

# Language and Search

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## I. INTRODUCTION

To know reality

this is an intimate search

pursued wittingly or

unwittingly

a search for a boundary,

signifying

knowing

signifying, first, myself.

The crisis arises

I am born with it

I must enter my own experience.

Through this I must understand you.

What is the convolution, the wholeness within being aware

by which

in my experience

I come to your intent?

enter my own inner language

## II. MODALITIES

During an afternoon science lecture on ... well that doesn't matter, for I never caught up to understanding the speaker, for a problem of my own concern was beginning to come to focus, that of "science-think," the problem of understanding a scientific discussion and the sense mode which I predominantly used in reaching understanding: the modality of my thinking versus a modality more natural to the lecture.

The talk, a logical and mathematical development proceeded from axiom to proof.

I faced a great difficulty in my own understanding. Much of the subject of this lecture and, indeed, the subject I was studying, proceeded and worked on a written language level, proceeding with the logic of sentence structure and of symbolic logic.

And I? I was literally working in a different language, a pictorial language, a visual language, even though the problems to which I was applying it were non-pictorial. My language had a plasticity and a color and a dimensionality to it which compounded on top of the logical linguistics being presented. Extra elements, colors, and textures, and forms were added. My language operated by different internal psychological laws.

The lecturer stated axioms, premises and definitions, solid as logical definitions but difficult to literally picture. I translated them into some sort of three-dimensional picture, geometrical and plastic, moved them in my head, and on that afternoon found it very difficult to find a picture that would fit the initial concept.

As he proceeded through the mathematical and the linguistic logic of the lecture I proceeded to twist and turn and play with my own. After that I had to prove my proof against his. I had to know if my last line translated into his last line, and whether I was doing a proof or an analogy: whether each of the steps in my thought process really flowed in the same logic as his.

What would happen if I could learn to think linguistically, and stop thinking so predominantly visually? Immediately I began an exercise. I tried to think white picturing black: Picture nothing; a sea of black; a space of black in front of my eyes and think! (The location of my visual imagery during problem solving is somewhere just in front of my eyes and forehead). For weeks I couldn't think.

I rode a subway and saw a woman's face; she sat across from me with a face exquisite in old age. I felt, "I want to paint that face. People have to see that face and share that face. But I must write a poem about that face. How do I reach a linguistic equivalent? How do I make a verbal equivalent to that face?" I could see the painting. For the rest of the subway ride I could not think the lines of a poem that worked. I could not think of lines; I could not even think of the word that worked.

So it went for some time.

Now watch more closely:

### III. "OF" and "IN"

(1) "words are a naming of meanings" (quoted from a physicist)

(2) "Poetry is to be needled in the vein" (quoted from a poet)

Note this

" of meaning"

" in the vein"

of: Anglo Saxon *at*, *aef* meaning away (from); akin to the Greek *ab*, based on *apo* meaning "from, away from"

in: Anglo Saxon; akin to the Greek *in*, meaning "contained or enclosed"

Something is very different if I speak "of pain," than if I speak "in pain." *In* denotes the expressible relation requiring entrance into -- into sensation coupling the knower, knowing, and the known. If I speak *in* pain, I am contained in it, in the sensation of the pain. I speak in a voice of identity-with.

If I speak *of* pain, I am removed from it. I speak in the voice of observation (even if I speak of my own pain). Pain stands as structure.

*Of* points to structure. *Structure*: an arrangement of parts, elements, or constituents. Two primitives are implied: (a) arrangement, meaning place or to place, or to adjust properly; and

(b) part(s) (elements), meaning a piece or division of the whole.

Parts, and their (explicit) arrangement

Follow the Latin roots of "logic," "reason," and "concept" to "structure."

take *structure* as the primitive to reason, logic and concept.

*In* points to sensation. *Sensate*: having the power of physical sensation, registering on the senses, or felt by the senses.

Follow the Latin roots of "empathy," "intuition," "perception" to "sensate."

take *sensation* as the primitive to perception, empathy, intuition, and such gestalten as "feeling."

Sensation and structure mark the primitives of intent -- of public language and expression.

