



Thank you for trying to articulate the terms of your affection, but you are using confused gender, your participle is dangling and your superlative is "like, totally" infantile.

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Language Shapes Realities

Words, Words, Words

What We Saw Last Week

- **Perception**
 - is the first “point of entry”
 - can be deceptive
- **Cognition**
 - mediates perception
- **Language**
 - codifies perception and cognition
 - “linearly” relates to both
- all three shape each other
- represent the **Inescapable Trinity**

The Plan for Today

- The World and words
- Language: relative or universalistic?
- What words mean
- and can be made to mean

The World and the Words

**Lexical items in the light of
theoretical linguistics and cognition**

The World and the Word

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)

“Father of Modern Linguistics”



referent
signified



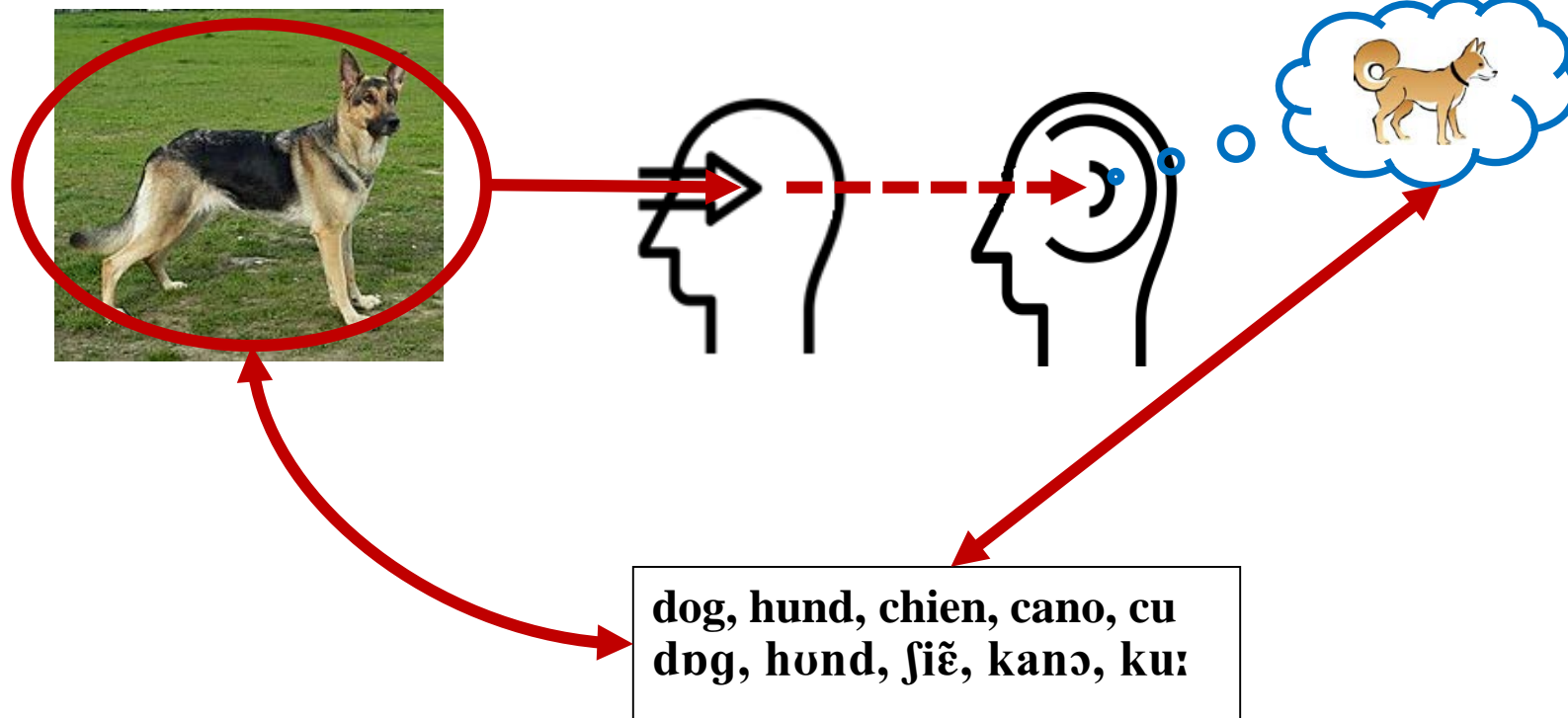
sign
signified



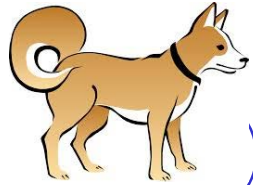
dog
hund
chien
cano
cú

choice of
sign/signified
is “arbitrary”

