

IV-3 Between the Bits of Utterances

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.

Possibly yes. Also some varieties of rose have no smell. In naming we connote more than just an object, act, or event. Names connote a class - not just what is common to the class but also the range of common behaviors and the distinguish characteristics. Names may come to mean something, but names rarely communicate the experience. Sweetness of rose for example is an experience of reality that is independent of the name.

Bees give meaning to flowers. A bee, and for that matter any bee or any flower are not meant for each other. Survival strategy lies in the behaviors that facilitate interactions that assure nourishment for the bee to thrive, and in return by carrying pollen from flower to flower bees assure survival of plants and all those who depend on plants. Tennyson in *Flower in the Crannied Wall* wonders:

Little flower - but if I could understand

What you are, root and all, and all in all,

I should know what God and man is.

To break out of the prison of words. Neither grammatical correctness nor the poetic liberties confer reality, validity, or meaning to the word constructs. Whether or not coined explicitly for such a purpose, enduring words come to represent a concept with affinity to common experience. On the other hand, dead-end words like god come to mean different thing to different people. This is because it is about nothing accessible to mind and senses.

Such words become mere cliché as their concept space and boundaries are lost in the rubble of their evolutionary history. On the other hand, evolving boundaries of words like medicine also enrich interactions with our concerns to create value.

Nurturing language and communication. Words may be coined to carve out a discrete world, but by naming we are bound to the actions of the word that evolve through its usage. Although by naming we commit to a part of the observed and experienced reality, words are not about just keeping the promise. As names begin to evoke essence of experience they also invoke the subjective and objective realities. In doing so, a name comes to represent identities that connote not just certain qualities but the entirety of the form and function.

Such relations become part of word usage. Once let go, as part of the shared worlds the word boundaries take on their own course: Meanings take shape as connotations are chiseled. Such sharing is part of building common perceptions. It facilitates a consensus about the experience of reality communicated by word representations. Even if a word may be coined as analytical device with focus on the particulars, the word boundaries change as the concept space expands in search of generalization that we share. Ultimately ideas cohere around a word to become a motif or module of shared experience and insights.

Languages facilitate mind to mind communication. Humans have in-born propensity for the syntax and inference, apparently *hard-wired* during the early development. For the interpretation of word constructs all languages make use of syntax to evaluate intentionality, i.e. what is behind and between the uttered words and vocalizations. With identified syntax languages seek syllogisms to elaborate the content and context of assertions. Ratios and fractions complement such systematic

manipulations of the boundaries of *all and some* with numbers. Inference procedures are not derived from the rhetoric or idiom of language, but are intrinsic in the way the "realist" in us has evolved to deal with the content of sense data in the context of asserted concern. Emerging context of experience further facilitates the representation and abstraction.

Written words to guide reality. Shared reasoning is remarkable antidote to vagaries of mind. Phenomena of language and the meaning it communicates are intertwined with the social surroundings: Language has become a vehicle of accountability, if not the rationality, to guide actions and behaviors. Written words further facilitate reasoning without risking repercussions and liabilities of face to face encounters. Social nature of this art form is an integral part of continuous reshaping the social contract with which we live.

To break out of the prison of our minds there is no substitute for contemplation. Written words facilitate contemplation without intimidation, and liberate from the tyranny of grunt to nurture independent views and opinions. More than any other human achievement, writing, printing, computing, and now the electronic media and Internet Web continue to facilitate ever wider searches for the choices that our minds can offer and make.

Room for Doubt

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