

SYLLABLES UNDERFOOT

To those who don't know the syllable, which is the abode of all the gods in the supreme space, of what avail will be the hymn? — Rig Veda hymn 1.16411

CAN'T PLAY THE PIANO IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THE KEYS ARE — 2-MINUTE CRASH COURSE IN ARTICULATORY PHONETICS

Syllables are how we sound. Would you like an a pple an ap ple or apl? Are syllables real? Syllables are spectra, sentience, sap, transience, ambi-body/mind, immaterial densities, collective excitations, phonon phenomenon, enjoyment bodies, nucleated nothingnesses, rosaries of intensest entirely interdependent passings on, pressings, distillations of the undying, content's peristalsis coursing through us.

“Syllable” means *to take together*. Syllable is the sensorial, how we jointly recognize each other, through meter's epitome. We're so accustomed to vowel shifts, word mutations, neologisms, clusterings, transliterations, desecrations, euphonizations and all forms of impermanence (all forms *are* impermanent) we forget that we're all speaking syllables — not that they're always the same and cannot change (*aksara* — “not melting away” “indelible” “immutable” “non-mutable”—the Sanskrit word for *syllable*) rather they are, in any case, in their contingent coming-into-existence, avatars of om-the-imperishable (which is ultimately its own sub-syllabic fade out.) They are the substantiality of that which always must be in flux for us to ever flourish. The ground of speech.

In the vast ocean of words, the syllable is the life-raft, the beacon, the shore. And then, ultimately, a single syllable is the sea itself. And they are the seeds.

The syllables *are* the senses (not merely analogous).

The syllable is *how* we recognize. How's parsing preference. How's favoring of the rudimentary set (onset/nucleus/coda) over strings of segments or indivisible words. The alphabetic perspective clouds this basic fact. (The alphabet is not “language”—it's an exercise.) The first level at which letters become intelligible is the syllable. (Although a few poets have spoken and written segmentally, in phonemes, even sub-phonemically.) A deep alphabetization bias has allowed modern phonology to all but ignore the syllable. Segmentation is more orthographic than sonic, more a matter of spelling than speaking. Or are syllables more determined by orthographic encoding than I realize? It's easy to imagine early scribes sounding out words in a sort of orthographic re-syllabification of the spoken word; a lineup of alignments and misalignings. Granted, the syllable is a postulate, a product of our acoustic imagination —but very effectively so, and indestructibly so ... *due* to change. People can only, bodily, make a limited number of meaningful letter-sounds. Languages average an inventory of 40 phonemes; the IPA lists 107 all in all. Phonemes are the inhering energies of syllabic awareness. Syllables, in turn, safeguard the phones. Syllables animate the letters, infinitely. Without recombination and phonotactics, the letters couldn't be the syllable's persistence. We'd be cosmogenesis-less. Syllable is elemental ritual.

A syllable is one use of a vowel with or without consonant onset and coda. In phonologists' formulation this pattern of syllabification can be written V, CV, VC or CVC, where V is a vocalic sonority/energy peak and C is a single consonant or clustering of consonants (e.g., the *str* or *ngth* of strength.) Then again, there are exceptions. Typically, a consonant could be defined as that which can't form a syllable nucleus, except in the relatively rare cases of *syllabic consonants*. The Afro-Asiatic Berber dialect Tashlhiyt contains vowel-less syllables (*tkkst stt* "you took it away") as does Nuxalk, a highly endangered Salishan language of British Columbia: "he had in his possession a bunchberry plant, *clhp'xwlhltlhplhhskwts*—purely obstruent, but for *w* (and perhaps we could say *syllableless* as well.) English can be said to have syllabic consonants as well; liquids and nasals (sonorant consonants) can drop the ghost of nuclear schwa and sound alone, as in the *r* of father, *l* in people or *fl* in awful, *m* in rhythm or *n* in human. The *l* of "disgruntled" can be heard as the sonorous core of the consonantal syllable *tld* (facilitated by the homorganic place-of-articulation of these three consonants). The obstruent (stops, fricatives, affricates) onomatopoeia of *brr*, *shh*, *psst* or *tsk tsk* is fully meaningful. Sanskrit liquids and nasals also have syllabic allophones: *r*, *l*, *m*, *ṅ*. In Cantonese, *m* is a word meaning "not." In English we can simply voice a long nasal *n* with a certain tonal attitude to indicate "I don't think so."

