

THE NEW SPELLING

ORTHOGRAPHIC STRUCTURALISM

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To Bern, for a great life

Chapter One

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ORTHOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

In attempting to recreate the entire development of man as a human animal, Claude Levi-Strauss, the eminent French structuralist, has posited the existence of an underlying and largely unconscious structural thread uniting all men through their acts and accomplishments. He has used the structure of the myth primarily to demonstrate his belief that all human history can be perceived and understood more fully through an improved understanding of the internal structure and workings of the human mind, as it expresses itself through the various media man has evolved through eons of development.

Gardner (1974) sums up this all-encompassing view of evolutionary development when he notes that Levi-Strauss has "...embraced strongly the conclusion that the full gamut of human possibilities and human experience is rooted in, and limited by, the intrinsic structure of the human mind and that it can be specified."

The impact of such thinking, in combination with the essentially paralleling thought of Piaget and others, has significantly influenced a broad range of areas of scientific investigation, including linguistics, anthropology, education, psychology and psychoanalysis. The work of Chomsky in linguistics is largely an effort to discover the unconscious, but quantifiable, phonemic foundation of English and other language systems.

With all that is being done in the fields of study involved in the search for clarity and stability in our understanding of the nature and operations of language, it is clear that the secrets of the unconscious will not be yielded up easily, nor perhaps ever, in their fullness. There are multiple barriers standing in the way of such discoveries, barriers largely constructed by man himself which tend to obscure and obfuscate. Levi-Strauss (1963) has stated:

A structural model may be conscious or unconscious without this difference affecting its nature. It can only be said that when the structure of a certain type of phenomenon does not lie at great depth, it is more likely that some kind of model, standing as

a screen to hide it, will exist in the public consciousness. For conscious models, which are usually known as 'norms', are by definition very poor ones, since they are not intended to explain the phenomena but perpetuate them.... The more obvious the structural organization is, the more difficult it becomes to reach it because of the inaccurate models lying across the path which leads to it. (p.218)

One most significant area of language study upon which an inordinate amount of time and effort has been expended, has been the area of orthographic word processing as it relates to the decoding and encoding of printed language. Over the period of time elapsed since man developed the capacity to express himself in graphic symbols, there have been numerous consciously derived structural models posited claiming to explain and define the structure of graphic symbolic print.

And yet, the effort to find those unifying processes which underlie and connect all of the millions of words possible of graphic transcription, has gone unfulfilled and unsatisfied. In English, the overall result, as new approaches to word processing were superimposed upon earlier models, has been an increased state of confusion in the efforts of those who must find meaning in print, both those who must teach, and those who must learn the "how" of dealing with language in its printed form.

The major purpose of ORTHOGRAPHIC STRUCTURALISM is to lay the foundation for the development of a new approach to the study of the English orthographic system of structural transfer underlying the transformation of orally produced symbolic language into graphically produced symbolic language.

In laying a new substrate which will permit a comprehensive re-examination of the print medium, it will be demonstrated that although the original system of transfer was a direct sound to symbol association, one in which the individual graphic elements contained in the English alphabet could be associated in a unitary manner with their oral counterparts, a multiplicity of events intervened over time and space which resulted in a two-fold effect.

First, changes in the pronunciation of specific English phonemes and graphemes through usage and over a long period, resulted in numerous disruptions in the overall directness of the sound to symbol transfer. These changes were influenced by a diversity of environmental, cultural, social, historical and political factors which, while positively contributing to the

enrichment of the language, also contributed to the creation of many of the apparent contradictions to be found in printed English. Foremost among these were the following: a) the loss of certain individually pronounced sound elements in words in which the original graphic correspondances were retained, as in hate, road, write and gnome; b) the sublimation of the specific associated sound value to be found in either letter element of certain combinations when they appeared in combined form, in favor of a variant and seemingly unrelated oral pronunciation, as in fish, phone, boil, loud, eight, etc.; and finally, c) the establishment of extremely limited categories of near unique words characterized by great variance in sound to symbol correspondance, a group whose oral and graphic relatives have virtually disappeared from use, as in their, was, though, etc.

