Beyond Words: The Limits of Linguistic Expression

How to Express It All?

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[…] vos y yo somos dos entes absolutamente incomunicados entre sí salvo por medio de los sentidos y la palabra, cosas de las que hay que desconfiar si uno es serio.

(Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*, Chapter 28)

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1. Introduction

Stop and reconsider human expression: we know far more than we can tell. Exposed to constant stimuli and we ourselves a part of the activity chain, our brains constantly process, learn, and aim to understand. For instance, we recognize faces, but we cannot verbalize how we came to identify those features among the crowd; we come up with ideas, but we cannot walk others through the exact paths our minds followed. Neither could we possibly put into words the mental processes that guide creative activity. That is, if we wanted to explain how all the ideas that are exposed in the present project came about, we would not be satisfied by linguistic tools. This fact does not make our creative process less ours, but it renders it an ineffable experience which others will only comprehend if they have themselves experienced it or something similar. There is thus a myriad of experiences that seem to defy words. And precisely that which is ineffable contains information about ourselves and our surroundings. How to express it all? It is certainly a task language is not up to. Even right at this moment, in typing about ineffability, the mind shows some degree of resistance. After all, it is not a word's area of expertise to delineate what is by nature unsayable. What can language express, and how can we express what remains unsaid? To answer that, this project takes up the question of linguistic finitude and expressive infinitude. The study of the limits of words seems relevant to better understand and express ourselves.

There is still much to be studied on the topic by linguists. Most postulates on the limits of language come from the field of philosophy, a discipline that presents them mainly through analogies and metaphors, as in Wittgenstein or Heidegger. There is, however, a significant vacuum in linguistic studies on what language is fit to do. It is for that reason that we play with Wittgenstein's, Heidegger's, and Schopenhauer's postulates in order to develop our ideas on the limits of language. The chapter 'Theoretical Framework: What is there, beyond words?' explores how far language can go in expression. A mélange of philosophy of language, logic, linguistics, and pragmatics led us to conclude that the limits of language and the limits of understanding are the same. Having established that, our study continues with the 'Discussion and Analysis', whereby we delve into different disciplines to sharpen language's limits.

First, the topic needs to be approached from the perspective of logic. This is the field that studies the underlying structure of language, and therefore it enables us to build the skeleton of the subject. A strong logical structure built, linguistics supplements it. The section 'Logic and Linguistic Limits' analyzes the postulates of these two fields on the topic, mainly Wittgenstein's and Heidegger's. In the case of linguistics, we complement our views with the few 'contemporary' works we could find on the subject (e.g., Singer, 1990; Heaton & Groves, 1999; Mualem, 2002/2002b; Rit, 2004;

Boghossian et al., 2015). It is worth mentioning that most of the sources used are from the time window of 1970-2000—except for the 1900-1950 philosophy work (Mauthner, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Schopenhauer). Second, in order to put language into context, its setting in reality must be examined. Such task is carried out in the sections 'Pragmatic Limits' and 'Practical Limits', which dissect the relationship between language and its frame of reference as well as the limits of language in practice. Both sections are strongly informed by the field of psychology. We use the individual and social dimensions of language to shed light on the subjectivity and context-dependency of our most used expressive tool. Also, the influence of culture upon language is essential in delineating the expressive potential of language. The work of linguist Joanna Radwanska-Williams and philosopher Fritz Mauthner was especially useful in both these sections. They both brightly show the medium in and for which language exists, i.e., context. In order to best illustrate our theoretical findings, some psychological cases of language use are also presented.

But words are not all we have, since not all we have to express is linguistically-compatible. There are a number of other mediums available to convey all conscious, subconscious and unconscious knowledge. Thus, in completing the negative space created by the limits of language, there is literature, poetry, painting, music, and silence. Sections 'Responding to the limits: The Nonsensical Arts' and 'Responding to the limits: Silence' undertake this task. Each of the mentioned mediums is addressed, and by comparison, the reader acquires an idea of what can be attained by means of each of them. We use the works of Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, James Joyce, Mirtha Dermisache, Mark Rothko and Johan Sebastian Bach to present real-life examples of expressed ineffability. Finally, the 'Conclusion' culminates the study by presenting the general lessons of our research.

This project began from two points. First, the reading of Cortázar's awe-inspiring 'Hopscotch' (1963), and our attempt to explain to ourselves what the Argentinian novelist was setting out to accomplish with his language games —and what, in fact, he did accomplish. We were taken aback by Cortázar's explanation of so many elements which, to the moment of reading, we had considered ineffable. Poetic language and metaphors are the means whereby he explains metaphysical feelings, emotions and thoughts (See sample in Annex 1). He explains in showing, in directing the reader's sight to the correct place. Thus, by means of verbal expression, he implausibly transcends language, inspiring deep questions about the use and limits of this linguistic tool. The second point is a life (admittedly but a young one) spent in close connection to art and from nearly 8 years of regular reflection on what art did/does to us and how; of trying to solve the puzzle of its communicative power. This final degree project is therefore a research on a topic that has not been sufficiently covered by

linguistic studies, scientific results being complemented with personal reflection and experience vis-à-vis human expression.

2. Objectives and Research Questions

Based on what has been stated in the previous section, the main aim of this final degree project is to critically comprehend the limits of language. The analysis of those limits will lead us to find forms that transcend the expressive capacity of language and to examine how these forms complement language —if at all. Given the nature of language, its limits will be explored in linguistic, logical and pragmatic terms, bringing forth literature and ideas appertaining to the three areas. Having delved into what language cannot manifest, we will look at what other means of expression[1] can convey. In so doing, we aim to provide the reader with a holistic view of human expressive capacity. Bearing in mind these objectives, our main research question is:

1- Based on linguistics, logic, and pragmatic postulates, which are the limits of language as a means of expression?

To provide an answer to this question, a set of secondary research questions will be examined:

2- What is language and how does it work in relation to thought? What about in relation to emotions/feelings?

3- What is the relation between language, expression and communication? Between knowing and feeling?

4- How do words (and the knowledge thereof) affect one's expressive capacity?

5- Why can the arts convey sensations language cannot?

6- How does experimental literature and poetry, through language, express more than general language[2]?

7- What can —or ought to— be expressed by the opposite of language, that is, by silence?

These questions will be subsequently approached in three chapters. Given the complexity of the topic and the scientific somewhat blurred approach to the human mind, all questions will be 'attempted to be' answered; that is, the purpose of this project is to present the reader with our view on the topic, but one cannot aim at empirical certainty in this area [yet]. Thus, the first chapter (Section 4) presents the reader with the body of theory that will support later analyses and answers. It engages in a discussion and novel association of concepts and literature review about the logic, linguistics, pragmatics and, to some extent, metaphysics. The second chapter (Section 5) follows an in-depth

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[1] This project will analyze arts (symbols, imagery and sounds), poetry and silence as mediums of expression.
[2] For our purposes, 'general language' is understood as the combination of words used for daily communicative purposes (e.g. conversations, teaching and lecturing, expression of feelings, storytelling).

analysis of the aforementioned questions. To that end, the chapter is divided into four sections. Sections 5.1 and 5.2 endeavor to answer questions 1 and 2 as concerned with the applying the fields of logic, linguistics and pragmatics to the exploration of language's limits. For its part, Section 5.3 specifically target questions 3 and 4: along these lines one can discover our view on language, expression and communication in practical terms, that is, through the examination of real case-studies that confront the limits of words. Section 5.4 completes the negative space created by what language cannot do with what the arts can, thus aiming to answer question 5. In this section, sub-section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 explore the paradoxical exploration carried out by literature and poetry on the limits of language (question 6). The last section of this chapter (Section 5.5) deals with the interplay between silence and thought for expressive purposes, in order to answer question 7 and to complete the answering of question 1. Last, a third chapter concludes the project by showing the general lessons of the research (Section 6), followed by an evaluation of the answers to the research questions.

3. Methodology

The main methodology used in this project was literature review and critical reflection, in which the units of study have been logic, linguistics, pragmatics, art and, to some extent, metaphysics. In order to achieve our objectives and answer the research questions, we examined in detail the works of Wittgenstein and, to a lesser degree, Heidegger. The literature (books and academic essays) was singled out based on academic research and further bibliography selection thereof. To our surprise, most of our sources are previous to the year 2000. There seems to be a halt in the literature on the topic, although it never attracted much attention in the academic field. However, as we continued our research, we were not discouraged by the scarcity of sources. We believe that our project demonstrates the importance of understanding the expression tools at our disposal: in this manner we can comprehend ourselves better as well as our surroundings, and express it accordingly.

To complement our research, we conducted some case study reviews, which were mainly drawn from the field of psychology. As can be inferred, this project consisted mostly in desk study where an extensive literature review took place. The other main part of our study was critical reflection, which was spent in writing and theoretically constructing this philosophy-like body of work. It seems worthy to mention that, in order to reflect on the negative space of language (i.e., that which language cannot reach), the three months of summer were spent at museums, concerts (of different styles of music), art theory, literature and poetry reading, discussions with art historian (and friend) Jenna Lynch, and subsequent reflection time on these various topics and their multiple intricate links.

The sections 'Introduction' (above) and 'Theoretical Framework' were elaborated mainly through literature review and academic research. The first was the digest of our reading and the

production of our own state of affairs on the topic. For the 'Theoretical Framework' we mostly used linguistic theory, complemented with logic, pragmatics, psychology and metaphysics. This presented an initial challenge given the technical vocabulary and complexity of the topics. It should be emphasized that for these two sections, which required in-depth comprehension of mechanisms and underlying meanings to metaphoric language, commentaries of the work of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Schoppenhauer —the authors that comprise the backbone of our research— were almost often misleading. Contrary to our belief, reading the primary sources was, though more difficult at first, rewarding in the long run, for our understanding was not contaminated by intermediary interpretations.

Subsequently, the combination of the literature, case-study review, and reflection made possible to identify which were the limits of language and how could art and silence complement them for expression purposes. Having conducted all this background research, we developed the section 'Discussion and Analysis' through the insight acquired. Our 'Conclusions and proposals' were based on the findings of the research and the results of further critical reflection on the topic.

4. Theoretical Framework: What is there beyond words?

There is a certain anxiety in words' finitude: the sense of holding something inside and the impossibility of letting it out. We all have "ran up against the limits of language" (Waismann, 1967, p. 68) when trying to express ourselves, without it entailing a lack of awareness or of consciousness. It is well-known that we cannot describe the smell of coffee or the color blue. In vain we grope for the proper words to express in detail our thoughts, our experiences, our feelings. Communication of the whole of human reality seems beyond the reach of language altogether. In a way, not finding the words is an encounter with the limits of one's own possibilities. Recognition and identification of the limits of language is thus paramount for those individuals who are trying to navigate what is beyond them.

For practical purposes, human language suffices. Yet, the longing for further comprehension and for being fully comprehended leads to notice the insufficiency of this tool. Because, in fact, language and reality are not found at two ends of a continuum that can be linked by thought (Heaton & Groves, 1999, pp. 113-119). This linking would only take place through references human brains make, i.e., language only exists in the mind and "it will neither grasp nor alter the real world" (Mauthner, 1901, p. 25). This explains the denial some philosophers have made of the possibility of true communication and translation (Mauthner, 1901, p. 25; Quine, 1969, pp. 26-68). Institutions of research and higher education have for long devoted themselves to the study of human language (Ritt, 2004, p. 3). The insight so far acquired has established that much of language is part of the human mind. This renders linguistic studies all the more impenetrable, as the mind remains the greatest knowledge gap in the scientific landscape. Hence, when endeavoring in linguistic academic enquiry,

the [unknown] workings of the mind should nonsensically be at the center of our studies (Ibid., p. 4). Since the mind cannot be opened and observed while it produces language[3], the only way to effectuate linguistic studies is through inference and empirical research, which strikes as unsatisfactory of a result as does the running out of words.

Early hominids took a step beyond their ancestors in their developing of speech abilities. Given its advantageous qualities[4], language was to be one of the pivotal factors ensuring the hegemonic survival of human species (Harari, 2013, pp. 15-54; Ritt, 2004, p. 17). Emerged as a human tool, language is paradoxically incapable of expressing *all* that is human. Yet, at the same time, without the individuals' participation in the linguistic code, there would be no language. It seems thus that a last connecting dot is missing, precluding our complete understanding of speech. Cognitive psychologist Arthur S. Reber suggests that "the verbalizing criterion is a red herring"[5] (Reber, 1997, p. 141), hinting that studying only that which is uttered will distract us from grasping the real workings of language. Reber upholds his claim by adverting the slippery relation between verbalizing and consciousness. Humans cannot verbalize all they are conscious of, yet all thinking occurs in words (Ibid., p. 146; Ritt, 2004, pp. 1-4). To make things worse, "imitation is how a child learns its particular language" (Dawkins, 2000, p. vii). Therefore, speech, among others, expresses thought; we think in words (Mauthner, 1901, p. 507), but language is not learnt through thinking. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and psychologist Susan Blackmore propose a solution to this riddle: memetics[6]. According to this field, language is a combination of very successful/replicated memes[7], which are independent from us humans. The purpose of all memes is replicating. Hence, memetics considers language to be autonomous of human agency (not in the sense of speaking but rather of words making up linguistic codes). Blackmore and Dawkins argue for a symbiotic relation between languages and humans: languages pursue their aim of replicating in 'using' the speakers that 'host' them, just as much as they are used by the latter. This theory would explain why languages are beyond our understanding (Ritt, 2004, p. 17).