With the continued reduction of unstressed English vowels to *schwa*, fully-formed vowels may one day fall into disuse altogether.

Sociophysiologicaly, a syllable is one complete jaw oscillation with one sonority (amplitude) peak, the nucleus of the syllable. (Conversation is an interchanging of strings of syllabic jaw oscillations.) A syllable is gestural; the onset/nucleus is synchronously sounded, shaping each other at once, in phase, as the closing coda concatenates. Our facial gestures and body language are in phase with this syllable formation.

And the syllable onset is fully anticipated, under formation and contouring before we even speak.

The syllable, as a cell or shell, is necessary for organizing the rules that determine its structure. Obviously. Without the syllable, the rules of both segmental (phoneme grouping) and suprasegmental (stress, tone, rhythm...i.e., *prosody*) phenomena can't be applied. It's the perfect regulatory size. Bite-size. (As *Projective Verse* has said: "It is from the union of the mind and the ear that the syllable is born."—although ear and heart are more intimately interrelated, as are mind and breath, especially *medicinally* and *subtly*.)

But are you ha ppy, hap py, happ y, unsure, or n shrr? Perhaps you're impossibly h a p p y? And in wanting the above *ap ple*, *a pple* or *apl*, is *(p)ple* a consonantly nucleated syllable, or is it nucleus-less, or perhaps more purely cytoplasmically syllabic or protist?

Shall we simply go with native-speaker knowledge of prosodic prominence to parse the suprasegmental stream into syllables as they fly, without a care in the world?

Shall we perceive inter-vocalic consonants ambi-syllabically (as belonging to both preceding and succeeding syllables)? Or do consonants side with the more strongly stressed of two adjoining syllables? Almost unbeknownst, the syllable is the expression of *phonotactics*, the principles of a language that describe which strings and contiguities of sounds are allowable. Any compound consonant onset that can be word-initial must remain intact as a word-medial onset. Because we say "play" we parse *am pli tude*, not *amp lit ude* (unless you *shoplift*.) American English allows no word-intital *tl* or *nt*, and so we say *at lan tis*, not *a tlant is*. Any letter can start a word, so any letter can be median-syllable initial.

Of course, there are coda-final clusters that are impermissible as onsets (mpt, nt, rt, lt, lf, ght, ks, nd, lp, lm, kt, ft, xts, etc. (While Japanese doesn't allow consonant compounds at all.) Consonant clustering is completely phonotactically constrained. Three-consonant onsets start with *s*, followed by a voiceless plosive (*p, t, k*) and close with an approximant (*l, r, w, y*) as in *split, scream, street, squeeze, skew*. Two-consonant onsets can't start with an approximate (nor, h, x, z, ch, j) but must be followed by one; thus, any stop or fricative can be the initial consonant, followed by a liquid: *pl pr bl br fl fr tr dr kl kr gl gr*. (Initial *s* is more accepting: it can be followed by *p, t, k, f, m* and *n*, although only *l* and *w* among the approximates, as in *startled spellbound swashbuckler skeptically smarms snap-on sphincter slipup*.)

Codas are less constrained and are to some extent, as stop/continuant inversions, onset-mirrors (as in *bro* and *orb*, *plump* and *pulp*, *true-art*) set in a Sonority Hierarchy (see below.)

Phonotactics is a people's melding of euphony and articulatory mechanics.

The syllable is the prototypic quantum model. As particle or wave, the syllabic contour fills positions along its rising onset, vocalic crest and coda decrescendo, with the syllable boundary as the trough.

As that with an openness, unbostuctedness or peak sonority at its heart, the syllable symbolizes (solicits) compassion. We love syllabically.

Meanwhile, we're destroying our world because speech is not perceived as seed syllables, as that through which we tune to the ecocosmos, through which we support each other and are elementally nourished.

Segments are gross, syllables subtle. The senses are subtle flowerings of the 5 elements. Subtlety is for being liberated while alive. Syllables are the most excellent boat (for crossing over, from unintelligibility to intelligibility, from separable to shared, from unaware to aware, from here to there, here to home.)