The second effect of the change, resulting from the gradual loss of total associational dependence upon directness in sound to symbol transference, was the growth and development of a second strata of graphic process superimposed upon the original body of language, that composed of unisyllabic word forms bearing direct sound to symbol relationships. Initially, the essential structure of many languages contributing to the growth of English were incompatible with its own uniquely evolving structure. An example of this involves the use of pronouns in English which were signalled in other languages by a change in the inflection used with the root word. There was also a need for the development of a neuter gender in English since in some of the contributing languages, gender was signalled either by a specific identifying article before the noun, or by a change in the inflection used with the noun form. In addition, the invention of a large number of prepositions was required in English to signal a variety of subtle meaning variations since they had no exact counterpart in many contributing languages. These variations were apparently understood there, either as a result of contextual settings, or as a result of unconscious forces operating within native speakers.

In addition to these structural incompatibilities, the growing loss of total reliance upon directness in the sound to symbol transference, resulted in the increasing use of more complex inflected endings, and even more to the point, to the use of increasingly complex additions to original root words in the form of prefixes and suffixes. The growing creativity permitted, as a result of the use of these inflections and affixes, resulted in what this writer believes to be the evolution of a capacity for graphic expression which eventually allowed man to transcend the need for total directness of associative relationship between oral and printed language. It was an evolution which is

believed to mirror closely man's overall growth in cognitive maturity toward ever greater capacity for abstraction in his thought. The graphic medium itself, operating harmoniously with the oral medium with which it is intimately and inextricably allied, has evolved in complexity to a new and higher level of language structuring than was possible when man had only the capacity for associative directness in his speech to print relationships. It is a language structuring capacity which now permits him to create indirect formal and abstract categories of thought for use in expanding upon the direct primary and concrete categories he originally evolved for creative expression, as he learned to interiorize his awareness of concrete external reality.

By this point in time, the graphic medium has assumed a virtual existence of its own, one which operates most effectively when man expresses himself graphically in writing. The activation of unconscious neural activity, triggered by the writing act itself, and operating through the complex interchange of synaptic transfers associating concrete reality with abstract reality, allows man to use the sum total of his already sensed, perceived and cognized learnings. He is able to tap the enormous fund of data stored and available for instantaneous retrieval in his memory bank and utilize what is needed in the creation of new ideas and acts. These thoughts and actions which flow forth from his unconscious depths, are largely triggered by the motoric activity involved in the writing act itself.

This capacity for immediately and selectively retrieving information gained from his directly and sensorily representative experiences with the concrete stuff of his daily existence over time and space, data stored in his neurally administered memory bank, is what permits man to create abstract, formal and non-representative categories of thought, categories which have no direct representative existence in and of themselves. Such an ability is found only in man. It has allowed him to create a symbolic system freed from the limiting and inhibiting parameters of concreteness, one transcending the absolute need for directness in the translation of sounds to symbols as the two complementing media operate reciprocally in the production of language.

With this potent skill, man can internally invent new and totally abstract non-representative ideas and encode them in a printed form which is equally abstract and non-representative. Within this framework, he can conceive of such matters as religion, democracy and justice, when the awareness arising from the reality of such abstract conceptual matters is indirect and can only flow from the sum totality of his own and his shared experiences with the concrete manifestations of these ideas. His knowledge of religion, democracy and justice can only come from those experi-

iences which have been sensed, perceived and stored within the individual's framework for dealing with such inputs at the direct, auditory-oral and kinesthetic-tactual levels of concrete perceptible function.

The implication to be drawn from this latter, and supremely human, activity, is that the ability to conceptualize in the abstract and then express these abstractions orally, is a capacity which came to have existence only after man developed the ability to first represent reality in the form of directly representative hand signals and/or drawings. Again, it can be implied that the capacity to function with abstract concepts did not flower into a full-blown oral structuring capacity until some time after man took the next step and developed an equally abstract and non-representative graphic orthographic system.

