

Wisdom?

“and those of us, never angels, who are verbal...”

-Jorge Luis Borges-

“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom”

Psalms 90:12

“Wisdom” bewilders me. *Sapientia. Sophia.* Something, maybe about knowledge and rectitude (*homo sapiens*) - ? *Right* wisdom. *Right* action. *Right...* I think there are about four of them. Those *right* things.

“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and *right*” (Proverbs 20:11) (and why only boys? such early troubles with loving things – *philo-sophy* – *loving* wisdom, craving it, wanting it, aching for everything rather than just being/having wisdom – some spirit of conquering and battle, avarice? I don’t know). That word again, *right*. Rectified, demonstrable, established, supportable – a *way* of living.

Buddhists have it. Christians have it. Humanists, Marxists, Anarchists and Atheists have it. Jews, Muslims, Teenagers, Parents, Relativists and Moralists and Philanthropists have it. Poets have it. All –isms and –ologies, habits, practices and vocations have these rulebooks of rectitude – of bests and correctnesses and well, *beliefs*.

But what do these guidelines or protocols *mean*? What are the *for* and *about*? And why so many *true* and *pure* ones? Authentic, recommended, attested, of noble lineage – codes, codes, codes of rectitude.

I doubt I’ll ever know. But I can’t see a way to escape them. Should you proffer that there’s a kind of generalized hybrid principle or community of rectitudes, perhaps a relative rectitude, just saying so presents yet another form of what one thinks is *right*, *beneficial* or *good* in contradistinction to someone...imposition. Rectitude.

Sigh.

“The mind is unable to think the mind”

-Edmond Jabes-

Plainly and simply, like a collective of individual cells that don’t work without one another, even though they’re individual and constructed toward their own survival...

What’s that got to do - ?

Ummmmmm *baffling*, that’s what I was getting at. *Baffling*. I’ve been working over these thoughts for days...like sifting chaff from wheat, salt from sugar...I make sense of very little. But *baffling* is my word to the wise. Elsewise, otherwise, contrariwise, pennywise, sidewise...

Slant-wise...like whatever it was that started me thinking about these things in the first place...

Ache: some apparently constituent doubling or incongruity betwixt human beings and their reality, surround, context and ways.

Swarm and *Absorb*: *this* human's meeting of that longing with diverse fragmenting and experiences of said "reality", i.e. the shifting surround and shifty within.

Maybe "wisdom" came up in the baffling conundrum of how or whether one could possibly reach a satisfactory relation or fulfillment with desire and want and reality; or recognize convergences of ache and swarmed absorption?

Everything *I* think about, or even just the thinking process itself, seems to resolve itself for me into "I DON'T KNOW!"

I don't know why I ach, nor why I'm diffuse and absorbent. Why no "wisdom" or advised "rectitudes" add up to satisfaction and sufficiency, personally.

Which isn't to say I feel lost or pointless.

I began this essay to try to talk about something I've been unable to talk about.

The other day I was studying the personhood of verbs. What linguistic scholar Emile Benveniste referred to as "verbal person" (which incited me, sneakily, to insert my "self" into his writings). He pointed out that no action is without person, we can think of no activity without also thinking a pronoun, personalized or de-personalized. There can be no first-person without reference to a second (no "I" without "You") and no third person without the first two always being in mind. Two distinct persons, or the awareness of such, is required to de-personalize and refer to a third or group indistinctly.

I realized in a manner akin to becoming aware that an automobile accident is unavoidable, or that one is truly beginning to choke or drown (unmistakably, incontestably) that "I" cannot "do" anything without there being some "you." Even an atom or quark, or some single-celled parasitic animal is unable to "do" anything – live, move, exist – unless there is something for (even) "*it*" to relate to.

The past few years of study I have been twisting, turning, revising and otherwise torturing Descartes' unfortunately infamous *cogito ergo sum*. *I think* therefore I am? Wouldn't I have to *be* in order to think? Others have altered it to "*I act* therefore I am," or "*I love* therefore I am." I see people around me trying out "*I abuse drugs* therefore I am," "*I overpower* therefore I am," "*I get sexed* therefore I am," "*I belong* to this or that group or religion or ethnicity or family or church or (etc.) therefore I am." "Wisdom" perhaps would simply say (like mind unable to think mind) "*I am* therefore, I am?" But then, in order to become aware of such a thing, circularities and tautologies – there'd have to be *someone* or *something* for that concept to come up at all. I couldn't think or state something unless I could address something else, even my "self" would posit a You.

Baffling in that tormenting mind can't mind itself sort of way, but in the immersing impression-y way it struck me freshly and deeply. "I" – literally and utterly (absolutely, in fact?) – depends on a "you" to *BE*. Really. No thing, no *one*, can behave or act or experience in any way, without.

Solipsism cannot exist, or at least we couldn't be aware of it if it did.

Which gets around to what has pestered my verbal skills and comprehension for the past few days leading to this rambling search on pen and paper. When my wife is away, my children, friends, and I am alone – I must needs trees or air or books or music to manage to think, to act – to *reify*, realize, recognize, re-member, re-mind me that I exist. That I am. Even this textualizing, by very dint of coming to be demanded that a "you" be posited to receive it, even if the "you" was merely "I" disguised, not identical to the "I" writing and asking, thinking and feeling.

I think.

Therefore I read, therefore I think, therefore I'm baffled, therefore I think and read...
...trying so damn hard to get it through to my wife, my children, my readers, my self...

that there *is* no "I" without "You"

and precisely

totally

vice-versa.

I relate, therefore I am.