

IV-1 It is Jungle out There!

Playfulness in words, thought and actions makes the world accessible to mind. Such behaviors are motivated by desire to deal with real-world problems with perceptions as they emerge with active interaction.

The perception that *it is jungle out there* shadows us in all our dealings. It persists even generations after human ancestors moved out of Africa and crossed rivers, deserts, oceans and space. Uncertainties of nomadic life have given way to agriculture and settlements. To address concerns we continue to invent tools. To make up for our real-time deficiencies we increasingly rely on languages and institutions. Our languages are strewn with wide ranging words to on reflect uncertainties and doubts. As summarized in Table IV-1, the range and nuances of such words are not for the tone-deaf or the boxed-in mind. Consider how we routinely deal with limitations and liabilities by expressing shades of ignorance, wistful, wishful, and willful. Semantic nuances come to life when we have to acknowledge doubt, uncertainty, imprecision, and ambiguity.

Table IV-1. Shades of Wishful, Wistful, and More!

Absurd, acausal, *ad hominum*, *ad verecundiam*, advertisement, affirmation, agony, alibi, alienation, allegory, alter-ego, always, ambiguity, ambivalence, amphiboly, analogy, angst, annihilation, annoyance, anomaly, apparition, aplomb, a priori, apple-pie, approximation, arbitrary, arguably, artistic-liberty, assumption,

asymmetry, attenuated, attitude, augury, augmented, authority,
average, awareness, axiom

Balderdash, ballpark, banter, bastard, battle, Bayesian, bedazzled,
believable, betwixt, bizarre, boundary condition, boxed-in (mind),
bull (or bullshit), buncombe,

Cart-before-the-horse, causality, certitude, chameleon, chance,
chaos, chatter, chew fat, circular reasoning, clairvoyance, claptrap,
clarity, cliché, clue, cognizant, coherence, coincidence, collision of
ideas, complicit, conceit, concurrence, consciousness, consistent,
constraints, contingent, contradictory, contrariety, contrive,
conundrum, convention, convergence, converse, conviction,
correlation, cosmetic, counterpoint, craft, crazy, creation, creative,
credible, creditable, criteria, culpability, cupidity, curiosity,
cutting edge, cynicism

Deception, debate, defeatist, defect, deferred, déjà vu, denial,
derisive, deterministic, devil, devious, diabolical, diatribe,
dilemma, disability, discrepancy, disorientation, dissent,
dissimulation, divine inspiration, dogged, dogma, dormant,
dotted-line, double-take, doubt, dream, drivel, duality, dubious,
dumb-down

Economical with truth, emotional, emphasis, end-game, enigma,
ephemeral, epithet, equivocation, error, essence, estimate,
euphemism, evasion, evidence, evoked, exactitude, expediency,
extreme

Failures, fairy-tale, faith, fallacious argument, falsity, fantasy,
farrago, fashion, feel-lucky, fib, fluctuations, foot-work, forked-
tongue, fractal, frown,

Game, genuine, ghost, gnawing, gods and God, grunt, guess,
guesstimate, guided-tour

Half-truths, happenstance, hidden, historical, hit-the-wall, Hmm!
hogwash, hokum, Hollywood, Holy-smoke, horn-of-dilemma,

hornet's nest, humbug, hunch, hyperbole, hypothesis

I Ching, ideal, ignorance, image, imaginative sympathy, imminent, impasse, imperfect, imperative, implication, impossible, imposture, imprecision, improvise, impugn, in-prefix (such as inability, inaccuracy, incoherent, incompatible, incomplete, incongruous, inconsequential, indecisions, indefensible, indifference, indiscretion, indiscriminate, inevitable) inspiration, instincts (reptilian and otherwise), intangible, intelligent life (and its variations), interesting, interpretation, intrigue, intrusion, intuition, inverted, ironic, irrefragable

