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Mythophilia and the Sophology of Language

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Previous essays [1] have taken us on a tour through language [2],[3],[4],[5], by applying the ideas of Derrida and Lacan in the deconstructing-reconstructing of various logo-myths. Here we emphasized the importance of the undecidable, supplementary trace, and the psychological reconciliation of false binary oppositions, and the almost 'magical' influence this can have on the unconscious striving for creativity and individuation of the human personality-in-language [6]. We then went on to show how modern hypnotherapy seeks to steer a course between the mystical and the scientific realm, by acknowledging its roots in the former, and properly understanding and utilizing tools from the latter [7]. It was shown that in this way psycho-chaotic 'magic' can be worked successfully by disrupting the entrainment of brainwaves in deleterious, 'ironic' and 'self-referential,' conscious psycho(a)logical states [6], and allowing them to evolve into dynamic, creative, unconscious patterns. In this article we rekindle our '*mythophilia*' ('narrative-love') and delve back into our linguistic adventure with the aim of gaining more '*sophology*' ('wisdom-knowledge').

So now sliding down the serpents and clambering up the biblical towers in the Edenic game of language [2],[3],[4], we read in Genesis 11 – "{1} And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.' In the less familiar Hebrew it sounds this way: '*VaYiHee Kol HaAreTZ SaPHaH AKHaT ooDiVaRim AKHaDim*'" [5]. And it is enlightening to note that "Of one speech (of 'common' speech) in Hebrew is DEVARIM ACHADIM – a plural form. DEVAR ACHAD means 'one thing', the IM is the plural suffix. DEVAR means 'thing' as well as 'word'. The consonants DVR form the root of the verb 'to speak'. Translation loses the plural meaning of the suffix IM" [6]. So we might, quite reasonably, ask "… how Adam, Eve, and the Serpent were taught the same language" [8] – or indeed, whether they were all more closely related than we have been led to believe? And there's another question: "How did the serpent learn…? Did God teach … him, or did he happen to overhear God, when he was teaching Adam and Eve?" [9]. We could go so far as to ask God: "Did You really create a serpent that talks human language? What language was that by the way, French? Italian? American Indian maybe? Oh, no. America had not yet been discovered. How about Japanese? Russian? Oh, I'm forgetting, you gods had not yet toppled the Tower of Babel to confound us. It was Persian! They gave You that talking-serpent nonsense. I've got it! It was Hebrew. Right?" [10]. In other words, in terms of our symbols: how can a single language process develop to encompass the programming principle of God *Primus Loquens*, the naming principle of *Adam Nominator*, the generative principle of *Eve Generatrix*, and the reasoning principle of *Satanas Rogator*? After all we might conjecture that "Many centuries are required to produce a language capable of expressing complex ideas. It does not

seem to me that ideas can be manufactured by a deity and put in the brain of man" [8]. Moreover even the process of language acquisition must be queried since we can argue that "The teacher judges that his pupil has mastered the rule of addition if he obtains enough of the same results as the teacher is himself disposed to reach. I am on the right semantic track so long as my verbal usages agree with those of my community. This may sound very well, until we pause to consider what agreement comes to in this context. In the case of the teacher no provision has been made for anything more than the fact that on similar occasions he and his pupil make similar marks or noises. The practice of the community is supposed to bestow meaning on my utterances" [11]. And of course the problem lies here, for " ... what is the community except a collection of persons? And if each of those persons is supposed to take his orders about meaning solely from the others, it follows that none of them takes any orders. The whole semantic house of cards is based upon our taking in each other's washing, or would be if there were any laundry to wash" [11]. The answer to this quandary lies in the distinction between the innate and unique human capability to use language, and the realization of this capability in a specific form. That is, "Language ... must be looked upon as being an immediate given in mankind. Taken as a work of man's reason, undertaken in clarity of consciousness, it is wholly inexplicable. Nor does it help to supply man with millennia upon millennia for the 'invention' of language. Language could not be invented or come upon if its archetype were not already in the human mind ... As natural as the supposition of the gradual development of languages is, yet the 'invention' of language could only happen all at once" [12]. The logical consequence of this is that "Man is man only through language; to invent language, he would have to be man already. As soon as one imagines that it happened gradually ... that by means of a bit more invented language, man became more human, and being more human, thus was enabled to invent a little more language, one fails to recognize the indivisibility of human consciousness and human speech, and the nature of the intellectual act which is necessary to comprehend but a single word, but which then suffices to comprehend all of language" [12].