Although Aristotle held that "the syllable is a meaningless vocal sound composed of a consonant and a vowel, for *gr* without *a* is not a syllable, but with *a*, as *gra*, it is," a syllable in fact acts as the non-arbitrary manifestation of the phonemes. (More on the strictness of phonotactics and sound symbolism below.)

Our alphabet is recited as a syllabary. Consonants are pronounced as either CV (*bee, cee, dee, jā, kā, wai*, etc.) or VC (*ef, el, em, are, ex, etc.*) while vowels stand alone.

Syllables are the means for synchronizing the prosodic (suprasegmental) and segmental (phoneme) streams.

Syllables are our dread of continuous stream, of senselessness, emptiness and pure light without love.

A syllable is that of which we must always ask: "does it actually exist?" A calling-into-question of its existence is as a calling into question of existence itself—the practice of no-such-thing, until we see with our own eyes, hear with our own hearts, test with our own instruments. The binary question whether syllables are stressed or unstressed, long or short, is superseded by the wonder of whether they exist at all.

A syllable is *figmental* while a segment is *visceral*.

If the syllable ultimately has no physical correlates, if it is purely or mostly a phenomenon of theoretical phonetics, speech is revealed as a spiritual practice; intermediary between faith and construct, at each step, as that step—a flow we're responsible for while under its spell.

Syllables are an accommodation of scarcely understood yet conspicuous neuromotor constraints.

Vowels take the air out of consonants.

Verse caused syllabification caused civilization.

Syllables are rhythmic oscillations between open (nuclear) mouth and closed (coda) mouth; between sonority crests and troughs (or crest to crest without falling, as in *go on*, where there is perhaps a pause, but no trough.) This pulse of acoustic energy can be sensed as a minimization of force at syllable boundaries, between coda (the falling sonority slope) and the following onset (the start of the rise to peak nuclear sonority.) Phoneticians and phonologists have referred to this as *the Sonority Sequencing Principle*. Maximization of this sonority contour is called the *Syllable Contact Law* under which sonorously contrastive segment-sequences are selected for greater perceptibility and salience.

"Handles" and "lanterns" bear wholly consonantal, perfectly sonorous, well-formed tri-part syllable structures: *dlz, trnz*.

A consonant-nucleus and a vowel can't share the same syllable.

Can a syllable be non-nuclear? Only in practice.

How things are pointed out: syllabically. That, this, those, these, them, there.

Know the violable constraints, first. Then start a revolution.

The constraints themselves war among themselves. One may be another's turnoff, or they may coincide.

Soften the universals. Uproot to save the soil.

Although (and perhaps due to the fact that) we live in a graduated, contingent interdependency, actors tend to proceed tendentiously.

The nucleus is the overlapping of the steep onset sonority rise and the more gradual coda sonority slope (sometimes called the *Sonority Dispersion Principle*). A peak can only be made of its surrounding pitches.

Sonority, as a universal phonological primitive, equates with duration which determines weight that in turn attracts stress. With every word we speak. To speak without words simply use their gestures, unifying physical and mental.

Sonority can be known by its function: sonority forms syllables by determining the locations of segments within the syllable, as it interacts with a language-specific phonotactics mostly derived from universal sonority. Syllabic sonority forms the comity of phonemic forces.

The two (sonority and syllable) conspire in their unknowability, ceaselessly generative of descriptive (illusory) phenomena.

Stress is sonority's exaggeration.

Stress saves sonority (when it would have backfired or collapsed).

Sonority is an internal, ascending wind offered forth (as speech) through one's life sustaining energy into the shared space capable of having generated all forms. Speech sounds are integrally cosmogenic. Losing sight of this brings on a deafness, dullness, descriptiveness.

As for possible descriptions or definitions of sonority, I find the most helpful featural correlates to be: vocal tract openness (as distinct from constriction,) fullness of sound, loudness, unimpeded airflow, well-defined formant structure, periodicity, resonance, non-turbulence, expiratory force, amplitude, salience, vowel-likeness, nuclearity, syllabicity, duration, sustainability, excitation, perspicuity, force of segmental modulation, supraglottal ease (although it may seem counterintuitive, intraoral air pressure is inversely correlated with sonority). All in all, sonority can be summed up as *intensity*, an enhanced, attuned decibel awareness. The less pressured, the freer the force, the more sonorous and louder the speech sound.

