

IV-2 Brute Force of Articulated Grunt

By meaning more, our lives yield more. Such a vision of qualitative change is no longer a zero-sum game.

- *An Ancient Arihant adage*

In the beginning there was darkness. First arose the grunt - possibly with mashing of jaws. Then there was another, and then still another... and it has not stopped yet. Many cultures have surmised that Word was the beginning. It means different things to different people. A Queen in the Alice's Wonderland plays: *Tusk. Tusk. Words mean what I mean.* In another world, Queen Juliana of Netherlands was exasperated: *I don't understand it. I don't even understand the people who understand it.*

Words are also tools of cultural ideals and beliefs. Such words tend to unleash thought, yet people often remain prisoners of babbles within the walls of boxed-in mind. Rituals of cultures tend to prey and thrive on such corruptions. Bolder myths are needed to serve the bigger powers on the ground. The brute force of *thou shalt not* rings the primordial grunt enshrined in *might is right*. Creation myths of *being created in the image of the creator* empower tribes of faithful to shape the world around them in their own images.

Complexity may not be coexistence of opposites, but it is part of dealing with doubt. Arjun enumerates the attributes of Krishna (Bhagvad Gita, ca. 300 BCE): *O Lord, I see within your body all the gods and every kind of living creature. I see Brahma the Creator, seated on a lotus. I see infinite mouths and arms, stomachs and eyes, and you are embodied in every form. I see you everywhere, without*

beginning, middle or end... I see you, who are so difficult to behold, shining like a fiery sun blazing in every direction. You are the Supreme, changeless Reality, the one thing to be known. To this Krishna adds: *I am time, the destroyer of all; I have come to consume the world.* Robert Oppenheimer witnessed the power of such grunt in the atomic blast test in the desert of New Mexico in 1945.

Grunt and Vocalization. Like symbolic art, gestures try to capture significant acts. Humans are also born with the ability to vocalize, i.e. to produce and distinguish bits of sounds. As we learn to use these, in an abstract way languages connect the bits of sounds with worlds of concern.

Alphabets formalize phonemes where the distinguishing sounds come from the vowels. Roman alphabets tend to reconstruct phonemes by an explicit combination of alphabets with the vowel. For example the character "i" stands for the sounds ranging from 'ei' to 'ai.' In the languages of India, a soft "a" is part of the consonants. As is apparent in the conception of zero and the ten-based numbering system, the panache of the ancient Indian mind for systematization is also apparent in the way vowels (*swar* or sounds only from the resonance cavities of the body) interact with consonants (*vyanjan*) brought into play as the sound of vowels is modified with the movement of tongue. For example the vowels (soft and hard) "i", "e", "o" or "u" originate from different regions of the respiratory system. The organs used for resonating the phonemes of *a, aa, i, ii, u, uu, e, ei, o, ou, am, ah* move from abdomen for *aa* to the nasal chamber for *am-ah*. By movement of the tongue one generates sounds of each of the consonants *k, ch, t, p* or *s* in association with the 12 vowels. The sound of "*aaoum*" – the primordial vocalization of all sounds – integrates the physiology and anatomy of the human sound

producing system with yogic practices!

Combinations of phonemes and lexemes are like formula for mental reality (*mantr(a)*) that enables, amplifies and configures conscious patterns of thought and behaviors. It is not too different than the limits to the use of a formula by a chemist to synthesize a desirable chemical agent. Contrast this to an apparent lack of order in the arrangement of alphabets in Arabic, English, and other European languages.

Search for the Original-language

Psamtik I (700 BCE) is remembered for his flawed experiment. He was an enlightened ruler of Egypt. He opened his country to large scale immigration. This brought Hellenic culture to Egypt and these mercenaries also helped him in his military campaigns against the neighbors. Psamtik was intrigued by the idea of the original human language. As described by Herodotus 200 years later, Psamtik instructed a shepherd to rear two infants in isolation and silence on the diet of goat's milk. The first word uttered by the pair was *bekos*. After it was found that *bekos* means bread in the language of Phrygians of Asia Minor it was determined to be the protolanguage.

Quandary of the protolanguage remains with us. Whether or not the formulation of the issue by Psamtik was correct, it is quite likely that the speech with discrete words evolved about 100,000 years ago out of clicking sounds, rather than grunt gestured through modulation, mimicry and movements.

It is also recognized that the syntactic abilities to learn syntax in word strings is hard-wired at birth and developed soon after. Like technologies, complex languages and family of languages are built from group interactions over period of millennia. The transition from speech to complex language

distinguishes humans. Birds, insects, fish and mammals also have elaborate vocalizations for mating and group communications. In effect, developments in language (*tongues*), communication, and technologies are intricately associated with the evolution of cultures.

