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LIBERATION FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION:

THE THEORY UNDERLYING THE WORK TO BE DONE

1. General Semantics

As a young man, I experienced Psychological Exploitation as a terribly powerful means of control in the hands of my own political organization's establishment and its leadership. Other party members I knew were not bothered, they were either cynical about it or unaffected. But I could feel distinctly the oppressive quality in the inner processes of discussion in a Party that in its own mind was egalitarian and democratic, priding itself in "open and free debate" before reaching its decisions. By that formally democratic method, after a majority decision had been reached, a "party discipline" was imposed, everybody had to follow suit. I felt entrapped not having any conceptual means for even expressing clearly what I felt was going on. The first glimpses of awareness came with reading "Freedom or Death", a novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, the author of the more famous "Zorba the Greek" and "The Last Temptation of Jesus". The book is about the civil war in Greece between the Communists and the Nationalists and it contained the sentence *"There are no ideas in this world. All there is are people who believe in ideas and behave in light of them. And the value of an idea is only as the moral stature of persons who live by it".* In my inner world, in which "objective truth" and "common ideology" served as a weapon to club opponents on their heads or prod deviants back into line it felt like the basic truth. It gave me some strength, but I had to grope my way around psychological exploitation trying to pinpoint it exactly, wondering why so few people were aware of that obvious phenomenon, how exactly it worked, and what could be done to liberate oneself and others from it. I was very much strengthened by the first real theory of political psychology I found in Erich Fromm's "Fear of Freedom"(1), becoming now convinced that people's psychological inclination to authority and domination motivates their political orientation along with, or more than, their ideology and economic interests. And then I found an existing theory that gave my awareness of Psychological Exploitation a tremendous push upwards and an ability to cope with it and fight it back. That theory is called **General Semantics**. It is *not* to be confused nor associated with the academic disciplines "Semantics" and "Semiotics".

General Semantics won my respect and affection by the simple truthfulness of its basic premises and by the character of its people as it was reflected in their books and articles. There was something humanly warm, fresh and simple, in their style. It was as if someone wanted to invent a style which is as far away as one may get from professional philosophical jargon, ideological phraseology, abstract language. Imagine a young idealistic person, feeling helpless, often victimized psychologically by charismatic figures, trying to push his way against the flames of high rhetoric, reading:

> "...unless we fumble for words and pause and groan and creak when we talk and add footnotes and explanations, we are not thinking, we are just moving muscles. A dog does that when it barks. I think we would do well never to trust a person who easily talks more than a hundred words a minute..."(2)

The General Semanticists presented themselves as honest guys, no-nonsense and with an uncommon intellectual courage that led them straight to dealing with the most relevant and most dangerous areas of human existence. And they did not think twice when a sacred cow needed to be slaughtered, and explained everything in a simple and crystal-clear language, and with good humor too. The formulation I have used here repeatedly as an "oath" against repeating old mistakes, "*we need to know what we're talking about as we have never known before*" – is theirs. I feel intellectually indebted to them. The most popular of the General Semanticists, Sam Hayakawa, defined GS once as a theory dedicated to the problem of how not to make a fool of yourself. That is certainly more than the political ideologues and teachers of philosophy can claim. Today I am still willing to be labeled a "General Semanticist" in addition to "a Humanist", in spite of the fact that General Semantics has not developed as I hoped and is still not accepted in the first echelon of respectable academic disciplines. I suppose, it is too straightforward and too simple to be taken seriously by people with deeply entrenched ideological, ideological-academic, and political interests. Among the established learned theories I found that General Semantics (GS) is that child with open mind and eyes who sees what all those adults, blinded by their ideologies, do not see, namely, "*The Emperor has no clothes!*".