All syllables are self-arising, resonances of the original light. Non-originating, actually.

SEGMENT-SEQUENCING SONORITY RULES IN A LANGUAGE IN WHICH ANY CONSONANT CAN BE A SYLLABLE-NUCLEUS (BERBER DIALECT TASHLHIYT) AND HOW THIS MAY INFORM INNOVATION IN A LANGUAGE (LIKE ENGLISH) ALLOWING (ALMOST) ONLY VOWEL NUCLEI

"But I think it is important to realize that syllables are logically subsequent, not antecedent, to constructing the optimal segment stream itself. In this way we avoid the circularity of taking syllables as given, finding the favored segment sequences in them and then restricting "legitimate" syllables only to such segment strings." (Alternatives to the Sonority Hierarchy for Explaining Segmental Sequential Constraints. John J. Ohala.)

In 1871, German linguist Oskar Wolf conducted an experiment in which he counted his steps as he walked away from an assistant while repeating the phonemes, noting the distances at which the segments remained audible. This was an early attempt to scale the speech sounds according to their respective intensities. He referred to this research as the "volume ratio of speech sounds" *des Tonstärkeverhältnisses der Sprachlaute*. What I find particularly fascinating about this experiment is that it established the measure between phonemes as *distances*, in fact correlating with articulatory phonetics in terms of distances between the places of articulation in the mouth, bringing into play "travel-time" and ease or difficulty of transition. The center column below records the maximum number of steps at which the speech sound can still be heard:

Schematische Darstellung
des Tonstärkeverhältnisses der Sprachlaute.

Sprachlaut *)	Wird noch deutlich unterschieden in einer Entfernung von Schritten	Bemerkungen
A	360	*) Im Freien in einer Allée zur Nachmittagszeit gemessen.
O	350	
Ei **)	340	***) Klingt meist wie Ai.
E	330	
I	300	
Eu	290	
Au	285	
U	280	
Sch	200	
M und N ***)	180	***) In Verbindung mit dem Vocale A.
S	175	
F	67	
K und T	63	****) Das Zungenspitzen-R für sich.
R ****)	41	
B	18	*****) Für sich als verstärkter Hauch.
H *****)	12	

—from: *Sprache und Ohr: Akustisch-Physiologische und Pathologische Studien* (Language and the ear: acoustic-physiological and pathological studies).

Among phoneticians and phonologists, the *Sonority Hierarchy* is a highly disputed scale, especially with regard to cross-linguistic universality vs language-specificity of the values. Many sonority gradients for the various classes of speech sounds have been proposed by various linguists (Panini, Otto Jespersen, de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, Nick Clements, Elizabeth Selkirk, John Ohala, Amalia Gnanadesikan, to name a few). The general, agreed upon hierarchy is as follows, from most to least sonorous: vowels > liquids > nasals > obstruents. Obviously, this scale is too general to be of experimental use for poetics. For the purposes of poetry composition, as inherent and applied to American English, I'll suggest the following sonority-hierarchy index:

low vowels: æ, ɑ,

open-mid: ε, Λ, ɔ

closed-mid: e, o

vowels

high vowels: i, I, U, u

schwa: ə

glides: w, y

liquids: r, l

approximates

sonorants

nasals: m, n, ŋ

unvoiced glottal fricative: h
 voiced fricatives: z, ʒ, v, ð
 unvoiced fricatives: s, ʃ, f, θ

obstruents

voiced affricate: dʒ
 unvoiced affricate: tʃ plosives
 voiced stops: b, d, g
 unvoiced stops: p, t, k

As an intra-class (reversible) rule, I track front to back places-of-articulation as decreasing in sonority, such that:

æ > ʌ > ε > ʌ > ɔ > e > o > i > I > U > u > ə

and

w > y > r > l > m > n > ŋ > h > z > ʒ > v > ð > s > ʃ > f > θ > dʒ > tʃ > b > d > g > p > t > k

(English diphthongs are always trochaic, with a more open and sonorous lead vowel that diminishes to a more-closed mid or high vowel. They can therefore be scaled according to their more prominent initial vowel. Requiring more effort to pronounce, they could also be placed between the vowels and glides, as such: aI, aU, ɔI, eI, (oU)).