Referent to Sign



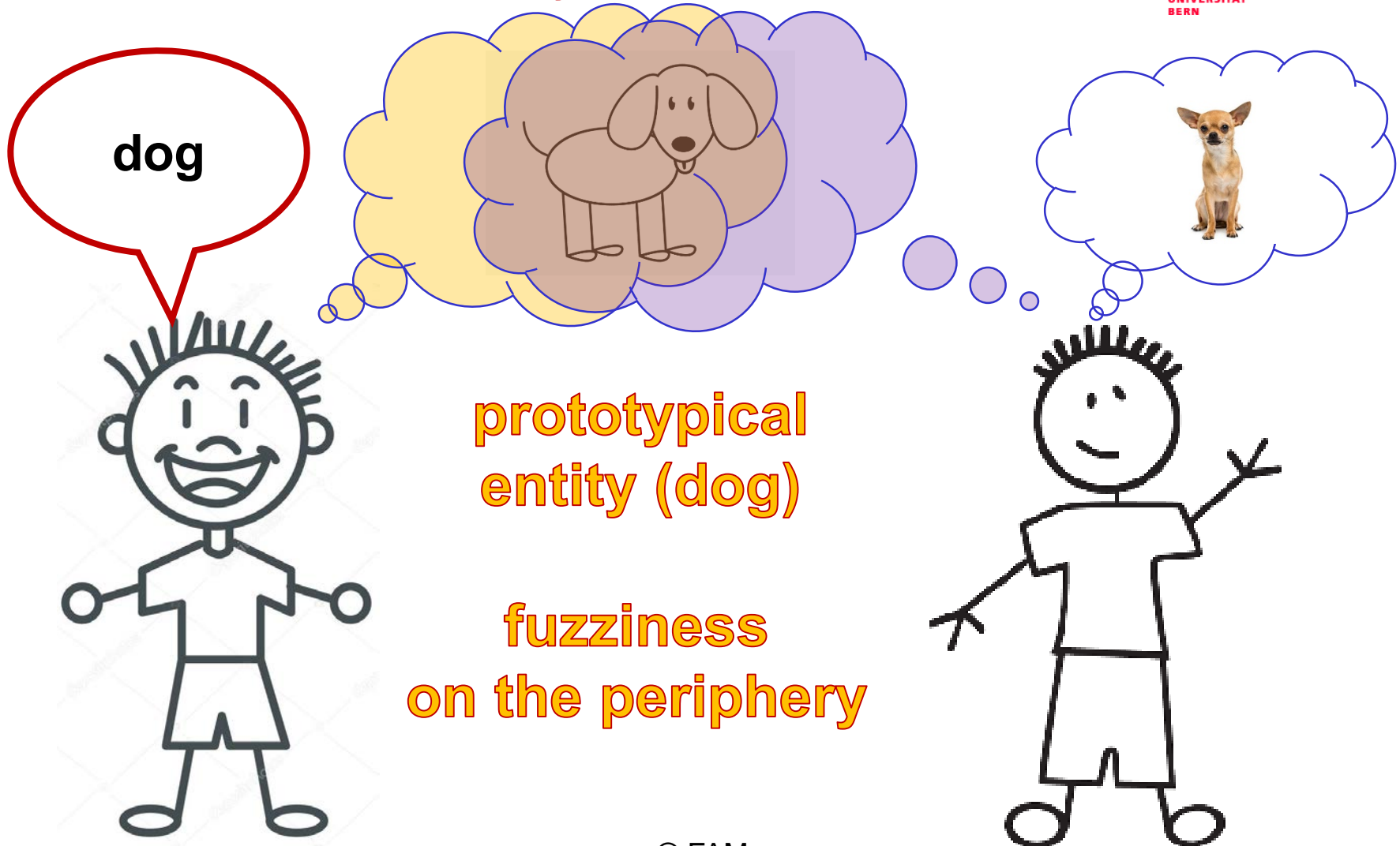
Sign and Referents



dog



Word and Entity



Choosing your words

Systematicity vs. specificity

Words to refer to

dog

hound

man's best friend

bow-wow

pooch

mutt

