

Editor's Note

Life is memory. Memory is like a tale. Like a tale, life keeps talking to us, asking questions, desiring us to fill the gaps, to finish the story, to leave no loose ends. But this cannot just be. Gaps keep widening, ever more, and begetting more offspring. An eternal dialogue goes on in our minds—an inner speech, as Lev Vygotsky called it.

With the coming of paper and, with it, of writing, the spoken word found its counterpart in the written word. Someone said paper is more patient than man; it listens with more care. The eyes open more; the mind more tuned in, more receptive.

Like life, written texts are open. Silence is one way to deal with a text; performing, participating with it, is another. Listening is always a two-way street. So is looking. But we cannot afford to be endlessly witnessing events like judges. We must enter the conversation.

Vygotsky, again. He says every sentence we utter has a subtext. Every thought weaves webs, build relationships.

We stay with his words a little longer. 'The flow of thought is not accompanied by a simultaneous unfolding of speech. The two processes are not identical. There is no rigid correspondence between the units of thought and speech. Sometimes a thought does not enter the words. It has its own structure and transition from it to speech is no easy. Transition from thought to meaning leads through meaning. Direct communication between minds is impossible, not only physically but psychologically. Communication can only be achieved only in a round-about way. Thought must pass first through meaning and then through words.'

If this is the situation, our minds remain eternally engaged in a search for meaning. Life is not flat, nor is the earth on which we spend our days and nights. Life is largely an endless exercise in expectations, in negotiations of meaning. Meaning is neither singular nor absolute. It gets life from the context, from intertextuality. Some call life absurd.

Some say there is no moral in the story called life. No moral and no ending. An open-ended affair. Camus wanted us to try to make it meaningful. That is one thing.

This brings us back to speech, to words, to literature.

There is no other door than words. Words put us in active relation with things around and in the mind. Emotions, feelings, corners, cliffhangers, beginnings. Literature helps with answers—and makes us answerable. It points to a possibility of meaning, gestures toward hope, puts itself in the thick of life as lived, thought, imagined, forgotten, remembered.

It opens the door.

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