

# Language, Culture and Society

**Randy Vinson**





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## Chapter 1

# Language

A **language** is a structured system of communication used by humans, based on speech and gesture (spoken language), sign, or often writing. The structure of language is its grammar and the free components are its vocabulary. Many languages, including the most widely-spoken ones, have writing systems that enable sounds or signs to be recorded for later reactivation. Human language is unique among known systems of animal communication in that it is not dependent on a single mode of transmission (sight, sound etc.), it is highly variable between cultures and across time, and affords a much wider range of expression than other systems. It has the properties of productivity and displacement, and relies on social convention and learning.

Estimates of the number of human languages in the world vary between 5,000 and 7,000. However, any precise estimate depends on the arbitrary distinction (dichotomy) between languages and dialect. Natural languages are spoken or signed (or both), but any language can be encoded into secondary media using auditory, visual, or tactile stimuli – for example, in writing, whistling, signing, or braille. In other words, human language is modality-independent, but written or signed language is the way to inscribe or encode the natural human speech or gestures.

Depending on philosophical perspectives regarding the definition of language and meaning, when used as a general concept, "language" may refer to the cognitive ability to learn

and use systems of complex communication, or to describe the set of rules that makes up these systems, or the set of utterances that can be produced from those rules. All languages rely on the process of semiosis to relate signs to particular meanings. Oral, manual and tactile languages contain a phonological system that governs how symbols are used to form sequences known as words or morphemes, and a syntactic system that governs how words and morphemes are combined to form phrases and utterances.

The scientific study of language is called linguistics. Critical examinations of languages, such as philosophy of language, the relationships between language and thought, etc., such as how words represent experience, have been debated at least since Gorgias and Plato in ancient Greek civilization. Thinkers such as Rousseau (1712 – 1778) have debated that language originated from emotions, while others like Kant (1724 – 1804), have held that languages originated from rational and logical thought. Twentieth century philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1889 – 1951) argued that philosophy is really the study of language itself. Major figures in contemporary linguistics of these times include Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky.

Language is thought to have gradually diverged from earlier primate communication systems when early hominins acquired the ability to form a theory of mind and shared intentionality. This development is sometimes thought to have coincided with an increase in brain volume, and many linguists see the structures of language as having evolved to serve specific communicative and social functions. Language is processed in many different locations in the human brain, but especially in

Broca's and Wernicke's areas. Humans acquire language through social interaction in early childhood, and children generally speak fluently by approximately three years old. Language and culture are codependent. Therefore, in addition to its strictly communicative uses, language has social uses such as signifying group identity, social stratification, as well as use for social grooming and entertainment.

Languages evolve and diversify over time, and the history of their evolution can be reconstructed by comparing modern languages to determine which traits their ancestral languages must have had in order for the later developmental stages to occur. A group of languages that descend from a common ancestor is known as a language family; in contrast, a language that has been demonstrated to not have any living or non-living relationship with another language is called a language isolate. There are also many unclassified languages whose relationships have not been established, and spurious languages may have not existed at all. Academic consensus holds that between 50% and 90% of languages spoken at the beginning of the 21st century will probably have become extinct by the year 2100.

## **Definitions**

The English word *language* derives ultimately from Proto-Indo-European *\*dn̥ǵʰwéh₂s* "tongue, speech, language" through Latin *lingua*, "language; tongue", and Old French *language*. The word is sometimes used to refer to codes, ciphers, and other kinds of artificially constructed communication systems such as formally defined computer languages used for computer programming. Unlike conventional human languages, a formal

language in this sense is a system of signs for encoding and decoding information. This article specifically concerns the properties of natural human language as it is studied in the discipline of linguistics.

As an object of linguistic study, "language" has two primary meanings: an abstract concept, and a specific linguistic system, e.g. "French". The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who defined the modern discipline of linguistics, first explicitly formulated the distinction using the French word *langue* for language as a concept, *langue* as a specific instance of a language system, and *parole* for the concrete usage of speech in a particular language.

When speaking of language as a general concept, definitions can be used which stress different aspects of the phenomenon. These definitions also entail different approaches and understandings of language, and they also inform different and often incompatible schools of linguistic theory. Debates about the nature and origin of language go back to the ancient world. Greek philosophers such as Gorgias and Plato debated the relation between words, concepts and reality. Gorgias argued that language could represent neither the objective experience nor human experience, and that communication and truth were therefore impossible. Plato maintained that communication is possible because language represents ideas and concepts that exist independently of, and prior to, language.

During the Enlightenment and its debates about human origins, it became fashionable to speculate about the origin of language. Thinkers such as Rousseau and Herder argued that language had originated in the instinctive expression of

emotions, and that it was originally closer to music and poetry than to the logical expression of rational thought. Rationalist philosophers such as Kant and Descartes held the opposite view. Around the turn of the 20th century, thinkers began to wonder about the role of language in shaping our experiences of the world – asking whether language simply reflects the objective structure of the world, or whether it creates concepts that in turn impose on our experience of the objective world. This led to the question of whether philosophical problems are really firstly linguistic problems. The resurgence of the view that language plays a significant role in the creation and circulation of concepts, and that the study of philosophy is essentially the study of language, is associated with what has been called the linguistic turn and philosophers such as Wittgenstein in 20th-century philosophy. These debates about language in relation to meaning and reference, cognition and consciousness remain active today.

### **Mental faculty, organ or instinct**

One definition sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behaviour: to learn languages and to produce and understand utterances. This definition stresses the universality of language to all humans, and it emphasizes the biological basis for the human capacity for language as a unique development of the human brain. Proponents of the view that the drive to language acquisition is innate in humans argue that this is supported by the fact that all cognitively normal children raised in an environment where language is accessible will acquire language without formal instruction. Languages may even develop spontaneously in environments where people live or grow up together without a

common language; for example, creole languages and spontaneously developed sign languages such as Nicaraguan Sign Language. This view, which can be traced back to the philosophers Kant and Descartes, understands language to be largely innate, for example, in Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar, or American philosopher Jerry Fodor's extreme innatist theory. These kinds of definitions are often applied in studies of language within a cognitive science framework and in neurolinguistics.

### **Formal symbolic system**

Another definition sees language as a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning. This definition stresses that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings. This structuralist view of language was first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, and his structuralism remains foundational for many approaches to language.

Some proponents of Saussure's view of language have advocated a formal approach which studies language structure by identifying its basic elements and then by presenting a formal account of the rules according to which the elements combine in order to form words and sentences. The main proponent of such a theory is Noam Chomsky, the originator of the generative theory of grammar, who has defined language as the construction of sentences that can be generated using transformational grammars. Chomsky considers these rules to be an innate feature of the human mind and to constitute the rudiments of what language is. By way of contrast, such

transformational grammars are also commonly used in formal logic, in formal linguistics, and in applied computational linguistics. In the philosophy of language, the view of linguistic meaning as residing in the logical relations between propositions and reality was developed by philosophers such as Alfred Tarski, Bertrand Russell, and other formal logicians.

### **Tool for communication**

Yet another definition sees language as a system of communication that enables humans to exchange verbal or symbolic utterances. This definition stresses the social functions of language and the fact that humans use it to express themselves and to manipulate objects in their environment. Functional theories of grammar explain grammatical structures by their communicative functions, and understand the grammatical structures of language to be the result of an adaptive process by which grammar was "tailored" to serve the communicative needs of its users.

This view of language is associated with the study of language in pragmatic, cognitive, and interactive frameworks, as well as in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Functionalist theories tend to study grammar as dynamic phenomena, as structures that are always in the process of changing as they are employed by their speakers. This view places importance on the study of linguistic typology, or the classification of languages according to structural features, as it can be shown that processes of grammaticalization tend to follow trajectories that are partly dependent on typology. In the philosophy of language, the view of pragmatics as being central to language and meaning is often associated with Wittgenstein's later

works and with ordinary language philosophers such as J.L. Austin, Paul Grice, John Searle, and W.O. Quine.

## **Distinctive features of human language**

A number of features, many of which were described by Charles Hockett and called design features set human language apart from communication used by non-human animals.

Communication systems used by other animals such as bees or apes are closed systems that consist of a finite, usually very limited, number of possible ideas that can be expressed. In contrast, human language is open-ended and productive, meaning that it allows humans to produce a vast range of utterances from a finite set of elements, and to create new words and sentences. This is possible because human language is based on a dual code, in which a finite number of elements which are meaningless in themselves (e.g. sounds, letters or gestures) can be combined to form an infinite number of larger units of meaning (words and sentences). However, one study has demonstrated that an Australian bird, the chestnut-crowned babbler, is capable of using the same acoustic elements in different arrangements to create two functionally distinct vocalizations. Additionally, pied babblers have demonstrated the ability to generate two functionally distinct vocalisations composed of the same sound type, which can only be distinguished by the number of repeated elements.

Several species of animals have proved to be able to acquire forms of communication through social learning: for instance a bonobo named Kanzi learned to express itself using a set of



symbolic lexigrams. Similarly, many species of birds and whales learn their songs by imitating other members of their species. However, while some animals may acquire large numbers of words and symbols, none have been able to learn as many different signs as are generally known by an average 4 year old human, nor have any acquired anything resembling the complex grammar of human language.

Human languages differ from animal communication systems in that they employ grammatical and semantic categories, such as noun and verb, present and past, which may be used to express exceedingly complex meanings. It is distinguished by the property of recursivity: for example, a noun phrase can contain another noun phrase (as in "[[the chimpanzee]'s lips]") or a clause can contain another clause (as in "[I see [the dog is running]]"). Human language is the only known natural communication system whose adaptability may be referred to as *modality independent*.

This means that it can be used not only for communication through one channel or medium, but through several. For example, spoken language uses the auditive modality, whereas sign languages and writing use the visual modality, and braille writing uses the tactile modality.

Human language is unusual in being able to refer to abstract concepts and to imagined or hypothetical events as well as events that took place in the past or may happen in the future. This ability to refer to events that are not at the same time or place as the speech event is called *displacement*, and while some animal communication systems can use displacement (such as the communication of bees that can communicate the

location of sources of nectar that are out of sight), the degree to which it is used in human language is also considered unique.

## **Origin**

Theories about the origin of language differ in regard to their basic assumptions about what language is. Some theories are based on the idea that language is so complex that one cannot imagine it simply appearing from nothing in its final form, but that it must have evolved from earlier pre-linguistic systems among our pre-human ancestors. These theories can be called continuity-based theories. The opposite viewpoint is that language is such a unique human trait that it cannot be compared to anything found among non-humans and that it must therefore have appeared suddenly in the transition from pre-hominids to early man. These theories can be defined as discontinuity-based. Similarly, theories based on the generative view of language pioneered by Noam Chomsky see language mostly as an innate faculty that is largely genetically encoded, whereas functionalist theories see it as a system that is largely cultural, learned through social interaction.

Chomsky is one prominent proponent of a discontinuity-based theory of human language origins. He suggests that for scholars interested in the nature of language, "talk about the evolution of the language capacity is beside the point." Chomsky proposes that perhaps "some random mutation took place [...] and it reorganized the brain, implanting a language organ in an otherwise primate brain." Though cautioning against taking this story literally, Chomsky insists that "it may

be closer to reality than many other fairy tales that are told about evolutionary processes, including language."

Continuity-based theories are held by a majority of scholars, but they vary in how they envision this development. Those who see language as being mostly innate, for example psychologist Steven Pinker, hold the precedents to be animal cognition, whereas those who see language as a socially learned tool of communication, such as psychologist Michael Tomasello, see it as having developed from animal communication in primates: either gestural or vocal communication to assist in cooperation. Other continuity-based models see language as having developed from music, a view already espoused by Rousseau, Herder, Humboldt, and Charles Darwin. A prominent proponent of this view is archaeologist Steven Mithen. Stephen Anderson states that the age of spoken languages is estimated at 60,000 to 100,000 years and that:

Researchers on the evolutionary origin of language generally find it plausible to suggest that language was invented only once, and that all modern spoken languages are thus in some way related, even if that relation can no longer be recovered ... because of limitations on the methods available for reconstruction.

Because language emerged in the early prehistory of man, before the existence of any written records, its early development has left no historical traces, and it is believed that no comparable processes can be observed today. Theories that stress continuity often look at animals to see if, for example, primates display any traits that can be seen as

analogous to what pre-human language must have been like. Early human fossils can be inspected for traces of physical adaptation to language use or pre-linguistic forms of symbolic behaviour.

Among the signs in human fossils that may suggest linguistic abilities are: the size of the brain relative to body mass, the presence of a larynx capable of advanced sound production and the nature of tools and other manufactured artifacts.

It was mostly undisputed that pre-human australopithecines did not have communication systems significantly different from those found in great apes in general. However, a 2017 study on *Ardipithecus ramidus* challenges this belief.

Scholarly opinions vary as to the developments since the appearance of the genus *Homo* some 2.5 million years ago. Some scholars assume the development of primitive language-like systems (proto-language) as early as *Homo habilis* (2.3 million years ago) while others place the development of primitive symbolic communication only with *Homo erectus* (1.8 million years ago) or *Homo heidelbergensis* (0.6 million years ago), and the development of language proper with anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* with the Upper Paleolithic revolution less than 100,000 years ago.

## **Study**

The study of language, linguistics, has been developing into a science since the first grammatical descriptions of particular languages in India more than 2000 years ago, after the development of the Brahmi script. Modern linguistics is a

science that concerns itself with all aspects of language, examining it from all of the theoretical viewpoints described above.

## **Subdisciplines**

The academic study of language is conducted within many different disciplinary areas and from different theoretical angles, all of which inform modern approaches to linguistics. For example, descriptive linguistics examines the grammar of single languages, theoretical linguistics develops theories on how best to conceptualize and define the nature of language based on data from the various extant human languages, sociolinguistics studies how languages are used for social purposes informing in turn the study of the social functions of language and grammatical description, neurolinguistics studies how language is processed in the human brain and allows the experimental testing of theories, computational linguistics builds on theoretical and descriptive linguistics to construct computational models of language often aimed at processing natural language or at testing linguistic hypotheses, and historical linguistics relies on grammatical and lexical descriptions of languages to trace their individual histories and reconstruct trees of language families by using the comparative method.

## **Early history**

The formal study of language is often considered to have started in India with Pāāini, the 5th century BC grammarian who formulated 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology. However, Sumerian scribes already studied the differences between

Sumerian and Akkadian grammar around 1900 BC. Subsequent grammatical traditions developed in all of the ancient cultures that adopted writing.

In the 17th century AD, the French Port-Royal Grammarians developed the idea that the grammars of all languages were a reflection of the universal basics of thought, and therefore that grammar was universal. In the 18th century, the first use of the comparative method by British philologist and expert on ancient India William Jones sparked the rise of comparative linguistics. The scientific study of language was broadened from Indo-European to language in general by Wilhelm von Humboldt. Early in the 20th century, Ferdinand de Saussure introduced the idea of language as a static system of interconnected units, defined through the oppositions between them.

By introducing a distinction between diachronic and synchronic analyses of language, he laid the foundation of the modern discipline of linguistics. Saussure also introduced several basic dimensions of linguistic analysis that are still fundamental in many contemporary linguistic theories, such as the distinctions between syntagm and paradigm, and the Langue-parole distinction, distinguishing language as an abstract system (*langue*), from language as a concrete manifestation of this system (*parole*).

### **Modern linguistics**

In the 1960s, Noam Chomsky formulated the generative theory of language. According to this theory, the most basic form of language is a set of syntactic rules that is universal for all

humans and which underlies the grammars of all human languages. This set of rules is called Universal Grammar; for Chomsky, describing it is the primary objective of the discipline of linguistics. Thus, he considered that the grammars of individual languages are only of importance to linguistics insofar as they allow us to deduce the universal underlying rules from which the observable linguistic variability is generated.

In opposition to the formal theories of the generative school, functional theories of language propose that since language is fundamentally a tool, its structures are best analyzed and understood by reference to their functions. Formal theories of grammar seek to define the different elements of language and describe the way they relate to each other as systems of formal rules or operations, while functional theories seek to define the functions performed by language and then relate them to the linguistic elements that carry them out. The framework of cognitive linguistics interprets language in terms of the concepts (which are sometimes universal, and sometimes specific to a particular language) which underlie its forms. Cognitive linguistics is primarily concerned with how the mind creates meaning through language.

## **Physiological and neural architecture of language and speech**

Speaking is the default modality for language in all cultures. The production of spoken language depends on sophisticated capacities for controlling the lips, tongue and other components of the vocal apparatus, the ability to acoustically

decode speech sounds, and the neurological apparatus required for acquiring and producing language. The study of the genetic bases for human language is at an early stage: the only gene that has definitely been implicated in language production is FOXP2, which may cause a kind of congenital language disorder if affected by mutations.

## **The brain**

The brain is the coordinating center of all linguistic activity; it controls both the production of linguistic cognition and of meaning and the mechanics of speech production. Nonetheless, our knowledge of the neurological bases for language is quite limited, though it has advanced considerably with the use of modern imaging techniques. The discipline of linguistics dedicated to studying the neurological aspects of language is called neurolinguistics.

Early work in neurolinguistics involved the study of language in people with brain lesions, to see how lesions in specific areas affect language and speech. In this way, neuroscientists in the 19th century discovered that two areas in the brain are crucially implicated in language processing. The first area is Wernicke's area, which is in the posterior section of the superior temporal gyrus in the dominant cerebral hemisphere. People with a lesion in this area of the brain develop receptive aphasia, a condition in which there is a major impairment of language comprehension, while speech retains a natural-sounding rhythm and a relatively normal sentence structure. The second area is Broca's area, in the posterior inferior frontal gyrus of the dominant hemisphere. People with a lesion to this area develop expressive aphasia, meaning that they



know what they want to say, they just cannot get it out. They are typically able to understand what is being said to them, but unable to speak fluently. Other symptoms that may be present in expressive aphasia include problems with word repetition. The condition affects both spoken and written language.

Those with this aphasia also exhibit ungrammatical speech and show inability to use syntactic information to determine the meaning of sentences. Both expressive and receptive aphasia also affect the use of sign language, in analogous ways to how they affect speech, with expressive aphasia causing signers to sign slowly and with incorrect grammar, whereas a signer with receptive aphasia will sign fluently, but make little sense to others and have difficulties comprehending others' signs. This shows that the impairment is specific to the ability to use language, not to the physiology used for speech production.

With technological advances in the late 20th century, neurolinguists have also incorporated non-invasive techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electrophysiology to study language processing in individuals without impairments.

## **Anatomy of speech**

Spoken language relies on human physical ability to produce sound, which is a longitudinal wave propagated through the air at a frequency capable of vibrating the ear drum. This ability depends on the physiology of the human speech organs. These organs consist of the lungs, the voice box (larynx), and the upper vocal tract – the throat, the mouth, and the nose. By

controlling the different parts of the speech apparatus, the airstream can be manipulated to produce different speech sounds.

The sound of speech can be analyzed into a combination of segmental and suprasegmental elements. The segmental elements are those that follow each other in sequences, which are usually represented by distinct letters in alphabetic scripts, such as the Roman script. In free flowing speech, there are no clear boundaries between one segment and the next, nor usually are there any audible pauses between them. Segments therefore are distinguished by their distinct sounds which are a result of their different articulations, and can be either vowels or consonants. Suprasegmental phenomena encompass such elements as stress, phonation type, voice timbre, and prosody or intonation, all of which may have effects across multiple segments.

Consonants and vowel segments combine to form syllables, which in turn combine to form utterances; these can be distinguished phonetically as the space between two inhalations. Acoustically, these different segments are characterized by different formant structures, that are visible in a spectrogram of the recorded sound wave. Formants are the amplitude peaks in the frequency spectrum of a specific sound.

Vowels are those sounds that have no audible friction caused by the narrowing or obstruction of some part of the upper vocal tract. They vary in quality according to the degree of lip aperture and the placement of the tongue within the oral cavity. Vowels are called *close* when the lips are relatively closed, as in the pronunciation of the vowel [i] (English "ee"),

or *open* when the lips are relatively open, as in the vowel [a] (English "ah"). If the tongue is located towards the back of the mouth, the quality changes, creating vowels such as [u] (English "oo"). The quality also changes depending on whether the lips are rounded as opposed to unrounded, creating distinctions such as that between [i] (unrounded front vowel such as English "ee") and [y] (rounded front vowel such as German "ü").

Consonants are those sounds that have audible friction or closure at some point within the upper vocal tract. Consonant sounds vary by place of articulation, i.e. the place in the vocal tract where the airflow is obstructed, commonly at the lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, palate, velum, uvula, or glottis.

Each place of articulation produces a different set of consonant sounds, which are further distinguished by manner of articulation, or the kind of friction, whether full closure, in which case the consonant is called *occlusive* or *stop*, or different degrees of aperture creating *fricatives* and *approximants*. Consonants can also be either *voiced* or *unvoiced*, depending on whether the vocal cords are set in vibration by airflow during the production of the sound. Voicing is what separates English [s] in *bus* (unvoiced sibilant) from [z] in *buzz* (voiced sibilant).

Some speech sounds, both vowels and consonants, involve release of air flow through the nasal cavity, and these are called *nasals* or *nasalized* sounds. Other sounds are defined by the way the tongue moves within the mouth such as the l-sounds (called *laterals*, because the air flows along both sides of the tongue), and the r-sounds (called *rhotics*).

By using these speech organs, humans can produce hundreds of distinct sounds: some appear very often in the world's languages, whereas others are much more common in certain language families, language areas, or even specific to a single language.

## **Modality**

Human language is plastic in its choice of the mode used to convey it. Two modes of communication appear to be fundamental: oral (speech and mouthing) and manual (sign and gesture). It is common for oral language to be accompanied by gesture, and for sign language to be accompanied by mouthing. In addition, some language communities use both modes to convey lexical or grammatical meaning, each mode complementing the other. Such bimodal use of language is especially common in genres such as story-telling (with Plains Indian Sign Language and Australian Aboriginal sign languages used alongside oral language, for example), but also occurs in mundane conversation.

For instance, many Australian languages have a rich set of case suffixes that provide details about the instrument used to perform an action. Others lack such grammatical precision in the oral mode, but supplement it with gesture to convey that information in the sign mode. In Iwaidja, for example, 'he went out for fish using a torch' is spoken as simply "he-hunted fish torch", but the word for 'torch' is accompanied by a gesture indicating that it was held. In another example, the ritual language Damin had a heavily reduced oral vocabulary of only a few hundred words, each of which was very general in meaning, but which were supplemented by gesture for greater

precision (e.g., the single word for fish, *l\*i*, was accompanied by a gesture to indicate the kind of fish).

Secondary modes of language, by which a fundamental mode is conveyed in a different medium, include writing (including braille), sign (in manually coded language), whistling and drumming. Tertiary modes – such as semaphore, Morse code and spelling alphabets – convey the secondary mode of writing in a different medium. For some extinct languages that are maintained for ritual or liturgical purposes, writing may be the primary mode, with speech secondary.

## **Structure**

When described as a system of symbolic communication, language is traditionally seen as consisting of three parts: signs, meanings, and a code connecting signs with their meanings. The study of the process of semiosis, how signs and meanings are combined, used, and interpreted is called semiotics. Signs can be composed of sounds, gestures, letters, or symbols, depending on whether the language is spoken, signed, or written, and they can be combined into complex signs, such as words and phrases. When used in communication, a sign is encoded and transmitted by a sender through a channel to a receiver who decodes it.

Some of the properties that define human language as opposed to other communication systems are: the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, meaning that there is no predictable connection between a linguistic sign and its meaning; the duality of the linguistic system, meaning that linguistic structures are built by combining elements into larger structures that can be seen

as layered, e.g. how sounds build words and words build phrases; the discreteness of the elements of language, meaning that the elements out of which linguistic signs are constructed are discrete units, e.g. sounds and words, that can be distinguished from each other and rearranged in different patterns; and the productivity of the linguistic system, meaning that the finite number of linguistic elements can be combined into a theoretically infinite number of combinations.

The rules by which signs can be combined to form words and phrases are called syntax or grammar. The meaning that is connected to individual signs, morphemes, words, phrases, and texts is called semantics. The division of language into separate but connected systems of sign and meaning goes back to the first linguistic studies of de Saussure and is now used in almost all branches of linguistics.

## **Semantics**

Languages express meaning by relating a sign form to a meaning, or its content. Sign forms must be something that can be perceived, for example, in sounds, images, or gestures, and then related to a specific meaning by social convention. Because the basic relation of meaning for most linguistic signs is based on social convention, linguistic signs can be considered arbitrary, in the sense that the convention is established socially and historically, rather than by means of a natural relation between a specific sign form and its meaning.

Thus, languages must have a vocabulary of signs related to specific meaning. The English sign "dog" denotes, for example, a member of the species *Canis familiaris*. In a language, the

array of arbitrary signs connected to specific meanings is called the lexicon, and a single sign connected to a meaning is called a lexeme. Not all meanings in a language are represented by single words. Often, semantic concepts are embedded in the morphology or syntax of the language in the form of grammatical categories.

All languages contain the semantic structure of predication: a structure that predicates a property, state, or action. Traditionally, semantics has been understood to be the study of how speakers and interpreters assign truth values to statements, so that meaning is understood to be the process by which a predicate can be said to be true or false about an entity, e.g. "[x [is y]]" or "[x [does y]]". Recently, this model of semantics has been complemented with more dynamic models of meaning that incorporate shared knowledge about the context in which a sign is interpreted into the production of meaning. Such models of meaning are explored in the field of pragmatics.

## **Sounds and symbols**

Depending on modality, language structure can be based on systems of sounds (speech), gestures (sign languages), or graphic or tactile symbols (writing). The ways in which languages use sounds or signs to construct meaning are studied in phonology.

Sounds as part of a linguistic system are called phonemes. Phonemes are abstract units of sound, defined as the smallest units in a language that can serve to distinguish between the meaning of a pair of minimally different words, a so-called

minimal pair. In English, for example, the words *bat*[bæt] and *pat*[pæt] form a minimal pair, in which the distinction between /b/ and /p/ differentiates the two words, which have different meanings. However, each language contrasts sounds in different ways.

For example, in a language that does not distinguish between voiced and unvoiced consonants, the sounds [p] and [b] (if they both occur) could be considered a single phoneme, and consequently, the two pronunciations would have the same meaning. Similarly, the English language does not distinguish phonemically between aspirated and non-aspirated pronunciations of consonants, as many other languages like Korean and Hindi do: the unaspirated /p/ in *spin*[spɪn] and the aspirated /p/ in *pin*[pʰɪn] are considered to be merely different ways of pronouncing the same phoneme (such variants of a single phoneme are called allophones), whereas in Mandarin Chinese, the same difference in pronunciation distinguishes between the words [pʰá] 'crouch' and [pá] 'eight' (the accent above the á means that the vowel is pronounced with a high tone).

All spoken languages have phonemes of at least two different categories, vowels and consonants, that can be combined to form syllables. As well as segments such as consonants and vowels, some languages also use sound in other ways to convey meaning. Many languages, for example, use stress, pitch, duration, and tone to distinguish meaning. Because these phenomena operate outside of the level of single segments, they are called suprasegmental. Some languages have only a few phonemes, for example, Rotokas and Pirahã language with 11 and 10 phonemes respectively, whereas languages like Taa



may have as many as 141 phonemes. In sign languages, the equivalent to phonemes (formerly called cheremes) are defined by the basic elements of gestures, such as hand shape, orientation, location, and motion, which correspond to manners of articulation in spoken language.

Writing systems represent language using visual symbols, which may or may not correspond to the sounds of spoken language. The Latin alphabet (and those on which it is based or that have been derived from it) was originally based on the representation of single sounds, so that words were constructed from letters that generally denote a single consonant or vowel in the structure of the word. In syllabic scripts, such as the Inuktitut syllabary, each sign represents a whole syllable. In logographic scripts, each sign represents an entire word, and will generally bear no relation to the sound of that word in spoken language.

Because all languages have a very large number of words, no purely logographic scripts are known to exist. Written language represents the way spoken sounds and words follow one after another by arranging symbols according to a pattern that follows a certain direction. The direction used in a writing system is entirely arbitrary and established by convention. Some writing systems use the horizontal axis (left to right as the Latin script or right to left as the Arabic script), while others such as traditional Chinese writing use the vertical dimension (from top to bottom). A few writing systems use opposite directions for alternating lines, and others, such as the ancient Maya script, can be written in either direction and rely on graphic cues to show the reader the direction of reading.

In order to represent the sounds of the world's languages in writing, linguists have developed the International Phonetic Alphabet, designed to represent all of the discrete sounds that are known to contribute to meaning in human languages.