“Denotation”

doggy

tailwagger

stray

fleabag

canine

mongrel

k-9

affective

Connotations

technical

judgmental

interlocutor-
oriented

facetious/
humorous

“specific”

How many words for ...

Types of Pasta



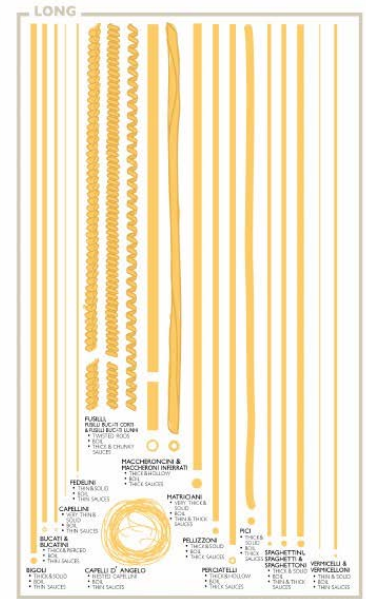
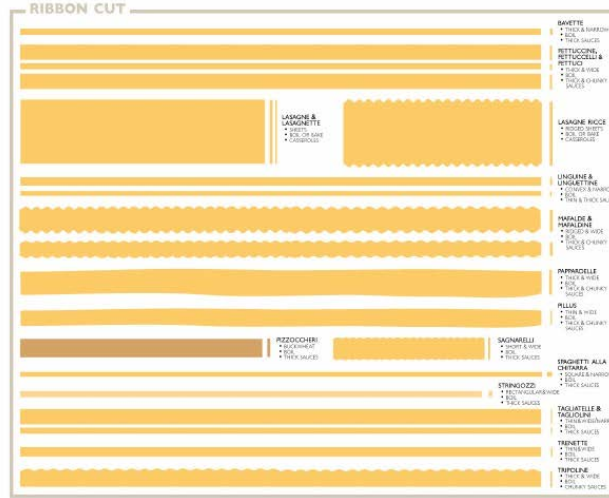
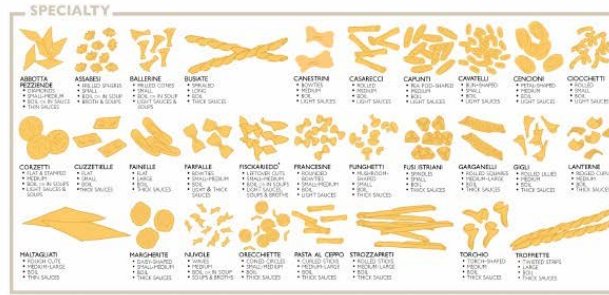
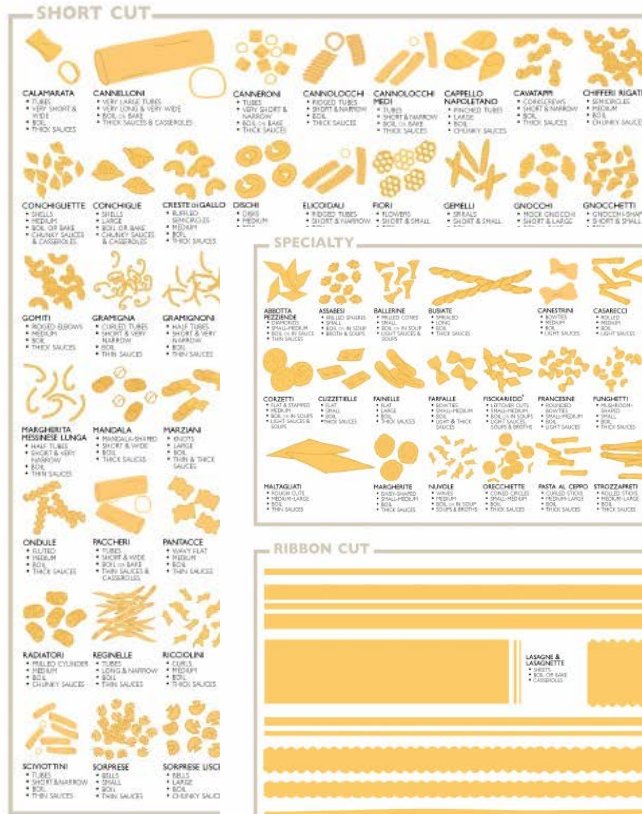
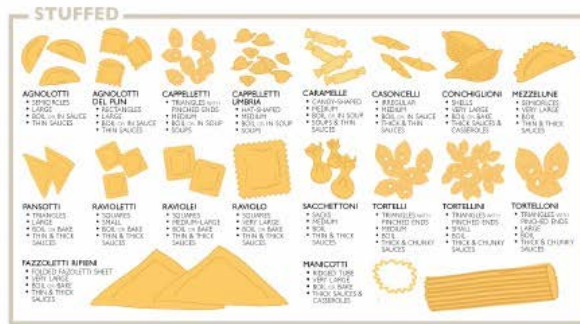
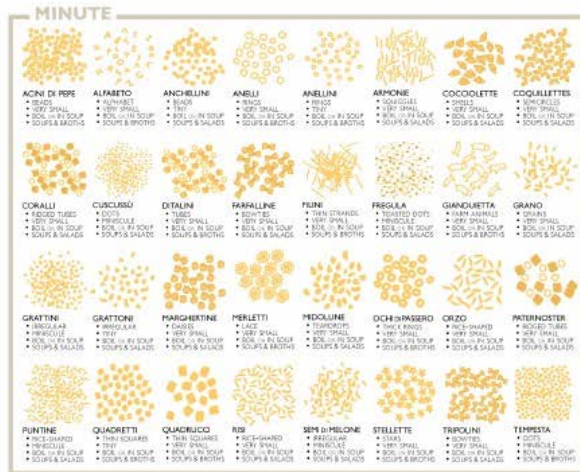
ONLYFOODS

