# THE GS CASE FOR TRUMP A General Semantics/media ecological analysis



#### Vectors of Analysis

Weaponised Two-Valued
Orientation

Schismogenesis

Postman: Casting the President

An Angry Media Ecology

The Limits of GS: Can GS create harmony among preferences?

### The Weaponised Two-Valued Orientation

- \* "Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done... Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." President George W. Bush, September 11, 2001
- \* "They're racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic Islamophobic you name it. And unfortunately, there are people like that. And he has lifted them up. He has given voice to their websites that used to only have 11,000 people now have 11 million. He tweets and retweets their offensive hateful mean-spirited rhetoric. Now, some of those folks they are irredeemable, but thankfully, they are not America." Fmr. Secy. Of State Hillary Clinton, September 9, 2016

## Schismogenesis

- The act of organisms dividing along abstracted, rather than "real" subdivisions
- ♦ Two-valued orientations and bipolarity are present in cultures we make for our own convenience, a "fallacy of misplaced concreteness"
- Perceived unity in economics (working-class), spatial/chronological (age and location, high support in "flyover" states), sociology (behaviours)
- Bateson, G. "Culture Contact and Schismogenesis" in Steps to an Ecology of Mind. Grenada Publishing: Great Britain.
   (1972) pp.35-49.

#### Casting The President

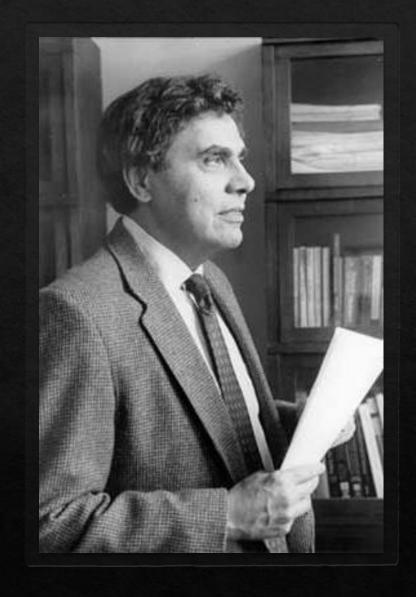
"Politician as celebrity has made political parties irrelevant"

"Reagan used thirty-second commercials to sell himself in the same way McDonalds does"

Trump used Twitter to sell himself in the same way brands and influencers do online – "gaming" the press

"People remember only the last 24 hours, not the past sixty years"

Postman, N. Amusing Ourselves To Death, Penguin Books: New York, USA. (1985) pp. 153-54



# The "Angry" Media Ecology

- \* "We mediate through our languages...and we mediate through our technologies...we relate to our environment not as separate entities but as interdependent parts of an ecosystem. The organism is shaped by that system." Strate, L. 'A Systems View of Semantic Environments and Media Environments' in On The Binding Biases of Time. Institute of General Semantics: Fort Worth, TX. (2011) p. 63.
- ♦ Humans produce 2.5 quintillion (2.5 x 1024) bytes of new data each day, and the rate is accelerating. It would be impossible for any one human to observe and analyse the data we create, per day, in a lifetime. We are not oppressed by an external imposition but the sheer size of our media environment
- \* "Researchers have found, for example, that the algorithms running social media platforms tend to show pictures of exlovers having fun. No, users don't want to see such images. But, through trial and error, algorithms have discovered showing pictures of our exes having fun increases our engagement. We are drawn to click on those pictures and see what our exes are up to, and we're more likely to do it if we're jealous they've found a new partner. The algorithms don't know why it works, and they don't care. They're only maximise whatever metric we've instructed them to pursue." Douglas Rushkoff, Team Human

#### Can GS "Agreement" Account For Preferences?

- ♦ If GS agreement and consciousness of abstraction can avoid disagreements over symbols and over/under-definitions, can it account for preferences?
- ♦ "Pepperoni pizza is the best in the world" is a meaningless statement insofar that it is a personal preference can the same be said for "liberal democracy is the best system of government in the world?" or "The Republican ticket is best for America?"
- "Concentration camps" vs "transit centre for migrant children" intensional definitions for a holding facility in Texas
- ♦ Hayakawa's parable of A-Town and B-Ville "only" the "same thing"