

THE DEEPEST STRUCTURE OF THE SENTENCE

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Abstract

This article suggests a possible interpretation of the sentence by resorting to the ancient Hindu grammar and the model of Archetypes. According to the former, Language belonged to a superior ontological level that was called the Primordial Word unifying the material reality and awareness into the causal realm of all objects and their corresponding words (an equivalent to the Archetypes). This causal level manifests only through the Sentence which is an indivisible content. The relationships between its parts illustrate the structure of the Cosmic Ritual that operates a magic transfer leading to completeness and transformation.

Keywords: sentence, verb, structure, role, archetype, ritual

Introduction

The aim of this article is to suggest a possible interpretation of the sentence based on a synthesis of the ancient Hindu Grammar and the theory of archetypes developed by analytical psychology. The present attempt is not to revisit the now classical theory of the deep structure postulated by generative grammars but to go deeper inside what linguists understand by “sentence”, “verb”, “language” and try to reveal what presumably lies at their deepest level. The intuition that there must be more to sentences than mere language specific grammatical relations inspired linguists to identify what they called the “universal principles” governing all languages. What generative linguistics nowadays understands by “syntax” mainly refers to a universal set of principles and rules common to all languages that is an innate component of the human mind making up the so called speaker 'inborn competence. The aim of linguistics is, therefore, to explain the internal mechanisms of the human mind by discovering the universal properties of all languages on the assumption that language is an internal property of the human mind. Thus, at the internal level of the sentence, called the Deep Structure, the lexicon items, that also contain information about the roles of Agent, Patient, Experiencer etc. are represented in a form that can be “read” by the system, just like in a computer.

The Hindu Theory of Language

However, human mind is much more complex than a computer and trying to restrict its manifestation to the binary logic of the machine has limited the chances of perceiving the intricacies of the most amazing human phenomenon – Language. Surprisingly enough, an extremely complex and accurate theory of sentence structure and language as a whole had already been elaborated before the beginning of the first millennium. We refer to the Hindu grammarians who elaborated a theory of language that was the result of a highly spiritual state of contemplation where the knowledge attained was direct and free from mental conditionings. They reached the cognition that Language played an essential role in the birth and existence of the entire Universe. Famous linguists like Panini (5th c. BC), Patanjali (4th c. BC), Bhartrihari (5th c. AD) and others became aware of the unique nature of language and considered it equal to Creation and Knowledge. That superior ontological level was called “Shabda Brahman“ which in Sanskrit means the Primordial Word exceeding both the form and meaning of the written and spoken language. “Shabda” actually referred to speech and it unified all forms of the material reality, the knowledge of these forms as well as the nature of awareness, because they are nothing else than Brahma, the Supreme Creator. Brahma denotes the support of Reality, without beginning or end, beyond time and space. It is the principle of language, the essence of the word and , as such, the essence of the entire cognition .It was believed that ,irrespective of its various forms, language itself was not created, thus having neither beginning nor end. The Upanishads write about Shabda Brahma that is born through the splitting of the primordial Unity.

The vibrations created by this phenomenon, called Big Bang in astrophysics, generated the gross, subtle and causal universes, all of them existing at specific energy frequencies. Hence, language is, in the view of the ancient Hindu grammarians, the supreme principle underlying the creation of objects, mental concepts and communication at large.

The Original Word is the absolute or eternal source of plurality and generator of the multiple levels of creation: objects, living creatures, cognition, language etc. Shabda Brahma was also the Divine Word or the informational Seed or Trace included in the state of pure potentiality or Absolute Silence existing between the cosmic cycles. The Absolute is one but through Creation, it appears as subject, object and act of experience. Having the nature of language, it stands for that primordial “sound sequence” containing all meanings.

When Creation was initiated, the first to appear was the so-called causal Universe or Original Archetype that had to underlie the entire material universe .It embodied all the basic elements to be used in the creation of the human beings. Its equivalent in the analytical psychology is the Collective Unconscious that cannot be directly accessed by human consciousness because it is transcendent in nature. The only

way in which it can reach awareness is through images that can be concrete (the mythical figures of the Sage, the Divine Child, the Virgin, the Dragon etc.) or abstract (the Circle, the Triangle, the Spiral etc.). In the mythical terminology, the archetype is the God guiding and controlling both the material and the psychic levels. Archetypes are only determined in form but not in content, where the content is provided by the conscious experience. Its form can be compared to the system of axes in a crystal that is an empty element, a possibility, an organizer.