## **Grammar**

Grammar is the study of how meaningful elements called *morphemes* within a language can be combined into utterances. Morphemes can either be *free* or *bound*. If they are free to be moved around within an utterance, they are usually called *words*, and if they are bound to other words or morphemes, they are called affixes. The way in which meaningful elements can be combined within a language is governed by rules. The study of the rules for the internal structure of words are called morphology. The rules of the internal structure of phrases and sentences are called *syntax*.

## **Grammatical categories**

Grammar can be described as a system of categories and a set of rules that determine how categories combine to form different aspects of meaning. Languages differ widely in whether they are encoded through the use of categories or lexical units. However, several categories are so common as to be nearly universal. Such universal categories include the encoding of the grammatical relations of participants and predicates by grammatically distinguishing between their relations to a predicate, the encoding of temporal and spatial relations on predicates, and a system of grammatical person governing reference to and distinction between speakers and addressees and those about whom they are speaking.

## Word classes

Languages organize their parts of speech into classes according to their functions and positions relative to other parts. All languages, for instance, make a basic distinction between a group of words that prototypically denotes things and concepts and a group of words that prototypically denotes actions and events. The first group, which includes English words such as "dog" and "song", are usually called nouns. The second, which includes "think" and "sing", are called verbs. Another common category is the adjective: words that describe properties or qualities of nouns, such as "red" or "big". Word classes can be "open" if new words can continuously be added to the class, or relatively "closed" if there is a fixed number of words in a class. In English, the class of pronouns is closed, whereas the class of adjectives is open, since an infinite number of adjectives can be constructed from verbs (e.g. "saddened") or nouns (e.g. with the -like suffix, as in "noun-like"). In other languages such as Korean, the situation is the opposite, and new pronouns can be constructed, whereas the number of adjectives is fixed.

Word classes also carry out differing functions in grammar. Prototypically, verbs are used to construct predicates, while nouns are used as arguments of predicates. In a sentence such as "Sally runs", the predicate is "runs", because it is the word that predicates a specific state about its argument "Sally". Some verbs such as "curse" can take two arguments, e.g. "Sally cursed John". A predicate that can only take a single argument is called *intransitive*, while a predicate that can take two arguments is called *transitive*.

Many other word classes exist in different languages, such as conjunctions like "and" that serve to join two sentences, articles that introduce a noun, interjections such as "wow!", or ideophones like "splash" that mimic the sound of some event. Some languages have positionals that describe the spatial position of an event or entity. Many languages have classifiers that identify countable nouns as belonging to a particular type or having a particular shape.

## **Morphology**

In linguistics, the study of the internal structure of complex words and the processes by which words are formed is called morphology. In most languages, it is possible to construct complex words that are built of several morphemes. For instance, the English word "unexpected" can be analyzed as being composed of the three morphemes "un-", "expect" and "-ed".

Morphemes can be classified according to whether they are independent morphemes, so-called roots, or whether they can only co-occur attached to other morphemes. These bound morphemes or affixes can be classified according to their position in relation to the root: *prefixes* precede the root, *suffixes* follow the root, and *infixes* are inserted in the middle of a root. Affixes serve to modify or elaborate the meaning of the root. Some languages change the meaning of words by changing the phonological structure of a word, for example, the English word "run", which in the past tense is "ran". This process is called *ablaut*. Furthermore, morphology distinguishes between the process of inflection, which modifies or elaborates on a word, and the process of derivation, which creates a new

word from an existing one. In English, the verb "sing" has the inflectional forms "singing" and "sung", which are both verbs, and the derivational form "singer", which is a noun derived from the verb with the agentive suffix "-er".

Languages differ widely in how much they rely on morphological processes of word formation. In some languages, for example, Chinese, there are no morphological processes, and all grammatical information is encoded syntactically by forming strings of single words. This type of morpho-syntax is often called isolating, or analytic, because there is almost a full correspondence between a single word and a single aspect of meaning. Most languages have words consisting of several morphemes, but they vary in the degree to which morphemes are discrete units. In many languages, notably in most Indo-European languages, single morphemes may have several distinct meanings that cannot be analyzed into smaller segments. For example, in Latin, the word *bonus*, or "good", consists of the root *bon-*, meaning "good", and the suffix *-us*, which indicates masculine gender, singular number, and nominative case. These languages are called *fusional languages*, because several meanings may be fused into a single morpheme.

The opposite of fusional languages are agglutinative languages which construct words by stringing morphemes together in chains, but with each morpheme as a discrete semantic unit. An example of such a language is Turkish, where for example, the word *evlerinizden*, or "from your houses", consists of the morphemes, *ev-ler-iniz-den* with the meanings *house-plural-your-from*. The languages that rely on morphology to the greatest extent are traditionally called polysynthetic languages.

They may express the equivalent of an entire English sentence in a single word. For example, in Persian the single word *nafahmidamesh* means *I didn't understand it* consisting of morphemes *na-fahm-id-am-esh* with the meanings, "negation.understand.past.I.it".

As another example with more complexity, in the Yupik word *tuntussuqatarniksatengqiggtuq*, which means "He had not yet said again that he was going to hunt reindeer", the word consists of the morphemes *tuntu-ssur-qatar-ni-ksaite-ngqiggte-uq* with the meanings, "reindeer-hunt-future-say-negation-again-third.person.singular.indicative", and except for the morpheme *tuntu* ("reindeer") none of the other morphemes can appear in isolation.

Many languages use morphology to cross-reference words within a sentence. This is sometimes called *agreement*. For example, in many Indo-European languages, adjectives must cross-reference the noun they modify in terms of number, case, and gender, so that the Latin adjective *bonus*, or "good", is inflected to agree with a noun that is masculine gender, singular number, and nominative case.

In many polysynthetic languages, verbs cross-reference their subjects and objects. In these types of languages, a single verb may include information that would require an entire sentence in English. For example, in the Basque phrase *ikusinauzu*, or "you saw me", the past tense auxiliary verb *n-au-zu* (similar to English "do") agrees with both the subject (you) expressed by the *n-* prefix, and with the object (me) expressed by the *- zu* suffix. The sentence could be directly transliterated as "see you-did-me"

## Syntax

Another way in which languages convey meaning is through the order of words within a sentence. The grammatical rules for how to produce new sentences from words that are already known is called syntax.

The syntactical rules of a language determine why a sentence in English such as "I love you" is meaningful, but "\*love you I" is not. Syntactical rules determine how word order and sentence structure is constrained, and how those constraints contribute to meaning. For example, in English, the two sentences "the slaves were cursing the master" and "the master was cursing the slaves" mean different things, because the role of the grammatical subject is encoded by the noun being in front of the verb, and the role of object is encoded by the noun appearing after the verb. Conversely, in Latin, both *Dominus servos vituperabat* and *Servos vituperabat dominus* mean "the master was reprimanding the slaves", because *servos*, or "slaves", is in the accusative case, showing that they are the grammatical object of the sentence, and *dominus*, or "master", is in the nominative case, showing that he is the subject.

Latin uses morphology to express the distinction between subject and object, whereas English uses word order. Another example of how syntactic rules contribute to meaning is the rule of inverse word order in questions, which exists in many languages. This rule explains why when in English, the phrase "John is talking to Lucy" is turned into a question, it becomes "Who is John talking to?", and not "John is talking to who?". The latter example may be used as a way of placing special emphasis on "who", thereby slightly altering the meaning of the

question. Syntax also includes the rules for how complex sentences are structured by grouping words together in units, called phrases, that can occupy different places in a larger syntactic structure. Sentences can be described as consisting of phrases connected in a tree structure, connecting the phrases to each other at different levels. To the right is a graphic representation of the syntactic analysis of the English sentence "the cat sat on the mat". The sentence is analyzed as being constituted by a noun phrase, a verb, and a prepositional phrase; the prepositional phrase is further divided into a preposition and a noun phrase, and the noun phrases consist of an article and a noun.

The reason sentences can be seen as being composed of phrases is because each phrase would be moved around as a single element if syntactic operations were carried out. For example, "the cat" is one phrase, and "on the mat" is another, because they would be treated as single units if a decision was made to emphasize the location by moving forward the prepositional phrase: "[And] on the mat, the cat sat". There are many different formalist and functionalist frameworks that propose theories for describing syntactic structures, based on different assumptions about what language is and how it should be described. Each of them would analyze a sentence such as this in a different manner.

## **Typology and universals**

Languages can be classified in relation to their grammatical types. Languages that belong to different families nonetheless often have features in common, and these shared features tend to correlate. For example, languages can be classified on the



basis of their basic word order, the relative order of the verb, and its constituents in a normal indicative sentence. In English, the basic order is SVO (subject–verb–object): "The snake(S) bit(V) the man(O)", whereas for example, the corresponding sentence in the Australian language Gamilaraay would be *ḍuyugun̄amaḍaynyi:y* (snake man bit), SOV. Word order type is relevant as a typological parameter, because basic word order type corresponds with other syntactic parameters, such as the relative order of nouns and adjectives, or of the use of prepositions or postpositions. Such correlations are called implicational universals. For example, most (but not all) languages that are of the SOV type have postpositions rather than prepositions, and have adjectives before nouns.

All languages structure sentences into Subject, Verb, and Object, but languages differ in the way they classify the relations between actors and actions. English uses the nominative-accusative word typology: in English transitive clauses, the subjects of both intransitive sentences ("I run") and transitive sentences ("I love you") are treated in the same way, shown here by the nominative pronoun *I*. Some languages, called ergative, Gamilaraay among them, distinguish instead between Agents and Patients. In ergative languages, the single participant in an intransitive sentence, such as "I run", is treated the same as the patient in a transitive sentence, giving the equivalent of "me run". Only in transitive sentences would the equivalent of the pronoun "I" be used. In this way the semantic roles can map onto the grammatical relations in different ways, grouping an intransitive subject either with Agents (accusative type) or Patients (ergative type) or even making each of the three roles differently, which is called the tripartite type.

The shared features of languages which belong to the same typological class type may have arisen completely independently. Their co-occurrence might be due to universal laws governing the structure of natural languages, "language universals", or they might be the result of languages evolving convergent solutions to the recurring communicative problems that humans use language to solve.

## **Social contexts of use and transmission**

While humans have the ability to learn any language, they only do so if they grow up in an environment in which language exists and is used by others. Language is therefore dependent on communities of speakers in which children learn language from their elders and peers and themselves transmit language to their own children. Languages are used by those who speak them to communicate and to solve a plethora of social tasks. Many aspects of language use can be seen to be adapted specifically to these purposes. Owing to the way in which language is transmitted between generations and within communities, language perpetually changes, diversifying into new languages or converging due to language contact. The process is similar to the process of evolution, where the process of descent with modification leads to the formation of a phylogenetic tree.

However, languages differ from biological organisms in that they readily incorporate elements from other languages through the process of diffusion, as speakers of different languages come into contact. Humans also frequently speak

more than one language, acquiring their first language or languages as children, or learning new languages as they grow up. Because of the increased language contact in the globalizing world, many small languages are becoming endangered as their speakers shift to other languages that afford the possibility to participate in larger and more influential speech communities.

## **Usage and meaning**

When studying the way in which words and signs are used, it is often the case that words have different meanings, depending on the social context of use. An important example of this is the process called deixis, which describes the way in which certain words refer to entities through their relation between a specific point in time and space when the word is uttered. Such words are, for example, the word, "I" (which designates the person speaking), "now" (which designates the moment of speaking), and "here" (which designates the position of speaking). Signs also change their meanings over time, as the conventions governing their usage gradually change. The study of how the meaning of linguistic expressions changes depending on context is called pragmatics.

Deixis is an important part of the way that we use language to point out entities in the world. Pragmatics is concerned with the ways in which language use is patterned and how these patterns contribute to meaning. For example, in all languages, linguistic expressions can be used not just to transmit information, but to perform actions. Certain actions are made only through language, but nonetheless have tangible effects, e.g. the act of "naming", which creates a new name for some

entity, or the act of "pronouncing someone man and wife", which creates a social contract of marriage. These types of acts are called speech acts, although they can also be carried out through writing or hand signing.

The form of linguistic expression often does not correspond to the meaning that it actually has in a social context. For example, if at a dinner table a person asks, "Can you reach the salt?", that is, in fact, not a question about the length of the arms of the one being addressed, but a request to pass the salt across the table.

This meaning is implied by the context in which it is spoken; these kinds of effects of meaning are called conversational implicatures. These social rules for which ways of using language are considered appropriate in certain situations and how utterances are to be understood in relation to their context vary between communities, and learning them is a large part of acquiring communicative competence in a language.

## **Acquisition**

- All healthy, normally developing human beings learn to use language. Children acquire the language or languages used around them: whichever languages they receive sufficient exposure to during childhood. The development is essentially the same for children acquiring sign or oral languages. This learning process is referred to as first-language acquisition, since unlike many other kinds of learning, it requires no direct teaching or specialized study. In

*The Descent of Man*, naturalist Charles Darwin called this process "an instinctive tendency to acquire an art".

First language acquisition proceeds in a fairly regular sequence, though there is a wide degree of variation in the timing of particular stages among normally developing infants. Studies published in 2013 have indicated that unborn fetuses are capable of language acquisition to some degree. From birth, newborns respond more readily to human speech than to other sounds. Around one month of age, babies appear to be able to distinguish between different speech sounds. Around six months of age, a child will begin babbling, producing the speech sounds or handshapes of the languages used around them. Words appear around the age of 12 to 18 months; the average vocabulary of an eighteen-month-old child is around 50 words. A child's first utterances are holophrases (literally "whole-sentences"), utterances that use just one word to communicate some idea. Several months after a child begins producing words, he or she will produce two-word utterances, and within a few more months will begin to produce telegraphic speech, or short sentences that are less grammatically complex than adult speech, but that do show regular syntactic structure. From roughly the age of three to five years, a child's ability to speak or sign is refined to the point that it resembles adult language.

Acquisition of second and additional languages can come at any age, through exposure in daily life or courses. Children learning a second language are more likely to achieve native-like fluency than adults, but in general, it is very rare for someone speaking a second language to pass completely for a

native speaker. An important difference between first language acquisition and additional language acquisition is that the process of additional language acquisition is influenced by languages that the learner already knows.

## **Culture**

Languages, understood as the particular set of speech norms of a particular community, are also a part of the larger culture of the community that speaks them. Languages differ not only in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, but also through having different "cultures of speaking." Humans use language as a way of signalling identity with one cultural group as well as difference from others.

Even among speakers of one language, several different ways of using the language exist, and each is used to signal affiliation with particular subgroups within a larger culture. Linguists and anthropologists, particularly sociolinguists, ethnolinguists, and linguistic anthropologists have specialized in studying how ways of speaking vary between speech communities.

Linguists use the term "varieties" to refer to the different ways of speaking a language. This term includes geographically or socioculturally defined dialects as well as the jargons or styles of subcultures. Linguistic anthropologists and sociologists of language define communicative style as the ways that language is used and understood within a particular culture.

Because norms for language use are shared by members of a specific group, communicative style also becomes a way of displaying and constructing group identity. Linguistic

differences may become salient markers of divisions between social groups, for example, speaking a language with a particular accent may imply membership of an ethnic minority or social class, one's area of origin, or status as a second language speaker. These kinds of differences are not part of the linguistic system, but are an important part of how people use language as a social tool for constructing groups.

However, many languages also have grammatical conventions that signal the social position of the speaker in relation to others through the use of registers that are related to social hierarchies or divisions. In many languages, there are stylistic or even grammatical differences between the ways men and women speak, between age groups, or between social classes, just as some languages employ different words depending on who is listening. For example, in the Australian language Dyirbal, a married man must use a special set of words to refer to everyday items when speaking in the presence of his mother-in-law. Some cultures, for example, have elaborate systems of "social deixis", or systems of signalling social distance through linguistic means. In English, social deixis is shown mostly through distinguishing between addressing some people by first name and others by surname, and in titles such as "Mrs.", "boy", "Doctor", or "Your Honor", but in other languages, such systems may be highly complex and codified in the entire grammar and vocabulary of the language. For instance, in languages of east Asia such as Thai, Burmese, and Javanese, different words are used according to whether a speaker is addressing someone of higher or lower rank than oneself in a ranking system with animals and children ranking the lowest and gods and members of royalty as the highest.

## **Writing, literacy and technology**

Throughout history a number of different ways of representing language in graphic media have been invented. These are called writing systems.

The use of writing has made language even more useful to humans. It makes it possible to store large amounts of information outside of the human body and retrieve it again, and it allows communication across physical distances and timespans that would otherwise be impossible. Many languages conventionally employ different genres, styles, and registers in written and spoken language, and in some communities, writing traditionally takes place in an entirely different language than the one spoken.

There is some evidence that the use of writing also has effects on the cognitive development of humans, perhaps because acquiring literacy generally requires explicit and formal education.

The invention of the first writing systems is roughly contemporary with the beginning of the Bronze Age in the late 4th millennium BC. The Sumerian archaic cuneiform script and the Egyptian hieroglyphs are generally considered to be the earliest writing systems, both emerging out of their ancestral proto-literate symbol systems from 3400 to 3200 BC with the earliest coherent texts from about 2600 BC. It is generally agreed that Sumerian writing was an independent invention; however, it is debated whether Egyptian writing was developed completely independently of Sumerian, or was a case of cultural diffusion. A similar debate exists for the Chinese



script, which developed around 1200 BC. The pre-Columbian Mesoamerican writing systems (including among others Olmec and Maya scripts) are generally believed to have had independent origins.

## **Change**

All languages change as speakers adopt or invent new ways of speaking and pass them on to other members of their speech community. Language change happens at all levels from the phonological level to the levels of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and discourse. Even though language change is often initially evaluated negatively by speakers of the language who often consider changes to be "decay" or a sign of slipping norms of language usage, it is natural and inevitable.

Changes may affect specific sounds or the entire phonological system. Sound change can consist of the replacement of one speech sound or phonetic feature by another, the complete loss of the affected sound, or even the introduction of a new sound in a place where there had been none. Sound changes can be *conditioned* in which case a sound is changed only if it occurs in the vicinity of certain other sounds. Sound change is usually assumed to be *regular*, which means that it is expected to apply mechanically whenever its structural conditions are met, irrespective of any non-phonological factors. On the other hand, sound changes can sometimes be *sporadic*, affecting only one particular word or a few words, without any seeming regularity. Sometimes a simple change triggers a chain shift in which the entire phonological system is affected. This happened in the Germanic languages when the sound change known as Grimm's law affected all the stop consonants in the

system. The original consonant \*b became /b/ in the Germanic languages, the previous \*b in turn became /p/, and the previous \*p became /f/. The same process applied to all stop consonants and explains why Italic languages such as Latin have *p* in words like *pater* and *pisces*, whereas Germanic languages, like English, have *f*ather and *f*ish.

Another example is the Great Vowel Shift in English, which is the reason that the spelling of English vowels do not correspond well to their current pronunciation. This is because the vowel shift brought the already established orthography out of synchronization with pronunciation. Another source of sound change is the erosion of words as pronunciation gradually becomes increasingly indistinct and shortens words, leaving out syllables or sounds. This kind of change caused Latin *mea dominato* eventually become the French *madame* and American English *ma'am*.

Change also happens in the grammar of languages as discourse patterns such as idioms or particular constructions become grammaticalized. This frequently happens when words or morphemes erode and the grammatical system is unconsciously rearranged to compensate for the lost element. For example, in some varieties of Caribbean Spanish the final /s/ has eroded away. Since Standard Spanish uses final /s/ in the morpheme marking the second person subject "you" in verbs, the Caribbean varieties now have to express the second person using the pronoun *tú*. This means that the sentence "what's your name" is *¿comote llamas?* [komote jamas] in Standard Spanish, but [komo tute jama] in Caribbean Spanish. The simple sound change has affected both morphology and syntax. Another common cause of grammatical

change is the gradual petrification of idioms into new grammatical forms, for example, the way the English "going to" construction lost its aspect of movement and in some varieties of English has almost become a full-fledged future tense (e.g. *I'm gonna*).

Language change may be motivated by "language internal" factors, such as changes in pronunciation motivated by certain sounds being difficult to distinguish aurally or to produce, or through patterns of change that cause some rare types of constructions to drift towards more common types.

Other causes of language change are social, such as when certain pronunciations become emblematic of membership in certain groups, such as social classes, or with ideologies, and therefore are adopted by those who wish to identify with those groups or ideas. In this way, issues of identity and politics can have profound effects on language structure.

## **Contact**

One important source of language change is contact and resulting diffusion of linguistic traits between languages. Language contact occurs when speakers of two or more languages or varieties interact on a regular basis. Multilingualism is likely to have been the norm throughout human history and most people in the modern world are multilingual. Before the rise of the concept of the ethno-national state, monolingualism was characteristic mainly of populations inhabiting small islands. But with the ideology that made one people, one state, and one language the most desirable political arrangement, monolingualism started to

spread throughout the world. Nonetheless, there are only 250 countries in the world corresponding to some 6000 languages, which means that most countries are multilingual and most languages therefore exist in close contact with other languages.

When speakers of different languages interact closely, it is typical for their languages to influence each other. Through sustained language contact over long periods, linguistic traits diffuse between languages, and languages belonging to different families may converge to become more similar. In areas where many languages are in close contact, this may lead to the formation of language areas in which unrelated languages share a number of linguistic features. A number of such language areas have been documented, among them, the Balkan language area, the Mesoamerican language area, and the Ethiopian language area. Also, larger areas such as South Asia, Europe, and Southeast Asia have sometimes been considered language areas, because of widespread diffusion of specific areal features.

Language contact may also lead to a variety of other linguistic phenomena, including language convergence, borrowing, and relexification (replacement of much of the native vocabulary with that of another language). In situations of extreme and sustained language contact, it may lead to the formation of new mixed languages that cannot be considered to belong to a single language family. One type of mixed language called pidgins occurs when adult speakers of two different languages interact on a regular basis, but in a situation where neither group learns to speak the language of the other group fluently. In such a case, they will often construct a communication form

that has traits of both languages, but which has a simplified grammatical and phonological structure. The language comes to contain mostly the grammatical and phonological categories that exist in both languages. Pidgin languages are defined by not having any native speakers, but only being spoken by people who have another language as their first language. But if a Pidgin language becomes the main language of a speech community, then eventually children will grow up learning the pidgin as their first language. As the generation of child learners grow up, the pidgin will often be seen to change its structure and acquire a greater degree of complexity. This type of language is generally called a creole language. An example of such mixed languages is TokPisin, the official language of Papua New-Guinea, which originally arose as a Pidgin based on English and Austronesian languages; others are Kreyòl ayisyen, the French-based creole language spoken in Haiti, and Michif, a mixed language of Canada, based on the Native American language Cree and French.

## **Linguistic diversity**

*SIL Ethnologue* defines a "living language" as "one that has at least one speaker for whom it is their first language". The exact number of known living languages varies from 6,000 to 7,000, depending on the precision of one's definition of "language", and in particular, on how one defines the distinction between languages and dialects. As of 2016, *Ethnologue* cataloged 7,097 living human languages. The *Ethnologue* establishes linguistic groups based on studies of mutual intelligibility, and therefore often includes more categories than more conservative classifications. For example, the Danish language that most

scholars consider a single language with several dialects is classified as two distinct languages (Danish and Jutish) by the *Ethnologue*. According to the *Ethnologue*, 389 languages (nearly 6%) have more than a million speakers. These languages together account for 94% of the world's population, whereas 94% of the world's languages account for the remaining 6% of the global population.

## **Languages and dialects**

There is no clear distinction between a language and a dialect, notwithstanding a famous aphorism attributed to linguist Max Weinreich that "a language is a dialect with an army and navy". For example, national boundaries frequently override linguistic difference in determining whether two linguistic varieties are languages or dialects. Hakka, Cantonese and Mandarin are, for example, often classified as "dialects" of Chinese, even though they are more different from each other than Swedish is from Norwegian. Before the Yugoslav civil war, Serbo-Croatian was generally considered a single language with two normative variants, but due to sociopolitical reasons, Croatian and Serbian are now often treated as separate languages and employ different writing systems. In other words, the distinction may hinge on political considerations as much as on cultural differences, distinctive writing systems, or degree of mutual intelligibility.

## **Language families of the world**

The world's languages can be grouped into language families consisting of languages that can be shown to have common ancestry. Linguists recognize many hundreds of language

families, although some of them can possibly be grouped into larger units as more evidence becomes available and in-depth studies are carried out. At present, there are also dozens of language isolates: languages that cannot be shown to be related to any other languages in the world. Among them are Basque, spoken in Europe, Zuni of New Mexico, Purépecha of Mexico, Ainu of Japan, Burushaski of Pakistan, and many others.

The language family of the world that has the most speakers is the Indo-European languages, spoken by 46% of the world's population. This family includes major world languages like English, Spanish, French, German, Russian, and Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu). The Indo-European family achieved prevalence first during the Eurasian Migration Period (c. 400–800 AD), and subsequently through the European colonial expansion, which brought the Indo-European languages to a politically and often numerically dominant position in the Americas and much of Africa. The Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken by 20% of the world's population and include many of the languages of East Asia, including Hakka, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, and hundreds of smaller languages.

Africa is home to a large number of language families, the largest of which is the Niger-Congo language family, which includes such languages as Swahili, Shona, and Yoruba. Speakers of the Niger-Congo languages account for 6.9% of the world's population. A similar number of people speak the Afroasiatic languages, which include the populous Semitic languages such as Arabic, Hebrew language, and the languages of the Sahara region, such as the Berber languages and Hausa.

The Austronesian languages are spoken by 5.5% of the world's population and stretch from Madagascar to maritime Southeast Asia all the way to Oceania. It includes such languages as Malagasy, Māori, Samoan, and many of the indigenous languages of Indonesia and Taiwan.

The Austronesian languages are considered to have originated in Taiwan around 3000 BC and spread through the Oceanic region through island-hopping, based on an advanced nautical technology.

Other populous language families are the Dravidian languages of South Asia (among them Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu), the Turkic languages of Central Asia (such as Turkish), the Austroasiatic (among them Khmer), and Tai-Kadai languages of Southeast Asia (including Thai).

The areas of the world in which there is the greatest linguistic diversity, such as the Americas, Papua New Guinea, West Africa, and South-Asia, contain hundreds of small language families.

These areas together account for the majority of the world's languages, though not the majority of speakers. In the Americas, some of the largest language families include the Quechumaran, Arawak, and Tupi-Guarani families of South America, the Uto-Aztecan, Oto-Manguean, and Mayan of Mesoamerica, and the Na-Dene, Iroquoian, and Algonquian language families of North America. In Australia, most indigenous languages belong to the Pama-Nyungan family, whereas New Guinea is home to a large number of small families and isolates, as well as a number of Austronesian languages.



## **Language endangerment**

Language endangerment occurs when a language is at risk of falling out of use as its speakers die out or shift to speaking another language. Language loss occurs when the language has no more native speakers, and becomes a *dead language*. If eventually no one speaks the language at all, it becomes an *extinct language*. While languages have always gone extinct throughout human history, they have been disappearing at an accelerated rate in the 20th and 21st centuries due to the processes of globalization and neo-colonialism, where the economically powerful languages dominate other languages.

The more commonly spoken languages dominate the less commonly spoken languages, so the less commonly spoken languages eventually disappear from populations. Of the between 6,000 and 7,000 languages spoken as of 2010, between 50 and 90% of those are expected to have become extinct by the year 2100. The top 20 languages, those spoken by more than 50 million speakers each, are spoken by 50% of the world's population, whereas many of the other languages are spoken by small communities, most of them with less than 10,000 speakers.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) operates with five levels of language endangerment: "safe", "vulnerable" (not spoken by children outside the home), "definitely endangered" (not spoken by children), "severely endangered" (only spoken by the oldest generations), and "critically endangered" (spoken by few members of the oldest generation, often semi-speakers). Notwithstanding claims that the world would be better off if

most adopted a single common *lingua franca*, such as English or Esperanto, there is a consensus that the loss of languages harms the cultural diversity of the world. It is a common belief, going back to the biblical narrative of the tower of Babel in the Old Testament, that linguistic diversity causes political conflict, but this is contradicted by the fact that many of the world's major episodes of violence have taken place in situations with low linguistic diversity, such as the Yugoslav and American Civil War, or the genocide of Rwanda, whereas many of the most stable political units have been highly multilingual.

Many projects aim to prevent or slow this loss by revitalizing endangered languages and promoting education and literacy in minority languages. Across the world, many countries have enacted specific legislation to protect and stabilize the language of indigenous speech communities. A minority of linguists have argued that language loss is a natural process that should not be counteracted, and that documenting endangered languages for posterity is sufficient.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Culture**

**Culture** is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.

Humans acquire culture through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies.

A cultural norm codifies acceptable conduct in society; it serves as a guideline for behavior, dress, language, and demeanor in a situation, which serves as a template for expectations in a social group. Accepting only a monoculture in a social group can bear risks, just as a single species can wither in the face of environmental change, for lack of functional responses to the change. Thus in military culture, valor is counted a typical behavior for an individual and duty, honor, and loyalty to the social group are counted as virtues or functional responses in the continuum of conflict. In the practice of religion, analogous attributes can be identified in a social group.