2. Conceptions and misconceptions of science

General Semantics is basically a proposition to use the methods of science in areas that so far have not been approached scientifically -- politics and all areas that are considered to be the realm of normal persons' opinions, traditions, and values. Science in those areas is considered inapplicable on the grounds that in matters that are settled by personal values you cannot make "scientific" measurements, predictions, or experiments that can be repeated and their results verified. But Science is a terribly effective—and a wonderfully effective—method humans may use to find solutions to their problems.– The reader, who having read Part One is now familiar with the scientifically-based processes and procedures for democratic-humanistic political organization, should be able to answer the contention that in the course of human *political* events the scientific method is inapplicable: Indeed, it is not science but our value-choice that determined our decision to organize politically and yet maintain equality of all of us in access to organizational decision-making power. However, once we made that choice, we have plenty of scientific evidence, including much that is based on experimentation, that to reach this goal we need to abolish the organizational power-pyramid with leaders on top. We have been scientific in choosing the ways to practice our values, and even in understanding our "values" as organizing principles in our behavior rather than just beautiful words which resonate favorably in our hearts and minds. We have been scientific in making it our methodological principle to know, as accurately as men and women of science can when they talk about anything they are working on, what we are talking *about* when we talk about our values, or politics, or when we seek solutions to our problems.

The proposition of GS is radical because, in contrast to the idea that science and values do not come together, it suggests that we better be scientific in coping with our human problems and even tells how. That proposition is also terribly important, because the scientific method is so effective and other traditional, philosophic, and traditionally common-sense methods so ineffective in the course of human events. GS requires that we pattern our problem-stating and problem-investigating and problem-solving after engineers and doctors, while we tread the ground in a domain that so far was run by pre-scientific modern-day All-Knowers, Sages, Magicians or High Priests, Leaders, people of Vision, Ideologues, Politicians, Philosophers, Teachers, Authorities, and all kinds of "Public-opinion Leaders" who shape our political culture and lead it to the results you can observe, if not feel yourself, all over the world. Sadly, science in the last 100 years has revolutionized the technology of war beyond our

wildest dreams or nightmares, but politics has not been practiced scientifically in any other aspect. As far as thinking rationally, reaching agreement and understanding is part of politics -- if Machiavelli could be resurrected, he'd feel that nothing much has changed over the last 500 years or so in the ways and means people, including their rulers, cope with political problems and conflicts.

The GS proposition, that we be scientific and not anti-scientific when approaching normal human problems that involve morality and values, must be evaluated, first, in light of the existing and traditional alternatives. Then, we need to know exactly what we are talking *about*. We are not talking about the practices and products of science in industrial, technological or academic institutions. We are talking about science as a guiding principle in approaching and solving our problems. The reader is invited to suspend judgment for a while. First, consider the idea of Science in our culture.

In a sweeping generalization, we suffer from a split personality with regard to "science". On the one hand we have internalized unlimited belief in science as the only approach capable of understanding and mastering the forces of nature, for better or worse, and of solving problems of physical nature such as cancer or AIDS, ICBM's, the hole in the ozone layer or interplanetary flight. On the other hand, witnessing the destructive potential of scientifically developed technologies or political theories advertising themselves as "scientific" (Marxism), we became distrustful of science itself. We have a strongly internalized disbelief that by scientific methods one can understand and resolve political problems or master the destructive forces of human nature. The mainstream of "Science Fiction" in popular culture is a characteristic symptom of this split-personality mentality, and had it not been so ridiculous in its lack of human imagination, it should be interpreted as sinister.. The future people of the galaxies with their "death rays" and time-machines are not different in their political behavior from the people we know too well with their prejudices, power-drives, authority, rhetoric, hatred, and of course aggression. Wendell Johnson, the General Semanticist to whom I feel deep affinity and gratitude for what I had learned from him, defined the essence of the **scientific approach** and described the nature of alternative approaches, in these words:

> "**Our earliest forebears protected themselves from the torment of raw experience by swaddling their tender sensitivities in superstition... In this orientation improvement had no meaning because the Magician transformed. He could solve problems quickly and finally**

and so he does today. It is in some such terms that I see totalitarianism as the old world writ large. And I see the new world, the possible future, as one ruled by the *authority of evaluated experience* - ruled, that is, by the attitude that the dictates of the Old Man, the Knower, the Magician, the authority of age and tradition and power, are to be tested and validated. If democracy means anything then to me it means just that." (p. 16)

"...The scientific method simply requires that we maintain an honest relationship between conclusion and data, that is between our map and the territory, between the world inside and the world outside..." "It is the only pattern I know about in which the individual is free, by definition, to work out his own conclusion on the basis of his own data. He is free, that is, to maintain harmony between himself and the world. As I see it, the scientific method in that sense is related to everything that somehow centers around the integrity and the dignity of the individual." (p. 55)

