

PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOLOGOS

[by Hugh M. Lewis](#)

When a cultural group suddenly notices an eclipse of the moon, they all respond to the same belief that a dog is eating the moon in the same manner, even though no words of instruction are exchanged between them. A western observer sees the same phenomenon and rationalizes it as an eclipse of the moon.

Simultaneous invention of the same theory or machine occurs independently of one another in the same cultural context.

Though many people may realize that the social system they are working within is doing harm, they consistently fail to see the very roles they themselves are playing in the promotion of harm, and so continue to do so.

How do we explain culture historical synchronicity of the same kinds of behavioral phenomena, even though there may be no active communication or deliberate intention between the participants.

How do two strangers have immediate recognition of one another even though they may have never met each other ever before.

In such ways we can say that understanding is embedded in the environment and that people may act upon such silent understandings without having to exchange words or communicate their intentions except by their actions. In such ways do we say that experience is embedded in the environment and that our environments are always symbolically mediated.

Wisdom is expressed by words but imperfectly even though words are always encompassed by wisdom. But without our words wisdom must remain mute and limited to the narrow range of

organic experiences in our relation to the world. Words are the only other ways we have of understanding our world, and allow us to communicate this understanding in a way which is independent of the contexts in which organic experience is always situated. Words 'lift' wisdom from the contextual relations of the real world and allows a more general range of understandings and a more inclusive view of the world to be transmitted.

But words also have a morphological history of organic experience of their own, and do not come un-situated within their own linguistic environments. Words embody their own kind of wisdom, usually left implicit in their etymologies and hermeneutical definition.

When we speak of history of ideas or a history of consciousness or a culture historical understanding of mind, we are referring to the kind of wisdom embodied in words--the understanding of the organic experience which they have come to symbolize and represent in the world.

The problem of language and understanding is central to the study of culture history and is at the heart of human symbolization. Language is the principle mechanism of culture historical transmission--it allows the communication of experience and thus its 'stimulus generalization' in the world. Without it experience would perish with the passing of each person and each generation. The only other mechanism available for the transmission of culture would be the thin and fragile line of imitative learning and of course genetic transmission, what comes with the overlapping of the generation.

Language may facilitate the understanding of experience and allow its transmission, but language may also be used to distort such understanding and to prevent its transmission. Words are deliberate and are integrative while experience is automatic and undeniable. Words are subject to the whims of the speaker and listener while wisdom remains imperviously rooted in the ground of experience. To the extent that words and wisdom overlap in their dialectical middle ground, such that wisdom is difficult to think at its extremes without words, and words without wisdom appear nonsensical and trivial, we can say that wisdom becomes relatively manipulable by the words of its expression and that words become to some extent 'non-arbitrary' by the experiential understandings which 'embed' them in the ground of the environment.

It is this 'middle ground' of meaning between the arbitrariness of words and the essential non-relativity of wisdom rooted in organic experience that we find the relative 'non-relativity' and the non-relative 'relativity' of our culture historical and scientific understandings of the world, as somehow stable and enduring through the many preparations and as the focus for the dialectic between our words and our wisdom.

It is upon this more or less stable middle ground of meaning that we find the convergence of both our philosophical interests in both the words of wisdom and the wisdom of words. It is in this region of interrelationship between philosophical and philological concerns that we are to find the central methodological fulcrum of the study of culture history as a 'third culture' bridging the sciences and the humanities.

This set of essays is entitled 'Philosophos and Philologos' instead of 'Philosophy and Philology' to de-emphasize these as fields of study and to emphasize the general subject of such study. This is to avoid the influence of many preconceptions surrounding the terms of philosophy and philology and the traditions (both western and eastern) which these terms represent.

In a sense, it is the philosophos of philosophy (and the philosophy of philosophos) as well as the philologos of philology (and the philology of philologos) with which these essays are most concerned and even more importantly, the middle ground of meaning between these areas of mind, or the philplogos of philosophy and the philosophy of philologos and the philosophos of philology and the philology of philosophos.

There is another way of understanding this set of common interests between wisdom and words, and this is in the attempt to systematically elucidate the semanticity of language and how language comes to embody the 'truth' of real experience and how wisdom of the ways of the world comes to be dependent upon the expression of words for its sense of experience. Without language and wisdom, we cannot be fully human in our world of experience. As human beings, we cannot have complete wisdom without words, and we cannot have words without wisdom.

If we drop the prefix 'philo' meaning 'love for' and just consider the Greek etymology of the roots 'sophos' and 'logos' we can perhaps come to a closer understanding of the implications and paradoxical twist, of their interconnections. 'Sophos' originally meant clever, skillful and wise, and has come down to us in the forms of 'sophism' and 'sophistry' which means 'a fallacious argument...an ingenuous statement and arrangement of propositions devised for the purpose of misleading' and 'fallacious reasoning, sound in appearance only'. 'Logos' meant 'speech or reason' or 'ration or proportion' or 'word or discourse' and is related to the forms 'logos' or the 'word by which the inward thought is expressed, the inward thought itself' and meaning 'reason thought of as constituting the controlling principle of the universe and as being manifested by speech' and as 'logic' or 'the science which deals with the criteria of

valid thought, correct reasoning, way of reasoning' or 'the system of principles underlying any science or art'. What is a twist of fate is that philosophy has come down to us today as embodying more the original meaning of 'logos' while philology has generally become associated with the skillful play of words, or the logodaedaly and sophistry of words.

Logos, in Greek thought, designated the ordering of the cosmos, even the cosmos itself, making possible human understanding of the world and of human relations within it. Philology, (the love of words) before the advent of scientific linguisticality, was passed down as the study of 'logos' or 'mind', especially as this is expressed through words and texts. Textuality was the state or condition of mindscape which was the domain of philologists. 'Sophos' was a Greek term for cleverness' skillfulness and being wise, and has come down to us in terms of 'sophistry, sophism, sophistication and sophomore'. 'Sophia' skill or wisdom, was the combining from meaning 'knowledge or thought'. Philosophy (philosophos, or 'the love of wisdom') has been received as the study of thought and mind in terms of understanding the relations between ideas. Philology and Philosophy combine in the 'understanding of mind' and the 'mind of understanding' forming a critical dialectic (from the Greek dialektikos or dialect) fundamental to the workings of the western 'rational mind' or 'rationalism' which is believed to inhere in science as 'world view'.

Linguistics, as a science informed by such rationalist world view, has become the modern substitute for the traditional form of philology, which had become widely regarded as an esoteric and pedantic exercise in epigraphy, classical scholasticism in the idiom of dead languages and literary minutia and trivia without scientific relevance. Exegetical hermeneutics became a matter of trying to mine texts to uncover hidden associations between different texts and to reveal the 'essential' structure of spirit which informed these texts. The loss of culture historical studies has been an unfortunate

one to the modern western world, as it leads to a collective blindness of the modern world view to the interpretative importance of such study, incapacitating the modern mind in its ability to encounter adaptively new earthbound environments.

Not to denigrate the importance of scientific linguistics, the loss of philology has meant more than the loss of dead languages or trivial pedanticism, it has meant the permanent loss of a hermeneutical and culture historical world view which provided the dialectical counterbalance to scientism in our appreciation of the contextuality of words and the basic linguisticity of mind. This has resulted not only in a collective myopia or blindness of general relevance, but in sanctioned 'forgetfulness' of the collective mind (mind comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'gemnyd' or 'memory') which has served well the ideological principle of 'progress' as the scientific substitute for 'logos'.