## **Description**

Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Cultural universals are found in all human societies. These include expressive

forms like art, music, dance, ritual, religion, and technologies like tool usage, cooking, shelter, and clothing. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture and art, whereas the immaterial aspects of culture such as principles of social organization (including practices of political organization and social institutions), mythology, philosophy, literature (both written and oral), and science comprise the intangible cultural heritage of a society.

In the humanities, one sense of culture as an attribute of the individual has been the degree to which they have cultivated a particular level of sophistication in the arts, sciences, education, or manners. The level of cultural sophistication has also sometimes been used to distinguish civilizations from less complex societies. Such hierarchical perspectives on culture are also found in class-based distinctions between a high culture of the social elite and a low culture, popular culture, or folk culture of the lower classes, distinguished by the stratified access to cultural capital. In common parlance, culture is often used to refer specifically to the symbolic markers used by ethnic groups to distinguish themselves visibly from each other such as body modification, clothing or jewelry. Mass culture refers to the mass-produced and mass mediated forms of consumer culture that emerged in the 20th century. Some schools of philosophy, such as Marxism and critical theory, have argued that culture is often used politically as a tool of the elites to manipulate the proletariat and create a false consciousness. Such perspectives are common in the discipline of cultural studies. In the wider social sciences, the theoretical perspective of cultural materialism holds that human symbolic culture arises from the

material conditions of human life, as humans create the conditions for physical survival, and that the basis of culture is found in evolved biological dispositions.

When used as a count noun, a "culture" is the set of customs, traditions, and values of a society or community, such as an ethnic group or nation. Culture is the set of knowledge acquired over time. In this sense, multiculturalism values the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different cultures inhabiting the same planet. Sometimes "culture" is also used to describe specific practices within a subgroup of a society, a subculture (e.g. "bro culture"), or a counterculture. Within cultural anthropology, the ideology and analytical stance of cultural relativism hold that cultures cannot easily be objectively ranked or evaluated because any evaluation is necessarily situated within the value system of a given culture.

## **Etymology**

The modern term "culture" is based on a term used by the ancient Roman orator Cicero in his *Tusculanae Disputationes*, where he wrote of a cultivation of the soul or "*cultura animi*," using an agricultural metaphor for the development of a philosophical soul, understood teleologically as the highest possible ideal for human development. Samuel Pufendorf took over this metaphor in a modern context, meaning something similar, but no longer assuming that philosophy was man's natural perfection. His use, and that of many writers after him, "*refers to all the ways in which human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice, become fully human.*"

In 1986, philosopher Edward S. Casey wrote, "The very word *culture* meant 'place tilled' in Middle English, and the same word goes back to Latin *colere*, 'to inhabit, care for, till, worship' and *cultus*, 'A cult, especially a religious one.' To be cultural, to have a culture, is to inhabit a place sufficiently intensely to cultivate it—to be responsible for it, to respond to it, to attend to it caringly."

Culture described by Richard Velkley:

... originally meant the cultivation of the soul or mind, acquires most of its later modern meaning in the writings of the 18th-century German thinkers, who were on various levels developing Rousseau's criticism of "modern liberalism and Enlightenment." Thus a contrast between "culture" and "civilization" is usually implied in these authors, even when not expressed as such.

In the words of anthropologist E.B. Tylor, it is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Alternatively, in a contemporary variant, "Culture is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses and material expressions, which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common.

The *Cambridge English Dictionary* states that culture is "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time." Terror management theory posits that culture is a series of activities and worldviews that provide humans with the basis for perceiving themselves as "person[s] of worth within the world

of meaning"—raising themselves above the merely physical aspects of existence, in order to deny the animal insignificance and death that *Homo sapiens* became aware of when they acquired a larger brain.

The word is used in a general sense as the evolved ability to categorize and represent experiences with symbols and to act imaginatively and creatively. This ability arose with the evolution of behavioral modernity in humans around 50,000 years ago and is often thought to be unique to humans. However, some other species have demonstrated similar, though much less complicated, abilities for social learning. It is also used to denote the complex networks of practices and accumulated knowledge and ideas that are transmitted through social interaction and exist in specific human groups, or cultures, using the plural form.

## **Change**

It has been estimated from archaeological data that the human capacity for cumulative culture emerged somewhere between 500,000–170,000 years ago.

Raimon Panikkar identified 29 ways in which cultural change can be brought about, including growth, development, evolution, involution, renovation, reconception, reform, innovation, revivalism, revolution, mutation, progress, diffusion, osmosis, borrowing, eclecticism, syncretism, modernization, indigenization, and transformation. In this context, modernization could be viewed as adoption of Enlightenment era beliefs and practices, such as science, rationalism, industry, commerce, democracy, and the notion of

progress. Rein Raud, building on the work of Umberto Eco, Pierre Bourdieu and Jeffrey C. Alexander, has proposed a model of cultural change based on claims and bids, which are judged by their cognitive adequacy and endorsed or not endorsed by the symbolic authority of the cultural community in question.

Cultural invention has come to mean any innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior but which does not exist as a physical object. Humanity is in a global "accelerating culture change period," driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, and above all, the human population explosion, among other factors. Culture repositioning means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society.

Cultures are internally affected by both forces encouraging change and forces resisting change. These forces are related to both social structures and natural events, and are involved in the perpetuation of cultural ideas and practices within current structures, which themselves are subject to change.

Social conflict and the development of technologies can produce changes within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models, and spurring or enabling generative action. These social shifts may accompany ideological shifts and other types of cultural change. For example, the U.S. feminist movement involved new practices that produced a shift in gender relations, altering both gender and economic structures. Environmental conditions may also enter as factors. For example, after tropical forests returned at the end of the last ice age, plants suitable for domestication



were available, leading to the invention of agriculture, which in turn brought about many cultural innovations and shifts in social dynamics.

Cultures are externally affected via contact between societies, which may also produce—or inhibit—social shifts and changes in cultural practices. War or competition over resources may impact technological development or social dynamics. Additionally, cultural ideas may transfer from one society to another, through diffusion or acculturation. In diffusion, the form of something (though not necessarily its meaning) moves from one culture to another. For example, Western restaurant chains and culinary brands sparked curiosity and fascination to the Chinese as China opened its economy to international trade in the late 20th-century. "Stimulus diffusion" (the sharing of ideas) refers to an element of one culture leading to an invention or propagation in another. "Direct borrowing," on the other hand, tends to refer to technological or tangible diffusion from one culture to another. Diffusion of innovations theory presents a research-based model of why and when individuals and cultures adopt new ideas, practices, and products.

Acculturation has different meanings. Still, in this context, it refers to the replacement of traits of one culture with another, such as what happened to certain Native American tribes and many indigenous peoples across the globe during the process of colonization. Related processes on an individual level include assimilation (adoption of a different culture by an individual) and transculturation. The transnational flow of culture has played a major role in merging different cultures and sharing thoughts, ideas, and beliefs.

# Early modern discourses

## German Romanticism

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) formulated an individualist definition of "enlightenment" similar to the concept of *bildung*: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity." He argued that this immaturity comes not from a lack of understanding, but from a lack of courage to think independently. Against this intellectual cowardice, Kant urged: *Sapere Aude*, "Dare to be wise!" In reaction to Kant, German scholars such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) argued that human creativity, which necessarily takes unpredictable and highly diverse forms, is as important as human rationality. Moreover, Herder proposed a collective form of *Bildung*: "For Herder, *Bildung* was the totality of experiences that provide a coherent identity, and sense of common destiny, to a people."

In 1795, the Prussian linguist and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) called for an anthropology that would synthesize Kant's and Herder's interests. During the Romantic era, scholars in Germany, especially those concerned with nationalist movements—such as the nationalist struggle to create a "Germany" out of diverse principalities, and the nationalist struggles by ethnic minorities against the Austro-Hungarian Empire—developed a more inclusive notion of culture as "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*). According to this school of thought, each ethnic group has a distinct worldview that is incommensurable with the worldviews of other groups. Although more inclusive than earlier views, this approach to

culture still allowed for distinctions between "civilized" and "primitive" or "tribal" cultures.

In 1860, Adolf Bastian (1826–1905) argued for "the psychic unity of mankind." He proposed that a scientific comparison of all human societies would reveal that distinct worldviews consisted of the same basic elements. According to Bastian, all human societies share a set of "elementary ideas" (*Elementargedanken*); different cultures, or different "folk ideas" (*Völkergedanken*), are local modifications of the elementary ideas. This view paved the way for the modern understanding of culture. Franz Boas (1858–1942) was trained in this tradition, and he brought it with him when he left Germany for the United States.

## **English Romanticism**

In the 19th century, humanists such as English poet and essayist Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) used the word "culture" to refer to an ideal of individual human refinement, of "the best that has been thought and said in the world." This concept of culture is also comparable to the German concept of *bildung*: "...culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world."

In practice, *culture* referred to an elite ideal and was associated with such activities as art, classical music, and haute cuisine. As these forms were associated with urban life, "culture" was identified with "civilization" (from lat. *civitas*, city). Another facet of the Romantic movement was an interest

in folklore, which led to identifying a "culture" among non-elites. This distinction is often characterized as that between high culture, namely that of the ruling social group, and low culture. In other words, the idea of "culture" that developed in Europe during the 18th and early 19th centuries reflected inequalities within European societies.

Matthew Arnold contrasted "culture" with anarchy; other Europeans, following philosophers Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, contrasted "culture" with "the state of nature." According to Hobbes and Rousseau, the Native Americans who were being conquered by Europeans from the 16th centuries on were living in a state of nature; this opposition was expressed through the contrast between "civilized" and "uncivilized." According to this way of thinking, one could classify some countries and nations as more civilized than others and some people as more cultured than others. This contrast led to Herbert Spencer's theory of Social Darwinism and Lewis Henry Morgan's theory of cultural evolution. Just as some critics have argued that the distinction between high and low cultures is an expression of the conflict between European elites and non-elites, other critics have argued that the distinction between civilized and uncivilized people is an expression of the conflict between European colonial powers and their colonial subjects.

Other 19th-century critics, following Rousseau, have accepted this differentiation between higher and lower culture, but have seen the refinement and sophistication of high culture as corrupting and unnatural developments that obscure and distort people's essential nature. These critics considered folk music (as produced by "the folk," i.e., rural, illiterate,

peasants) to honestly express a natural way of life, while classical music seemed superficial and decadent. Equally, this view often portrayed indigenous peoples as "noble savages" living authentic and unblemished lives, uncomplicated and uncorrupted by the highly stratified capitalist systems of the West.

In 1870 the anthropologist Edward Tylor (1832–1917) applied these ideas of higher versus lower culture to propose a theory of the evolution of religion. According to this theory, religion evolves from more polytheistic to more monotheistic forms. In the process, he redefined culture as a diverse set of activities characteristic of all human societies. This view paved the way for the modern understanding of religion.

## **Anthropology**

Although anthropologists worldwide refer to Tylor's definition of culture, in the 20th century "culture" emerged as the central and unifying concept of American anthropology, where it most commonly refers to the universal human capacity to classify and encode human experiences symbolically, and to communicate symbolically encoded experiences socially. American anthropology is organized into four fields, each of which plays an important role in research on culture: biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, cultural anthropology, and in the United States and Canada, archaeology. The term *Kulturbrille*, or "culture glasses," coined by German American anthropologist Franz Boas, refers to the "lenses" through which we see our own countries. Martin Lindstrom asserts that *Kulturbrille*, which allow us to make

sense of the culture we inhabit, also "can blind us to things outsiders pick up immediately."

## **Sociology**

The sociology of culture concerns culture as manifested in society. For sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918), culture referred to "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history." As such, culture in the sociological field can be defined as the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together shape a people's way of life. Culture can be any of two types, non-material culture or material culture. Non-material culture refers to the non-physical ideas that individuals have about their culture, including values, belief systems, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions, while material culture is the physical evidence of a culture in the objects and architecture they make or have made. The term tends to be relevant only in archeological and anthropological studies, but it specifically means all material evidence which can be attributed to culture, past or present.

Cultural sociology first emerged in Weimar Germany (1918–1933), where sociologists such as Alfred Weber used the term *Kultursoziologie* (cultural sociology). Cultural sociology was then "reinvented" in the English-speaking world as a product of the "cultural turn" of the 1960s, which ushered in structuralist and postmodern approaches to social science. This type of cultural sociology may be loosely regarded as an approach incorporating cultural analysis and critical theory. Cultural sociologists tend to reject scientific methods, instead

hermeneutically focusing on words, artifacts and symbols. "Culture" has since become an important concept across many branches of sociology, including resolutely scientific fields like social stratification and social network analysis. As a result, there has been a recent influx of quantitative sociologists to the field. Thus, there is now a growing group of sociologists of culture who are, confusingly, not cultural sociologists. These scholars reject the abstracted postmodern aspects of cultural sociology, and instead, look for a theoretical backing in the more scientific vein of social psychology and cognitive science.

### **Early researchers and development of cultural sociology**

The sociology of culture grew from the intersection between sociology (as shaped by early theorists like Marx, Durkheim, and Weber) with the growing discipline of anthropology, wherein researchers pioneered ethnographic strategies for describing and analyzing a variety of cultures around the world. Part of the legacy of the early development of the field lingers in the methods (much of cultural, sociological research is qualitative), in the theories (a variety of critical approaches to sociology are central to current research communities), and in the substantive focus of the field. For instance, relationships between popular culture, political control, and social class were early and lasting concerns in the field.

## **Cultural studies**

In the United Kingdom, sociologists and other scholars influenced by Marxism such as Stuart Hall (1932–2014) and Raymond Williams (1921–1988) developed cultural studies.

Following nineteenth-century Romantics, they identified "culture" with consumption goods and leisure activities (such as art, music, film, food, sports, and clothing). They saw patterns of consumption and leisure as determined by relations of production, which led them to focus on class relations and the organization of production.

In the United Kingdom, cultural studies focuses largely on the study of popular culture; that is, on the social meanings of mass-produced consumer and leisure goods. Richard Hoggart coined the term in 1964 when he founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies or CCCS. It has since become strongly associated with Stuart Hall, who succeeded Hoggart as Director. Cultural studies in this sense, then, can be viewed as a limited concentration scoped on the intricacies of consumerism, which belongs to a wider culture sometimes referred to as "Western civilization" or "globalism."

From the 1970s onward, Stuart Hall's pioneering work, along with that of his colleagues Paul Willis, Dick Hebdige, Tony Jefferson, and Angela McRobbie, created an international intellectual movement.

As the field developed, it began to combine political economy, communication, sociology, social theory, literary theory, media theory, film/video studies, cultural anthropology, philosophy, museum studies, and art history to study cultural phenomena or cultural texts. In this field researchers often concentrate on how particular phenomena relate to matters of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class, and/or gender. Cultural studies is concerned with the meaning and practices of everyday life. These practices comprise the ways people do



particular things (such as watching television or eating out) in a given culture. It also studies the meanings and uses people attribute to various objects and practices. Specifically, culture involves those meanings and practices held independently of reason. Watching television to view a public perspective on a historical event should not be thought of as culture unless referring to the medium of television itself, which may have been selected culturally; however, schoolchildren watching television after school with their friends to "fit in" certainly qualifies since there is no grounded reason for one's participation in this practice.

In the context of cultural studies, the idea of a *text* includes not only written language, but also films, photographs, fashion or hairstyles: the texts of cultural studies comprise all the meaningful artifacts of culture. Similarly, the discipline widens the concept of "culture." "Culture" for a cultural-studies researcher not only includes traditional high culture (the culture of ruling social groups) and popular culture, but also everyday meanings and practices. The last two, in fact, have become the main focus of cultural studies. A further and recent approach is comparative cultural studies, based on the disciplines of comparative literature and cultural studies.

Scholars in the United Kingdom and the United States developed somewhat different versions of cultural studies after the late 1970s. The British version of cultural studies had originated in the 1950s and 1960s, mainly under the influence of Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams, and later that of Stuart Hall and others at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. This included overtly political, left-wing views,

and criticisms of popular culture as "capitalist" mass culture; it absorbed some of the ideas of the Frankfurt School critique of the "culture industry" (i.e. mass culture). This emerges in the writings of early British cultural-studies scholars and their influences: see the work of (for example) Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Paul Willis, and Paul Gilroy.

In the United States, Lindlof and Taylor write, "Cultural studies [were] grounded in a pragmatic, liberal-pluralist tradition." The American version of cultural studies initially concerned itself more with understanding the subjective and appropriative side of audience reactions to, and uses of, mass culture; for example, American cultural-studies advocates wrote about the liberatory aspects of fandom. The distinction between American and British strands, however, has faded. Some researchers, especially in early British cultural studies, apply a Marxist model to the field.

This strain of thinking has some influence from the Frankfurt School, but especially from the structuralist Marxism of Louis Althusser and others. The main focus of an orthodox Marxist approach concentrates on the *production* of meaning. This model assumes a mass production of culture and identifies power as residing with those producing cultural artifacts. In a Marxist view, the mode and relations of production form the economic base of society, which constantly interacts and influences superstructures, such as culture. Other approaches to cultural studies, such as feminist cultural studies and later American developments of the field, distance themselves from this view. They criticize the Marxist assumption of a single, dominant meaning, shared by all, for any cultural product. The non-Marxist approaches suggest that different ways of

consuming cultural artifacts affect the meaning of the product. This view comes through in the book *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (by Paul du Gay *et al.*), which seeks to challenge the notion that those who produce commodities control the meanings that people attribute to them. Feminist cultural analyst, theorist, and art historian Griselda Pollock contributed to cultural studies from viewpoints of art history and psychoanalysis. The writer Julia Kristeva is among influential voices at the turn of the century, contributing to cultural studies from the field of art and psychoanalytical French feminism.

Petrakis and Kostis (2013) divide cultural background variables into two main groups:

- The first group covers the variables that represent the "efficiency orientation" of the societies: performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.
- The second covers the variables that represent the "social orientation" of societies, i.e., the attitudes and lifestyles of their members. These variables include gender egalitarianism, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, and human orientation.

In 2016, a new approach to culture was suggested by Rein Raud, who defines culture as the sum of resources available to human beings for making sense of their world and proposes a two-tiered approach, combining the study of texts (all reified meanings in circulation) and cultural practices (all repeatable

actions that involve the production, dissemination or transmission of purposes), thus making it possible to re-link anthropological and sociological study of culture with the tradition of textual theory.

## **Psychology**

Starting in the 1990s, psychological research on culture influence began to grow and challenge the universality assumed in general psychology. Culture psychologists began to try to explore the relationship between emotions and culture, and answer whether the human mind is independent from culture. For example, people from collectivistic cultures, such as the Japanese, suppress their positive emotions more than their American counterparts. Culture may affect the way that people experience and express emotions. On the other hand, some researchers try to look for differences between people's personalities across cultures.

As different cultures dictate distinctive norms, culture shock is also studied to understand how people react when they are confronted with other cultures. Cognitive tools may not be accessible or they may function differently cross culture. For example, people who are raised in a culture with an abacus are trained with distinctive reasoning style.

Cultural lenses may also make people view the same outcome of events differently. Westerners are more motivated by their successes than their failures, while East Asians are better motivated by the avoidance of failure. Culture is important for psychologists to consider when understanding the human mental operation.

## **Protection of culture**

There are a number of international agreements and national laws relating to the protection of culture and cultural heritage. UNESCO and its partner organizations such as Blue Shield International coordinate international protection and local implementation.

Basically, the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Diversity deal with the protection of culture. Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights deals with cultural heritage in two ways: it gives people the right to participate in cultural life on the one hand and the right to the protection of their contributions to cultural life on the other.

The protection of culture and cultural goods is increasingly taking up a large area nationally and internationally. Under international law, the UN and UNESCO try to set up and enforce rules for this. The aim is not to protect a person's property, but rather to preserve the cultural heritage of humanity, especially in the event of war and armed conflict.

According to Karl von Habsburg, President of Blue Shield International, the destruction of cultural assets is also part of psychological warfare. The target of the attack is the identity of the opponent, which is why symbolic cultural assets become a main target. It is also intended to affect the particularly sensitive cultural memory, the growing cultural diversity and the economic basis (such as tourism) of a state, region or municipality.

Another important issue today is the impact of tourism on the various forms of culture. On the one hand, this can be physical impact on individual objects or the destruction caused by increasing environmental pollution and, on the other hand, socio-cultural effects on society.

## Chapter 3

# Society

A **society** is a group of individuals involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same spatial or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions; a given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent of members. In the social sciences, a larger society often exhibits stratification or dominance patterns in subgroups.

Societies construct patterns of behavior by deeming certain actions or speech as acceptable or unacceptable. These patterns of behavior within a given society are known as societal norms. Societies, and their norms, undergo gradual and perpetual changes. Insofar as it is collaborative, a society can enable its members to benefit in ways that would otherwise be difficult on an individual basis; both individual and social (common) benefits can thus be distinguished, or in many cases found to overlap. A society can also consist of like-minded people governed by their own norms and values within a dominant, larger society. This is sometimes referred to as a subculture, a term used extensively within criminology, and also applied to distinctive subsections of a larger society.

More broadly, and especially within structuralist thought, a society may be illustrated as an economic, social, industrial or cultural infrastructure, made up of, yet distinct from, a varied

collection of individuals. In this regard society can mean the objective relationships people have with the material world and with other people, rather than "other people" beyond the individual and their familiar social environment.

## **Etymology and usage**

The term "society" came from the 12th Century French *société* (meaning 'company'). This was in turn from the Latin word *societas*, which in turn was derived from the noun *socius* ("comrade, friend, ally"; adjectival form *socialis*) used to describe a bond or interaction between parties that are friendly, or at least civil.

Without an article, the term can refer to the entirety of humanity (also: "society in general", "society at large", etc.), although those who are unfriendly or uncivil to the remainder of society in this sense may be deemed to be "antisocial". In the 1630s it was used in reference to "people bound by neighborhood and intercourse aware of living together in an ordered community". However, in the 18th century the Scottish economist, Adam Smith taught that a society "may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility without any mutual love or affection, if only they refrain from doing injury to each other."

Used in the sense of an association, a society is a body of individuals outlined by the bounds of functional interdependence, possibly comprising characteristics such as national or cultural identity, social solidarity, language, or hierarchical structure.



## **Conceptions**

Society, in general, addresses the fact that an individual has rather limited means as an autonomous unit. The great apes have always been more (*Bonobo, Homo, Pan*) or less (*Gorilla, Pongo*) social animals, so Robinson Crusoe-like situations are either fictions or unusual corner cases to the ubiquity of social context for humans, who fall between presocial and eusocial in the spectrum of animal ethology.

Cultural relativism as a widespread approach or ethic has largely replaced notions of "primitive", better/worse, or "progress" in relation to cultures (including their material culture/technology and social organization).

According to anthropologist Maurice Godelier, one critical novelty in society, in contrast to humanity's closest biological relatives (chimpanzees and bonobos), is the parental role assumed by the males, which supposedly would be absent in our nearest relatives for whom paternity is not generally determinable.

### **In political science**

Societies may also be structured politically. In order of increasing size and complexity, there are bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and state societies. These structures may have varying degrees of political power, depending on the cultural, geographical, and historical environments that these societies must contend with. Thus, a more isolated society with the same level of technology and culture as other societies is more likely to survive than one in close proximity to others that may

encroach on their resources. A society that is unable to offer an effective response to other societies it competes with will usually be subsumed into the culture of the competing society.

## **In sociology**

Sociologist Peter L. Berger defines society as "...a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts upon its producers." According to him, society was created by humans, but this creation turns back and creates or molds humans every day.

Sociologist Gerhard Lenski differentiates societies based on their level of technology, communication, and economy: (1) hunters and gatherers, (2) simple agricultural, (3) advanced agricultural, (4) industrial, and (5) special (e.g. fishing societies or maritime societies).

This is similar to the system earlier developed by anthropologists Morton H. Fried, a conflict theorist, and Elman Service, an integration theorist, who have produced a system of classification for societies in all human cultures based on the evolution of social inequality and the role of the state. This system of classification contains four categories:

- Hunter-gatherer bands (categorization of duties and responsibilities). Then came the agricultural society.
- Tribal societies in which there are some limited instances of social rank and prestige.
- Stratified structures led by chieftains.
- Civilizations, with complex social hierarchies and organized, institutional governments.

In addition to this there are:

- Humanity, humankind, upon which rest all the elements of society, including society's beliefs.
- Virtual society, a society based on online identity, which is evolving in the information age.

Over time, some cultures have progressed toward more complex forms of organization and control. This cultural evolution has a profound effect on patterns of community. Hunter-gatherer tribes settled around seasonal food stocks to become agrarian villages. Villages grew to become towns and cities. Cities turned into city-states and nation-states.

Many societies distribute largess at the behest of some individual or some larger group of people. This type of generosity can be seen in all known cultures; typically, prestige accrues to the generous individual or group. Conversely, members of a society may also shun or scapegoat any members of the society who violate its norms. Mechanisms such as gift-giving, joking relationships and scapegoating, which may be seen in various types of human groupings, tend to be institutionalized within a society. Social evolution as a phenomenon carries with it certain elements that could be detrimental to the population it serves.

Some societies bestow status on an individual or group of people when that individual or group performs an admired or desired action. This type of recognition is bestowed in the form of a name, title, manner of dress, or monetary reward. In many societies, adult male or female status is subject to a ritual or process of this type. Altruistic action in the interests of the larger group is seen in virtually all societies. The phenomena

of community action, shunning, scapegoating, generosity, shared risk, and reward is common to many forms of society.

## **Types**

Societies are social groups that differ according to subsistence strategies, the ways that humans use technology to provide needs for themselves. Although humans have established many types of societies throughout history, anthropologists tend to classify different societies according to the degree to which different groups within a society have unequal access to advantages such as resources, prestige, or power. Virtually all societies have developed some degree of inequality among their people through the process of social stratification, the division of members of a society into levels with unequal wealth, prestige, or power. Sociologists place societies in three broad categories: pre-industrial, industrial, and postindustrial.

### **Pre-industrial**

In a pre-industrial society, food production, which is carried out through the use of human and animal labor, is the main economic activity. These societies can be subdivided according to their level of technology and their method of producing food. These subdivisions are hunting and gathering, pastoral, horticultural, agricultural, and feudal.

#### **Hunting and gathering**

The main form of food production in such societies is the daily collection of wild plants and the hunting of wild animals. Hunter-gatherers move around constantly in search of food. As

a result, they do not build permanent villages or create a wide variety of artifacts, and usually only form small groups such as bands and tribes. However, some hunting and gathering societies in areas with abundant resources (such as people of tlingit) lived in larger groups and formed complex hierarchical social structures such as chiefdom. The need for mobility also limits the size of these societies. They generally consist of fewer than 60 people and rarely exceed 100. Statuses within the tribe are relatively equal, and decisions are reached through general agreement. The ties that bind the tribe are more complex than those of the bands. Leadership is personal—charismatic—and used for special purposes only in tribal society. There are no political offices containing real power, and a chief is merely a person of influence, a sort of adviser; therefore, tribal consolidations for collective action are not governmental. The family forms the main social unit, with most members being related by birth or marriage. This type of organization requires the family to carry out most social functions, including production and education.

## **Pastoral**

Pastoralism is a slightly more efficient form of subsistence. Rather than searching for food on a daily basis, members of a pastoral society rely on domesticated herd animals to meet their food needs. Pastoralists live a nomadic life, moving their herds from one pasture to another. Because their food supply is far more reliable, pastoral societies can support larger populations. Since there are food surpluses, fewer people are needed to produce food. As a result, the division of labor (the specialization by individuals or groups in the performance of specific economic activities) becomes more complex. For

example, some people become craftworkers, producing tools, weapons, and jewelry, among other items of value. The production of goods encourages trade. This trade helps to create inequality, as some families acquire more goods than others do. These families often gain power through their increased wealth. The passing on of property from one generation to another helps to centralize wealth and power. Over time emerge hereditary chieftainships, the typical form of government in pastoral societies.

## **Horticultural**

Fruits and vegetables grown in garden plots that have been cleared from the jungle or forest provide the main source of food in a horticultural society. These societies have a level of technology and complexity similar to pastoral societies. Some horticultural groups use the slash-and-burn method to raise crops. The wild vegetation is cut and burned, and ashes are used as fertilizers. Horticulturists use human labor and simple tools to cultivate the land for one or more seasons. When the land becomes barren, horticulturists clear a new plot and leave the old plot to revert to its natural state. They may return to the original land several years later and begin the process again. By rotating their garden plots, horticulturists can stay in one area for a fairly long period of time. This allows them to build semipermanent or permanent villages. The size of a village's population depends on the amount of land available for farming; thus villages can range from as few as 30 people to as many as 2000.