In the view of both the ancient grammarians and the analytical psychology the universe consists in a continuum enclosing matter and psyche alike. The two basic parts of the matter-psyche component are the conscious and the unconscious. The centre of the conscious psyche is the Ego governed by the Self – the archetype of centeredness or the source of the entire Creation. The Ego is a complex entity that is subordinate to the Self or, in other words, included in the total personality, the center of which is the Self. Its relationship to the latter manifests itself during the various stages of human evolution according to the archetype of the Ego – Self axis. This process consists in the conscious attempt of the individual to understand and develop the innate potential of his psyche to the benefit of completeness. The Ego has to consciously relate to the Self, thereby achieving stability and enlightenment. It is true that the Self is inborn but it has to be gradually integrated within the conscious life by what Jung called the “Self Realization”. The concept of the Self is very abstract but it also includes an empirical manifestation as a numinous (sacred) and fascinating feeling or as a continuous impulse towards order and harmony. Either as a figurative representation (the King, the Hero etc.) or as an abstract symbol (the Triangle, the Circle, etc.) it has the role of putting the chaotic psychic contents into order. Each of its models suggests a protective space that guides and stimulates towards the perception of the Universal on the Individual scale. On the other hand, the Self needs the Ego as the sole factor possessing the conscious ability to understand it.

The Hindus believed that Shabda Brahman first manifested as “Sphota” (explosion – Sanskr.) or the causal, archetypal level of all objects and their corresponding names. Thus, words are also parts of the Universe, having their matrix in the causal zone or Sphota, where each and every object/ phenomenon has a “name” or “sound print” associated to it like an eternal vibration pattern. Therefore, the different names given by languages to an object appear to be different only at the illusory level of concrete manifestation for, in reality, they are basically undifferentiated. For Bhartrihari, the father of the Indian semantics, Sphota was the unity of meaning, denoting the idea that “explodes” or becomes clear to the mind whenever a meaningful sound sequence i.e. a sentence is uttered. For Bhartrihari the unity of meaning or Sphota was specific only to the sentence that stood for an indivisible and whole content. A sentence could be separated into words but only for the sake of the grammatical analysis. Its parts have no meaning outside their combination in a specific structure.

They are not related to the senses that can only perceive the object at a certain moment and can have access to fragments of actions. Just like the circle of fire produced by rotating a torch, the sentence as a total form, is classified by the intellect during the spontaneous birth of a mental image through which the intellect recognizes a unit of meaning that already exists deeply stored into the unconscious. The meaning of a sentence is that conscious state of spontaneously knowing/ understanding the respective meaning. Sphota and the concrete sounds are closely related just like the moon reflection into the water. The moon only appears to be moving due to the ripples that deform its image. In the same way, the sound sequence is placed upon sphota that is devoid of parts and ordering. Such properties are typical only of physical sounds and hence, are attributed to the mental- auditive image (sphota) through illusion. Sounds and Sphota are actually one and their operation illustrates the metaphysical relationship between the subtle, eternal essences and the visible phenomena.

The Hindus believed that the sentence reflected the universal activity. Hence, its central element was the Verb round which various nouns, adjectives etc. rotated like satellites with specific roles. The entire system was as compact and unbreakable as the nucleus of an atom surrounded by its electron cloud. The six roles represented the truly deep structure of the sentence where the activity involved was invisible and could be mentally understood only by grammatical analysis. Its deepest meaning implied the totality of components, that was metaphorical and integrative in nature. The model of both human and nonhuman acts was the vedic ritual considered to be the supreme activity of reestablishing the contact with the Divinity. It was through the performance of the rituals to the gods that the archetypal categories of the human consciousness were revealed. The Hindu grammar was therefore born in close connection with the significance of the ritual and syntax came to be considered the "hidden scheme" of the cosmic ritual itself. Philosophers started studying the strict rules of the vedic ritual and of Sanskrit and it was soon revealed that the two were isomorphic. Thus, they discovered that the relationships among the participants to the ritual were symbolically expressed in the syntactic structures. To be more specific, the relationships connected the verb, as the main part of the sentence, and the six functions/ roles played by the other parts, namely, the agent, patient, offering, magical transfer, instrument and location.

