

# Chapter 13

## Man's Search for Extra-Ordinary Answers in Life: Silence as a Catalyst for Crisis-Solving

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*I have always loved the desert. One sits down on a desert sand dune, sees nothing, hears nothing. Yet through the silence something throbs, and gleams.*

The Little Prince—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Both the process of catalysis and the concept of a catalyst have been recently imported from biology, chemistry, and philosophy as a methodological and conceptual tool for cultural psychology and the establishment of a psychology of conditions. This theoretical and methodological tool opens a path for multiple contributions of research that enable an understanding of sense-making and decision-making processes (Cabell 2010, 2011a). In chemistry, catalysis is known as the process that increases the reaction rate of chemical synthesis. A catalyst is not only the reactant but also the product of the reaction because it is restored at the end of the process of synthesis (Fechete et al. 2012). Thus, these abstract qualities can be imported in to psychology so that catalysis can be understood as a coordination process of meanings in our everyday experience. This coordination of meaning provides conditions that enable the production or regulation of novel meanings by means of activating, directing, and deactivating existing semiotic mechanisms in the psychological system (Cabell 2011a, b). The catalyst modifies the qualities of the reaction of signs within the psycho-semiotic system, making it possible for semiotic regulators to construct or deconstruct meanings. Catalysts work in hypergeneralized, field like and point like signs (Cabell 2010), and the qualitative imprint of their reaction can be studied in everyday life. The cultural dynamics of catalytic processes in the psychological system

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of the self can change personal cultural trajectories (Cabell 2011a), which highlight its importance in times of crisis as a way out. The catalytic process involved here requires making sense of uncertainty through decisions that change cultural and personal trajectories producing perceived welfare<sup>1</sup>.

From the most conventional routine to the most memorable day in our life, both silence and language are means for sense-making of experience and existence. Furthermore, the dialectics of what is said, what is silent, and what is silenced involves a crucial tension in the ways we cope with uncertainty (Lehmann forthcoming, a). Everyday life is about making decisions in order to cope with personal, social, societal, and existential tasks that often make us feel as if we are “in crisis”. Think, for instance, about times when you might have asked yourself/others if you should get married, invest your savings in the stock exchange, or live abroad. The transcendence of such crises may vary from person to person, depending on the value he/she attributes to the decision to make—influenced by personality traits and developmental goals—in relation to the anticipation of future outcomes for their life project.

When facing such dilemmas, we often try to do the “right” thing and, in some situations we would rather not make such decisions, so we won’t be able to assume responsibility in the case of a negative outcome. The awareness of such inner dilemmas and decisions requires silence to emerge (Hermans and Hermans–Konopka 2010). During this crisis-solving process, popular advice that people receive and/or give come from proverbs, such as psalms, koans, or quotes from famous philosophers, singers, writers, or movie characters. For instance, in the famous claims from Pascal or Saint-Exupéry, the importance of following our heart in order to gather the truth of our longings is commonly referenced. Alternatively, the act of “listening to the heart”, as well as other references to popular sayings, proverbs, and the like involve silent settings such as sacred mountains, deserts, temples, and so forth. In this sense, silence catalyzes the dialogic property of affective resonance. This includes inner voices (i.e., heart’s voice versus rational voice, mother’s voice versus wife’s voice, god’s voice versus man’s voice, etc.), external voices (i.e., a family member, a priest, a friend, a peer, etc.) and environmental tools that can become messages (i.e., objects, advertisements, landscapes, etc.).

When trying to describe, analyze, understand, and comprehend human experience, we often look at words and discourse. Language has been the predominant tool for studying human experience in western culture; even if it became relevant during the twentieth century (Classen 1999). The predominance of words and discourse as a way to understand experience is a Greek and Jewish inheritance that permeated Christian culture (Steiner 1982) and became reinforced in scientific

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<sup>1</sup> With decisions that promote welfare, I intend those ones that maintain and/or increase the perceived quality of life. Furthermore, here quality of life is understood as: “‘individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. It is a broad ranging concept incorporating in a complex way the persons’ physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationships to salient features of the environment (World Health Organization 1998, p. 3).

inquiry. It was around the time of the Enlightenment where the visual character of human phenomena gained more importance than other senses (Rosenfeld 2011).

