

The White Chair

Friday, 20 December 2019 13:38

On the Intrinsic Nature of Language and the Development of Language in Humans

Years ago, soon after 9/11, I was doing some reading on US History, and the Constitution more specifically, and I remember a segment of that reading that was discussing the interpretation of some Constitutional passages and the need to research the satellite debates and discussions concerning those parts of the Constitution under discussion in order to fully understand and comprehend the real meaning of the passages. I struggled for some time trying to get my head around all the background reading in order to just understand what I thought were pretty plain words already. My average American upbringing and education just couldn't understand, at first, how words I was reading today, words that I found understandable with easy to comprehend meanings and apparent intentions could mean something different because of other words, say in a Congressional debate, that were being used to frame what I thought were new or expanded meanings over what I seemed to understand from the few words of the passage itself.

I don't remember the exact years but I know this was sometime after 9/11 and soon I was immersed as a homeschool father with additional, and quite scary at the time, responsibilities of actually getting involved and making decisions with regard to the educating of my daughters. I was around this time that I remember watching an educational show about early humans and the beginnings of language. I remember little of what exact show or when but what I do remember has always stayed with me. In the segment I want to describe, early humans, cavemen, were out hunting. They were still trying to locate their game and one of the cavemen climbed up a small cliff to get on top of a hill to scope out the area behind. To his excitement he finds what they're after and turns back to look down at his brother cavemen below and bellows some strange guttural sounds. At this point the narration is going on about the early development of language and other such stuff, but the show CGI is what I remember most clearly. Graphically, something looking like a long multi-colored, multi-shaded silk scarf with whiffs and strands of purples, blues, and reds begins to emanate from the speaker's mouth and it floats and waffles down the cliffside toward the other cavemen. At some point, near enough, the purple-ly strands split into multiple wafts of color and continue on, each finding the ear of one of the other cavemen. And the narration is going on about humans beginning to use rudimentary sounds to convey information about the prey, to coordinate the hunt, to communicate with the other hunters. This was not quite language but it was the beginning of

language and, whether they realized it or not, the earliest understanding for the need for language.

Sometime after, my oldest daughter and I started a logic class. We didn't teach many subjects in our home despite the term homeschooling. Most of the classes our girls took were taught by independent teachers and other organizations but we did teach a few classes that were sort of in my wife's and my general wheelhouse. Most commonly the first logic class a student takes, Formal logic is a deductive logic that studies the form and logical structure of statements and propositions and the relations that are formed between words, premises or assertions and conclusions. It is the classic Aristotelian logic of the basic Syllogism and the structure, validity and inferences made by form rather than by content from the starting premises. In this study, before you start putting your first syllogism together you must learn the smaller components or parts that make up the larger, structural elements of a syllogism of premises/conclusion. One of the first steps on that journey was a chapter titled, "The Simple Apprehension." This is defined as the mental act of perceiving an object intellectually, where the mind grasps the concept or meaning of an object without confirming or denying anything about it. This was an entire chapter mind you, who knew there was so much that went into the simple act of just mentally grasping the meaning of a thing! But the first concept to understand in basic logic, and in all use of language really, is the duality of the **mental acts** which in turn result in increasingly more complex **verbal expressions** starting at a single word, phrase or term for a concept, to a sentence or premise representing a judgment, to finally a formal conclusion stating the deduction.

These embody the six basic concepts or parts needed to understand the logical syllogism or deduction,

the three mental acts: simple apprehension, judgment, Deduction; and
the three verbal expressions: term, proposition, Syllogism.

Three increasingly complex mental acts and their corresponding, also increasingly complex, language representations that help demonstrate the order and timeline of how the mind forms ideas, creates judgements and deduces new truths or ideas; and then represents that same process in language. Clearly demonstrating that language is subservient to the mental acts, concepts, intelligence, which originate first and in the mind and only then are represented in actual language for the single and specific intention of communicating those concepts to others.

So how do these stories fit together and what do they have to do with Constitutional passages?

None of the mental acts need verbal expression to originate or exist. If yours were the only mind in existence, you'd hardly need to communicate outside of yourself, but you would still have sensory perception and apprehension of ideas, you'd still form judgements and make deductions. But once others are part of the experience, your need to communicate those ideas to others would quickly become apparent.

It took all of these experiences for me to finally come to understand what the author was saying about having to read and research the debates and correspondence surrounding passages in our Constitution that were written 230 plus years ago and how the misunderstanding of this basic, intrinsic characteristic of language has actually done so much great harm to our country and the principles of freedom.