Such a thought has received considerable impetus from the recent work of Jaynes (1976) who has espoused and effectively documented the idea that man's very capacity for conscious thought, as we presently conceive of that most abstract of abstract ideas, occurred in the comparatively recent past. Jaynes believes that consciousness is an internalized spatial construct. It evolved over time and space as man learned to transfer his thinking capacity from a primitive conditioned bicameral mind processing function, to a uniquely human, personal and individual consciousness of himself as an entity with a history and a future, one distinct and separate from all others in the universe. He indicates that such a radical transfer occurred in a time span roughly equivalent to that encompassed in the writing of the Odyssey. The work of Jaynes is of great interest to this researcher for he too observes a most significant relationship between the development of writing and the events Jaynes discusses so convincingly in his book.

It is hoped that the effort undertaken at the outset of this evolving work, one dedicated to the establishment of new pathways in the study of English orthography, and by extension, all other essentially phonemic systems which have been developed, that a new and unburdening sense of clarity and stability will be brought to all areas of language study involved in the decoding and encoding of graphic material. Such an undertaking is made with a great humility and sense of personal gratitude to those thousands of students who are in truth responsible for the evolution of the useful ideas hopefully to be found here. If there is validity to them, it is a validity which was awakened in my own consciousness and gradually forced to the surface of awareness as a result of a twenty-year continuing study. It was a study designed to assist those students suffering the debilitating and demoralizing effects of language disability.

Awareness grew as they reached out for help in achieving that sense of stability and clarity in their dealings with language which is each man's birthright as a linguistic animal. It was the sum total of these millions of stimulus exposures to their individual and group dealings with the medium itself, exposures occurring over time and space, a form of reverberative linguistic activity, which resulted in what has been referred to elsewhere by this writer as my own "creative synthesis," one which has led directly to the ideas to be found in ORTHOGRAPHIC STRUCTURALISM. (Laurita,1973)

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Chapter Two

THE EVOLVING STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY

In studying the English language, or any language, one may resort to many differing organizational strategies, or as Levi-Strauss refers to them, "many structural models," by means of which the words comprising the language can be categorized for classification and study. Two major examples of inclusive systems which will be discussed briefly for illustrative purposes, relate to, first, a grammatic or functional system, and second, a sequential phonemic or orthographic system.

In using the first, all of the words in English can be categorized in terms of their usage as meaning bearers having a grammatic function when used on the speech or print levels. As a result, the totality of words to be found in English can be categorized by placement within the parameters of the eight traditional categories of speech - noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection. At both levels however, such a categorial system must be considered to be arbitrary in terms of essential structure. The meaning and usage of the words forming these categories can in no way be considered to be directly or intrinsically associated with either their sound value or their orthographic representation. Categorization of the words comprising membership in each of these eight classifications is determined by its function at the usage level. The parameters of such a classification are defined by conditions operating within these two media. The reception and transmission of speech and print in the human animal are controlled and limited by the structural capabilities of the sensory apparatus used in these media.

The relationships that exist, for example, between a group of nouns, such as, dog, cat, table, man, gland, etc., are solely those which unite the objective realities represented by these words as exemplars of concrete reality. Likewise, their grammatic usage as subjects or objects within the framework of a sentence, relates them only in a functional way. Neither the phonemes used in speech nor the orthographic elements used to represent them in print bears any intrinsic relationship with their pronunciation or orthography. Their classification as nouns is a result of the meaning associated with them as mem-

bers of a class. Such representative usage must be considered to be orthographically and phonemically arbitrary.