As with pastoral societies, surplus food leads to a more complex division of labor. Specialized roles in horticultural

societies include craftspeople, shamans (religious leaders), and traders. This role specialization allows people to create a wide variety of artifacts. As in pastoral societies, surplus food can lead to inequalities in wealth and power within horticultural political systems, developed because of the settled nature of horticultural life.

## **Agrarian**

Agrarian societies use agricultural technological advances to cultivate crops over a large area. Sociologists use the phrase agricultural revolution to refer to the technological changes that occurred as long as 8,500 years ago that led to cultivating crops and raising farm animals. Increases in food supplies then led to larger populations than in earlier communities.

This meant a greater surplus, which resulted in towns that became centers of trade supporting various rulers, educators, craftspeople, merchants, and religious leaders who did not have to worry about locating nourishment.

Greater degrees of social stratification appeared in agrarian societies. For example, women previously had higher social status because they shared labor more equally with men. In hunting and gathering societies, women even gathered more food than men. However, as food stores improved and women took on lesser roles in providing food for the family, they increasingly became subordinate to men. As villages and towns expanded into neighboring areas, conflicts with other communities inevitably occurred. Farmers provided warriors with food in exchange for protection against invasion by enemies. A system of rulers with high social status also

appeared. This nobility organized warriors to protect the society from invasion. In this way, the nobility managed to extract goods from "lesser" members of society.

## **Feudal**

Feudalism was a form of society based on ownership of land. Unlike today's farmers, vassals under feudalism were bound to cultivating their lord's land. In exchange for military protection, the lords exploited the peasants into providing food, crops, crafts, homage, and other services to the landowner. The estates of the realm system of feudalism was often multigenerational; the families of peasants may have cultivated their lord's land for generations.

## **Industrial**

Between the 15th and 16th centuries, a new economic system emerged that began to replace feudalism. Capitalism is marked by open competition in a free market, in which the means of production are privately owned. Europe's exploration of the Americas served as one impetus for the development of capitalism. The introduction of foreign metals, silks, and spices stimulated great commercial activity in European societies.

Industrial societies rely heavily on machines powered by fuels for the production of goods. This produced further dramatic increases in efficiency. The increased efficiency of production of the industrial revolution produced an even greater surplus than before. Now the surplus was not just agricultural goods, but also manufactured goods. This larger surplus caused all of



the changes discussed earlier in the domestication revolution to become even more pronounced. Once again, the population boomed. Increased productivity made more goods available to everyone. However, inequality became even greater than before. The breakup of agricultural-based feudal societies caused many people to leave the land and seek employment in cities. This created a great surplus of labor and gave capitalists plenty of laborers who could be hired for extremely low wages.

## **Post-industrial**

Post-industrial societies are societies dominated by information, services, and high technology more than the production of goods. Advanced industrial societies are now seeing a shift toward an increase in service sectors over manufacturing and production. The United States is the first country to have over half of its workforce employed in service industries. Service industries include government, research, education, health, sales, law, and banking.

## **Contemporary usage**

The term "society" is currently used to cover both a number of political and scientific connotations as well as a variety of associations.

## **Western**

The development of the Western world has brought with it the emerging concepts of Western culture, politics, and ideas, often referred to simply as "Western society". Geographically, it covers at the very least the countries of Western Europe, North

America, Australia, and New Zealand. It sometimes also includes Eastern Europe, South America, and Israel.

The cultures and lifestyles of all of these stem from Western Europe. They all enjoy relatively strong economies and stable governments, allow freedom of religion, have chosen democracy as a form of governance, favor capitalism and international trade, are heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian values, and have some form of political and military alliance or cooperation.

## **Information**

Although the concept of information society has been under discussion since the 1930s, in the modern world it is almost always applied to the manner in which information technologies have impacted society and culture. It, therefore, covers the effects of computers and telecommunications on the home, the workplace, schools, government, and various communities and organizations, as well as the emergence of new social forms in cyberspace.

One of the European Union's areas of interest is the information society. Here policies are directed towards promoting an open and competitive digital economy, research into information and communication technologies, as well as their application to improve social inclusion, public services, and quality of life.

The International Telecommunications Union's World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva and Tunis (2003 and 2005) has led to a number of policy and application areas where action is envisaged.

## **Knowledge**

As the access to electronic information resources increased at the beginning of the 21st century, special attention was extended from the information society to the knowledge society. An analysis by the Irish government stated, "The capacity to manipulate, store and transmit large quantities of information cheaply has increased at a staggering rate over recent years. The digitisation of information and the associated pervasiveness of the Internet are facilitating a new intensity in the application of knowledge to economic activity, to the extent that it has become the predominant factor in the creation of wealth. As much as 70 to 80 percent of economic growth is now said to be due to new and better knowledge."

## **Other uses**

People of many nations united by common political and cultural traditions, beliefs, or values are sometimes also said to form a society (such as Judeo-Christian, Eastern, and Western). When used in this context, the term is employed as a means of contrasting two or more "societies" whose members represent alternative conflicting and competing worldviews.

Some academic, professional, and scientific associations describe themselves as *societies* (for example, the American Mathematical Society, the American Society of Civil Engineers, or the Royal Society).

In some countries, e.g. the United States, France, and Latin America, the term "society" is used in commerce to denote a partnership between investors or the start of a business. In the

United Kingdom, partnerships are not called societies, but co-operatives or mutuels are often known as societies (such as friendly societies and building societies).

## Chapter 4

# Human Communication

**Human communication**, or **anthroposemiotics**, is the field dedicated to understanding how humans communicate. Human communication is grounded in cooperative and shared intentions. Our ability to communicate with one another cannot be possible without an understanding of what we are referencing or thinking about. Because we are unable to fully understand another's perspective, there needs to be a creation of commonality through a shared mindset and/or viewpoint. The field of communication is very diverse. There are multiple layers to what communication is and how we use its different sectors and features as human beings.

Humans have communicatory abilities other animals do not. For example, we are able to communicate about time and place as though they are solid objects. Humans communicate to request help, to inform others, and to share attitudes for bonding. Communication is a joint activity largely dependent on the ability to maintain common attention. We share relevant background knowledge and joint experience in order to communicate content and coherence in exchanges.

The evolution of human communication took place over a long period of time. We evolved from simple pointing and hand gestures to the use of spoken language. Most face-to-face communication requires visually reading and following communication from the other person, offering replying gestures in return, and maintaining eye contact throughout the interaction. As humans, we have an obligation to communicate

in the way we are taught in our youth, and if one layer of communication grows, they all do. In a way, the layers work as a system, which coordinate with one another to formulate what the field of human communication is.

## **Category**

The current study of human communication can be branched off into two major categories; rhetorical and relational. The focus of rhetorical communication is primarily on the study of influence; the art of rhetorical communication is based on the idea of persuasion. The relational approach examines communication from a transactional perspective; two or more people interact to reach an agreed perspective.

In its early stages, rhetoric was developed to help ordinary people prove their claims in court; this shows how persuasion is key in this form of communication. Aristotle stated that effective rhetoric is based on argumentation. As explained in the text, rhetoric involves a dominant party and a submissive party or a party that succumbs to that of the most dominant party.

While the rhetorical approach stems from Western societies, the relational approach stems from Eastern societies. Eastern societies hold higher standards for cooperation, which makes sense as to why they would sway more toward a relational approach for that matter. "Maintaining valued relationships is generally seen as more important than exerting influence and control over others". "The study of human communication today is more diversified than ever before in its history".

Classification of human communication can be found in the workplace, especially for group work. Co-workers need to argue with each other to gain the best solutions for their projects, while they also need to nurture their relationship to maintain their collaboration. For example, in their group work, they may use the communication tactic of "saving face".

Spoken language involves speech, mostly human quality to acquire. For example, chimpanzees are humans' closest relative, but they are unable to produce speech. Chimpanzees are the closest living species to humans. Chimpanzees are closer to humans, in genetic and evolutionary terms, than they are to gorillas or other apes.

The fact that a chimpanzee will not acquire speech, even when raised in a human home with all the environmental input of a normal human child, is one of the central puzzles we face when contemplating the biology of our species.

In repeated experiments, starting in the 1910s, chimpanzees raised in close contact with humans have universally failed to speak, or even to try to speak, despite their rapid progress in many other intellectual and motor domains. Each normal human is born with a capacity to rapidly and unerringly acquire their mother tongue, with little explicit teaching or coaching. In contrast, no nonhuman primate has spontaneously produced even a word of the local language.

## **Types**

Human communication can be subdivided into a variety of types:

- Intrapersonal communication (communication with oneself): This very basic form of information, is the standard and foundation, of all things communication. This communication with ourselves, showcases the process in which we think on our previous and ongoing actions, as well as what we choose to understand from other types of communications and events. Out intrapersonal communication, may be shown and expressed to others by our reactions to certain outcomes, through simple acts of gestures and expressions.
- Interpersonal communication (communication between two or more people) - Communication relies heavily on understanding the processes and situations that you are in, in order to communicate affectively. It is more than simple behaviors and strategies, on how and what it means to communicate with another person. Interpersonal communication, reflects the personality and characteristics, of a person, seen through the type of dialect, form, and content, a person chooses to communicate with. As simple as this is, interpersonal communication can only be correctly done if both persons involved in the communication, understand what it is to be human beings, and share similar qualities of what it means to be humans. It involves acts of trust and openness, as well as a sense of respect and care towards what the other person is talking about.
- Nonverbal communication: The messages we send to each other, in ways that cover the act of word-by-mouth. These actions may be done through the use



of our facial features and expressions, arms and hands, the tone of our voice, or even our very appearance can display a certain type of message.

- Speech
- 
- Conversation
- Visual communication
- Writing
- Mail
- Mass media
- Telecommunication
- Organizational communication (communication within organizations)
- Mass communication: This type of communication involves the process of communicating with known and unknown audiences, through the use of technology or other mediums. There is hardly ever an opportunity for the audience to respond directly to those who sent the message, there is a divide/separation between the sender and receiver. There are typically four players in the process of mass communication, these players are: those who send the message, the message itself, the medium in which the message is sent, and those who receive the message. These four components come together to be the communication we see and are a part of the most, as the media helps in distributing these messages to the world everyday.
- Group dynamics (communication within groups)
- Cross-cultural communication (communication across cultures)

## **Colin Cherry**

**Edward Colin Cherry** (23 June 1914 – 23 November 1979) was a British cognitive scientist whose main contributions were in focused auditory attention, specifically the cocktail party problem regarding the capacity to follow one conversation while many other conversations are going on in a noisy room.

Cherry used shadowing tasks to study this problem, which involve playing two different auditory messages to a participant's left and right ears and instructing them to attend to only one. The participant must then shadow this attended message.

Cherry found that very little information about the unattended message was obtained by his participants: physical characteristics were detected but semantic characteristics were not.

Cherry therefore concluded that unattended auditory information receives very little processing and that we use physical differences between messages to select which one we tend.

He was born in St. Albans in 1914 and educated at St Albans School and Northampton Polytechnic (now City University) gaining his B.Sc. in 1936. After the war, during which he worked on radar research with the British Ministry of Aircraft Production, he taught at the Manchester College of Technology and then Imperial College London. He was awarded the D.Sc. in 1956 and presented the Bernard Price Memorial Lecture in 1958. He was appointed to the Chair of Telecommunications at

Imperial College in 1958. In 1978 he was elected to a Marconi International Fellowship. His writings include *On Human Communication* (1957) and *World Communication: Threat or Promise* (1971).

## **Jacques Derrida**

**Jacques Derrida** (/ˈdɪrɪdə/; French: [ʁakdɛʁida]; born **Jackie Élie Derrida**; 15 July 1930 – 9 October 2004), born in Algeria, was a French philosopher best known for developing a form of semiotic analysis known as deconstruction, which he analyzed in numerous texts, and developed in the context of phenomenology. He is one of the major figures associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy.

During his career Derrida published more than 40 books, together with hundreds of essays and public presentations. He had a significant influence on the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, literature, law, anthropology, historiography, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychoanalysis and political theory.

His work retains major academic influence throughout the US, continental Europe, South America and all other countries where continental philosophy has been predominant, particularly in debates around ontology, epistemology (especially concerning social sciences), ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of language. In most of the Anglosphere, where analytic philosophy is dominant, Derrida's influence is most presently felt in literary studies due to his longstanding interest in language and his association with prominent literary critics from his time at Yale. He also

influenced architecture (in the form of deconstructivism), music, art, and art criticism.

Particularly in his later writings, Derrida addressed ethical and political themes in his work. Some critics consider *Speech and Phenomena* (1967) to be his most important work. Others cite: *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967), and *Margins of Philosophy* (1972). These writings influenced various activists and political movements. He became a well-known and influential public figure, while his approach to philosophy and the notorious abstruseness of his work made him controversial.

## **Life**

Derrida was born on July 15, 1930, in a summer home in El Biar (Algiers), Algeria, into a Sephardic Jewish family (originally from Toledo) that became French in 1870 when the Crémieux Decree granted full French citizenship to the Arabic-speaking Mizrahi Jews of Algeria. His parents, Haïm Aaron Prosper Charles (Aimé) Derrida (1896–1970) and Georgette Sultana Esther Safar (1901–1991), named him "Jackie", "which they considered to be an American name", though he would later adopt a more "correct" version of his first name when he moved to Paris; some reports indicate that he was named Jackie after the American child actor Jackie Coogan, who had become well-known around the world via his role in the 1921 Charlie Chaplin film *The Kid*. He was also given the middle name Élie after his paternal uncle Eugène Eliahou, at his circumcision; this name was not recorded on his birth certificate unlike those of his siblings, and he would later call it his "hidden name".

Derrida was the third of five children. His elder brother Paul Moïse died at less than three months old, the year before Derrida was born, leading him to suspect throughout his life his role as a replacement for his deceased brother. Derrida spent his youth in Algiers and in El-Biar.

On the first day of the school year in 1942, French administrators in Algeria —implementing antisemitism quotas set by the Vichy government—expelled Derrida from his lycée. He secretly skipped school for a year rather than attend the Jewish lycée formed by displaced teachers and students, and also took part in numerous football competitions (he dreamed of becoming a professional player). In this adolescent period, Derrida found in the works of philosophers and writers (such as Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Gide) an instrument of revolt against family and society. His reading also included Camus and Sartre.

In the late 1940s, he attended the LycéeBugeaud [fr], in Algiers; in 1949 he moved to Paris, attending the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, where his professor of philosophy was Étienne Borne. At that time he prepared for his entrance exam to the prestigious ÉcoleNormaleSupérieure (ENS); after failing the exam on his first try, he passed it on the second, and was admitted in 1952.

On his first day at ENS, Derrida met Louis Althusser, with whom he became friends. After visiting the Husserl Archive in Leuven, Belgium (1953–1954), he completed his master's degree in philosophy (*diplôméd'étudessupérieures* [fr]) on Edmund Husserl (see below). He then passed the highly competitive *agrégation* exam in 1956. Derrida received a grant

for studies at Harvard University, and he spent the 1956–57 academic year reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* at the Widener Library. In June 1957, he married the psychoanalyst Marguerite Aucouturier in Boston. During the Algerian War of Independence of 1954–1962, Derrida asked to teach soldiers' children in lieu of military service, teaching French and English from 1957 to 1959.

Following the war, from 1960 to 1964, Derrida taught philosophy at the Sorbonne, where he was an assistant of Suzanne Bachelard (daughter of Gaston), Georges Canguilhem, Paul Ricœur (who in these years coined the term *hermeneutics of suspicion*) and Jean Wahl. His wife, Marguerite, gave birth to their first child, Pierre, in 1963. In 1964, on the recommendation of Louis Althusser and Jean Hyppolite, Derrida got a permanent teaching position at the ENS, which he kept until 1984. In 1965 Derrida began an association with the *Tel Quel* group of literary and philosophical theorists, which lasted for seven years. Derrida's subsequent distance from the *Tel Quel* group, after 1971, has been attributed to his reservations about their embrace of Maoism and of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

With "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", his contribution to a 1966 colloquium on structuralism at Johns Hopkins University, his work began to gain international prominence. At the same colloquium Derrida would meet Jacques Lacan and Paul de Man, the latter an important interlocutor in the years to come. A second son, Jean, was born in 1967. In the same year, Derrida published his first three books—*Writing and Difference*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Of Grammatology*.

In 1980, he received his first honorary doctorate (from Columbia University) and was awarded his State doctorate (*doctorat d'État*) by submitting to the University of Paris ten of his previously published books in conjunction with a defense of his intellectual project under the title "L'inscription de la philosophie : Recherches sur l'interprétation de l'écriture" ("Inscription in Philosophy: Research on the Interpretation of Writing"). The text of Derrida's defense was based on an abandoned draft thesis he had prepared in 1957 under the direction of Jean Hyppolite at the ENS entitled "The Ideality of the Literary Object" ("L'idéalité de l'objettlittéraire"); his 1980 dissertation was subsequently published in English translation as "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations". In 1983 Derrida collaborated with Ken McMullen on the film *Ghost Dance*. Derrida appears in the film as himself and also contributed to the script.

Derrida traveled widely and held a series of visiting and permanent positions. Derrida became full professor (*directeur d'études*) at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris from 1984 (he had been elected at the end of 1983). With François Châtelet and others he in 1983 co-founded the Collège international de philosophie (CIPH), an institution intended to provide a location for philosophical research which could not be carried out elsewhere in the academia. He was elected as its first president. In 1985 Sylviane Agacinski gave birth to Derrida's third child, Daniel.

On May 8, 1985, Derrida was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, to Class IV - Humanities, Section 3 - Criticism and Philology.

In 1986 Derrida became Professor of the Humanities at the University of California, Irvine, where he taught until shortly before his death in 2004. His papers were filed in the university archives. After Derrida's death, his widow and sons said they wanted copies of UCI's archives shared with the Institute of Contemporary Publishing Archives in France. The university had sued in an attempt to get manuscripts and correspondence from Derrida's widow and children that it believed the philosopher had promised to UC Irvine's collection, although it dropped the suit in 2007.

Derrida was a regular visiting professor at several other major American and European universities, including Johns Hopkins University, Yale University, New York University, Stony Brook University, and The New School for Social Research.

He was awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Cambridge (1992), Columbia University, The New School for Social Research, the University of Essex, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the University of Silesia, the University of Coimbra, the University of Athens, and many others around the world. In 2001, he received the Adorno-Preis from the University of Frankfurt.

Derrida's honorary degree at Cambridge was protested by leading philosophers in the analytic tradition. Philosophers including Quine, Marcus, and Armstrong wrote a letter to the university objecting that "Derrida's work does not meet accepted standards of clarity and rigour," and "Academic status based on what seems to us to be little more than semi-intelligible attacks upon the values of reason, truth, and



scholarship is not, we submit, sufficient grounds for the awarding of an honorary degree in a distinguished university".

Late in his life, Derrida participated in making two biographical documentaries, *D'ailleurs, Derrida (Derrida's Elsewhere)* by SafaaFathy (1999), and *Derrida* by Kirby Dick and Amy ZieringKofman (2002).

Derrida was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2003, which reduced his speaking and travelling engagements. He died during surgery in a hospital in Paris in the early hours of October 9, 2004. At the time of his death, Derrida had agreed to go for the summer to Heidelberg as holder of the Gadamer professorship, whose invitation was expressed by the hermeneutic philosopher himself before his death. Peter Hommelhoff, Rector at Heidelberg by that time, would summarize Derrida's place as: "Beyond the boundaries of philosophy as an academic discipline he was a leading intellectual figure not only for the humanities but for the cultural perception of a whole age."

## **Philosophy**

Derrida referred to himself as a historian. He questioned assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition and also more broadly Western culture. By questioning the dominant discourses, and trying to modify them, he attempted to democratize the university scene and to politicize it. Derrida called his challenge to the assumptions of Western culture "deconstruction". On some occasions, Derrida referred to deconstruction as a radicalization of a certain spirit of Marxism.

With his detailed readings of works from Plato to Rousseau to Heidegger, Derrida frequently argues that Western philosophy has uncritically allowed metaphorical depth models to govern its conception of language and consciousness. He sees these often unacknowledged assumptions as part of a "metaphysics of presence" to which philosophy has bound itself. This "logocentrism," Derrida argues, creates "marked" or hierarchized binary oppositions that have an effect on everything from our conception of speech's relation to writing to our understanding of racial difference. Deconstruction is an attempt to expose and undermine such "metaphysics."

Derrida approaches texts as constructed around binary oppositions which all speech has to articulate if it intends to make any sense whatsoever. This approach to text is, in a broad sense, influenced by the semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure, considered to be one of the fathers of structuralism, posited that terms get their meaning in reciprocal determination with other terms inside language.

Perhaps Derrida's most quoted and famous assertion, which appears in an essay on Rousseau in his book *Of Grammatology* (1967), is the statement that "there is no out-of-context" (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*). Critics of Derrida have been often accused of having mistranslated the phrase in French to suggest he had written "Il n'y a rien en dehors du texte" ("There is nothing outside the text") and of having widely disseminated this translation to make it appear that Derrida is suggesting that nothing exists but words. Derrida once explained that this assertion "which for some has become a sort of slogan, in general so badly understood, of deconstruction [...] means nothing else: there is nothing outside context. In this form,

which says exactly the same thing, the formula would doubtless have been less shocking."

## **Early works**

Derrida began his career examining the limits of phenomenology. His first lengthy academic manuscript, written as a dissertation for his *diplôme d'études supérieures* and submitted in 1954, concerned the work of Edmund Husserl. Gary Banham has said that the dissertation is "in many respects the most ambitious of Derrida's interpretations with Husserl, not merely in terms of the number of works addressed but also in terms of the extraordinarily focused nature of its investigation." In 1962 he published *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, which contained his own translation of Husserl's essay. Many elements of Derrida's thought were already present in this work. In the interviews collected in *Positions* (1972), Derrida said: "In this essay the problematic of writing was already in place as such, bound to the irreducible structure of 'deferral' in its relationships to consciousness, presence, science, history and the history of science, the disappearance or delay of the origin, etc. [...] this essay can be read as the other side (recto or verso, as you wish) of *Speech and Phenomena*."

Derrida first received major attention outside France with his lecture, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," delivered at Johns Hopkins University in 1966 (and subsequently included in *Writing and Difference*). The conference at which this paper was delivered was concerned with structuralism, then at the peak of its influence in France, but only beginning to gain attention in the United

States. Derrida differed from other participants by his lack of explicit commitment to structuralism, having already been critical of the movement. He praised the accomplishments of structuralism but also maintained reservations about its internal limitations; this has led US academics to label his thought as a form of post-structuralism.

The effect of Derrida's paper was such that by the time the conference proceedings were published in 1970, the title of the collection had become *The Structuralist Controversy*. The conference was also where he met Paul de Man, who would be a close friend and source of great controversy, as well as where he first met the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, with whose work Derrida enjoyed a mixed relationship.

### **Phenomenology vs structuralism debate (1959)**

In the early 1960s, Derrida began speaking and writing publicly, addressing the most topical debates at the time. One of these was the new and increasingly fashionable movement of structuralism, which was being widely favoured as the successor to the phenomenology approach, the latter having been started by Husserl sixty years earlier. Derrida's countercurrent take on the issue, at a prominent international conference, was so influential that it reframed the discussion from a celebration of the triumph of structuralism to a "phenomenology vs structuralism debate."

Phenomenology, as envisioned by Husserl, is a method of philosophical inquiry that rejects the rationalist bias that has dominated Western thought since Plato in favor of a method of reflective attentiveness that discloses the individual's "lived

experience;" for those with a more phenomenological bent, the goal was to understand experience by comprehending and describing its genesis, the process of its emergence from an origin or event. For the structuralists, this was a false problem, and the "depth" of experience could in fact only be an effect of structures which are not themselves experiential.

In that context, in 1959, Derrida asked the question: Must not structure have a genesis, and must not the origin, the point of genesis, be *already* structured, in order to be the genesis of something? In other words, every structural or "synchronic" phenomenon has a history, and the structure cannot be understood without understanding its genesis. At the same time, in order that there be movement or potential, the origin cannot be some pure unity or simplicity, but must already be articulated—complex—such that from it a "diachronic" process can emerge. This original complexity must not be understood as an original *positing*, but more like a default of origin, which Derrida refers to as iterability, inscription, or textuality. It is this thought of originary complexity that sets Derrida's work in motion, and from which all of its terms are derived, including "deconstruction".

Derrida's method consisted in demonstrating the forms and varieties of this originary complexity, and their multiple consequences in many fields. He achieved this by conducting thorough, careful, sensitive, and yet transformational readings of philosophical and literary texts, to determine what aspects of those texts run counter to their apparent systematicity (structural unity) or intended sense (authorial genesis). By demonstrating the aporias and ellipses of thought, Derrida hoped to show the infinitely subtle ways in which this

originary complexity, which by definition cannot ever be completely known, works its structuring and destructuring effects.

## **1967–1972**

Derrida's interests crossed disciplinary boundaries, and his knowledge of a wide array of diverse material was reflected in the three collections of work published in 1967: *Speech and Phenomena*, *Of Grammatology* (initially submitted as a *Doctorat de spécialité* thesis under Maurice de Gandillac), and *Writing and Difference*.

On several occasions, Derrida has acknowledged his debt to Husserl and Heidegger, and stated that without them he would not have said a single word. Among the questions asked in these essays are "What is 'meaning', what are its historical relationships to what is purportedly identified under the rubric 'voice' as a value of presence, presence of the object, presence of meaning to consciousness, self-presence in so called living speech and in self-consciousness?" In another essay in *Writing and Difference* entitled "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas", the roots of another major theme in Derrida's thought emerges: the Other as opposed to the Same "Deconstructive analysis deprives the present of its prestige and exposes it to something *tout autre*, "wholly other," beyond what is foreseeable from the present, beyond the horizon of the "same." Other than Rousseau, Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas, these three books discussed, and/or relied upon, the works of many philosophers and authors, including linguist Saussure, Hegel, Foucault, Bataille, Descartes, anthropologist Lévi-Strauss, paleontologist Leroi-

Gourhan, psychoanalyst Freud, and writers such as Jabès and Artaud. This collection of three books published in 1967 elaborated Derrida's theoretical framework. Derrida attempts to approach the very heart of the Western intellectual tradition, characterizing this tradition as "a search for a transcendental being that serves as the origin or guarantor of meaning".

The attempt to "ground the meaning relations constitutive of the world in an instance that itself lies outside all relationality" was referred to by Heidegger as logocentrism, and Derrida argues that the philosophical enterprise is *essentially* logocentric, and that this is a paradigm inherited from Judaism and Hellenism. He in turn describes logocentrism as phallogocentric, patriarchal and masculinist. Derrida contributed to "the understanding of certain deeply hidden philosophical presuppositions and prejudices in Western culture", arguing that the whole philosophical tradition rests on arbitrary dichotomous categories (such as sacred/profane, signifier/signified, mind/body), and that any text contains implicit hierarchies, "by which an order is imposed on reality and by which a subtle repression is exercised, as these hierarchies exclude, subordinate, and hide the various potential meanings." Derrida refers to his procedure for uncovering and unsettling these dichotomies as deconstruction of Western culture.

In 1968, he published his influential essay "Plato's Pharmacy" in the French journal *Tel Quel*. This essay was later collected in *Dissemination*, one of three books published by Derrida in 1972, along with the essay collection *Margins of Philosophy* and the collection of interviews entitled *Positions*.

## 1973–1980

Starting in 1972, Derrida produced on average more than one book per year. Derrida continued to produce important works, such as *Glas* (1974) and *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (1980).

Derrida received increasing attention in the United States after 1972, where he was a regular visiting professor and lecturer at several major American universities. In the 1980s, during the American culture wars, conservatives started a dispute over Derrida's influence and legacy upon American intellectuals, and claimed that he influenced American literary critics and theorists more than academic philosophers.

### ***Of Spirit* (1987)**

On March 14, 1987, Derrida presented at the CIPH conference entitled "Heidegger: Open Questions," a lecture which was published in October 1987 as *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*. It follows the shifting role of *Geist* (spirit) through Heidegger's work, noting that, in 1927, "spirit" was one of the philosophical terms that Heidegger set his sights on dismantling. With his Nazi political engagement in 1933, however, Heidegger came out as a champion of the "German Spirit," and only withdrew from an exalting interpretation of the term in 1953. Derrida asks, "What of this meantime?" His book connects in a number of respects with his long engagement of Heidegger (such as "The Ends of Man" in *Margins of Philosophy*, his Paris seminar on philosophical nationality and nationalism in the mid-1980s, and the essays published in English as *Geschlecht* and *Geschlecht II*). He



considers "four guiding threads" of Heideggerian philosophy that form "the knot of this *Geflecht* [braid]": "the question of the question," "the essence of technology," "the discourse of animality," and "epochality" or "the hidden teleology or the narrative order."