<https://www.onlyfoods.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Types-of-Pasta.jpg>

© FAM

Actually...

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PASTA



<https://www.diyncrafts.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/4-pasta-encyclopedia.jpg>

“Sapir Whorf” made very simple

“context” → language → thought → “reality”



variety of desert nomad
words for *dunes*

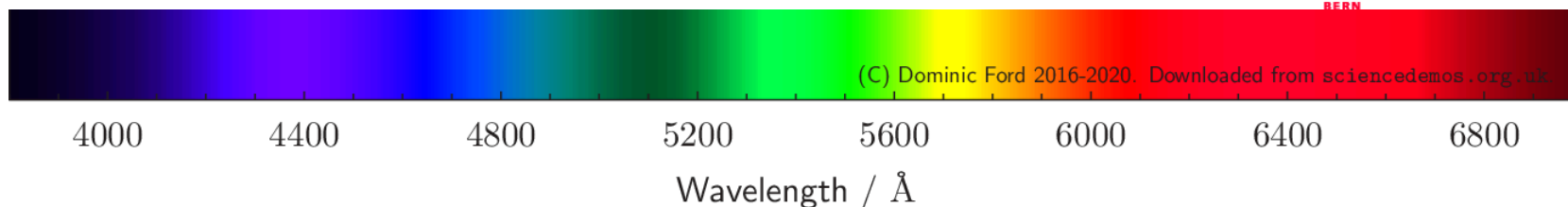
no desert nomad
word for *snow*



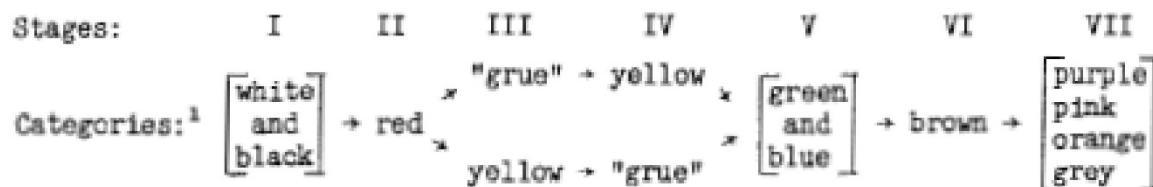
“200” Inuit words
for *snow*

no Inuit words
for *dune*

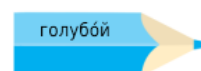
Relativity or Universality



- colours are on a spectrum (no distinct borders)
- not all languages have the same number of colour terms
- colours may have different names in different languages
- **But** Berlin and Kay (1969) argue: max 11 basic colour terms



- Davis & Corbett (1994) Russian has *light* and *dark blue*



No word for ...

Jonathan Swift *Gulliver's Travels*

Part IV: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms.

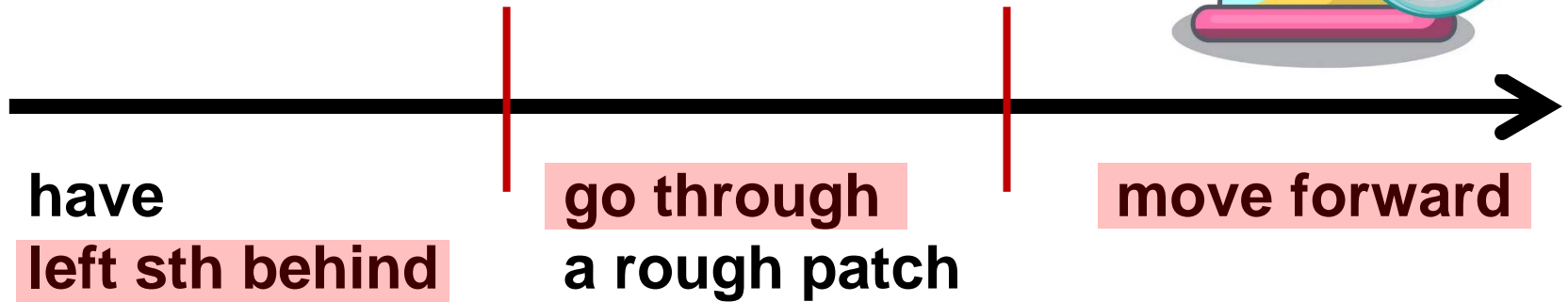
**'I cannot but think you have
said the thing which is not.'**



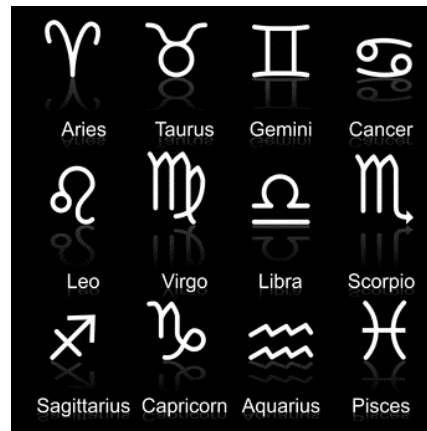
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/81/The_Servants_Drive_a_Herd_of_Yahoos_into_the_Field%2C_from_Gulliver%27s_Travels.jpg/1200px-The_Servants_Drive_a_Herd_of_Yahoos_into_the_Field%2C_from_Gulliver%27s_Travels.jpg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houyhnhnm#/media/File:Gulliver_u_Hvajninim%C5%AF_-_Grandville.jpg

Notions of Time as Space



parsing
time



units of time as “landmarks”



Another way of parsing time

“Using spatial concepts to talk and think about time may be a universal characteristic of the human mind” (Sinha 2011)

abstract notion of Time

Amondawa (indigenous people of Rondônia)