Now we have seen that generative Mother Eve "dreaming ... touched by time," mediated our Fall into reason [2] – [4], and we are led to ask what this means in terms of the nature of the postulated "generalized symbolic media" discussed above. We realise that "The mother is symbol of our primary unity and the thing we long to find again. But the paradox is that unity is the other side of differentiation, and for that the cutting edge of the Father and the Logos is necessary ... the Eros (connecting power) ... is the complement of the Logos (dividing power)" [13]. Now we know that "The emergence of a personified feminine figure called Wisdom occurred during the period of the Jewish exile in Babylon ... it appears that these exiled Jews were dependent on the illuminative presence of Wisdom to lead them back into their own muddled history, their own depths – and to light these up into universal meaning ... while they were in the harlot's midst, surrounded by her pagan myths and earth-goddesses, they discovered the fertility of their own imaginative gifts and wrote much of the Genesis account and Wisdom literature" [13]. We know that "Jung emphasized the importance of balance in a healthy mind. He wrote that modern humans rely too heavily on science and logic and would benefit from integrating spirituality and appreciation of the unconscious. Jung understands the

emergence of the Demiurge out of the original, unified monadic source of the spiritual universe by gradual stages to be analogous to (and a symbolic depiction of) the emergence of the ego from the unconscious" [14]. We have to bear in mind, however, that " ... it is uncertain as to whether the similarities between Jung's psychological teachings and those of the gnostics are due to their sharing a 'perennial philosophy', or whether Jung was unwittingly influenced by the Gnostics in the formation of his theories" [14]. Thus we follow Jung in realising that "Paradise Regained" requires "a second birth of a son from the mother Sophia [Wisdom], a divine birth which was characterized by a *coniunctio oppositorum* [joining of opposites] and which anticipated the *filius sapientiae* [son of wisdom], the essence of the individuation process" [15] since "While the masculine mysteries start from the priority of the spirit and look upon the reality of the phenomenal world and of matter as the creation of the spirit; the feminine mysteries start from the priority of the phenomenal, material world, from which the spiritual is born ... The two are complementary" [16]. Having understood this necessary dichotomy-zeugma or *coniunctio*, inherent in the universe of our discourse and thus all our experience, we arrive at the reconciling of opposites: "In this moment, biology fuses with society, history with Now, the many with the one. Because this is so, the writing has meaning. And the more closely my experiences and desires, perhaps unrecognized until this instant, are mapped by my attention onto the language-web, the more sharply my imagination reveals huge patterns of protosyntactic paths in that web lit up by those experiences and desires" [17].

Now the "birth of a son from the mother Sophia" has another natural consequence. In order to achieve this *coniunctio* we require " ... some place in which it can be created. Plato conjures one: a receptacle or *chora*" [18]. Now the metaphor of birth is redoubled and folded back upon itself since "We must try to describe in words a form that is difficult and obscure. It is the receptacle and, as it were, the nurse of all becoming and change ... Compare the receptacle to the mother, the ideal model to the father and what they produce to their offspring ... It is a kind of neutral plastic material, malleable, like gold. The things which pass in and out of it are copies of the eternal realities ... And we may notice, that anything that is to receive in itself every kind of character must be devoid of all character. The receptacle is invisible and formless, all-embracing, possessed in a most puzzling way of intelligibility, yet very hard to grasp ... It's something between container and contained. Like sand on the beach: it's not an object or a place, but merely the record of the movement of water" [18]. In terms of psychological implications we note that " ... it is clear from a comparison of Jung's writings and that of ancient Gnostics, that Jung disagreed with them on the ultimate goal of the individual. Gnostics in ancient times clearly sought a return to a supreme, other-worldly Godhead. In a study of Jung, Robert Segal claimed that the eminent psychologist would have found the psychological interpretation of the goal of ancient Gnosticism (that is, re-unification with the Pleroma, or the unknown God) to be psychically 'dangerous', as being a total identification with the unconscious. To contend that there is at least some disagreement between Jung and Gnosticism is at least supportable: the Jungian process of individuation involves the addition of unconscious psychic tropes to consciousness in order to achieve a trans-conscious centre to the personality. Jung did not intend this addition to take the form of a complete identification of the Self with the Unconscious" [14]. We can think of this

