

REFLECTIONS ON ECONOMICS BUSINESS AND MYSTICISM

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Kafka said that recollections of his life were so fast that he wondered that he had had time to do the briefest thing; eat a meal, walk to work, or go Las Vegas. The paper reflects on teaching economics and management and working with businesses for many years. The duration of events in time are indistinguishable in memory and events that took minutes, hours, or half a lifetime, in recollection are experienced in a flash. A different grammar is used to remember events in *times past* than the grammar that was used to experience them. Recollection of a journey has a different grammar than the experience of the journey and the grammar of meta reflection, reflecting on reflections, is different again. Grammars and meta grammars are themes of the paper. Every sphere of being or existence is perceived and lived through a grammar and there are many such spheres and all grammars contain a series of sub-grammars².

Why grammar? On a famous definition, grammar is the rules for the use of a word. Grammars have morphology and syntax. Morphology describes names, parts of speech, nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns and so on and syntax describes the rules governing how names should be connected. Grammars are also rhetorical. They are discourses that determine what things and events we speak and think about and how we speak about them.

In relation to spheres of being, the phrase organizational grammar is a more accurate, but grammar is briefer. The function of the grammar is to organize, introduce order and stability,

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²Sub grammars (g_i^j , $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$) of any sphere of being are subsets of a more general grammar G^j of the J ($J = 1, 2, \dots, m$) spheres of being referred to. In is a union of subsets, Figure 1a should refer to union not intersection of sub-grammars

partition complexity into manageable bits and impose a pattern. It is something like an algorithm, procedure, or blue print through which being *is perceived* and artefacts, structures, architecture and spaces in which it *is lived*. It is expressed as artefacts and algorithms.

Grammar is indispensable. It is also something like a straightjacket³. The rhetoric of taught in business schools founded on variations on the (sub) grammar competitive advantage. The current rhetoric of politics and economics is that government financial deficits are sins, when the real issue is whether or not the NPV (usually social) of investments funded by deficits are positive or not. As teachers we are purveyors of grammar; *'think like this, do like this'*, so we instruct. *'Stay within the intersection in figure 1a, you must!'*

One tradition has it that at the instant of death, reality is momentarily revealed, in a grammar we are not familiar with, and we think it is false. Creativity or meditation escape grammar, by seeing one grammar from the perspective of another.

Grammar has many dimensions. Figure 1a illustrates some of the dimensions of the grammar of the material world. The nodes in figure 1b might be elements of a firm's value chain, the nodes (A, B, C,) being business functions, marketing, operations, purchasing and so on; in which case connectors indicate synergies between business functions or linkages over time (feedback effects). Alternatively the nodes could be systems, political, economic, social, demographic, ecological and so on and the connectors are relationships and feedback effects through time; events in one system percolate through to other systems. The discourse of grammar influences how we speak about these things and events and what we focus on.

If we think of the state of being of small city of (say) several million people, using or consuming a million products or services produced by a several thousand firms, each involving several hundred different processes, we can see clearly why grammar as an organizational principle is necessary, and how the grammar, even of this microcosm of the material world, has many (trillions of) interdependent, inseparable dimensions, some of them illustrated in figure 1a. We can see how the grammar includes both underlying rules (cultures and systems and so on) and

³ Grammar of the material world corresponds to Heidegger's Dasein; *being in* a grammar.

artefacts (infrastructures, buildings, distribution channels) that are interlinked in time and space, and how the city might be seen differently by current and future residents⁴. Some of the many dimensions are illustrated in the figure 1a; the worlds of time and space or space-time. There are many more.

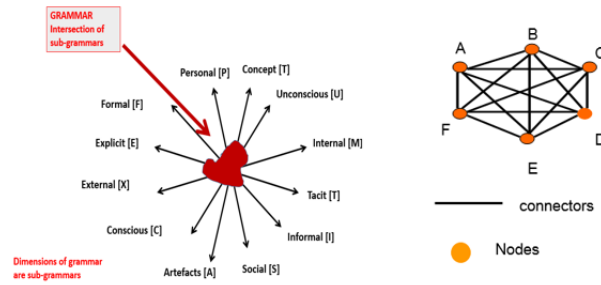


Figure 1a

Figure 1b

Figure 1 Grammar in the material world.

It appears that we are born *with* a grammar, instinctual, emotional, the capacity for language; not born as a tabula rasa and we are born *into* a grammar; both *with a grammar* and *into a grammar*.

Many spheres of being exist; at the everyday level, waking and sleeping, conscious and unconscious, personal and collective; and at other levels, soul, spirit, will or whatever we choose to call them. Grammars are not confined to human beings, or living things. Evolutionary processes are grammars. The forces of nature are grammars. The cosmos operates according to a grammar. There are many varieties of grammar, scientific methodologies, artistic forms, ethical systems, power structures. Mathematics is a grammar, or set of grammars. Untold grammars wait to be understood or will remain mysteries. Similar grammars are understood differently. Human beings perceive, discover and explain these grammars through their own grammars. Myths, fairy tales, dreams, superstitions are stories with characters (morphology)

⁴ That can be combined in $10^{6+6+3+2} = 10^{17}$ ways

and plot (syntax) tell the tale according to grammars and often they span, like the scriptures, many spheres of being.

The story told so far seems like a story of relativism. This is the intention only in so far as reality is relative to the grammar through which it is perceived and lived. One way of expressing the story is through the image of a disco ball or a hyper-sphere with different dimensions each corresponding to a particular sphere of being. If grammars are infinitely diverse then what of reality? Maybe it is something like figure 2.

Imagine a disco ball with many surfaces, infinitely many, as it gets closer and closer (in the tangent limit) to a sphere. A light shines on the disco ball as it rotates and spins. Every surface is a grammar that reflects the light from the source onto the many spheres (worlds or planes) of being.



Figure 2(a)



Figure 2(b)

Figure 2 Disco ball and hypersphere⁵

Without grammar, represented by the surfaces of the ball, the light would be unbearable. Every surface orders the light, directs, organizes and suggests interpretation and or meaning. The source of the light is not the light, nor is it separate from the light⁶. Reflections of the light are not the light. We might also imagine the disco ball as a hypersphere with where each of the

⁵ Images from Wikipedia

⁶ And every discrete photon of light suggests variations of interpretation and meaning.

many, perhaps infinitely many faces, corresponds to the grammar sphere of being it reflects upon.

No grammar is complete. We can always construct a self-referential proposition within a grammar that cannot be proved or seen within the logic of that grammar⁷. Hence every grammar requires a meta grammar, borrowed within its own sphere of existence and from other spheres⁸.

Grammars and (sub-grammars) interact with one another. Jung and Swedenborg described the interaction between spheres of being differently.⁹

A state in which there is no grammar whatsoever would be a state of nothing: an incomprehensible state because comprehending and being require grammar. Maybe this is a state where for example, Kafka's reflection on time mixes with Borges *Garden of the Forking Paths* where every state, possible and impossible, before and after, happens instantaneously, or not.

⁷Gödel. See Matthews (2011). Organizational grammar Gödel and the other.

⁸ Every sub grammar (g_p^J) requires another (g_s^J) of any sphere of being G^J and the grammar of any sphere of being G^R requires grammar from other spheres G^S to complete it.

⁹ Jung as synchronicity, Swedenborg as correspondences