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The following text is the second part of a shortened version of a speech given in Dornach on April 5, 1918 on the occasion of the *Internationalen Fachkonferenz für Eurythmisten, Sprachgestalter, Heileurythmisten und Interessierte* vom 2. bis 6. April 2018 am Goetheanum. The first part has been published in the fall issue of the journal of the *Sektion für Musizierende und Redende Kunst*

Part I of this lecture ended with the following questions which were then discussed in small groups:

Can you see any connections between what you have experienced as Eurythmists and Speech formation teachers and what we have just heard about the infant and child's acquisition of language?

How do you understand what Steiner is saying about the significance of the experience of this dimension of language for the development of a higher humanity, a higher Self?

Part II

IV Max Picard: *Das Vorgegebene*, the Word and the Silence behind Speech - *das Schweigen*

In thinking about these questions, I have found the works of the Swiss philosopher Max Picard to be extremely illuminating and I would like to introduce some of his thoughts here.

Picard views language as being woven into the general and underlying order of the world: “Die Sprache des Menschen ist in die Ordnung der Welt eingewoben” (Max Picard, *Der Mensch und das Wort*. Zürich: Rentsch Verlag, 1955, 61) He echoes what Maurice Merleau-Ponty also writes that the entire language already lives ontogenetically in the child, and phylogenetically in humankind; that the point at which the first human beings could express themselves in language, in stark contrast to the sounds and cries of animals, the whole of language must have been present in them. This is an argument that Wilhelm von Humboldt also made. And Martina Maria Sam gave us in her lecture a clear picture of how we can begin to imagine that first intuitive phase of human language.

And then Picard says something very striking about the child's language in contrast to the adult's language. He first introduces the concept of *das Vorgegebene* – that which is already given to us in language from birth on and then elucidates the child's unique relation to this dimension:

“The language of the child is closer to that language which is first given to us than the language of the adult. The child is covered by it, the words of the child only come through that covering slowly. The child speaks wholly out of it, it exists within him, it is that which moves the child into language. The child doesn't speak slowly because it first has to learn language, but because he or she belongs to a completely different world” (Ibid. 12). (All translations in this text are my own)

In the original language:

...Die Sprache des Kindes ist näher dem Vorgegebenen als die des Erwachsenen, das Vorgegebene umhüllt das Kind, das Wort des Kindes kommt nur langsam hindurch. Das Kind spricht ganz im Vorgegebenen, es existiert in ihm, das Vorgegebene bewegt das Kind in die Sprache hinein, es

redet nicht langsam, weil es die Sprache erst erlernen muß, sondern weil es einer ganz anderen Welt angehört(Ibid. 12).

And Picard believes that in and through the Word - and he makes a clear distinction between what he calls the Word and what he calls “word noise,” which is his term for the everyday informational use of language – one was the closest one could ever come to God. And he then considers the Word in its smallest and most basic element - the phoneme (*der Laut*). And even in this shortest of speech sounds - the microcosmos of a language - he sees the presence of the Spirit:

“What appears to be the least connected to the Spirit – the phoneme – the single speech sound - appears in the Word as though it belongs primarily to the Spirit. This unity of phoneme and Word could have never been created by human beings, and is thus a proof of the spiritual origins of language.” (Ibid. 43)

Was am wenigsten vereinbar erscheint mit dem Geist, der Laut, ist so im Wort, als gehöre der Laut primär zum Geist. Diese Einheit des einander Entgegengesetzten hätte nie durch den Menschen selber zustande kommen können, auch sie ist ein Beweis für den göttlichen Ursprung der Sprache (Ibid. 43).

And he makes the point that this is the case in every language; that throughout the entire human range of speech sounds the Word can be expressed in every language. And he sees a further underlying connection between all human languages in their expression of the Word: they all generate Light. And without the Word we would not be able to live in the light:

“Without the Word there would only be brightness as opposed to darkness. Through the Word brightness becomes Light. For an animal the day is only bright: for human beings the day is Light. (...) And today, almost always, language is no longer light, but brightness - artificial light.” (Ibid. 50-51,55).

Ohne das Wort gäbe es nur eine Helligkeit entgegengesetzt dem Dunkel. Durch das Wort wird die Helligkeit Licht. ... Für das Tier ist der Tag nur hell, weiß; für den Menschen ist er Licht. “ (...) Heute, fast immer, ist die Sprache nicht mehr Licht, sie ist nur noch Beleuchtung“ (Ibid.50-51 55).