Symbols for words and words for posterity. Standard ways (convention) to capture sounds to represent entities, events and quantities are needed for human interactions in organized societies. The alphabetic roots of the Indo-European languages possibly go back 8000 years. I believe that writing with symbols for alphabets also emerged independent of the pictographic writing on the clay tablets of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Iraq.

Strongly enunciated vowels and consonants of the Indo-European languages emerged about 6500 years ago. Around this time people in the Ganga valley developed symbols for each of the 18 to 20 alphabets of the Prakrit languages. This Brahmi script survived as rock inscriptions, and evolved into the Nagari script used by 14 of the major languages of India.

Patanjali (ca 500 BCE), also a mathematician, began to systemize and organize the Prakrit (*naturally created*) languages. In the process he explored the relationship between thought and cognition as the Yog(a). Panini (b. 350 BC in Kandahar) formalized (Sanskrit, *created by purification*) phonemes to facilitate communication which emerged as a full fledged grammar around 200 CE. Similar changes came into Greek after 200 BCE from the Centers in Cairo, and then into Latin around 1100 CE and in to English around 1400 CE. Not coincidentally in this period European centers of learning arose for assimilation of Moorish libraries transmitted by the Jesuits. Such institutions made it their business to “purify” the use of languages and “realign”

information into contemporary beliefs. It continues to be the academic tradition.

On issues of language communication

* When you think of alphabets, that are asked to bear all the human investigations and all the aspirations and appetites that we have and that have ever existed in human history - it is terribly abstract (*Alan Turing*).

* All languages are full of images and metaphors whose origin is being lost together with the art form from which they are created (*Robert Oppenheimer*).

* A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds (*Emerson*).

* ...it is life in the poem and not in the history of the poet (*Elliot*).

* We have an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I like things that appeared, than one was sure (*Henry James*).

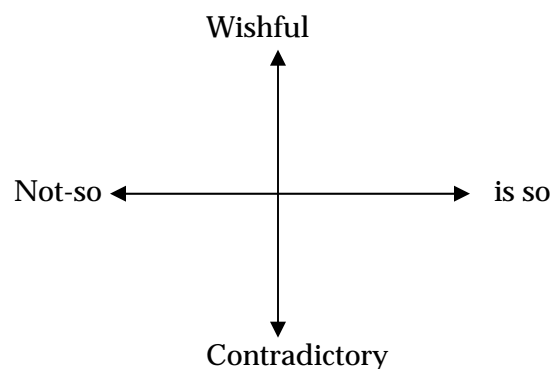
* Mathematics is a language that sometimes makes things clearer to me than do other languages, and that sometimes helps me discover things that I have been unable to discover with the use of other languages (*J. Willard Gibbs*).

There is more to language than just the grammar. Words are meant to communicate a represented part of the universe. Word-strings leave a neutral but curious observer with an array of metaphors for thought. If history is any guide use of organized speech has facilitated and improved human understanding. Enlarging vocabulary goes hand in hand with enhanced perception. We cheer, jeer, and leer at multi-characterizations of the known, as well as of what we do not understand or do not know. Word spectrum appeals to the aesthetics and appearance of certainty. Verbs are particularly useful in introducing the

induction to guide the rhythms of examined life. As we draw a nimble distinction through parts with shades of perceived certainty, the world is no longer black or white. Perceived range of words is a liberating experience for mind, while words allude to the captured nagging and pestering issues. In this surreal of extremes, dreams are interspersed with encounters with reality. Wishful thrives as day-dreaming as well as the source for innovative and imaginative solutions to create value.

Devil's Advocate. Cynics and mindless skeptics have given bad name to devil. Devil is often confused with evil. Voodoo, Ying-Yang, good-and-evil are about casting certitudes of this world in the platitudes of the others. Far too many chaotic and disordered states fall outside such a desirable order. Dealing with states of disorder requires acknowledging ignorance.

Being devil's advocate is about a wider search for certainty. They invent words to dissect states of the world that remains outside evidence based affirmation. It is not just a matter of rhetoric. It is the way to experience and explore through orthogonal assertions to seek independent evidence. As we learn to focus on the partial truth values of the particulars of similarity, degrees of certainty also emerge from the meaningful differences.



Perceptions bridge the gap between what we comprehend

and find accessible and what we choose, desire, and know. As the identified content and context of our concern intersect with the unreal, its scrutiny helps us identify what we may know, what we do not know, what we pretend to know, and what else may or may not exist. Being devil's advocate is about scrutiny of what lies beyond the black and white worlds.

Room for Doubt

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