Now the reader can judge Wendell Johnson's proposition that we become scientific in our approach to politics. That is exactly what I mean too: I welcome the reader to the "possible new world", a world truly democratic as it is governed by the "**authority of evaluated experience**" which lies within each individual, rather than by any theory or dogma or leader or tradition; and, like science itself in choosing its ways to solving its problems, it values above all "**honest relationship between conclusion and data**". Just consider what could be accomplished if our conceptual maps about the world of politics were patterned after the fairly accurate maps of science guiding us in the physical world. Common people all over the world know the scientific approach as the only approach that can solve problems of physical nature, fly people to the moon or raise them from the dead (by resuscitation, possibly one day by de-freezing..). Millions of Africans make it a passionate goal of their politics to be given the benefit of science for curing the epidemic of AIDS.   Change, innovation, the notion that things are *not* going to stay as they have always been became the cultural common sense wherever the scientific approach leads the human endeavor to solve problems and cure epidemics.   In all that concerns physical matter science changed completely the ages-old thinking and living patterns of people all over the world and made them look to science rather than to their traditions for solutions. Not so in politics and normal social life – and see the difference!

In a collection of his lectures published after his death, <u>Living with Change</u>, Wendell Johnson tells a true story that shook me and stays with me ever since. I feel that, in a nutshell, it tells *exactly* what I mean by science and how a scientific approach should be seen in the context of human values and other alternative approaches. Johnson cites Gallileo Gallilei, whose friend, a professor of medicine at the University of Padua, summoned his colleagues and the faculty's dean to observe an experiment. He dissected a human cadaver in order to prove that the center of nerves is the brain, not the heart (the realization, that just a few centuries ago the most learned people in the world new less about their own bodies than a contemporary 8 years old highlights the effectiveness of the scientific approach in changing people's orientation). The dean who watched the demonstration said afterwards that he was very impressed. "*I myself would believe that the center of the nervous system is the brain*", he declared, "*had I not, with my own eyes, read Aristotle*".

The conceptual maps guiding people in their social behavior and politics are not good, at least if you judge by the results. Education does very little in teaching us good orientation in the social area. We are not taught how to use our orientation apparatus, how to navigate independently and sanely and how to avoid mistakes. Most people learn terribly bad social habits which make them prone to make war against other people. They are being socialized to believe and not question their collective maps as if they represented the living truth and as if their legends and signposts always represented the ways in the right directions. Traditional modes of thinking and believing in matters of national politics, war and peace, etc. have been more often than not openly *anti-scientific,* educating people to be oriented backwards, toward the "glorious" history, past, leaders -- rather than be skeptical, question authority, look for new solutions to national-social-political problems and believe, like any scientific explorer and researcher worth her or his grain, that new things can be discovered and old problems could be found to have better than the existing ways of coping. For me, systematic application of GS could become a giant step toward making "That Way **Nevermore"**. With all due caution, we should not overlook the tremendous potential of change by "scientifying" our traditional approach to politics and political life.

3. Orientation and navigating in political reality

A scientific approach to exploration of the orientation system of normal adults like the *homo politicos* is still a new area of scientific interest that has not penetrated the prevailing cultural and educational systems. However, scientific methods were being applied, experimentally and otherwise, in approaching problems in interpersonal communication, group dynamics, organizational behavior, influence, the psychology of language, prejudices, fanaticism, etc., and progress has been made. In periods of my life I experienced the liberating changes a scientific approach can achieve in people in groups, the personal growth that is facilitated in the process. I touched and experienced the possible humanistic alternatives of relating, communicating and working together. This work wants to be part of that movement and apply it to a new area -- political behavior.

It means venturing into that new area with much to worry about. Science in the last 100 years became discredited by whole populations and armies lined behind political "Knowers" and social Magic Transformers who cloaked themselves in the white cloaks of scientists. True believers all over the world became disenchanted and resistant to science itself. And what they are left with? -- Have you ever encountered in your life a new scientific theory, that you believe can significantly change for the better our political experience and destiny? – I know of none in the domain of academic science, where the mood has been very skeptical for the last 50-60 years, and I know only of some that are pure religion or pure magic. And how many people you know who, if you were to tell them that there *is* such a theory, would be scientifically-minded enough to stop and wonder what it is, before rushing to assure you it is impossible?