The burden of understanding in and of the world has fallen to philosophers, exclusively relegated to the scientifically unimportant world of the academic humanities. Philosophers substitute 'logic' for 'logos' in the vain hope of recover their relevance to a world predominated by scientific rationality, and the central hermeneutical 'raison d'être' of the humanities is lost in the modern age of the machine.

Traditional academic scholasticism focused tuition around the three Aristotelian subject areas of logic, dialectic and artistic (or rhetoric). It is interesting that the traditional curricula of 'logic' has come down to us in the form of mathematics and scientific theory, while the study of artistic has lead to the humanities--speech, literature, philosophy and history. Dialectic as a formal respondent-questioner question and answer forum for debate, has largely fallen by the wayside in academic praxis. This is noteworthy because it is precisely in the kind of dialogue set of up in such dialectic that the kind of understanding which informs the

middle ground between words and wisdom is to be found. Between the sciences and the humanities, between the logic of the former and the artistic of the latter, exists a third culture based upon the philosophical/philological efficacy of linguistics. This third culture might be referred to as culture history, and today is occupied primarily by those fields identified generally as the 'social sciences'.

Understanding the middle ground between words and wisdom has something to do with the difference between formal syllogistic reasoning of logic, and the kind of formal fallacies based upon two value truth theorem logic, like modus tollens or ergo hoc, ex post propter hoc, and the many kinds of informal fallacies rooted in common sense preconceptions of normal linguistic praxis--fallacies of deriving an ought from an is, of anthropomorphizing or overemphasis, of hypostasis. Many of these kind of fallacies are rooted in the difference between the parole of 'natural linguistic discourse' and the 'language of formal linguistic syntax' that are rooted in the organically derived pre-understandings of a 'folk psychology' and 'folk taxonomy of the world'. Furthermore these are differences between a primarily oral mode of linguistic transmission and a literate mode of transmission.

Linguistically speaking, part of this central problematic is the difference between descriptive and prescriptive grammar, or more precisely, basic selective difference of linguistic style and design which maximize the efficiency of communication of important information while simultaneously optimizing the individual interest of stylistic expression--accentuating the 'unique' and the 'unusual'. Elements of style and features of design stand as basic paradigmatic examples of 'good' linguistic praxis versus 'poor' linguistic performance. While there are no absolute standards for such roles, there are general 'working' rules and their noteworthy exceptions.

From the standpoint of pragmatics, or linguistic function, this middle ground is apparent in which statements stand ambiguously in two or more functional categories or between such categories-- as when statements may be both descriptive and performative, or when a statement may be by its structure simultaneously a command or a request, or statement of logical conclusion and a prescriptive principle or a directive statement.

Another dimension which tests the boundaries of both 'normal' language and reason is the occurrence of linguistic code switching and code mixing, and the overlapping or mixing up of different speech styles within a single context of performance. This may lead to differential 'densities' of switching points and to mixing up of different values of marked or unmarked or covert and overt values of language.

In this way we may refer to the overlay of different experiential 'topographies' of mindscape which creates a dynamic tension or conflict of basic significance between different values of metaphorical salience or metaphysical relevance or importance of interest.

This becomes a basic problem of interpretation and translation and the hermeneutical 'distanciation of surplus meaning'. Two speakers may be talking to one another about the same central subject, and each may be interpreting the other in each's own way and yet both may simultaneously be talking past one another or through one another to an idealized or projected sense of self. Such discourse is reflective, but non-reflexive, as it does not turn the meaning system of each speaker upon itself in testing it or contrasting it against the meaning system of the other.

In all instances linguistic communication is never unmediated by a process of interpretation of different topographies of metaphorical and metaphysical salience. There are not objective standards or criteria for determination of such salience, and there can be no purely neutral, scientific, 'etic' language or 'meta' language which can adequately serve the function of inter-linguistic translation.

All linguistic encoding of environmental experiences is 'institutional' within a culture historical context, and all involve

some arbitrary measure of linguistic interpretation and translation of events.

Cultural constructivism by discursive praxis (and critical destructionism by discursive analysis) depends upon, indeed, even demands, the definite delimitation of 'contexts', but fails to resolve in any constructive manner the concomitant 'dilemma of context'-- how much or how little 'context' is necessary and sufficient to 'describe and explain' an 'event'. (Ben-Ami Scharfstein, 1989)

The related dilemma of interpretation involves the question of who's translation of metaphorical salience and metaphysical importance of distinguishing between 'loaded' and 'unloaded' meanings (Roger Keesing, 1985) in the 'taken for granted' definition of inference, reference and transference of meaning in particular metaphors and statements and in generalized 'codes' and 'schemas'. Are inferences and implications about 'invisible' or 'entangled' or 'hidden' realities the speaker/actors own or may they in fact be the listening/interpreter's own invisible presumptions. One must only consider the possibility of multiple translations to reveal the hidden ambiguities of determining the necessarily 'correct' or best or only translation possible. (Daniel Rosenberg, 1990)

Rendering visible the apparently 'invisible', revealing 'hidden' feelings (and enlightening 'back regions' and 'deep structures') and the consistent transparency of cultural codes presents an antinomial paradox shared by both participants and observers, speakers and listeners and this 'invisibility' of shared contexts and connotations tends to undermine the whole 'hidden' agenda of superimposing rational order upon apparent empirical disorder. This is a dilemma far greater for the observed than for the participant, because the former must successfully disentangle at least two or more differing, but equally invisible cultural codes, entailing a deliberate estrangement (distanciation, critical indifference, objectification,

disinterested inquiry) divorcing or divisively sundering the 'dialogical betweenness' or intermediacy or 'togetherness' of the dyadic relation. In allusion to the notion of scientific psychology's 'epistemo-pathology' (Sigmund Koch, 1981) I will refer to this inherent antinomy of cross cultural, cross situational, and interpersonal realities and the existential predicament of the 'participant observer' as 'anthropology'.

Precise statistical description helps to precipitate the rarefied and invisible and fixes inferences and frames and thus brings enhanced resolution and clearer 'visibility' to the inherently invisible and apparently ambiguous, but statistical realities often depend upon superficial one to one correspondences between the term and the thing, a frequently fractitious precision between the fact and the act, and its presumed facticity and precision may only be spurious and superfluous. In the process of rendering the abstract concrete and the concrete abstract, transforming cultural schemata into statistical data, and vice versa, statistical measurements may hide more than it reveals, obfuscate more the disambiguate, rendering invisible the possibly visible, saying nothing about intentions, meanings, emotions or purposes behind its silent facts, and in the process providing the ultimate reification of human reality--turning 'beingness' into the 'thing-ness' of non-being by transforming real people into abstract numbers. Then statistical descriptions and their superficial realities become the defense of the insecure and their authoritarian status quo.

