

What must it take to believe in magic? Not conjurer's tricks, not the invocation of some god or devil, but true magic?

The magician calls; the world answers. The magician commands; the world obeys. In short, the universe speaks and responds to a language. If the magician can learn that language, then he has vast power.

It is in this context that we can make sense of Duret's search to recover the original human language, a variant of pentateuchial Hebrew. The possibility of one language arising from the world itself, fitting as a key in a lock, was reality to the well known surgeon Paracelsus. His medicinal and alchemical experiments were nothing more nor less than a rigorous application of a methodology based upon the premise that the world is magical.

Since then, we have long since become accustomed to substitute for Paracelsus' key the more 'mature' metaphor of a formless desert, arbitrarily divided by language. But that metaphor leads only to a loss of meaning – not only in words, but in actions, in purposes, in lives. We might be well advised to return to a more innocent state, a belief that in magic the world and language are at one.