

Saul Williams

in the beginning was the word. word. and the word was with God. and the word was God. word up. and God said, let there be ... and (then) there was. Word is bond. and the word was made flesh. word life.

a latin transcription of the word "person" is "being of sound." as human beings we communicate with each other and with the greater universe through sound vibration. it is, thus, the essence of our collective being. all sounds reverberate with meaning. every sound vibration has an effect, and every sound connected with every word we speak, in every syllable, is connected to its eternal meaning, its eternal reverberation. the original inhabitants of egypt (KMT) actually documented the esoteric meaning of each sound vibration. they believed that all consonant sounds communed with energies of a temporal reality, whereas vowel sounds connected us with energies of the eternal reality. in their written text they wrote only consonants, for the eternal reality was too sacred to be transcribed. the ancient egyptian language like all other languages of antiquity was, needless to say, rooted in passion. yet, over time, many cultures have become disconnected from the passionate roots of their language and thus, perhaps, we have become disconnected from the roots of our existence.

nada brahma: the world is sound

in the east, it is widely believed that the word/sound "om" is the seed of the universe and the seed of all creation that can be heard reverberating within all

life forms. practically all religions over time have focused on the power of sound vibration. whether through the chanting of "om," buddhist and hindu chants, islamic prayers and calls to worship, or reciting hail mary and the lord's prayer, the common thread has been an investment in the belief that change will come about through voicing these sacred words, aloud. yet, like that of the ancient egyptians, many of these belief systems have also contained the idea that there is a realm of eternal reality that cannot be put into words. in the words of the eastern mystic lao-tsu:

the tao that can be told is not the eternal tao.
 the name that can be named is not the eternal name.
 the unnamable is the eternally real.
 naming is the origin of all particular things.

thus, the future of language would involve our getting closer and closer to being able to articulate the unspoken. consciousness, like technology, evolves over time. in the same way that there are advances in technology that may take a decade or more before they reach the public, there are also shifts in consciousness that gradually become understandable to the masses over time—so that an idea that perhaps the twelfth dalai lama achieved through meditation however many years ago may just today be reaching the level of common understanding by the average young american. ideas and concepts that perhaps our parents could not grasp until reaching a midlife crisis may now be grasped by adolescent teens. and things that once could be put into words only by the most learned philosophers can now be expressed by the average emcee (and in my estimation most emcees that i hear are average).

i had the privilege of cowriting a film called *slam*, the story of a young kid who learns the power of words and uses it to transcend his given reality. in writing this film i decided to give the main character the last name joshua, based on the biblical story of joshua who fought the battle of jericho by simply marching around the city's walls seven times while playing his trumpet to make the walls come tumbling down. i figured that if the film was played on seven hundred screens the walls of babylon would come tumbling down, mainly because of the spells laced into the poetry of the film. i have often thought of my poetry in terms of incantations: spells (note: magic is done through casting spells which is the same way words are made) or prayers to be recited in the darkest caves and highest mountain tops. in writing, i often

feel as if i am deciphering age-old equations and am often as baffled an audience member as any other listener or reader. i have also found numerous occasions where i have felt that i wrote or recited a situation into existence.

i write in red ink
that turns blue
when the book closes

language usage is a reflection of consciousness. thus, the future of language is connected to the ever-evolving state of human awareness. as we become more aware of our existing reality it becomes clearer that we live with the power to dictate our given situations and thus the power to determine our future. our present reality is *pre-sent*, dictated by what we asked for previously. no, i am not saying that everything that happens to us is within our control, but through our perception we have the ability to determine much more of our reality than we realize (all puns intended). and what we say (which is clearly a reflection of what and how we think) is of the ut-most (utter-most) importance. what we say matters (becomes a solid: flesh). word life.

so then the question becomes, what role does hip-hop play in the future of language, or rather, what role does the future of language play in hip-hop? there does seem to have been a lyrical evolution in hip-hop. vivid, descriptive narratives of ghetto life seem to have come at the cost of imaginative or psycho-spiritual exploration. in other words, niggas have come up with amazing ways to talk about the same ol' shit. the problem is, when we recite the same ol' shit into microphones which increase sound vibration the same ol' shit continues to manifest in our daily lives, and only gets more deeply embedded. but of course employing one's imagination is problematic when the aim is to keep it real.

in a book called *illusions* by richard bach, the main character finds that when jesus reportedly said that all one needs is faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains he actually only used the word faith because at the time there wasn't a word for imagination. it is imagination applied to our daily lives and use of language that brings about interesting futures. hip-hop, as is, is mainly concerned with depicting a rough street life devoid of hope or an upscale designer life devoid of reflection and in doing so dictates its own outcome. if biggie's album had not been entitled *ready to die* would he still be alive today? did his vocalized profession dictate his destination? the fact that we were so ready to hear about how he was ready to die increased the sound

vibration of his recitation through playing it on a million radios and televisions at once, to the point where it affected our reality and his.

word is bond.

“these are the words that i manifest”

—guru

we are the manifestation of our thinking patterns. and we think in terms of terms. words. sooner or later we must realize that we are liable for what and how we think and say and thus must alter (altar) our use of language. sentence structures predate pyramids and are as complex. realize, even in asking me to describe the future of language, i am simply playing my part in determining it by helping those who read this to become more aware of the importance of what they say. and that (this) is how the future comes about.

word.