Nonetheless, memetics only proposes a hypothesis to the existence of linguistic limits, but not an explicit formula of the limits themselves. For the purpose of elucidating the limits of language

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[3] As discussed in *The Meme Machine* (Blackmore, 2000, p. 210), we do not know where the mind is. We imagine our minds, our actorness, our own selves, to be in the back of our heads, from there guiding our thoughts and actions. However, we cannot be certain about this.
[4] To name a few, language enables us humans to make information communicable and tradable, to command, to request, and to negotiate. Also, through language, cooperation is facilitated as group actions can be more easily coordinated and same-group members are more readily identified (Harari, 2013, pp. 15-54; Diamond, 1991; Diamond, 1999, pp. 115-138; Ritt, 2004, p. 1).
[5] Quote continues: "a small odoriferous cousin to the sardine that when dragged across one's path, disturbs the scent and diverts one's attention away from the main issues" (Reber, 1997, p. 141).
[6] Memetic theory is mainly developed in *The Selfish Gene* (Dawkins, 1989) and *The Meme Machine* (Blackmore, 2000).
[7] Meme: a virally-transmitted cultural symbol or social idea often with the aim of conveying a particular phenomenon, theme, or meaning. Memes work from mind to mind but are autonomous of human agency. They are transmitted through replication and their purposes can be either advantageous or disadvantageous to people; all memes aim for maximum replication (Dawkins, 1989, pp. 245-260; Blackmore, 2000).

—so as to make better use of speech in communication— one first has to understand the connection between language and what it expresses (i.e., thought/information, and feelings/emotions). The manner in which thought/information is expressed differs from the articulating of feelings/emotions. In logical terms, thinking is the process of finding a solution. Thoughts are mental processes that cannot be observed inwardly (Heaton & Groves, 1999, pp. 103-111). Meanwhile, emotions and feelings are patterns in human life. Knowledge is concerned with doubt and certainty, learning and finding out, grounds and confirmation. These do not apply to sadness, content, cheerfulness, pain or anxiety, because our relation to ourselves is one of undergoing not of reflection[8]. If we are in pain or feeling sad, we experience those emotions or feelings, whereas we infer, reflect, reason on concepts, information or ideas (Ibid., pp. 145-148). Therefore, the manner in which we express thought/information tremendously differs from the manner in which feelings/emotions are expressed.

In terms of thinking, this process is constituted by concepts, which are mental representations of ideas, ergo, they only exist in the human mind. Concepts —and, by extension, thought— arise, from experience, as abstractions or generalizations. Notwithstanding the non-linear character of thought, articulating concepts into language does follow a somehow linear process. By thinking we form networks of interconnected associations, dependencies or causalities (Earl, 2017). Putting our thoughts into language —which essentially is a chain of clauses— entails mapping a convoluted network with a sequential structure. Despite its implausibility, the articulation of concepts does take place, as we speakers/writers know very well. For concepts to be verbalized, the mind requires to link its inside — made of thoughts, experiences and feelings— with the outside. These mental representations are believed to be closely related with the meaning attached to reality, as our understanding and interaction with the world involves concepts and our grasp of them (Margolis & Laurence, 2014).

Meaning is the [exclusively] mental experience of what an object is, which depends on staging, the scene or the circumstances in which it is used (Ritt, 2004, p. 52). It is determined by articulation rather than representation: meaning is related to words only insofar as we experience it and use language creatively (Heaton & Groves, 1999, pp. 97, 161). When a word is used outside its usual context, then new meanings are created[9]. The expressive and communicative functions of meaning cast light upon this phenomenon. The meaning an utterance has, which is unique to itself given its individual creation in use/text by its author, corresponds to the expressive function of

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[8] We recognize that what one individual feels might be more or less apparent to him/her, depending on how much he/she knows him/herself. However, we do not believe that knowing information, thinking about experiences, analyzing, or reflecting can be categorized in the same box as emotional intelligence. Therefore, throughout this work, we make a distinction between knowledge and 'emotional knowledge'. Our view on the topic will be elaborated four pages further.

[9] For instance, note the adoption of the terms "awesome" and "cool" in U.S. teenage slang. No longer does "awesome" mean to them "imposing". By changing the context of use, the word now rather stands for "terrific". The case of "cool" is the same: its meaning has changed from "cold" to "nice" (Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 98).

language. And, the meaning an utterance has as a result of its place in the linguistic system constitutes the communicative function of language (Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 98). Advancing towards utterance, the mind accounts for the link between meaning and object through reference. The fact that reference is outside language (e.g., pointing at objects) helps explain the link between language and reality. It is important to bear in mind that reference does not fix meaning or words; it fixes nothing but objects (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 118; Strawson, 1950, pp. 320-344).

This mental process channels our minds to words and language: linguistic expressions that link meaning and objects in an utterance. The linear structure of language can hijack thought for various reasons (Chomsky, 1992, p. 102). Words can be deceitful, for they are taken out of their natural place in talking and used to refer to some essence or ideal entity which we try to think of or define. For instance, as we think in words, language leads us to assume that not having a word for a concept impedes thinking about it[10] (Hartshorne, 2009). Or that what we can put into specific words has a direct and deep control over what we can think (Cavell, 1969, p. 172). Both these claims are false. For example, not having an English term for the Japanese word 積ん読[11] ('*tsundoku*') does not entail that English speakers (or any other language-speakers also lacking this word in their lexicons) cannot express the concept in more than one word.

So as to further delineate the boundaries of language, the relation between expression and communication must be pinpointed. For its part, expression precedes the social act of communication[12]: it is the semiotic process of encoding thoughts into signs (e.g., mathematics, music and art) or words (Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 98). Thought might ensue in expression or not; that is, expression is the consequence of the individual wish to articulate cerebration. If expression relates language and thought in individual minds, communication connects individuals in society (Ibid., p. 93). In general, communication is a broad concept which may not involve people or words (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, pp. 1-13). Neither expression or communication necessitate of language. Art forms can also express and communicate, as can signs, gestures or contexts. However, words permit to accelerate interaction. Linguistic expression is practical: its rules for the combination of words (i.e., syntax) facilitate instinctive recognition by speakers of the same language (Ibid.: 91). Yet, such linguistic practicality has its downsides. Rule-based, language is rigid by nature. As soon as grammar and syntax

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[10] Psychology professor Joshua Hartshorne presents the example of Eskimos and their conception of snow. As it is commonly reported, Eskimo languages such as Yupik and Inuit have a myriad of words for snow. This phenomenon captures how they perceive frozen precipitation, but their more extensive lexicon does not affect how they perceive it. To put it differently, words do not precede meaning: Eskimos had a myriad of meanings for snow that then put into words, and not vice versa (Hartshorne, 2009).
[11] In Japanese, '*tsundoku*' means "buying books and not reading them; stockpiling books" (Jisho, 2018).
[12] Here lies the basic notion of translation: the expression of thoughts must be separated from the communication of those, which may occur in this or that language.

are altered, interlocutors see their capacity to communicate/understand decreased. Rule free, non-linguistic expression finds no limits to what it can express and neither to what can be made of it.

Thus, communication is the mechanism by which one individual's sensations, ideas, information and attitudes may bring forth reactions in others. This bringing about of reactions can either be intentional or inadvertent. And, those sensations, ideas, information or attitudes need not have been understood to qualify as 'communicated'. Indeed, factors such as comprehension/lack thereof, understanding/misunderstanding, interpretation/misinterpretation, and linguistic, cultural and social baggage should be very much considered intrinsic to the communication process (Swadesh, 2006, p. 179; Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 92; Dance, 1970, pp. 201-210; Williams, 1967, p. 17). This sheds light on a further limit of linguistic expression. Bringing pragmatics into play, the context and the baggage of interlocutors will affect communication. And precisely that baggage will most probably ensure a mismatch between communicative intent and communicative effect, which escapes the speaker's control. All individuals come to communicative situations with their own linguistic baggage —as well as cultural, educational or experiential. Each person's exposure to language is different, which adds up to considerable differences between what each of us truly speaks. Based on the set of education level, differences in dialect, interests, abilities, areas of specialization, knowledge of one or more languages —factors that are unique to each individual— some linguists have denied the existence of public language and asserted that all that can be spoken are idiolects[13] (Labov, 1972, pp. 183-326; George, 1990, pp. 275-98; Salzmann, 2004, pp. 12-16; Higginbotham, 2006, pp. 140-150). This differs from Chomsky's idealized "speaker/listener" (Chomsky, 1965, pp. 3-10) and the Saussurean view of *la langue* as a homogeneous unit (Saussure, 1966, pp. 101-123).

A unique theory on the limits of language is philosopher and writer Fritz Mauthner's. As early as 1901, this German academic denied the limits of language, ascribing our linguistic constraints to knowledge instead. To Mauthner, all we know is what we can say and what we say reflects nothing but who we are and in what society we live —nothing else. He conceives language as a *Weltanschauung* ('a world view'), but not as an insight into metaphysics (Mauthner, 1901, pp. 24-27). So, for Mauthner the problem does not lie in the limits of language but on the limits of knowledge. For him, there would be no ineffability but a simple lack of knowledge. Equating thinking and language, he considers our speech capacity and memory synonymous —all that language consists of are sense impressions. According to Mauthner, all that inhabits the mind was first in the senses; memory stands thus as the connection between sensory experience and language (Ibid.: 189). This explanation of what

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[13] Idiolect: the dialect of an individual person at one time. It implies that no two persons speak in the exact same way and that each person's dialect is constantly undergoing change —e.g., by the introduction of new words (Barber & García Ramírez, 2017).

language can and cannot do precludes the possibility of arriving at any idea of reality: man can only gain an approximation thereof. Unable to move beyond memory and faced with infinite knowledge, he cannot be certain about anything (Mauthner, 1902b, pp. 86-87).

As such, Mauthner's theory faces the challenge of the art forms and of other non-reportable yet conscious experiences. It has been empirically demonstrated that processes such as 'tip-of-the-tongue' episodes (Brown & McNeill, 1966), affective judgements (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), visual imagery observation (Brandimonte et al., 1992), aesthetic evaluations, taste judgements (Melcher & Schooler, 1995; Wilson, 1997), and implicit learning (Fallshore & Schooler, 1995) are also linguistically non-reportable. A theory of why this happens is that verbalizing these episodes would consume processing resources that otherwise would not be available for the problem-solving, assimilation, or comprehension efforts (Russo et al., 1989). Then, what these non-reportable experiences and art have in common is their empirical delinking of knowledge from language. Agreeing to disagree with Mauthner, the mere existence of feelings/experience that are reported through non-linguistic mediums (art forms) or that cannot be articulated but are experienced in full consciousness demonstrates that language can go beyond knowledge as well as knowledge can reach beyond language. This is backed by the phenomenon of Freudian slips in language, or by the subconscious knowledge transmitted through painting or calligraphy[14].

Appreciating the dimensions of the conscious and the subconscious mind in language may help us avoid the confusion (both in measurement and in cognition) that can ensue when language is used as a proxy for knowledge or consciousness. These two dimensions enable us to better delineate the limits of language, making for a better understanding of ourselves and our possibilities, and thus be able to explore ways to transcend the actual state of things[15]. For its part, conscious experience brings out again the very critical dichotomy of 'know vs. feel'. As mentioned, there are big differences between expressing knowledge and conveying feeling, yet both can be conscious experiences — though not necessarily so. Then, language and consciousness are not directly related as some linguists and philosophers seem to think (See Schooler & Fiore, 1997, p. 255).

Some words arise out of experience and learning, while retaining in its linguistic form the pre-linguistic texture out of which they arose (i.e., thought). Others arise out of feeling, right out of the platonic irascible mind. This second group of words is usually harder to articulate, and most often needs to be taught (e.g., through emotional intelligence instruction, introspection, psychoanalysis).

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[14] There is a subfield in psychology that establishes connections between our minds, identities and hand-writing styles.
[15] To illustrate, artists may find it very useful to know the limits of linguistic expression. Painters could use this information to try to convey what language is missing through color, imagery and shapes. Musicians could do the same by sounds and acoustic messages. And, aware of what their most valuable tool can and cannot achieve, writers and poets would be able to experiment with it more cleverly.

Mauthner showed grounds for his 'knowledge-language' equation by stating that, "our feelings, our life itself, our nature itself… remain inaccessible to language" (Mauthner, 1901, p. 422) and that, "the essence of our being has nothing to do with language and thinking" (Ibid., p. 421). Mauthner was certainly right in that personal feelings and emotions cannot be known —they are undergone with more or less awareness[16]—, but they do not remain completely inaccessible to language. These can only be expressed insofar as we know an expression of that emotion or feeling[17] (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 145-148). For what we feel inhabits our inner worlds. In these realms we find the succession of private experiences —known by their possessors alone—, and not to be found inside the brain. Yet, not finding feelings within cerebral matter does not preclude language from accessing and expressing them. Because, as a matter of fact, the inner world relates inner and outer concepts lying at the heart of human understanding (Ibid., p. 142-143). Thus, going back to what language can and cannot express of this sensorial mélange: "everyone knows what their own consciousness is like but they cannot share that knowledge with anyone else" (Blackmore, 2000, p. 2).