I have found not one but two scientific bodies of knowledge that I believe have that potential of changing the world of political experience if applied to it: **Group Dynamics** and **General Semantics.** The first discovered the small group as a framework for learning the effects of one's behavior and communication patterns. The great humanistic psychologist and psychotherapist Carl Rogers referred to it as "*perhaps the greatest social invention of the century*". It has been applied here as the basis for the suggested organization in decision-making and the Primary Group life (Part One). The other invention is **General Semantics.** It is going to be applied here, in Part Two, as the basis for the suggested ways of navigating in political reality while avoiding worshipping of words, lack of correspondence between professed values

and life, and other pitfalls of Psychological Exploitation. The first body of knowledge focuses on human relations. The second lays the foundation for understanding the individual's relation to his or her world – "understanding understanding", as one of the General Semantic people put it.

In General Semantics (GS) frame of mind, even the expression "the relation of the individual to his or her world" could be misleading and requires modification. GS's starting point is, that we humans live in two worlds. One is the natural "Outer World" we share with other creatures, made of Things in reality. Facts. The other is an Inner World that is not genetically inherited but learned, acquired as human children learn language. It is made not of Things but of abstracts: concepts, words, images and symbols from the language. This fact of human existence becomes our starting point. GS specifies the practical conclusions drawn from our human condition as inhabitants of the two worlds, the physical and the symbolic, and suggests how to maintain a decent and honest relationship between them. The honest and decent relationship between people and their world has, in General Semantics, an organic meaning, not a philosophical one. It means the relationship between our organic System of Orientation in the world, our inner representations of reality called "conceptual maps", and the reality they represent.

General Semantics gives us chance to immunize ourselves against Psychological Exploitation because it teaches how we should operate our mental instruments of Orientation. When we'd be more free of mistakes caused by faulty operation of our perception, abstraction, evaluation, and other thinking processes which participate in Orientation we shall be able to cope better with human problems (one faulty operation, as we have shown, is treating words as Things or Values). Wendell Johnson would tell his students:

> It seems to me that a world of peace and harmony and efficiency of progress is one in which people themselves know, and let their listeners know when they are talking bout their inner world an when they are talking about the outer world. We need to talk about both, of course, but we need to know which is which.

Please note, that Johnson's suggestion, that we should know and let others know the difference between what we are talking *about*, whether our inner concepts or outer Things, is exactly relevant to the tragic mistakes of the people in Moscow, Philadelphia, or the Israeli Kibbutz movement that we had reported earlier. They thought and talked about strong and emotional concepts from their inner world:

Means, Ends, Capitalism, Socialism, Values, etc. They struggled with concepts, worshipped or surrendered to their logic as if they were powerful beings in the real world. Note, as well, that the "world of peace and harmony and progress" that Johnson visualizes has nothing to do with what is generally understood as radical political action, blood or destruction. It calls for an inner change first: first we must learn to master out tools of Orientation in the world to know what in reality we are talking about... And so, we have here a radically different view of radicalism.

The Map-Territory relationship is the basic model in GS for explicating the demands of and the ways of keeping a sane and honest relationship between our view of the world and the world in which we have to find our ways. This model will be our model in tracing the orientation problems and mistakes that make us susceptible to Psychological Exploitation. Our theory will therefore be practical as navigational directions. The General Semanticists were not just theoreticians but created practical rules and directions for the public. They wanted to enable people avoid the common mistakes in navigating with their conceptual maps. The following are their basic rules for Orientation:

"The Word is not the Thing; The Map is not the Territory."

"The Word is not the Thing"... The inventor of General Semantics was a Polish engineer, an artillery officer in Russian Tsarist army, who was sent to the U.S. as a military attaché in World War One and stayed there. His name was Alfred Korzybski. His war experiences made him wish to explore what was there in the approach of engineers and other scientists that made them able to solve their problems so well. He meant solutions that were impressive in his time, such as suspending a bridge over a mile of water, constructing a flying machine, or sending a 500 kg heavy artillery shell 10 kilometers away. He wanted to find out exactly what was there in their approach to solving problems that was missing, or different in the approach of political leaders and their supporters solving their problems, since they were failing so miserably and turning the world into a slaughterhouse. When he emerged with results of his investigations he called the approach of scientists who know how to solve their problems, "Non-Aristotelian". By that he slaughtered one of the holiest cows in the pantheon of Western philosophy, the one that proclaims A= A.