I come to your expression. You wish me to see a structure, or to feel a feeling. Public language is an instruction. A form is chosen with the intent to make structure clear or to make sensation clear. Discourse appears to signify a realness. Yet in coming to these public languages in my own awareness. I enter them through both sensation and structure -- confounding them in my own awareness.

This is my crisis

is

My experience of your intent

My experience of knowing

knowing                      at once                      reality                      and self.

Enter my own awareness

Watch the interplay of *of* and *in*

This is the transformation of equivalents:

to watch the rooting of sensation in structure and

structure in sensation

convolved into a wholeness of awareness.

Sense structure: I feel the tension in a drawn line. In a mathematical graph I only understand the graphed line through its tension -- the lines thrust to bend or climb. My learning block is that I don't "feel" the equivalence of the graph line as a set of place values, of x's and y's -- the list of coordinates described by an equation, the math of the teacher.

there is this

sensation in structure

And against this, there is also structure in sensation. I structure sensation: My sensations are structure -- perhaps at the deepest levels of my physiology. My mind moves to form the simplest patterns of my percepts. In entering awareness of my sensations I reflect through this structure. I structure sensation.

The photographer Alfred Stieglitz wrote of his Cloud photographic series:

I had told Miss O'Keefe I wanted a series of photographs which when seen by Ernest Bloch (the composer) he would exclaim: Music! Music! Man, why that is Music! ... and he would have to write a symphony called "Clouds."...

And when finally I had my series of photographs printed, and Bloch saw them -- what I said I wanted to happen, happened verbatim.

The intent, the meaning of the photos is just that; this empathetic recognition

with- *in* me Music

with- *in* the experience *clouds*

To sense this music, or again to

sense pain with- *in* dance

to sense light with- *in* paint

places *meaning in* my dwelling.

and to dwell within this sensation, there must be mute, tacit a form, a structure *of*.

*of* music

*of* dance

*of* clouds, light, texture

from which is known, silently, the relation

expression music moves into expression clouds

---

The structure is mute in that I can say

"yes, those clouds *are* music

that dance *is* pain

They work, but I can't say how."

---

Somehow there seems a structure tacit within this knowing *in*

this is the structure of sensation

#### IV. THE WEAVE

##### Of and In

Postulate: The act of being aware may be given as two-valued, with one value of being aware tacit, or silent, within the other.

Consider a weave. In the simplest texturing of pattern, two dimensions are sufficient to describe one relation -- one from the other. That is, pattern that occurs in one dimension cannot be recognized from within that same dimension.

Suppose I have a row of beads along a string. The beads may be of many different colors, and spaced to form some arrangement. I cannot fathom that arrangement if I simply look down along the line (or if I am a bead looking along toward other beads). This is a pattern in one dimension, with my awareness also in that same dimension -- a problem beautifully expressed by Abbott in *Flatland*.

To see the pattern of the beads, I must step out of the string. I must view it from outside, from an orthogonal position, in truth, another dimension. When I do so, I may not recognize the dimension which I am in, only the pattern of the beads in front of me. So I may be unaware of the dimension in which I am imbedded. That is, my dimension may seem tacit or silent, or hidden, and I am primarily aware only of the dimension of the string of beads.

*in* is tacit within *of*

*sensation* is silent within *structure*

*of* is tacit within *in*

*structure* is silent within *sensation*

consider

An abstract concept

$F = MA$

is *of*

of F

of M

of A

not containing my sensations,

but *of* the relations coupling F, and M, and A.

Yet, to interiorize  $F = MA$  I must hold a mute intuition of the sense, or perhaps better, the

sense-sensation of the notions within the equation

I must hold

F

M

A

and also the sense-sensation of the structure of the mathematical relations

+

X

/

$$F / M = A$$

$$F / A = M$$

There appears an empathy within this knowing of structure

1. The concept always contains an implied equal sign.
2. The notions on either side of the equal sign have their own sensory equivalences.
3. The sensation of the concept must equate sensually the notions on either side of the equal sign. This is equivalent to sensing the equivalences of the equivalents.
4. The required demonstration, therefore, is that this equivalence is of the nature of the *image-of-the-first-time*. That is, that it is dynamic -- flashing and *superimposing* feelings/sensations until they resonate -- that is, it is a set of sensations which oscillate across the equal sign.
5. The Equivalence may then become "static." That is, it may be replaced by a new sign, but the sign is a second-level sensatic quality which must imbed the perceptual tension of the equation.
6. The equivalence of the sensations across the equal sign *is* a structure. That is, the superimposing of sensations is a dynamic fitting of *structure* which is tacit within the referent substrata which are equated and therefore tacit within the oscillating image(s).