Judgment call, judicious

Kafkaesque, key, Kissingerian, kudos

Labyrinth, latent, latest, latitude, leap, legend, liberator, limbo, limits (of rightness), loose-cannon, lost (in translation), lull, (extent of) lies

Machiavellian, madness, magical, make-believe, marginalize, market-value, mask-of-theory, maverick, maybe (perhaps), maze, meaning, meme, message-control, metaphor, mind, miracle, miscommunication, misgiving, mistake, mock, model, mystery, mythical

Nebulous, nefarious, nemesis, never-say-never, news, non-certain, normal, notion, not-too-unreasonable, nugatory

Obdurate, obfuscate, objective, obsession, Occam's razor, oddity, official line, operational, optimism, ornamented, ostensible, out-of-sight and out-of-mind, outline, oxymoron

Palaver, panacea, pandemonium, paradox, parsimony, passion, perplexity, phantom, platitude, Platonic, plausible, poll, possible, potshot, Power-Point presentation, precision, predicament, pre-maturity, probable, problem, promise, propaganda, prove it, provisional, proverbial, prudence, pseudo-science, puzzle

Quackery, quagmire, quandary, queasy, questionable, quick-sand

Rainbow, random, reality, reassurance, rectitude, reduction, refutation, reservation, restriction, revival, revolution, riddle, rigmarole, romantic, rumor

Sacrosanct, Santa Claus, scheming, self-evident, senior moments, sensible, serendipity, shadow of tomorrow, shell (as in shell game), show me, simplistic, skepticism, sleuth, sly, smoke-and-mirror, solipsist, song-and-dance, sophistry, Spam, spin, spirit, standard, stargazing, statistical, stealth, story, stupor, subjective, subside, subversive, superstition, surreal, surreptitious, suspense, synchronicity

Tabloid-truth, tangible, Tao, tea leaves, teleology, temerity, temptation, tentative, test, time tested, time for, transient, trap, trepidation, trial-balloon, tried-and-true, trite, trivia, tongue-in-cheek

UFO, *umm*, with un- prefix (such as uncertain, uncommon, undecidable, undecipherable, undetermined, undividable, unexpected, unexplained, unidentified, unknown, unpredictable, unreliable, unscientific) and universal (images, ideas, thoughts)

Validity, variation, veridical, verisimilitude, vicissitudes, violation, virtual, vitiate

Wary, wise, wisdom, wishful, wistful, wit, WMD (words of mass deception, wielders of mass deception, weapons of mass deception, weapons of mass destruction. Interestingly all such usages emerged during the US attack on Iraq in 2003).

XYZ, let-there-be-X

Yellow journalism, yoke

Zebra-stripes (leopard-spots, means of camouflage and display),

Zen

Truth value of the doubt lies in knowing what we do not know.

Words are not mere quick response substitutes for grunt. Arguing

can be a serious business. Use of words with closely-spaced meaning, helped by rules of grammar and punctuations, brings out nuances of grunt to facilitate discourse. It helps us explore the content of a concern, words if we can identify the states that can neither be satisfactorily affirmed, nor denied. After existence of the un-known part of the assertion is affirmed as the source of doubt, tools are needed to explore what *is* that unknown. Independent and orthogonal assertions further explore implications of *what we do know* and *how do we know*. Evolution of new social principles is often accompanied by tools that provide insights into the realms that we did not know existed before.

Word usage is about ascertaining truth-values of the content and context of our concerns. It is the only acceptable way to communicate interpretation of our sense experiences. Nouns, verbs and adjectives orient us towards the entity and event. Words have evolved to cover the range between the known and the unknown with degrees of doubt. Virtually all living organisms instinctively focus on the gradients or differences to identify changes in the inputs from the environment. We focus on changes in the mood and nuances. Words rise and fall as they evolve to deal with uncertainties of survival.