The implicit critique of 'structuralism' and the description of its terminological rationalism as spurious, Euro-centric categorical coherence superimposed upon apparent indigenous inconsistencies of 'other-ness', poses the final question of whether the authoritative ethnographer, as textual translator, might not yet be substituting one brand of 'struktur' for yet other, opposite kinds of 'structures' (schematas, codes, frames, events) smuggling into the 'hidden agenda' of making the strange familiar, the invisible visible, and the concrete abstract, yet one mode of information to replace of another, yet one form of fixed purpose for another, superimposing yet another arbitrary, transparent, and categorical sense of organization, order, constraint and purpose upon other people's subjectively constituted and shared realities. Analytical destruction

of 'common senseness' whether strange or familiar, self or other, always begs the question of 'whose common sense categories'.

Might not the native's hidden inconsistencies and cultural contradictions and apparent arbitrariness be our own, and might not our own invisible inconsistencies and contradictions and arbitrariness become theirs in the process of disentangling our shared realities. I suggest this is always so. Human reality is always entangled, our meanings remain always invisible, submerged like ice bergs beneath the surface, our motives always hidden, and intentions always transparent.

The kind of linguistic problem in understanding the middle ground of meaning between words and wisdom is to understand the basic problem of description and definition in the fitting of limited words to virtually unlimited contexts of reality--descriptions are always simplifying models of a larger more complex reality of experience. If many profiles of possibility within a given objective experiential horizon present themselves, then that many more possible descriptions of each profile also must be available. No two descriptions of the same event will be the same, and all descriptions of even a single event will not exhaust the complete picture of the profile, much less the whole horizon, of understanding. There is thus an optimum value in description between expressiveness, interest, detail and communication, such that beyond a certain threshold of reiteration there are diminishing returns of the value of added descriptive accuracy.

No non-arbitrary rules exist to guide us in the process of selecting elements in our descriptive designs. We may formulate rules of thumb to guide our descriptive practice, founded in our fund of experience. As we grow in experience, we gradually come to modify our 'rules' to better suit us in the process of description. We come to rely upon our sense, sensitivities and sensibilities in guiding us in our choices and judgments as to what elements of

design are important to select and what to eliminate. Similarly, we rely upon our judgment to help us to interpret and translate the wisdom of the descriptions which others present to us. To a certain extent, our own wisdom is at the mercy of our ability to deploy and manipulate words in ways that seem to fit or frame our experiences of reality.

In a sense, the middle ground of meaning between our words and our wisdom in the world is a function of the embeddedness of 'common sense' in our experiences. It is the embeddedness of common sense which makes it normally invisible and left implicit in our understandings of the world and in our descriptions of the world. We can say that our words of wisdom and the wisdom of our words are always 'situated' by a tacit context of 'common senseness' in our selves and in our social environments with which, if we are able to eliminate its effects upon our understandings, we must excoriate and bring to conscious awareness and come to terms with the basic preconceptions and presuppositions, value orientations and prejudices, in which such common senseness is always embedded. Common sense informs our pre-understandings of the world both unconsciously and contextually in or environments and if we cannot control for its pervasive presence and persuasive influence in our words and wisdom, then it will control our words and our wisdom in ways which prevent us from ever really transcending the narrow ethnocentric horizons which they reinforce. The horizons of common sense are the culture historical horizons of world view and power in the world. They are the non-reflexive reflection of our own value and prejudice, and more important of our own ignorance in the world.

Philosophos and Philologos are an attempt to excoriate and reexamine our common sense pre-understanding and the ignorances that render us blind to new experiences and to seeing the world in different ways. Philologies is concerned with words and their definitions, such that they reflect the reality of experience from which they came and which they symbolically, ideationally represent. Philosophies is more concerned with the 'relations' between words which we attribute to them or which we find attributed to them in our culture historical contexts of understanding and to render the patterns of these relations in a way which corresponds to the ways that the things that the words purported represent are also related. To some undetermined extent such definitions and their relations are non-arbitrary in that their basic referents are always grounded in experiential realities--but the ways that these are so grounded are never obvious and never direct to our senses.

Our own experiential horizons are bounded by our pre-understanding which precondition how we experience the world. The linguisticity of our understandings is rooted in the experiential structure of the world in which our lives are situated. Our descriptions are drawn from experiences which themselves are rooted in the common senseness of our world.

Culture history always frames the world in which we live--it creates the cultural contexts and the symbolic experiential environments by which we configure our constructions of reality. Unless our language and our constructions are situated within a symbolic field of culture history, unless the culture historical contexts surrounding our understandings are present, then our understandings will be unavailable to us and our efforts to make them will come to nothing.

It is critically important to understand our culture history provides the environment which must always situate and render relevant,

our descriptive understandings of the world. This environment is always composed of many interrelated symbolic elements which become more or less available for our use. In a sense, these culture historical environments are evolving. They create possibilities of expression and patterning and provide the selective sanctioning for the determination of the success and survival of ideas of mind. The horizons of the profiles of our understanding are thus created by the environments in which we find ourselves always, inescapably situated. Culture historical contexts can be construed as the normal 'institutions' of our symbolic experience and linguistic expressions.

We must learn to see the world in such a way that our environments which always surround us and predetermine the linguisticity of our experiences are changing very rapidly in ways which we cannot control but yet which exert a measure of control over us by defining our existential and experiential possibilities. These changing environments are rapidly and irreversibly altering every dimension of our lives--or identity, our linguisticity, our ways of seeing and understanding and relating to the world. As our world changes, so it also changes us.

Always being situated within and by the culture historical contexts of our pre-understandings we are thus confronted with an irresolvable dilemma that, though we must exercise our normative capacity to make choices in the world, in a sense all of our possible choices are always pre-selected for us and are indirectly constrained by the very symbolic environments in which we are acting. If we fail to choose wisely, then the selective forces of our environments will work against our choices. If we choose wisely, the environments of our choices will provide the necessary elements for their success. We cannot choose possibilities which lie outside the experiential 'event' horizons of our culture historical contexts--even if we could, we would be wiser not to want to, because they are predetermined to end in our failure. The selective forces of our culture historical environments situate us with in a

web of contextual relations and determinations which function as indirect constraints upon the possibilities of our normative development in life. They are our existential horizon as well as our experiential and linguistic horizon of understanding.

Though we may never step outside of the horizons of our culture historical environments, or escape their existential imperative in our lives, we can consistently and constantly enlarge and expand these horizons by challenging them and seeking to always 'comprehend' them through the discursive activity of our question and answer dialectic. It is in such a way that we may augment the fund of our common experiences in the world, and enlarge our experience of the world, and thereby create more possibilities for our own choices. By expanding our horizons of experience we can become more aware of the world and more 'wiser' of it--that the relations encompassed within our horizons in better measure reflect the relations of the unknown world beyond them.

We can say that the linguisticity of our culture historical environments is the very fabric of our collective consciousness and unconscious, of our universal 'mindness' and pan humanness. We may have wisdom and understandings and experiences which cannot be put into words, but they are therefore not part of this culture historical fabric by which the understandings in the world are constructed and by which its environments develop.

It is by the word, by the linguistic enactment of communication, that we gain relationship with the world, that we are rendered relevant in the world, from which experience and our wisdom of the world come. Through our deceit and our deliberate distortions we may rend this fabric into tattered pieces, but only by the honest and open use of our words in the service of or wisdom can we mend it and reserve it into a single meaningful whole.

Our dialectical praxis of our language to express our understandings, through question and answer dialogue, is the enactment of our language in the weaving of this fabric of both our consciousness and our experience. Words and wisdom are the warp and weft of the loom of life. Language and experience are the interwoven threads which create the tapestry of meaning in the world.