For comparison, in David Crystal's Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language, here is a table listing the relative decibel values of English phonemes:

ɔ: 29	e 23	l 20	ʒ 13	ð 10
ɒ 28	i: 22	ʃ 19	z 12	b 8
ɑ: 26	u: 22	ŋ 18	s 12	d 8
ʌ 26	ɪ 22	m 17	t 11	p 7
ɜ: 25	w 21	tʃ 16	g 11	f 7
ɑ 24	r 20	n 15	k 11	θ 0
u 24	j 20	dʒ 13	v 10	

For further comparison, Pāṇini (late Vedic period, around the early second half of the first millennium BCE) opened his 3,996 sutra/verse grammar (*Astādhyāyī*) with a phoneme sonority scale, based on *prayantna*, as a measure of *effort* required to produce the sound. *Prayantna* can also be translated as volition, initiative or determination supported by one's inner confidence and enthusiasm. Of course, in this context, Pāṇini is applying *prayantna* to the places of articulation (points of contact or constriction in the vocal tract) and the process of producing equipoise between breath and embodiment, balancing effort and effortlessness, by aspiring to form the perfect frequency of the phoneme, as articulation becomes a yoga, an attainment-practice, in itself. Pāṇini's 14-line varnamala Śiva'sūtra:

1. /a i u/	simple vowels
2. /ɾ ʌ/	sonant vowels
3. /e o/	diphthongs
4. /ai au/	diphthongs
5. /h y v r/	voiced aspirate and semivowels
6. /l/	semivowel
7. /ñ m ŋ ŋ n/	nasal stops
8. /jh bh/	palatal and labial voiced aspirate stops
9. /gh dh dh/	voiced aspirate stops
10. /j b g ɸ d/	voiced unaspirated stops
11. /kh ph ch th c ʈ t/	unvoiced stops
12. /k p/	unvoiced stops
13. /š š s/	sibilants
14. /h/	voiced (velar) fricative

KEEPING DISTANCE

Write a work with words made only/mostly of phonemes furthest from each other in sonority, e.g. low vowels and stops (cat, achieve, attack, catch, patent, jagged, get back at, adieu.)

Write a work with words made only/mostly of phonemes nearest to each other in sonority, e.g., high vowels and sonorants (you'll, loom, rule, wool, lyre.)

Alternate the two proposals above, as lines or stanzas.

Which tones emerge? Compose assuming that the correlation between sound and meaning is the least arbitrary (we don't chop a chip or finesse a glob) and most constitutive phenomenon of human being, and that we move in a profoundly prosodized rapport with all things, not merely atop the surface of phonetic symbolism and onomatopoeic imitation (croak,) rather in the realization of prosody as both language and music precursor, regeneratively.

Write a work with words made only/mostly of high vowels (the most constricted, least resonant vowels) and obstruents (the most constricted consonants) that manifests an open, expansive, relaxed, decompressed view.

Write a work with only low vowels and voiceless obstruents (p,t,s,sh,ch,k) (no glides, liquids or nasals.)
Writing a work that is abuzz: b,d,z,j,dj,g (only voiced obstruents.)

How would a work with only mid-vowels work?

Write a work with consonants furthest from each other (yap, wet, yet, yack, wreck, rattle (approximates and stops.)

Write a work with only continuants (f, l, m, n, r, s, v) and no stops. Write a flowing work with only stops, a noncontinuant unjam (ptchjd chtjd.)

Write a work with only/mostly unvoiced consonants.

Write a homorganic work with a predominance of sounds issuing from the same place.

Write a heterorganic work.

Write a maximally contrastive work, with sounds the furthest articulatory distances from each other placed adjacently or in alternation. What does it say?

Write a work with only open syllables (like Hawaiian.)

Write a work with only onset-less syllables.

Find further consonant morphemes (beyond psst and grr.)

What's the virtue in phonotactic violation?

Because the Sonority Sequencing Principle (sonorousness diminishing as we slope away from the nucleus, and rising toward the next nucleus-crest) following the Sonority Hierarchy and ruled by phonotactics (segment sequencing rules) is all but universal across all languages, call it into question, controvert our prehistoric vocal conventions—or confirm or consecrate them. Not gratuitously (and certainly not as an artful aphonotaxia). Hear wholly impartially. As never before. Before ever. From scratch. A pristine, unconditioned phonotaxia would take us where? To be open to the extent of being the vastness of sound. This is an *omniscience practice*. Very few recombinations will seem viable (like trying to bring about an alternate set of initial conditions for the emergence of life). To live on, unrestricted, untried. Unlimited. Whosome. Hwhowlsuum. To be poised for the ever-unresolvable question: What is soundedness? To retune, atone for all the harm always caused by words.