This 'know vs. feel' dichotomy takes us directly to Wittgenstein's postulates. The Austrian mathematician, philosopher, linguist and logician took several of his ideas from Mauthner, and so acknowledges in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922). In this work, Wittgenstein argues the impossibility of articulating anything meaningful except for propositions on sciences. He reflects his desire for linguistic clarity and precision in his writing form: enumerated lines of thoughts, conveying his precise thinking process behind the sentences. The message of the *Tractatus* seems to be that language cannot possibly describe ethical concerns, since its grammatical rules are marked by logic[18] and determinacy. Logically analyzed, language displays its limits as well as those of sensical thought (Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 27). To illustrate this, Wittgenstein makes an analogy between clothing and language. Language disguises thought: just like it is not possible to infer the real body shape of a clothed person, so happens with thought and language. Clothing is made up of a considerably different material for the body shape to be recognized through it. Same with language and thought, their essences are too distinct to be fully mutually explanatory (4.002 in Ibid., p. 45).

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[16] In fact, emotions and consciousness are intimately linked. Few are the hormones that can control emotional states (e.g., adrenaline, noradrenaline, etc.) (Blackmore, 2000, p. 46). Thus, most of the feelings/emotions can be processed, understood and controlled by the mind. This does not mean that we know our feelings/emotions but rather that we are aware of them. We believe that the 'information' we acquire by the undergoing of feelings is quite different from what is considered 'knowledge', strictly speaking.

[17] E.g., slowly sticking a pin into your skin might reach a certain point in which you do not know if you either feel discomfort or pain. Suddenly, as the expression of pain surfaces, you can identify this expression [with previous experience] and become certain of your pain (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 145-148).

[18] Please note the difference between Aristotelian logic and linguistic logic here. The first deals with the study of classical syllogism and the relation of terms in an argument. Whether the reasoning is valid depends on the right arrangements of the terms of an argument. Linguistic logic, aka., modern logic, was chiefly produced by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Linguistic logic is born of the rejection of certain traditional assumptions about reality and meaning. What these modern philosophers tried to achieve by means of logic was the capturing of the complexity of human statements in a formal scientific method (Bobzien, 2016).

Consequently, Wittgenstein could not escape using metaphors and metaphysical terms —i.e., nonsensical forms— to describe the sensical. In this respect, language is paralleled with the walls of a cage (Wittgenstein, 1929): we feel the urge to escape it to further express ourselves, yet we cannot. Not only is language limiting, but it is also misleading. Indeed, language disguises thought, but also conceals and confines it (4.121 in Witgenstein, 1922, p. 108). Given this deceitful nature, "what can be shown cannot be said" (4.1212 in Ibid., p. 108). And with this, Wittgenstein exhorts us not to even try to put into words what is not sayable in sensical propositions, for this can only be shown (e.g., through reference, symbols, art forms or experience). In terms of logic, every proposition in language comprises two divergent elements: a bipolar statement that represents a possibility in the world, and logical form, which is mirrored by language (Mualem, 2002, p. 65). "Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent" (4.121 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 47). He symbolizes such complex aftermath by comparing the *Tractatus* with a ladder that leads to a conclusion (the aforementioned limits), and which has to be kicked away once it has been climbed (6.54 in Ibid., p. 108).

The idea of kicking the ladder away was intended to be soothing, but instead it might appear all the more confusing. Nonetheless, it all becomes a little more relieving when we read Wittgenstein's *Culture and Value*, a book that was never meant to be published[19]. In its pages, the Austrian sage remarked that, "the inexpressible (what I find enigmatic & cannot express) perhaps provides the background, against which whatever I was able to express acquires meaning" (MS 112 1: 5.10.1931 in Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 23). What is implied here is that showing and saying are not a complete antithesis. Instead, they are interdependent while comprising a dichotomy. First, the act of saying, when done according to what can be sensically said —ergo, following the rules of logic— creates room for what is shown to become clearer to the mind. Second, if done according ethical and logical criteria, showing can be the background against which saying becomes meaningful. As a result, what can be inferred from the contrast between showing and saying is that language comprehends a dialectical tension between the expressible and the ineffable. Philosopher Ray Monk, Wittgenstein's biographer, throws light upon that which is inexpressible to the Austrian philosopher: ethics, aesthetics, religion, the meaning of life, philosophy and logical processes. All these, Wittgenstein declares, cannot be stated in propositions. So, when conversations span out to these areas, one unavoidably reaches the limits of language (Monk, 2015 in Boghossian et al., 2015). Thus, the only logical response Wittgenstein sees to ineffability is silence. Precisely so concludes the *Tractatus*:

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[19] Wittgenstein only approved of the *Tractatus* to be published. The rest of his works were published posthumously and without his approval (nor prohibition) (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 113).

"Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (7 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 92). For him, silence is the only substratum whereon language shows its logical form (Mualem, 2002, p. 65).

The topic of silence, as the origin and foundation of speech, was also part of Heidegger's postulates. This philosopher reaches the topic of silence through his questioning of the link between human communication and the *logos*. Are we reducing the self to the logos by pretending that human communication transmits it all? According to this philosopher —as to Wittgenstein— we cannot observe the self and therefore cannot express it. For that matter, Heidegger makes a critical difference between 'the unsaid' (*das Ungesagte*), 'the unspoken' (*das Ungesprochene*), and 'the inexpressible' (*das Unsagbare*). These three dimensions link the self to the *logos*, leaving speech and silence intimately related with being. How can we then, express through language —so close to the concept of 'being' as it emanates from it— *the non-being*? If we succeed in articulating the non-being, we automatically turn it into being (by formulating it into concepts and words), which is a non-sequitur (Heidegger, 1996, p. 106). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger creates the ontological world of *Dasein* ('being there'). This is made up of 'self-finding' (*Befindlichkeit*) and 'understanding' (*Verstehen*), which are both co-originally determined and structured by speech (Ibid., pp. 134-149). For Heidegger, speaking is the articulation of comprehensibility, and language opens up to 'self-finding' and to 'being-in-the-world' (Ibid., p. 151).

Therefore, we can only say what has been filtered by 'self-finding' and 'understanding'. And what we do not find the words for must remain silent or else be doomed to failed expression. Thereby, Heidegger's philosophy allows us to see language as a filter for comprehension. Inherent to meaningful totality lies wording. Having established itself in the materiality of speech, an idea becomes a concept by means of its acquired 'being'. "In the totality of its articulated contexts of signification, expression preserves an understanding of the disclosed world" (Ibid., p. 68). Thus, the philosopher confirms the linguistic character of that which has been understood. That established, muteness or silence must be acknowledged as a mode of speech (Ibid., p. 165). The antithesis 'silence vs. speech' notwithstanding, silence also expresses and very much so. And once again, we run up against the ineffable in this dichotomy: silence is meaningful yet language will never be able to condense its significance into words.

The reason why Heidegger forces speech into silence is because for that which one is trying to express in language there is a more infallible manner. This is elucidated by the application of the theory of the *skopos* (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, pp. 85-92) to our search of the limits of language. According to translation studies, translating and interpreting should essentially take into account the function of the target text. The same can be extrapolated to communication; one should reflect upon

the function or intention of what is to be expressed and find the best manner to so do. Therefore, language should express something when, and only when, it can accurately convey meaningful totality, leaving other communication forms do their magic.

Another German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, also meditated on language and, as Wittgenstein, he was very much concerned with the limits of language when running up against them. Schopenhauer signaled a series of experiences whose knowledge could not be put into words. For him, virtue and will are not teachable. They are born out intuitive knowledge, and only find their adequate expression in conduct rather than in concepts. One can put virtuosity or willingness into words, by description. However, to properly grasp both concepts, they need to be shown in conduct. Both are thus ineffable knowledges. In Schopenhauer we find an alternative response to what language can and cannot do. Words can indeed be sequenced in whichever manner when attempting to express Wittgenstein's and Heidegger's inexpressible. However, in such cases, they would only address the negative space, i.e., they can only refer to what the inexpressible is not. Since reason cannot access these ineffable knowledges —if it could, we would understand them, and therefore we could articulate them—, we do not have images, concepts or words with which to communicate them. This is because what ineffability generates opposes the phenomenal world and, as such, it is alien to concepts[20]. In consequence, ineffable knowledge can only be addressed in the form of a metaphor: for metaphors do not say, they show; they do not capture reality, they point at it; they lie outside language (Villamil, 2016, p. 48). And through reference, metaphors —understood as poetry, literature, arts forms, silence–– can transcend the limits of language.

Metaphors —either linguistic (poetry or literature) or non-linguistic (arts, symbols and silence)— cannot apprehend Heidegger's *Dasein* or encompass its meaning in their expressive forms. But neither they aspire to do so. Their goal is instead to show in Wittgensteinian terms: they do not embody ineffability but indicate the right direction for the mind to comprehend —in whichever unknown ways it does this. To clarify further, these metaphorical forms do not capture themselves the meaning of the inexpressible; they only take us away from language, which is the one form in which the inexpressible —as its name entails— cannot arise. In so doing, precisely due to their muteness of speech, these forms become the dimensions in which 'the inexpressible' (*das Unsagbare*) appears.

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[20] According to Schopenhauer, concepts are formed out of the intuition of phenomena (Villamil, 2016, p. 46).

5. Discussion and Analysis

The present study purports to examine the limits of language as a means of expression according to logic, linguistics, and pragmatics. Having established this, we aim to color the negative space left by linguistic limits through an exhibition of the alternatives of linguistic expression. In this sense we will analyze the arts and silence as complementary forms to achieve the pinnacle of our expressive capacities.

5.1. Logical and Linguistic Limits

There is a system of principles underlying the arrangement of human language, enabling it to acquire sense. The study of this internal and subjacent system is logic, from the Ancient Greek *logos* —which is sometimes translated as 'sentence', 'discourse', 'reason', 'rule', and 'ratio'. These principles governing our thinking and expression thereof encompass the foundations of correct reasoning, the meaning of the concepts common to all sciences (semantics), and the general laws governing such concepts (syntax). The process of going from a question to a definitive answer —ergo, reasoning— is at the root of logic. Logic explores arguments for truth in studying sequences of reasoning (Lau & Chan, 2018). As philosopher Gottlob Frege put it, "to discover truths is the task of all sciences; it falls to logic to discern the laws of truth […]. I assign to logic the task of discovering the laws of truth, not of assertion or thought" (Frege, 1956, p. 289). Thus, logic focuses only on propositions that are capable of being true and false at the same time[21], being thus unconcerned with the psychological processes connected with thoughts or emotions. The main object of study in this field are propositions, which are declarative sentences used to make an assertion —either true or false. These are opposed to questions, commands or sentences expressing wishes (Shapiro, 2013).

By means of logic we can think about the world abstractly without any physical basis. We can spend numerous hours thinking about abstractions that have nothing to do with reality. Aristotle's differentiation between 'primary substance' (physical matter in the world) and 'secondary substance' (abstract categories in our mind) illustrates this fact. Primary substance stands for real things we can point to in the physical world. For its part, secondary substance represents the mental denominations of reality or the derivations of reality at which we arrive through reasoning —i.e., logical thought (Studtmann, 2017; Smith, 2018). Let us take the example of the secondary substance of 'tree'. If we imagine a tree we have never seen before, we automatically activate the abstract categorization of 'tree' acquired from all the trees we have seen in the physical world. The image that appears in our

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[21] This refers to Aristotle's law of non-contradiction. Reality is divided into categories, which we learn at an early age from observation. Very often when we make statements about the world, we are actually expressing connections between categories. The law of non-contradiction works through the proposition "All____ are____", and then inverting the order. He contributed to logic by indicating that valid statements must be true or false, but never both true or both false at the same time. To illustrate: "All 'humans' are 'mortal'" is a valid proposition, for "All 'humans' are 'mortal'" is true, while "All 'mortals' are 'human'" is false (Studtmann, 2017; Smith, 2018).

minds at the utterance of the word 'tree' is the feeling of what we associate with our [personal] idea of tree. To any image of a tree that is then put in front of us we will assent it to represent a tree. Thus, secondary substances enable us to speak about reality by linking the mind to the real world. But also, with the abstract idea of 'tree' we can generate any tree in our minds and, through reasoning (in this case commonly called 'imagination'), arrive to derivations of real trees[22]. This is abstraction, i.e., to think beyond what is real, which is also determined by logic. We believe that all that logic allows for can be put into words. Everything we can create through imagery in our minds[23], we can describe more or less detailed through language (for we think in words). Logic produces the rules of language, and, since thought occurs in words, our minds and the imagery it produces must be, to a certain extent, logical. We learn to think abstractly when, at an early age, start understanding shapes and numbers as categories. We progressively incorporate words to link physical things and abstract concepts: words become labels for Aristotle's primary substances (Margolis & Laurence, 2014). Since logic sets the rules of this linking, we believe the limits of language and of logic to be no different.

Logic allows us to see the limits of language insofar as it delineates the internal structure of linguistic clauses. Logical space underlies language: "although a proposition may only determine one place in logical space, the whole of logical space must already be given by it" (3.42 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 38) and "logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits" (5.61 in Ibid., p. 74). Logic is unrelated to realization, since we can indeed picture unreal propositions to ourselves through mental abstraction. Real propositions (those which mirror reality) and unreal propositions (those which echo mental abstractions) can be equally represented in language (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 36). Propositions —i.e., language— only exist in logical space —i.e., the mind—; they do not exist in reality, as do physical things (Ibid., 42). And, bringing back the 'say vs. show' dichotomy, these mental representations of the physical or abstract world cannot be shown but only said:

> So what is a logical picture? Consider a gramophone record. It consists of variegated grooves on a plastic base. When the record is played, the information contained in the grooves is reproduced in the music. So the spatial patterns on the record must share a form with the auditory relations of the notes in the music. The music, the score of the music, a digital recording of the music and an analog recording all share homologous form, but there is no way of representing the form. Homologous form simply shows itself in its various manifestations. In a similar way, a logical picture depicts the way things are because it shares homologous form with reality. In other words, you can't show a thought (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 43).