The semiotic processes involved in the fields of language have never truly captured feelings and emotions in human life (Matte Blanco 1998). However, the boundaries of the linguistic world do not inhibit us from comprehension of affective phenomena, which is also a main objective of cultural semiotic psychology (Valsiner 2007). Sometimes, self-comprehension of affective experiences necessitates moving in between language and silence (Lehmann forthcoming, b). Furthermore:

(. . .) the dynamicity of silence in ordinary and extraordinary experiences is meant to become a field in human studies. The dialectics of presence–absence of signs goes beyond words. We cannot forget that resonance and vibration are corporal experiences, which are not just about hearing, but predominately about feeling and evoking aromas, images, rhythms, flavors, and textures of experience. (Lehmann 2012, p. 470).

That way, even if developing models for the study of silence based phenomena cannot constitute the answer for the comprehension of affective life, they are promising and integrative starting paths. In this chapter, I attempt to highlight the catalytic function of silence in everyday life, describing its role when people are trying to make sense of experience and existence by means of making decisions. With this purpose, I will first clarify what I intend by crises, then go in-depth with silence based phenomena highlighting the resolution of dilemmas enabled by different kinds of catalytic silences.

## Crisis-Solving Processes: Decisions to Cope with Uncertainty

From the etymologic point of view a “crisis” involves the dialectic relationship concerning the decision of how to cope with a seemingly unsolvable event (Cigoli and Scabini 2006). Psychological crises occur when sudden (i.e., an earthquake) or expected (i.e., impending finitude) changes menace the self, one’s identity, and/or the existence of one’s social positions. In their theoretical model of family relationships,<sup>2</sup> Cigoli & Scabini (2006) point out important characteristics of crises, based on assumptions from the anthropologic work of Bateson and Turner, which I adapt by linking with other conceptual frameworks:

- (a) *Crises are relational.* They involve a social other that from a dialogical self framework might be internal or external social positions (Hermans 2001).
- (b) *Crises are the basis of cultural rituals.* Every relationship involves a rite of passage formed from crisis and resolved from action guidelines (Cigoli and Scabini 2006) directly related to values.
- (c) *Crises can lead to constructive transformation or destruction of the self* (Cigoli & Scabini 2006). Given the dynamic quality of the self, changes to resolve crises that are chosen can be prejudicial for the constitution of the self, or promote its development.
- (d) *Crises are developmental.* Here, it is necessary to highlight the work of Erik Erikson (1968) who describes eight stages of development from infancy to late adulthood, each one

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<sup>2</sup> The Relational Symbolic Model created by Vittorio Cigoli and Eugenia Scabini uses the family therapy as a therapeutic genre, the systemic approach as a clinical paradigm and the Systems Theory as an epistemological tool (Cigoli 2006).

involving a crisis of two dialectic forces in order to enable the emergence of virtues by means of transforming the self.

(e) *Crises are historical*. That is, there are repeated crises through our family history and the history of our relationships, and an unconscious tendency to repeat these patterns. Otherwise, as Frankl (1994) highlights, every epoch entails a crisis, being the crisis of this time the existential vacuum.

As long as uncertainty is inherent to development, both the past and the future influence any present decision-making process (Abbey and Valsiner 2005). This uncertainty is subject to logical, illogical, and dialogical ways to make sense of experience (Josephs and Valsiner 1999) and therefore often result in crises. Furthermore, the complexity and multidimensionality of the mind that construct cultural processes such as linguistics, theoretical and empirical systems, and music (Klempe In Press, a) provide more room for the production of crises in the microgenetic and macrogenetic structure and functioning of affective arenas of everyday life (Lehmann forthcoming, a). Thus, crisis and contradiction describe the relationship of silence and feelings and the subsequent tension in the crisis-solving process where silence feelings and language are interwoven.

When dealing with crises, we can use and create cultural rituals as we move towards resolving these crises. An example of this could be the visit to graves after the death of a beloved person that Josephs (1998) mentions, because:

Rather than being characterized by rationality or logic, this process implies the transcendence of the world ‘as-if’ by the future-oriented ‘as-if-could-be’, in which both the person and the world as-is, as well as the person’s constructed past, are transformed. From an ontogenetic developmental perspective, it is argued that *this as-if mode of approaching and making sense of the world is not inferior or immature, but is rather an important characteristic of human development across all age groups*. (Josephs 1998, p. 180, *emphasis added*).