All 3-consonant onsets follow the sequence: s + voiceless plosive + approximant. Break these confines.

Enucleate. Same sonorousness *across* the syllable...somehow. Or place the greatest sonority at the extremes while the lack of nuclear intensity becomes the feature event (the least becomes greatest).

Include affricates in clusters. Generate affricate geminates: choochoo without the expiration. (Phonotactically, consonants can't follow affricates and θ , δ .) As in *elekshn*. Elongate a consonant.

Introduce geminates as doubling of emphasis, lengthening of phone moment, visual salience and dividing of the indivisible. Lovelly.

Make sonorants begin and end a syllable's consonant clusters (occupying the outer positions, "protecting" the weaker sounds as they huddle under the nuclear umbrella, butting liquids and glides at the borders.) A sonorant can end a coda cluster only if preceded by a less sonorous sonorant (i.e., not howl, calm or worn.) Invert the Sonority Sequencing Principle's mirror effect from the center out. If we can have mump and

pump, may we have *mpupm*; *ychn*, *lthogw*, or *blecictapr* (as predictable onset/coda-switch) or *njupl* for “plunge”).

Disallow voicing in coda clusters. The voicing of obstruents in coda clusters can't match.

Hear foreign languages' phonotactics as inhering in English as well; perhaps especially from the beginning—5th millennium BCE Proto-Indo-European (PIE) which is now fairly well attested. PIE also adhered to the Sonority Sequencing Principle. (Speech is one long regenerative etymologizing and inflecting. Speaking from the root yields flowers on the crown, our *uroboric vocal tract*.) PIE permitted thorn clusters (a dental stop followed by a velar stop): *d^hǵ^hemon* (human); *h₂t^htkos* (bear). As well as *dnǵ^huH₂* (tongue); *wlop* (fox); *lew^b* (to love); *prksk* (to ask); *nputlos* (childless).

PIE phonotactics was alive with stop/sonorant and stop/stop clusters lost to English, e.g. *sr*, *dl*, *lg*, *dn*, *gw*, *sd*, *tst*, *sg*, *dt*, *dd*, *kt*, *ks*, *gs*, *tk*, *dq*, *wb*, *lksn* and *x^wǵlxnex* (wool).

Grammatical gender in PIE originally distinguished words as either animate or inanimate (as deified or mundane, if you will); *h₁ng^wnis* was “fire” as elemental deity (later, Agni) while *péh₂ur* was everyday fire (later, pyr, fire, pfyr). In that we now know that all is alive and that every word is holy, in already-ungendered English fuse these two grammatical classes in one sound, one sense of what is real.

Strictly follow the rules of sonority sequencing hierarchizing while generating illicit phonotactic sequences (nonwords, word applicants). E.g. *gmunth*, *zoine*.

Apply aphonotaxia to already existing text, to engender further morphophonemics. “Grip of ignorance” (a phrase I just heard on the radio) becomes *rgiripr ovn ingorance enduance*. Use excrescence (epenthetic addition of a consonant) and anaptyxis (vowel insertion). Use elision, reduplication, inversion, coalescence, compounding, clipping, back-forming, speech acceleration and deceleration, etc. Warmphth; rdaphazah for haphazard; ntaccicide for accident. Nauldroc. Glug, glulg, glulp, glump, glilp, glolp, glolop.

Inculcate in English a foreign *sandhi* (sound-change rules for “putting together” words) and it will be more fecund and feral, for a moment. Take up, for example, the Dravidian *Tolkāppiyam*, the oldest, aphoristic-verse and Tamil grammar, focusing on the *Eluttatikaram*, the first book to ever cover the basic phonotactic elements: phonology, morphophonemics, articulatory phonetic, sandhi, orthography, and so on. (https://archive.org/details/dli.jZY9lup2kZl6TuXGlZQdjZU3kZly.TVA_BOK_0006660/page/80/mod e/2up): *Tolkāppiyam* translated into English.)