According to logic, our difficulty in putting something into words lies in the fact that we learn words under certain circumstances, which in turn we do not learn to describe (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 98). Depending on that which we are trying to formulate, another explanation of these obstacles to

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[22] i.e., trees that do not exist by the act of nature, that were created by means of imagination. Either we leave them in our minds or we recreate them through art. For example, klein blue trees, or trees whose leaves have a cloud texture. This stands for the mind's interplay between a certain secondary substance, and an individual's experience of primary substance, i.e., the things s/he has seen or experienced.
[23] Note that whatever is created in the mind is not synonymous of 'knowledge'. We do not believe Mauthner's equation of knowledge and language to be accurate. For logic contains thought, but thought does not contain logic.

speaking could be a factual difference between an object/fact and its description (e.g., the sound of a bell and the description of the sound of that bell) (Boghossian et al., 2015). This explains the Herculean task of vocalizing our feelings. Although we need to be cognizant of an expression for that emotion or feeling in order to verbalize it (Heaton & Groves, 1999, pp. 145-148), psychological states can only be expressed insofar as they are metaphysically part of the world (Ibid., 52). This means that the factual differences between feeling and describing that feeling preclude language from being completely accurate in this task. A third explanation we agree with is that whatever we do not understand —i.e., it has not been logically processed— cannot be verbalized either.

Logical limits explain why that which is outside logic (the world of art, of religious experience, of the mystical) is much harder to put into words (Singer, 1990, p. 446). Because in order to describe these worlds, we would as well have to station ourselves outside logic —which is not possible for we think in words (4.12 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 45). According to Wittgenstein, these worlds only mirror themselves in language (4.121 in Ibid., pp. 45, 48). We believe that talking about these external spheres is possible insofar as we have understood them. Forms such as metaphors or analogies make possible to articulate experiences appertaining to such logic-alien worlds; and they do so by showing in saying. And, by showing, we can transcend the limits of linguistic expression.

The power of showing in saying also manifests itself by what is left unsaid (Mualem, 2002b, p. 48). The aforementioned dialectical tension between the expressible and the ineffable that is comprehended in language explains this fact (MS 112 1: 5.10.1931 in Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 23): a sentence is the totality of the said and the unsaid. This is clear when one thinks of connotations, but it also goes beyond such truism. In Heidegger's 'unsaid' (*das Ungesagte*) one can see, through reflection in non-linguistic codes, the meaning of the outside-of-logic worlds. The factual differences between these worlds and those dimensions which can be expressed linguistically —reminiscing Wittgenstein's clothing metaphor— entail that the former constitute 'the inexpressible' (*das Unsagbare*) given their being outside logic. Therefore, showing and saying are inherent to all propositions, yet forever dichotomous and interdependent.

The inability to express what is located outside logical space also proposes a solution to the philosophical problem of expressing the self. Logic reasons out the conundrum of saying the self. Inasmuch as we cannot observe ourselves —i.e., we cannot step outside ourselves as we cannot step outside logical space—, speaking about the self is beyond the bounds of possibility. The self we think of as having agency, thinking and decision-making capacity "does not belong to the world but is a limit of the world" (5.632 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 74). And because the self is nothing but a viewpoint, coordinated with the world and necessary to see the world, speaking of it is ever more

impossible (Mualem, 2002, p. 67). However, we beg to differ with Wittgenstein's statement of "the limits of my language means the limits of my world" (5.6 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 74) when applied to the context of personal world, i.e., the combination of experiences, identity and subconsciousness. For, as we have seen, ineffability cannot be put into words yet this does not make it less part of our worlds, of ourselves, or indeed less real.

However, Heidegger's *Dasein* ('being there') illustrates a paradox in self-expression (literally taken as expressing one's own self). If in Wittgensteinian terms the self is found outside logic, in Heideggerian terminology the two dimensions of the Dasein ('self-finding' [*Befindlichkeit*] and 'understanding' [*Verstehen*]) are intrinsically determined and structured by speech (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 134-139). We agree with Heidegger in that speech is the articulation of comprehensibility (Ibid., p. 170), which confirms the essentially linguistic character of 'self-finding' and 'understanding' the world. And here is where linguistics come more blatantly into play, for the comprehension of the *Dasein* and of other dimensions is limited by language. As logic explains, our incapability to access that which is outside logic is explained by our thinking merely in linguistic terms. In this sense, it is important to note the distinction between 'speech' and 'language', as the latter is contingent upon rules of combination (i.e., syntax, grammar). Heidegger affirms that for the daunting task of understanding the self in words "not only most of the words are lacking but above all the grammar" (Ibid., p. 34). One of the most manifest problems for matching the logic and the nonlogic (or, rather the linguistic and the non-linguistic) is that language is essentially linear. Verbalizing comprehensibility of a fact is done through sequential linguistic clauses, while we do not know —but can infer— that whatever is not logical is alien to this structure. In Schopenhauer's words, it opposes the phenomenal world (Villamil, 2016, p. 48).

All that language cannot say constitutes a background that makes language dependent on many non-linguistic features, above all on human nature (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 113). Linguistics is the study of human language, involving an analysis of form, meaning and context. In establishing what language is through study, linguistics hints us which limits delineate this tool. From the synchronic approach to linguistics[24], one can appreciate linguistic limits in relation to context. The fuzzy set theory illustrates this very clearly (Zadeh, 1975; De Cock et al., 2000). When there is not a clear way to determine their meaning, words are known as 'fuzzy'. This theory is a mathematical approach to language that tries to capture vagueness in linguistic expression. Let us take the example of quantity and people. Within these terms, a fuzzy expression would be: "<u>many</u> people work at that

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[24] A synchronic approach to language describes it as it is at a given time. A diachronic approach is concerned with the historical development of language and the structural changes that it has undergone (Lyons, 2010).

company". But, what is meant by 'many'? Do we consider 20 to be many or does it rather refer to 100? The speculation goes on. Fuzzy set theory represents the ambiguity of an expression by probabilistic distributions (Zadeh, 1975, pp. 301-309). Thus, according to this theory 100 is considered to be more likely to be represented by 'many' than 20 is, even though so is not explicitly stated. This theory helps to illustrate the dynamics of context's interplay with language. The synchronic-diachronic dichotomy inherent to linguistics sheds light on another aspect dependent on context: meaning can be very often determined by specific conditions external to the expression itself (e.g., speaker, audience, situation, time). This aspect should be necessarily taken into account when trying to delineate the limits of language. If grammar limits language, context does so too when faced with deictic words (e.g., I, you, we, here, there) (Levelt, 1989, pp. 44-52). In such instances we would need context, in addition to language, to make sense, and context and its implications are as subjective as there are people in the world[25].

Thus it is shown that words and definitions depend on human interaction to take on meaning. We had previously established that language only exists in the mind, yet for communication to take place, minds need to have agreed on common words and definitions (i.e., language). For words in themselves do not mean anything without use. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein makes an analogy between chess and language. The piece of the king only means 'king' within the context and use of the game. The piece itself could be substituted by a grape and still be named 'king'. "The question 'What is a word really?' is analogous to 'What is a piece in chess?' (108 in Wittgenstein, 1953, pp. 46-47). A word's meaning thus depends on the context in which it is used and on the community in which understanding occurs, language limited by communal consensus and use. In this sense, language change also acquires relevance. A word might be dead in its use, but its meaning, the concept behind it, could move on as the communicative culture continues (Ritt, 2004, p. 17).

Through the exploration of logic and linguistics one can delineate the borders of language. Aware of the underlying structure of clauses and words, one starts to comprehend language and its workings by telling apart the sensical from the nonsensical. In addition, as language is a social tool it will be determined by rules —to guarantee ordered use and relatively accurate interpretation— and by context —for specific reference needs be paramount in a process that constantly links primary and secondary substances. This all enables us speakers to identify what has the same clothing as language, and what does not, a critical aspect for recognizing its limits.

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[25] This aspect will be explored in the following section.

5.2. Pragmatic Limits

The branch of linguistics that deals with language use in context —i.e., how context (physical or social) contributes to meaning— is pragmatics. This area of study considers context to encompass the milieu of utterance, the pre-existing knowledge of those involved in the communicative act, the inferred intent of the speaker, and the structural and linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar or lexicon) of both the speaker and the listener, among others. Also object of pragmatics is the observation of how is context used when producing and interpreting linguistic utterances and which implications can linguistic utterances have beyond their literal meaning (connotations or *implicature* as in Grice, 1975, p. 45). The reasoning about the minds of others and the understanding of others' communicative intent is called 'pragmatic competence', which, acquired through empathy and emotional intelligence, contributes more communication insight (i.e., to transcend of the linguistic limits a person is born with[26]) (Korta & Perry, 2015; Woensdregt & Smith, 2017). The inclusion of pragmatics in the study of the limits of language is indispensable given the dualistic nature of language. This tool, common to us speakers, has an individual as well as a social dimension. From the study of context and its implications, one can shed light on both these dimensions more clearly.

In terms of the individual dimension of language, subjectivity strikes as the prime pragmatic limit. Delineated by the metaphysical self, psychological subjectivity is determined, to a considerable extent, by language —for we think in words— (Tilghman, 1991 in Mualem, 2002, p. 67). Of course the limits of language are subjective insofar as each individual has a unique experiential and linguistic baggage. Factors like different levels of education, differences in dialect, interests, travel experiences, abilities and areas of specialization, the presence of bilingualism or multilingualism, and the whole range of social exposure determine each individual's relation with language[27] (Randwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 93; Blackmore, 2000, p. 210), for "our way of life is mirrored in language" (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 85). The fact of subjectivity accounts for communicational phenomena such as misunderstanding and misinterpretation between speakers of the same language. In fact, the more similar two people's subjectivities the more unobstructed will be their dialogue.

As we mentioned, the linguistic baggage of an interlocutor determines the course of the communicative act. Each individual's linguistic experience is different, which constitutes as many idiolects as there are people (Labov, 1972, pp. 183-326; George, 1990, pp. 275-98; Salzmann, 2004, pp. 12-16; Ritt, 2004, p. 7; Higginbotham, 2006, pp. 140-150). This is backed by the Prague School's

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[26] Although attributes such as empathy or emotional intelligence can be inherent to some people to variable degrees, studies have shown that it can be developed and learned, achieving better results than those who are born with some degrees of such attributes but do not cultivate these capacities (Goldsmith, 2009; Kahn, 2013).
[27] These are the pragmatic factors constituting our personal linguistic experiences.

conception of language as a 'system of systems'. For these group of linguists, language is made up of several partial systems, all of which are properly balanced, each part lending support and relating to one another (Vachek, 2003, p. 97). The Czech 'system of systems' admits the existence of stylistic, dialectical and social variation in language (Randwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 93). Thus, if we only understand fully our very own idiolects (each of the systems there comprised), it is in language where subjectivity is forged. This subjectivity limits —although very subtly— the communication capacities of our own words as well as our capacity to understand the combination of other people's words. Since language is fed by experience, one person might attribute certain connotations to a certain word, which, in turn, would make us subconsciously interpret discourses where such word is used through the filter of those self-made connotations.

Since the source of language sits in the individual mind, its paradoxical public dimension becomes evident. Language arises from individual experience, yet its main function is communication, which occurs between two or more people. This dualism implies that there can exist infinite interpretations for one same context, for there is no logic —i.e., rules— to interpretation. An aspect that will be determined by cultural, linguistic and experiential baggage. Fritz Mauthner put this paradox over. In his denial of the possibility of full communication, Mauthner established that words grow out of individual experiences and sensations and that they are in fact metaphorical representations of those exposures (Mauthner, 1901, p. 25). The result of linguistic interaction is then pseudo-communication, as "we hand out words like banknotes and don't ask ourselves whether there are materially tangible funds in the treasury which correspond to them" (Ibid., p. 496). However, our shared human condition makes us believe that we all have had sufficiently similar experiences and sensations, and so we infer shared meanings. Yet, we cannot be sure that every one of our interlocutors has had experiences and sensations similar to ours (Ibid., pp. 496-497). The paradoxical nature runs deeper as, in its social dimension, no language will be complete within a single individual conception of the language in question (Ritt, 2004, p. 7). Only within its speech community, and through the aggregate of their idiolects, will English be considered English, and Afrikaans be considered Afrikaans.

In pragmatic terms, the relevance of the social dimension of language is even greater. According to the *principle of linguistic complementarity*, the meaning of expressions involves elements from outside language (Löfgren, 1991, pp. 1-19). Since linguistic combinations are finite, context is what complements language by making it infinitely versatile to time and space. Therefore, through reference, context makes possible to create meanings for that which there is no linguistic form (yet). Context also enables the speaker to transcend the limits of language through connotations or

implicatures. Subjective to cultural and/or emotional coloration, connotations are the ideas underlying words —in addition to their literal meaning (i.e., denotation). The connotation of a word may be also thought as the set of all its possible referents (as opposed to merely the actual ones) (New World Encyclopedia, 2016). The problem that arises at this point is the limits language faces when lacking the appropriate context or the shared past experiences/sensations. We all have felt the frustration of not being capable to convey the feeling of an anecdote to those who were not present (that is, they lacked the context). How to transmit it all when our most basic communicative tool —ergo, reference– – is missing? Short of the ability of pointing at 'this' or 'that' to make better understanding of ourselves, language seems to run out of options. When the words we use are polysemous, or fuzzy in meaning, the reference they are making to reality turns blurry, and so does the communicative act. Of course, there is always room for defining that which is blurry to make it specifically clear. However, the definition process is finite, as so are words and the combination thereof.

