

thrown up, mostly to pass away; though occasionally to settle and permanently chrystallize.

To make it plainer, it is certain that many of the oldest and solidest words we use, were originally generated from the daring and license of slang. In the processes of word-formation, myriads die, but here and there the attempt attracts superior meanings, becomes valuable and indispensable, and lives forever. Thus the term *right* means literally only straight. *Wrong* primarily meant twisted, distorted. *Integrity* meant oneness. *Spirit* meant breath, or flame. A *supercilious* person was one who rais'd his eyebrows. To *insult* was to leap against. If you *influenc'd* a man, you but flow'd into him. The Hebrew word which is translated *prophecy* meant to bubble up and pour forth as a fountain. The enthusiast bubbles up with the Spirit of God within him, and it pours forth from him like a fountain. The word prophecy is misunderstood. Many suppose that it is limited to mere prediction; that is but the lesser portion of prophecy. The greater work is to reveal God. Every true religious enthusiast is a prophet.

Language, be it remember'd, is not an abstract construction of the learn'd, or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground. Its final decisions are made by the masses, people nearest the concrete, having most to do with actual land and sea. It impermeates all, the Past as well as the Present, and is the grandest triumph of the human intellect. "Those mighty works of art," says Addington Symonds, "which we call languages, in the construction of which whole peoples unconsciously co-operated, the forms of which were determin'd not by individual genius, but by the instincts of successive generations, acting to one end, inherent in the nature of the race—Those poems of pure thought and fancy, cadenced not in words, but in living imagery, fountainheads of inspiration, mirrors of the mind of nascent nations, which we call Mythologies—these surely are more marvellous in their infantine spontaneity than any more mature production of the races which evol'd them. Yet we are utterly ignorant of their embryology; the true science of Origins is yet in its cradle."

Daring as it is to say so, in the growth of Language it is certain that the retrospect of slang from the start would be the recalling from their nebulous conditions of all that is poetical in the stores of human utterance. Moreover, the honest delving, as of late years, by the German and British workers in comparative philology, has pierc'd and dispers'd many of the falsest bubbles of centuries; and will disperse many more. It was long recorded that in Scandinavian mythology the heroes in the Norse Paradise drank out of the skulls of their slain enemies. Later investigation proves the word taken for skulls to mean *horns* of beasts slain in the hunt. And what reader had not been exercis'd over the traces of that feudal custom, by which *seigneurs* warm'd their feet in the bowels of serfs, the abdomen being open'd for the purpose? It now is made to appear that the serf was only required to submit his unharm'd abdomen as a foot cushion while his lord supp'd, and was required to chafe the legs of the seigneur with his hands.

Slang in America (p. 720)

WALT WHITMAN

The following questions refer to paragraphs 1–4.

1. In the second sentence of paragraph 1, the antecedent for the pronoun "it" is
 - a. English language
 - b. dialect
 - c. race
 - d. range of time
 - e. composition
2. In the first sentence of paragraph 2, "germinal" most nearly means
 - a. rebellious
 - b. fertile
 - c. primitive
 - d. basic
 - e. crucial
3. Which of the following noun phrases does the author use to illustrate that language is derived from every living organism?
 - a. "a sort of universal absorber, combiner, and conqueror" (third sentence, para. 1)
 - b. "the history of Nature in all departments, and of the organic Universe, brought up to date" (fourth sentence, para. 1)
 - c. "a certain perennial rankness and protestantism" (first sentence, para. 2)
 - d. "most precious possession" (second sentence, para. 2)
 - e. "some mighty potentate" (third sentence, para. 2)
4. It can be inferred from the passage that language is
 - a. a living thing that evolves and grows
 - b. a unique part of American culture
 - c. a complex form that cannot be easily described
 - d. a reflection of man's ability and power
 - e. a commonly misunderstood figure of speech
5. The purpose of providing examples of definitions in paragraph 3 is to
 - a. prove how antiquated commonly used words are
 - b. suggest that commonly held definitions are inferior to original definitions
 - c. demonstrate the intellectual prowess of the speaker
 - d. clarify the true meanings of the words
 - e. highlight the evolution of language
6. The analogy at the end of paragraph 2 serves to
 - a. reinforce the relationship between science and language
 - b. suggest that slang is a byproduct of language that becomes a fixture in speech
 - c. challenge the notion that slang is organic and dynamic
 - d. present the speaker's knowledge of the fermentation process
 - e. emphasize the low-brow nature of slang
7. The speaker of the passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements?
 - a. The most important feature of slang is that it has a simple origin.
 - b. Slang is more refined than most people realize.
 - c. Language is to be valued because it is related to the common man.
 - d. Language will never truly be understood by the masses.
 - e. Slang cannot be controlled by the authorities.
8. What is the purpose of including the quotation from Addington Symonds (para. 4)?
 - a. to support the speaker's theory that language develops collectively
 - b. to counter the notion that slang should be celebrated
 - c. to introduce a new idea about the origin of language
 - d. to promote the acceptance of slang
 - e. to suggest that slang is a product of the working man