the sensation of the structural relations

I begin to see my own sensations/structures

which evoke

Meaning

## V. MEANING

### Meaning and Body Sensation

The dancer writes:

To know movement, one must move and attend to the sensations of his own body, thereby discovering movement to be a highly stimulating experience whose sensations can be held in consciousness where they can be recognized, compared, evaluated, and where ideas can be formed about them. Because we are endowed with a kinesthetic sense, we can perceive the relative degree of speed and force of muscle tension ....

(Margaret H'Doubler)

it is without gravity.

It is a relationship unrelated to gravity. Inner sensing shuts out the pull of gravity and pulls us to the center of our own experiencing. We have had a sense of this inner relationship to space. Swimming, gymnastics on the trampoline approach this state of inner sensing. In the womb, we may have had our first anti-gravitational experience.

(Allegra Fuller Synder)

.... To attend to the sensations of movement, to concentrate on its rhythmic structure, and to operate under and understanding of their significance is to have a creative art experience.

(Margaret H'Doubler)

For myself, I never recognized inner visceral or tactile sensations as thought, as foundations of a knowing that could be conscious. For one such as myself, such subtle feelings and experienced sensations are not the stuff of thought.

Why?

Body feelings did not carry *significance* as did the tensions and forms and colors in my visual inner world, and as did the tensions and contours of spoken words themselves.

Yes

there were body feelings, but always they hung on the sorry awareness of uncomfortable self-awareness.

This was an inner space, not even

recognized as such.

Sometimes to feel

literally

two feet tall

almost formless

amoeba-like

or at least of soft and jellied skin

swallowed in the vaster

rigid space of sidewalks and concrete buildings

and adult hardness

To feel so sick and frightened that I could feel myself

black

heavy

pulled

running

stretching a taut spring of "self" out into a field

or across the street

or out the door.

My body awareness being, it seemed, stretched across two plates at once. Sitting in school orchestra

just before needing to play

running across the field across from the school

a black

taut spring

pulling both ways through the open classroom door.

For years, to stand at the top of a cliff edge, or any high point, would be to experience myself, literally being over the edge, in space, treading to stay up against an inner sensation of falling, perhaps of spinning.

Only a considerable effort would pull my location of sensing, of "being" back into the location of my physical body, which remained standing firmly "back there" on rock or balcony.

Later, I took up rock climbing so that if I was going to fall at least I'd be tied to a rope.

It was strange,



hearing Balkan folk music I could feel my body dancing inwardly, but always, I felt clumsy and stiff in my physical body.

It was strange,

how these sensations became freed within dreams.

Asleep, I did fly over cliffs and rolling hills.

inner sensation shutting out the pull of gravity

Asleep, my "body" did assume many sizes and positions; but then in the dreams, these were natural to the dream state, and did not hold in my awareness as split feelings to my physical body in my waking state.

Looking back, I am surprised that these sensations did not become a sense of vocabulary as did the inner sensations of words and sights. But, it was in the body senses that I carried pain and avoidance. *It was in my visual and tonal senses that I sought significance, meaning, and expression.*

Surely to turn this into vocabulary

would have been dance

## VI. INFOLDING

Watch more closely now

this dance

this experiential dance of meaning

convolving

these sensations

these structures

Watch *of* arise out of the tacit sea *in*

Watch *in* arise out of the tacit sea *of*

Two terms with this relation are reflected in the Taoist symbol of wholeness, the Tai-Chi. The symbol is a circle of two pollywog forms wrapped head to tail. The two forms appear in distinction to each other. The eye of each pollywog is also of opposing distinction. That is, Yang lies next to Yin. Balance is along their common line.