Think of similar “as-if” experiences such as supernatural apparitions (e.g., Something like a light came to me) where crises between observation and belief or between the real and unreal are often situated. It is not my attempt to discuss which crises are “real” crises, nor whether supernatural apparitions exists or not, but to make evident that phenomena have crucial—and even unexplored—roles as catalysts for sensemaking to cope with crisis. Consequently, such a topic is necessary for cultural psychologists to focus on.

## **Silence, Silences and Silencing: Dialogues Beholding and Beyond Language**

The academic interest in silences and their enabling of certain psychological spaces of meaning is not new. For instance, Abadjieff (2011) formulates different silences such as contemplative silences, silence during conversations, and silent settings in the environment. The first ones involve a person in front of nature or within the sacred (e.g., archetypical references to mountains, deserts, or meditation). Secondly, during conversations one could find: (a) silences that promote something to germinate;

(b) silences that reaffirm the power of words allowing them to be heard; (c) silence as promoters of encountering one's self essence; (d) aggressive silences, that paralyze others; (e) accusative silences, that do not support others' words; (f) hidden silences, that allow the person not to feel committed with the topic in course; (g) awaiting silences, that allow the person to choose a precise moment to talk; (h) caring silences, that quiet faults and imperfections of an "other", accepting him/here as he/she is; (i) silences that should be kept, as the ones concerning intimacy; (j) imposed silences, like the ones that emerge when someone is not available to talk with; and (k) protective silences, like when victims of violence stay quiet in order to protect themselves. Lastly the author mentions silent settings in the city such as libraries, streets at night, temples, hospitals, and houses. Abadjieff (2011) mentions in brief these different types of silence, without giving further explanations about their implications and functioning in everyday life.

In a more systematized way, Levitt (2001) found seven types of silence—here understood as a pause—in clients during psychotherapy that occurs when the need to focus on a psychological process is so powerful that the person requires being speechless. These types of silence correspond to three higher categories: productive, neutral, and obstructive silences. Silence is meant to be productive when it promotes reflection, expression, or emotional processing. Neutral silences are associated with mnemonic and associational issues. Silence is considered obstructive when it is threatening (disengaged), and when it comes from a disturbing reaction attributed to the therapist (interactional). With other perspectives of silence Stone et al. (2012) describe mnemonic silences—here understood as that which is unsaid during a conversation—in accordance with its intentionality and covertness (hiding the memory instead of overtly expressing it). Authors refer to mnemonic silence as the failure or refusal to express a memory during a conversation that in other situations would be remembered or expressed. The consequences of mnemonic silences depend on other subtypes of silence. Four types of silence are described in the paper: (a) when one remembers covertly and refuses to remember overtly; (b) when one refuses to remember overtly and suppresses covert remembering; (c) when one fails to remember overtly while remembering covertly; (d) when one fails to remember overtly and covertly.

Aforementioned approaches to silence share the same implications for interactions and relationships among individuals in diverse social settings. Acknowledging such implications of silence in the dialogical nature of the self<sup>3</sup>, Hermans & Hermans-Konopka (2010), state that decision-making involves conflict, criticism, agreement, and/or consultancy of different relationships between people and within the self (e.g., self-conflict, self-criticism, self-agreement, self-consultancy). There exists a particular interest in consultancy because:

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<sup>3</sup> For the Dialogical Self Theory "the self does not have existence separate from society but is part of the society (. . .) Society, from this side, is not 'surrounding' the self, influencing it as an external 'determinant', but there is a society of selves; that is, the self is in society and functions as an intrinsic part of it" (Hermans and Gieser 2011, p. 2).

when we are confronted with a difficult problem or when we pose a puzzling question to ourselves, we are sometimes not able to give an immediate answer and need time to consult ourselves. Self-consultancy is also typical of situations in which we have to take a decision that has important implications for our future and/or that of significant others. (Hermans and Hermans–Konopka 2010, p. 125).

In this case, awareness of the answer to give, requires a *preparing silence*, which needs a receptive attitude from other positions involved in the dialogue; this process involves hierarchies and power relationships (Hermans and Hermans–Konopka 2010).

Thus, with an emphasis on the experience of silence, the authors argue that the positioning of the 'I' is associated with three mystical states described by Robert Forman: (a) *unitive*, sense of communion with a wider external environment; (b) *dualistic*, the experience of awareness within an expansive silence and consciousness of the world; and (c) *pure consciousness*, inner silence involving absence of sensations and thoughts (Hermans and Hermans–Konopka 2010). Thus, in the emotional experience of silence, there are different degrees of involvement of attention and perception of boundaries that allow or block the simultaneous-polyphonic experiencing (Lehmann forthcoming, b).