The basic rules of General Semantics begin with the rule of Non-Identity. A is *not* A, the first letter\symbol on the left is not the second A on the right side of the equation, *The Word is not the Thing* and nothing in nature is identical with anything else, word or thing. When one says "A Jew is a Jew", "an Arab is an Arab", "a Man is a Man", "a Woman is a Woman", etc., as if there was identity between the individual and the generalization, one literally does not know (and apparently doesn't care) what one is talking *about*. Which Arab? Which woman? Who? Where? When?... To say "a Jew is a Jew" is to *identify* the concept one has *inside* one's head with some real person or persons who have their (unique) existence *outside*, in the real world. It is as good as saying "The idea in my head *is* the Thing".

Not only expressions of identity (A is A, a Jew is a Jew, etc.) but also expressions of verbal labeling are instances of Map-Territory confusion. Labeling, in a majority of cases, signifies identification of real Things with verbal labels. "A is a criminal", "B is white", "C is black" means that people identify A, B, and C, with labels from their verbal treasuries. In labeling we identify a real Thing, notably a unique person, with a concept from our inner world which denotes a whole category of people (criminals, whites, blacks, etc.). This semantic mechanism, *Identification,* in a reality of *Non-Identity* makes possible the socially significant false knowledge, stereotyping and prejudice.

Natural disasters come from the outer world and they correspond to our lack of knowledge about the outer world's physical nature. However, the worse disasters, those that befall humanity from the hands of people, correspond to *false knowledge*. The most deeply rooted concepts of culture and tradition come not from observation of reality but from inherited conceptual structures that are like inadequate maps, lacking in information and distorted, that the person believes **are** the reality. The realization that Non-Identity is the structure of the real world and that all Things there are unique requires that we think and use our words very carefully. We must always know as accurately as possible--and if we don't we must explore, collect data, investigate, ask, observe, find out—what or who, **in the outer world** we are describing, labeling or talking about. That is what GS basically means by being scientific.

The conceptual maps in our inner world that guide our orientation are different from the outer world they represent along two basic dimensions: One is the Abstract-Concrete dimension and the second is the *Time* dimension. Out there all Things and unique and different. Inside our heads symbols and words are abstract, generalizations, labels

that symbolize entire categories of Things. Out there all Things exist in time and change with time, whereas inside our heads the symbols on our Maps could remain unchanged, like words. Both dimensions are an inexhaustible source of blundering in thinking, perception, understanding, and navigation in the social world.

In light of those two basic dimensions of difference between Maps and Territories, old Korzybski formulated two more practical rules that need to be committed to memory in order to help us bridge unreasonable gaps between our Maps and the Territory. The first is the Law of Non-Identity, for example:

$$Arab_1 \text{ is not } Arab_2 \text{ is not } Arab_3 \text{ is not } Arab_4, \text{ etc.}$$
$$Jew_1 \text{ is not } Jew_2 \text{ is not } Jew_3 \text{ is not } Jew_4, \text{ etc.}$$
$$Squirrel_1 \text{ is not } Squirrel_2 \text{ is not } Squirrel_4, \text{ etc.}$$

That is the Law of Non-Identity governing the outer world. It is an anti-generalizing device. Whenever you hear that inner voice telling you that a squirrel is simply a squirrel and you could ignore the differences between individual squirrels -- beware! Some squirrel-lover who knows them will certainly accuse you of ignorance, prejudice and, who knows, anti-Squirrelism. All Things in nature are unique and no-Thing in nature is identical with any other Thing or word or definition. We may want to symbolically pin some label on it, or squeeze it into a category, but to do so is to "sin" intellectually if along that process you let yourself forget the Law of Non-Identity....