In the view of the Hindu grammar, the structure of language was only accessible to the initiates through the study of grammar. Therefore, both language and ritual offered access to knowledge. The ritual was a whole where each part had to be in harmony with the rest: the agent (sacrificing priest), the offering (flowers, sweets, incense, etc.), the instrument (fire, holy grass, utensils etc.), etc. According to the ancient idea, the human microcosm was a projection of the macrocosm. That is why, in the Vedas, all the ritual elements were also found in the human body and each psycho - physiological activity was interpreted to be a well determined ritual. The sense organs played the role of the sacrificing priests, the mind was the fire of

sacrifice, the action organs were the instruments etc. The ritual was mainly performed with a purpose: to obtain prosperity, to drive away evil etc. More precisely, however, the ritual was, at first, done in nature and then, intuitively copied by man. The Vedas write about the sun and the moon who, as sacrificing priests, offered their light to the gods, while the wind acted as the fuel. The offering of the rays returned to the soil where it was further given to man - a substitute of the divinity. In his turn, man performed the ritual of the offering through his every day acts.

During our analysis of the ritual structure and its linguistic manifestation, we found out that they could be symbolically represented by a pattern in the form of a triangle including four basic elements. The first element (the center of the triangle) is the individual/ Ego who, animated by his innate impulse to approach the Self, brings an offering to the deity materialized in a statue, picture etc. The second element (the right-hand corner of the triangle) is the concrete, external support that symbolizes the Self in the form of a statue of the deity, or an offering consisting in flowers, ornaments, incense, mantras etc. The third element (the left - hand corner of the triangle) is the psychic representation or image triggered in the Ego through the direct physical contact with the material support. The fourth element (the top corner of the triangle) is the significance that, once activated, triggers a magic transfer through which certain qualities of the Self are incorporated into the performer of the ritual. The significance is the Idea about the Self, which consists in perceiving some of its attributes, because most of them remain inaccessible. They are archetypal qualities that, once activated, are experienced as an inexpressible state of "purity", "detachment" etc. accompanied by concrete sensations of coolness, absence of weight in the body, etc. The ritual is ultimately a language through which the Ego receives messages from the Self, that can be visual (artistic arrangement of the ritual objects etc.), auditory (music, mantras /prayers), or olfactory (incense, fragrance of flowers etc.). They produce a psychic image that will be endowed with significance. For example, during the ritual of worshipping the Indian deity of Innocence, people bring offerings of red flowers accompanied by specific formulas/ mantras. The visual contact with the flowers as well as the uttering of the Sanskrit words for "red flowers" create a unique image in the psyche of each participant, that activates the spiritual significance of the respective elements, namely a state of holiness, innocence and joy.

It is important to understand that the human psyche is the only one capable of understanding and tapping the qualities of the Self. They operate as signals sent by the latter to challenge man to start searching and activate the Ego – Self axis. The signals are experiences, states, symbols that, in the course of evolution, awakened in man the intuition that there was something beyond him – much greater and overwhelming. That revelation was associated, in the primitive man, with a certain discomfort that made him look for those objects / phenomena that reminded him of the Self from the immemorial times when they were one. Thus, man discovered a number of formal patterns carrying fundamental, unconscious meanings (the Sea,

the Mountain, the Tree etc.) and soon they came to be worshipped as gods. He also started to use those material supports and so discovered the Ritual that became Knowledge.

With the exception of certain collectivities in the far-eastern countries and other primitive zones, people nowadays have lost the significance of the ritual. It is true that one of the reasons was that the participants in the ritual are not directly perceptible to the senses and can only be identified by the intellect or insight. The ritual was abandoned by the modern man but his entire life has continued to be organized around archetypes that are operational to a certain extent. The “House” or the “Family”, for example, are matrix – like symbols through which the Ego instinctively seeks the protection and security remembered from the dawn of humanity when he was undifferentiated from the Self. Each every-day act can have a universal implication but only when its value has reached consciousness. Just like in the classical ritual, the “gods” come only when man is aware of the value of his actions. Eating, preparing food, sleeping, walking etc. are the small and the great rituals of life through which a symbolic magic transfer can lead to completeness and transformation.

The every day ritual activities always implied a need pertaining to self preservation and self protection, in whose absence, man is annihilated. Both the classical rituals and the modern (unconscious) ritual are based on compulsiveness only that, in the latter case, the absence of the connection to the Self transforms it into a sequence of stressful activities leading to depression and unhappiness. However, the ritual is paradoxical in nature for the Self does not need any offering or any libation, He has everything. What the Ego ultimately does is to offer something to himself because the offering “challenges” the Self to stimulate a certain quality in the Ego. Something from the latter is unconsciously projected onto the offering namely certain qualities that need to be activated through the magic transfer.