*Of Spirit* contributes to the long debate on Heidegger's Nazism and appeared at the same time as the French publication of a book by a previously unknown Chilean writer, Victor Farías, who charged that Heidegger's philosophy amounted to a wholehearted endorsement of the Nazi *Sturmabteilung* (SA) faction. Derrida responded to Farías in an interview, "Heidegger, the Philosopher's Hell" and a subsequent article, "Comment donner raison? How to Concede, with Reasons?" He called Farías a weak reader of Heidegger's thought, adding that much of the evidence Farías and his supporters touted as new had long been known within the philosophical community.

### **1990s: political and ethical themes**

Some have argued that Derrida's work took a political and ethical "turn" in the 1990s. Texts cited as evidence of such a turn include *Force of Law* (1990), as well as *Specters of Marx* (1994) and *Politics of Friendship* (1994). Some refer to *The Gift of Death* as evidence that he began more directly applying deconstruction to the relationship between ethics and religion. In this work, Derrida interprets passages from the Bible, particularly on Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac, and from Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*.

However, scholars such as Leonard Lawlor, Robert Magliola, and Nicole Anderson have argued that the "turn" has been

exaggerated. Some, including Derrida himself, have argued that much of the philosophical work done in his "political turn" can be dated to earlier essays.

Derrida develops an ethicist view respecting to hospitality, exploring the idea that two types of hospitalities exist, conditional and unconditional. Though this contributed to the works of many scholars, Derrida was seriously criticized for this.

Derrida's contemporary readings of Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin, Carl Schmitt, Jan Patočka, on themes such as law, justice, responsibility, and friendship, had a significant impact on fields beyond philosophy. Derrida and Deconstruction influenced aesthetics, literary criticism, architecture, film theory, anthropology, sociology, historiography, law, psychoanalysis, theology, feminism, gay and lesbian studies and political theory. Jean-Luc Nancy, Richard Rorty, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom, Rosalind Krauss, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Duncan Kennedy, Gary Peller, Drucilla Cornell, Alan Hunt, Hayden White, Mario Kopic, and Alun Munslow are some of the authors who have been influenced by deconstruction.

Derrida delivered a eulogy at Levinas' funeral, later published as *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas*, an appreciation and exploration of Levinas's moral philosophy. Derrida used Bracha L. Ettinger's interpretation of Lévinas' notion of femininity and transformed his own earlier reading of this subject respectively.

Derrida continued to produce readings of literature, writing extensively on Maurice Blanchot, Paul Celan, and others.

In 1991 he published *The Other Heading*, in which he discussed the concept of identity (as in cultural identity, European identity, and national identity), in the name of which in Europe have been unleashed "the worst violences," "the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism."

At the 1997 Cerisy Conference, Derrida delivered a ten-hour address on the subject of "the autobiographical animal" entitled *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More To Follow)*. Engaging with questions surrounding the ontology of nonhuman animals, the ethics of animal slaughter and the difference between humans and other animals, the address has been seen as initiating a late "animal turn" in Derrida's philosophy, although Derrida himself has said that his interest in animals is present in his earliest writings.

### ***The Work of Mourning (1981–2001)***

Beginning with "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" in 1981, Derrida produced a series of texts on mourning and memory occasioned by the loss of his friends and colleagues, many of them new engagements with their work. *Memoires for Paul de Man*, a book-length lecture series presented first at Yale and then at Irvine as Derrida's Wellek Lecture, followed in 1986, with a revision in 1989 that included "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War". Ultimately, fourteen essays were collected into *The Work of Mourning* (2001), which was expanded in the 2003 French edition, *Chaquefois unique, la fin du monde* (literally, "Unique each time, the end of the world"), to include essays dedicated to Gérard Granel and Maurice Blanchot.

## 2002

In October 2002, at the theatrical opening of the film *Derrida*, he said that, in many ways, he felt more and more close to Guy Debord's work, and that this closeness appears in Derrida's texts. Derrida mentioned, in particular, "everything I say about the media, technology, the spectacle, and the 'criticism of the show', so to speak, and the markets – the becoming-a-spectacle of everything, and the exploitation of the spectacle." Among the places in which Derrida mentions the *Spectacle*, is a 1997 interview about the notion of the intellectual.

## Politics

Derrida engaged with many political issues, movements, and debates:

- Although Derrida participated in the rallies of the May 1968 protests, and organized the first general assembly at the *École Normale Supérieure*, he said "I was on my guard, even worried in the face of a certain cult of spontaneity, a fusionist, anti-unionist euphoria, in the face of the enthusiasm of a finally "freed" speech, of restored "transparence," and so forth." During May '68, he met frequently with Maurice Blanchot.
- He registered his objections to the Vietnam War in delivering "The Ends of Man" in the United States.
- In 1977, he was among the intellectuals, with Foucault and Althusser, who signed the petition against age of consent laws.

- In 1981 Derrida, on the prompting of Roger Scruton and others, founded the French Jan Hus association with structuralist historian Jean-Pierre Vernant. Its purpose was to aid dissident or persecuted Czech intellectuals. Derrida became vice-president.
- In late 1981 he was arrested by the Czechoslovakian government upon leading a conference in Prague that lacked government authorization, and charged with the "production and trafficking of drugs", which he claimed were planted as he visited Kafka's grave. He was released (or "expelled", as the Czechoslovakian government put it) after the interventions of the Mitterrand government, and the assistance of Michel Foucault, returning to Paris on January 1, 1982.
- He registered his concerns against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in 1984.
- He was active in cultural activities against the Apartheid government of South Africa and on behalf of Nelson Mandela beginning in 1983.
- He met with Palestinian intellectuals during a 1988 visit to Jerusalem.
- He protested against the death penalty, dedicating his seminar in his last years to the production of a non-utilitarian argument for its abolition, and was active in the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.
- Derrida was not known to have participated in any conventional electoral political party until 1995, when he joined a committee in support of Lionel Jospin's Socialist candidacy, although he expressed misgivings about such organizations going back to Communist organizational efforts while he was a student at ENS.

- In the 2002 French presidential election he refused to vote in the run-off between far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen and center-right Jacques Chirac, citing a lack of acceptable choices.
- While supportive of the American government in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, he opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq (see *Rogues* and his contribution to *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* with Giovanna Borradori and Jürgen Habermas).

Beyond these explicit political interventions, however, Derrida was engaged in rethinking politics and the political itself, within and beyond philosophy. Derrida insisted that a distinct political undertone had pervaded his texts from the very beginning of his career. Nevertheless, the attempt to understand the political implications of notions of responsibility, reason of state, the other, decision, sovereignty, Europe, friendship, difference, faith, and so on, became much more marked from the early 1990s on. By 2000, theorizing "democracy to come," and thinking the limitations of existing democracies, had become important concerns.

## **Influences on Derrida**

Crucial readings in his adolescence were Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* and *Confessions*, André Gide's journal, *La porte étroite*, *Les nourritures terrestres* and *The Immoralist*; and the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. The phrase *Families, I hate you!* in particular, which inspired Derrida as an adolescent, is a famous verse from Gide's *Les nourritures terrestres*, book IV. In a 1991 interview Derrida commented on a similar verse, also from book IV of the same Gide work: "I hated the homes, the

families, all the places where man thinks he'll find rest" (*Je haïssais les foyers, les familles, tous lieux où l'homme pense trouver un repos*).

Other influences upon Derrida are Martin Heidegger, Plato, Søren Kierkegaard, Alexandre Kojève, Maurice Blanchot, Antonin Artaud, Roland Barthes, Georges Bataille, Edmund Husserl, Emmanuel Lévinas, Ferdinand de Saussure, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Claude Lévi-Strauss, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, J. L. Austin and Stéphane Mallarmé.

His book, *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas*, reveals his mentorship by this philosopher and Talmudic scholar who practiced the phenomenological encounter with the Other in the form of the Face, which commanded human response.

The use of deconstruction to read Jewish texts – like the Talmud – is relatively rare but has recently been attempted.

## **Peers and contemporaries**

Derrida's philosophical friends, allies, students and the heirs of Derrida's thought include Paul de Man, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Sarah Kofman, Hélène Cixous, Bernard Stiegler, Alexander GarcíaDüttmann, Joseph Cohen, Geoffrey Bennington, Jean-Luc Marion, GayatriChakravortySpivak, Raphael Zagury-Orly, Jacques Ehrmann, Avital Ronell, Judith Butler, Béatrice Galinon-Méléneq, Ernesto Laclau, Samuel Weber and Catherine Malabou.

## **Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe**

Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe were among Derrida's first students in France and went on to become well-known and important philosophers in their own right. Despite their considerable differences of subject, and often also of a method, they continued their close interaction with each other and with Derrida, from the early 1970s.

Derrida wrote on both of them, including a long book on Nancy: *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy (On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy, 2005)*.

## **Paul de Man**

Derrida's most prominent friendship in intellectual life was with Paul de Man, which began with their meeting at Johns Hopkins University and continued until de Man's death in 1983. De Man provided a somewhat different approach to deconstruction, and his readings of literary and philosophical texts were crucial in the training of a generation of readers.

Shortly after de Man's death, Derrida wrote the book *Memoires: pour Paul de Man* and in 1988 wrote an article in the journal *Critical Inquiry* called "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War". The memoir became cause for controversy, because shortly before Derrida published his piece, it had been discovered by the Belgian literary critic Ortwin de Graef that long before his academic career in the US, de Man had written almost two hundred essays in a pro-Nazi newspaper during the German occupation of Belgium, including several that were explicitly antisemitic.



Critics of Derrida have argued that he minimizes the antisemitic character of de Man's writing. Some critics have found Derrida's treatment of this issue surprising, given that, for example, Derrida also spoke out against antisemitism and, in the 1960s, broke with the Heidegger disciple Jean Beaufret over Beaufret's instances of antisemitism, about which Derrida (and, after him, Maurice Blanchot) expressed shock.

## **Michel Foucault**

Derrida's criticism of Foucault appears in the essay *Cogito and the History of Madness* (from *Writing and Difference*). It was first given as a lecture on March 4, 1963, at a conference at Wahl's *Collège philosophique*, which Foucault attended, and caused a rift between the two men that was never fully mended.

In an appendix added to the 1972 edition of his *History of Madness*, Foucault disputed Derrida's interpretation of his work, and accused Derrida of practicing "a historically well-determined little pedagogy [...] which teaches the student that there is nothing outside the text [...]. A pedagogy which inversely gives to the voice of the masters that infinite sovereignty that allows it indefinitely to re-say the text."

According to historian Carlo Ginzburg, Foucault may have written *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* partly under the stimulus of Derrida's criticism. Carlo Ginzburg briefly labeled Derrida's criticism in *Cogito and the History of Madness*, as "facile, nihilistic objections," without giving further argumentation.

## Derrida's translators

Geoffrey Bennington, Avital Ronell and Samuel Weber belong to a group of Derrida translators. Many of Derrida's translators are esteemed thinkers in their own right. Derrida often worked in a collaborative arrangement, allowing his prolific output to be translated into English in a timely fashion.

Having started as a student of de Man, GayatriSpivak took on the translation of *Of Grammatology* early in her career and has since revised it into a second edition. Barbara Johnson's translation of Derrida's *Dissemination* was published by The Athlone Press in 1981. Alan Bass was responsible for several early translations; Bennington and Peggy Kamuf have continued to produce translations of his work for nearly twenty years. In recent years, a number of translations have appeared by Michael Naas (also a Derrida scholar) and Pascale-Anne Brault.

Bennington, Brault, Kamuf, Naas, Elizabeth Rottenberg, and David Wills are currently engaged in translating Derrida's previously unpublished seminars, which span from 1959 to 2003. Volumes I and II of *The Beast and the Sovereign* (presenting Derrida's seminars from December 12, 2001 to March 27, 2002 and from December 11, 2002 to March 26, 2003), as well as *The Death Penalty, Volume I* (covering December 8, 1999 to March 22, 2000), have appeared in English translation. Further volumes currently projected for the series include *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History* (1964-1965), *Death Penalty, Volume II* (2000-2001), *Perjury and Pardon, Volume I* (1997-1998), and *Perjury and Pardon, Volume II* (1998-1999).

With Bennington, Derrida undertook the challenge published as *Jacques Derrida*, an arrangement in which Bennington attempted to provide a systematic explication of Derrida's work (called the "Derridabase") using the top two-thirds of every page, while Derrida was given the finished copy of every Bennington chapter and the bottom third of every page in which to show how deconstruction exceeded Bennington's account (this was called the "Circumfession"). Derrida seems to have viewed Bennington in particular as a kind of rabbinical explicator, noting at the end of the "Applied Derrida" conference, held at the University of Luton in 1995 that: "everything has been said and, as usual, Geoff Bennington has said everything before I have even opened my mouth. I have the challenge of trying to be unpredictable after him, which is impossible... so I'll try to pretend to be unpredictable after Geoff. Once again."

### **Marshall McLuhan**

Derrida was familiar with the work of Marshall McLuhan, and since his early 1967 writings (*Of Grammatology, Speech and Phenomena*), he speaks of language as a "medium," of phonetic writing as "the medium of the great metaphysical, scientific, technical, and economic adventure of the West."

He expressed his disagreement with McLuhan in regard to what Derrida called McLuhan's ideology about the end of writing. In a 1982 interview, he said:

I think that there is an ideology in McLuhan's discourse that I don't agree with because he's an optimist as to the possibility of restoring an oral community which would get rid of the

writing machines and so on. I think that's a very traditional myth which goes back to... let's say Plato, Rousseau... And instead of thinking that we are living at the end of writing, I think that in another sense we are living in the extension – the overwhelming extension – of writing. At least in the new sense... I don't mean the alphabetic writing down, but in the new sense of those writing machines that we're using now (e.g. the tape recorder). And this is writing too.

And in his 1972 essay *Signature Event Context* he said:

As writing, communication, if one insists upon maintaining the word, is not the means of transport of sense, the exchange of intentions and meanings, the discourse and "communication of consciousnesses." We are not witnessing an end of writing which, to follow McLuhan's ideological representation, would restore a transparency or immediacy of social relations; but indeed a more and more powerful historical unfolding of a general writing of which the system of speech, consciousness, meaning, presence, truth, etc., would only be an effect, to be analyzed as such. It is this questioned effect that I have elsewhere called *logocentrism*.

## **Architectural thinkers**

Derrida had a direct impact on the theories and practices of influential architects Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi towards the end of the twentieth century. Derrida impacted a project that was theorized by Eisenman in *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*. This design was architecturally conceived by Tschumi for the Parc de la Villette in Paris, which included a sieve, or harp-like structure that

Derrida envisaged as a physical metaphor for the receptacle-like properties of the *khôra*. Moreover, Derrida's commentaries on Plato's notion of *khôra* (χώρα) as set in the *Timaeus* (48e4) received later reflections in the philosophical works and architectural writings of the philosopher-architect Nader El-Bizri within the domain of phenomenology.

Derrida used "χώρα" to name a radical otherness that "gives place" for being. El-Bizri built on this by more narrowly taking *khôra* to name the radical happening of an ontological difference between being and beings. El-Bizri's reflections on "*khôra*" are taken as a basis for tackling the meditations on *dwelling* and on *being and space* in Heidegger's thought and the critical conceptions of space and place as they evolved in architectural theory (and its strands in phenomenological thinking), and in history of philosophy and science, with a focus on geometry and optics. This also describes El-Bizri's take on "eontology" as an extension of Heidegger's consideration of the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) by way of the fourfold (*Das Geviert*) of earth-sky-mortals-divinities (*Erde und Himmel, Sterblichen und Göttlichen*); and as also impacted by his own meditations on Derrida's take on "χώρα". Ecology is hence co-entangled with ontology, whereby the worldly existential analytics are grounded in earthiness, and environmentalism is orientated by ontological thinking Derrida argued that the subjectile is like Plato's *khôra*, Greek for space, receptacle or site. Plato proposes that *khôra* rests between the sensible and the intelligible, through which everything passes but in which nothing is retained. For example, an image needs to be held by something, just as a mirror will hold a reflection. For Derrida, *khôra* defies attempts at naming or the either/or logic, which he "deconstructed".

# Criticism

## Criticism from Marxists

In a paper entitled *Ghostwriting*, GayatriChakravortySpivak—the translator of Derrida's *De la grammatologie* (*Of Grammatology*) into English—criticised Derrida's understanding of Marx. Commenting on Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, Terry Eagletonwrote "The portentousness is ingrained in the very letter of this book, as one theatrically inflected rhetorical question tumbles hard on the heels of another in a tiresomely mannered syntax which lays itself wide open to parody."

## Criticism from analytic philosophers

Though Derrida addressed the American Philosophical Association on at least one occasion in 1988, and was highly regarded by some contemporary philosophers like Richard Rorty, Alexander Nehamas, and Stanley Cavell, his work has been regarded by other analytic philosophers, such as John Searle and Willard Van Orman Quine, as pseudophilosophy or sophistry.

Some analytic philosophers have in fact claimed, since at least the 1980s, that Derrida's work is "not philosophy." One of the main arguments they gave was alleging that Derrida's influence had not been on US philosophy departments but on literature and other humanities disciplines.

In his 1989 *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Richard Rorty argues that Derrida (especially in his book, *The Post Card:*

*From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, one section of which is an experiment in fiction) purposefully uses words that cannot be defined (e.g., *différance*), and uses previously definable words in contexts diverse enough to make understanding impossible, so that the reader will never be able to contextualize Derrida's literary self. Rorty, however, argues that this intentional obfuscation is philosophically grounded. In garbling his message Derrida is attempting to escape the naïve, positive metaphysical projects of his predecessors.

Philosopher Sir Roger Scruton wrote in 2004, "He's difficult to summarise because it's nonsense. He argues that the meaning of a sign is never revealed in the sign but deferred indefinitely and that a sign only means something by virtue of its difference from something else. For Derrida, there is no such thing as meaning – it always eludes us and therefore anything goes." On Derrida's scholarship and writing style, Noam Chomsky wrote "I found the scholarship appalling, based on pathetic misreading; and the argument, such as it was, failed to come close to the kinds of standards I've been familiar with since virtually childhood. Well, maybe I missed something: could be, but suspicions remain, as noted."

Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt also criticized his work for misusing scientific terms and concepts in *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels With Science* (1994). Three quarrels (or disputes) in particular went out of academic circles and received international mass media coverage: the 1972–88 quarrel with John Searle, the analytic philosophers' pressures on Cambridge University not to award Derrida an honorary degree, and a dispute with Richard Wolin and the NYRB.

## **Searle–Derrida debate**

In the early 1970s, Searle had a brief exchange with Jacques Derrida regarding speech-act theory. The exchange was characterized by a degree of mutual hostility between the philosophers, each of whom accused the other of having misunderstood his basic points. Searle was particularly hostile to Derrida's deconstructionist framework and much later refused to let his response to Derrida be printed along with Derrida's papers in the 1988 collection *Limited Inc.* Searle did not consider Derrida's approach to be legitimate philosophy or even intelligible writing and argued that he did not want to legitimize the deconstructionist point of view by dedicating any attention to it. Consequently, some critics have considered the exchange to be a series of elaborate misunderstandings rather than a debate, while others have seen either Derrida or Searle gaining the upper hand. The level of hostility can be seen from Searle's statement that "It would be a mistake to regard Derrida's discussion of Austin as a confrontation between two prominent philosophical traditions", to which Derrida replied that that sentence was "the only sentence of the 'reply' to which I can subscribe". Commentators have frequently interpreted the exchange as a prominent example of a confrontation between analytical and continental philosophy.

The debate began in 1972, when, in his paper "Signature Event Context", Derrida analyzed J. L. Austin's theory of the illocutionary act. While sympathetic to Austin's departure from a purely denotational account of language to one that includes "force", Derrida was sceptical of the framework of normativity employed by Austin. He argued that Austin had missed the fact that any speech event is framed by a "structure of absence"



(the words that are left unsaid due to contextual constraints) and by "iterability" (the constraints on what can be said, given by what has been said in the past). Derrida argued that the focus on intentionality in speech-act theory was misguided because intentionality is restricted to that which is already established as a possible intention. He also took issue with the way Austin had excluded the study of fiction, non-serious or "parasitic" speech, wondering whether this exclusion was because Austin had considered these speech genres governed by different structures of meaning, or simply due to a lack of interest. In his brief reply to Derrida, "Reiterating the Differences:

A Reply to Derrida", Searle argued that Derrida's critique was unwarranted because it assumed that Austin's theory attempted to give a full account of language and meaning when its aim was much narrower. Searle considered the omission of parasitic discourse forms to be justified by the narrow scope of Austin's inquiry. Searle agreed with Derrida's proposal that intentionality presupposes iterability, but did not apply the same concept of intentionality used by Derrida, being unable or unwilling to engage with the continental conceptual apparatus. (This caused Derrida to criticize Searle for not being sufficiently familiar with phenomenological perspectives on intentionality.) Searle also argued that Derrida's disagreement with Austin turned on his having misunderstood Austin's type-token distinction and his failure to understand Austin's concept of failure in relation to performativity. Some critics have suggested that Searle, by being so grounded in the analytical tradition that he was unable to engage with Derrida's continental phenomenological tradition, was at fault for the unsuccessful nature of the exchange.

The substance of Searle's criticism of Derrida in relation to topics in the philosophy of language—referenced in Derrida's *Signature Event Context*—was that Derrida had no apparent familiarity with contemporary philosophy of language nor of contemporary linguistics in Anglo-Saxon countries. Searle explains, "When Derrida writes about the philosophy of language he refers typically to Rousseau and Condillac, not to mention Plato. And his idea of a "modern linguist" is Benveniste or even Saussure." Searle describes Derrida's philosophical knowledge as pre-Wittgensteinian—that is to say, disconnected from analytic tradition—and consequently, in his perspective, naive and misguided, concerned with issues long-since resolved or otherwise found to be *non-issues*.

Searle also wrote in *The New York Review of Books* that he was surprised by "the low level of philosophical argumentation, the deliberate obscurantism of the prose, the wildly exaggerated claims, and the constant striving to give the appearance of profundity by making claims that seem paradoxical, but under analysis often turn out to be silly or trivial."

Derrida, in his response to Searle ("a b c ..." in *Limited Inc*), ridiculed Searle's positions. Claiming that a clear sender of Searle's message could not be established, he suggested that Searle had formed with Austin a *société à responsabilité limitée* (a "limited liability company") due to the ways in which the ambiguities of authorship within Searle's reply circumvented the very speech act of his reply. Searle did not reply. Later in 1988, Derrida tried to review his position and his critiques of Austin and Searle, reiterating that he found the constant appeal to "normality" in the analytical tradition to be problematic from which they were only paradigmatic examples.

In the description of the structure called "normal," "normative," "central," "ideal," this possibility must be integrated as an essential possibility. The possibility cannot be treated as though it were a simple accident-marginal or parasitic. It cannot be, and hence ought not to be, and this passage from can to ought reflects the entire difficulty. In the analysis of so-called normal cases, one neither can nor ought, in all theoretical rigor, to exclude the possibility of transgression. Not even provisionally, or out of allegedly methodological considerations. It would be a poor method, since this possibility of transgression tells us immediately and indispensable about the structure of the act said to be normal as well as about the structure of law in general.

He continued arguing how problematic was establishing the relation between "nonfiction or standard discourse" and "fiction," defined as its "parasite", "for part of the most original essence of the latter is to allow fiction, the simulacrum, parasitism, to take place-and in so doing to 'de-essentialize' itself as it were". He would finally argue that the indispensable question would then become:

what is "nonfiction standard discourse," what must it be and what does this name evoke, once its fictionality or its fictionalization, its transgressive "parasitism," is always possible (and moreover by virtue of the very same words, the same phrases, the same grammar, etc.)? This question is all the more indispensable since the rules, and even the statements of the rules governing the relations of "nonfiction standard discourse" and its fictional "parasites," are not things found in nature, but laws, symbolic inventions, or conventions,

institutions that, in their very normality as well as in their normativity, entail something of the fictional.

In the debate, Derrida praises Austin's work but argues that he is wrong to banish what Austin calls "infelicities" from the "normal" operation of language. One "infelicity," for instance, occurs when it cannot be known whether a given speech act is "sincere" or "merely citational" (and therefore possibly ironic, etc.). Derrida argues that every iteration is necessarily "citational," due to the graphematic nature of speech and writing, and that language could not work at all without the ever-present and ineradicable possibility of such alternate readings. Derrida takes Searle to task for his attempt to get around this issue by grounding final authority in the speaker's inaccessible "intention".

Derrida argues that intention cannot possibly govern how an iteration signifies, once it becomes hearable or readable. All speech acts borrow a language whose significance is determined by historical-linguistic context, and by the alternate possibilities that this context makes possible. This significance, Derrida argues, cannot be altered or governed by the whims of intention.

In 1994, Searle argued that the ideas upon which *deconstruction* is founded are essentially a consequence of a series of conceptual confusions made by Derrida as a result of his outdated knowledge or are merely banalities. He insisted that Derrida's conception of *iterability* and its alleged "corrupting" effect on meaning stems from Derrida's ignorance of the type-token distinction that exists in current linguistics and philosophy of language. As Searle explains, "Most

importantly, from the fact that different tokens of a sentence type can be uttered on different occasions with different intentions, that is, different speaker meanings, nothing of any significance follows about the original speaker meaning of the original utterance token."

In 1995, Searle gave a brief reply to Derrida in *The Construction of Social Reality*. He called Derrida's conclusion "preposterous" and stated that "Derrida, as far as I can tell, does not have an argument. He simply declares that there is nothing outside of texts..." Searle's reference here is not to anything forwarded in the debate, but to a mistranslation of the phrase "*iln'y a pas de hors-texte*" ("there is no outside-text"), which appears in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*.

According to Searle, the consistent pattern of Derrida's rhetoric is:

(a) announce a preposterous thesis, e.g. "there is no outside-text" (*iln'y a pas de hors-texte*);

(b) when challenged on (a) respond that you have been misunderstood and revise the claim in (a) such that it becomes a truism, e.g. "'*iln'y a pas de hors-texte*' means nothing else: there is nothing outside contexts";

(c) when the reformulation from (b) is acknowledged then proceed as if the *original* formulation from (a) was accepted. The revised idea—for example that *everything exists in some context*—is a banality but a charade ensues as if the original claim—*nothing exists outside of text* [sic]—had been established.

## **Cambridge honorary doctorate**

In 1992 some academics at Cambridge University, mostly not from the philosophy faculty, proposed that Derrida be awarded an honorary doctorate. This was opposed by, among others, the university's Professor of Philosophy Hugh Mellor. Eighteen other philosophers from US, Austrian, Australian, French, Polish, Italian, German, Dutch, Swiss, Spanish, and British institutions, including Barry Smith, Willard Van Orman Quine, David Armstrong,

Ruth Barcan Marcus, and René Thom, then sent a letter to Cambridge claiming that Derrida's work "does not meet accepted standards of clarity and rigour" and describing Derrida's philosophy as being composed of "tricks and gimmicks similar to those of the Dadaists." The letter concluded that:

... where coherent assertions are being made at all, these are either false or trivial. Academic status based on what seems to us to be little more than semi-intelligible attacks upon the values of reason, truth, and scholarship is not, we submit, sufficient grounds for the awarding of an honorary degree in a distinguished university.

In the end the protesters were outnumbered—336 votes to 204—when Cambridge put the motion to a formal ballot; though almost all of those who proposed Derrida and who voted in favour were not from the philosophy faculty. Hugh Mellor continued to find the award undeserved, explaining: "He is a mediocre, unoriginal philosopher — he is not even interestingly bad."

Derrida suggested in an interview that part of the reason for the attacks on his work was that it questioned and modified "the rules of the dominant discourse, it tries to politicize and democratize education and the university scene." To answer a question about the "exceptional violence," the compulsive "ferocity," and the "exaggeration" of the "attacks," he would say that these critics organize and practice in his case "a sort of obsessive personality cult which philosophers should know how to question and above all to moderate".

### **Dispute with Richard Wolin and the NYRB**

Richard Wolin has argued since 1991 that Derrida's work, as well as that of Derrida's major inspirations (e.g., Bataille, Blanchot, Levinas, Heidegger, Nietzsche), leads to a corrosive nihilism. For example, Wolin argues that the "deconstructive gesture of overturning and reinscription ends up by threatening to efface many of the essential differences between Nazism and non-Nazism".

