

From Third Person Singular



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Three persons in the verb. One speaks, one's spoken to, one, as the Arabs say, is absent. Groom awaited by the bride? Death, by the widow? Knows she must curb her eyes from touching you if she wants to take in anything else. In vision, as in language, much depends on interpretation. A tree trunk as a lover. A statue as something to point at. So that, at least in German, it will have meaning. The mass of the sun bends space-time in such a way that, although the earth follows a straight path in four-dimensional space-time, it appears to curve along a circular orbit of three-dimensional, saturated feeling.

Of course one has to think. For thinking, categories are a help. Less so than the forty phonemes of the English language, especially when in local ink, pronounced with the entire face. Stands in front of the fireplace, blinking. Legs wide apart. The acquisition of personal pronouns is connected with the capacity for symbolic representation in which vision plays a central part. But how slow she always is to wake her eyes to the light while galaxies are moving apart everywhere. Then notices your erection and feels her good morning link to a deeper space inside her.

It is possible for both space and time to be finite without any edges or boundaries, but not for language to be without speaker. Air turbulence at teeth and lips. Bone. Ivory. Flesh. Shakes her wet head. Does not often hold her dreams up for scrutiny: to be a femme fatale? to have your name imprinted in her body? Babies as young as one month are more responsive to the sounds of speech than to any others. This does not explain how we develop the uncertainties of if and though. Or the emotional balance that gets us through paragraphs and other perplexities.