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THE ANATOMY OF THOUGHT

There are many types of thought. Unless one knows these types he can make serious errors on administrative lines.

In the unpublished work “Excalibur” (most of which has been released in HCOBs, PLs and books) there was an important fundamental truth. This was:

SANITY IS THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES, SIMILARITIES AND IDENTITIES.

This is also intelligence.

Two or more facts or things that are totally unlike are DIFFERENT. They are not the same fact or same object.

Two or more facts or things that have something in common with one another are SIMILAR.

Two or more facts or things that have all their characteristics in common with one another are IDENTICAL.

SEMANTICS

In a subject developed by Korzybski a great deal of stress is given to the niceties of words. In brief a word is NOT the thing. And an object exactly like another object is different because it occupies a different space and thus “can’t be the same object.”

As Alfred Korzybski studied under psychiatry and amongst the insane (his mentor was William Alanson White at Saint Elizabeth’s insane asylum in Washington, DC) one can regard him mainly as the father of confusion.

This work, “*general semantics*,” a *corruption* of semantics, (meaning really “significance” or the “meaning of words”) has just enough truth in it to invite interest and just enough curves to injure one’s ability to think or communicate. Korzybski did not know the formula of human communication and university professors teaching semantics mainly *ended* up assuring students (and proving it) that no one can communicate with anyone because nobody really knows what anybody else means.

As this “modern” (it was known to the Greeks, *was a specialty of Sophists* and was also used by Socrates) penetration into culture affects all education in the West today, it is no wonder that

current communication is badly strained. Schools no longer teach basic logic. *Due to earlier miseducation in language and no real education in logic* much broken-down “think” can occur in high places.

A system of thinking derived from a study of psychotics is not a good yard stick to employ in solving problems. Yet the “thinking” of heads of states is based on illogical and irrational rules. Populations, fortunately less “well educated,” are assaulted by the irrational (kooky) “thinking” of governments. This “thinking” is faulty mainly because it is based on the faulty logic shoved off on school children. “You must study geometry because that is the way you think” is an idiocy that has been current for the past two or three decades in schools.

I have nothing against Korzybski. But the general impact of “General Semantics” has been to give us stupefied schoolboys who, growing up without any training in logic except general semantics are giving us problems. Increasingly we are dealing with people who have never been taught to think and whose native ability to do so has been *hampered by a false “education.”*

ADMINISTRATIVE TROUBLE

At once this gives an administrator trouble. Outside and inside his sphere of influence he is dealing with people who not only can’t think but have been taught carefully to reach irrational conclusions.

One can make a great deal of headway and experience a lot of relief by realizing the way things are and not getting exasperated and outraged by the absurdities that he sees being used as “solutions.” He is dealing with people who in school were not only not taught to think but were *often* taught the impossibility of thinking or communicating.

This has a very vast influence on an administrator. Things that are perfectly obvious to him get so muddled when passed for decision to others that an administrator tends to go into apathy or despair.

For instance it is completely logical to him that some activity must either cut its expenses or make more money before it goes broke. So he passes this on as an order demanding that the activity balance up its income—outgo ratio. He gets back a “solution” that they “get a huge sum each week from their reserves” so they will be “solvent.” The administrator feels rattled and even betrayed. What reserves? Do they have reserves? So he demands to know, has this activity been salting away reserves he knew nothing about? And he receives a solemn reply—no they don’t have any reserves but they consider the administrator should just send them money!

The idiocy involved here is that the “logic” of the persons in that activity is not up to realizing that you cannot take more out of something than is in it.

And the activity mentioned is not alone. Today the “assets” of a company are said by “competent economists” to be its property—goodwill—cash added to its debts! In short, if you have ten pennies and owe £1000 then your assets are *£ 1000-0-10!*

Yes, you say, but that’s crazy! And you’re right.

For an example of modern “think” the Ford Foundation is *believed to have* financially *supported* the arming of revolutionary groups so they will be dependent upon the capitalistic system and won’t overthrow it even though the revolutionary group could not exist without Ford Foundation support!

