

choices (not things) — choices among unequals (not equals) —, that oppositions are relations (not things), and that oppositions define the concepts of the system (concepts like "left-handedness": "present tense", "woman", "death") through the relational network they create. Any semiotic system is a hierarchical system of relations, and markedness is one of the relations that help to hierarchize that system.

## Notes

1. This paper was presented, in a shorter version, to the Third Annual Meeting of the Semiotic Society of America, Providence, R. I., October 1978. I would like to thank Dwight Bolinger, Jonathan Culler, Roman Jakobson, James Nollitt, Donald Preziosi, Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, and Doug Whalen for their comments on earlier versions of this study.
2. For a discussion of 'double articulation' and 'differentiatedness' ('otherness', 'sense-discrimination'), see Jakobson and Waugh 1979 and Waugh 1979a.
3. This is an oversimplification. For a discussion of the marking for English, see Jakobson 1959; for Russian see Jakobson 1932, 1957, and van Schooneveld 1978c; for French see Waugh 1975).
4. This relationship is seen most clearly in the works of van Schooneveld (see the bibliography).
5. I want to thank Dwight L. Bolinger and James Nollitt for having suggested that I underline more specifically the figure-ground relation. See also Holenstein 1974/1976: 123-124.
6. This example is further confounded by the use of *he* or *she* (usually intended as a substitute for *he* in the zero-interpretation in order to avoid ambiguity): *everyone in New York State is entitled to an abortion if he or she wants it!* (My thanks to Doug Whalen, and through him, Guy Carden, for this example.)
7. In the examples given here and in the next paragraph, the relation described is for the majority of uses: in some contexts, the markedness may be reversed.
8. I am not talking about the words here, but rather about the phenomena themselves. I will be using double quotation marks throughout the following sections to refer to various cultural phenomena, reserving italics for the linguistic items and single quotes for glosses and for the oppositions themselves.
9. It should be obvious that I am citing these as examples of cultural behavior and properties, not as linguistic items. In many of these cases the relation between the cultural and the linguistic is a very complex one: for example, *fertility* as a linguistic term is slightly artificial — but the cultural situation is not.
10. See also the quote by Jakobson above, pointing out that for a man like Majakovski the markedness relation was reversed — for him life needed motivation and death didn't. Majakovski of course committed suicide.
11. I will leave aside here the question of whether left-handedness is universally the marked element of the opposition.
12. My thanks to my 'native informant' Mary Beth Norton for having provided me with these examples.

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