Sense experience persists as artifact of language. As vehicles of pronouncements and propaganda words have their hay-days. As tangible ideas evolve words fall in disrepute. Even those laced with the emotion-laden dialectic of affirmation or negation, soon come to recognize that the real world is not as discrete. Sharing experience requires words to identify genuine differences until every viable idea is expressed and every viable concern considered and addressed.

Idealized certainty (Aristotelian and doctrinal) is contrived as in: *One should never meet evil halfway*. The bipolar world (of a

binary 0 or 1 Boolean switch) is an isolated fragment of reality, if not an idealized figment of imagination. Binary polarity creates paradoxes of self-reference: Some forget that personal freedom to worship also includes freedom not to worship or not to believe. Ignoring the worlds that lie between such poles also assumes that all that *what is there to know is known*.

In order to net reality through words, and capture the range and relevance of a narrative, our thoughts juggle with overlapping states – not only the defined ones but also the others that may be out there. Reality-based alternatives ward off contradictions and inconsistencies. To realize and materialize potential of experience is a shared journey of mind.

A string of meaningful words builds bridges to another mind. It is a crucial step for knitting community behaviors. In its chaotic ways language mimics the real world complexity. But the purpose of meaningful word motifs and constructs is about interactions with such representation for usable perception. It takes us through unrecognized and unacknowledged states. It seeks correspondence to cognized reality through coherence, convergence, concomitance, and consilience.

On Not-knowing

It is doubtful if the perfect of good and evil exists. In real sense perfection is wishful construct to introduce feed-back into practice.

- The scientist has a lot of experience with ignorance and doubt and uncertainty. We take it for granted that it is perfectly consistent to be unsure - that is it is possible to live and not know (*Richard Feynman*).

- Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first (*Vernon Sanders*).

- I had the good fortune of being able to make my plans in near perfect ignorance of my destination (*Eric Hanson in Stranger in the Forest*)
- Creator can be dispensed with by eliminating the beginning (*Stephen Hawking*).
- Human beings are all right for as long as they are ignorant of ignorance. This is our normal condition, but when we know we don't know, we can't stand it. (*Lewis Thomas*)
- If you ask me whether there is another world, well, if I thought there were, I would say so. But I don't say so. And I don't deny it. And I don't say there neither is, nor is not another world. And if you ask me about the beings produced by chance; or whether there is any fruit, any result, of good or bad actions; or whether a man who won the truth continues or not after death - to each or any of these questions do I give the same reply (*Sanjay Belatthiputta, ca. 600 BCE*).
- The secret of right and wrong has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists (*George Bernard Shaw in Major Barbara*).
- Uncertainty is a challenge, a catalyst for change.
- I can't go on, I'll go on (Beckett)
- Perplexity is the beginning of knowledge (*Khalil Gibran*).
- You can not solve current problem from current thinking. Current problems are the result of current thinking (*Albert Einstein*).

Room for Doubt

Preface

1. It is Jungle out There!
2. Brute Force of Articulated Grunt
3. Between the Bits of Utterances
4. In a Word
5. To a Concept
6. Taming Memes and Sound Bites
7. Words Hijack Thoughts
8. On the Tail of Two Tales
9. Anecdotes: Experience or Wishful
10. Word Play
11. Parables as Thought Algorithms
12. Hearing to Listen and Looking to See
13. Standardization of Meaning
14. Tales Explore Meaning
15. Cast of Characters
16. Play With Unknown and Unexpected
17. Ways of Doubt
18. Reference, Reason, Resonance
19. Folly of Denying "I"
20. Deconstruction of ad hoc
21. Survival by Trial
22. Flowers in the Garden of Eden?
23. Unintended Consequences
24. Bumbling Tool-Maker
25. Evolution by Trials
26. Interdependence for Independence
27. Is There a Bio-Logic?
28. Innovation Diffusion
29. Greed and Grab
30. Exploitation of the Commons
31. Unintended Consequences
32. Prediction
33. Chaos of Premature Ideas
34. Rationality by Practice
35. Mathematics Tracks Reality
36. Abstraction as But-nothing-else