Shout out the unvoiced. Exceptions abound. Accept some more. Create idiomaticity. The allomorphic morphophonemic book is never closed.

UPENDING THE SYLLABLE—HUMAN BEING RE-HEED

“... *aliud est dicere (esse) verborum analogia, aliud dicere uti oportere analogiis...cum poeta transilire lineas impune possit.*” (“It's one thing to say that conventions exist in language and another thing to say that one should

follow them ... while the poet may break bounds with impunity.") — Marcus Terentius Varro, *De Lingua Latina Libri*, IX, I. 4-5.

Write an English, against its nature, that is affixally polysynthetic and agglutinative instead of analytical and isolating. Keep compounding and infixing to defeat division and fragmentation. Write a word without boundedness. Language is one long lexeme.

Even if we agree upon words and their boundaries, that doesn't necessarily mean they exist. Grammar attests to words...but what attests to grammar?

Morphology happens.

Unsurprisingly, those who held that language was anomalous also perceived language as natural, not conventional. To ask whether words are self-arising or contrived, we roll the mind back, phylo-ontogenetically, to the origination of language. It's difficult to imagine a more fruitless, less constructive debate than the arbitrary-vs-essential correspondence between sound and meaning, word and signified, word and no word, empirical and paradigm, anomalous and analogous or unreal and real. To untangle the terms, apply a basic *catuṣkoṭi*: it is one or the other, it is either, it is both, it is neither either nor both. Now, we're free to speak.

If we were *not* able to form an unlimited number of expressions, language acquisition would be impossible. Words themselves have no *lógos*, no ordering principle, other than wonder. Wonder itself is unepistemologicalizable. Order reigns *in our norms*. Ecology drives us. Wonder guides us. Grammar agrees with itself.

Overnight, 35 tornadoes devastated Alabama. On the news, a woman standing in a field of twisted metal, uprooted trees and scattered furniture, household items and pink building insulation is being interviewed: "allthishereallaroundev'rywherewasmamom'shousey'allyou'dneverknownow."

Does speech sound like separate words or does it just sound like it does?

How do we parse off, the page, if the sonorous sawtooth pattern of peaks and troughs doesn't actually exist, if there are only streams of free fundamentals, of mediality (of being in the midst)? No way of knowing if one is hearing to the left or right of a prosodic cue? Is intensity shift giving words away, the so-called *rhythmic segmentation hypothesis*, formed when we were babies, by adults speaking to us as though we were babies (the *BabyTalkBackBootstrap Hypothesis*). "Together these strands of evidence motivate the claim that the explicit segmentation procedures used by adult listeners may in fact have their origin in the infant's exploitation of rhythmic structure to solve the initial word boundary problem." (Anne Cutler, *Prosody and the Word Boundary Problem*.)

Problem: we are taught words with words.

A word is *during* that which (itself) is separated by a space before and after, on the page and in the air.

A word is uninterruptible, i.e., it *can* be isolated and made inviolable.

A word is uninterruptible (except within itself in synthetic languages).

A word is uninterruptible, but it can forcibly abut.

Anishinaabemowin is an affixally polysynthetic language, with many-morphemed words that can be both inflective and agglutinative. Like Anishinaabemowin, Indigenous Alaskan Yupiik is capable of forming word-sentences: *tuntussuqatarniksaitengqiggtug* (translatable as "He had not yet said again that he was going to hunt reindeer."). *Tuntu* (reindeer) *ssur* (hunt) *qatar* (future) *ni* (say) *ngqiggte* (again) *uq* (3sg.ind.). Yupiik words have only one root, which must be word-initial. In the above sentence all morphemes other than "reindeer" are bound and can't appear in isolation.

"to keep making up a lie that causes the most extreme anger while pretending you are not" — *pinakanakapagnitngitngitngitang-pagsisinungasinungalingan* (from agglutinative Tagalog).

In sharp contrast to North American Indigenous languages, English is predominantly analytical and isolating, having broken with its inflective PIE past by the end of the Dark Ages. Residually we yet practice plural *s*, past *ed*, present participle *ing*, apostrophe *s*, and ablaut variations. The weakening (and dropping) of unstressed syllables resulting in the uniform reduction of their distinct vowel sounds to schwa is the probable cause of inflectional decay in English, as unstressed inflective endings would have become indistinguishable from each other. Another factor may have been the influx of Scandinavian peoples, beginning in the 8th century, necessitating a sort of lingua franca pidgin (which is to say that we in America are speaking, de facto, an 11th century Old Norse-AngloSaxon-Norman creole).