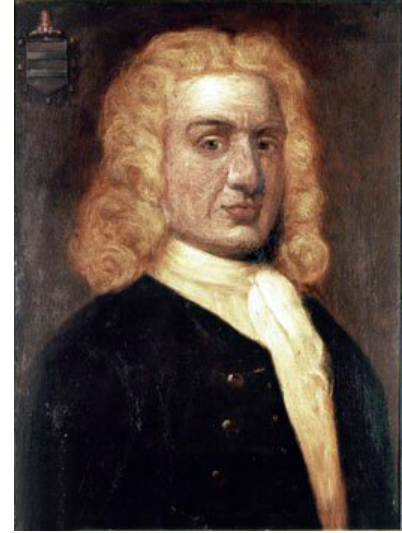
- only four number words
- time (day) marked
 - by sun's position
 - activity (rising, eating, working)
- no abstract notion of “time” (*tempo* translated *kuara*, sun)
- they talk about movement of *kuara*
- but not about dry season “approaching”
- do not recognise birthdays, but name “life stages”

time characterised to activities

In the end there is the Word ...

The power of Words

The Story of Captain William Kidd



- ca 1645 born in Dundee, Scotland
- 1680 on worked on various **buccaneer** crews (waters around Central America)
- 1695 received financial backing from Lord Belmont (Boston) to become a **privateer**
- 1698 captured an Armenian vessel in the Indian ocean sailing with French passes, part owned by Indian courtier
- 1701 flight to Boston
dropped by his erstwhile backer
transported to London
tried and executed as a **pirate**
decaying body displayed at Wapping on the Thames to discourage **pirates**

<https://www.biography.com/explorer/william-kidd>

Mariners with Violent Tendencies

Pirate	general term for illegal, violent robbery involving boats (from Greek <i>peiratēs</i> , meaning <i>brigand</i>)
Buccaneer	active around the Caribbean, French and British, targeting Spanish ships
Corsair	active around North Africa, the Barbary coast, often but not only targeting Muslim vessels, privateer status
Privateer	privately owned, armed ships official permissions to plunder ships of enemy states “private” extension of the navy



Foreign Commentary on Elections

Polls are set to open in 48 hours across [REDACTED] as the authoritarian regime of [REDACTED] attempts to consolidate its hold over the troubled, oil-rich, [...] nation. Analysts are sceptical the election will end months of political violence.

Viral images captured by [REDACTED] journalists who have ventured deep into the interior of the troubled [REDACTED] show deserted streets taken over by politically-aligned militia riding in "technicals" just a day before the country's presidential election.

[REDACTED] official denies reports that the country has told its citizens in [REDACTED] to "get out while you can", says the military is developing plans for an orderly evacuation should the political situation in the crisis-wracked [...] nation deteriorate further.

Analysts warn that the fear and desperation created by the deepening [REDACTED] humanitarian crisis, coupled with one of the most tribalized election campaigns in its history, may lift the lid off dangerous ancient ethnic hatreds and grievances that have festered for centuries.

Words and the World

“... and you had some very bad people in that group, but you also had people that were very fine people, on both sides.”



Anarchists, Agitators or Protestors who vandalize or damage our Federal Courthouse in Portland, or any Federal Buildings in any of our Cities or States, will be prosecuted under our recently re-enacted Statues & Monuments Act. MINIMUM TEN YEARS IN PRISON. Don't do it! @DHSgov



American Patriots - any security breach or disrespect to our law enforcement is unacceptable.

“terrorists”