But still more, within Yang is a small circle of Yin and within the pollywog of Yin is a small dot of Yang -- two dimensions each, each one buried silently within the other.

This arrangement has a further and more profound consequence. The "eyes" are of fundamental importance. If the Tai-Chi symbol had only two opposing halves, then balance of strict dualism would be inferred. However, the "eyes" mark the inner penetration -- the *in-folding* of the opposing terms which implies that while the whole structure *appears* dualistic, the awareness

from either one "pole" contains the opposing pole. This infolding can be taken as a connection of the two terms *outside of the plane of dualism*. The dualism (two dimensions) implies a connection of higher dimension. This can be pictured by "tubes" looping in the third dimension which connect the inner "eyes" with their corresponding larger dualistically explicit "polly-wog" fields. The existence of dualism implies a higher (paradoxical) connective or transcendent state.

## VII. MEDITATION

Now meditate

follow awareness

enter first

inner Space

Begin to see Great Space:

Now

this inner gravitationless space *as experience* becomes a richer *Seeing*. The significance of such sensations becomes the significance of Being.

this then,

I begin to learn to sit

watch this string, this filament of consciousness.

In meditation I feel the position of my consciousness move further from the body. Rather, I become extended like a dipole, still and not "Letting go" because I am still using thought to try to "uncouple" myself.

watch the string

To realize now

simply observe

what is the nature of this string

simply observe

These are simply notes: They are attempts to describe the *sense of experience*. As such, since they are of "realities" within "realities," English will show its limits. English words denote normal *senses* of "reality." Therefore, the sensing of senses "within" senses, or of manifold senses lead to apparently "crazy" descriptions of manifold realities. Here, I do not pursue metaphysics -- only the *sense of experience* in the language of reality.

the quality of space;

Within a simple meditation -- *Within* a "physical" space (of a few cubic feet in front of me, say for example) there is another "space" of tremendous depth which may be perceived at the same time. It is as if normal air and light are only a *surface*, and even though extending in 3-space, float on the surface of a deeper, more brightly lit and subtle translucent volume.

Into this space I may tend to feel myself starting to move. It is so large that I, and whole worlds, may fly into it. This perception is, perhaps, somewhat akin to being on top of a mountain, looking out into an exceeding clear and rarefied sky, but looking through a "surface" (normal space) of unfocused tree branches, or the shifting haze of small insects nearly in front of one's own face

through the heart  
a vast traveling  
a vast winging of stars

And the sense of extended mind:

In everyday thinking I hear my own voice, inwardly. Normally, say, I hear the rain outside. It is in the background and clearly outside of my sensed limits of my head (much as when one is driving in a car, the scenery is outside one's *sensed* limits of the car). My inner or thinking voice is clear. It is saying these words as I write them, and it is clearly in the center region of the sensed limits of my head.

Now in meditation I hear my thoughts, this voice, on parity with all other "external" sounds.

Is the sound of a train any further from my mind than is my normal inner voice? No. There remains a center of awareness essentially at the center (or head) of the physical body, but awareness may move to the sound of the train and "center" on it

exactly as one normally centers on one's own inner voice when one "hears oneself think." In terms of the sensation of the above-described inner space, the sound of my thinking voice is as if in the background of my awareness.

In the meditative state, the sound of the rain, or the sound of my thoughts have exactly the same physicality. Both may sound as thoughts *within* in my "mind,"

or as sounds background to, or outside of my *center of awareness*.

The river does not flow  
it is the mind that flows

When the self is not remembered

only existence remains

This is humility

in its existence Compassion is Pure

a vast traveling

APPENDIX:

## Equivalents

These introspections are further reflected within the nature of *Equivalents*, a concept (developed by the photographer Alfred Stieglitz) which can be taken as the process of living a language, and which is illustrated here.

*Equivalence*: Seeing as a process of transforming. It may be seen as of three levels:

transforming (1) that which we observe

into (2) what may be held

into (3) what may be re-expressible

and hence, may again be observed by others.

While the examples forming this article concern the second level of equivalents -- this internalization and the internal wholeness involved in meaning, all three levels are explored in exercises developed within special classes on art and science given in 1983/84 at the Otis-Parsons Art Institute (Los Angeles). These classes are discussed in "The Experience of Knowing: Special Classes in Art and Science," in *LEONARDO*, Sept., 1986.