Altogether, gathering possible structures of silence is just the beginning of research geared towards the comprehension of its functions in everyday psychological life. In the masterpiece of Bruneau and Ishii (1988) three aspects sum up all the conceptualizations of silence described above. The authors make a theoretical distinction between *silence*, *silences*, and *silencing* that becomes crucial for further conceptualizations of silence based phenomena, sharing the structure of concepts with Orlandi (1995). *Silence* is described as a present-now timeless experience associated to the individual which is often perceived as spiritual–mystical, solitudinal, unconscious, expanded, and acausal (Bruneau and Ishii 1988; Orlandi 1995). *Silences* are past–future oriented timefull experiences, often perceived as secular–profane, social, conscious, contracted, and relatively causal. Furthermore, *silencing* is considered a persuasive act in reference to the ones who silence and the ones who are silenced in social, societal, and political arenas (Bruneau and Ishii 1988; Orlandi 1995). Some precisions of terms are to be made in order to give an accurate understanding of silence based phenomena. Here, while silences are linked to what remains quiet—even if it could be said—silence concerns the untellable and involves a search of detachment from language. This is the case of poetic instants, where a hyper-generalized level of affect is experienced, facing the ambiguous boundaries of mystic and aesthetic experienced values (Lehmann forthcoming, b).

Secondly, the authors, one North American and the other Japanese, acknowledge the variance of the affective resonance of silence within cultural settings. Both in eastern and western cultures, silence is associated with some depth levels of consciousness, such as mystical experience, trances, and relative unconsciousness (Bruneau and Ishii 1988). Yet, it is stylized differently depending of diverse cultural, philosophical, and theological traditions (Bruneau and Ishii 1988). Furthermore:

... Since silence is not valued and therefore not tolerated socially in American (and many European) societies, the function of speech is in the avoidance of silence, generally, as well as in

the filling of silences during the transference of messages. Contrary to the American practice, silence and silences in Japanese society are generally considered to be positively meaningful and socio-culturally accepted to a much higher degree. (Bruneau and Ishii 1988, p. 25)

In fact, both west and east share the transcendence of silence from language, such as in the case of Zen and trapist Monks. While these experiences of silence are associated with mystical experience in general, it is paradoxical that in the predominant western culture, silence is something to avoid and for eastern cultures silence is something to embrace (Steiner 1982).

Silence is neither the opposite of speech nor an absence; on the contrary, silence and language are interdependent (Bruneau and Ishii 1988). Thus, language represents just a part of our everyday experiences (Wittgenstein 1922/2005). Furthermore, Bruneau and Ishii (1988) consider that:

... Silences are surfaces of deeper levels of silence. Silences are like interconnected rivers and lakes; but silence is like the sea to which they connect. While analogy is not a popular form of definition to Western scientists locked rigidly into a world of predictable becoming, it is nevertheless, a common way of explaining for great numbers of peoples throughout the planet. (pp. 4–5)

Very important facts emerge from the analogy above. By one hand, it highlights the straight link between the boundaries of language, silence, and poetry. According to Octavio Paz (1990), giving birth to a poem is to feel desperate with the powerless words and encountering the omnipotence of silence, by means of “listening” to the real voice of things (Paz 1990) and, that way, “Silence, in the field of senses, also holds the incapability of language to express the whole immersion of human experience” (Lehmann 2012, p. 469). Poetic interpretations of silence are needed in order to understand its significance in people's stories (Mazzei 2003).

On the other hand, it recognizes the interdependence of silence and silences. That is, socially promoted silences in a temple or in a museum can themselves make the apparition of silence possible as a contemplative act in the silent prayers to God, or in front of a work of art. Both silence and silences have a cultural mediation and emerge in Social Demand Settings [SDS]; that is, human made structures that constitute the social boundaries of the topic of talks and have three zones: the Zone of “Possible Talking” [ZPT], the Zone of “Promoted Talking” [ZPrT], and the Zone of “Taboo of Talking” [ZTT] (Valsiner 2000). These zones guide communication processes using semiotic mediators (Valsiner 2003). If you consider the zones of possible talk promoted talk, and taboo talk, it is easy to situate the presence of silence, silences, and silencing on them. Furthermore, one could also adapt such constructs to the existence of a Zone of “Possible Silentness” [ZPS]; a Zone of “Promoted Silentness” [ZPrS]; and a Zone of “Taboo of Silentness” [ZTS]. Indeed, the ZPrS and the ZTS are inside the ZPS, and the emergence of silence based phenomena from taboo topics needs to pass through ZPrS, these being interconnected.

