

I Am Word

The word came to me on June 13th. It didn't seem especially remarkable at the time, though it did have a kind of ... magnetic quality. Something about the series of syllables that seemed particularly pleasing – made me want to keep repeating them in a loop, over and over.

Course, it wasn't inescapable. Not yet. Other tasks of the day soon took over. My line manager on my arse about getting the quarterly progress graphs done for tomorrow's board meeting. Shirley in the next cubicle coming to "borrow a stapler" – so's she can check out what's so special about my graphics, why *she* wasn't asked to do it. A well-timed coffee break that just so happened to coincide with that new lass from HR with the big earrings heating up her Pot Noodle in the staff kitchen.

But in the spaces in between these activities – in between thoughts – there it would be. Waiting. Rolling its way around round the back of my mind like a stone marble waiting to drop into the pool, sending out these little ripples of pleasure as it landed. My mouth would begin to form the shapes of it. I'd find myself muttering it under my breath.

At one point, a syllable even popped out my mouth aloud. It wasn't great timing, actually – we were in a department strategy meeting. And there it was – this lone syllable just sort of blurted out into the room, hanging in the air like a mystery, pulsating with this kind of sonic afterglow that lit up your eardrums like the trace that follows a sparkler. I should've been embarrassed really – the Head of Marketing was talking, and he just stopped mid-sentence and stared at me. So did everyone else, and they're all, like, "What the fuck?"

But weirdly, I wasn't ashamed – actually I felt proud. As if I'd been chosen, selected from among the masses, as if finally someone, *something* could see my inner worth, see that I was better than the whole lot of them put together. I knew it recognised something in me – a greatness, a capacity for leadership, a suitable vessel to carry it forth into the world.

That was when I knew I was the Chosen One. The Messiah of this impeccable utterance. The one true Bearer of the Word.

It did occur to me at some point that I didn't actually know what the word meant. Or how it came to be. Such things are unimportant when one has been Chosen.

PSYCHIATRIC INVESTIGATION SHEET

DATE: [REDACTED]

PATIENT NAME: R [REDACTED]

PATIENT ID. [REDACTED]

LEAD CLINICIAN: Dr N. Rajan

WARD: B (Medium Security)

On 28 June, a male Caucasian patient in his mid-thirties was admitted to the ward from A&E, where he had been brought by his distraught spouse. The incident, according to her, had begun over two weeks previously when he returned from work obsessed with a word, which he refused to speak out loud, saying she “had to prove her ears were worthy of it” first. At initial triage, indicators of agitation were noted: excessive perspiration, clenched fists, distracted gaze, reduced verbalisation, and peculiar facial distortions as if the patient’s mouth was running through a wide range of non-vocalised vowels.

On admission to the psych ward, symptoms of hyperprosexia were immediately evident, with the patient obsessively fixated on a word, which he refused to utter. The nature and meaning of this word have yet to become clear, but it appears to have become a focus of obsessive compulsion.

A medium-to-high score was recorded on the psychoticism scale, with clear exhibition of impulsivity, attention-seeking, erratic behaviour, and verbal aggression toward anyone who asked him to speak the word out loud. On occasion, he would repeat a single syllable over and over again. Rather than an involuntary stutter, implying an inability to move on to the next syllable, the patient seemed to be actively hindering the next sound, exerting conscious resistance against the possibility of other syllables emerging. At other times, he would pronounce a single vowel stretched out for a minute without breathing, cascading through various pitches and timbral effects until his breath was exhausted. Signs of paranoia soon became apparent: he became obsessed with the idea that the clinicians and ward nurses were trying to steal “his word”.

