The Oomphalos

Brendan Hughes

This is the oomphalos, we've arrived! This, my friends, is inside all those layers of narrative; the actual truth that we don't know we don't know; the truth we forgot we once knew; our unknown unknowns, to bring Rumsfeld back in; this whole truth, the truth that you can't really quite know. I live it every day in my marriage, my wife and I can describe the same five-second situation and sound like one was hot air ballooning and the other was at a bullfight. So itâ€™s like, â€˜My truth meow, meow, meow, meow.â€™ you know - but husbandâ€™s n works because America loves kittens.

This is a sentence that has 11 hads in a row, â€˜James while John had had had had had had had had had had had a better effect on the teacher.â€™ This actually can work, this can be one sentence, but you have to sprinkle curvy marks everywhere, â€˜James, while John had had "had", had had "had had"; "had had" had had a better effect on the teacher.â€™ - without punctuation weâ€™re fucked.

Hereâ€™s another one - these are some bizarre punctuation I have unearthed. Punctuation is ever-evolving, on the left is the percontation point, which is the backwards question mark (â¸®). It came about around 1580, it caught on for a little while, it was for when people use air quotes, which they were using back then. So they do that, but then it got a little wonky when the King James Bible came out and they wanted to use it when the apostles were sarcastic. But some of the Gnostic writers got upset, their agents lit up the phones in the King James literary department - it was a disaster, the whole thing was scrapped. This was also hazarded the tilde over the period, which is for when youâ€™re like, â€˜really? Really? ~.â€™ Punctuation both bedevils language but also we need it desperately.

Now you canâ€™t write any, you sound, everyone sounds either like an enthusiastic pollyanna or clinically depressed when they write an email, you have one choice or the other; you know, use a fucking exclamation point, â€˜it was really great to see you!â€™ - or like waaaa, â€˜...really great to see you.â€™ Thatâ€™s all we have, v very upsetting, so thatâ€™s frustrating. Inside all this, all these layers of narrative, all this, what the meaning is, is the Oomphalos.

One morning on Mount Olympus, Zeus started to wonder what was on the other side of the world, so he released two eagles to fly in opposite directions; and he surmised that where the Eagles met on the other side would be the Oomphalos, which is Greek for navel or belly button - it would be the belly button of the universe. So the Oomphalos is that which allows us to recognize meaning, but it is a little bit beyond our grasp. Otherwise to talk about (it) in history and like the history of philosophy and stuff - this is all wikipedia guys, all of it. Back to the Agora, when we last left Euclid was rolling around on ecstasy and drawing squares, but over by the bleachers Socrates is sitting with his personal assistant Plato. And Plato just got a book deal, he comes out with the Republic, which is mostly just name dropping, I donâ€™t know if you guys read it, but itâ€™s like, â€˜I knew Socrates...soâ€¦â€™ - and he uses the dangling so, too, all the time, â€˜soâ€¦â€™ - thatâ€™s how every chapter ends, o depending on the translation.

Anyway, in chapter 10 he argued that all artists, actors, painters, deliverers of alt comedy lectures on trivia - have to be ejected from the Republic, because they are that much further away than the general public from the

thing itself or the Oomphalos. Or, hereâ€™s how he put it, we all know what chairs are, youâ€™re all sitting on them, c you all have incredibly strong quads - weâ€™re all on chairs but there must be a cosmic rubric for that which is chair, which is what he called Godâ€™s chair, that which is chair. And if an artist paints a painting of a chair then thatâ€™s one step further away from Godâ€™s chair and thus against God and thus out go the artists - and weâ€™ve struggling back from this for the last two millennia, thereâ€™s been an anti theatrical prejudice ever since. In ancient Rome actors had to renounce their life as actors to get their babies baptized, before going back and like un-renouncing and doing a matinee. That went on in Italy until like 1987, or something like that. So they did not make it easy for any of us, but I argue, Plato, that in fact perhaps good, fine, brilliant works of art are a conduit to Godâ€™s chair, that when we all sit and we experience a work of art and it brings us closer to an understanding of the condition of being human, that communion is something where we get closer to the Oomphalos, that thing we all are agreeing on and donâ€™t realize weâ€™re agreeing on.

This all came about when form and content mixed together when modernism was born, in the 1890s when the artists became self-aware, like Skynet, and then they started sending Terminators like Filippo Marinetti and Samuel Beckett - who eventually met his demise when he was lowered into a vat of molten steel by James Cameron. But actually it may not be postmodern, modern, postmodern, what have you, because it might in fact date back to Rome again, Virgil he had this one poem about horses and one of the lines went, â€˜With fourfold beat the thundering hooves did shake the crumbling plane.â€™ And the line went, â€˜quadrupedante putra sonitu quatit ungla campum.â€™ - and you can hear the horse hooves in it, quadrupedante putra sonitu quatit ungla campum. And thereâ€™s this brilliant onomatopoeia, that was the birth of onomatopoeia, thatâ€™s where it was born, so we can actually through art get closer to what we donâ€™t know we donâ€™t know and to this cosmic truth that is behind everything like Godâ€™s chair.

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