When observed in context, both the individual and social dimensions of language will determine what needs to be and what is actually put into words. For instance, shared culture and akin experiential and linguistic baggage will affect the need of explicating in words. One can vicariously experience ineffability when we talk with someone we know very well: they run up against the limits of their own language, and we know what they want to mean without further verbalizing. At this moment, our minds direct us to all that we know about such person, both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, and the sum of it enables us to draw conclusions (either linguistic or non-linguistic, conscious or subconscious). In parallel, context also determines what is said and what can be said. This is determined to a great extent by culture, gender, and introversion/extroversion.

First, behavior is determined by culture (Russel, 1979; Spiro, 2003, p. 22; Innis, 2012, pp. 255-276; Tarasti, 2012, pp. 316-321; Boesch, 2012, pp. 347-356), which in turn is intimately related to language. Studies conducted by psychologists Maass, Karasawa, Politi and Suga (2006) provided evidence for cultural influences on language expression. For instance, they found Italians to favor abstract language (context-free adjectives) to describe experiences, while Japanese preferred concrete language (context-limiting verbs and descriptors) (Maass et al., 2006 in Oyserman & Spike, 2008). The particular cultures of both Italy and Japan determine how their populations speak —i.e., what is socially accepted to be said and not said and how people express themselves linguistically. Second, gender also influences that which is verbalized. A study by Dewaele (1998) showed that women's oral expression appears more context-dependent, implying that females are more attentive/sensitive to other's feelings. Meanwhile, men tend to detach themselves more from the immediate context, as they

are more results-oriented[28]. Whatever gender roles are imposed to us or we grow to be, will affect the way we talk, for gender is very much part of daily life, as is culture. Third, as it was also shown by Dewaele (1993), verbalization is also affected by introversion/extroversion. Introverts take more time to reflect on what they do or say —and they usually say less—, while extroverts react more expeditiously. On the whole, one could argue that limits then are not found in language itself, but on the limits imposed to it by context. However, as language is a tool connecting our minds with reality, language cannot be separated from context —while the opposite is possible—, and insofar as the latter limits, the former is limited as well.

Thus, what pragmatics precisely reveals is that thoughts need not be expressed only in words since context plays to our advantage. Then, to make the most of communication, the mediums to express ourselves must be properly adapted to context. When in a context-independent situation, language suffices, but context-dependent situations need the speaker's ability to use intuition and referencing to his/her advantage. By acknowledging the nuances of pragmatics, we can transcend the limits of language, by reference, connotations, empathy, emotional intelligence, and context-awareness.

5.3. Practical limits

For we think in words, language helps us to analyze the world. One learns how to speak and so begins to discern the objects that conform reality. One is introduced to language and the world fits in parents no longer. Within the parent-child relationship —especially the mother-child bond— there exists only one mind. Then, the child acquires words and meanings and he/she secures a mind of his/her own. As the child learns and reads, his/her consciousness changes and somehow apprehends the subjective —both his/her own subjectivity and the capacity to understand other's (Boghossian et al., 2015). Certainly, speech enlarges our possibilities of communication and understanding, yet it is in practice —through the application of logical, linguistic and pragmatic notions— that language exhibits its very own limits.

To begin with, our linguistic microcosms influence our perception of reality. Benjamin Lee Whorf advocated that "the more words you know, the more thoughts you can have" (Harthstone, 2009). However, this theory faired very poorly scientifically, as one's learning of new words does not affect the way we think (see page 13). Do more words mean more thoughts? Certainly not; we can easily prove whorfianism wrong by defining or explicating the meaning of words we lack. Words are a mirror of reality: it is reality and knowledge what precedes language and not the other way around. However,

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[28] Nevertheless, this gender-line may become blurrier in the years to come, as gender is turning more healthily seamless.

more words do make it easier to remember our thoughts. MIT cognitive neuroscientist Michael Frank and his colleagues conducted a study in 2008 to prove the relation between language and world perceptions (Frank, 2008 in Harthstone, 2009). The team travelled to a small Amazonian community where the language Pirahã is spoken. They asked Pirahã speakers to count a variety of objects, whereby they discovered that this community used 'hói' to describe a small number of objects, 'hoí' to describe a larger number, and 'baágiso' for an even greater number. This had a surprising effect on what the community could do. A series of experiments showed that not having number words for specific quantities changed their perception of reality. One experiment required participants to hand the researcher the same number on balloons by comparison to the number of spools of thread assembled. When participants had to line the balloons next to the spools of thread one-by-one, they succeeded. However, if the spools were dropped into a bucket one at a time to then ask the participants to reproduce the same number of balloons, they failed. The minds of Pirahã speakers conceive amounts in 'hói', 'hoí' and 'baágiso', numbers being outside their reality. The participants thus failed to give the same number of balloons as spools were in the bucket when the amount was big and they had to rely on memory: imagining the concept of four is simple, imagining the concept of twenty not so much. Matching twenty balloons with twenty spools by sight alone, without relying on a word that bridged mind and reality, is an impossible task. Lacking words for numbers, their perception of amounts completely differed from ours.

The conclusions of this experiment can be extrapolated to the phenomenon of monolingualism. Since language involves many complex sociopolitical, historical, cultural and normative elements (Chomsky, 1992, p. 102), knowing only one language has a direct correlation with having a limited vision of global society, politics, history, culture and values. Learning another language does not only nominatively widen one's vocabulary, it also gives more opportunities, perspectives, tolerance and empathy. For instance, let us make a comparison between Europe and the United States. There are 53% people who can converse in a second language in Europe, while in the United States only 18% reported speaking a language other than English (Skorton & Altschuler, 2012). Looking at these figures, it comes as no surprise that policies such as xenophobia or anti-climate change actions were endorsed in the land of freedom. When embarking on the journey of learning a new language, a sense of the society, culture, history and politics of the people who speak it is acquired. Bilingualism (and multilingualism) allows an individual to transcend the limits of language by acquiring more context: the context of others.

On a similar note, the acquisition of more concepts and words, as in field-specialization, sheds further light on the limits of language. Psychologists Melcher and Schooler studied the process of field

specialization in order to hypothesize about situations in which domain-specific perceptual expertise exceeded specialized verbal expertise (Melcher & Schooler, 1996). To illustrate this, Melcher and Schooler examined the impact of verbalization on wine recognition. There were three 'categories' of individuals (non-wine drinkers, untrained wine drinkers and trained wine experts), which were divided into two groups, each containing the same number from each category. Participants had to taste a sip of red wine, then one group had to conduct a nonlinguistic task (e.g., a crossword puzzle) and the other group had to describe the tasted wine in detail. After several minutes of these activities, the participants had to sample four other wines and identify which one was the same as had been previously tasted. The results were that non-verbal intermediates (untrained wine drinkers in the group preluding with non-linguistic activities) performed very similar in wine recognition as did experts. However, those intermediates that had to describe the wine post-drinking did show impaired wine recognition later. This effect was denominated 'verbal overshadowing', the results supporting the claim that it occurs when there is a significant discrepancy between perceptual expertise and verbal expertise (Melcher & Schooler, 1996, pp. 231-245). By extrapolation, this study may help us grasp the 'running-against-the-limits-of-language' feeling. It might be that we are undergoing a differential development of perceptual and verbal skills in the area/situation/experience in question.

Another study contributes to our purposes by linking the 'perceptual-verbal gap' with linguistic complexity. Short term memory has a very limited capacity, whereas long term works by association, that is, by reference to context (Salkind, 2011, p. 115). Therefore, enriching one's lexicon needs to be done through association in order to be long-lasting, and this takes time to settle in. A group of psycho-linguists studied the clash that can take place between great perceptual expertise and recently-learnt verbal knowledge to match the former. They found that part-way through their residencies, in-training radiologists showed decreased precision in diagnosing lung abnormalities. The researchers speculated that such decline might mirror the gap between a fast perceptual learning and a slower cognitive, by-association, verbal learning (Lesgold et al., 1988, p. 337). This study shows that verbal expression, in order to be faithful to perception, needs to be preceded by a cognitive processing of concepts. The in-training radiologists' difficulty to articulate diagnosis was not due to lack of expertise (neither verbal or perceptual), it was due to underdeveloped mental processing of perceptions. In other words, one cannot express what has not been comprehended, and mere perception does not automatically translate into understanding. All this takes time to settle in.

Thus, in practice, language shows itself to be limited by its own structure —subjectivity and culture. The reason is that languages carry in them human history and culture, as well as the unconscious journey of man. We learn how to speak, and immediately we inherit such imposed human

trajectory. As we grow, we have to cope with our own personal perceptions and subjectivity. The result: a blend of conscious, subconscious and unconscious elements that limit the possibilities of our words, which are leased to us but not of our possession.

5.4. Responding to the limits: The Nonsensical Arts

When confronted with the limits of language, we have two options: nonsense and silence (Singer, 1990, p. 165). The following three sections will address nonsense, ergo, artistic expression[29], as opposed to language. With these, we want to convey to the reader how does art complement human communication in what language undershoots. We believe that the Latin concept of '*habencia sub specie aeternitatis*' (from the perspective of the eternal) (Spinoza, 2001 in Nadler, 2013) really captures this communicational gap. It stands for a way of thinking and feeling that makes permanent reference to the cosmic dimension of space and time surrounding us, that is to say, thinking and feeling without losing sight of one's smallness and futility. The Latin word '*habencia*' transcends the mere concept of 'existence', as it refers to all that has been, is, and will be, as well as to a collective and infinite presence of entities that are real, ideal, possible, and fictional in all their realizations, implications, complications and confluences (Nadler, 2013). Having this in mind as our point of departure, we aim to elaborate on the contrast between linguistic and artistic expression.

5.4.1. The transcendence of literature

The artistic nature of literature is rooted in Wittgenstein's 'saying vs. showing' doctrine. For literature shows and so destroys the walls of language. The way this is done is by entering the land of the nonsensical in expression. Nonsense is synonymous for 'absurd', a concept that evolved from the Ancient Greek *paralogos* (παράλογο)[30], which literally means 'next to thought, logic, words' (The Free Dictionary, 2018). Interestingly, we have evolved from 'side-by-side to logic' to 'absurd' ("stupid and unreasonable, or silly in a humorous way" as in Cambridge Dictionary, 2018), which attributes to the word 'nonsense' a negative connotation. Maybe, half-way, we stopped trying to understand what followed the logical/sensical, and we turned complementarity into opposition to redeem ourselves. Has the motto "language is limited" been a memetic replication all along? Only the most successfully replicated thoughts have pervaded in language, while ancient, powerful, and evocative linguistic functions —such as what is stirred by *paralogos*— were left behind in semantical terms. Since we own language, this certainly cannot be a conspiracy preventing us from discovering what words are for and which are the limits of their use. In preference of speculation, we should take this linguistic evolution

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[29] Note that we have decided to include literature and poetry under the concept of 'art' although we are contrasting this with language and these two mediums are in fact constituted by language. Despite their linguistic form, we believe they cannot be placed at the same level as routine speech and writing, for they are preceded by reflection, their results being premeditated and of artistic intent.
[30] Note that we are referring to the concept of 'absurdity', not to the term 'absurd', which comes from the Latin *absurdus*.

as a hint: it seems to suggest the human inability to grasp the full meaning of language. Being inherently human, words appertain to the realm of neurons and brains, life and universe, elements which we do not seem to be able to apprehend. In a way, words are the reminder of the infinite unknown surrounding and within us, but in a rather intimate way. For they are our daily tools: we use them to express from the most trivial aspect to the innermost feeling. And, by reason of this, literature is art insofar as it explores absurdity.

Thus, Wittgenstein's nonsense is not completely outside logic but in contact with it, as the prefix 'para-' implies. In fact, it makes sense to endeavor in reaching for the nonsensical through the word, as *paralogos* would not exist without *logos*. When confronted with the walls of logic, one option is silence, another is nonsense. As a matter of fact, Wittgenstein recommends to break with the deceitful character of language, encouraging us to play with it: to see differences in the use of expressions and their connecting links, to invent new uses of words —sometimes absurd utterances— and thus loosen the grip of logical language (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 93). Literature is then "a release of the tangible from the intangible" (Helmes, 1973 in Russel, 1979). In particular, there is a literary movement that, in playing with language, in exploring absurdity, breaks the conventional: the postmodernists. The prose of these writers is performative rather than narrative: they should be read with special attention to their *action*, not just to their meaning. The postmodernist writing has an underlying tone conveying the 'sub specie aeterni' and, at the same time, tries to apprehend this universal eternity and to represent it in language. They reject the reproduction of reality —which is the purpose of conventional language— believing that it is fleeting and ever-fluid (De Toro, 1991, p. 454). For the purpose of exemplifying the postmodernist mission of confronting the limits of language, we will briefly analyze the substance of Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, and James Joyce.

