

Poetry Before Language

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AT SOME TIME before words, these words upon which any hungry brain will feed its circuits, avid for swelling excitements, there were all the sounds that the mouth, the lips, the tongue, the glottis, the tooth delighted in, which were later hidden in all the alphabets. This was the dance of the would-be phonemes, and they were as irritating to the brain as pure phones, meaningless sputters, clicks or gurgles, still are. They were sounds like the other sounds of the body which gave for no enlargement, and the brain was restless for enlargements. B-b-b-b-b-b went the lips on their own, delighting, delighted too to please the ear in spite of the brain. Trickle-trickle-trickle sang the stomach. Thump thump thump thump the heart beat at night and the ear listened or the hand moved in space to make a counterpoint to the sound.

The brain in those days was of ordinary service, a mere clearing house for parts of the body. "Scratch me, right hand," the buttocks would say—and what had brain to do with that? In those days many communications as brief as this and as personal cleared quite unknown to the brain. But you see how difficult it is for my intellect to keep up with the story! For the point is just that the brain "knows" little of these vital inner orders today; most, like scratchings—and we suddenly find ourselves scratching—or

noises—and we are embarrassed to hear that our stomach speaks up—are cleared by parts of the brain that do not “know” and hence these are calld thruout the sacred literatures “lower” orders; whereas the “knowing” brain that claims so cunningly that all things began when it began—in the beginning was the Word—the intellect that has to do with the things we mind is called the “higher”.

But in the story this divinity of the minding brain had not begun; and in the happy concourse and democracy of what we do not mind, hand, arm, leg, foot, finger, stomach, bowels, liver, heart, lungs, brain, skin and bone made their way together. There was no sense of anything, not even common sense; all sense was in the senses. What was there? Certainly there was inner communications. “Scratch me, right hand,” the buttock said, remember? But these are not words, or symbols of anything. Today, when the brain is monitoring the works, even such communications appear as “words” within us; all the parts of the body have become parts of the mind’s vocabulary. We begin to mind what we eat, go into, fuck, excrete. We say we are *consciously* scratching our buttocks. When there are no words, we say we scratcht *unconsciously*. Consciously means that the monitor is checking out the communications circuits to feed his own admonitions. With psychoanalysis

the monitor takes over even the genital operations to check them out, and, going on to the earliest systems, begins to command a conscience of mouthing, stomaching, digesting and shitting. You will see that I find this minding the store presumptive. In the height of this presumption word-communications are sent out that have no origin at all between the parties concerned. The brain contrives a confusion of feedback messages, orders "from the hand" or "from the cock" are counterfeited. Earlier these officious orders would run "Scratch me, right hand. Yours, buttock.", but as the Old Maker has grown more self-satisfied, indeed, as Self begins to appear, these orders will be more obvious in their source: "Scratch *my* buttock, my right hand." All this adventure of "my" and the monitor's self satisfactions is a later part of the story. All the functions of the body come to be self-functions.

I want to describe Poetry as it was before words, or signs, before beauty, or eternity, or meaning, were. Poetry would not allow the brain to falsify what it was in giving it a word or a

"meaning"; and so the "meaning" of the word poetry or name Poetry is a making. The organs of the body not only communicated but all the organs made things. The act was dancing, the product of the act was the dance, poetry. In one kind of dancing the hand and the eye danced together. Thus the hand "saw" the stones and sticks, and the eye "felt" them. The foot danced with the sight and the feel which measured the ground and made space, and the eye heard accurately the measures on the ground as the accents of the tread and the numbers of the steps or stops and the stretches or durations or silences between steps and stops. The ear dancing with the foot returned to the balances which reappeared as stops in the measures the inner ear sounded. The happy brain—this was the brain before it grew upon its self—and the heart danced in concourse, and, as the brain danced, hand no longer determined, nor eye determined, nor ear determined, but all became attentive to the full complex of the sum of all their dance as it cleared in the dancing circuits of the brain; and heart and lungs beat faster or slower, set the pulse according to the dance of the brain, not led by that dance but sounding their accords.

So there were inner com-

...sounding their accords.