A war is fought and continued for years to defend the property rights of landlords against peasants although the landlords are mostly dead.

Electronic computers are exported under government license and paid for by the exporter and shipped to an enemy who could not bomb the exporter without them in order to prevent the enemy from bombing the exporter.

Yes, one says. That’s treason. Not necessarily. It is the inability to think! It is the result of suppressing the native ability by false systems of “logic.”

PROPER DEFINITIONS

People who annoy one with such weird “solutions” do not know certain *differences*.

Thoughts are infinitely divisible into classes of thought.

In other words, in thought there are certain wide *differences* which are very different indeed.

A FACT is something that can be proven to exist by visible evidence.

An OPINION is something which may or may not be based on any *facts*.

Yet a sloppy mind sees *no difference* between a FACT and somebody’s opinion.

In courts a psychiatrist (who is an AUTHORITY) says “Joe Doakes is crazy.” Joe Doakes is promptly put away for ten years, tortured or killed. Yet this statement is just an OPINION uttered by somebody whose sanity is more than suspect and what’s more is taken from a field “psychiatry” which has no basis in fact since it cannot cure or even detect insanity.

A vast number of people see no difference at all in FACTS and OPINIONS and gaily accept both or either as having equal validity.

An administrator continually gets opinions on his lines which are masquerading as facts.

If opinions instead of facts are used in solving problems then one comes up with insane solutions.

Here is an example: By *opinion* it is assumed there are 3000 pounds of potatoes available in a crop. An order is therefore written and payment (\$300 at 10 cents a pound) is made for the crop. One sack of potatoes is delivered containing 100 pounds. That sack was the *fact*. Loss is 2900 pounds of potatoes.

An administrator runs into this continually. He sends somebody to find an electric potato peeler “just like the one we had.” He gets back a paring knife because it is the *same*.

The administrator orders a *similar* type of shirt and gets overcoats.

The administrator feels he is dealing with malice, sharp practice, laziness, etc., etc. He can lose all faith in honesty and truthfulness.

The ACTUAL REASON he is getting such breakdowns is:

SANITY IS THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES, SIMILARITIES AND IDENTITIES.

The people with whom he is dealing *can't think* to such a degree that they give him insane situations. Such people are not crazy. Their thinking is suppressed and distorted by modern “education.” “You can't really communicate to anybody because the same word means different things to everyone who uses it.” In other words, all identities are different.

A BASIC LAW is usually confused by students with an INCIDENTAL FACT. This is conceiving a similarity when one, the law, is so far senior to the fact that one could throw the fact away and be no poorer.

When a student or an employee cannot USE a subject he studies or cannot seem to understand a situation his disability is that basics are conceived by him to be merely similar to incidental remarks.

The law, “Objects fall when dropped,” is just the same to him as the casual example “a cat jumped off a chair and landed on the floor.” Out of this he fixedly keeps in mind two “things he read”—objects fall when dropped, a cat jumped off a chair and landed on the floor. He may see these as having identical value whereas they are similar in subject but widely different in VALUE.

You give this person a brief write-up of company policy. “Customers must be satisfied with our service,” begins the write-up. Of course that's a *law* because it has been found to be catastrophic to violate it. On down the page is written, “A card is sent to advise the customer about the order.” The employee says he understands all this and goes off apparently happy to carry out his duties. A few weeks later Smith and Co. write and say they will do no more business with you. You hastily try to find out WHY. If you're lucky enough to track it down, you find the shipping clerk sent them a card saying, “Your order was received and we don't intend to fill it.”

You have the clerk in. You lay down the facts. He looks at you glumly and says he's sorry. He goes back and pulls another blooper. You threaten to fire him. He's now cost the company \$54,000. He is contrite.

All he understands is that life is confusing and that for some mysterious reason you are mad at him, probably because you are naturally grouchy.

What he *doesn't* know is what the administrator seldom taps. It isn't that he doesn't know "company policy." It's that he doesn't know the difference between a law and a comment!