IV.1 Die Welt des Schweigens

Perhaps the most remarkable connection he makes is the one between language and silence, or rather he uses a word in German which doesn't translate well into English. He speaks of *das Schweigen* – which can only be translated as that dimension of silence created by not speaking. And he makes the case that the Word, as opposed to “Word noise” can become the Word exactly because it is connected to that dimension of silence and that without that connection it loses itself, loses its powers of regeneration and its substance and is in danger of becoming word-noise. And since we are living in times in which we are continually surrounded by word-noise both silence and language are endangered:

“When the word is no longer connected to this silence, it can no longer regenerate itself, it loses its substance. Language today is on its own, spreading itself out, emptying itself hurriedly to get to an end. (...) Language became an orphan when it was taken away from silence. It is no longer a mother tongue, but only an ‘orphaned tongue’” (Max Picard, *Die Welt des Schweigens*. Zürich: Rentsch Verlag 1959, 37-38)

“Wenn das Wort nicht mehr mit dem Schweigen verbunden ist, kann es sich nicht mehr regenerieren, es verliert von seiner Substanz. Wie von selber redend ist die Sprache heute,

und, sich ausstreuend und sich entleerend, scheint sie auf ein Ende zuzueilen.

(...) Man hat die Sprache verwaisen lassen, indem man sie vom Schweigen wegnahm. Sie ist keine Muttersprache mehr, nur noch eine Waisensprache. (...) (Max Picard, Die Welt des Schweigens. Zürich: Rentsch Verlag 1959, 37-38)

For Picard this dimension of silence has existential and living qualities and it is not only present in language and before and after words, but it exists in its own right and has no beginning and no end:

„There is no beginning of this silence and also no ending... When the silence is there, it is as if there were never anything else, only that. This silence perceives human beings. It looks at us, far more than we look at it. We do not examine the silence, but this silence examines us.“ (Ibid., 11)

Es gibt keinen Anfang vom Schweigen und auch kein Ende... Wenn das Schweigen da ist, dann ist es, als habe es nie etwas anderes gegeben: immer nur es. Wo das Schweigen ist, da wird der Mensch vom Schweigen angeschaut; es schaut den Menschen an, mehr als der Mensch das Schweigen. Er prüft das Schweigen nicht, aber das Schweigen prüft ihn (Ibid.,11).

In the end he offers an example of where we can still experience the Word:

“It is only in the language of the poets that the Word that is real, that is still connected to this silence, sometimes appears.”(Ibid. 37-38)

Nur in der Sprache des Dichters erscheint manchmal noch das wirkliche, mit dem Schweigen zusammenhängende Wort.” (Ibid. 37-38)

These are the thoughts that I would like to touch on in the last part of this speech and thereby draw connections to impulses that Steiner offered, particularly in the last years of his life.

V Poetry and the Word in an Age of Prose

Where can we experience language as light, language born out of silence, still connected to that cosmic dimension which is given to the child – *das Vorgegebene*. It is evident that in the prosaic age in which we live, experiencing this dimension of language requires our our active and concerted efforts. The general poverty of everyday language – think of text messages, emails, Twitter, seems to represent a polarity to this dimension of language. This is what both Stephan Hasler and Martina Maria Sam referred to as the great challenge for us today. How can we reconnect to that which was originally given to us?

In countless lectures, Rudolf Steiner described how the experience of Art can help us to discover and develop our highest possibilities. What is it that the poet, the playwright, the writer, the storyteller, the Eurythmist do that help us reveal those dimensions in ourselves and in the world? I want to suggest that they are listening acutely to what comes from their innermost beings and, at the same time, listening closely to the world. As Steiner continually pointed out: to know the world you need to look inside yourself and to know yourself you need to look into the world. Stefan Hasler spoke on the first evening spoke about the importance of the *Hörraum* - a space in which we can hear and listen. And I think this is what poets create for us. We have been able to experience during this conference such spaces for listening both to language and to silence in many different languages in the last few days.

We can experience this in its fullest form in Shakespeare. He can be considered a paradigm insofar

as he has transformed the dramas of life into the most exalted language that was ever written in English. Taking stories that others had written, Shakespeare managed in the context of the theatre to create a language and pictures that have never stopped inspiring people throughout the world, from Elizabethan England until today. And this has even been the case in translation. For more than 400 years his plays have been continually performed, not only in English-speaking countries, but throughout the world. In Germany, he is still the most often performed playwright year after year.

How did he manage to do this? There are many things that came together. Fortunately for him and for us, he lived in a uniquely poetic age and it is important to realize that the most beautiful and influential works in the history of the English language were set down at exactly the same time and place: Shakespeare's dramas and the King James Bible. Poetic language in Elizabethan England was very much a part of both the higher culture of the aristocratic and educated classes, as well as being the language that everyone else regularly heard; not only in the remarkably well-attended theatres, but also in the two hour long sermons they listened to in church every Sunday. John Donne, the minister at St. Pauls Cathedral, directly across the Thames from the Globe Theatre, was also one of the greatest poets of the Renaissance. And yet even in this uniquely poetic times in which hundreds of young playwrights were competing to write for theatres that were packed every night, Shakespeare's plays enjoyed a unique status. What he achieved in the English language had never occurred before and has never been surpassed.