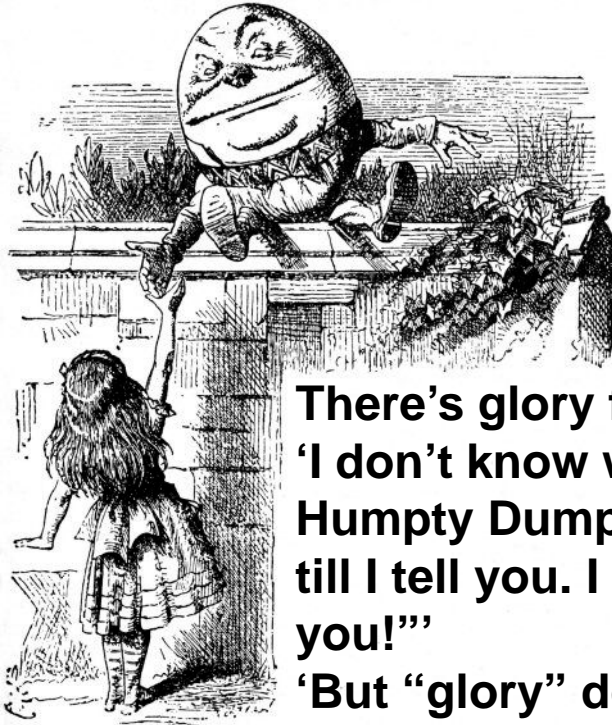


“thugs”

The violence must stop immediately. Please be peaceful.



A Lesson from Humpty Dumpty



... and that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—'

'Certainly,' said Alice.

'And only one for birthday presents, you know.

There's glory for you!'

'I don't know what you mean by "glory,"' Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you!"'

'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument,"' Alice objected.

A Lesson from Humpty Dumpty

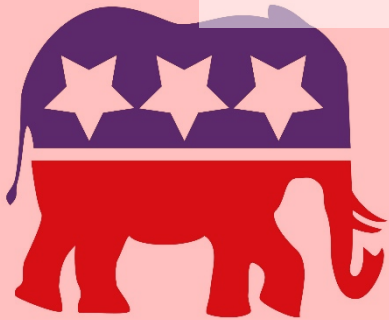
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6 January 2021: What was it?

Framing the Event



deadly attack on the Capitol

attempted coup

an insurrection

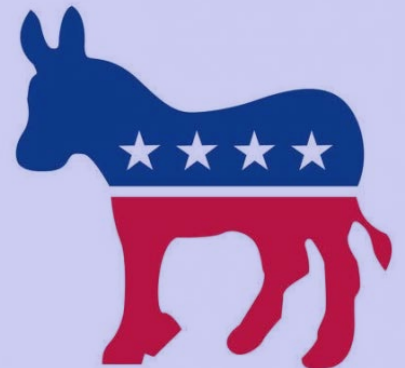
violent riot

act of domestic terrorism

legitimate protest

attempt to stop a stolen election

March on the Capitol



And who where they?

protesters

hooligans

concerned citizens

violent mob

Trump supporters

extremists

insurgents

American patriots

conspiracy theory believers

cheated voters

protesters

concerned citizens

Trump supporters

American patriots

cheated voters

**Characterising
through
connotations**

Good words

(Western) Civilisation

Patriotism

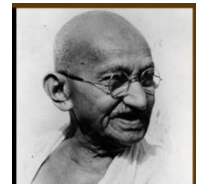
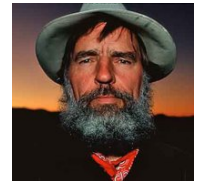
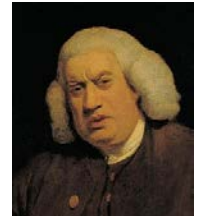
Freedom of Speech

“Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel” Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

“A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against his government” Edward Abbey (1927-1989)

What do I think of Western Civilisation? I think it would be a very good idea” Mahatma Ghandi (1869-1948)

“I may not agree with you, but I will defend to the death your right to make an ass of yourself.” Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)



“Loaded” Words

woke

cancel culture

feminazi

snowflake

politically
correct

inclusivity

tree-hugger

feminist

bleeding hearts
do-gooders

diversity

multiculturalism

mainstream
media

but what about
“liberal”?

positively / not negatively
connoted

not positively
connoted

negatively
connoted

And so to conclude

- Language as a system fails to consider that it is discursively emergent
- “Words matter” because
 - they frame events
 - characterise agents
 - distinguish “cultures”

→ shape “realities”
- Analysis of how meaning (and “power”) is
 - constructed
 - maintained
 - perpetuated

through discourse

is vital

That's it for today...

See you next week when
we will have a look at



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**How to be
Credible**