Our linguistic activity, the very linguisticity of our world and our lives, is always functional in orientation--it always serves a purpose or intention of human enactment in the world--even if this is only passive perception or symbolic suggestion. Language, even in its play and nonsense, always serves a human purpose in the world, whether it is prologue or epilogue, precursor or postscript, justification or obfuscation. It is the communicative functionality of linguistic activity, its pragmatic purposes, which provides the middle ground between words and wisdom.

As symbolization, language functions to intermediate our experiences of our environments in selective ways which allow us to cope with and respond to changes in the world.

The functionality of language entails that linguistic activity is always framed by 'intentionality structures' which inform and direct the selectiveness of our experience and our understandings of the world. Intentionality structures situate our linguistic activity within the culture historical contexts of their pre-understanding, and are also situated by these very contexts. Intentionality structures pre-structure and directs linguistic praxis in way which serve human interests in the world.

It is through language that humankind is able to live simultaneously upon more than one level of meaning, of experience, of understanding. Besides the natural environments which are presented to our senses, we have to deal with the

symbolic experiences of our culture historical environments as well, as well as with the psycho-geographic environments created by our own individual minds. The problem becomes a matter of how to order these parallel worlds of experience such that they articulate with one another and make sense, rather than contradict with one another and create noise. These parallel worlds of experience are not independent of one another, but are reflexive of one another and interrelated in many ways such that change in one world creates reverberations and resonances in the others. It has fallen to the functionality of language to inter-integrate these different sets of realities into a reasonably coherent and consistent whole. It achieves this through its on going dialectic which continuously brings the different worlds of experience to focus and 'tests' them for their degree of fit.

All on going dialogue between the speakers, whether casual conversation or more formal debate or even literary jousting, consists of the same basic pragmatic structure. In informal, casual conversation, there is a stringing together of set of five or seven syllable phrases paratactically.

The conversation as a whole will be arranged into 'syllogistic sets' headed or concluded by a key statement--a general statement of truth--which then becomes 'tested' or evaluated by the shared experiences of the speakers. At some point, a metonymically related idea will be turned up, at which point the direction of the conversation will turn and a new set of examples of experience will be elucidated. In such a 'chain link' fashion an entire dialogue between two speakers may exhibit quite a great deal of drift, twisting and turning in many directions such that the final topic of the conversation is not even remotely related to the original subject. If two speakers are wanting to establish symmetrical rapport in the conversation, the drift may be quite unrelated. If two people are trying to maintain a neutral distance between each other, the conversation may touch only briefly on topics which are of neutral relevance to either speaker. If a person is attempting to establish dominance or is clearly superior, they will attempt to control the overall directionality of the conversation in a way suitable to their own sets of experiences and interests. More formal dialogues proceed in the same way, but generally their topic and

developmental framework is more rigid and has less natural drift, such that the concluding sets provide a conclusive understanding to the opening topics of the dialogue. More formal syllogisms following fairly precise principles of syllogistic reasoning may also constrain such formal discourse and these principles may provide criteria for the evaluation of the relevance of such discourse.

But whatever the context of the dialogue, there always occurs a calling up of general ideas or statements of some relevance or interest to the speaker, which then becomes tested in the course of conversation by the relating of different or shared experiences. Such 'testing' sooner or later exhausts itself, or reaches a point of diminishing returns during which some alternative general statement of interest is touched upon and turn the direction of the conversation. If a problem is especially important, it may be reiterated and explored at some length, exhausting many different dimensions of its experiential understanding, or it may provide a sense of center of gravity from which the conversation may drift in its exploration and 'reality testing' but to which the conversation eventually rebounds when it stretches to far from center.

Such is the dialectical structure of all discourse as it attempts to integrate the different levels of reality in which we live.

In referring to intentionality structures embedded in our everyday discourse and in the linguisticity of our experiential realities, it may be said that such structures are rigid and inflexible, then they will result in a strong tendency to direct or dominate and control linguistic praxis in ways which suit its purposes, but it will also result in many frustrating and failed attempts at the pragmatic and functional integration of reality. But if such intentionality structures are not so rigid and more flexible and open to varieties of experience then it will result in the capacity to linguistically 'transact' and negotiate experience in reality and will eventuate in establishing compromises with experience in which its interests are

served in a limited way but which does not end in frustration and failure.

Via our intentionality structures--the deliberate, arbitrary sense of purpose or design--which we bring to our linguistic praxis, the functionality of our language 'transacts' our realities in directive ways.

The kind of normal syllogistic structure of discourse, of question and answer dialectic, as being that which informs and expresses our 'intentionality structures' whether formal or informal, are basically 'frames of reference/inference' by which our ideas about reality--our statements, words and their relations--are tested and evaluated against our sets of experiences in reality, our wisdom, our knowledge, our understandings. Frames of reference and inference work in two general ways--either 'deductively' by the posing of a general opening statement to be regarded as the central 'problem' of subsequent discourse. Which then becomes referentially regarded in relation to relational sets of experiences or understandings, or 'inductively' by 'searching' or questioning a general set of inferentially regarded experiences or relationships which then becomes open to a concluding 'general statement' which summarizes the sequence of evaluations. Such inferential frames create 'gaps' of information which then must be filled in by reason or generalization in order to be completed. Frames of references tests general ideas against sets of related experiences, leading to the reevaluation of ideas. Frames of inference tests related sets of experiences against preconceived ideas, resulting in the reevaluation of experiences to fit ideational structures. Actual discourse always contain elements of both kinds of frames in either tandem oscillation or working both ways simultaneously. Conversations may open as a general statement posed as an open problem but which in the process open up another problem of experiential 'gaps' of understanding, which then become resolved by general concluding evaluations drawn from implicit pre-

understandings. Such is the general dialectical structure of all linguistic discourse between two or more speakers, whether formal or informal, two way or one way.

It can be said that the general syllogistic structure of discourse as a whole is basically adductive in working both ways at once, and that depending upon the contexts or environmental 'situatedness' of the discourse, different sets of criteria may be working in the evaluation of experiences/statements. In casual conversation the criteria may be somewhat loose and basically 'relational' in an analogical or metaphorical way, whereas in more formal dialogue the criteria become more stringent in a rationalizing and analytical way following principles of two value causal logic.

Such a discursive structure is general and flexible enough to account for either 'magical' or 'mythical' thinking and for 'scientific' rationality and method, as well as for the full gamut of legalistic, artistic and religious structures of meaning in-between these extremes and yet it is particular enough not to be irrelevant and to provide evidential substantiation for the consistent differences and similarities of linguistic patterning and structure between different 'modes of discourse'.

Within such a general dialectical structure, many different kinds of linguistic strategies may be pursued, whether cultural, bureaucratic, small group or individual idioms of expression, whether code switching, standardization, euphemization, formation of argots and jargons and slangs, exaggeration of speech styles or dialectical differences, etc.

In such ways the basic discursive structure of linguistic praxis may be manipulated in many different ways to serve many different kinds of interests, to fit many different sets of intentionality structures and to articulate many different experiences and ideas about reality.

A difference exists between the natural functions and natural 'structures' of a natural linguistic praxis, versus more 'rational' functions of rational 'structures' of rational linguistic praxis.

