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of 10-17-94

## WRITING AND READING TEXTS ARE A SPEECH EVENTS

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Of course, although work such as Bickerton's gives invaluable insights into "protolanguage," we cannot recover the point at which human language as we know it originated. But it is possible to imagine, at least schematically, some of the problems which it would have to solve, some bridges it would have to cross. Imagine, for example, a situation in which the first genuinely human word was said. Whatever the utterance was, the one or ones being addressed had to understand that it was an utterance.

Even after language has been used for thousands of years, every use of language involves the nonlinguistic, time-bound universe, that is, always involves surroundings more than language itself. Use of language--oral, written, printed, or electronic--is a speech event, a happening, in a context which includes countless elements besides just words: the persons speaking, the physical setting, the historical and geographical setting, the relationships of the interlocutors to one another--parent and child, dominant or subordinate, and so on ad infinitum. Words are never defined by other words alone.

Thus, because every use of language is involved in prelinguistic time as well as linguistic time, every use of languages is interpretive, which is to say hermeneutic.

First human word(s): a speech event. All use of language is a speech event--not just a matter of words. "Words, words, words" mean nothing unless built into a nonverbal context, which always controls meaning of words, directly or indirectly. Bauman and Scherzer, Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking.

First human words=beginning of interpretation or hermeneutic. Language is essentially hermeneutic, not labeling. Hermeneutics evolves through primary oral culture, writing, print, reaching a new high in the electronic age.

Oral, writing, print, electronics: emerge today as information and/or communications age. (a) Information systems have been operating in the universe from the start (chemical bonding), indescribably complex systems in living beings for pretty close to a billion years; (b) communication systems (infra-human animals nearly a billion years; human, reflective, communicating about communication, about consciousness c. 150,000 years).

Information systems, although so old, have been studied as such only beginning with Mendel. Communication, although no older than H. sapiens, has been studied for thousands of years--with great intensity since invention of writing. First "art" or "science": rhetoric.

But information accessed by human consciousness is now billions upon billions of times greater than it was even a century ago. This information has also served human communication (electronics, telephone, radio, television, computers) so that today can be styled the age of information as well as the age of communication. In fact, information threatens to overwhelm communication. We know more than we can readily handle.

Digitization serves information, but is not the same as information, which is prehuman. Origins of digitization: fingers. Gradual and inevitable dehumanization of digital design. (cf. musicologists on digitized symphonies, etc.).

Digitization and hermeneutics curiously bound in time, in history: complementary opposition, and collaboration as well. Digitization maximizes fractioning, separation; hermeneutics ambitions tying all knowledge and meaning together in the seamless web of history. Still, digitization (a) serves hermeneutics and increases the need for hermeneutics (interpretation). Another instance of the hermeneutic circle.

Dalí's Persistence of Memory only capitalizes on what is evident on all sides today, the culmination of what began as the technology of handwriting in the technology of digitization. The encrypting which began with manual inscription has reached a peak in the modeling of all human communication on digitization.

"Information age" an encrypted age. Digitization serves encryption. Writing serves incryption: it removes discourse from its real nondiscursive context or setting.

Dalí's Persistence of Memory a signal of resistance to digitization. Another parallel signal is the cult of hermeneutics. Digitization fractioning, hermeneutics holistic.

Hermeneutics as antigen to digitization. But the two collaborate.