So there were inner communications, and there were poetries, and cords, accords and possible discords and concords of a music. And then, too, there were perceptions. Long before minding everything and finding fulfillment of self in everything. Long before mind or before any words. When all was dumb. There were dumb perceptions. A mountain came into view. The eye saw the mountain happen (there were no words to make memories of other mountains or views of a mountain to be confused with the mountain in view). There is an earlier reality even today when Poetry takes over what we had thought was language and we find ourselves confronted by such a mountain in view. Unmixt with our selves, a demanding confrontation without a history. Immediate. No mediators. This is a non-spiritual reality. There is in Poetry a ground in which communication, creation or making, and perception are all quite extra spiritual concerns. From this ground a second poetry arises of spirit and mediations—but this is the poetry that begins as the admonition of realities begins and the Word begins. The reality of the mountain first was without "being"; for "being" is the primary appreciation of self-consciousness. All the organs liked to dance by themselves in the immediate

world when the great dance was not on. The mouth made little skips and frolics with much noise. The ear could gather all kinds of noises to set dancing against its sensitive equilibriums. The heart had the blood continually supplying its dance to the full. But the poor brain could not dwell in upon itself; everything had to clear thru—orders, orders, orders. Then, just as within the yolk of an egg a spot of blood pulsing, and the pulsing becomes an organ of the pulsing—and then the heart and the circulations of the blood, whose full flower is the body—so, in the most intense pulsation of the brain, in the seizure of the dance, there “emerged from the first darkness a point of scintillation.” It is in this that the intellect honors light as deity and creator. This “light” was a node of the full maze of the dance of the organs which in the seizure had entered the brain, a pressure point of pulsing which became an organ of pulsation of all communications which appeared as a circuit system of excitements, as the fountain of ideas and visions. The brain that carrying the message of hand must have thought itself to have a grasp of things, and carrying the message of foot must have thought itself to run or to stand on firm ground, out of the total body seizure-message of the genitals thought itself to “come” and came to have like power, whose full flower was the mind! an internal world of the brain’s self-orgasm that is called intellect.

But I hurry beyond my story again. For this "light" that dawned was born of that dance we were speaking of. The mouth and the ear made motions and heard sounds and this was the "light" and hence the phonemes became attendant spirits in the light. Well, there was no spirit yet, or only the "light" which was *just* spirit. In the ecstasy of the dance, the communications of all the organs and limbs instead of clearing thru the brain came to the brain. It was in this a terminal of terminals, a totality, an All that was a-light. Now, as the Zohar tells us, the Holy One (He was the area of the brain about the "light" which became drawn to it and out of its excitation conceived a new brain, a Self, played with the letters of the alphabet for centuries before arranging the alphabet. This refers to the gathering of the phones and the communications of the other organs to the magnet until a rose of brain-order or musical disorder was formed. Into this rose of brain-order-disorder all perceptions that passed at all thru the brain, the sounds which the idle ear delighted in, were arranged, sorted in light of the intellect.

It was in the final enclosures of the circuits of the light that sense and sounds were enclosed and the sounds along the active circuits became alphabet since groups of sounds made words—that is, cohered in sense. There were few enclosures at first and as conglomerates of sound and sense became a single word-image, then the circuit could be used by the brain, deeper and deeper engraved or infolded in courses of memory or readied remembering. Sometimes the new brain worked rapidly adding circuits so fast that, poorly made, barely consequent, all effort was lost and sense departed from sound. Consequence means, as does meaning, or significance, that a circuit is made or in making that leads to self assurance in the intellect. Inconsequence means, as does meaninglessness or insignificance, that there is no room, or vitality, or appetite, for a new circuit. The intellect allows itself amusement parks of nonsense, which here means witty skip-circuits, in imitation of circuits the intellect cannot create. This “nonsense” entertains, since the intellect creates within itself a victory over an inconsequence of its own; but serious nonsense, that which is meaningless or insignificant, is that which the senses perceive and communicate in a code inaccessible to the alphabet that leads to language. Where the monitor cannot read become

alphabet that leads to language. Where the monitor cannot read becomes a course of absolute messages. These are all organic experiences exclusive of the phantasm world of conscious and unconscious powers the brain and the new intellect have raised; these are mere visual or aural or oral pleasures that are unintelligible as values to the self, so that the mind translates them as mere phenomena, impermanencies, as against the eternal images of the more than real. They cannot be put into words and must seem worthless, wordless, to be put into words. The powerful intellect can only enjoy the printed page densely word-full, so that its pleasure can be entire, undistracted by the fancy that the eye might be merely enjoying the pictures or variations of space and dark and light upon the page, or the ear might be hearing possible sounds and so having mere joys of phone upon phone that destroy the attention necessary for the true reader. So, the reader comes to exert a powerful control to be sure that his mouth does not *actually* move as he reads, for the mouth would get lost in the mere indulgence of mouthing the text. Thus reading aloud to oneself is a sure road to intellectual envy and despair.

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