A second example of an inclusive classification system is categorization by the sequence of phonemic or alphabetic elements comprising the body of words constituting a language. One of the major purposes of such a system is to provide users of the language with a means for establishing an inclusive compendium of all the members to be found within a particular system for placement in a dictionary or other linguistic reliquary. Such works are essential for storage, and for descriptive or evaluative purposes, and the means developed for these ends are admirably suited to the needs of the users of these books. However, this type of classification system must also be considered to be arbitrary, since the sequence used to determine these serial categories is not determined necessarily by any inherent or intrinsic logic within the phonemic or orthographic structure of the media themselves. Rather, it is based upon the sequence of the letters and sounds which have evolved over time and space into their present form as these words have come to stand for, or represent, spoken and written language. The storage of these sequences is governed by their relationship to the arbitrarily established sequence of the letters of the English alphabet. Any inherent predetermining characteristics of structure operating at the unconscious level that might exist within the orthography used to represent print, becomes sublimated to the arbitrary demands dictated by the need for a consistent, serial and unified organizational system throughout the dictionary in which the language members are stored.

For example, in arranging the words cede and cession for placement in a dictionary, a considerable spacial separation of these two closely related words is necessitated by virtue of the sequence of the letters used in their spelling. The logical meaning and structural relationship existing between these two words is sublimated in favor of the demand for precision in the overall letter organization of the dictionary. In addition to separating the root verb cede from its noun form cession, so also are the logical structural and meaning relationships of the root and its related coordinates or correlatives sublimated arbitrarily, with even greater spacial separations, as in, cede-accede-accession, cede-antecede-antecedence, cede-concede-concession, cede-decedent, cede-intercede-intercession, cede-precede-precession, cede-recede-recession and cede-secede-secession.

More in keeping with the purposes of the present restructuring of the print system being undertaken in ORTHOGRAPHIC STRUCTURALISM, an even deeper structural separation can be shown to result from the arbitrary sequential classification system forc-

ed upon users of the dictionary as an instrument designed to bring clarity and stability to speech and print relationships. Within the words accede, antecede, cede, concede, intercede, precede, recede and secede, there are two distinct orthographic structural units which have a logic and existence of their own, units which will be referred to henceforth as spelling roots and root elements. In the orthographic structuralist rationale, the spelling root in all of the above words would be cede, one whose meaning - to surrender possession or yield - is contained within the root itself. Each word containing that spelling root, either alone or in combination with affixes and/or inflected endings, is considered to be a member of a related or familial orthographic category, one whose members may or may not have a common meaning relationship and a common etymological origin. Table 2-A contains a listing of the words comprising this familial categorical group, all of which have both a commonality of meaning and etymological relationship.

TABLE 2-A

The Spelling Root cede - to surrender possession or yield

accede	antecede	cede	concede	intercede
accedes	antecedes	cedes	concedes	intercedes
acceded	anteceded	ceded	conceded	interceded
acceding	anteceding	ceding	conceding	interceding
acceder			conceder	interceder
accedence	antecedence			
	antecedent			
	antecedents			
	antecedently			
			concededly	
precede	recede	secede		
precedes	recedes	secedes		
preceded	receded	seceded		
preceding	receding	seceding		
precedence				
precedency				
(precedent)				
(precedents)				
(precedently)				
(precedential)				

NOTE: The parenthesis is used throughout ORTHOGRAPHIC

STRUCTURALISM to indicate a variant, but categorically consistent, pronunciation of the vowel used in the spelling root. Such variations are directly related to the demands of the oral medium and occur normally in the speech of native speakers at the unconscious level of function. The variation most frequently involves a change in the pronunciation of the vowel from its long sound value to its short sound value. When exceptions to this shift occur, they generally assume a consistency and are able therefore to be categorized in terms of that consistency of shift, as in, announce-annunciation, denounce-denunciation, enounce-enunciation, renounce-renunciation, pronounce-pronunciation.

The second distinct unit of structure to be found in the spelling root cede is the more basic unitary grouping of sound-symbol components, the root element. The root element in this word is ede, a grouping of letters which does in fact have a direct sound to symbol relationship. It is composed of the vowel and its signal - e-e, and the consonant d. The origin of the root element and the functional role it plays as an essential structure in the evolution of English orthography, will be discussed more fully later. For the present, it can be stated that virtually all words in the English language system containing the root element ede as their essential structural unit, may be considered to be members of a broader familial category, one in which the members are related, not necessarily in terms of their meaning or etymological origin, but rather in terms of a deeper orthographic structural relationship.

