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Mechanists assume that slang and such productive processes as "phrasal verbs" are idiomatic, because new senses seem unrelated to old. The apparent lack of continuity of meaning is a symptom of the inadequacies of mechanist views; it is revealing, for example, that mechanist theories deny any semantic motivation for the use of *take off* to describe the departure of an airplane (Ruhl 1977). It is also revealing that mechanists have such a limited conception of semantic possibilities that they view the poetic use of language as semantic deviance.

Palmer sees one implication: as Firth thought, we will "never capture the whole of meaning" (p. 51). This supposition underlies holistic thought. As an introduction to mechanist semantics, Palmer's book, considering its size, can be helpful to beginning students. It may even convince students that context is important. But it will not help them to recognize it.

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Looking back on this volume of essays is instructive. In the years since its appearance, the contours of a number of areas within linguistics have either changed or become clearly visible for the first time. Publishing a collection of papers on semantics in 1971 was a symptom of change, but

this symptom did not offer many clues as to the course the change would follow.

It would have been wrong in 1971 to criticize the articles collected in this work for their narrowness, although some linguists did so. Linguists are just now beginning to develop a feel for the organization of semantics; in 1971 the best that could be done was to show how some specific ideas fit into the most fully developed linguistic theory then available. The need for such a narrowing of attention is common to every discipline that constructs theories. Thus this book contains no wide-ranging discussions of the relation between semantics and society or the psyche, since such discussions could become fruitful only after anthropological theories of institutions and interaction, as well as linguistic theories of speech acts and sentence meaning, could assemble enough relevant detail for the beginnings of a comparison.

Instead of generalities, therefore, the collection treats restricted problems within the framework of Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Among the problems are these: (1) The question of whether transformations change meaning (Barbara Hall Partee, "On the Requirement That Transformations Preserve Meaning"), together with the related issue of whether the notion of deep structure should be extended to account for even more kinds of paraphrase relations (Paul Postal, "On the Surface Verb 'Remind' ") or whether, on the contrary, simple deep structures as supplemented by rules of surface semantic interpretation might suffice to resolve some dilemmas left by *Aspects* (Bruce Fraser, "An Analysis of 'Even' in English"). (2) A semantic problem that seemed closely tied to syntax but also bound up with general issues in philosophy, logic, and anthropology—namely, the presuppositions associated with various elements of a sentence (Richard Garner, " 'Presupposition' in Philosophy and Linguistics"; Edward L. Keenan, "Two Kinds of Presupposition in Natural Language"; Charles J. Fillmore, "Verbs of Judging: An Exercise in Semantic Description"; D. Terence Langendoen and Harris Savin, "The Projection Problem for Presuppositions"). (3) The issue of how abstract the posited underlying structures should be (Sandra Annear Thompson, "The Deep Structure of Relative Clauses"; James D. McCawley, "Tense and Time Reference in English"). (4) The question of whether semantics can be limited within the narrow bounds set by the sentence or whether logic and the structure of discourse must also be considered (George Lakoff, "The Role of Deduction in Grammar"; Arnold M. Zwicky, "On Reported Speech"; Robin Lakoff, "If's, And's, and But's about Conjunction").

Such more or less formalist concerns will, I believe, remain important.

What now seems to be attracting the most interest, however, is how those concerns relate to our understanding of the way the brain functions and the way society is structured. The nature of the relationships remains murky, but some very interesting hints may be found in the work of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, whose theories offer an intriguing synthesis of structuralist and functionalist ideas.[1]

Note

1. Especially his *Rechtssoziologie* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1972). A discussion of some of the implications of Luhmann's work for linguistics appears in Dieter Wunderlich, ed., *Linguistische Pragmatik* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972), and George Williams, "Linguistic Pragmatics in West Germany," *Studies in Language* 1 (1977): 265-78.

MORE ON THE REBEL YELL

M. B. Darwin ("A Footnote on the Rebel Yell," *American Speech* 48 [1973]: 303-4), an authority himself despite his cynical view of Allen Walker Read's definitive treatment ("The Rebel Yell as a Linguistic Problem," *American Speech* 36 [1961]: 83-92), unaccountably failed to cite support for his view from the major, albeit exotic, study of the subject by H. Allen Smith, *The Rebel Yell: Being a Carpetbagger's Attempt to Establish the Truth Concerning the Screech of the Confederate Soldier plus Lesser Matters Appertaining to the Peculiar Habits of the South* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954). On page 111 of that work, there is testimony from a resident of Blue Mountain, Mississippi, confirming Darwin's theory:

> Hunting Fox, 'coons, 'Possums, rabbits etc. Has been all but universal in the south, and even yet is common. Formerly ALL was rural. A FEW kept a pack of dogs, but every one had one or more hounds. Once the dog or dogs were on the track, yelling to them was inevitable. I have heard and given this YELL since a mere lad. The so-called "rebel yell" was only the hunters' yell, MERGED into the army. Cameron Wilbourne of Oakland Tenn, now 80, will give this yell perfectly, if you'll hunt rabbits with him, and not tell him what you wish.

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