The Belgium-born Argentinian writer tried to apprehend the 'sub specie aeterni' by radically reevaluating reality in his prose. "What good is a writer if he can't destroy literature?"[31] (Cortázar, 2016, p. 557), he hinted us in *Hopscotch*. Together with his Latin American Boom fellows[32], Cortázar endeavored to do away with the barriers between the mundane and the fantastic (Illingworth, 2017): fragmented structures, alternative narratives, circular arguments to embark upon the denial of logical, aesthetical or ethical orders (De Toro, 1991, p. 461). Aiming for literature's destruction, he plays with language and tests reality. His writings are a reflection —as literature tends to be— of his historical

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[31] Original quote: "¿Para qué sirve un escritor si no para destruir la literatura?". Direct quotes from Cortázar's *Rayuela* were originally written in Spanish. For homogeneity purposes, we use English translations extracted from Cortázar's *Hopscotch, Blow-Up, We Love Glenda So Much*, an Everyman's Library edition translated by Gregory Rabassa. Unfortunately, the edition we had access to did not provide the paging but a searcher of key words. Therefore, the paging indicated pertains to our Spanish version of the book (See Bibliography: Cortázar, 2016). We provide the link below in case there is a need for consult (See Bibliography: Cortázar, J. trans. Rabassa, G., 2014).

[32] E.g., Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, José Lezama Lima, among others.

time: brutal regimes in the region[33], whereby reality lost any claim to the real (Illingworth, 2017). Perhaps as a way of escapism do his writings evoke an impression: that there exists a multiplicity of realities, and for him, language represents any of them (Cortázar, 2016, p. 576); realities that can either exist factually or be created in the mind. Cortázar writes: "That world does not exist, one has to create it like the phoenix. […] Let us say that the world is a figure, it has to be read. By read let us understand generated. Who cares about a dictionary as dictionary?"[34] (Cortázar, 2016, p. 497). Thus, his destruction of literature —which automatically renders literature more artistic than ever— pretends to be "a coagulant of experiences", "a catalyst of confused and badly understood notions"[35] (Cortázar, 2016, p. 518). He aims for an open system in order to enable all that exists to be its own messenger. This will "bring us to our own limits from which we are so far removed, while being face to face with them"[36] (Cortázar, 2016, p. 518).

His exploring of absurdity by means of playing with language and breaking the conventional reaches the fantastic. For he distrusts the everydayness of life:

> […] that this whole A B C of my life was a painful bit of stupidity, because it was based solely on a dialectical pattern, on the choice of what could be called nonconduct rather than conduct, on faddish indecency instead of social decency"[37] (Cortázar, 2016, p. 29).

In his acknowledgement of a multiplicity of realities, he does not mean to capture what is real —for he denies this possibility—, and is in fact interested in the endless, freeing pursuit of the 'sub specie aeterni'. In one of his Berkeley lectures to students in 1980, he illustrated this all: "When you reach the limits of expression, just beyond begins a territory where everything is possible and everything is uncertain" (Illingworth, 2017). By taking language and reality not so seriously, he transcended linguistic limits, which in Ancient Greek terms, had been our companion all along.

For his part, Borges conceived language as a tool used by us humans to impose some structure on the chaotic universe, setting some limits to its infiniteness (Standish, 1991, p. 136). Being language man's creation —artificial by all means—, transcending its limits will take little more than imagination. Borges, ever conscious of the restrictiveness and arbitrariness of language, illustrates his thoughts with the concept of the 'Aleph', which is found at the basement of Daneri's house, the main character in his novel *The Aleph*. Strangely as it might appear, the Aleph is "the only place on earth where all places are —seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or

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[33] E.g., Jorge Rafael Videl (Argentina), Alfredo Stroessner (Paraguay), Fulgencio Batista (Cuba), Anastasio Somoza (Nicaragua), among others.
[34] Original quote: "Ese mundo no existe, hay que crearlo como el fénix. […] Digamos que el mundo es una figura, hay que leerla. Por leerla entendamos generarla. ¿A quién le importa un diccionario por el diccionario mismo?"
[35] Original quotes: "coagulante de vivencias", "catalizadora de nociones confusas y mal entendidas".
[36] Original quote: "[…] acercarnos a nuestros propios límites de los que tan lejos estamos cara a cara".
[37] Original quote: "[…] ese abecé de mi vida era una penosa estupidez porque se quedaba en mero movimiento dialéctico, en la elección de una conducta en vez de una conducta, de una módica indecencia en vez de una decencia gregaria".

blending"[38] (Borges, 1989, p. 623). And the daunting task of describing this place in a poem is Daneri's endeavor. Through the eyes of his character, we infer Borges' despair: "How, then, can I translate into words the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass?"[39] (Ibid., p. 624). Because it is logically impossible to detail an infinite phenomenon[40]; because language is diachronic while the scenery of the Aleph is synchronous (Ibid., p. 625); language can only oversimplify reality (Borges, 1989, p. 80).

Then, what reflects the artistic quality of Borges' prose are his narrative riddles and suggestive imagery —perhaps in a more serious tone than Cortázar's. Borges also plays with language, but explores absurdity through literary themes and motifs, conveying his ideas in a way, style and combination that reminisces to Wittgenstein's 'showing vs. saying' doctrine. Borges seems to have read Wittgenstein's denial of language as a tool to share sense-experiences (Monk in Boghossian et al., 2015), and to be using his works in order to prove just the contrary. For his writings are purely sensorial: in *The Aleph*, his words bring to life the transcendental layer of the *logos* (i.e., the *paralogos*) in both linguistic and non-linguistic terms. Borges' prose is theoretically confined within the walls of language; he does not seem to destroy literature in a Cortazarian sense. Instead, resembling the essence of poetry, he shows the 'sub specie aeterni' in saying. He mastered in understanding the inexpressible —the sensorial perceptions usually missing in the written word— and with an utmost sensibility he is able to show it without ever mentioning it. Here lies his artistic prowess: a delicate selection and combination of words inspire in his reader all that cannot be said yet is essential for comprehension.

On a different note, Joyce creates his art by traveling the internal dimension of language. That is, if everything that has not been understood cannot be said, Joyce ventures into those parts of ourselves for which there is no language, ergo, our understanding has not grasped. He delves into the limits of our self-understanding to thus transcend our linguistic barriers. This is best exemplified in his first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* —perhaps the prime example of *bildungsroman* in English literature (Knausgaard, 2016). In that work, Joyce writes: "He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld" (Joyce, 2000, p. 55). The Irish writer made use of the psychological development that characterizes the genre of *bildungsroman* to explore the absurdity —i.e., nonsensical— within the self and thus show the 'sub specie aeterni'. His novel

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[38] Original quote: "el lugar donde están, sin confundirse, todos los lugares del orbe, vistos desde todos los ángulos". Direct quotes from Borges's *Complete Works* were originally written in Spanish. For homogeneity purposes, we use English translations extracted from Borges's *Collected Fictions*, a Penguin Group edition translated by Andrew Hurley. Unfortunately, the edition we had access to did not provide the paging but a searcher of key words. Therefore, the paging indicated pertains to our Spanish version of the book (See Bibliography: Borges 1989). We provide the link in case there is a need for consult below (See Bibliography: Borges, J. L. trans. Hurley, A., 2000).
[39] Original quote: "¿cómo trasmitir a los otros el infinito Aleph, que mi temerosa memoria apenas abarca?"
[40] The word selected by Borges to denominate this world is the first Hebrew letter which, which, according to the cabalists, represents infinitude (Mualem, 2002, p. 50).

full of riddles and hints, he reflects: "What was after the universe? Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began? (Joyce, 2000, p. 189). That is precisely what his art aims to capture, and he does so from inside language[41]. In the *Portrait*, Joyce presents various examples of language in use[42], which enable him to explore the shifts of the mind, the currents of moods and feelings, and the subconscious responses reflected in language, "to discover the mode of life or of art whereby my spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom" (Joyce, 2000, p. 208).

Joyce, his prose over, seems to mirror Wittgenstein's words: "don't for heaven's sake, be afraid of talking nonsense! But you must pay attention to your nonsense" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 56). Unafraid of nonsense and very aware of it, a technique of elliptical exposition allows him to show what he cannot say. That is, through polarity and fragmentation, he leaves it to his readers to make the connections that many authors solve for us instead (Singer, 1990, p. 172). Then, each of Joyce's readers fills in the structure provided with words of his/her own, permitting the individual to conduct an exploration of his/her particular inner limits. He would even ask us to look for solutions outside the text (Ibid., 173). Mapping the unarticulated, Joyce's *Portrait* conquers what belongs to the individual alone, what is unique to each of us (Knausgaard, 2016), and shows it. For Joyce, "to speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, […] from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand—that is art" (Joyce, 2000, p. 174). And Joyce's art is precisely great because it does not escape nonsense, but remains central to it.

The art of literature, particularly of postmodernist writers, lies in *the attempt to draw the limits of language from the inside*. Ever mindful of the 'sub specie aeterni', writers such as Cortázar, Borges or Joyce —each in his very personal and meaningful way— use the absurd to transcend linguistic expression and thus convey us more of that which can merely be shown. It is relevant to note, that all this artistic work is done by means of understanding; the three writers are observers and artificers. They observe and therefore attain some understanding of existence. This enables them to grasp the different workings of comprehension, and so have a holistic sense of language.

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[41] This might seem a truism, but literature is not always about language nor it occurs inside language; sometimes it is mostly concerned with the story, the narrative; and in other instances it is the aesthetics or the mystery what the writing is about.
[42] E.g., "language as expression, language of beauty, of play, of adults, of therapy, of inflation and self-importance, of character, of enticement, of shame, of religion, as polysemic and in need of explanation, of guilt, of obedience, of the everydayness, of fear, of poetry…" (Pierce, 2008, p. 179).

5.4.2. Poetical deepening

Poetry is the exceptional region of language able to answer Heidegger's concern about the *Dasein*. It is through 'self-finding' and 'understanding' that poetry shows the Heideggerian region. As we have seen, poetry does not choose a linguistic form to do this. Rather, it is deceitful; it makes us believe that language is the medium, when expression actually occurs through the stimulation of the 'sub specie aeterni' in all of us. In Heidegger's words: "if indeed we consider such language [poetic] in terms of its capacity for expression, then it is here precisely not supposed to express anything, but to leave the unsayable unsaid, and to do so in and through its saying" (Heidegger, 2014, p. 108). Thus, poetic language spins around the 'the unsaid', 'the unspoken', and 'the inexpressible', creating meaning and evoking sensations. The inexpressible becoming manifest through the unsaid —i.e., through all the negative space created by the written words—, poetry paradoxically uncovers the inexpressible through words.

Poeticizing entails expressing —either through showing or saying— the self. Here lies its beauty: in leaving the self naked in front of the mind. Inevitably, poetry must then be deeply related to the senses: arousing, exciting, stirring them. Full of linguistic games, language is merely used to make "pictures of pictures" (Mauthner, 1901, p. 129), as in poetry "no word has ever any other meaning but a metaphorical meaning" (Mauthner, 1902, p. 451). Such metaphorical scenery allows the reader to see "from the perspective of the eternal" (Spinoza, 2001 in Nadler, 2013). The creativity of poetry — its undeniable artistic nature— is found in its ability to express complex thought/sensorial experiences, erecting with writing "a sense of the word and poem as tactile, tangible, sensuous events" (Vallega, 2009, p. 100). Thereby, poetry allows to digest absurdity subconsciously and non-linguistically. Nonetheless, despite their apparent lack of meaning, words matter tremendously in poetry. And this deems the translator's task all the more daunting. As Virginia Woolf once explained:

> Words... are the wildest, freest, most irresponsible, most unteachable of all things. Of course, you can catch them and sort them and place them in alphabetical order in dictionaries. But words do not live in dictionaries; they live in the mind.... […]. Words like us to think, and they like us to feel, before we use them; but they also like us to pause; to become unconscious. Our unconsciousness is their privacy; our darkness is their light… (Woolf, 2014, pp. 90-91).

How to tame the beasts that words are, in the deverbalization process of translation? How to convey all the nuances described by Woolf, loyal to all the historical/cultural/pragmatic connotations of a certain word in a particular language? In a poem, words play in the dimension of evocation and impression, as opposed to merely the message or the aforementioned *skopos*. Yes, one might capture the evocative *skopos* of a particular poem, but, alas, the effect for which the author took into account the shared world of his/her linguistic kinship cannot be equally recreated. Here it is necessary to bring back the communicative and the expressive functions of language: the communicative function of

poetry can certainly be translated[43], but the expressive function[44] is untranslatable (Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 98).

By means of the effective combination of showing and saying, poetry elevates many into new states of consciousness (Boghossian et al., 2015). From the top of Wittgenstein's ladder, having thrown it away, poets speak to our souls. They seem to juggle with objects from both the *logos* and the *paralogos*, mixing them up in the air, the moving objects in movement becoming a single circumference. They do not recognize any limits to language. Instead, they experiment wherever they see fit in the realm of expression, language a mere accessory and not necessarily the principal one. They have understood that the inexpressible lies in accomplishing the assimilation of the self, which is only made of logic, language and structure to a minimal degree.

5.4.3. Painting and music[45]

Music and painting manifest the language of the sublime. These media transmit all the *invisibilia*[46], because, as writer Henry Miller had said, "there is nothing but art, if you look at the world properly" (Miller, 1944, p. 284). Painting and music permeate the seeming realities of the world, those of which we have no sight and which we cannot reach if not through these mediums. Raising above the prosaic —yet having it very much in mind—, painting and music play in deep emotional territories. For these art forms have the power of enabling their authors to convey what they have not understood and the sediments of all they have experienced, ergo, to communicate on a subconscious level. But, of course, this psychological capacity has to be earned "through the talent of understanding, the skill of commitment, and truthfulness to one's response" (Cavell, 1969, p. 237). For these reasons, art is for its audience a tremendously tiring experience. We need to bring a lot of ourselves to music and painting for art to do its magic, be it in a flood or in a whisper. Because the work in question is reaching out to the subconscious while our conscious minds try to figure it all out. However, as Wittgenstein established with his clothing analogy, conscious and subconscious are not of the same material.