Words bearing this level of structural relationship may be considered to be a class of graphic units related at the deepest level of structural association possible in the human species. It is a level operating at the neural stage where the aboriginal unconscious structures of the various media involved in the communicative act find their very well-springs.

It is at this deep level of neural function that the elements comprising the evolutionary sequence of symbolic creation, those occurring at the non-verbal kinesthetic-tactile, speech and print levels, join together in an infinitely reoccurring and reverberating confluence of synaptic transfers. This union of cell firings results in the association of clusters of non-meaningful and reciprocating neurally connected media elements with their associated meanings, to form the categories of structurally related words possible of graphic transcription, in

this case, words involving the root element ede.

Table 2-B contains a very brief sampling of the words considered to be structurally related to each other as members of the category formed by the union of the individual graphic elements e-e and d.

TABLE 2-B

The Root Element ede

<u>ede</u> (bede)	<u>ede</u> (cede)	<u>ede</u> (crede)	<u>ede</u> (fede)
obedient	cedar	credence	(fedora)
obediently	cedars	(incredulous)	(federate)
obedience	(cedilla)	(credentials)	(federal)
	ceded	(credibility)	(federation)
	concede		(federalist)
	(precedent)		(confederation)
<u>ede</u> (grede)	<u>ede</u> (hede)	<u>ede</u> (mede)	<u>ede</u> (pede)
ingredient	hedonism	medium	impede
	hedonist	mediate	impedance
	hedonistic	immediately	(impediment)
		(medical)	expedient
		(medicine)	(expedition)
<u>ede</u> (prede)	<u>ede</u> (sede)		
(predator)	(sedate)		
(predatory)	(sedative)		
(depredations)	(sedan)		
	(sediment)		

The approach being developed in ORTHOGRAPHIC STRUCTURAL-ISM is one which will demonstrate that there is a logical and non-arbitrary system underlying all orthographic constructions. Such a system is one which can be considered to be categorically perfect in that all of the words possible of transcription can, and must, be viewed as being members of a class, one whose membership may consist of only a single member word unit, a relic

of a lost linguistic heritage somewhere in the misty origins of man's historical past.

There will also be a limited number of categories which came into existence as the result of common usage. It is the author's belief that these should be returned to their proper and more inclusive categories of structure in the effort to make spelling more logical and holistically structured, words such as only and wholly which more correctly spelled would appear as onely and wholely. This subject will be discussed more fully in a book to be written devoted to orthographic speculations.

Orthographic Structuralism is a new and more systematically based approach to orthography which attempts to discover and explicate its underlying and unifying structural principles. It is an approach which hopefully will bring English orthography into structural harmony with all of the other operational systems which in toto constitute man as a biological entity. It attempts also to demonstrate that the external manifestations of the orthographic system are closely associated at the neural level of function with his earlier developed abstract, indirectly representative oral communication system, and in a less intimate but perhaps more essential manner, with his other earlier developed capacity for expression through directly representative systems, including pictographs and hand signals.

Orthographic Structuralism is an approach to graphic symbols that will attempt to achieve its goal of regularizing speech to print relationships through the exposition of a number of Principles of Graphic Linguistic Structure. Through the aegis of these principles, it will be shown that, as a result of the superimposition of an indeterminate series of overlaid theoretical efforts, some primitive and some extremely sophisticated, efforts designed originally to serve as structural models to use in describing the operations of print, the deep and largely unconscious structure of the graphic medium lying just beneath the surface has become increasingly more difficult to perceive or understand.

The major cause leading to the loss of our ability to consciously grasp this logical and perceptible underlayment of structure, has been the misdirected and perseverative attempt of researchers and theorists to discover a totally direct and all-encompassing unity and harmony in speech to print relationships. The search for structural unity based upon this defective initial premise has persistently led to failure, as all systems based upon such a faulty theoretical rationale broke down at one point or another. These approaches all falter as the difficulties involved in making one-to-one sound to symbol relation-