In 1991, when Wolin published a Derrida interview on Heidegger in the first edition of *The Heidegger Controversy*, Derrida argued that the interview was an intentionally malicious mistranslation, which was "demonstrably execrable" and "weak, simplistic, and compulsively aggressive". As French law requires the consent of an author to translations and this consent was not given, Derrida insisted that the interview not appear in any subsequent editions or reprints. Columbia University Press subsequently refused to offer reprints or new editions. Later editions of *The Heidegger Controversy* by MIT Press also omitted the Derrida interview. The matter achieved public exposure owing to a friendly review of Wolin's book by

the Heideggerian scholar Thomas Sheehan that appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, in which Sheehan characterised Derrida's protests as an imposition of censorship. It was followed by an exchange of letters. Derrida in turn responded to Sheehan and Wolin, in "The Work of Intellectuals and the Press (The Bad Example: How the New York Review of Books and Company do Business)", which was published in the book *Points....*

Twenty-four academics, belonging to different schools and groups – often in disagreement with each other and with deconstruction – signed a letter addressed to *The New York Review of Books*, in which they expressed their indignation for the magazine's behaviour as well as that of Sheenan and Wolin.

### **Critical obituaries**

Critical obituaries of Derrida were published in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Independent*. The magazine *The Nation* responded to the *New York Times* obituary saying that "even though American papers had scorned and trivialized Derrida before, the tone seemed particularly caustic for an obituary of an internationally acclaimed philosopher who had profoundly influenced two generations of American humanities scholars."

## **Wendell Johnson**

**Wendell Johnson** (April 16, 1906 – August 29, 1965) was an American psychologist, author and was a proponent of general semantics (or GS). He was born in Roxbury, Kansas and died in



Iowa City, Iowa where most of his life's work was based. The Wendell Johnson Speech and Hearing Center, which houses the University of Iowa's speech pathology and audiology programs, is named after him. Aside from his contributions to speech-language pathology, he is known for the experiment he created with Mary Tudor nicknamed "The Monster Study" for the damage it did to its human subjects.

## **Early life**

Johnson began to stutter when he was around the age of five or six. When he turned twenty he began his studies at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa during 1926 to study English. He switched to psychology for his Master's degree.

## **The Monster Study**

Wendell Johnson developed a study with the hopes of gathering a better understanding into the depths of stuttering. During the fall of 1938, Wendell Johnson recruited Mary Tudor, one of his clinical psychology graduate students. His goal was to see if she would be able to cause children who spoke perfectly well to adopt a speech defect. She drove to the Iowa Soldiers and Sailors Orphans' home where there were more than 600 orphans as well as children whose parents were unable to care for them. Of the 600 orphans, Tudor selected twenty-two children who would go on to become her subjects in what is now known as the monster study.

The twenty-two children were separated into four groups: Group IA, Group IB, Group IIA, and Group IIB. Group IA

consisted of five children who did in fact stutter and were given the label “stutterers” although the goal for this group of children was to remove the label placed on them. They were told they spoke normally as opposed to being ostracized into a group of individuals who spoke otherwise. Group IB consisted of five children as well who were also labelled as “stutterers” however, unlike with Group IA these children were not told they spoke perfectly well, instead, these children were treated as such, stutterers. Group IIA consisted of six children who spoke outside the bounds of stuttering although they were labelled as “stutterers”. Unlike with the children in Group IA who did in fact stutter but were told they spoke perfectly well, the children in group IIA spoke perfectly well and were told they had an issue with stuttering. Lastly was Group IIB which consisted of six children as well who did not stutter and had no negative speech connotations placed on them. Each group of children were treated according to their labels

This study lasted the full semester and Mary Tudor had speech sessions with each of the children in order to record their progress to add to her data. After the semester long study the results were observed. As expected, there were no major changes with the children in groups IA, IB, and IIB. However the children in group IIA had a “decrease in verbal output” as well as “they were reluctant to speak and spoke only when they were urged to” (Leonard 2019, p. 72).

One of the many issues that arose from this study was the use of children without the use of informed consent. The major issue that arose from Johnson’s experiment was the induction of stuttering in children who had not previously had issues with speech. This was in some ways an accomplishment in

terms of what it was Johnson was trying to prove although it came at the expense of these children. Leonard discusses the legalities circulating around the individuals who were a part of group IIA. The six members sued the State of Iowa in 2003 and ultimately ended up being awarded \$900,000 in 2007 by Iowa state in compensation.

Wendell Johnson's son, Nicholas Johnson, defended his father's study by explaining how it did pass IRB approval in today's society:

“Harm was neither intended nor done, as there is no evidence for permanent repercussions; children were the only acceptable subject population for the hypothesis, being based on developmental speech pathology; informed consent in this case was provided, as although deception of the children was required the administrator of the orphanage provided consent; the experiment was limited in scope and time, being limited to only a few children and lasting only one semester; finally, there was adequate post-study care for the subjects.”

In 1965, the year of Wendell Johnson's death, he was in the process of writing the Encyclopædia Britannica entry on “Speech Disorders”, defending both his work and his study when he suffered a heart attack. Although not fully completed, his 4,000 word essay was still published.

## **Stuttering contributions**

Considered one of the earliest and most influential speech pathologists in the field, Johnson spent most of his life trying to find the cause and cure for stuttering – through teaching,

research, scholarly and other writing, lecturing, supervision of graduate students, and persuading K-12 schools, the Veterans Administration and other institutions of the need for speech pathologists. He played a major role in the creation of the American Speech and Hearing Association. In 1930 Johnson published the book *Because I Stutter*, based on his master's thesis, which describes his struggles with stuttering from an autobiographical perspective.

- The stutterer, if I may speak for him as a type, does not want pity any more than he wants contempt, but he does want the understanding which the normal respect of one human being for another makes possible. He is a human being, trying to make a stutterer's adaptation to a world of glib speakers.

Johnson's book *People in Quandaries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment* (1946; still in print from the Institute of General Semantics) is an introduction to general semantics applied to psychotherapy. In 1956 his *Your Most Enchanted Listener* was published; in 1972, his *Living With Change: The Semantics of Coping*, a collection of selected portions of transcriptions of hundreds of his talks, organized by Dorothy Moeller, provided further general semantic insights. He also published many articles in his lifetime, in journals, including *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*. [1] Neil Postman acknowledges the influence of *People in Quandaries* in his own general semantics book *Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk* (1976, Delacorte, New York):

- I am tempted to say that there are two kinds of people in the world – those who will learn something

from this book (*People in Quandaries*) and those who will not. The best blessing I can give you is to wish that as you go through life you will be surrounded by the former and neglected by the latter.

Patricia Zebrowski, University of Iowa assistant professor of speech pathology and audiology, notes, "The body of data that resulted from Johnson's work on children who stutter and their parents is still the largest collection of scientific information on the subject of stuttering onset. Although new work has determined that children who stutter are doing something different in their speech production than non-stutterers, Johnson was the first to talk about the importance of a stutterer's thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. We still don't know what causes stuttering, but the 'Iowa' way of approaching study and treatment is still heavily influenced by Johnson, but with an added emphasis on speech production."

Attacks on the 1930s master's thesis, and the journalistic labeling as a "Monster Study", due to the experimentation on orphaned children and the massive, lifelong damage it did to them, contributed to controversy. On the one hand, speech research scientists Nicoline Grinager Ambrose and Ehud Yairi are critical of the *conclusions* that Mary Tudor drew from her data, but believe that no harm was done to the subjects and that there was no intention to do harm. Others felt the study was unethical by today's standards but fell within the bounds of those standards in 1939.

On the other hand, Richard Schwartz concludes in Chapter 6 of the book that the study "was unfortunate in Tudor and Johnson's lack of regard for the potential harm to the children

who participated and in their selection of institutionalized children simply because they were easily available. The deception and the apparent lack of debriefing were also not justifiable." Other authors concur claiming the orphan experiment was not within the ethical boundaries of acceptable research. The University of Iowa paid a settlement to some of the surviving subjects of over \$900,000 in 2007.

## **Personal life**

Johnson had a son, Nicholas Johnson (September 23, 1934) who was the former American Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioner from the years 1966 to 1973.

## **Marshall McLuhan**

**Herbert Marshall McLuhan** (July 21, 1911 – December 31, 1980) was a Canadian philosopher, whose work is among the cornerstones of the study of media theory. Born in Edmonton, Alberta, and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, McLuhan studied at the University of Manitoba and the University of Cambridge. He began his teaching career as a professor of English at several universities in the United States and Canada before moving to the University of Toronto in 1946, where he remained for the rest of his life.

McLuhan coined the expression "the medium is the message" and the term *global village*, and predicted the World Wide Web almost 30 years before it was invented. He was a fixture in media discourse in the late 1960s, though his influence began to wane in the early 1970s. In the years following his death, he

continued to be a controversial figure in academic circles. However, with the arrival of the Internet and the World Wide Web, interest was renewed in his work and perspective.

## **Life and career**

McLuhan was born on 21 July 1911 in Edmonton, Alberta, and was named "Marshall" after his maternal grandmother's surname. His brother, Maurice, was born two years later.

His parents were both also born in Canada: his mother, Elsie Naomi (née Hall), was a Baptist school teacher who later became an actress; and his father, Herbert Ernest McLuhan, was a Methodist with a real-estate business in Edmonton. When the business failed at the break out of World War I, McLuhan's father enlisted in the Canadian Army. After a year of service, he contracted influenza and remained in Canada, away from the front lines.

After Herbert's discharge from the army in 1915, the McLuhan family moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Marshall grew up and went to school, attending Kelvin Technical School before enrolling in the University of Manitoba in 1928.

### **Undergraduate education**

After studying for one year as an engineering student, he changed majors and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (1933), winning a University Gold Medal in Arts and Sciences. He went on to receive a Master of Arts degree (1934) in English from the university as well. He had long desired to pursue graduate studies in England and was accepted to the University of

Cambridge, having failed to secure a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford.

Though having already earned his B.A. and M.A. in Manitoba, Cambridge required him to enrol as an undergraduate "affiliated" student, with one year's credit towards a three-year bachelor's degree, before entering any doctoral studies. He entered Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in the autumn of 1934, where he studied under I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis, and was influenced by New Criticism. Years afterward, upon reflection, he credited the faculty there with influencing the direction of his later work because of their emphasis on the "training of perception", as well as such concepts as Richards' notion of "feedforward". These studies formed an important precursor to his later ideas on technological forms. He received the required bachelor's degree from Cambridge in 1936 and entered their graduate program.

### **Conversion to Catholicism**

At the University of Manitoba, McLuhan explored his conflicted relationship with religion and turned to literature to "gratify his soul's hunger for truth and beauty," later referring to this stage as agnosticism. While studying the trivium at Cambridge, he took the first steps toward his eventual conversion to Catholicism in 1937, founded on his reading of G. K. Chesterton. In 1935, he wrote to his mother:

Had I not encountered Chesterton I would have remained agnostic for many years at least. Chesterton did not convince me of religious faith, but he prevented my despair from becoming a habit or hardening into misanthropy. He opened



my eyes to European culture and encouraged me to know it more closely. He taught me the reasons for all that in me was simply blind anger and misery.

At the end of March 1937, McLuhan completed what was a slow but total conversion process, when he was formally received into the Catholic Church. After consulting a minister, his father accepted the decision to convert. His mother, however, felt that his conversion would hurt his career and was inconsolable. McLuhan was devout throughout his life, but his religion remained a private matter. He had a lifelong interest in the number three (e.g., the trivium, the Trinity) and sometimes said that the Virgin Mary provided intellectual guidance for him. For the rest of his career, he taught in Catholic institutions of higher education.

### **Early career, marriage, and doctorate**

Unable to find a suitable job in Canada, he returned from England to take a job as a teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin–Madison for the 1936–37 academic year. From 1937 to 1944, he taught English at Saint Louis University (with an interruption from 1939 to 1940 when he returned to Cambridge). There he taught courses on Shakespeare, eventually tutoring and befriending Walter J. Ong, who would write his doctoral dissertation on a topic that McLuhan had called to his attention, as well as become a well-known authority on communication and technology.

McLuhan met Corinne Lewis in St. Louis, a teacher and aspiring actress from Fort Worth, Texas, whom he married on 4 August 1939. They spent 1939–40 in Cambridge, where he

completed his master's degree (awarded in January 1940) and began to work on his doctoral dissertation on Thomas Nashe and the verbal arts. While the McLuhans were in England, World War II had broken out in Europe. For this reason, he obtained permission to complete and submit his dissertation from the United States, without having to return to Cambridge for an oral defence. In 1940, the McLuhans returned to Saint Louis University, where they started a family as he continued teaching. He was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in December 1943.

He next taught at Assumption College in Windsor, Ontario, from 1944 to 1946, then moved to Toronto in 1946 where he joined the faculty of St. Michael's College, a Catholic college of the University of Toronto, where Hugh Kenner would be one of his students.

Canadian economist and communications scholar Harold Innis was a university colleague who had a strong influence on his work. McLuhan wrote in 1964: "I am pleased to think of my own book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as a footnote to the observations of Innis on the subject of the psychic and social consequences, first of writing then of printing."

### **Later career and reputation**

In the early 1950s, McLuhan began the Communication and Culture seminars at the University of Toronto, funded by the Ford Foundation. As his reputation grew, he received a growing number of offers from other universities. During this period, he published his first major work, *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), in which he examines the effect of advertising on society and

culture. Throughout the 1950s, he and Edmund Carpenter also produced an important academic journal called *Explorations*. McLuhan and Carpenter have been characterized as the Toronto School of communication theory, together with Harold Innis, Eric A. Havelock, and Northrop Frye. During this time, McLuhan supervised the doctoral thesis of modernist writer Sheila Watson on the subject of Wyndham Lewis. Hoping to keep him from moving to another institute, the University of Toronto created the Centre for Culture and Technology (CCT) in 1963.

From 1967 to 1968, McLuhan was named the Albert Schweitzer Chair in Humanities at Fordham University in the Bronx. While at Fordham, he was diagnosed with a benign brain tumor, which was treated successfully. He returned to Toronto where he taught at the University of Toronto for the rest of his life and lived in Wychwood Park, a bucolic enclave on a hill overlooking the downtown where Anatol Rapoport was his neighbour.

In 1970, he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada. In 1975, the University of Dallas hosted him from April to May, appointing him to the McDermott Chair. Marshall and Corinne McLuhan had six children: Eric, twins Mary and Teresa, Stephanie, Elizabeth, and Michael. The associated costs of a large family eventually drove him to advertising work and accepting frequent consulting and speaking engagements for large corporations, including IBM and AT&T.

Woody Allen's Oscar-winning *Annie Hall* (1977) featured McLuhan in a cameo as himself. In the film, a pompous academic is arguing with Allen in a cinema queue when

McLuhan suddenly appears and silences him, saying, "You know nothing of my work." This was one of McLuhan's most frequent statements to and about those who disagreed with him.

## **Death**

In September 1979, McLuhan suffered a stroke which affected his ability to speak. The University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies tried to close his research centre shortly thereafter, but was deterred by substantial protests, most notably by Woody Allen. McLuhan never fully recovered from the stroke and died in his sleep on 31 December 1980. He is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Thornhill, Ontario, Canada.

## **Major works**

During his years at Saint Louis University (1937–1944), McLuhan worked concurrently on two projects: his doctoral dissertation and the manuscript that was eventually published in 1951 as a book, titled *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*, which included only a representative selection of the materials that McLuhan had prepared for it.

McLuhan's 1942 Cambridge University doctoral dissertation surveys the history of the verbal arts (grammar, logic, and rhetoric—collectively known as the trivium) from the time of Cicero down to the time of Thomas Nashe. In his later publications, McLuhan at times uses the Latin concept of the *trivium* to outline an orderly and systematic picture of certain periods in the history of Western culture. McLuhan suggests that the Late Middle Ages, for instance, were characterized by

the heavy emphasis on the formal study of logic. The key development that led to the Renaissance was not the rediscovery of ancient texts, but a shift in emphasis from the formal study of logic to rhetoric and grammar. Modern life is characterized by the re-emergence of grammar as its most salient feature—a trend McLuhan felt was exemplified by the New Criticism of Richards and Leavis.

McLuhan also began the academic journal *Explorations* with anthropologist Edmund "Ted" Carpenter. In a letter to Walter Ong, dated 31 May 1953, McLuhan reports that he had received a two-year grant of \$43,000 from the Ford Foundation to carry out a communication project at the University of Toronto involving faculty from different disciplines, which led to the creation of the journal.

At a Fordham lecture in 1999, Tom Wolfe suggested that a major under-acknowledged influence on McLuhan's work is the Jesuit philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose ideas anticipated those of McLuhan, especially the evolution of the human mind into the "noosphere." In fact, McLuhan warns against outright dismissing or whole-heartedly accepting de Chardin's observations early on in his second published book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*:

This externalization of our senses creates what de Chardin calls the "noosphere" or a technological brain for the world. Instead of tending towards a vast Alexandrian library the world has become a computer, an electronic brain, exactly as in an infantile piece of science fiction. And as our senses have gone outside us, Big Brother goes inside. So, unless aware of this dynamic, we shall at once move into a phase of panic terrors,

exactly befitting a small world of tribal drums, total interdependence, and super-imposed co-existence.

In his private life, McLuhan wrote to friends saying: "I am not a fan of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The idea that anything is better because it comes later is surely borrowed from pre-electronic technologies." Further, McLuhan noted to a Catholic collaborator: "The idea of a Cosmic thrust in one direction ... is surely one of the lamest semantic fallacies ever bred by the word 'evolution'.... That development should have any direction at all is inconceivable except to the highly literate community."

Some of McLuhan's main ideas were influenced or prefigured by anthropologist like Edward Sapir and Claude Lévi-Strauss, arguably with a more complex historical and psychological analysis. The idea of the retribalization of Western society by the far-reaching techniques of communication, the view on the function of the artist in society, and the characterization of means of transportation, like the railroad and the airplane, as means of communication, are prefigured in Sapir's 1933 article on *Communication* in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, while the distinction between "hot" and "cool" media draws from Lévi-Strauss' distinction between hot and cold societies.

### ***The Mechanical Bride (1951)***

McLuhan's first book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (1951), is a pioneering study in the field now known as popular culture. In the book, McLuhan turns his attention to analysing and commenting on numerous examples of persuasion in contemporary popular culture. This followed naturally from his earlier work as both dialectic and rhetoric in

the classical trivium aimed at persuasion. At this point, his focus shifted dramatically, turning inward to study the influence of communication media independent of their content. His famous aphorism "the medium is the message" (elaborated in his *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964) calls attention to this intrinsic effect of communications media.

His interest in the critical study of popular culture was influenced by the 1933 book *Culture and Environment* by F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, and the title *The Mechanical Bride* is derived from a piece by the Dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp.

Like his later *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), *The Mechanical Bride* is composed of a number of short essays that may be read in any order—what he styled the "mosaic approach" to writing a book. Each essay begins with a newspaper or magazine article, or an advertisement, followed by McLuhan's analysis thereof. The analyses bear on aesthetic considerations as well as on the implications behind the imagery and text. McLuhan chose these ads and articles not only to draw attention to their symbolism, as well as their implications for the corporate entities who created and disseminated them, but also to mull over what such advertising implies about the wider society at which it is aimed. Roland Barthes's essays 1957 *Mythologies*, echoes McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*, as a series of exhibits of popular mass culture (like advertisements, newspaper articles and photographs) that are analyzed in a semiological way.

## ***The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962)***

Written in 1961 and first published by University of Toronto Press, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) is a pioneering study in the fields of oral culture, print culture, cultural studies, and media ecology.

Throughout the book, McLuhan efforts to reveal how communication technology (i.e., alphabetic writing, the printing press, and the electronic media) affects cognitive organization, which in turn has profound ramifications for social organization:

[I]f a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture. It is comparable to what happens when a new note is added to a melody. And when the sense ratios alter in any culture then what had appeared lucid before may suddenly become opaque, and what had been vague or opaque will become translucent.

### **Movable type**

McLuhan's episodic history takes the reader from pre-alphabetic, tribal humankind to the electronic age. According to McLuhan, the invention of movable type greatly accelerated, intensified, and ultimately enabled cultural and cognitive changes that had already been taking place since the invention and implementation of the alphabet, by which McLuhan means phonemic orthography. (McLuhan is careful to distinguish the phonetic alphabet from logographic or logogramic writing systems, such as Egyptian hieroglyphs or ideograms.)



Print culture, ushered in by the advance in printing during the middle of the 15th century when the Gutenberg press was invented, brought about the cultural predominance of the visual over the aural/oral. Quoting (with approval) an observation on the nature of the printed word from William Ivins' *Prints and Visual Communication*, McLuhan remarks:

In this passage [Ivins] not only notes the ingraining of lineal, sequential habits, but, even more important, points out the visual homogenizing of experience of print culture, and the relegation of auditory and other sensuous complexity to the background....

The technology and social effects of typography incline us to abstain from noting interplay and, as it were, "formal" causality, both in our inner and external lives. Print exists by virtue of the static separation of functions and fosters a mentality that gradually resists any but a separative and compartmentalizing or specialist outlook.

The main concept of McLuhan's argument (later elaborated upon in *The Medium Is the Massage*) is that new technologies (such as alphabets, printing presses, and even speech) exert a gravitational effect on cognition, which in turn, affects social organization: print technology changes our perceptual habits—"visual homogenizing of experience"—which in turn affects social interactions—"fosters a mentality that gradually resists all but a...specialist outlook". According to McLuhan, this advance of print technology contributed to and made possible most of the salient trends in the modern period in the Western world: individualism, democracy, Protestantism, capitalism, and nationalism. For McLuhan, these trends all reverberate

with print technology's principle of "segmentation of actions and functions and principle of visual quantification."

## **Global village**

In the early 1960s, McLuhan wrote that the visual, individualistic print culture would soon be brought to an end by what he called "electronic interdependence:" when electronic media replaces visual culture with aural/oral culture. In this new age, humankind will move from individualism and fragmentation to a collective identity, with a "tribal base." McLuhan's coinage for this new social organization is the *global village*.

The term is sometimes described as having negative connotations in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, but McLuhan was interested in exploring effects, not making value judgments:

Instead of tending towards a vast Alexandrian library the world has become a computer, an electronic brain, exactly as an infantile piece of science fiction. And as our senses have gone outside us, Big Brother goes inside. So, unless aware of this dynamic, we shall at once move into a phase of panic terrors, exactly befitting a small world of tribal drums, total interdependence, and superimposed co-existence.... Terror is the normal state of any oral society, for in it everything affects everything all the time....

In our long striving to recover for the Western world a unity of sensibility and of thought and feeling we have no more been prepared to accept the tribal consequences of such unity than we were ready for the fragmentation of the human psyche by print culture.

Key to McLuhan's argument is the idea that technology has no *per se* moral bent—it is a tool that profoundly shapes an individual's and, by extension, a society's self-conception and realization:

Is it not obvious that there are always enough moral problems without also taking a moral stand on technological grounds?...

Print is the extreme phase of alphabet culture that detribalizes or decollectivizes man in the first instance. Print raises the visual features of alphabet to highest intensity of definition. Thus print carries the individuating power of the phonetic alphabet much further than manuscript culture could ever do. Print is the technology of individualism. If men decided to modify this visual technology by an electric technology, individualism would also be modified. To raise a moral complaint about this is like cussing a buzz-saw for lopping off fingers. "But", someone says, "we didn't know it would happen." Yet even witlessness is not a moral issue. It is a problem, but not a moral problem; and it would be nice to clear away some of the moral fogs that surround our technologies. It would be good for morality.

The moral valence of technology's effects on cognition is, for McLuhan, a matter of perspective. For instance, McLuhan contrasts the considerable alarm and revulsion that the growing quantity of books aroused in the latter 17th century with the modern concern for the "end of the book." If there can be no universal moral sentence passed on technology, McLuhan believes that "there can only be disaster arising from unawareness of the causalities and effects inherent in our technologies".

Though the World Wide Web was invented almost 30 years after *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, and 10 years after his death, McLuhan prophesied the web technology seen today as early as 1962:

The next medium, whatever it is—it may be the extension of consciousness—will include television as its content, not as its environment, and will transform television into an art form. A computer as a research and communication instrument could enhance retrieval, obsolesce mass library organization, retrieve the individual's encyclopedic function and flip into a private line to speedily tailored data of a saleable kind.

Furthermore, McLuhan coined and certainly popularized the usage of the term *surfing* to refer to rapid, irregular, and multidirectional movement through a heterogeneous body of documents or knowledge, e.g., statements such as "Heidegger surf-boards along on the electronic wave as triumphantly as Descartes rode the mechanical wave." Paul Levinson's 1999 book *Digital McLuhan* explores the ways that McLuhan's work may be understood better through using the lens of the digital revolution.

McLuhan frequently quoted Walter Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958), which evidently had prompted McLuhan to write *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Ong wrote a highly favorable review of this new book in *America*. However, Ong later tempered his praise, by describing McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as "a racy survey, indifferent to some scholarly detail, but uniquely valuable in suggesting the sweep and depth of the cultural and psychological changes entailed in the passage from illiteracy to print and beyond." McLuhan himself said of the book, "I'm not concerned to get any kudos

out of [*The Gutenberg Galaxy*]. It seems to me a book that somebody should have written a century ago. I wish somebody else had written it. It will be a useful prelude to the rewrite of *Understanding Media* [the 1960 NAEB report] that I'm doing now."

McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* won Canada's highest literary award, the Governor-General's Award for Non-Fiction, in 1962. The chairman of the selection committee was McLuhan's colleague at the University of Toronto and oftentime intellectual sparring partner, Northrop Frye.

### ***Understanding Media (1964)***

McLuhan's most widely-known work, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), is a seminal study in media theory. Dismayed by the way in which people approach and use new media such as television, McLuhan famously argues that in the modern world "we live mythically and integrally...but continue to think in the old, fragmented space and time patterns of the pre-electric age."

McLuhan proposed that media themselves, not the content they carry, should be the focus of study—popularly quoted as "the medium is the message." McLuhan's insight was that a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself. McLuhan pointed to the light bulb as a clear demonstration of this concept. A light bulb does not have content in the way that a newspaper has articles or a television has programs, yet it is a medium that has a social effect; that is, a light bulb enables people to create spaces during

nighttime that would otherwise be enveloped by darkness. He describes the light bulb as a medium without any content. McLuhan states that "a light bulb creates an environment by its mere presence." More controversially, he postulated that content had little effect on society—in other words, it did not matter if television broadcasts children's shows or violent programming, to illustrate one example—the effect of television on society would be identical. He noted that all media have characteristics that engage the viewer in different ways; for instance, a passage in a book could be reread at will, but a movie had to be screened again in its entirety to study any individual part of it.

### **"Hot" and "cool" media**

In the first part of *Understanding Media*, McLuhan states that different media invite different degrees of participation on the part of a person who chooses to consume a medium. Using a terminology derived from French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss' distinction between hot and cold societies, McLuhan argues that a **cool medium** requires increased involvement due to decreased description, while a **hot medium** is the opposite, decreasing involvement and increasing description. In other words, a society that appears to be actively participating in the streaming of content but not considering the effects of the tool is not allowing an "extension of ourselves." A movie is thus said to be "high definition," demanding a viewer's attention, while a comic book to be "low definition," requiring much more conscious participation by the reader to extract value: "Any hot medium allows of less participation than a cool one, as a lecture makes for less participation than a seminar, and a book for less than a dialogue."

Some media, such as movies, are *hot*—that is, they enhance one single sense, in this case vision, in such a manner that a person does not need to exert much effort to perceive a detailed moving image.

Hot media usually, but not always, provide complete involvement with considerable stimulus. In contrast, "cool" print may also occupy visual space, using visual senses, but requires focus and comprehension to immerse its reader. Hot media creation favour analytical precision, quantitative analysis and sequential ordering, as they are usually sequential, linear, and logical. They emphasize one sense (for example, of sight or sound) over the others. For this reason hot media also include film (especially silent films), radio, the lecture, and photography.

McLuhan contrasts *hot* media with *cool*—specifically, television [of the 1960s i.e. small black-and-white screens], which he claims requires more effort on the part of the viewer to determine meaning; and comics, which, due to their minimal presentation of visual detail, require a high degree of effort to fill in details that the cartoonist may have intended to portray. Cool media are usually, but not always, those that provide little involvement with substantial stimulus.

They require more active participation on the part of the user, including the perception of abstract patterning and simultaneous comprehension of all parts. Therefore, in addition to television, cool media include the seminar and cartoons. McLuhan describes the term *cool media* as emerging from jazz and popular music used, in this context, to mean "detached."

This concept appears to force media into binary categories. However, McLuhan's hot and cool exist on a continuum: they are more correctly measured on a scale than as dichotomous terms.

### **Critiques of *Understanding Media***

Some theorists have attacked McLuhan's definition and treatment of the word "medium" for being too simplistic. Umberto Eco, for instance, contends that McLuhan's medium conflates channels, codes, and messages under the overarching term of the medium, confusing the vehicle, internal code, and content of a given message in his framework.