Think again of the image of the cavemen and the guttural, purple representation of early language, now think about the simple apprehension, the mental act of grasping the meaning of a concept. Now think of the verbal expression of that concept, the **Term**, a word, language, as I offer this assertion:

Language, words, in whatever form, are always inferior to the Concept for which that language was employed to express.

Let me also state this another way:

The Concept or idea is always Superior to the tool used to express and convey that concept, language!

This is such a critical concept and unfortunately it's one that being broken, whether by ignorance or malfeasance, has allowed our government, *of and by the people*, to trample over our inalienable rights and freedoms by effectively redefining and disregarding the original Concepts. Concepts that are intrinsically and always Superior to the words used to express and convey those concepts. This understanding is rooted in the very essence and motivation for the development of language in humans. It was seeing those purply wafts of color that it finally hit me in the caveman-head that language was developed specifically and fundamentally as a tool to convey ideas that **already existed** in one's mind to the thoughts and minds of others.

In, "*The Republic of Plato*," by Allan Bloom on page three of the Preface (xiii) Bloom is discussing the nature and challenges for translators of texts such as this ancient Greek. He writes,

For example, H. D. P. Lee in describing his view of a translator's responsibility, says,

*"The translator must go behind what Plato said and discover what he means, and if, for example, he says
'examining the beautiful and the good'
must not hesitate to render this as
'discussing moral values'
if that is in fact the way in which the same thought would be expressed today."*

There it is, the understanding that even in the translation of texts, the understanding that despite the meanings of words today, the primary obligation of the translator is to get behind the words to the **Original Concept** for which those words were used then, and in the case of translating ancient texts, translate them not directly into modern versions of the same words but to translate those ideas into **expressions that represent those same ideas in words of today!**

It was then I began to realize that for generations now, we, and the increasingly democratic and tyrannical evil we call our government, and our shared ignorance have been the very source of our own suffering!

Language is NEVER and cannot be interpreted. It can only be understood. If the words are old or not effective in transmitting and sharing the concept for which they were written, as reader, your obligation is to seek out clarification, in effect more words, if possible, in order to understand the concept for which those words were written. Your malfeasance is to think you are free to just decide what they mean to you today!

Even Judges are not empowered to ***interpret*** the Constitution or legal Statutes. While we often hear that the Judiciary interprets the law, this is an elementary and colloquial expression not a formal or principled one. Rather, ***the judge's role is to fill in and find the meaning and intent of statutes when there is controversy and difference in the understanding by parties in conflict, not to broaden, expand or redefine a fixed legal meaning.*** In fact, the judge's role is to be a bulwark against the natural predisposition of citizens to do exactly that, broaden meaning and intent to fit their personal needs and purposes. It is one of the many reasons the Judiciary was supposed to be apolitical and tenured for life. What we have today is purely corruption, and a corruption that is killing the country that is our birthright!

As Michael Boldin, of the 10th Amendment Center, once described it,

...the constitution is an 18th century legal document. It's not just prose....

...like any legal document... the legal meaning of the constitution is the same today as it was understood to mean at the time that the people gave it legal force.

Can you imagine reinterpreting say a land contract long after the signing to "reinterpret" boundaries and extents? Can you imagine the bank where you have your auto loan writing you to say they've reinterpreted your auto loan to mean that your interest should be calculated and compounded hourly instead of daily?

Think of the legion of court opinions that have redefined language, think of the thousands of laws and ordinances under which we are all subject, think of all the legal documents, agreements, contracts and the like which are all, each and every day, manipulated, argued, redefined to the needs and will of the readers and you'll begin to grasp how the misunderstanding of this intrinsic **fact of language itself** has all but destroyed, not just our Constitution, but even our ability to cooperate, build community and find common ground among us. How is it even logical that this stands? How can real community and cooperation even be built and maintained, strong and unwavering, with such a shifting foundation? Once you understand this, you'll realize the very idea of a "living Constitution" is moronic, antithetical to language itself!

Our founding fathers understood this and they had an intellectual command of language that few have today. They gave us something new yet amazing and never before seen on the stage of all of human existence and almost before the ink was dry frail, corruptible, evil, narcissistic humans began to redefine and manipulate what we were given, though language. I submit this critical misunderstanding has been the single most significant factor in the disintegration of the true intention and meaning of our once great founding documents and the country we were supposed to have! Think about how it might have been different if not for this malfeasance. Think about how fixing this critical misunderstanding can also be one of the most significant steps forward. Think about how you can contribute to community and understanding just by using language correctly!

The White Chair
20 December 2019

edited: 16 May 2020
edited: 17 Oct 2020
edited: 12 Jan 2023