Natural linguisticity in general follows an open structural patterning with a general non-fixedness of its frames or a non-standardness of its structural variations. Such natural praxis may only serve very vague or general purposes, rather than specific purposes associated with rational praxis. In the most general sense, natural linguisticity serves the purpose of the expression and articulation of beingness in the world.

The idea of linguistic boundary is inimical in natural linguisticity--boundaries separating speech styles, dialectics, languages and codes with the rationalization and standardization of language. When no single 'correct' way of linguistic patterning exists, people are much freer to pick and choose between different codes, dialects and languages and even surface 'structures' of language in way which fit their individual capacities, interests and personalities. It was possible that before the rise of 'standard' languages, associated with the stratification of classes within a society, and the functional classification of languages along ethno-national lines, and the superimposition of corporate bureaucratic controls over linguistic praxis in the preservation of the legalistic and ideological 'nomos' of societies, that natural languages were a lot less rationally structured and neatly boundable--that continuous variation among languages was more the rule than discontinuous boundaries between languages, and that there was much more give and take, borrowing and structural free-play than is evident today with the political-territorial superimposition of rigid borders separating peoples, their cultures and their conversations.

If this were the case, then the history of language must reveal an evolution and development of linguistic praxis which is much more open minded, more flexible, self organizing and

'environmental' in the same way that natural evolution and the development of human civilization can be said to be--it happened around and to different linguistic groupings, creating the indirect constraints, degrees of freedom and choices for linguistic change. linguistic change may have been much less systematic than modern comparative linguistics believes, and the principles and structures underlying linguistic change may be a lot less 'universal' and basic and much more epi-phenomenal and ex-temporaneous in the patterning of linguistic praxis. As a process of development, once it was inaugurated in the world, its functionality and patterning began happening in many different way which were essentially beyond the control of any group or individual.

The boundaries separating different languages and speech patterns may have been more of relative culture historical distances of differences/similarities between speakers or groups or of 'betweenness' or relative proximity to competing 'centers' of linguistic civilization such that the linguistic identity could be easily changed given changing contexts of its instantiation. Linguistic contexts were not frozen and inflexible but were culture historically fluid and dynamic. Similarly, linguistic structures were not indefinitely fixed and forever embedded within the human psyche, but were variable and relationally interdependent with changing contexts.

This argument emphasizes the relativity, the instrumentality, intentionality, the experientially and the functionality of linguistic praxis, and sees cultural and linguistic competence as generally behavioral, acquired and performative--skills of wisdom of words--rather than as innate, universally the same, deep structure of 'logos' which follows a definable, scientific set of principles or a basically 'deterministic' model of understanding language in the world. The acquired skills of linguistic performance becomes like typing, reflexive coordination and organically embedded in human

experience such that its remarkable speed, agility, capacity cannot be explained by rationalistic or cybernetic models.

Given the chance interaction between two 'mutually unintelligible speakers' we see the basis for the evolutionary beginning of linguistic praxis itself in the Creololization of pidgin languages, in linguistic 'syncretization' and the synthesis of a new independent language. And this beginning is rooted in the environmental experiences--such that these hypothetical different speakers share whole frameworks and environmental contexts of their normal linguistic praxis which are basically different from one another, such that their 'native speaker intuition' no longer adequately function in the 'culture historical clash'. But the beginning occurs in signing and in non-verbal, paralinguistic behaviors which expresses overtly the individual's intentionality structures. From this there is an inferential/referential exchange of words and meanings, of experiences and understandings and in the process of translation and inevitable distortions new words are coined to replace old words and to serve new relational functions of a newly emerging culture historical environment. In such a way, a new language is slowly built up out of the ashes of old languages, beginning with its roots in environmental experiences, in pragmatic and paralinguistic praxis, and working up through the metaphorical hierarchy of words and wisdom to embrace new metaphysical understandings and orientations in the world.

The process of linguistic emergence can occur quite rapidly given the appropriate culture historical circumstances of consistent contact and interaction--it can occur within the space of two or three generations and even within a single generation and this can be quite rapid from a larger framework of historical linguistics.

This process can be referred to as natural linguistic integration. It is rare in a modern world of historical civilization because the power structures and paradigmatic processes have lead to patterns of

domination, subordination between groups such that linguistic segregation, extermination or assimilation become 'normally' evident and process of Creolization and integration become exceptionally evident. The kind of relational reciprocity and structural symmetry necessary to the development of such integrative process are normally absent in a world of nation states preoccupied with power and domination and control of historical and cultural change such that integration as a natural process of linguistic praxis and development has lead instead to an overlay and substitution of other kinds of patterns.

But even in the process of linguistic assimilation the rapidity and relative completeness of substitution of one language by another one can be seen, such that if strongly reinforced it can be effected within a single generation.

This has dramatic implications for the understanding of linguistic change and historical patterning challenging the current status quo of the morphological structural conditioning of language which is held to be steady, continuous and which downplays the role of inter-linguistic contact and diffusion, in other words, which stresses 'evolution' of languages as a homogeneous, corporate 'systems', like 'species', rather than the actual 'history' of relations between languages.

Natural, original language had a fundamental 'extensive' orientation and functionality in the world, in that it was without any necessary 'center' or locus of power of its change, and that it served primarily the function of individual and group adaptation to changing environmental circumstances which were themselves more or less random and 'unstructured', rather than an 'intensive' orientation towards a socio-structural incorporation and reinforcement of social interrelations of power.

The basic difference between an extensiveness of natural linguisticity and the intensiveness of derivative, rational linguisticity can account for many differences and theoretical problems in the understanding of language change, history and structural or patterning dynamics, between language of competence and parole of performance, between etic of the speaker and the emic of the listener, in basic problems of translation and interpretation, etc.

In this we must also see that hierarchical structures of relations are always situating and situated in the larger, encompassing environmental contexts of our experiences--there is nothing necessarily or sufficiently innate in hierarchy, structure, dominance or power which makes it an inevitable feature of the human world of experience. Social relations of hierarchy reinforcing and emphasizing non-beingness and difference in the world are always contextually situated in the environments of the world, and are only secondarily, subsequently internalized into our own organic experience. We learn how to become hierarchical and structured through our relations with our world.

In this we can find cultural and linguistic features of the patterning of such cultural historical dominance and hierarchy of human interrelations between people and groups of people. We can see the long terms effects of subordination of a group in real, experiential terms of a 'collective inferiority complex' which has many negative, socio-pathological problems associated with it. We get a 'poverty of culture' complex which comes to be reflected in a 'poverty of language'--linguisticity may continue to serve extensive, general functions, but cannot be deployed to serve special, rationalistic functions which are instrumentally effective in the realization of 'intentionality structures' in the world, when the contents of relations are always working to frustrate, inhibit, and prevent such realization.

In such ways do the relations of violence and inequality and the socio pathological patterns, and the complexes of acquired inferiority become culture historically embedded in the contexts, the environments and the experiences of people, in such a way that it gains the power of common sense, of innateness, implicit givenness, which makes a 'self fulfilling' prophecy seem like a law of natural evolution. This becomes a vicious, regenerative cycle of cultural 'degeneration' and regression which becomes, if structurally, intensively reinforced, virtually impossible to escape.