Given the polysemy of silence related issues in literature and their dialogical quality, I consider here Silence Based Phenomena as the field involving silence, silences, and silencing settings that serve as a source of catalytic processes. Thus, Silence Based Phenomena can be studied as voluntary/involuntary silencing of inner

voices and noises and/or silencing external noises and voices that work as: (a) a source of hearing with varying degrees of involvement of awareness of the borders of inner and external experience; (b) a source of saying with varying degrees of involvement of awareness of the borders of inner and external experience; (c) the ambivalent sense of not saying and not listening but saying and listening everything at the same time, immersed in the timeless perception of communion between inner/outer borders (Lehmann forthcoming, a).

As an illustration, a brief description of the case study of a health professional that works in a palliative care practice is presented (Lehmann and Saita, In Press). CR is an Italian anesthesiologist who is in charge of pain management of advanced cancer patients in a hospital of northern Italy. She had also studied psychosomatic therapy for reasons she describes as personal, and affirms that she is very interested in transcendence, but does not practice any religion. Working in a hospital, silences inhabit the space in different zones. The place itself is a ZPS because there are zones where talking is allowed, as for instance cafeterias, but some others are ZPrS where noise is regulated by different signs (i.e., posters), such as waiting rooms, bedrooms, intensive care wards, and so on. The ZTS involve settings where taboo topics emerge, such as when communicating difficult issues concerning diagnosis and prognosis of illness, and/or topics related to death and dying.

CR has the custom of smoking while passing through the a garden that connects the parking lot with the entrance of the hospital. She is used to walking through the trees and plants of the garden while having a cigarette, which makes her feel relaxed and as if she is getting rid of the tensions from work and home. The silentness she has in this ZPrS was about allowing a releasing voice to emerge in order to make sense of her memories and anticipations of future to come (i.e., giving bad news to patients, difficulties in communicating with colleagues). CR's search for tranquility is a common process in the ordinary life of human beings, and tranquility itself is an attempt to face the unavoidable uncertainty of life. CR does not only work with persons that have cancer, but also suffered breast cancer which, in fact, increases the possibilities of suffering from lung cancer. We cannot avoid making difficult decisions. We move in the world through axiological categories: we are always giving value to the meanings we construct, and thus decision-making is a value-oriented processes (Lehmann forthcoming, b). Even if CR recognizes the smoking is a risky behavior, it becomes an ambiguous sign in her personal life because the relief of tension produced by these silences in the garden helps her give support to her patients in the hospital, despite her own difficulties facing mortality salience (Lehmann and Saita, In Press). Silences in her daily walk catalyze the crisis-solving process regulating stress and increase of perceived well-being—but immerses her in a new crisis: thinking about the effects of tobacco in her health and the dissonance it creates in her personal life. The ambivalence of signs in an individual's life trajectory are dilemmatic by nature, and the more a person questions both sides of the coin, the more they are aware of the uncertain directions of each decision.

Uncertainty and ambivalence are the foundations of meaning making. In our everyday life we face the dilemma of decision-making, and the impossibility to know how it will turn out (Valsiner 2003). It is precisely for coping with this ambivalence



that we establish solutions through imagination (Zittoun et al. 2012) and develop inner/outer monologues or dialogues with different positions of the self/others (Hermans 2001) where some answers are constructed. But how do such activities allow for the emergence of solutions in times of crisis? Cultural Psychology studies the intersection of dilemmas and the role of affective phenomena in decision-making and sense-making processes from the perspective of semiotic-cultural psychology (Valsiner 2007). In this order of ideas, it is our challenge to comprehend the affective phenomena by means of the explication of both the silent and affective vibrations of our ambiguous and ambivalent experiences (Lehmann 2012).