"dangerous … total identification with the unconscious" in terms of the Gnostic chymical cauldron mediating the magical reconciliation of opposites, the return to the totality of the Pleroma, as a an overwhelming pressure developing in the "neutral, malleable *chora.*" For if you keep pouring water into a bowl, it will eventually overflow. But suppose there was some sort of attachment – a one way lid, for instance – that prevented excess water from spilling out over the edge. What would happen if more and more water was pumped into a finite bowl, but none was permitted to flow out? Eventually, the pressure inside the bowl would build to the point where it would burst. That's precisely what happened … Eventually, the walls … were overwhelmed … and they shattered" [19] leading to the diversification and diaspora of languages, the beginning of a new age of individuality with everyone seeking their own "modern neutral language."

We can here fruitfully introduce the Derridean concept of "supplement" into our discussion of psychologically healthy language – where "The French word *supplément* means both addition and replacement. The supplement both extends and replaces – as a dietary supplement both adds to and becomes part of the diet" [18]. The point about this is that "The supplement obeys a strange logic. To be an addition means to be added to something already complete … yet it cannot be complete if it needs an addition … This supplement extends by repeating … But the supplement opposes by replacing" [18]. Thus we see that "The declaration 'The king is dead, long live the king!' must escape the grip of standard logic. It follows the logic of the supplement. The king must be *the same but different* …" [18]. And thus we return to an identification of God and the Serpent, masculine and feminine, something logical and poetic, and yet different from both. The whole point of this Edenic story then is that "Every act of his is marked by an unstable ambivalence. He is the god of calculation, arithmetic and rational science; and he also presides over the occult sciences, astrology and alchemy. He is the god of magic formulae, of secret accounts, of hidden texts. And so he is the god of *medicine*. The god of writing is the god of the *pharmakon* … Isn't the undecidable demi-god condemned to invent undecidables? Not just remedies, but *pharmakons*?" [18] – where the *pharmakon* is a potion that can both kill and cure. And this sly, ambivalent undecidability is what leads to the necessary rupture of the chymical *chora* of the *coniunctio*. Now in a modern context, we reach the same conclusions, just using different words. For as Wolfgang Pauli, one of the fathers of modern Quantum Mechanics and Indeterminacy, observed in correspondence with Jung, "It is true that in the empirical world of phenomena there must always be the difference between 'physical' and 'psychic', and it was the mistake of alchemists to apply a monist (neutral) language to concrete chemical processes. But now that matter has also become an abstract invisible reality for the modern physicist, the prospects for a psychophysical monism have become much more favourable" [20], and we are faced with the reconciliation of oppositions yet again. This leads us to realise that "In a modern language this archetypal occurrence must have to do with a *monistic psychophysical reality*, which is realized, when the chymic wedding of a male and a female god has taken place and as a result of this *coniunctio* a child has been born, which is, after Jung, the *homunculus*. Thus, we must find out, how we can describe this 21st century's archetypal occurrence in terms of a modern 'neutral language'

beyond quantum physics and depth psychology. Hermetic alchemy already had a vision of this process – but expressed in an archaic language" [20].