We have at hand an alternative framework of understanding culture historical processes of development other than the structural dynamic understandings which are currently predominant. In this language and culture is always constructed and contexted within larger environments, constituted symbolically as 'corporate' ideational and ideological entities, and composed of many basic elements of schemas, frames, 'strips', and the patterned relations between such elements. These basic elements form a mosaic or tapestry in the active weaving of the cultural fabric of on going experientiality. People borrow, pool, and construct these elements on a day to day basis, deconstruct and reconstruct cultural life in a manner which preserves customary consistency yet which also accommodates environmental changes. Discursive practice, whether verbal or non-verbal, is the basic functional means of such construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Symbolisms serve the basic function of paradigmatic exemplaries as basic representational models for stimulus generalization and diffusion of such re-constructive activity. Change occurs through the individual variations and modifications to the basic elements--new elements may be created and old elements may be selective discarded or re-employed. Syncretization of elements is continual and unending. Culture as 'environmental contexts' and frameworks for such recursiveness, reiteration and redesigning, are relatively stable and self organizing in their overall robustness--individual components may be altered, but the whole system and super

organic whole exerts a 'whole relational' influence which serves to constraining such changes in conservative yet flexible ways.

People regularly configure and reconfigure their worlds, their experiences and their environments from the elements which are available to them in their culture historical contexts. In the process of such reconfiguration they create consistency of a shared constructions. This process of dialectical construction is fundamentally experiential, interpretive, symbolically mediated and linguistically articulated.

This process can become rigid and inflexible when over determined. It becomes then pathological. Part of the linguistic praxis of reiteration and reformation of experience and ideas can become ideologically 'blind' as a closed system which perseverates inspite of environmental changes, or which continues to maintain long term structural relations of dominance of control over change through many sets of environments or circumstances.

In this role, we must understand the potential for prevarication of language, and for linguistic patterns of denial and ideological illusion which reinforce the status quo, which dichotomizes the world into front regions distinguishing hidden back regions in which there occurs a vicious degenerative circle of deceit. The circle of deceit rends the fabric of natural linguisticity because it fosters distortion and illusion of non-being in the world and leads to greater deceit and distortion. The natural function of linguistic praxis in making sense and experiencing the world, then becomes deviant and perverted in the promotion of intentionality structures rooted in dominance and power of control over change in the world. Ideological diatribe, disguised as 'truth', hides the dishonesty and distortion of reality which is involved and begins to 'embed' this kind of pathology of non-being in our environments and our experience.

In the functional pragmatic view of linguistic parole as discursive praxis in the construction and reconstruction of culture historical environments of experience, we can see that the automatic, reflexive function of 'native speaker intuition' in filling in inferentially the gaps of understanding between words in conferring a consistency and coherence to the encounter with the world. It accounts for the unspoken synchronicity and non-verbal communication between actors within shared environmental contexts. This process is basic to the instrumentality of 'frames of reference/inference' in interpreting, reinterpreting, translating and transacting 'intentionality structures in the world'.

We can say that there are available 'working rules of thumb' which generally guide and serve to render such discursive praxis relevant, interesting and functionally pragmatic in a shared social reality. These rules of thumb are the acquired fold wisdom which confer performative competence to individual behavior. They are practical 'rules' rooted in experience and are usually, customarily left implicit or tacit in their directive function of discursive praxis.

These rules are not structurally so much as they are historical-- inductively, inferentially derived rules based upon the consistency and efficacy of their functioning. They may not be learned or explicit understood so much as 'worked out' and understood from a standpoint of their experiential and adaptive success and proficiency in operating them. They are derivative and operational rules, rather than basic and primary. If asked to reiterate or explicate these rules, their best performer might be wholly unable to do so except by relating actual experiential examples of their function or general rationales for their strategic purpose. They are relational rules of general historical efficacy.

The study of culture history aims at such generalistic rules of understanding based upon experiential efficacy of their patterning. It is the central dialectical problematic of understanding and

explicating such working rules which is the middle ground between wisdom and words.

In distinguishing between natural and rational forms of linguisticity, it is apparent that we are touching upon examples of basic linguistic relativity as this culture historically rooted in contextual environments. There are several basic kinds of linguistic 'orientations' which are related to this kind of relativism. One is the basic difference between 'vulgar' orality and derived literacy. Another is the difference between concrete and abstract relations, between analytical and synthetic languages. Another basic difference is between 'verbality' of a language which elaborates the transitive, performative verbal relation in its sentence structure rather than the modification of nouns, or basic nominality, predominant in other languages. Verbality confers a basic 'time like' orientation to a language which makes sense of change. nominality confers a 'space like' orientation to language which reveals structure and synchronic system, but hides the understanding, or coming to terms, with change. Hopi is regarded as a language emphasizing verbality and is very different from English which is regarded as a language of nominality.

Another kind of difference is that between languages which stress direct subject-object relations, and which emphasizes the difference between subject and predicate, and languages which are 'flat' and which emphasize the relation between subject and object. In this regard we may refer to 'active' languages versus 'passive' languages, and to 'direct' languages versus 'contextualizing' or indirect languages. Similarity, tonality and homophony may confer a kind of spontaneous word play to some languages--a musicality which can translate into 'languages of love' and which exaggerate the basic paradoxicality of its meanings, while other language may promote a nomothetic and monothetic, rationalizing view which is intolerant of paradox. Again, Vietnamese and German are two fitting examples of such differences.

Understanding these basic kinds of differences rooted in the functionality and environments of languages bring us upon the thorny theoretical dilemmas of understanding linguistic change and how languages change through time. In this regard we again have a contrast between comparative views of relatively stable, systematic changes of all languages in terms of consistent allomorphic shifts and morphological conditioning which views language as internally homogeneous in structure and as 'species' with their own evolving dynamics of change. this kind of viewpoint supports a structuralist understanding that views all languages as having the same, universal deep structure and that this structure is the innate to all speakers. This has yielded some very systematic and consistent scientific results, and has enabled scholars to build a 'phenetic' structure of linguistic evolution based on relatedness between languages.

Contrasted with the view is the semantic emphasis of socio-linguists who view language shifts dialectically and historically as being rooted in social structural patternings and which sees language primarily as 'situated discourse'. This viewpoint de-emphasizes a strict dichotomy between spatial language and temporal parole, and sees structure as intrinsically embedded in learning and culture historical environments--language is not so much as it is 'structured' or enculturated behaviorally in linguistic environments.

Neither view of language is wholly correct or complete, and both viewpoints from the extremes of a basic dialectic in linguistic understanding and thus are dialectically complementary to one another in terms of a rational, scientific discourse about the problematics of language and understanding.

Related to this dialectic is the contrasted between relativistic and deterministic perspective of language and the general 'world view'

problem. How much does language influence thought, and how much is language influenced by culture?

What is important to understand is that language change is inevitable and unpreventable because language is a natural, self organizing system of 'making sense' from the nonsense of random entropy and chaotic disorder. If there is an over determined, dynamic structure to such change--a theory of linguistic 'genetics'-- it remains to be either explicitly understood or precisely proven. On the other hand, from the socio-linguistic perspective of the long run, it makes more sense to view the 'structure' of language as social discursive activity, as a corporate, super organic social phenomena of communication, as itself changing in different ways. We can hypothesize that humankind's organic capacity, or 'biological basis' for language evolved only once, or even emerged slowly, but that it eventually stopped evolving with the substitution of human culture historical development for the process of natural evolution. Language as a social, intensive phenomena of discursive praxis then emerged and acquired its own sense of 'structure' as a genuine system of symbolic communication.