One example of the catalytic property of affective and Silence Based Phenomena is a curious event in the biography of the Jewish psychiatrist, philosopher, and neurologist Viktor Emil Frankl that he then shares in his memories (Frankl 2003). In fact, Cabell (2010) previously analyzed other issues of his biography where faith is considered a catalyst for making sense of unavoidable suffering related to his experience in the concentration camps. In 1942, with a brilliant scientific career in development, professor Frankl was strongly considering leaving Vienna and emigrating to the United States in order to be saved from the Second World War. On other hand, his family was not able to travel with him. One night, trying to find out what he should do, he went for a walk and entered in the catholic cathedral of Vienna, where there was an organ concert. He decided to sit down and consider what to do in a silent prayer, realizing that a message from God would be required in order to help him. Back at home, he found a stone on the radio. His father said he had picked it up from the ruins of the biggest synagogue of Vienna, and he interpreted this as the message he was supposed to receive. That stone had a golden Hebrew letter engraved on it, saying, *honor your mother and father*. He remained in Austria and he became a prisoner until 1945. With exception of his sister, all his family died in the concentration camps (Frankl 2003).

Certainly, religious temples are considered silent places where, music, chants, litanies, and prayers are not noise, but promoters of the silence and silences needed to get in contact with god(s). As Bruneau and Ishii (1988) describe the relationship of silences and silence, both silent settings and silent practices catalyze the silence that Viktor Frankl was seeking for. This silence was a catalyst for making sense of Frankl's dilemma and eventually providing the conditions necessary for solving the crisis by deciding to stay in Vienna and go to the concentration camps with his family. Theoretically, Frankl's crisis was not because he was Jewish, or because of the war, but because of two values that were no longer allowed to coexist under the current contextual conditions: his professional development and success, and his family.

Another important issue that can be understood from Frankl's lived experience is that of intuition, which has been recognized by some psychological theories as a trait of personality (Jung 1966). Personality traits have a social and cultural guidance (Valsiner 1998). A clear example of this fact that also serves to illustrate the catalytic function of silence-based phenomena is the comparison made by Bruenau and Ishii (1988) about eastern and western cultures. In many social interactions, the authors say, eastern people appear to be silent, that is, they do attempt to fill pauses during conversations with noise or talk, as North Americans are noted for doing.

This is due to some cultural characteristics, such as the non-verbal and intuitive communication skills of people from countries as Japan, where speakers deepen on the communicative setting of interactions, economizing messages, a fact that has been also associated with empathetic abilities. In this context, one could hypothesize that, more than talk, silence catalyzes sense-making of communicative practices. But Silence Based Phenomena are also present in inner dialogues of different positions of the self. For instance, Hermans–Konopka (2011) proposes that even if the self is constantly in interaction and dialogue with its positions, there's also a process of depositioning, that is, a thought free disidentification of any position. Furthermore, clients that experience this kind of silence, often when they are caught up by intense emotions perceive themselves less judgmental with their experience to take decisions.(Hermans–Konopka 2011).

## Conclusion

In a world of uncertainty, both affect and Silence Based Phenomena serve to make sense of experience and dialogue with inner and outer voices during the course of life. Yet, the study of silentness involves its comprehension as a point-like, field-like, and hypergeneralized-like sign, and given this abstract quality, it is often narrowed, giving more importance to the role of language in everyday life. The boundaries of language, tested in science focus cultural scholars on the extra-ordinary significance of Silence Based Phenomena and their affective resonance, which also requires a movement towards integration of science and the arts. For instance, music itself is composed by silences, and makes use of silences to promote different emotive arousals (Lehmann forthcoming, a).

The significance of silence, silences and silencing can be studied from its semiotic quality—as in the case of semiotics of silence (Kurzon 1997), but its catalytic role on sensemaking opens the path to the theoretical comprehension of affect, which transcends language, and also needs development of integrative theories; scholars interested in communication should pay more attention to the cultural values and interpretations that could arise from them during interaction (Bruneau and Ishii 1988; Orlandi 1995) and dialogue, because both language and silence have an infinite resonance in the sense-making and decision-making processes, and studies of the cultural-semiotic organization of human life should integrate these nuances that promote value-grasping in life by means of realizing priorities (Lehmann forthcoming b).

Silence as a masterpiece of everyday mysteries has a catalytic property on our sense-making process, by means of enabling or disabling the value-grasping of our meanings in life. This fact highlights the importance of axiological theories that could widen our comprehension of the affective charge of semiotic meanings, as well as of the boundaries of semiotics to explain the meaning-making process. But, it is also crucial for us to focus on personality traits and its cultural guidance, as long as they are conditions for the rates of reactions of our settings of significance.

Furthermore, the development of Silence Based Phenomena theories are crucial for the comprehension of how people solve crises in everyday life, and why do people face same/different crises putting in dialogue inner and outer positions of the self towards life course.

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