Since our conscious minds think in words, and our subconscious mind is unknown, one might argue that linguistic expression and nonlinguistic art mediums (e.g., music and painting) are incompatible in form. As philosopher Alan Watts put it, "to understand music, you must listen to it. But as long as you are thinking, 'I am listening to music', you are not listening" (Watts in Cobussen, 2016, p. 169). Painting and music happen in the realm of primal and preverbal communication. They

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[43] "The meaning which an utterance has given its participation in the linguistic code" (Radwanska-Williams, 1993, p. 98).
[44] "The meaning an utterance has which is unique to itself given its individual creation in use/text by its author" (Ibid., p. 98).
[45] For the purpose of this project we have especially thought of the painters Mark Rothko and Mirtha Dermisache, composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johann Sebastian Bach, and the heart-touching flamenco music. When referring to 'art' throughout this section we intend for the reader to call to mind those great artists, whose works provoke the deepest emotions in them.
[46] Latin for "all the invisible things".

both inhabit the mystical; their content is to be made manifested rather than uttered (6.522 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 108). Schopenhauer intervenes here to remind us that, as in Wittgenstein's clothing analogy, ineffability and language appertain to different worlds. That which music and painting capture, in the form of metaphors, are precisely ineffable elements (Villamil, 2016, p. 48). However, there are two paradoxes to be pointed out here. First, that art and words are cunningly interrelated: we try to process what these mediums express in words —which are our means of understanding— yet we fail. For artistic ideas are, for the most part, nonlinguistic. In fact, a study by psychologists Schooler, Ohlsson, and Brooks (1993) showed the extent to which [attempt of] utterance can disrupt the artistic experience (both in terms of its assimilation and the remembering of sensations). Second, that art is an individual experience —even when it is experienced collectively. Interpretations are unique to each of us, as they appeal to the inner world in each of us. This renders artistic expression all the more intimate. Yet, artistic language is universal.

To better illustrate these paradoxical links, let us delve into the artwork of Argentinian artist Mirtha Dermisache. A first glance of her wonderful ink drawings suggests a sort of exotic language (See more samples in Annex 1).

Image 1: Mirtha Dermisache, *Untitled*, c. 1970. Chinese ink on paper, 11 x 9 in. Artist's Estate, New York, USA.

She invokes calligraphic form in her wavy shapes and enigmatic arrangements: she does write words, though empty of meaning. Her nonsensical scripts reject the semantic order, because they neither deliver the sign nor the intended meaning (Fajole, 2014). Through the combination of writing-like textures and plasticity, Dermisache transcends into the ineffable. Hers is the graphic depiction of Wittgenstein's 'walls of language' because, unable to decipher any linguistic meaning, one is found at a loss for words (Fenstermaker, 2018). However, the wonderful display the artist makes of this phenomenon reminds us to take these limits as an opportunity, for there are other, nonlinguistic, means to better explore the ineffable worlds. In addition, Dermisache also succeeds to transmit a sense of 'habencia sub specie aeternitatis'. As she remarked in an interview in 1972: "Graphically speaking,
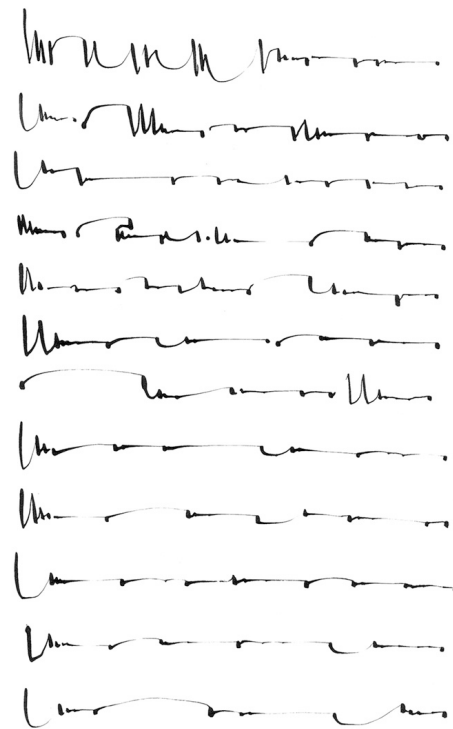
every time I start writing, I develop a formal idea that can be transformed into the idea of time" (Dermisache, 1972 in Fenstermaker, 2018). In a way, her works aim for a reconciliation between the viewer and that timeless dimension, i.e., eternity, that has the potential to hide all unknown meanings.

What are then the qualities of these media (painting and music) in order to enable artists like Dermisache to express in such a way? Essayist Alain de Bottom and art historian John Amstrong rightly point out the therapeutic function of art. To that end, they identify seven psychological functions of art: remembering, hope, sorrow, rebalancing, self-understanding, growth, and appreciation (De Bottom & Amstrong, 2013, pp. 1-30). But not only is art healing and therapeutic, it also makes an impact, putting together content and impact to create contact (Rothko, 2015, p. 20). Painting and music affect us on many levels and dimensions; their most intrinsic quality being the compulsion affected upon us to examine what we are experiencing. One could argue that great art does not aim to be liked, that it is only interested in triggering reactions. Son to great painter Mark Rothko and psychologist, Christopher Rothko, argued that those who discarded his father as a charlatan, his artwork derided, were driven by their incapacity to process art —which touches deeply and ultimately disturbs—, and this led them to not let it act upon and inside them (Ibid., pp. 9-10). This, C. Rothko explains, is because, "great art engages us, first and unrelentingly, in our personal realm, not allowing us the opportunity to ask what the work may say about its creator *until we have first come to terms with our own response.*" (Ibid., p. 5) And so, inherent to art there is also the discomfort, awkwardness, and embarrassment, factors that we are not ready or willing to embrace at all times.

Thus, art offers a gateway to our inner selves: a route into the better exercise and discovery of our emotions. According to philosopher Martha Nussbaum, we need a holistic picture of our emotions in order to understand them (Nussbaum, 2001 in Popova, 2015). Emotional responses to circumstances contain considerable information about ourselves (present and past), and art supports us in delving into the many layers of our inner worlds —a task that would prove very intricate without them. Art talks in the language of emotionality —or as Wittgenstein put it, "soul talk" (Heaton & Groves, 1999, p. 164)—, in order to communicate without interference with the irrational, subconscious, and unconscious of our psychological states. For these purposes, abstract art, especially abstract expressionism, is uniquely fascinating: their surfaces seem void of content, of action, of narrative, and of cues that could be tied to the world of objects and phenomena. And yet these paintings are captivating (if you truly let them), and surely they do transcend the void and the limits of what language could ever express.

Undoubtedly, a magisterial representative of the abstract expressionist group is Mark Rothko. His artwork is a door to the infinite and the inexpressible in each of us and in all of us at once (See

samples in Annex 2). Rothko struggled to incorporate a lifetime into the constrains of each brushstroke, to paradoxically then present the viewer "with an emptiness that must somehow be filled" (Rothko, 2015, p. 7). The U.S. artist has certainly climbed Wittgenstein's ladder, thrown it, and from atop he saw the 'sub specie aeterni'. According to the German philosopher, when this occurs, the observer of this dimension is deprived of his psychological self, all that remains for him to see is the metaphysical substance: "not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world—not a part of it" (5.641 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 74). From the perspective of the eternal, Rothko responds to limits with the most tremendous nonsense, yet very conscious of the other response, silence. Whatever he depicts in his window-like canvases has the whole world as background. Rothko's art —and any great art[47]— focuses on the tragic "not as a preoccupation with doom but as a point of contact that bonds us all together" (Rothko, 2015, p. 20). In fact, Rothko's untitled works are famed for having people crying in front of them. This is because Rothko interprets tragedy as the link between us and eternity. Rothko knows no saying, only showing. When in front of a Rothko, there is an echo in the back of our minds, "just look, be grateful for this patent nonsense". Understanding aside, Rothko does not try to say or to explain the 'sub specie aeterni'; he just builds a ladder, through his paintings, for one to experience it.

This referral to the eternal in art necessarily takes us to music. If painting enables us to see in the eternal, music opens the possibility of listening to it. When one listens to a great piece of music, there is a sense of picking up some kind of meaning that is over and above the sounds and the tones themselves (Boghossian et al., 2015). Let us take the example of composer Johan Sebastian Bach. For instance, his *Six Cello Suites* (Listen to sample in Annex 3) seem to "reveal the human soul in stark 'nakedness' as it were, without the customary linguistic draperies" (Pieper, 1988, p. 53). With explicit religious overtones, the poignancy of his music —of great music— arouses a sense of familiarity from the listener's own inner world. A world where one can lose oneself, and in the process find oneself. And, equally important, music brings awareness of silence in the everydayness. Rothko payed attention to silence and played with spaces as well as with shapes. Bach, for his part, uncovers the presence of silence, and elevates us into new nonlinguistic vibrations, otherwise inaudible and imperceptible. The silence factor in music cleans the impurities and delusions of the eye and language, the only context being the 'sub specie aeterni'. We listen to the majestic opening cello of Bach's *First Cello Suite*, and the music compels us to close our eyes, to erase logic, linguistics and pragmatics. Music makes no references to reality. There is no room for other than nonsense and silence.

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[47] We recognize the subjectivity of this statement and do not wish to impose the liking for Rothko upon the reader. We have chosen him as an example because he has for long captured us like no other. However, we invite the reader to fill in the blank of what 'great art' means to him/her.

Perhaps the structure of the art forms —as comprehensive wholes with many external and internal connections— are made of the same fabric as our subconscious minds. That might be so because each art piece is concerned with ineffability, nonsense, and silence to lesser or greater degrees, whereas in routinely speech these elements are by and large avoided. Music and painting complement language in expression. And if that is so, it is true all the more for literature and poetry, which use language in art and in transcending. Thereby, art and language are deeply interrelated: we need both media to access logical and illogical worlds. The vista of these two dimensions is the living atop of the ladder, both equally necessary and complementary in human understanding.

5.5. Responding to the limits: Silence

We remarked previously that, when confronted with the walls of logic, one option is to solve it with nonsense, and the other is to answer with silence. As Wittgenstein indicated in the *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (7 in Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 90). Silence is thus a complementary agent of speech. Although it apparently opposes language as not-language, silence does not say but shows (4.121 in Ibid., p. 45). Without silence, the boundaries of language could not be drawn, "for in order to draw a meaningful boundary there must be something thinkable outside it" (Mualem, 2002, p. 64). Silence is thus the background against which language is reproduced and vice versa. Yet, to remain silent rises far above that. Muteness is a kind of "ultralanguage which outreaches every concrete language" (Ibid., p. 72). Mirrored in language, yet not void, silence contains Heidegger's 'unsaid' (*das Ungesagte*), 'unspoken' (*das Ungesprochene*), and 'inexpressible' (*das Unsagbare*). This bottomless combination makes soundless times and spaces overpowering: conveying the 'sub specie aeternis' in themselves, we are released from reality's contamination.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger creates the ontological world of *Dasein* ('being there'), which consists of 'self-finding' (*Befindlichkeit*) and 'understanding' (*Verstehen*) (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 134-149). The two dimensions of the *Dasein* constitute a philosophical link between language and being. For Heidegger, speaking is the articulation of comprehensibility because our thinking occurs in words (Ibid., p. 151). Since silence is just another mode of speech, it appears that language, silence and being are closely interconnected. It follows that our inability to see or say ourselves precludes us from completely understanding these inner and subconscious minds of ours. Nevertheless, we can still show them. The limits of language are therefore found in our understanding, which could be transcended by art or by silence in showing. When one does not know/understand, there are two main responses: to ask further questions or to remain silent. But this silence does not equate to nothingness. As does art, it shows ineffability by pointing at its presence.

Silence enables us to become aware of everything language interferes with. For words seem

to draw attention to something they themselves fail to apprehend. Thus, silence is not a defeat of language, but an alternative in exploring understanding. To illustrate this, we would like to mention several studies on the effects of verbalizing on ambiguous stimuli. Brandimonte and Gerbino (1993) observed that the attempt at describing reversible images interfered with the ability of discovering the form's alternative interpretation. Schooler, Ohlsson and Books (1993) discovered that insight problem solving, which requires the reasoning of a nonobvious alternative approach, is hindered by thinking out loud, while logical problem solving is not affected by verbal articulation. In their study, Schooler and Engstler-Schooler challenged the assumption that verbalization improves memory performance, since, as previously pointed out, language can be deceitful. In a series of six experiments, they observed how the putting into words of previously seen visual stimuli impaired the participant's subsequent recognition performance. Their hypothesis was that "verbalizing a visual memory may produce a verbally biased memory representation that can interfere with the application of the original visual" (Schooler & Engstler-Schooler, 1990, p. 36). This matches the aforementioned theory of 'verbal overshadowing'. According to Russo et al. (1989), faced with ineffable situations, language consumes processing resources in a futile way. Hence, it seems that when our minds try to go into the unknown and unfamiliar, language only interferes.

Then, what ought to be expressed by silence? Silence comprises the bare muteness and all that follows or allows us to see beyond. For instance, in silence, we can better realize face expressions, become more sensitive to emotional reactions or to the meaning of body gestures. It also enables us to be more aware of nonsense, and thus have better experiences of art and become acquainted with the 'sub specie aeternis' that inhabits everything. Silence also brings unexpected understanding, for when our chattering minds do not have carte blanche to speak, some things are better left unsaid, unnecessary contamination prevented.

