

Titel: BREV TIL: Eli Fischer-Jørgensen FRA: Francis James Whitfield (1976-08-26)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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Dear Eli,

I should have guessed that you'd be glad to bring this time of year. It's a pity that you didn't have time for Berkeley, but it's very good to know that we can look forward to seeing you in the spring. You certainly are in great demand, and understandably so.

I'm not sure that I understand your question about how I "managed to set up a definite number of strata," but the important thing is that the number was not, strictly speaking, "set up," but rather resulted from the procedure that I tried to indicate in my introductory notes. You could imagine that procedure in another way, as follows: You begin by collecting all those definitions that do not presuppose any other definitions in the system, and you place them in Stratum 1. Next you collect all those definitions that presuppose only definitions in Stratum 1, and you place them in Stratum 2. From the remaining definitions, you select those that presuppose at least one definition in Stratum 2 and no definitions that appear neither in Stratum 1 nor in Stratum 2; these you place in Stratum 3. And so on. If I have followed this procedure correctly, the stack of definitions listed in the Index is exhausted when the definition of "Verb" is entered in Stratum 30. So I think it would be more appropriate and natural to say that I have "discovered," rather than "set up," the number of strata.

The main purpose, of course, was to check the whole definition system for possible circularity (and the stratified list, if it is correctly drawn up, demonstrates that there is, at least, no obvious circularity) and to provide the user with a picture of the skeletal structure of the theory as that, for example, if some weakness should be found in a given definition, he can be helped to determine how seriously the whole theory is affected or how the theory would need to be repaired. The ordering in strata (which I think Lamb may have suggested in his "Epitome" — and perhaps even carried out more for the definitions of the *Prolegomena* — I don't have the whole at hand) is simply an extension of the logical ordering of definitions that I added to the *Prolegomena*, but I did that while Hjelmslev was alive, and with his permission. I did not presume to add the stratified list to the *Précis* because I had a dread of doing anything as editor that might be criticized, however unjustifiably, as a distortion of Hjelmslev's intentions. There is nothing in Hjelmslev's papers, to the best of my knowledge, that would indicate his use of any other device than numbering to maintain control over the logical relationships of his definitions. In fact, I suspect that he didn't feel the need for any other check — as clear was his total view of the logical structure of the theory. One reason for my thinking that he used no extra checking procedure is that, in at least one instance, he violated his own principle by presenting a definition in the text before another definition that it presupposes (a flaw of clarity or logical impotence). Another reason is that he seems to me to have violated his own principle again in