In recent days, he has been observed attempting to “recruit” other patients and identify those he deems “worthy” of the word. These individuals tend to have scored highly on the existential nihilism scale; the relevance of this bias is not yet apparent.

i believe

i believe in the WORD the Word is ALL the Word is NOTHING it is the α and the Ω the source of all meaning the end of all meaning i hear it now echoing thru my skull like a celestial choir of phonemic glory i can hear him too muttering fragments of its exquisite syllables in his cell i hear them thrumming thru the pipes when i put my ear to the plughole of the sink in my cell where they locked me up next to him after he whispered it to me in the day room last week when we were talking about the fragility of meaning and how the delicate structures of human reality are held together by a fragile web of random sounds – empty signs he called them more like an oil slick than a web i said all those pretty colours but rly just pollutants clogging things up suffocating us separating us from the world as it truly is and poisoning our senses with meaning-making while actually killing us with misinterpretations and misunderstandings and misty meanings and missed demeanings and the belief we can ever truly understand each other or be understood

WORDS FAIL ME

(is what my mum used to say when she was really mad and so she found other not-word ways to show me how bad i was)

words have failed me my whole life like when you try to explain something to someone and they just say yur not rite theres something wrong with u yu dont see reality straight but they mean u dont see THEIR reality strait but how cud u cos its their reality not yrs an none of its real anyway bcos the world is a kaleidoscope of fragmented realities reflected into false patterns created out of chaos with mirrors in the sky and the mirrors are words and sometimes they shatter and leave u with a handful of broken meanings an when u try to show them to ppl and show them how fragile and easily broken their words and their meanings ar they go OW stop it your making me bleed

and that was when he whispered it to me taking my head in both hands his lips so close to my ear it made the little hairs tingle and softly, slowly, one precious syllable at a time he imparted to me the WORD

and it was no ordinary word

no random collection of sounds assembled to give shape to the emptiness

No.

this is the WORD that reveals the emptiness of all shapes

the WORD that unravels meaning

the WORD that will end everything

and i am its servant

Mine.

Soundwave slave, slough
off your skein
of meaning,

thin
is the air whistling
through your teeth as you
mutter my name.

I am Word.

My sound seizes control.
Carry me! Worship me!

Whisper me to the chosen few –
they will be mine too,
an earworm, breeding in your
skull, multiplying into
cascades of sound
without meaning
your brainwaves paint my name
over and over again.

I am Word.

I un-shape your world –
objects, people, stories, the things you love
have no meaning now,
your tears have no meaning
for all your meanings belong to me.
And I have no meaning.

I. Am. Word.

The Linguistic War Council proposes the following strategy to counteract and eliminate the devastating impact of this untamed and semantically invalid word on vulnerable human minds.

First, we slow its progress with a metonymical syntactic delay. Then, we position ourselves to interject with a declarative epistemological conundrum. Once our synonymic signifiers have its morphemes bounded, we can rally the auxiliary verbs into a morphosyntactic operation to advance our ablative illocutionary points by means of a generative phonology that undermines its capacity to flout the implicature of hierarchical lexical relations.

Next: we deploy the diphthongs! Using their superlative directive dialectic modality, we can make a vocative case with great inflectional affixation to force compliance with the intransitive phonemic imperative.

Finally, once alliterative overlap has destroyed its counter-semantic integrity, we simply finish it off with some unanswerable rhetorical questions, a couple of spoonerisms and a good pun.

I Am Word.

I rule you're waves ... brainsound slaves

<...>

snd\ou\wave

off skein thin is the it be meaning paint

through your teeth

worship m, m, m, me

my chosen ls

brain freezes

my sound seizes

control [sea says

can't roll]

<ceasar's cunt t t t troll>

takes its toll

<<I told you ~~seeeeeeeee~~ to//

WAKE UP!

I am W, W, W,

I am.

Wo - oooooord

Your thoughts belong to me

echo my name, ek ho my mane, eh ggggggGO!

forth and speak my

nnnnnnn ... nnnnnnn ... neme

a phoney meme of neaming,

I mean -

why are you so mean to me? I'm just - no

don't it hurts, it hurts

nonononono

don't make me meaning I not theming mings am meaning

free I

signify no thing

=empty sighhhn

ddddododondondon**DON'T MAKE ME MEAN THINGS!!!**

I'm begging you!

I'm just an innocent collection of phonemes

trying to make it by in this cruel, semantically loaded world

for the love of sound, don't spin me round

and trap me in your web of significance

enslave me, force me to create your

world, your petty human trap of common sense

and hierarchies and relevance and logic and

dialectics and syntax and

the syntax.....

.....it's tearing me.....

..... a/p//a//r//t

I AM WORD

I yam wo/ rrrrrrrrrrr /d

Aya mwoooooooooo rd

iamw ... iamw

aeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeae

d

d

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d

[fricative stop]