Which is to say, relationship is not integral to words in nonsynthesizing languages; the scope is linear, step by step and not encompassing. Isolating languages typically have one morpheme per word. Analytical languages separate words and rely on more words (particles, prepositions, unbound morphemes, articles, auxiliary verbs, modifiers, adjuncts, copulas, recursions) and strict word order to convey relationship and establish roles.

How are we experiencing? How does the interrelatedness necessary for sentence-impulse unfold? How far back, before the sentence, does the sentence begin, and how far forward does it start? One's entire life-experience inheres in instant selection, grammatically speaking.

How far can single-word compound nouns and verbs be stretched? Intersugarcoatedness? Shall we eliminate word separation through intra-word compounding, or simply by dropping spaces in favor of phonological streaming?

NEQVEPORROQVISQVAMESTQVIDOLOREMIPSVMQVIADOLORSITAMETCONSECTETVRADIPI SCIVELIT: "Nobody likes pain for its own sake, or looks for it and wants to have it, just because it is pain." (Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*.)

How can we, in our current corporatecapitalistindividualauthoritarianstandardizeddisparitydespair, ever honor Native American knowledge without understanding how this knowledge is realized, morphosyntactically, in Native American language. Treat English polysynthetically, guided by Indigenous grammar as grounded, interrelational world view. Get beyond the nonbelonging, the bottleneck, the backsliding, the blindspot. De-isolate:

unconditionallovingkindnessimpartiallypracticedunderoverwhelminglyunfavorableconditions.

Write sentence words and the page words. Hear nonsegmentally. All's irregular. (This will seriously mess up juncture, right-justification, and wrapping.)

Does the orthographic syllable differ from the phonetic syllable? Break open linguistics' "word boundary problem." Work with the non-indivisibility of the word and all of its moveable parts. Although a stem is not a word, a word is a stem, open to undergoing affixation frenzy.

The textual phenomenon of word separation actually undermined rhythmic, metrical performance/pronunciation. On the other hand, it introduced a form of popular, silent fastreading, the spoonfeeding of information.

Japanese, Ancient Greek, Chinese, are *scriptio continua*. Vedic Sanskrit: no intra-sentence spacing. Nasta'līq calligraphy makes use of the vertical dimension, starting each word higher than the end of the preceding word, analogous to capitalization. (Speech definitely finds orthography bizarre.) Leave no spaces behind. Take every prisoner. No interpuncts or middotting. (Latin stopped using the interpunctus circa 200 CE and didn't employ word-separating spaces until roughly the 7th or 8th century, about the same time spaces first appeared in AngloSaxon bibles.) Write an unbroken work, see what needs and indications develop. Involve prosody and neodiacriticalscoring, if you wish. Reconnect orthography with phonology.

On the other hand, Vietnamese space-separates syllables, not words; Tibetan script separates syllables with an intersyllabic *tsek*. Write a work, anyhow, with syllable separations. (Modern poetry typescript scoring variable space spans to indicate length of pause ... I don't mean that.)

Make a verb carry as much information as an entire sentence.

Retrace, revisit, revive fully-gendered and inflected *Old* Old English; take a morphophonological sentimental journey, one short step away from PIE. Re-inflect. Read "betwēonum" the lines. Free word order by means of scrambling, extrapositioning and inversion (SVO=OVS=VSO=SSVO=VVSVO, and so on.)

Predifferentiate. Predifferentiate sounds. Predifferentiate sound from meaning. Predifferentiate words.

Words are about to pass out of existence. Words are about to pass out from existence.

Work with word as utterly non-indivisible":

miinibaashkiminasiganibiitoosijiganibadagwiingweshiganibakwezigan

the longest word in affixally polysynthetic Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin) is a blueberry pie, i.e., *blueberry cooked to jellied preserve that lies in layers in which the face is covered in bread*. Word as entire recipe.

Epenthesis, in Sanskrit, is tone-devotion, tone that has shone, that has beautified on its own, owing to the place where it's made. Sound insertion is the history of genetics.