The second law, the Law of Change in Time, looks as in the following example:

$$Israel_{1950} \text{ is not } Israel_{1970} \text{ is not } Israel_{1990} \text{ is not } Israel_{2000} \text{ etc., etc.}$$
$$The\ Arabs_{1950} \text{ are not the } Arabs_{1970} \text{ are not the } Arabs_{1990} \text{ are not the }$$
$$Arabs_{2000} \text{ etc., etc. ...}$$
$$Zionism_{1950} \text{ is not } Zionism_{1970} \text{ is not } Zionism_{1990} \text{ is not}$$
$$Zionism_{2000} \text{ etc., etc.,}$$

"Etc." is a logo of General Semantics reminding us that there is no limit to our ability to generalize and abstract but reality goes beyond it. History cannot repeat itself, and if some aspects of contemporary events seem similar to what was in the past the similarity is in us, in our inner world, on our conceptual Map and not elsewhere. The law of Changing in Time tells that we cannot find identity, or find only similarity and not difference, because time has changed and with it all Things in reality.

The "intellectual sins" Aldous Huxley was referring to as "*attributing concrete significance to meaningless pseudo-knowledge... indulging instead in over-simplification, over-generalization, and over-abstraction*", the phenomena of entrenched institutionalized stupidity in any culture and time, are transgressions against these simple laws. Dogmatism is a belief that whatever is written on one's Map is absolutely true, actually the Map *is* the Territory ("the *objective* truth"). The dogmatism in vogue now, by the way, walks around attired in the cloak of Liberalism. The absolute belief that our conceptual Map (ideology, world-view, Weltanschauung, etc.) is the "Objective Truth" has undergone a transformation into the extreme formula "There is no Territory - all there is are each one's Maps"... Those Maps, called "Narratives", are very convenient in use, because, if there is no objective truth, there is no need to work hard seeking and pursuing it. One may always say to those who yell "*The Emperor is naked altogether*" that yes, that is your view, but "we live in a postmodern era" (a monstrous over-generalization), and each person has their own narrative, you know"...

Prejudices and inhuman views of the nationalistic, racist, ethnocentric, and other versions of fanaticism in the "We against Them" pattern, are mostly transgressions against the Law of Non-Identity. For example, expressions like "they are all the same", "They are to blame", "I know them well", etc. Backwardness, mental ossification, fixations to routine, fear of change and unwillingness to revise one's concepts when the reality has changed, are transgressions against the Law of Change in Time. In 1982, when the British Navy approached the Falkland Islands with the goal of driving out the Argentineans, crowds in Buenos Aires cheered "Come-on, Come-on, the hot oil is ready!" That was the hot oil that, in violation of the Law of Change in Time, contributed to the repulsion of siege on Buenos Aires by the British Navy in the beginning of 19th century. In 1989 Israeli Prime Minister, Itzhak Shamir, proclaimed: "*If we look at reality we see it did not change. The Arabs are the same Arabs and the Jews are the same Jews and the sea is the same sea, and the goal remained the same goal: destroying Israel and driving the Jews into the sea.*" - As a revelation about the speaker's inner world, that saying, of course, represents the reality there; however, in the outer world $Arab_1$ is not $Arab_2$, the Arabs are not the Arabs who wanted to drive the Jews into the sea when Itzhak Shamir, in the 1940's, fought them and fought the British (as a terrorist on their "most wanted" list…), and even the Mediterranean sea is not the same. In 1989 it was already

much more polluted and the Navies of the U.S. and Israel dominated its eastern parts, to mention only two of the differences. Things Change.

In order to help avoiding such "transgressions" against the laws of GS, humanity and nature, we shell suggest a number of practical techniques for developing the skills of performing correctly, according to the logic of fair correspondence between Maps and the Territories, our mental operations of orientation. Most of the theoretical base of the techniques is General Semantics, but they are in line with other findings in perception, cognition, conceptualization, language-analysis, and behavior. Before we get into techniques, however, we need to add one fundamental theoretical element to our self-concept: When you think of your real self, include your system of Orientation among your living organic systems.

4. Your Orientation system

The human Orientation system is, to date, the last vital area of interest that in its understanding science has not yet made an important imprint on society. In the beginning of our cultural evolution natural scholars were having systematic interest in the things farthest away - stars and heavenly bodies; however, to the 20th century there has been no scientific inquiry into the closest things, ourselves.