Thus we have unwittingly stumbled into the subtle terrain of philology and also mythology ... or even philosophy. And if we deconstruct-reconstruct and ask: should that be philomyth? ... or mythophilia? ... how about mythosophy? ... or sophophilia? Whatever term we choose, we conclude that "the consequence of the Babylonian diaspora scatters itself across the whole nebula of language" [6]. And is this the Lord's largesse for leading us to a philosophy for the love of lore; like the Biblical Daniel with his "{4} ... aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand ... the language and literature of the Babylonians" (Daniel 1 [21]). Or, is it Satan's stratagem for unleashing ligatures for linguistic manipulation: for "selling ourselves into bondage" like Joseph "{38} ' ... one in whom is the spirit of God?' {39} ' ... [As whom] there is no one so discerning and wise ...'" (Genesis 41 [21]). Or maybe language plays both parts, embracing Sophia and Logos in its confusing sophology. For natural language is the terrain of paradoxes, which arise from the fertile ground of "... analytically clumsy languages ... [which] break down into the linguistic manifestations of the language in which they're expressed" [22]. And "We cannot develop all the implications which would follow ... were Sophia recognized as the feminine complement to the masculine Logos ... a 'muse' signifying the extensions of that word from musician to amusement ... To play is to be utterly absorbed in the here and now – with presence. It is immediate reality, not postponed reality or a preoccupation with controlling the future" [13]. So it is that we have discovered "That is what is named from here on Babel: the law imposed by the name of God who in one stroke commands and forbids you to translate by showing and hiding from you the limit" [23]. And we can ask whether it is our task in species individuation to recover our sense of playfulness, paradoxically through rediscovering yet rejecting "... the most analytically exact language imaginable ... [where] everything is flexible, and ideas come in huge numbers of congruent sets, governed by the same words..." [22] in order to regenerate "the very means by which beauty enters the world ... " [13] and to realise that to " ... honour Sophia would also be the acknowledgement that beauty belongs with truth and that we must work for its release"? [13].

So, after our walk in the Edenic Garden, we can feel sure that "Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of Being insofar as they bring the manifestation to language and maintain it in language through their speech. Thinking does not become action only because some effect issues from it or because it is applied. Thinking acts insofar as it thinks" [24]. We have gone on to illustrate the way in which "Derrida has argued that communication is always subject to iterability, citation and grafting. If so, it can't be taken as a guaranteed, masterable passage of meanings. Language, Derrida says, is a 'non-masterable dissemination'. If that's the case, we lose absolute assurance that we can 'say what we mean' or 'know what someone is thinking'. ... We can't even be sure who is speaking or writing: the identity of the author or signatory who appears to have produced the discourse, who's signed for it, and who's supposed to be – in the logocentric view – the origin or centre of the discourse. Derrida derails communication, introducing disorder into its

foundational concepts" [18]. This of course leads to the Lacanian trap that " ... *alienation is situated in the register of language*. If speech was first seen as giving the subject some sort of identity, now *language has the role of blocking identity*. ... the subject is no longer recognized but abolished" [25]. And returning to *El Desdichado* we can see how subconscious deconstructive creativity or psycho-chaotic semiotics [26] "works by playing with juxtaposed notions" [27] and how thus the artist "sinks into the depths of his emotional turmoils, and comes up, grabbing the conflicting desires and weaving them together into his art, chanting the moans of the modest Saint and the screams of the exuberant Fairy" [27]. Since we can ".... feel sure that ... poetic language doesn't really operate at this literalistic level and that the fascination of these lines ... has to do with the linguistic energies contained in words" [28], we understand how the creative power arises "... not from understanding and reflecting on references and symbols, but on letting them sink in along with the music of the sounds, turning poetic words into magic" [27]. The use of such unconscious language-magic results in the " ... production of a completely new type of *knower*" [29]. So, perhaps we should look on the bright side of the "natural darkness" [30] and form an understanding that for a human " ... language is not simply 'a darkness pulled out of us.' Rather, it is an attempt to pull out the darkness, expose it to light, let it burn away the veil that keeps him from reconciling with his father" [31]. We can thus prevent ourselves, children of the "black sun," from being "gloomy" and "unconsoled" after our Fall into the "melancholy" knowledge of language, as Lucifer, "sole star" and bringer of Reason, reconciles with his Father. We might therefore offer in conclusion the comment "Communication? It is perhaps possible, if by communication we mean transactions which presuppose repetition-with-difference, quotation and re-insertions, without boundaries. And that could lead to some rethinking of everyday life" [18]. And our conclusion for communication is that we must thus be Abel to embrace " ... the Law of Possible Failure: it is always possible to fail and it's a necessary possibility" [18].

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