6. Conclusion

On the whole, studying the limits of language as a means of expression enables us to better understand and express ourselves. The fields of linguistics, logic and pragmatics give proof of the limitations to linguistic expression. The very fixed structure of language confines itself: both in terms of what it can express as well as in terms of what can be understood linguistically. Logical limits are thus the limits of what words can communicate, at least sensically. For its part, pragmatics shows that language is very often limited by the context in which it is produced. Thus, this field acts as the best indicator of when to use language as our means of expression and when not to. Whenever language does not suffice, we should resort to non-linguistic media. Be it art or silence, these non-linguistic forms enable us to transcend the limits of language through reference, i.e., metaphors. In Wittgensteinian terms, we should show what cannot be said. This showing (in whoever non-linguistic form we choose to use) makes possible to go beyond words, and thus reach a high in our expressive capacities.

6.1. A better expression: consciousness of nonsense and silence

With all this, we should have by now identified that the world of expression is multi-layered and multi-dimensional: there are many forms to express, and they all should be treated as complementary and never as mutually exclusive. It is critical that we be able to recognize the appropriate medium for each situation in order to peak our expressive and understanding possibilities. With the purpose of exploring our expressive capacities, we delved into this study about the limits of language, as that is our most used expressive tool. But, can we express it all? First of all, there is no way of ever knowing what 'all' could possibly comprise. Second of all, the question should rather be: "how to express the most?". Some could here question the rationale behind our desire of wanting to express that much. Ambition aside, it is through expression that we can explore and acquire a bigger vision —even subconscious— of both ourselves and what is around us. Longing for this greater vision, language appears lacking. This is understandable, for language only exists in the mind, and there is endlessly more out there. Even for human purposes, language, an essentially human tool, does not reach to express all that is about man.

6.2. Break through the wall: A riddle by logic, linguistics and pragmatics

The frustrating 'running-out-of-words' phenomenon finds its answer in the fields of logic, linguistics, and pragmatics. Logic constrained, language has a fixed structure in which a limited amount of word combinations is possible to express infinite realities. The math just does not add up. Wittgenstein explains that it is through logic that language acquires sense and meaning. All that logic allows for can be put into words: thought, reasoning, imagination, etc. The limits of logic build up the

walls of what can be sensically put into words. Thus, logic is the set of dynamics underlying linguistics. The pre-verbal nature of logic corresponds to its rational character. Our minds, artificers of language, require of logic to provide an architecture for words. As logic necessitates of rationality, language acts as a filter for comprehension: one can only say what has previously been understood. The relation between logic, understanding, and language sheds light on the elemental differences between expressing, on one side, thought and information, and, on the other, emotions and feelings. The first group relates directly to logic: by means of reasoning and reflection we find solutions, create concepts and meanings to explain reality to ourselves and to others. Meanwhile, the second group are patterns in human life. It is not through reasoning that we feel or sense. These experiences are undergone, and that is the factual difference between an emotion and its linguistic description. As Heidegger put it, language is intimately related to 'self-finding' and 'understanding', indispensable requirements for enlarging our vision of reality/realities. Studying logic and linguistics thus enables to see what is made of the same substance as language (4.002 in Wittgenstein, 1992, p. 45), as thought and information, and what is made not, as emotions and feelings. That is, these areas of study help clarify what can be best expressed by language.

The milieu of utterance, pre-existing knowledge, the situation and circumstances, communication intent and effects: that all constitutes pragmatics. In this sense, it is very important to acknowledge the individual and collective dimensions of language. On one side, we think in words and our individual exposure to language determines our take in communicative situations. On the other, languages would not exist without the collective's participation in linguistic codes. This paradox ensures a parallelism of linguistic limits: at both the subjective and social levels. All that is studied by pragmatics complements language by bridging reality and language through reference. Yet, pragmatics are not only important for linguistic purposes; rather, they are critical for expression at large. Pragmatics also affect the nonsensical, that is, art and silence. This field of study tells us when to speak, keep silent or create/experience art. It is through pragmatics that we become aware of our sense, and of our nonsense too. Bringing back the 'individual vs. collective' paradox in pragmatics, acquiring notions about our surroundings is the ultimate competence to master for best expressive power.

6.3. Beyond words: That absurd or silent experience

Outside of the rule-based fields of logic, linguistics, and pragmatics, Wittgenstein and Heidegger both pointed out that there is also absurdity. How can we then express the absurd, the non-logical, the nonsensical? Schopenhauer may hold the answer. For the German thinker, some experiences are ineffable since reason cannot access them. Only through metaphors can we refer this inexpressible knowledge because they do not partake in it, but merely point in the right direction for

us to see. Empowered by reference, we can transcend the limits of language, coloring the negative space of the 'running-out-of-words' phenomenon. Metaphors push us further from language, as ineffability cannot there take root. And metaphors point out to all that is at the other side of expressive reach: Wittgenstein's nonsensical; Heidegger's unsaid, unspoken, and inexpressible; Schopenhauer's ineffable knowledge—those are all synonyms. Metaphors direct us to that which we do not understand, and, in some cases, never will. This combination of unutterable elements is accurately described by the Latin concept of the 'sub specie aeternis' (i.e., the perspective of eternity). Schoppenhauer's metaphors make possible to refer to it in some way or another; and these metaphors are understood to be either nonsense or silence.

Nonsense and silence in the game, expression becomes more exhaustive of the several existing and non-existing realities[48]. Regarding nonsense, art is nonsensical and nonsense is artistic; there is pure conceptual equivalence. Art forms act as bridges, establishing contact with ineffability. Literature, poetry, music and painting: they all show through nonsensical expression. With regard to literature and poetry, they do so through words, as paradoxical as that might appear. The explanation lies in etymology: *paralogos*, ergo, absurdity and nonsense, is next to *logos* and logic. '*Paralogos*' contains the word '*logos*', which unlocks literary and poetic capacities in transcending the potential of common language. Either by destroying the walls of logic in writing, as in Cortázar; by showing in saying through sensorial experiences, as in Borges; or by exploring the internal dimensions of ourselves through language, as in Joyce, literature can reach the absurd. For its part, poetry finds in Heidegger's 'self-finding' and 'understanding' the keys to unlock linguistic rigidity. Poetry bamboozles readers, making them believe that they are reading, and instead creates a whole show for them to feel, to perceive, to create meaning, to evoke sensations. In this manner, the poetical experience makes possible to digest absurdity subconsciously and non-linguistically. Linguistic order inside out, literature and poetry are thus able to conquer other realities to express and to make manifest.

As do novels and poems, painting and music also communicate subconsciously. These mediums enable their audience to delve into the perspective of the eternal. Purely sensorial and alien to understanding, pictorial and musical content is manifested. According to artist Mirtha Dermisache, "it's not important what happens on a sheet of paper, the important thing is what happens within us"[49] (Dermisache, 1972 in Fajole, 2014). And we should interpret these artistic realms —also literature and poetry's— as opportunities to explore, discover and understand more layers and dimensions of ourselves and of our surroundings. As Rothko's artwork, painting and music build the steps of the

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[48] The latter (non-existing realities) as an affectionate nod to Córtazar.
[49] Original: "No importa lo que pasa en la hoja de papel, lo importante es lo que pasa dentro nuestro" (Dermisache, 1972 in Fajole, 2014).

ladder for us to see the 'sub specie aeternis', all the possible and impossible realities there comprised. In particular, music further enhances this vision, for it cleanses our senses of the known-to-us realities. Logic, linguistics, pragmatics, and sight[50] erased, there is no reference, no bridge to this world, and we can begin to witness absurdity in its purest form.

Closely interrelated to musical experience, there is silence; the other option to transcend the limits of language. In the same line of nonsense, silence goes beyond by showing. A lot is contained in silence: every unsaid, unspoken, inexpressible element. The lesson taught by silence is the interfering character of words. Blatantly it shows what Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Schopenhauer all came to suggest about language: that there are things better left unuttered. The power of silence is thus to point at the presence of ineffability, so we can become aware of it and of the phenomena that thrive in this medium.

Therefore, the single thing not to be forgotten about these pages is that language should express when, and only when, it can convey meaningful totality. Unique concern about what is uttered will distract us from understanding our surrounding realities. Be aware of your sense and of your nonsense: choose when is best to speak, best to keep silent, and best to create or experience art.

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[50] As it occurs when music is playing: no sight is needed for the communicative act to take place.

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8. Annex 1: The metaphorical showing of Julio Cortázar (samples)

Sample 1:

"Y por eso se le ocurría ahora lo que a lo mejor debería habérsele ocurrido al principio: sin poseerse no había posesión de la otredad, ¿y quién se poseía de veras? ¿Quién estaba de vuelta de sí mismo, de la soledad absoluta que representa no contar siquiera con la compañía propia, tener que meterse en el cine o en el prostíbulo o en la casa de los amigos o en una profesión absorbente o en el matrimonio para estar por lo menos solo-entre los demás? Pero gentes como él y tantos otros, que se aceptaban a sí mismos (o que se rechazaban pero conociéndose de cerca) entraban en la peor paradoja, la de estar quizá al borde de la otredad y no poder franquearlo. La verdadera otredad hecha de delicados contactos de maravillosos ajustes con el mundo, no podía cumplirse desde un solo término, a la mano tendida debía responder otra mano desde el afuera, desde lo otro" (Cortázar 2016: 142).

English:

"And that is why we has thinking only now of what he should have thought about in the beginning: without the possession of the self, there was no possession of otherness, and who could really possess himself? Who had come back from himself, from that absolute solitude which meant not even being in one's own company, having to go to the movies or to a whorehouse or to friends' houses or to get involved in a time-consuming profession or in marriage so that at least one could be alone-along-with-all-the-others? That's how, paradoxically, solitude would lead to the heights of sociability, to the great illusion of the company of others, to the solitary man in a maze of mirrors and echoes. But people like him and so many others (or those who reject themselves but know themselves close up) got into the worst paradox, the one of reaching the border of otherness perhaps and not being able to cross over. That true otherness made up of delicate contacts, marvelous adjustments with the world, could not be attained from just one point; the outstretched hand had to find response in another hand stretched out from beyond, from the other part" (Cortázar 2014).

Sample 2:

"—Somos muy diferentes —dijo Ronald—, lo sé muy bien. Pero nos encontramos en algunos puntos exteriores a nosotros mismos. Vos y yo miramos esa lámpara, a lo mejor no vemos la misma cosa, pero tampoco podemos estar seguros de que no vemos la misma cosa. Hay una lámpara ahí, qué diablos.

—No grites —dijo la Maga—. Les voy a hacer más café.

—Se tiene la impresión —dijo Oliveira— de estar caminando sobre viejas huellas. Escolares nimios, rehacemos argumentos polvorientos y nada interesantes. Y todo eso, Ronald querido, porque hablamos dialécticamente. Decimos: vos, yo, la lámpara, la realidad. Da un paso atrás, por favor. Animate, no cuesta tanto. Las palabras desaparecen. Esa lámpara es un estímulo sensorial, nada más. Ahora da otro paso más. Lo que llamas tu vista y ese estímulo sensorial se vuelven una relación inexplicable, porque para explicarla habría que dar de nuevo un paso adelante y se iría todo al diablo" (Cortázar 2016: 225).

English:

"We're very different," Ronald said, "I'm very much aware of that. But we find ourselves in certain places outside of ourselves. You and I are looking at that lamp, maybe we don't see the same thing, but neither can we be sure that we don't see the same thing. There's a lamp there, what the hell.

"Don't shout," La Maga said. "I'm going to make more coffee."

"One has the impression," Oliveira said, "that he's following old footprints. We're unimportant little schoolboys warming over arguments that are musty and not at all interesting. And all because, dear Ronald, we've been talking dialectically. We say: you, I, lamp, reality. Take a step back, please. Go ahead, it's not hard. Words disappear. That lamp is a stimulus to the senses, nothing else. Now take another step back. What you call your sight and that stimulus take on an inexplicable relationship, because if we wanted to explain it we would have to take a step forward and everything would go to hell" (Cortázar 2014).

9. Annex 2: Mirtha Dermisache and the unreadable words (samples)

Mirtha Dermisache, *Diario Nº 1 Año 1*, 1972. Chinese ink on paper, 18 3/16 x 14 1/8 inches. Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York, USA.

Mirtha Dermisache, *Text*, 1974. Chromopalladium salts print, 11 x 9 in. Editions de la Mangrove, Geneviève Chevalier & Fajole éditeurs, atelier Alban Chassagne (printer), Nïmes and Paris, France, 2011. First edition.

10. Annex 3: Mark Rothko's windows to ineffability (samples)

Mark Rothko, *Four Darks in Red*, 1958. Oil on canvas, 102.0 x 116.0 in. Whitney Museum of America Art, New York, USA.

Mark Rothko, *Untitled (Brown and Grey)*, 1969. Acrylic on paper, 60 3/8 x 47 5/8 in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

Mark Rothko, *Rothko Chapel*, 1971. Oil on canvas, (fourteen canvases). Houston, Texas

11. Annex 4: Johan Sebastian Bach's blindfolding into nonsense (sample)

Bach, 6 Cello Bach Suites:

Soundcloud [Yo-Yo Ma] (2016). *Yo-Yo Ma – Complete Bach Suites Live* [Sound File]. Retrieved from https://soundcloud.com/celloman-859210824/yo-yo-ma-complete-bach-suites-live

12. Image credits

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