

Dialects Dream A Common Language

By Christine Loughlin, OP

In autumn's span of shortening days, students across our land have been observing the night sky, counting the stars visible in their neighborhood. They're monitoring a pollution that is flooding our cities ~ light pollution. On a dark evening when the moon arcs in early waxing or late wane sliver, a child ought see 1500 to 2000 stars. Around our major cities, she is lucky to count 50 to 100 stars. Here on Atlantic's coast the program spurred the "Lights Out Boston" initiative. Students worked with city government and the business community to turn off the lights in the tall buildings of commerce and trade, insurance and lending. The migratory shorebirds are traversing the coastal flyway home to southern waters. Darkness protects them from predators and helps them store energy they lose flying in the heat of the day. They "see" with a vision beyond our knowing.

On the Pacific coast in Puget Sound a band of biologists is searching for seven orcas. They are presumed dead ~ the century old leader of the pod along with two young females has disappeared. These whales' main food supply, the chinook salmon, was in short supply last season. Lack of food, pollution, stress from whale watching boats may have taken effect. This amazing pod with its unique dialect, that mates only among themselves, that demonstrates a distinct attachment to their local region, is missing, perhaps gone forever.

Up the highway on the state road, a short drive, is the locally appreciated and internationally known Walden Pond. A cadre of Harvard University scientists is monitoring the quickly changing landscape of this renowned 'kettle hole.' They report 27% of the species Thoreau documented in the mid 1800's have disappeared and 36% exist in such small numbers their disappearance may be imminent. When Thoreau spoke the wisdom gleaned from his timeless hours of mindful encounter, he longed to instruct society that *wildness* labors to survive in spite of our efforts to eradicate. *In wildness is the preservation of the world.* We pave over and pull up, shoot down and search out, poison and pollute. He gave himself over to knowing a twenty-mile radius of local culture revealed in buttercups, dogwood, orchids, and violets. They all succumb to rising temperatures.

At the edge of our meadow where the oak and pine meet the low shrubs, near dusk you can catch a glimpse of the pointed ears of the fox as she saunters out to satisfy her hunger. The deer paths wind across the walking trails and often in the night, if you happen to lie awake, coyote howls stir your soul. Poison ivy and wild grape rope themselves around the edge growth and even the tall cedars yield to their power. We acknowledge wildness as we tend our gardens.

On any given day the tender and tragic stories of our nation and across the world scroll down our monitor screen, the outcome of living in a time of mass and immediate communication. We are drawn to the stories ~ inspired, stunned, elated, pained. The borders of our living broaden, the framework of our conscious self-awareness extends. The 'dialects' may differ from our colloquial ways of knowing. At some level we grasp the parlance of a pod of whales attached to their region. We feel the sensuous communication between morning mist rising from the cold water of a kettle pond and dew descending on yellow buttercups in late spring.

At the same time we listen to familiar words and find ourselves at a loss to comprehend the meaning of our language whether the message is printed or spoken. Our moral imperative of the past urged us not to store up but to risk the work of our heart and hands for the sake of the common good. Now it is reported that only if there is no risk is there an *investment*. We can *speculate* the risk of a loss but instead a short-term fluctuation in false pricing may just happen

to reap a large reward. If one should be among those receiving the large rewards, one can join with them and engage in a wider range of investment activities even if those dealings *hedge* the fundamental principles that recognize we are all one family. While futuring was the impetus that gave hope we could and would all 'sit at the welcome table,' now a double speak claims *futuring* means using synthetic financial instruments to avoid regulations.

Long ago a regulatory wisdom was established in this emerging Universe we call home. Every entity requires energy both for its formation and for its endurance. Any system closed off from new energy will inevitably wither and decay ~ the dynamics of a self-merging universe.

The dark mantle of winter's long night sweeps across our hemisphere. 'Tis the season to sit by the fire, cozy and safe and retell the stories about what matters most to us. These are the stories that have guided peoples across the tumultuous ages and lifted them up in times of abundance. They are the stories that discipline our cultural thought patterns and form our moral agency ~ simple, clear, miraculous. Whether a story of precious oil or human creativity, a story of cooperation or deliverance from suffering, it's the symbol of Light that empowers a hope that our human venture will be blessed and our burden made sweet.

The power of these stories has brought us thus far. They arose from different centers, different geographies, different dialects. In our world of global communication other dialects enter and reshape our language, our thought patterns. The voice of the orca in Puget Sound, the plover at the edge of Atlantic, the disappearing bluets and anemones that bespoke a pond culture.

The 'light' that appeared or sustained and guided our human behavior through the ages now sees far beyond a distant mountain or wide horizon line. The children across our land look deep into cosmic space. In their seeking, the students comprehend a new cosmology, a worldview that dreams the story of a Universe in which our human journey will enter fruitfully into the web of relationships with every mode of being. Colloquial dialects of the deep sea and the ancient flyways speak to us. Landscapes littered with violets and lilies washed by the mist of a local stream and pond teach us the full meaning of 'culture.' Yes, a new human is appearing and suddenly every aspect of life 'profits' from a human consciousness aware, attentive, engaged with every kind of being.

This is the time of year we ask the community of Crystal Spring, near and far, for your continued support for our on-going work. Inspired by your example and enthusiasm for change, you urge us to continue to bloom. Our programs, projects and local cooperative activities yearn to express the cosmic truth that lights our way ~ culture and Nature are one. ■ CL