The role of the Self in ritual action

Turning back to language, the center of the ritual is nothing but the centre of the sentence, namely the V + Obj. group. Having analyzed the main verbs in English, we have identified a number of semantic categories, function of the role played by the Self in the respective ritual action. By way of illustration we will present a couple of verb categories, all of them revealing the following ritual structure:

The **Agent-** is always the Self appearing as an individual/ Ego (“He is eating”), a form of matter (“The train goes to Denver”), or a set of factors (“The situation is critical”).

The **Patient-** is the Self as the element mostly desired by the Agent and hence, the objective of the ritual, the source and destination of everything. Each

action supposes a certain quality of the Self that has to be acquired by the Agent. The Patient can be a state desired by nature (“The tree blossomed”), an element of maintaining order (“He started working”), an activating factor (“He threw the ball”), a repairing factor (“He cured the child”) etc.

The **Offering-** is that part of the Agent offered as a sacrifice to the Self (the Patient) in order to receive something in exchange. It can be the effort or the work of the Ego like in “He opens the door” or his discomfort or suffering like in “He shivers with cold”. When the Agent is the Self in the form of matter, the Offering consists in the “effort made by matter according to the laws of nature (“The water burst out”).

The **Magic Transfer** - means acquiring a certain quality of the Self within a transfer from the Patient (Self) to the Ego or form of matter as concrete manifestations of the Self. It is the new state or order attained by the Agent. Thus, in “He went to the village”, the transfer concerns that transformation of the Ego as a result of perceiving the significance of the journey. In “The girl is dancing”, the Transfer refers to the new state attained by the Ego through the act of dancing. In “The water is boiling”, the Transfer is the physical transformation proceeding from the fire to the water that will further transform a physical object (the food to be boiled).

The **Instrument** - is that element through which the ritual is performed. This implies the physical and psychic body of the individual and also the external elements as forms of the Self. In the case of “The plane flies to Paris”, the Instrument involves the system of physical factors and laws underlying the action. In a sentence like “She washes the dishes.”, the Instrument is the physical body and the complex of physical laws involved in the act while in “He remained silent” the Instrument is the physical and psychic body.

The **Location** – is the “stage of the drama”. To be more exact, in “He picked up the coins.” and “The snow is falling” the Location is the world, while in “She is pretty”, the Location is the human individuality.

Among the verb categories identified during our analysis we will mention the following: the **Self as a Law of Nature** (“The wind is blowing.”, “The birds fly.”, “It is cold.”), the **Self as Sustainer** (“She is cooking.”, “They sponsor the project.”), the **Self as Hero/** element of self development (“He is working.”, “He studies.”, “He became a doctor.”), the **Self as Integrator** (“They worship the goddess.”, “He loves the girl.”), the **Self as Self Supporter** (“He is sleeping / eating.”), the **Self as Creator** (“They manufacture ships.”, “He composed the song.”), the **Self as a Psychological Complex** (“He is sad.”, “He is angry.”) etc.

The category of the **Self as a Source of Form** includes verbs that may appear in sentences like “She is green – eyed”, “The tree is tall” etc. The Patient here is the Self as a positive / negative image “feeding” a concrete human/ nonhuman form. The Offering is the Ego or the concrete form (the tree) that is subject to the

transformation imposed by the Self. The Magic Transfer refers to the (ideal) source image passing from the Patient to the Agent. The Instrument is the Ego or the concrete form that assumes and accepts whatever the Self has to give. The location is either the individuality or the world /nature.

The category of the **Self as Operator / Activator** is illustrated by verbs like “She rocks the baby”, ”He takes the horse to the stable”, etc. The Patient is the Self as a dynamic element of initiating or controlling the action. The Offering is the effort involved in the respective action, the Magic Transfer is the new order / state attained by the Agent, the Instrument is the physical body and the external factors and the Location is the world.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, we express our hope to have, at least, partly revealed something of the hidden nature of the verb as the center of the sentence. The paper ultimately aimed at reviving the ancient frame work of the Hindu grammar and its implications for further study. One of the consequences to be envisaged might be reconsidering linguistics as a fundamental instrument of knowledge used to reveal the Absolute Truth. It is through the investigation of the deepest syntax of language that the linguist can perform the ritual of preparing humanity for the biggest leap out of the limitations of gross matter into the causal realm. It is through linguistics that people could be made aware of the tremendous power of Language and of their responsibility to fulfill their destiny – the Ritual of taking hold of Reality and becoming like Gods.

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