

Ever since I first read them I've been fascinated by the following statements of Whitehead's concerning speech (*AI*: 187 f.):

To speak of anything, is to speak of something which, by reason of that very speech, is in some way a component in that act of experience. In some sense or other, it is thereby known to exist. This is what Plato pointed out when he wrote, Non-being is itself a sort of being.

Speech consists of noises, or visible shapes, which elicit an experience of things other than themselves. In so far as vocables fail to elicit a stable coördination of sound-character, or shape-character, to meaning, those vocables fail to function as speech. And in so far as some meaning is not in some sense directly experienced, there is no meaning conveyed. To point at nothing is not to point.

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