CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Simplicity

What is simplicity? Oneness is simple, twoness is complex. The first is simple, the second is complex. Down is simple, up is complex. Truth is simple, false is complex. Continuity is simple, interruption is complex. Harmony is simple, disharmony is complex. Satisfaction is simple, dissatisfaction is complex. Good is simple, bad is complex.

If so, then, since nobody wants dissatisfaction, nobody wants bad, the question naturally arises: Where does complexity come from? Linguists have long been aware of the working of the gravitational force of simplicity in governing the synchronic shape of language, and in governing historical change, so the question in language is this: Why doesn’t language just keep getting simpler and simpler. Or to put it the other way around, why does language get complex? This question must have been in the backs of the minds of linguists for as long as they have been aware of the gravitational force of simplicity, but it has been very rarely formulated. In one of the few instances of which I am aware, the question was well put by K. P. Mohanan in “Fields of Attraction” (in Goldsmith, 1993, p. 62).

what is the causal mechanism that fulfills the functional need for optimal complexity?

In the present theoretical frame of reference, the answer is obvious. If language becomes too simple, then its duplicity becomes evident and it loses its credibility and thus it loses its force and value. Simplicity is the death of the illusions of language. Thus in order to sustain itself language must continually sustain a degree of complexity sufficient to clothe the duplicity of language in an impenetrable facade of verisimilitude. Complexity, obfuscation, and confusion is the very substance of language.
Game Theory

A game is an interaction of the type of thirdness and thus is a function of the symbolic conceptualization of the situation. Therefore game theory only applies to interaction on the level of thirdness, which is the symbolic level, as represented in Figure 47.

FIGURE 47. The Position of Game Theory in the Realm of Signs.

Given this conceptualization of the situation, the generalizations about the human situation which follow from game theory hold only on the symbolic level. For example, having conceptualized the human situation in terms of game theory, social scientists have concluded that the human situation is essentially characterized by the prisoner’s dilemma. However, we can see that the prisoners’ dilemma is only a dilemma of the symbolic universe and does not have any relevance to the more primitive levels of indexical and iconic interaction. In fact, the most fundamental dilemma, and the dilemma that dominates the human situation is the strategic dilemma as represented in Figure 36, “The Strategic Paradox,” on page 308. And the strategic dilemma is basically the dilemma of whether to believe and/or act on the objective tactical estimation of the situation or the subjective symbolic estimation of the situation held by oneself or the symbolic estimation of the situation held by the other or whether, as we are arguing here, to look for some other estimation of the situation.

The Efficient Market Hypothesis is just a by-product of the erroneous Game Theory view of the human situation. It does not hold. And there have been glaring anomalies since it was first formulated, but economists have stubbornly held on to this theory trying to explain away the anomalous facts, rather than accept the facts and reject the theory.

So too, the Rational Man Hypothesis, along with the prudent actor, etc.
Markedness in Language

Foreignness

There are several different kinds of foreignness. One distinction is between that which we do not know because we have never encountered it, e.g., the other side of the moon; and that which we know but we do not know that we know because we are not conscious of it. Thus a word in a foreign language is felt to be foreign, but most things in our own language are also felt to be foreign, e.g., the rules that govern negative polarity items, the rules that govern number agreement, or the inventory of phonemes. Most of what we do in our own language is foreign to us. We do things that we don’t know how to do, and we mean things that are different from what we think we mean, etc.

All languages are foreign to the infant. Then, as the infant becomes socialized, the infant becomes alien to himself in taking on an alien identity in the alien realm of language, and thus becomes alien to himself as an adult. And thus for the adult all languages are foreign including his own and he is foreign to himself.

What is bad, what is alien to the ego and what is external are, to begin with, identical (XIX p. 237)

So for the normal English speaker, “dog” is a native to his mother tongue, “canine” is a native foreign word, and [t:l ] (the word for “dog” in Dogrib) is a foreign foreign word. But, of course, his native tongue is not really “native” in the literal sense, i.e., he is not born with it.

Lies and Lie Detectors