
Of medium, sign and symbol

The problem as outlined earlier, is that the text is constituted by word-signs which, by merely indicating, reduce the infinite, sonorous, resonance of the context to a [this] bland, ideal, line of objects, each of which is capable of unlimited re-presentation. Thus all awkwardness is thoughtlessly eradicated by language, and it is this which has come back to haunt us in the form of contextual [environmental] degradation.

It's true, we must try to speak with more understanding, in a more thoughtful, symbolic way that might automatically relate us to (and not distance us from) our singular context - our environment. But practically, this cannot involve trying to change the physical means of communication. Instead, we must look afresh at the languages we speak and write, to see if they already contain some symbolic component that has gone unobserved.

The first thing we should do to achieve this is to replace the sign-symbol binary with the idea of 'medium' or 'intermediary'. So instead of words being either signs or symbols, they would simply be the medium between text and the context. Thus at least do we hold the door ajar for coincidence and perhaps gradually open it further, to sense our actual state of singularity. Our soul?

But we cannot lose sight of the idea of a symbol as the constituent of a singular thing that can nevertheless present its singularity in the form of a real object in space and time. Let us look firstly in the direction, not of the whole of language, nor the text, the paragraph, the sentence nor the word, but into the letters that form the word. And ask ourselves if the letters of the word are in their own right a literary object - a sign to an idea that can form the timeline of the text? Indeed there are circumstances in which this seems to be possible, such as a sentence that reads, 'The letter d is the fourth letter of the English alphabet'. But does that mean that our potential medium - d - is a sign or a symbol? If it were a sign, it would indicate a distinct idea in the timeline, but it does not seem to do so. Rather, 'd' relies wholly on the words around it (or on the reader's /speaker's innate knowledge of the alphabet) to indicate for it. 'D' in itself indicates no objective idea, which means that it can only be a symbol - the constituent of a singular thing - for the means to achieve that sound in speaking: 'd'; mouth shape; tongue placement; shape of lips, percussiveness of breath. These are as the singular, timeless, constituents of coincidence 'D'.

But what of the sound 'd' when spoken in everyday conversation in a walk beside Eyemouth harbour? For instance: "Oh my god! Did you see that dog, darling?" Now imagine those words rolling off your tongue in real life, right now, beside the harbour where you and darling are strolling. Is 'd' indicating an idea? No, of course not, it's simply a sound, part of the timeline of Eyemouth harbour-space, part of the sounds your mouth is making for your brain to communicate dog to darling.

Now imagine yourself standing in the same spot on the 14th of October 1881. You are straining your eyes out to see if Davie's there... in the water where the boat was just a few moments ago... "Oh my God Davie!... Davie.... Da.. D... d.. d."