



Invisibility and the Word

a.w.

Excerpt

- i. Invisibility and the Word
- ii. The Point of View
- iii. Visibility and the Imagination
- iv. Arbitrary Forms and Common Sense
- v. Algebra and the New Testament



i.

The Word can be black or brown, blue, German or French it doesn't matter, lines on a page ask the reader to imagine something that isn't there. The Word itself does not intend to be seen so the reader adjusts their focus until it disappears. For the Word to disappear it has to establish a connection to the imagination. Anything invisible must be imagined. Because the imagination is often organized by words, it's worthwhile to think about how words are organized.

A dictionary defines “everything.” To define everything, each thing is distinguished from each other and put into a category. “Tulip,” is in the category of flower, “flower” is in the category of “plant” and so on, the words themselves are categories; the categories, unequal because plants would go on existing without tulips but tulips would not exist if there were no plants. Although the order of words is worth noticing, these arrangements depend on the word’s disappearance; on the incident of a reader losing their vision.

ii.

The Point of View

We see things from wherever we are standing. This point of view might become slightly higher or lower but even as the body changes, the view is always from one point. With words we can imagine that our condition is different. We can imagine things other than those in front of us, different things altogether or the same things from other sides; from above or below; from other points of view. We can talk around things and about things we've never seen before; the past; the future; words seem to allow any point of view on anything. *The Word* floats around in its own discreet conditions, its order, grammar, syntax, and the least visible of these is a subtle trade. It seems like a pretty good deal at first: many points, in exchange for a single point of view.

ii.

Visibility

and the Imagination

Here on the table there's an apple beside a newspaper. On the front page the word, "Saturday." Painting the apple and newspaper, I see how the word "Saturday" can appear in a painting very easily. The word doesn't have to change its appearance at all. And yet the apple disappears in this sentence: as the tulip is a type of flower (but a flower is not a type of tulip), this relation between the Word and image is not equal. The image can contain the Word, but not the other way around. The Word is a type of image.

Looking at the apple, it doesn't seem to define things in this way at all. A field of vision can't contain everything, only a few things so there's no reason to put everything into some great order. The visible world orders things from nearest to furthest so that an apple is larger than the sun. Anything could be closer than anything else so things are arbitrary, they all disappear behind a leaf or eyelid or door. The visible world leaves almost everything out and offers no order, no relations, just a single point of view, as if, condemned to looking up at the stars from below, this relationship imagined and reimagined for thousands of years were no different than an apple, small details in the fact of vision