> "Unfortunately, in seeking to read the book of nature more faithfully, the new thinkers banished the thinker himself from the picture as peremptorily and arbitrarily as Socrates, and after him the Christian theologians had turned their backs on nature."... "Those who looked upward and outward and forward, and were prepared to traverse astronomical distances, forgot to look downward and inward and backward." – Lewis Mumford, "*The sin of Galileo*",(3)

Of all the propositions brought in this book, this one, that you include your Orientation system in your concept of Self on the same level with other organic systems, would be the most intimate. It touches on the most inner sphere of the individual reader. It concerns self-concept or self-image in all aspects, not only in the political context. It asks for a change in the innermost conceptual-map of ourselves as thinkers and doers, as we touch the world and other people and cope with our problems, and as we orient ourselves morally and respond in our social relationships.

To be a human individual, different from all other creatures in nature, puts a burden of responsibility on us. That burden comes from the fact, that we are not endowed by nature to find our way in the world instinctively by using only our senses. We cannot respond instinctively in every situation, we think. We are not equipped by nature to survive as human beings without being taught to. We are born with a genetic programming that endows us with the ***potential*** to develop into fully functional humans. But to become human, an Orientation system must develop in our inner world. The Orientation system is not given to us genetically but by inheritance from our social environment, when we learn to understand and talk. In the known cases of infants that had not been taught language, they did not develop what we consider to be normal human qualities, such as self-awareness, and were not able to learn language in later years.

So a realistic self-concept, the simple "what am I" notion, should include the knowledge that, along with other genetically inherited organic systems like respiration, digestion, blood circulation, nervous system, sexuality, and others, we possess one *acquired* organic system, our system of Orientation. That system works by **Symbolization** – that unique and miraculous process by which we human beings – alone in the known universe – pour into the inner worlds of our offspring the symbols that represent reality, and with which reality becomes represented, perceived and understood, by the child. That process must be conceived as definitive of humanity, universal and therefore *organic*.

Our mind is the organ of Orientation the way our stomach is the organ of digestion and lungs the organ of respiration. Language is like food and air, provided by the environment and turning into organic part of ourselves.

This analogy can be stretched further: Without food and air we could not survive and without language we could not survive as humans. And, as food can be nutritious or poisonous and the air pure or polluted, so language can be good or bad for you, helpful or harmful in various degrees for your ability to orient yourself in the world sanely and cope with your problems humanly. If we are fed junk-food or breathe polluted air, our own organism is harmed, and we have pain mechanisms to alert us of the danger. But if our inner world is filled with symbols constituting an erroneous conceptual map of the human Territory, or if we ourselves generate ideas that make us harm ourselves and others, we very often become attached to them and depend on them as on an addictive drug. And so we can unnecessarily do terrible harm to ourselves and to many others. For just one historically not too significant example, it should be

understood, without any important qualifying disclaimers, that the deep-down (*direct*) cause why those people, on September 11, 2001, smashed the passenger airliners containing themselves and hundreds of others into the Twin Towers willingly, consciously and in full harmony with their highest moral--even Godly--values, is a result of them having had bad Orientation system. Regretfully, in what can be taken as a reflection on the contemporary human condition, they mastered the modern technology of navigating the huge airliners well enough, but navigated their ways in the world with terribly erroneous ages-old conceptual maps.

Our Orientation system differs from other organic systems in that the adult person has much more control, and with it responsibility, over it. It should be each person's responsibility to know and remember that our concepts and ideas about other human beings are symbolic, generalizations, abstractions; that our conceptual maps are Maps can never be identical, in their truth or detail, to the Things in the Territory. It should be our responsibility to check these concepts against the changing Territory and update our Maps constantly, despite the pain of parting with old habitual beliefs.

I believe that a conscious acceptance of our Selves as we really are, and that means having to navigate our ways by symbolic Maps - would help us navigate and live more sanely. That Self-concept would make us more aware of our human limitations and the corresponding responsibility, such as not to believe our conceptual-ideological Maps blindly but check them against what we perceive with our own senses in the Territory, even when all the sign-posts of past traditions and our leaders want us to follow them blindly rather than navigate independently. Our human condition of living in two so different worlds requires that we'd know as accurately as we can what we are talking or thinking *about*, whether it is a Thing in the outer world or some idea or feeling or concept from the enormous treasure of linguistic symbols that populate our inner world. The very nature of our Orientation system requires that we make it a point of personal commitment, a point of honor I'd suggest, that we be open to change our ideas and have courage to validate that commitment in human communication. Introducing the system of Orientation into our organic self-concept and taking the responsibility for its proper functioning becomes therefore a necessary condition for our ability to change our political experience.

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References

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