In *Media Manifestos*, Régis Debray also takes issue with McLuhan's envisioning of the medium. Like Eco, he is ill at ease with this reductionist approach, summarizing its ramifications as follows:

The list of objections could be and has been lengthened indefinitely: confusing technology itself with its use of the media makes of the media an abstract, undifferentiated force and produces its image in an imaginary "public" for mass consumption; the magical naivete of supposed causalities turns the media into a catch-all and contagious "mana"; apocalyptic millenarianism invents the figure of a *homo mass-mediaticus* without ties to historical and social context, and so on.

Furthermore, when *Wired* magazine interviewed him in 1995, Debray stated that he views McLuhan "more as a poet than a historian, a master of intellectual collage rather than a systematic analyst.... McLuhan overemphasizes the technology



behind cultural change at the expense of the usage that the messages and codes make of that technology."

Dwight Macdonald, in turn, reproached McLuhan for his focus on television and for his "aphoristic" style of prose, which he believes leaves *Understanding Media* filled with "contradictions, non-sequiturs, facts that are distorted and facts that are not facts, exaggerations, and chronic rhetorical vagueness."

Additionally, Brian Winston's *Misunderstanding Media*, published in 1986, chides McLuhan for what he sees as his technologically deterministic stances. Raymond Williams furthers this point of contention, claiming:

The work of McLuhan was a particular culmination of an aesthetic theory which became, negatively, a social theory ... It is an apparently sophisticated technological determinism which has the significant effect of indicating a social and cultural determinism.... For if the medium – whether print or television – is the cause, all other causes, all that men ordinarily see as history, are at once reduced to effects.

David Carr states that there has been a long line of "academics who have made a career out of deconstructing McLuhan's effort to define the modern media ecosystem", whether it be due to what they see as McLuhan's ignorance toward sociohistorical context or the style of his argument.

While some critics have taken issue with McLuhan's writing style and mode of argument, McLuhan himself urged readers to think of his work as "probes" or "mosaics" offering a toolkit approach to thinking about the media. His eclectic writing

style has also been praised for its postmodern sensibilities and suitability for virtual space.

### ***The Medium Is the Massage (1967)***

*The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*, published in 1967, was McLuhan's best seller, "eventually selling nearly a million copies worldwide." Initiated by Quentin Fiore, McLuhan adopted the term "massage" to denote the effect each medium has on the human sensorium, taking inventory of the "effects" of numerous media in terms of how they "massage" the sensorium.

Fiore, at the time a prominent graphic designer and communications consultant, set about composing the visual illustration of these effects which were compiled by Jerome Agel. Near the beginning of the book, Fiore adopted a pattern in which an image demonstrating a media effect was presented with a textual synopsis on the facing page. The reader experiences a repeated shifting of analytic registers—from "reading" typographic print to "scanning" photographic facsimiles—reinforcing McLuhan's overarching argument in this book: namely, that each medium produces a different "massage" or "effect" on the human sensorium.

In *The Medium Is the Massage*, McLuhan also rehashed the argument—which first appeared in the Prologue to 1962's *The Gutenberg Galaxy*—that all media are "extensions" of our human senses, bodies and minds.

Finally, McLuhan described key points of change in how man has viewed the world and how these views were changed by the adoption of new media. "The technique of invention was the

discovery of the nineteenth [century]", brought on by the adoption of fixed points of view and perspective by typography, while "[t]he technique of the suspended judgment is the discovery of the twentieth century," brought on by the bard abilities of radio, movies and television.

The past went that-a-way. When faced with a totally new situation we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavor of the most recent past.

We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backward into the future. Suburbia lives imaginatively in Bonanza-land.

An audio recording version of McLuhan's famous work was made by Columbia Records. The recording consists of a pastiche of statements made by McLuhan *interrupted* by other speakers, including people speaking in various phonations and falsettos, discordant sounds and 1960s incidental music in what could be considered a deliberate attempt to translate the disconnected images seen on TV into an audio format, resulting in the prevention of a connected stream of conscious thought. Various audio recording techniques and statements are used to illustrate the relationship between spoken, literary speech and the characteristics of electronic audio media. McLuhan biographer Philip Marchand called the recording "the 1967 equivalent of a McLuhan video."

"I wouldn't be seen dead with a living work of art."—'Old man' speaking "Drop this jiggery-pokery and talk straight turkey."—'Middle aged man' speaking

## ***War and Peace in the Global Village (1968)***

In *War and Peace in the Global Village*, McLuhan used James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, an inspiration for this study of war throughout history, as an indicator as to how war may be conducted in the future.

Joyce's *Wake* is claimed to be a gigantic cryptogram which reveals a cyclic pattern for the whole history of man through its Ten Thunders. Each "thunder" below is a 100-character portmanteau of other words to create a statement he likens to an effect that each technology has on the society into which it is introduced.

In order to glean the most understanding out of each, the reader must break the portmanteau into separate words (and many of these are themselves portmanteaus of words taken from multiple languages other than English) and speak them aloud for the spoken effect of each word. There is much dispute over what each portmanteau truly denotes.

McLuhan claims that the ten thunders in *Wake* represent different stages in the history of man:

- *Thunder 1: Paleolithic to Neolithic.* Speech. Split of East/West. From herding to harnessing animals.
- *Thunder 2: Clothing as weaponry.* Enclosure of private parts. First social aggression.
- *Thunder 3: Specialism.* Centralism via wheel, transport, cities: civil life.
- *Thunder 4: Markets and truck gardens.* Patterns of nature submitted to greed and power.

- *Thunder 5: Printing.* Distortion and translation of human patterns and postures and pastors.
- *Thunder 6: Industrial Revolution.* Extreme development of print process and individualism.
- *Thunder 7: Tribal man again.* All characters end up separate, private man. Return of choric.
- *Thunder 8: Movies.* Pop art, pop Kulch via tribal radio. Wedding of sight and sound.
- *Thunder 9: Car and Plane.* Both centralizing and decentralizing at once create cities in crisis. Speed and death.
- *Thunder 10: Television.* Back to tribal involvement in tribal mood-mud. The last thunder is a turbulent, muddy wake, and murk of non-visual, tactile man.

### ***From Cliché to Archetype (1970)***

Collaborating with Canadian poet Wilfred Watson in *From Cliché to Archetype* (1970), McLuhan approaches the various implications of the verbal cliché and of the archetype. One major facet in McLuhan's overall framework introduced in this book that is seldom noticed is the provision of a new term that actually succeeds the global village: the *global theater*.

In McLuhan's terms, a *cliché* is a "normal" action, phrase, etc. which becomes so often used that we are "anesthetized" to its effects. McLuhan provides the example of Eugène Ionesco's play *The Bald Soprano*, whose dialogue consists entirely of phrases Ionesco pulled from an Assimil language book: "Ionesco originally put all these idiomatic English clichés into literary French which presented the English in the most absurd aspect possible."

McLuhan's *archetype* "is a quoted extension, medium, technology, or environment." *Environment* would also include the kinds of "awareness" and cognitive shifts brought upon people by it, not totally unlike the psychological context Carl Jung described.

McLuhan also posits that there is a factor of interplay between the *cliché* and the *archetype*, or a "doubleness:"

Another theme of the Wake [*Finnegans Wake*] that helps in the understanding of the paradoxical shift from cliché to archetype is 'past time are pastimes.' The dominant technologies of one age become the games and pastimes of a later age. In the 20th century, the number of 'past times' that are simultaneously available is so vast as to create cultural anarchy. When all the cultures of the world are simultaneously present, the work of the artist in the elucidation of form takes on new scope and new urgency. Most men are pushed into the artist's role. The artist cannot dispense with the principle of 'doubleness' or 'interplay' because this type of hendiadys dialogue is essential to the very structure of consciousness, awareness, and autonomy.

McLuhan relates the cliché-to-archetype process to the Theater of the Absurd:

Pascal, in the seventeenth century, tells us that the heart has many reasons of which the head knows nothing. The Theater of the Absurd is essentially a communicating to the head of some of the silent languages of the heart which in two or three hundred years it has tried to forget all about. In the seventeenth century world the languages of the heart were pushed down into the unconscious by the dominant print

cliché. The "languages of the heart," or what McLuhan would otherwise define as oral culture, were thus made archetype by means of the printing press, and turned into cliché.

The satellite medium, McLuhan states, encloses the Earth in a man-made environment, which "ends 'Nature' and turns the globe into a repertory theater to be programmed." All previous environments (book, newspaper, radio, etc.) and their artifacts are retrieved under these conditions ("past times are pastimes"). McLuhan thereby meshes this into the term *global theater*. It serves as an update to his older concept of the global village, which, in its own definitions, can be said to be subsumed into the overall condition described by that of the global theater.

### ***The Global Village (1989)***

In his posthumous book, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (1989), McLuhan, collaborating with Bruce R. Powers, provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding the cultural implications of the technological advances associated with the rise of a worldwide electronic network. This is a major work of McLuhan's as it contains the most extensive elaboration of his concept of *acoustic space*, and provides a critique of standard 20th-century communication models such as the Shannon-Weaver model.

McLuhan distinguishes between the existing worldview of *visual space*—a linear, quantitative, classically geometric model—and that of *acoustic space*—a holistic, qualitative order with an intricate, paradoxical topology: "Acoustic Space has

the basic character of a sphere whose focus or center is simultaneously everywhere and whose margin is nowhere." The transition from *visual* to *acousticspace* was not automatic with the advent of the global network, but would have to be a conscious project. The "universal environment of simultaneous electronic flow" inherently favors right-brain Acoustic Space, yet we are held back by habits of adhering to a fixed point of view. There are no boundaries to sound. We hear from all directions at once. Yet Acoustic and Visual Space are, in fact, inseparable. The resonant interval is the invisible borderline between Visual and Acoustic Space. This is like the television camera that the Apollo 8 astronauts focused on the Earth after they had orbited the moon.

McLuhan illustrates how it feels to exist within acoustic space by quoting from the autobiography of Jacques Lusseyran, *And There Was Light*. Lusseyran lost his eyesight in a violent accident as a child, and the autobiography describes how a reordering of his sensory life and perception followed:

When I came upon the myth of objectivity in certain modern thinkers, it made me angry. So there was only one world for these people, the same for everyone. And all the other worlds were to be counted as illusions left over from the past. Or why not call them by their name - hallucinations? I had learned to my cost how wrong they were. From my own experience I knew very well that it was enough to take from a man a memory here, an association there, to deprive him of hearing or sight, for the world to undergo immediate transformation, and for another world, entirely different, but entirely coherent, to be born. Another world? Not really. The same world, rather, but seen from a different angle, and counted in entirely new



measures. When this happened all the hierarchies they called objective were turned upside down, scattered to the four winds, not even theories but like whims.

Reading, writing, and hierarchical ordering are associated with the left brain and visual space, as are the linear concept of time and phonetic literacy. The left brain is the locus of analysis, classification, and rationality. The right brain and acoustic space are the locus of the spatial, tactile, and musical. "*Comprehensive awareness*" results when the two sides of the brain are in true balance. Visual Space is associated with the simplified worldview of Euclidean geometry, the intuitive three dimensions useful for the architecture of buildings and the surveying of land. It is linearly rational and has no grasp of the acoustic. Acoustic Space is multisensory. McLuhan writes about robotism in the context of Japanese Zen Buddhism and how it can offer us new ways of thinking about technology. The Western way of thinking about technology is too much related to the left hemisphere of our brain, which has a rational and linear focus. What he called robotism might better be called androidism in the wake of *Blade Runner* and the novels of Philip K. Dick. Robotism-androidism emerges from the further development of the right hemisphere of the brain, creativity and a new relationship to spacetime (most humans are still living in 17th-century classical Newtonian physics spacetime). Robots-androids will have much greater flexibility than humans have had until now, in both mind and body. Robots-androids will teach humanity this new flexibility. And this flexibility of androids (what McLuhan calls robotism) has a strong affinity with Japanese culture and life. McLuhan quotes from Ruth

Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, an anthropological study of Japanese culture published in 1946:

Occidentals cannot easily credit the ability of the Japanese to swing from one behavior to another without psychic cost. Such extreme possibilities are not included in our experience. Yet in Japanese life the contradictions, as they seem to us, are as deeply based in their view of life as our uniformities are in ours. The ability to live in the present and instantly readjust.

### **Beyond existing communication models**

"All Western scientific models of communication are—like the Shannon–Weaver model—linear, sequential, and logical as a reflection of the late medieval emphasis on the Greek notion of efficient causality." McLuhan and Powers criticize the Shannon-Weaver model of communication as emblematic of left-hemisphere bias and linearity, descended from a print-era perversion of Aristotle's notion of efficient causality.

A third term of *The Global Village* that McLuhan and Powers develop at length is The Tetrad. McLuhan had begun development on the Tetrad as early as 1974. The tetrad an analogical, simultaneous, four-fold pattern of transformation. "At full maturity the tetrad reveals the metaphoric structure of the artifact as having two figures and two grounds in dynamic and analogical relationship to each other." Like the camera focused on the Earth by the Apollo 8 astronauts, the tetrad reveals figure (Moon) and ground (Earth) simultaneously. The right-brain hemisphere thinking is the capability of being in many places at the same time. Electricity is acoustic. It is simultaneously everywhere. The Tetrad, with its fourfold

Möbius topological structure of enhancement, reversal, retrieval and obsolescence, is mobilized by McLuhan and Powers to illuminate the media or technological inventions of cash money, the compass, the computer, the database, the satellite, and the global media network.

## **Key concepts**

### **Tetrad of media effects**

In *Laws of Media* (1988), published posthumously by his son Eric, McLuhan summarized his ideas about media in a concise tetrad of media effects. The tetrad is a means of examining the effects on society of any technology (i.e., any medium) by dividing its effects into four categories and displaying them simultaneously. McLuhan designed the tetrad as a pedagogical tool, phrasing his laws as questions with which to consider any medium:

- What does the medium enhance?
- What does the medium make obsolete?
- What does the medium retrieve that had been obsolesced earlier?
- What does the medium flip into when pushed to extremes?

The laws of the tetrad exist simultaneously, not successively or chronologically, and allow the questioner to explore the "grammar and syntax" of the "language" of media. McLuhan departs from his mentor Harold Innis in suggesting that a medium "overheats," or reverses into an opposing form, when taken to its extreme.

Visually, a tetrad can be depicted as four diamonds forming an X, with the name of a medium in the centre. The two diamonds on the left of a tetrad are the *Enhancement* and *Retrieval* qualities of the medium, both *Figure* qualities. The two diamonds on the right of a tetrad are the *Obsolescence* and *Reversal* qualities, both *Ground* qualities.

Using the example of radio:

- Enhancement (figure): What the medium amplifies or intensifies. *Radio amplifies news and music via sound.*
- Obsolescence (ground): What the medium drives out of prominence. *Radio reduces the importance of print and the visual.*
- Retrieval (figure): What the medium recovers which was previously lost. *Radio returns the spoken word to the forefront.*
- Reversal (ground): What the medium does when pushed to its limits. *Acoustic radio flips into audio-visual TV.*

## **Figure and ground**

McLuhan adapted the Gestalt psychology idea of a *figure and a ground*, which underpins the meaning of "the medium is the message." He used this concept to explain how a form of communications technology, the medium, or *figure*, necessarily operates through its context, or *ground*.

McLuhan believed that in order to grasp fully the effect of a new technology, one must examine figure (medium) and ground (context) together, since neither is completely intelligible

without the other. McLuhan argued that we must study media in their historical context, particularly in relation to the technologies that preceded them. The present environment, itself made up of the effects of previous technologies, gives rise to new technologies, which, in their turn, further affect society and individuals.

All technologies have embedded within them their own assumptions about time and space. The message which the medium conveys can only be understood if the medium and the environment in which the medium is used—and which, simultaneously, it effectively creates—are analysed together. He believed that an examination of the figure-ground relationship can offer a critical commentary on culture and society.

### **Opposition between optic and haptic perception**

In McLuhan's (and Harley Parker's) work, electric media has an affinity with haptic and hearing perception, while mechanical media have an affinity with visual perception. This opposition between optic and haptic, had been previously formulated by art historians Alois Riegl, in his 1901 *Late Roman art industry*, and then Erwin Panofsky (in his *Perspective as Symbolic Form*). However, McLuhan's comments are more aware of the contingent cultural context in which for instance linear perspective arose, while Panofsky's ones are more teleological.

Also Walter Benjamin, in his *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935), observed how in the scenario of perceptions of modern Western culture, from about the 19th century, has begun a shift from the optic towards the haptic.

This shift is one of the main recurring topics in McLuhan work, which McLuhan attributes to the advent of the electronic era.

## **Legacy**

After the publication of *Understanding Media*, McLuhan received an astonishing amount of publicity, making him perhaps the most publicized English teacher in the twentieth century and arguably the most controversial. This publicity began with the work of two California advertising executives, Howard Gossage and Gerald Feigen who used personal funds to fund their practice of "genius scouting". Much enamoured with McLuhan's work, Feigen and Gossage arranged for McLuhan to meet with editors of several major New York magazines in May 1965 at the Lombardy Hotel in New York. Philip Marchand reports that, as a direct consequence of these meetings, McLuhan was offered the use of an office in the headquarters of both *Time* and *Newsweek*, any time he needed it.

In August 1965, Feigen and Gossage held what they called a "McLuhan festival" in the offices of Gossage's advertising agency in San Francisco. During this "festival", McLuhan met with advertising executives, members of the mayor's office, and editors from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Ramparts* magazine. More significant was the presence at the festival of Tom Wolfe, who wrote about McLuhan in a subsequent article, "What If He Is Right?", published in *New York* magazine and Wolfe's own *The Pump House Gang*. According to Feigen and Gossage, their work had only a moderate effect on McLuhan's eventual celebrity: they claimed that their work only "probably speeded up the recognition of [McLuhan's] genius by about six months." In any case, McLuhan soon became a fixture of media

discourse. *Newsweek* magazine did a cover story on him; articles appeared in *Life*, *Harper's*, *Fortune*, *Esquire*, and others. Cartoons about him appeared in *The New Yorker*. In 1969, *Playboy* magazine published a lengthy interview with him. In a running gag on the popular sketch comedy *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, the "poet" Henry Gibson would randomly say, "Marshall McLuhan, what are you doin'?"

McLuhan was credited with coining the phrase *Turn on, tune in, drop out* by its popularizer, Timothy Leary, in the 1960s. In a 1988 interview with Neil Strauss, Leary stated that the slogan was "given to him" by McLuhan during a lunch in New York City. Leary said McLuhan "was very much interested in ideas and marketing, and he started singing something like, 'Psychedelics hit the spot / Five hundred micrograms, that's a lot,' to the tune of a Pepsi commercial. Then he started going, 'Tune in, turn on, and drop out.'"

During his lifetime and afterward, McLuhan heavily influenced cultural critics, thinkers, and media theorists such as Neil Postman, Jean Baudrillard, Timothy Leary, Terence McKenna, William Irwin Thompson, Paul Levinson, Douglas Rushkoff, Jaron Lanier, Hugh Kenner, and John David Ebert, as well as political leaders such as Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Jerry Brown.

Andy Warhol was paraphrasing McLuhan with his now famous "15 minutes of fame" quote. When asked in the 1970s for a way to sedate violences in Angola, he suggested a massive spread of TV devices. Douglas Coupland, argued that McLuhan "was conservative, socially, but he never let politics enter his writing or his teaching".

The character "Brian O'Blivion" in David Cronenberg's 1983 film *Videodrome* is a "media oracle" based on McLuhan. In 1991, McLuhan was named as the "patron saint" of *Wired* magazine and a quote of his appeared on the masthead for the first ten years of its publication. He is mentioned by name in a Peter Gabriel-penned lyric in the song "Broadway Melody of 1974". This song appears on the concept album *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, from progressive rock band Genesis.

The lyric is: "Marshall McLuhan, casual viewin' head buried in the sand." McLuhan is also jokingly referred to during an episode of *The Sopranos* entitled "House Arrest". Despite his death in 1980, someone claiming to be McLuhan was posting on a *Wired* mailing list in 1996.

The information this individual provided convinced one writer for *Wired* that "if the poster was not McLuhan himself, it was a bot programmed with an eerie command of McLuhan's life and inimitable perspective."

A new centre known as the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, formed soon after his death in 1980, was the successor to McLuhan's Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto. Since 1994, it has been part of the University of Toronto Faculty of Information and in 2008 the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology incorporated in the Coach House Institute. The first director was literacy scholar and OISE Professor David R. Olsen. From 1983 until 2008, the McLuhan Program was under the direction of Derrick de Kerckhove who was McLuhan's student and translator. From 2008 through 2015 Professor Dominique Scheffel-Dunand of York University served Director of the Program. In 2011 at the



time of his centenary the Coach House Institute established a Marshall McLuhan Centenary Fellowship program in his honor, and each year appoints up to four fellows for a maximum of two years. In May 2016 the Coach House Institute was renamed the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology; its Interim Director was Seamus Ross (2015–16). Sarah Sharma, an Associate Professor of Media Theory from the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) and the Faculty of Information (St. George), began a five-year term as director of the Coach House (2017- ). Professor Sharma's research and teaching focuses on feminist approaches to technology, including issues related to temporality and media. Professor Sharma's thematic for the 2017-2018 Monday Night Seminars at the McLuhan Centre is MsUnderstandingMedia which extends and introduces feminist approaches to technology to McLuhan's formulations of technology and culture.

In Toronto, Marshall McLuhan Catholic Secondary School is named after him.

## **Norbert Wiener**

**Norbert Wiener** (November 26, 1894 – March 18, 1964) was an American mathematician and philosopher. He was a professor of mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

A child prodigy, Wiener later became an early researcher in stochastic and mathematical noise processes, contributing work relevant to electronic engineering, electronic communication, and control systems.

Wiener is considered the originator of cybernetics, the science of communication as it relates to living things and machines, with implications for engineering, systems control, computer science, biology, neuroscience, philosophy, and the organization of society.

Norbert Wiener is credited as being one of the first to theorize that all intelligent behavior was the result of feedback mechanisms, that could possibly be simulated by machines and was an important early step towards the development of modern artificial intelligence.

## **Biography**

### **Youth**

Wiener was born in Columbia, Missouri, the first child of Leo Wiener and Bertha Kahn, Jewish immigrants from Poland and Germany, respectively. Through his father, he was related to Maimonides, the famous rabbi, philosopher and physician from Al Andalus, as well as to Akiva Eger, chief rabbi of Posen from 1815 to 1837. Leo had educated Norbert at home until 1903, employing teaching methods of his own invention, except for a brief interlude when Norbert was 7 years of age. Earning his living teaching German and Slavic languages, Leo read widely and accumulated a personal library from which the young Norbert benefited greatly. Leo also had ample ability in mathematics and tutored his son in the subject until he left home. In his autobiography, Norbert described his father as calm and patient, unless he (Norbert) failed to give a correct answer, at which his father would lose his temper.

A child prodigy, he graduated from Ayer High School in 1906 at 11 years of age, and Wiener then entered Tufts College. He was awarded a BA in mathematics in 1909 at the age of 14, whereupon he began graduate studies of zoology at Harvard. In 1910 he transferred to Cornell to study philosophy. He graduated in 1911 at 17 years of age.

## **Harvard and World War I**

The next year he returned to Harvard, while still continuing his philosophical studies. Back at Harvard, Wiener became influenced by Edward Vermilye Huntington, whose mathematical interests ranged from axiomatic foundations to engineering problems. Harvard awarded Wiener a Ph.D. in June 1913, when he was only 19 years old, for a dissertation on mathematical logic (a comparison of the work of Ernst Schröder with that of Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell), supervised by Karl Schmidt, the essential results of which were published as Wiener (1914). He was one of the youngest to achieve such a feat. In that dissertation, he was the first to state publicly that ordered pairs can be defined in terms of elementary set theory. Hence relations can be defined by set theory, thus the theory of relations does not require any axioms or primitive notions distinct from those of set theory. In 1921, Kazimierz Kuratowski proposed a simplification of Wiener's definition of ordered pairs, and that simplification has been in common use ever since. It is  $(x, y) = \{\{x\}, \{x, y\}\}$ .

In 1914, Wiener traveled to Europe, to be taught by Bertrand Russell and G. H. Hardy at Cambridge University, and by David Hilbert and Edmund Landau at the University of Göttingen. At Göttingen he also attended three courses with Edmund Husserl

"one on Kant's ethical writings, one on the principles of Ethics, and the seminary on Phenomenology." (Letter to Russell, c. June or July, 1914). During 1915–16, he taught philosophy at Harvard, then was an engineer for General Electric and wrote for the *Encyclopedia Americana*. Wiener was briefly a journalist for the *Boston Herald*, where he wrote a feature story on the poor labor conditions for mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, but he was fired soon afterwards for his reluctance to write favorable articles about a politician the newspaper's owners sought to promote.

Although Wiener eventually became a staunch pacifist, he eagerly contributed to the war effort in World War I. In 1916, with America's entry into the war drawing closer, Wiener attended a training camp for potential military officers but failed to earn a commission. One year later Wiener again tried to join the military, but the government again rejected him due to his poor eyesight. In the summer of 1918, Oswald Veblen invited Wiener to work on ballistics at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. Living and working with other mathematicians strengthened his interest in mathematics.

However, Wiener was still eager to serve in uniform and decided to make one more attempt to enlist, this time as a common soldier. Wiener wrote in a letter to his parents, "I should consider myself a pretty cheap kind of a swine if I were willing to be an officer but unwilling to be a soldier." This time the army accepted Wiener into its ranks and assigned him, by coincidence, to a unit stationed at Aberdeen, Maryland. World War I ended just days after Wiener's return to Aberdeen and Wiener was discharged from the military in February 1919.

## **After the war**

Wiener was unable to secure a permanent position at Harvard, a situation he attributed largely to anti-Semitism at the university and in particular the antipathy of Harvard mathematician G. D. Birkhoff. He was also rejected for a position at the University of Melbourne. At W. F. Osgood's suggestion, Wiener was hired as an instructor of mathematics at MIT, where, after his promotion to professor, he spent the remainder of his career. For many years his photograph was prominently displayed in the Infinite Corridor and often used in giving directions, but as of 2017, it has been removed.

In 1926, Wiener returned to Europe as a Guggenheim scholar. He spent most of his time at Göttingen and with Hardy at Cambridge, working on Brownian motion, the Fourier integral, Dirichlet's problem, harmonic analysis, and the Tauberian theorems.

In 1926, Wiener's parents arranged his marriage to a German immigrant, Margaret Engemann; they had two daughters. His sister, Constance (1898–1973), married Philip Franklin. Their daughter, Janet, Wiener's niece, married Václav E. Beneš. Norbert Wiener's sister, Bertha (1902–1995), married the botanist Carroll William Dodge.

Many tales, perhaps apocryphal, were told of Norbert Wiener at MIT, especially concerning his absent-mindedness. It was said that he returned home once to find his house empty. He inquired of a neighborhood girl the reason, and she said that the family had moved elsewhere that day. He thanked her for the information and she replied, "That's why I stayed behind,

Daddy!" In the run-up to World War II (1939–45) Wiener became a member of the China Aid Society and the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars. He was interested in placing scholars such as Yuk-Wing Lee and Antoni Zygmund who had lost their positions.

## **During and after World War II**

During World War II, his work on the automatic aiming and firing of anti-aircraft guns caused Wiener to investigate information theory independently of Claude Shannon and to invent the Wiener filter. (To him is due the now standard practice of modeling an information source as a random process—in other words, as a variety of noise.) His anti-aircraft work eventually led him to formulate cybernetics. After the war, his fame helped MIT to recruit a research team in cognitive science, composed of researchers in neuropsychology and the mathematics and biophysics of the nervous system, including Warren Sturgis McCulloch and Walter Pitts. These men later made pioneering contributions to computer science and artificial intelligence. Soon after the group was formed, Wiener suddenly ended all contact with its members, mystifying his colleagues. This emotionally traumatized Pitts, and led to his career decline. In their biography of Wiener, Conway and Siegelman suggest that Wiener's wife Margaret, who detested McCulloch's bohemian lifestyle, engineered the breach.

Wiener later helped develop the theories of cybernetics, robotics, computer control, and automation. He discussed the modeling of neurons with John von Neumann, and in a letter

from November 1946 von Neumann presented his thoughts in advance of a meeting with Wiener.

Wiener always shared his theories and findings with other researchers, and credited the contributions of others. These included Soviet researchers and their findings. Wiener's acquaintance with them caused him to be regarded with suspicion during the Cold War. He was a strong advocate of automation to improve the standard of living, and to end economic underdevelopment. His ideas became influential in India, whose government he advised during the 1950s.

After the war, Wiener became increasingly concerned with what he believed was political interference with scientific research, and the militarization of science. His article "A Scientist Rebels" from the January 1947 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* urged scientists to consider the ethical implications of their work. After the war, he refused to accept any government funding or to work on military projects. The way Wiener's beliefs concerning nuclear weapons and the Cold War contrasted with those of von Neumann is the major theme of the book *John Von Neumann and Norbert Wiener*.