Innate human linguistic capacity has remained rather limited. Social language and its 'distanciation of surplus meaning'--created potentially unlimited reservoirs of terms and concepts with which to give virtually unlimited expression to our open ended imaginations and possibilities of patterning.

The hypothetical structure of language, as a preeminently social and culture historical phenomena of communication is not synonymous with the genetic and behavioral structure of thought. Though the other two realm of reality must overlap and must be interrelated in important ways, they are not isomorphic with one another. Thought may work beyond the experience of language, and language may work beyond the experiences of thought.

Though linguistic change is contextually constrained, it is through the active process of imperfect interpretation and the exercise of linguistic choice, that we create the possibility for changing the linguistic contexts by which our choices are situated in the world.

Linguistic change is perhaps inevitable, but the structure of its patterning is not changeless or inevitable, or over determined or innate to human consciousness. Our shared realities are the long term consequence of the kinds of mutual understandings and agreed upon meanings as part of a pan human social contract which we implicitly make during the history of our linguistic praxis and performance. We inherit our language culturally and historically not genetically. It is so ingrained in our experience and so embedded in our environments that it appears to be organic, innate and non-arbitrarily, non-relativistically inevitable.

A wolf child grows up without the possibility of human language because its existence is situated outside of any normal contexts of this linguisticality. Though it may miss important stages of its growth and development, and thus remain irreversibly linguistically retarded, this by itself cannot disprove the presence or absence of an innate predetermining structure of human language. It is clear that gazelle boy grew up learning a very different kind of language with perhaps a very different kind of basic structure, unless we want to also posit a species nonspecific structure of all communication system.

We can define and enumerate the basic 'design features' of any or all communication systems, but we are not thereby explaining or revealing of the eidetic, a priori, Cartesian structure of any particular language occurring in nature. Definition and understanding of such design features of communication systems are themselves rooted inextricably in the very linguisticality of our own very human language.

It is not entirely clear that language acquisition is too rapid and complex to be explained by behavioral/environmental acquisition. Surely, the basic organic and biological capacity for speech is already there to be developed. Perhaps it follows certain inevitable natural sequences or stages of development. But the several years of basic primary language acquisition is not faster than the similar

amount of time it is required for complete immersion in second language acquisition. And the ten or more or lifetime it requires for linguistic mastery of a first language is no different from the same necessary involvement in the mastery of other languages. It has been documented that socio-linguistic differences in language acquisition emerge as early as the twelfth week of neonate. Learning a first language from scratch, without any prior experiential reference points, but with complete, natural intuness and attentive focus upon the environment, may follow the same basic steps and rely upon the same basic kinds of working 'meta-rules' as any process of secondary language acquisition. The differences may in fact be more the inherent or acquired skills or talents for 'code switching'--the flexibility and reflexiveness of automatic linguistic praxis. Rules require time for working out and are learned through trail and error. Certain kinds of rules and attendant skills must be learned before other, more complex rules and skills can be acquired. We might rationalize the entire process but this is not the same as the actual organic process of acquisition.

There may be innate individual differences in linguistic capacity such that some persons perform or learn languages better than others. It is like typing, though it occurs with great speed and accuracy in most people who learn how to do it, it can be better learned by a select few who have a greater capacity for it.

Similarly, there may be basic differences, as previously mentioned, between different languages--differences of relativity which make it more difficult to express some kinds of understandings or to even embody some kinds of experiences, in some languages rather than in others. Such languages may have different basic orientations or overall 'structures' from one another. Similarly, some languages, situated as they are in either more natural or more rational contexts, may have different capacities or competencies for expression of experience in the world. The hypothetical equality of languages in the world is more ideological than it is empirically validated. Nevertheless all languages share a general evenness and similarity in that they all function with equal facility in their respective linguistic environments to articulate and intermediate with the world. All languages are equally natural, equally symbolical, equally pragmatic in their functionality.

While it is extremely philosophically problematic and yet scientifically unproven, the hypothetical 'deep structure' of human language has proven itself to be ideologically unifying of a linguistic paradigm which sees itself as primarily scientific. It is ideologically satisfying as it is theoretically simplifying of the problematics and realities of language. While it is yet unclear whether there is a structure, and if so, than exactly how it functions, it is not unclear that no human language occurs or can occur, outside of its culture historical contexts and experiential environments as a natural and social phenomena of inter-human communication.

Noam Chomsky's generative grammar has become the predominant orthodoxy of American linguistics. It holds that all speakers have universally the same competence for language, that all languages have equivalent capacity and complexity of expression, and that all language acquisition is too complex and too rapid to be easily explained in terms of environmental conditioning--the structure of language is innately programmed in the human brain in terms of transformational rules. This theory depends upon the Saussurian dichotomy between language (competence) and parole (performance). This theory has promised a great deal more than it has actually provided.

Linguistic heterodoxies come from socio-linguistics, the ethnography of speaking and Marxist theory, and hold that all languages are structurally the same. Languages are not only functionally different and historically separate, but languages are structurally different in morphological conditioning--agglutinative, compounding or isolating--and in grammatical sentence structure (SVO or SOV, etc.) and also in terms of 'verbalization' as with Hop, or 'nominalization' as with English. Not only does emphasis upon language lead to ignorance and devaluation of parole, but stress upon a hypothetical universal grammar leads to systematic indifference to important differences between languages. Not only

do not all linguists agree that there really is a fundamental dichotomy between language and parole--that language as it is experienced and expressed is universally integrated and undichotomized--but that the discursive practice of language always occur within a larger culture historical context which can account for the 'structural' nature of language and language change. Focusing upon the language centers of the brain explains the human capacity for speech production, but does not fully explain language as a social phenomenon. The distinction between understanding the 'structure' of the engine of a car and the skilled performance of a car's operation does not account for the fact that the 'engine' itself is a by-product, and an extended instrumentality, of human performance.

It is interesting to note that the primary contexts of intercultural contact in which primary and secondary language acquisition is understood has yielded both the principle evidence in support of a generative structure in the form of the process of 'Creolization' but also it is in such multi-lingual contexts of code switching/mixing that the principle evidence for the refutation of 'generative structure' may be found.

The paradox of tracing the history of language to a single common ancestor or 'proto language' runs into the same kind of paradox of human evolution--the question of an 'Eve'. This paradox is more apparent than real, stemming from a failure to view the process of evolution of an entire species as an on-going process of continual selection, differentiations, diffusion, etc. Language and culture did not evolve from a single 'ancestor', to be revealed in the excoriation of its hidden structure. Rather, the structure of language and culture evolved from a 'base-line' and from its beginning exhibited phylogenetic diversity and variation. While major language families are found to exist, among the 3,000-4,000 extant languages some important categorical anomalies exist, and there are many more 'in-betweenies' whose cladistic or phenetic position of the tree of language cannot be precisely determined--a residue no doubt of the tremendous amount of borrowing, acculturation, Creolization. Diffusion between different languages throughout human prehistory and history. Language is yet evolving today in more subtle and complex ways than we yet understand.

