Psych Essay, Research Paper

But communicators also portray themselves, the communication and the audience not only in the explicit content of the communication, but also implicitly, in ways that are implied by the communication, but not directly stated. To use a common sense example, a lecture given in English using terms known mostly to physicists, also paints a picture of the lecturer and audience – of their language use, interest and expertise, of the lecturer as a kind of person who can stick to a subject, refer to relevant issues, and of audience members as having the maturity to attend to complex ideas without growing impatient. The lecturer may also note, in passing, that the next section of the speech is particularly complex but that most members of the audience will be able to follow it, using information provided in the previous lecture, upon which he is now explicitly portraying — or conveying a model or image of — the communication and the audience, which is about some of the same things that the less direct communication was about.

All of these communications, whether explicit or implicit, convey two kinds of information that make up all narrative elements of plot and characterization. First, they convey information about what it is that happened or that exists or will happen. This is the realm of relatively straight information – the who, what, when, where and how of “description.” But secondly, they convey value judgments about all this – is it good or bad, competent or incompetent, relevant or irrelevant. As this theory describes elsewhere, this involves locating what is described on a value grid that is an essential component of our cognitive schemas and of the emotions with which we invest them. As also noted previously, the value grids are organized, in part, according to binary oppositions of the kind just listed. In the model that is offered here, valued elements are put on the left and negatively valued elements on the right, so beautiful goes on the left and ugly on the right; articulate on the left, inarticulate on the right, and so on. When we make a value judgment, we “locate” what we refer to, on the grid.

These value grids, and the narratives about the world that they infuse with significance, make up much of the underlying moral and cultural order of society, that is the cognitive foundation of social perception, motivation, communication, interaction and shared symbolism. In short, our minds are made up of schemas, organized into stories, in which the elements are invested with value and emotion,\*\* which are about who we are essentially as people. A collection of minds, with similarities in these schemas, is part of what makes up cultures and subcultures.

By analyzing communication, we can discover and, ultimately, describe the underlying forms of narrative and value judgment that are the basis of human life. And we can tack back and forth, to reveal how the underlying narrative and values judgments are expressed in and give meaning to, specific communications, and how these, in turn, modify the underlying narrative and value grid over time.