Rudolf Steiner spoke of the unique importance of Shakespeare on different occasions including in his speeches in Stratford upon Avon, April, 23, 1922 on the occasion of the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday. And he makes clear that from Shakespeare we can draw inspiration for our own times. In his lecture on "Shakespeare and the New Ideals of Education" he views Shakespeare's works as a decisive impulse for the future.

„We feel in Shakespeare that more than a single human personality is at work: the spirit of his century is at work and, in fact, the spirit of the whole of human evolution. (...) The characters in Shakespeare's plays come not from a human intellect but from that power kindled and fired in a human being that we must seek again if we want to develop true human Ideals.“ (Stratford on Avon April 23, 1922)

In Shakespeare wirkt mehr als eine einzelne menschliche Persönlichkeit, in Shakespeare wirkt der Geist seines Jahrhunderts, und damit im Grunde genommen der Geist der ganzen Entwicklung der Menschheit. (...) So wurden die Gestalten seiner Dramen etwas, was nicht aus menschlichem Intellekt heraus, sondern was aus der entzündeten Kraft des Menschen heraus gekommen ist, die wir wieder suchen müssen, wenn wir zur Entwicklung wirklicher Menschheitsideale kommen wollen. ("Shakespeare und die neuen Erziehungsideale" Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, (1959), S. 32)

And he makes clear that this happens precisely because of the way in which Shakespeare was connected to the Spiritual World:

“Shakespeare lived in all his work in the spiritual world; at the same time, he lives in a world of Ideals. Thus having Shakespeare present in our minds and souls could be exactly what gives the men and women of today the strength and the inner impulse to follow such Ideals.”(Rudolf Steiner 23.April, 1922 Stratford upon Avon)

...Shakespeare lebt mit all seinem Schaffen durchaus im Geistigen, zugleich aber in einer idealen Welt. Und so könnte es wohl vor allen Dingen das Aufnehmen Shakespeares in unser eigenes

Gemüt, in unsere eigene Seele sein, das gerade dem heutigen Menschen die Kraft, den inneren Impuls dazu gibt, wenn ich mich des Ausdruckes bedienen darf: Idealen nachzugehen. (“Shakespeare und die neuen Erziehungsideale.” Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, (1959), 21)

What Steiner describes here – the possibility of receiving from the spiritual world, the strength and the inner impulse to follow one's ideals - is inevitably also tied to the way in which we perceive the world through our senses. And in this context, what Steiner termed the social or higher senses – hearing, language, thought and Self must be considered as crucial.

We began our discussion of language by considering how the sense of hearing as the first of the higher senses already develops in the womb and I would like to end with how the sense of hearing later in life can be extended into a listening to language, to thought and to the self of another human being. In doing this I am inspired by the work of the psychologist Carl Rogers, who based his approach to psychoanalysis on the concept of *deep listening* as the basis for healing. For Rogers, deep listening means a form of listening that becomes attuned to the inner world of a person and perceives what can also lie below the conscious intent of the speaker. He believes that is through this process of deep listening that a patient who thus feels him or herself heard, can discover in themselves what it is that is necessary for their healing and development. This is a listening which fully involves all the higher senses: Rogers describes what happens when this occurs:

“When I do truly hear a person and the meanings that are important to him at that moment, hearing not simply his words, but him and when I let him know that I have heard his own private meanings, many things happen. There is first of all a grateful look. He feels released. He wants to tell me more about his world. He surges forth in a new sense of freedom. ... (T)he more deeply I can hear the meanings of this person, the more there is that happens. One thing I have come to look upon as almost universal is that when a person realises he has been deeply heard ... in some real sense he is weeping for joy. It as though he were saying ‘Thank God, somebody has heard me. Someone knows what it’s like to be me.’ In such moments I have had the fantasy of a prisoner in a dungeon, tapping out day after day a Morse code message, ‘Does anybody hear me?’ And finally one day, he hears some faint tappings which spell out ‘Yes’. By that one simple response he is released from his loneliness; he has become a human being again.” (Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn*. Columbus Oh.: Merrill, 1969, 223-224) emphasizes in original.

At the same time, Rogers also hears something else. This kind of deep listening opens up another dimension of human existence for him, and I think this aspect is also highly significant with respect to all that we have been considering. He writes:

“There is also another peculiar satisfaction in it. When I really hear someone, it is like listening to the music of the spheres, because, beyond the immediate message of the person, no matter what that might be, there is the universe.” (Ibid.)

I would like to suggest that this dimension he perceives „the music of the spheres“ is that dimension the newborn and infant are awake to, which Picard refers to as the “Vorgegebene” and which is inherent in the Word. And I would further like to suggest that it is also the dimension which will continue to inspire our work when we listen to it.