A law of course is something with which one thinks. It is a thing to which one aligns other junior facts and actions. A law lets one PREDICT that if ALL OBJECTS FALL when not supported, then of course cats, books and plates can be predicted in behavior if one lets go of them. As the employee hasn't a clue that there is any difference amongst laws, facts, opinions, orders or suggestions he of course cannot think as he doesn't have anything to which he can align other data or with which to predict consequences.

He doesn't even know that company policy is, "Too many goofs equals fired." So when he does get sacked he thinks "somebody got mad at him."

If you think this applies only to the "stupid employee," know that a whole government service can go this way. Two such services only promoted officers to high rank if they sank their own ships or got their men killed! Social acceptability was the only datum used for promotion and it followed that men too socially involved (or too drunk) of course lost battles.

An organization, therefore, can itself be daffy if it has a concept that laws and facts and opinions are all the same thing and so has no operating policies or laws.

Whole bodies of knowledge can go this route. The laws are submerged into incidental facts. The incidental facts are held onto and the laws never pointed up as having the special value of aligning other data or actions.

An administrator can call a conference on a new building, accidentally collect people who can't differentiate amongst laws, facts, opinions or suggestions— treating them of equal value— and find himself not with a new building but a staggering financial loss.

As the world drifts along with its generations less and less taught and more and more suppressed in thinking, it will of course experience more and more catastrophes in economics, politics and culture and so go boom. As all this influences anyone in any organization it is an important point.

PERSONNEL

In despair an administrator enters the field of choosing personnel by experience with them. He embraces a very cruel modern system that fires at once anybody who flubs.

Actually he is trying to defend himself against some hidden menace he has never defined but which haunts him day by day.

The majority of people with whom he deals—and especially governments— cannot conceive of:

1. differences,
2. similarities,

3. identities.

As a result they usually can't tell a FACT from an OPINION (because all differences are probably identities and all identities are different and all similarities are imaginary).

A=A=A

We have a broad dissertation on this in *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* as it affects insane behavior. Everything is everything else. Mr. X looks at a horse, knows it's a house, knows it's a schoolteacher. So when he sees a horse he is respectful.

When anyone in an org is sanely trying to get things done he sometimes feels like he is spinning from the replies and responses he gets to orders or requests. That's because observation was faulty or think was faulty at the other end of the comm line.

As he tries to get things done he begins to realize (usually falsely) that he is regarded as odd for getting impatient.

THE WAYS OUT

There are several ways out of this mess.

- a. One is to issue orders that demand close observation and execution. Issuance of clear orders provides no faintest opportunity of error, assumption or default.
- b. Another is to demand that an order is fully understood before it is executed.
- c. A third is to be sure one totally understands any order one receives before one goes off to do it or order it done.
- d. One is to deal *only* in ORDERS and leave nothing to interpretation.
- e. Another is to pretest personnel on one's lines for ability to observe and conceive differences, similarities and identities.
- f. The effective way is to get the personnel processed.
- g. A useful way is to educate people with drills until they can think.
- h. Another way is to defend one's areas by excluding insofar as possible adjacent areas where crippled think is rampant.
- i. A harsh way is to plow under zones whose irrationality is destructive (such as psychiatry).

THOUGHT CONFUSIONS

Wherever you have thought confusions (where FACT = OPINION, where suggestion = orders, where an observation is taken as a direction, etc., etc., etc.) an administrator is at serious risk.

Misunderstoods pile up on these short circuits. Out of misunderstands come hostilities. Out of these come overwork or destruction.

The need for all discipline can be traced back to the ability to think. Even when appearing clever, criminals are idiots; they have not ever thought the thought through.

One can conclude that anyone on management lines, high or low, is drastically affected by irrational think.

Individuals to whom differences are identities and identities are differences can muddle up an operation to a point where disaster is inevitable.

These are the third dynamic facts with which an organization lives daily.

The fault can be very subtle so as to nearly escape close search or it can be so very broad so that it is obvious and ridiculous. But on all admin lines, the point that fails has not achieved the basic law:

SANITY IS THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES, SIMILARITIES AND IDENTITIES.

L. RON HUBBARD
Founder

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