In one set of exercises the students were asked to read three items: a poem, a Zen koan, and a page from a book on physics. The instructions were "don't concern yourself with understanding them. Rather try to be aware of your own sensations and images which arise in the process of reading them." The query behind this exercise was to directly see something of the structure of one's individual *inner language*, and its relations to a sense of meaning.

### THE RESPONSE

The exercise was somewhat difficult for many of the students for it required each student to step back and catch his or her own thoughts quickly, and to hold their form, so that they could be simply and objectively observed.

For several in the class, when they attempted to do this, the first thing they expressed was a combination of their emotions about the subject and its effect or role in their lives.

Introspection did not yield insight into individual forms of perception.

What did arise first?

Insights into problems that were bothering them, or relations of themselves to events. They entered the readings at the first level of equivalence:

that is the immediate recognition of object, image, or concept

## THE FIRST LEVEL

From the poem

1. the hills step off into whiteness

From the koan

2. A monk told Joshu, "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me."

From the physics

3. When an electron hits the screen we record the position of the hit.

The subjects were often simply taken as *cultural* definitions. That is, the students upheld standard ideas of the meanings of the words and subjects, and their own emotional relations to these ideas.

When they did begin to introspect into the quality of imagery, they began to experience what may be called individuation and internalization of the image: the experience of correspondence between the image and some aspect of each self. This is entering the second level of Equivalences.

## THE SECOND LEVEL

For each person, entering each piece, the perceptual form was different. One student entered the poem as images within a three-dimensional space in which she felt immersed. The space was all around her, emotions including depression felt as realistic moods within the space. The koan seem as a puzzle, the imagery flatter, more like drawings in front of her eyes -- pieces to be fit together and solved. The physics text produced no coherent imagery. Even though there appeared a diagram on the page, no image came that could be held to the diagram. She said her visualization was of snow, or more correctly, it was like a garbled television image, of the type when the antenna is broken. The quality, the character of the images changed markedly as in the texts the intent of the writing seemed more and more impenetrable. The quality changed. Accessibility disappeared. The quality of meaning disappeared.

In what qualities of perception lay the ability to evoke meaning?

A second artist:

He had simple images when he read the koans

but they made no sense

until

increasingly he found himself thinking in Spanish

his mother tongue

and of fables he had heard as a child.

I asked him what would have happened if my request had been

don't hear an inner voice in Spanish,

Would he still have been able to make himself comfortable or give a sense of meaning or understanding to the koans?

He thought

No.

This is the equivalent at the second level:

The second level becomes clear:

Although there was a great range of individual responses to any one piece, one observation was shared by everyone

Somehow what was read had to be  
transformed into an Equivalent,  
into an individual sense in the form of perceptual

language

a voice and a language from my youth  
a particular body sensation  
a particular quality of visual

imagery

The Equivalent sinks even deeper within us. Call this the third level.

### THE THIRD LEVEL

At this level, the internalized form of the image is symbol within oneself.

Of this Stieglitz wrote of his clouds:

"Still everyone will never forget them having once looked  
at them. I wonder if that is clear."

At this level, the image itself is symbol, or is seed for new symbols which can be re-expressed. Perhaps, it is now a symbol which arises automatically in completing a sensation of meaning. It is the symbol which suggests itself as being complete enough to serve as the expression of an inner state, to be used in re-creating a feeling. Using it oneself, one may say "Yes, I have made myself clear," or "yes, that feels right."

The three exercises convolve into the wholeness of poetry.

"My bones hold a stillness, the far fields melt my heart."

"at that point the monk is enlightened"

$$"P_a = [a_1 + a_2]^2"$$

"The *gestalten* of fundamental perceptual forms which invites us to construe the pandemonium of sheer impression into a world of things and occasions, belongs to the presentational order ....

"May not the order of perceptual forms then be a possible principle for symbolization, and hence the conception, expression and appreciation of impulsive, instinctive and sentient life? May not a non-discursive symbolism of light and color or of tone be formulative of that life?"

D. Langer