Not only is the substance of language changing continuously, but its very 'structure' has also been evolving in both the brain and in the ways it becomes articulated in social historical contexts.

It remains a moot point whether there is in fact a 'universal' generative structure underlying all languages. It also remains a moot point whether exact translation is in fact an impossibility.

One final question remains. We are left to speculate on whether mind itself may not have some kind of historical relational structure, if not basic evolutionary or universal structure. Asked another way, is human consciousness itself pre-structured in some important, definite ways, or are its general patternings reflective of a fundamental isomorphism with an a priori, noumenal structure of logos or mind.

It is evident that the patterning of mind may follow certain relational rules of historical efficacy which tend to cross cut and undermine the traditional academic boundaries and distinctions between different fields of inquiry. There may be a more or less general 'metaphysical' and 'epistemological' structure of mind, such that its criteria of validity and truth are translated empirically into criteria of ways of 'knowing' human reality.

From a culture historical perspective, it is interesting to speculate that there are five interrelated 'meta-paradigms' of mind, all sharing the same basic truth criteria. These five 'meta-paradigms' may be referred to as the philosophical, the aesthetic or artistic, the scientific, the religious or ideological, and the 'humanistic' which would include studies of culture history itself, the histories, literature, as well as the social 'sciences' of anthropology and sociology.

It is possible that these five 'meta-paradigms' are all interrelated in different, but definite ways and that each offers a fundamentally

different way of knowing and 'translating' human reality based upon alternative translations of basic truth criteria for human understanding.

Whether this kind of meta-paradigmatic patterning of mind actually reflects the order of a 'psychic unity of humankind' or is merely an epi-genetic, epi-phenomenal patterning of the culture historical development of mindness--the long term consequence of our collective history of consciousness--remains to be finally resolved.

What is clear is that the universality, if any, and the structure, if there is really such a thing, of the patterning of mind is to be found always 'situated' within given culture historical environments of experience and contexts of linguistic understanding. If it evolved, it evolved as a history of changes of such contexts and environments.

THINGING AND THINKING

'Thing-ness' might well be defined as 'the state of quality of being a thing'. Thingness might mean 'the act of making a state or quality of being a thing'. Such a term designates well the imperfect fit between our words and our meanings, if not knowing the right word for what we may intend to mean, or not knowing the right meaning for the word we may want to use. It denotes the vague mismatch between an indefinite 'thing' and its proper term.

'Thinging' might well designate the appropriate and approximate substitute for the process of mind we normally refer to as 'thinking' which we define as '...1. To have a thought; formulate in the mind. 2. To ponder. 3. To reason. 4. To believe; suppose. 5. To remember; call to mind. 6. To visualize; imagine. 7. To devise or invent. 8. To consider. (American Heritage Dictionary, 1983)

'Thinging' is the kind of 'thinking' we normally engage in when our thoughts are unclear, vague, loose, imaginative or especially difficult or slippery. We engage our minds in indefinite meanings, metaphors, similes, analogies, 'as if' 'suchness' when we cannot remember the appropriate word or put our finger upon an exact meaning. Most of us, most of the time, engage our intellects in 'thinging' throughout our normal lives, complicated as it usually is by so many subtleties, innuendoes, uncertainties, vagaries and vicissitudes. We only like to flatter ourselves and one another that we are really 'thinking' clearly, even when we seem to be hard at it.

But thinging is a nice and often necessary place to begin in our thinking--bringing the chaotic to a sense of order is a matter of bringing the thingness of thoughts to the thoughtness of things. Thinging between words and definitions and their interconnections and connotations, in lieu of more precise and ratiocinative 'thinking' is what human thought and language has been about. In thinking, we point to 'things' and say we have a thought. In thinging, we point to thought and say we have a thing. Thinging is a prerequisite process in clarifying our thoughts prior to their reformulation as clearer, more concise, 'thinking'. This is a preliminary step towards both 'an ecology of mind' and an 'economy of words'.

Thinging is also a nice designation of our first enactment of 'defining' or of definition, as we are concerned primarily with the approximate correlation between words and their denotations and connotations. Our thinging about some problematic topic is our 'defining' of that topic to render it more 'definite'. Thinging thus is an enactment of basic translation and description of our experiences. From thinging we then proceed to thinking as basic interpretations and explanations or our understanding of our environments and our world.

Thinging though our definitions of 'what is human reality' involves putting a clear, sharp outline of what that vague thing is by a brief description of the meaning of words.

'Thinging up' our definitions of 'what is human reality' involves literally and figuratively the very 'meaning' of that reality to ourselves.

DIALECTICS OF CHANCE

The paradox of change is that our understanding of it is always relative and non-arbitrary. Our baselines by which to measure change must themselves be the product and function of change. change relativizes our world, rendering our understanding of it fundamentally imprecise and indeterminant.

Even so, the paradox of change is also that it is the principle logos of the natural universe. Everything changes--evolving entropically from order to disorder and evolving systematically from chaos to patterned order.

The paradox of change is that we have no fixed reference points for its comprehension. We have no ground for coming to terms with its understanding in our lives. In a sense, it is a priori to our own existence and understandings. It just happens to us and around us.

The dialectics of change revolve around this paradox, as all dialectics revolve around the resolution of paradox. In order to understand change, it must be viewed from the standpoint of hypothetical, isomorphic structure. To understand 'structure' entails concomitantly an understanding of change in terms of such changes 'making a difference'. "Cultural change can be studied only as a part of the problem of cultural stability; cultural stability can be understood only when change is measured against conservatism--perhaps the basic difficulty arises from the fact that there are no objective criteria of permanence and change..." (Herskovits:20)

The dialectics of change involve us in the relative understandings of identity, or similarity, and difference. This understanding is fundamental to our understanding of 'relation' in the world--the explication of difference and similarity.

THE DILEMMA OF STRUCTURE

The dilemma of 'structure' is the paradox of change. we cannot understand the natural process of change in reality without the superimposition of some sense of structure and yet such 'structure' cannot always 'capture' change in the world in non-relative ways. Change happens to structure, around structure and through structure.

Our words provide structure to our wisdom of the world. Without such structure, without such coming to terms, things must remain only silently understood as experience and 'happening'.

Structure can mean any sense, order, meaning, significance, idea, system, non-random pattern, process, direction, limit, boundary, organization that we superimpose upon our experiences by which to configure and arrange them in ways which are then understandable and communicable. "Patterned structure, regularized form, we recognize, can be described as can any structure, since all structures has form and every form has describable limits." (Herskovits, 1947: 202)

The dilemma of structure is that though we need it to configure change, change must inevitably 'happen to it' to 'destructure' it as it is itself a relative part of the process of change. So we are led by the dialectics of change to construct, destruct and reconstruct the linguistic structures of our understandings such that our newest 'interpretations' better reflect the changes and 'fit the facts' of changes.

The dilemma of structure is that we need it in order to make sense of our reality--we cannot live well without it, and yet it must always be partial, imperfect, imprecise and in the act of its

creation, destructive of the very meanings, of the very change,
which it seeks by design to embrace.

Blanket Copyright, Hugh M. Lewis, © 2005. Use of this text
governed by fair use policy--permission to make copies of this text
is granted for purposes of research and non-profit instruction only.

Last Updated: 01/25/15