Wiener was a participant of the Macy conferences.

### **Personal life**

In 1926 Wiener married Margaret Engemann, an assistant professor of modern languages at Juniata College. They had two daughters. Opinions are not all positive on Margaret's impacts on Wiener's career.

Wiener died in March 1964, aged 69, in Stockholm, from a heart attack. Wiener and his wife are buried at the Vittum Hill Cemetery in Sandwich, New Hampshire.

### **Awards and honors**

- Wiener was a Plenary Speaker of the ICM in 1936 at Oslo and in 1950 at Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Wiener won the Bôcher Memorial Prize in 1933 and the National Medal of Science in 1963, presented by President Johnson at a White House Ceremony in January, 1964, shortly before Wiener's death.
- Wiener won the 1965 U.S. National Book Award in Science, Philosophy and Religion for *God & Golem, Inc.: A Comment on Certain Points where Cybernetics Impinges on Religion*.
- The Norbert Wiener Prize in Applied Mathematics was endowed in 1967 in honor of Norbert Wiener by MIT's mathematics department and is provided jointly by the American Mathematical Society and Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics.
- The Norbert Wiener Award for Social and Professional Responsibility awarded annually by CPSR, was established in 1987 in honor of Wiener to recognize contributions by computer professionals to socially responsible use of computers.
- The crater Wiener on the far side of the Moon is named after him.
- The Norbert Wiener Center for Harmonic Analysis and Applications, at the University of Maryland, College Park, is named in his honor.



- Robert A. Heinlein named a spaceship after him in his 1957 novel *Citizen of the Galaxy*, a "Free Trader" ship called the *Norbert Wiener* mentioned in Chapter 14.

## **Doctoral students**

- ShikaoIkehara (Ph.D. 1930)
- Dorothy Walcott Weeks (Ph.D. 1930)
- Norman Levinson (Sc.D. 1935)
- Brockway McMillan (Ph.D. 1939)
- Abe Gelbart (Ph.D. 1940)
- John P. Costas (engineer) (Ph.D. 1951)
- Amar Bose (Sc.D. 1956)
- Colin Cherry (Ph.D. 1956)

## **Work**

Information is information, not matter or energy.

- —□ *Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*

Wiener was an early studier of stochastic and mathematical noise processes, contributing work relevant to electronic engineering, electronic communication, and control systems. It was Wiener's idea to model a signal as if it were an exotic type of noise, giving it a sound mathematical basis. The example often given to students is that English text could be modeled as a random string of letters and spaces, where each letter of the alphabet (and the space) has an assigned probability. But Wiener dealt with analog signals, where such a simple example

doesn't exist. Wiener's early work on information theory and signal processing was limited to analog signals, and was largely forgotten with the development of the digital theory.

Wiener is one of the key originators of cybernetics, a formalization of the notion of feedback, with many implications for engineering, systems control, computer science, biology, philosophy, and the organization of society.

Wiener's work with cybernetics influenced Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, and through them, anthropology, sociology, and education.

### **Wiener equation**

A simple mathematical representation of Brownian motion, the Wiener equation, named after Wiener, assumes the current velocity of a fluid particle fluctuates randomly.

### **Wiener filter**

For signal processing, the Wiener filter is a filter proposed by Wiener during the 1940s and published in 1942 as a classified document. Its purpose is to reduce the amount of noise present in a signal by comparison with an estimate of the desired noiseless signal. Wiener developed the filter at the Radiation Laboratory at MIT to predict the position of German bombers from radar reflections. It is necessary to predict the position, because by the time the shell reaches the vicinity of the target, the target will have moved, and may have changed direction slightly. They even modeled the muscle response of the pilot, which led eventually to cybernetics. The unmanned V1's were particularly easy to model, and on a good day, American guns

fitted with Wiener filters would shoot down 99 out of 100 V1's as they entered Britain from the English channel, on their way to London. What emerged was a mathematical theory of great generality—a theory for predicting the future as best one can on the basis of incomplete information about the past. It was a statistical theory that included applications that did not, strictly speaking, predict the future, but only tried to remove noise. It made use of Wiener's earlier work on integral equations and Fourier transforms.

### **In mathematics**

Wiener took a great interest in the mathematical theory of Brownian motion (named after Robert Brown) proving many results now widely known such as the non-differentiability of the paths. Consequently, the one-dimensional version of Brownian motion was named the Wiener process. It is the best known of the Lévy processes, càdlàg stochastic processes with stationary statistically independent increments, and occurs frequently in pure and applied mathematics, physics and economics (e.g. on the stock-market).

Wiener's tauberian theorem, a 1932 result of Wiener, developed Tauberian theorems in summability theory, on the face of it a chapter of real analysis, by showing that most of the known results could be encapsulated in a principle taken from harmonic analysis. In its present formulation, the theorem of Wiener does not have any obvious association with Tauberian theorems, which deal with infinite series; the translation from results formulated for integrals, or using the language of functional analysis and Banach algebras, is however a relatively routine process.

The Paley–Wiener theorem relates growth properties of entire functions on  $\mathbf{C}$  and Fourier transformation of Schwartz distributions of compact support.

The Wiener–Khinchin theorem, (also known as the *Wiener – Khintchine theorem* and the *Khinchin – Kolmogorov theorem*), states that the power spectral density of a wide-sense-stationary random process is the Fourier transform of the corresponding autocorrelation function.

An abstract Wiener space is a mathematical object in measure theory, used to construct a "decent", strictly positive and locally finite measure on an infinite-dimensional vector space. Wiener's original construction only applied to the space of real-valued continuous paths on the unit interval, known as classical Wiener space.

Leonard Gross provided the generalization to the case of a general separable Banach space. The notion of a Banach space itself was discovered independently by both Wiener and Stefan Banach at around the same time.

The Norbert Wiener Center for Harmonic Analysis and Applications (NWC) in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Maryland, College Park is devoted to the scientific and mathematical legacy of Norbert Wiener. The NWC website highlights the research activities of the center. Further, each year the Norbert Wiener Center hosts the February Fourier Talks, a two-day national conference displaying advances in pure and applied harmonic analysis in industry, government, and academia.

## **In popular culture**

His work with Mary Brazier is referred to in Avis DeVoto's *As Always, Julia*. A flagship named after him appears briefly in *Citizen of the Galaxy* by Robert Heinlein.

The song *Dedicated to Norbert Wiener* appears as the second track on the 1980 album *Why?* by G.G. Tonet (Luigi Tonet), released on the Italian *It Why* label.

## **Carl Rogers**

**Carl Ransom Rogers** (January 8, 1902 – February 4, 1987) was an American psychologist and among the founders of the humanistic approach (and client-centered approach) in psychology. Rogers is widely considered to be one of the founding fathers of psychotherapy research and was honored for his pioneering research with the Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1956.

The person-centered approach, his own unique approach to understanding personality and human relationships, found wide application in various domains such as psychotherapy and counseling (client-centered therapy), education (student-centered learning), organizations, and other group settings. For his professional work he was bestowed the Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Psychology by the APA in 1972. In a study by Steven J. Haggblom and colleagues using six criteria such as citations and recognition, Rogers was found to be the sixth most eminent psychologist of

the 20th century and second, among clinicians, only to Sigmund Freud. Based on a 1982 survey among 422 respondents of US and Canadian psychologists, he was considered the most influential psychotherapist in history (Sigmund Freud was ranked third).

## **Biography**

Rogers was born on January 8, 1902, in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. His father, Walter A. Rogers, was a civil engineer, a Congregationalist by denomination. His mother, Julia M. Cushing, was a homemaker and devout Baptist. Carl was the fourth of their six children.

Rogers was intelligent and could read well before kindergarten. Following an education in a strict religious and ethical environment as an altar boy at the vicarage of Jimpley, he became a rather isolated, independent and disciplined person, and acquired knowledge and an appreciation for the scientific method in a practical world. His first career choice was agriculture, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he was a part of the fraternity of Alpha Kappa Lambda, followed by history and then religion. At age 20, following his 1922 trip to Peking, China, for an international Christian conference, he started to doubt his religious convictions. To help him clarify his career choice, he attended a seminar entitled *Why am I entering the Ministry?*, after which he decided to change his career. In 1924, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin and enrolled at Union Theological Seminary (New York City). Some time afterward he became an atheist. Although referred to as an atheist early in his career, Rogers eventually came to be described as agnostic. However, in his later years it is reported

he spoke about spirituality. Thorne, who knew Rogers and worked with him on a number of occasions during his final ten years, writes that "in his later years his openness to experience compelled him to acknowledge the existence of a dimension to which he attached such adjectives as mystical, spiritual, and transcendental." Rogers concluded that there is a realm "beyond" scientific psychology, a realm which he came to prize as "the indescribable, the spiritual."

After two years he left the seminary to attend Teachers College, Columbia University, obtaining an M.A. in 1928 and a Ph.D. in 1931. While completing his doctoral work, he engaged in child study. In 1930, Rogers served as director of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Rochester, New York. From 1935 to 1940 he lectured at the University of Rochester and wrote *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* (1939), based on his experience in working with troubled children. He was strongly influenced in constructing his client-centered approach by the post-Freudian psychotherapeutic practice of Otto Rank, especially as embodied in the work of Rank's disciple, noted clinician and social work educator Jessie Taft. In 1940 Rogers became professor of clinical psychology at Ohio State University, where he wrote his second book, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (1942). In it, Rogers suggested that the client, by establishing a relationship with an understanding, accepting therapist, can resolve difficulties and gain the insight necessary to restructure their life.

In 1945, he was invited to set up a counseling center at the University of Chicago. In 1947 he was elected President of the American Psychological Association. While a professor of psychology at the University of Chicago (1945–57), Rogers

helped to establish a counseling center connected with the university and there conducted studies to determine the effectiveness of his methods. His findings and theories appeared in *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951) and *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* (1954). One of his graduate students at the University of Chicago, Thomas Gordon, established the Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) movement.

Another student, Eugene T. Gendlin, who was getting his Ph.D. in philosophy, developed the practice of Focusing based on Rogerian listening. In 1956, Rogers became the first President of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. He taught psychology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (1957–63), during which time he wrote one of his best-known books, *On Becoming Person* (1961). A student of his there, Marshall Rosenberg, would go on to develop Nonviolent Communication. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow (1908–70) pioneered a movement called humanistic psychology which reached its peak in the 1960s. In 1961, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Carl Rogers was also one of the people who questioned the rise of McCarthyism in the 1950s. Through articles, he criticized society for its backward-looking affinities.

Rogers continued teaching at the University of Wisconsin until 1963, when he became a resident at the new Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (WBSI) in La Jolla, California. Rogers left the WBSI to help found the Center for Studies of the Person in 1968. His later books include *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* (1977) and *Freedom to Learn for the '80s* (1983). He remained a resident of La Jolla for the rest of his life, doing therapy, giving speeches and writing.



Rogers's last years were devoted to applying his theories in situations of political oppression and national social conflict, traveling worldwide to do so. In Belfast, Northern Ireland, he brought together influential Protestants and Catholics; in South Africa, blacks and whites; in Brazil people emerging from dictatorship to democracy; in the United States, consumers and providers in the health field. His last trip, at age 85, was to the Soviet Union, where he lectured and facilitated intensive experiential workshops fostering communication and creativity. He was astonished at the numbers of Russians who knew of his work.

Between 1974 and 1984, Rogers, together with his daughter Natalie Rogers, and psychologists Maria Bowen, Maureen O'Hara, and John K. Wood, convened a series of residential programs in the US, Europe, Brazil and Japan, the Person-Centered Approach Workshops, which focused on cross-cultural communications, personal growth, self-empowerment, and learning for social change.

In 1987, Rogers suffered a fall that resulted in a fractured pelvis: he had life alert and was able to contact paramedics. He had a successful operation, but his pancreas failed the next night and he died a few days later after a heart attack.

## **Theory**

Rogers' theory of the self is considered to be humanistic, existential, and phenomenological. His theory is based directly on the "phenomenal field" personality theory of Combs and Snygg (1949). Rogers' elaboration of his own theory is extensive. He wrote 16 books and many more journal articles

describing it. Prochaska and Norcross (2003) states Rogers "consistently stood for an empirical evaluation of psychotherapy.

He and his followers have demonstrated a humanistic approach to conducting therapy and a scientific approach to evaluating therapy need not be incompatible."

## **Nineteen propositions**

His theory (as of 1951) was based on 19 propositions:

- All individuals (organisms) exist in a continually changing world of experience (phenomenal field) of which they are the center.
- The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is "reality" for the individual.
- The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field.
- A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.
- As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluative interaction with others, the structure of the self is formed—an organized, fluid but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the "I" or the "me", together with values attached to these concepts.
- The organism has one basic tendency and striving—to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism.

- The best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual.
- Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.
- Emotion accompanies, and in general facilitates, such goal directed behavior, the kind of emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behavior for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.
- The values attached to experiences, and the values that are a part of the self-structure, in some instances, are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values introjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly.
- As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either, a) symbolized, perceived and organized into some relation to the self, b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self structure, c) denied symbolization or given distorted symbolization because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.
- Most of the ways of behaving that are adopted by the organism are those that are consistent with the concept of self.
- In some instances, behavior may be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolized. Such behavior may be inconsistent

with the structure of the self but in such instances the behavior is not "owned" by the individual.

- Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.
- Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies awareness of significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension.
- Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization of the structure of the self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self structure is organized to maintain itself.
- Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of threat to the self structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences.
- When the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals.
- As the individual perceives and accepts into his self structure more of his organic experiences, he finds that he is replacing his present value system—based extensively on introjections which have been

distortedly symbolized—with a continuing organismic valuing process.

In relation to No. 17, Rogers is known for practicing "unconditional positive regard", which is defined as accepting a person "without negative judgment of .... [a person's] basic worth".

### **Development of the personality**

With regard to development, Rogers described principles rather than stages. The main issue is the development of a self-concept and the progress from an undifferentiated self to being fully differentiated.

**Self Concept** ... the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of 'I' or 'me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness though not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, but at any given moment it is a specific entity. (Rogers, 1959)

In the development of the self-concept, he saw conditional and unconditional positive regard as key. Those raised in an environment of unconditional positive regard have the opportunity to fully actualize themselves.

Those raised in an environment of conditional positive regard feel worthy only if they match conditions (what Rogers describes as *conditions of worth*) that have been laid down for them by others.

## **Fully functioning person**

Optimal development, as referred to in proposition 14, results in a certain process rather than static state. He describes this as *the good life*, where the organism continually aims to fulfill its full potential. He listed the characteristics of a fully functioning person (Rogers 1961):

- A growing openness to experience – they move away from defensiveness and have no need for subception (a perceptual defense that involves unconsciously applying strategies to prevent a troubling stimulus from entering consciousness).
- An increasingly existential lifestyle – living each moment fully – not distorting the moment to fit personality or self-concept but allowing personality and self-concept to emanate from the experience. This results in excitement, daring, adaptability, tolerance, spontaneity, and a lack of rigidity and suggests a foundation of trust. "To open one's spirit to what is going on now, and discover in that present process whatever structure it appears to have" (Rogers 1961)
- Increasing organismic trust – they trust their own judgment and their ability to choose behavior that is appropriate for each moment. They do not rely on existing codes and social norms but trust that as they are open to experiences they will be able to trust their own sense of right and wrong.
- Freedom of choice – not being shackled by the restrictions that influence an incongruent individual, they are able to make a wider range of choices more

fluently. They believe that they play a role in determining their own behavior and so feel responsible for their own behavior.

- Creativity – it follows that they will feel more free to be creative. They will also be more creative in the way they adapt to their own circumstances without feeling a need to conform.
- Reliability and constructiveness – they can be trusted to act constructively. An individual who is open to all their needs will be able to maintain a balance between them. Even aggressive needs will be matched and balanced by intrinsic goodness in congruent individuals.
- A rich full life – he describes the life of the fully functioning individual as rich, full and exciting and suggests that they experience joy and pain, love and heartbreak, fear and courage more intensely. Rogers' description of *the good life*:

This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life. (Rogers 1961)

## **Incongruence**

Rogers identified the "real self" as the aspect of one's being that is founded in the actualizing tendency, follows organismic values and needs, and receives positive others' regard and self-regard. It is the "you" that, if all goes well, you will become. On the other hand, to the extent that our society is out of sync

with the actualizing tendency, and we are forced to live with conditions of worth that are out of step with organismic valuing, and receive only conditional positive regard and self-regard, we develop instead an "ideal self". By ideal, Rogers is suggesting something not real, something that is always out of our reach, the standard we cannot meet. This gap between the real self and the ideal self, the "I am" and the "I should" is called *incongruity*.

## **Psychopathology**

Rogers described the concepts of *congruence* and *incongruence* as important ideas in his theory. In proposition #6, he refers to the actualizing tendency. At the same time, he recognized the need for *positive regard*. In a fully congruent person, realizing their potential is not at the expense of experiencing positive regard.

They are able to lead lives that are authentic and genuine. Incongruent individuals, in their pursuit of positive regard, lead lives that include falseness and do not realize their potential. Conditions put on them by those around them make it necessary for them to forgo their genuine, authentic lives to meet with the approval of others. They live lives that are not true to themselves, to who they are on the inside out.

Rogers suggested that the incongruent individual, who is always on the defensive and cannot be open to all experiences, is not functioning ideally and may even be malfunctioning. They work hard at maintaining and protecting their self-concept. Because their lives are not authentic this is a difficult task and they are under constant threat. They deploy *defense*



*mechanisms* to achieve this. He describes two mechanisms: *distortion* and *denial*. Distortion occurs when the individual perceives a threat to their self-concept. They distort the perception until it fits their self-concept.

This defensive behavior reduces the consciousness of the threat but not the threat itself. And so, as the threats mount, the work of protecting the self-concept becomes more difficult and the individual becomes more defensive and rigid in their self structure. If the incongruence is immoderate this process may lead the individual to a state that would typically be described as neurotic. Their functioning becomes precarious and psychologically vulnerable. If the situation worsens it is possible that the defenses cease to function altogether and the individual becomes aware of the incongruence of their situation. Their personality becomes disorganised and bizarre; irrational behavior, associated with earlier denied aspects of self, may erupt uncontrollably.

## **Applications**

### **Person-centered therapy**

Rogers originally developed his theory to be the foundation for a system of therapy. He initially called this "non-directive therapy" but later replaced the term "non-directive" with the term "client-centered" and then later used the term "person-centered". Even before the publication of *Client-Centered Therapy* in 1951, Rogers believed that the principles he was describing could be applied in a variety of contexts and not just in the therapy situation. As a result, he started to use the

term *person-centered approach* later in his life to describe his overall theory. Person-centered therapy is the application of the person-centered approach to the therapy situation. Other applications include a theory of personality, interpersonal relations, education, nursing, cross-cultural relations and other "helping" professions and situations. In 1946 Rogers co-authored "Counseling with Returned Servicemen" with John L. Wallen (the creator of the behavioral model known as *The Interpersonal Gap*), documenting the application of person-centered approach to counseling military personnel returning from the second world war.

The first empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the client-centered approach was published in 1941 at the Ohio State University by Elias Porter, using the recordings of therapeutic sessions between Carl Rogers and his clients. Porter used Rogers' transcripts to devise a system to measure the degree of directiveness or non-directiveness a counselor employed. The attitude and orientation of the counselor were demonstrated to be instrumental in the decisions made by the client.

### **Learner-centered teaching**

The application to education has a large robust research tradition similar to that of therapy with studies having begun in the late 1930s and continuing today (Cornelius-White, 2007). Rogers described the approach to education in *Client-Centered Therapy* and wrote *Freedom to Learn* devoted exclusively to the subject in 1969. *Freedom to Learn* was revised two times. The new Learner-Centered Model is similar in many regards to this classical person-centered approach to education. Rogers and Harold Lyon began a book prior to

Rogers' death, entitled *On Becoming an Effective Teacher—Person-centered Teaching, Psychology, Philosophy, and Dialogues with Carl R. Rogers and Harold Lyon*, which was completed by Lyon and Reinhard Tausch and published in 2013 containing Rogers' last unpublished writings on person-centered teaching. Rogers had the following five hypotheses regarding learner-centered education:

- "A person cannot teach another person directly; a person can only facilitate another's learning" (Rogers, 1951). This is a result of his personality theory, which states that everyone exists in a constantly changing world of experience in which he or she is the center. Each person reacts and responds based on perception and experience. The belief is that what the student does is more important than what the teacher does. The focus is on the student (Rogers, 1951). Therefore, the background and experiences of the learner are essential to how and what is learned. Each student will process what he or she learns differently depending on what he or she brings to the classroom.
- "A person learns significantly only those things that are perceived as being involved in the maintenance of or enhancement of the structure of self" (Rogers, 1951). Therefore, relevancy to the student is essential for learning. The students' experiences become the core of the course.
- "Experience which, if assimilated, would involve a change in the organization of self, tends to be resisted through denial or distortion of symbolism"

(Rogers, 1951). If the content or presentation of a course is inconsistent with preconceived information, the student will learn if he or she is open to varying concepts. Being open to consider concepts that vary from one's own is vital to learning. Therefore, gently encouraging open-mindedness is helpful in engaging the student in learning. Also, it is important, for this reason, that new information be relevant and related to existing experience.

- "The structure and organization of self appears to become more rigid under threats and to relax its boundaries when completely free from threat" (Rogers, 1951). If students believe that concepts are being forced upon them, they might become uncomfortable and fearful. A barrier is created by a tone of threat in the classroom. Therefore, an open, friendly environment in which trust is developed is essential in the classroom. Fear of retribution for not agreeing with a concept should be eliminated. A classroom tone of support helps to alleviate fears and encourages students to have the courage to explore concepts and beliefs that vary from those they bring to the classroom. Also, new information might threaten the student's concept of him- or herself; therefore, the less vulnerable the student feels, the more likely he or she will be able to open up to the learning process.
- "The educational situation which most effectively promotes significant learning is one in which (a) threat to the self of the learner is reduced to a minimum and (b) differentiated perception of the field is facilitated" (Rogers, 1951). The instructor

should be open to learning from the students and also working to connect the students to the subject matter. Frequent interaction with the students will help achieve this goal. The instructor's acceptance of being a mentor who guides rather than the expert who tells is instrumental to student-centered, nonthreatening, and unforced learning.

### **Rogierian rhetorical approach**

In 1970, Richard Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth Pike published *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*, a widely influential college writing textbook that used a Rogierian approach to communication to revise the traditional Aristotelian framework for rhetoric. The Rogierian method of argument involves each side restating the other's position to the satisfaction of the other, among other principles. In a paper, it can be expressed by carefully acknowledging and understanding the opposition, rather than dismissing them.

### **Cross-cultural relations**

The application to cross-cultural relations has involved workshops in highly stressful situations and global locations including conflicts and challenges in South Africa, Central America, and Ireland. Along with Alberto Zucconi and Charles Devonshire, he co-founded the Istitutodell' Approccio Centratosulla Persona (Person-Centered Approach Institute) in Rome, Italy.

His international work for peace culminated in the Rust Peace Workshop which took place in November 1985 in Rust, Austria.

Leaders from 17 nations convened to discuss the topic "The Central America Challenge". The meeting was notable for several reasons: it brought national figures together as people (not as their positions), it was a private event, and was an overwhelming positive experience where members heard one another and established real personal ties, as opposed to stiffly formal and regulated diplomatic meetings.

### **Person-centered, dialogic politics**

Some scholars believe there is a politics implicit in Rogers's approach to psychotherapy. Toward the end of his life, Rogers came to that view himself. The central tenet of a Rogerian, person-centered politics is that public life does not have to consist of an endless series of winner-take-all battles among sworn opponents; rather, it can and should consist of an ongoing dialogue among all parties. Such dialogue would be characterized by respect among the parties, authentic speaking by each party, and – ultimately – empathic understanding among all parties. Out of such understanding, mutually acceptable solutions would (or at least could) flow.

During his last decade, Rogers facilitated or participated in a wide variety of dialogic activities among politicians, activists, and other social leaders, often outside the U.S. In addition, he lent his support to several non-traditional U.S. political initiatives, including the "12-Hour Political Party" of the Association for Humanistic Psychology and the founding of a "transformational" political organization, the New World Alliance. By the 21st century, interest in dialogic approaches to political engagement and change had become widespread, especially among academics and activists. Theorists of a

specifically Rogerian, person-centered approach to politics as dialogue have made substantial contributions to that project.

## **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**

Carl Rogers served on the board of the Human Ecology Fund from the late 50s into the 60s, which was a CIA-funded organization that provided grants to researchers looking into personality. In addition, he and other people in the field of personality and psychotherapy were given a lot of information about Khrushchev. "We were asked to figure out what we thought of him and what would be the best way of dealing with him. And that seemed to be an entirely principled and legitimate aspect. I don't think we contributed very much, but, anyway, we tried."

## **Albert Mehrabian**

**Albert Mehrabian**, born in 1939 to an Armenian family living in Iran, is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Although he originally trained as an engineer, he is best known for his publications on the relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages. He also constructed a number of psychological measures including the Arousal Seeking Tendency Scale.

Mehrabian's findings on inconsistent messages of feelings and attitudes (the "7%-38%-55% Rule") are well-known, the percentages relating to relative impact of words, tone of voice, and body language when speaking. Arguably these findings

have been misquoted and misinterpreted throughout human communication seminars worldwide.

## **Attitudes and congruence**

According to Mehrabian, the three elements account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward a message concerning their feelings: words account for 7%, tone of voice accounts for 38%, and facial expression accounts for 55% of the liking. For effective and meaningful communication about emotions, these three parts of the message need to support each other - they have to be "congruent". In case of any incongruence, the receiver of the message might be irritated by two messages coming from two different channels, giving cues in two different directions.

The following example should help illustrate incongruence in verbal and non-verbal communication.

- Verbal: "I do not have a problem with you!"
- Non-verbal: person avoids eye-contact, looks anxious, etc.

It becomes more likely that the receiver will trust the predominant form of communication, which to Mehrabian's findings is the non-verbal impact of tone+facial expression (38% + 55%), rather than the literal meaning of the words (7%). This is known as "the 7%-38%-55% Rule".

It is important to say that in the respective study, Mehrabian conducted experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like-dislike), and that the above,



disproportionate influence of tone of voice and facial expression becomes effective only when the situation is ambiguous. Such ambiguity appears mostly when the words spoken are inconsistent with the tone of voice or facial expression of the speaker (sender).

## **Misinterpretation**

The "7%-38%-55% rule" has been widely misinterpreted. It is often claimed that in any communication, the meaning of a message is conveyed mainly by non-verbal cues, not by the meaning of words. This generalization from the initially very specific conditions in his experiments is the common mistake made in relation to Mehrabian's rule. On his website, Mehrabian clearly states:

Total Liking = 7% Verbal Liking + 38% Vocal Liking + 55% Facial Liking. Please note that this and other equations regarding relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages were derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like-dislike). Unless a communicator is talking about their feelings or attitudes, these equations are not applicable. Also see references 286 and 305 in *Silent Messages* – these are the original sources of my findings.

## **Criticism**

The "7%-38%-55%" rule is based on two studies reported in the 1967 papers "Decoding of Inconsistent Communications", and "Inference of Attitudes from Nonverbal Communication in Two

Channels". Both studies dealt with the communication of positive or negative emotions via single spoken words, like "dear" or "terrible". The first study compared the relative importance of the semantic meaning of the word with the tone of voice, and found that the latter was much more influential. The second study dealt with facial expressions (shown in black-and-white photographs) and vocal tone (as heard in a tape recording), and found that the relative contributions of the two communication channels had the ratio 3:2. Mehrabian then combined the results of the two studies to obtain the ratio 7:38:55.

There are several limitations of the study's applicability to real life, which are largely ignored when the study is now cited outside a scientific context and contribute to the misinterpretation above. First, it is based on the judgment of the meaning of single tape of recorded words, i.e., a very artificial context. Second, the figures are obtained by combining results from two different studies which are inappropriately combined. Third, it relates only to the communication of positive versus negative emotions. Fourth, it relates only to women, as men did not participate in the study. Fifth, other types of nonverbal communication, e.g., body posture, were not included in the studies.

Since then, other studies have analyzed the relative contributions of verbal and nonverbal signals under more naturalistic situations. One in 1970, using video tapes shown to the subjects, analyzed the communication of submissive/dominant attitude and found that all types of non-verbal cues combined – especially body posture – had 4.3 times the effect of verbal cues. On the other hand, another in 1992,

dealing with the communication of happy/sad mood, found that hearing words spoken in a "flat" voice was about 4 times more influential than facial expressions seen in a film with no sound. Thus, different studies may reach very different conclusions dependent on methodology.