

3/22/93

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Dear Brian,

I continue to enjoy your booknotes and round table discussions. It has been quite some time since I mailed something to you. I am hopeful that improvements in ethical behavior by the political leaders of this nation become evident soon.

A peeve of mine that I would like to hear discussed is the incompetent (choose 'greed-driven' if you find it more appropriate) per-centage salary increases and COLAs system which I consider one of the causes of the increasing disparity in wages of the low-wage worker versus the high-salaried chief executive officer.

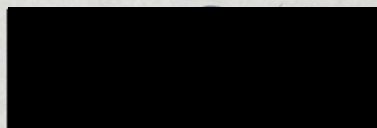
The cost of basic goods and services increases in discrete amounts. The concept of adjusting wages, pensions, and subsistence payments to prices is rational if competence, ethics, and inclusion of typical expenses of food, shelter, clothing, basic education and basic health needs are the scope. Luxury items and increases in the wage differentials (originally justified by skill level differences in manual or mental dexterity and knowledge-experience from longevity at the trade or training) should not be part of raises or the "cost of living adjustment".

This percentage-substituted-for-discrete adjustment (and the broadening of salary-wage scales such as the federal GS series - which now has the SES extension put on top so that political power is extra well rewarded) has gone on for so long that few consider it aberrant or unfair. I advocate that the ethical basis of having child labor and minimum wage laws condemns the lack of a maximum wage, salary, income - as well as having too wide a disparity between the lowest wage and the highest salary. (Minimum wage is not indexed at all. Subsistence payments exceed the wage.)

Paul Kennedy, recently on booknotes, was interesting. His recommending that scholarly overviews by experts 'looking at the big picture' as being something that the educated public wants and should read is 'right on target' in my opinion. I do suspect that only a small percentage actually read books that have much depth.

The enclosure is my current essay attempt to provide my point of view and arguments as to it's veracity. Continuing my education-teaching-learning is the major occupation of my retirement. Your comments-feedback on this overview of what it's all about by a books-taught-eclectic-seeker are solicited and, if received, would be appreciated. Permission is granted for unlimited copying of my writings as long as the copies are not sold. On second thought, selling copies is desired if the funds are given in their entirety to the Bureau of the Public Debt to reduce the debt.

Thank you for reading my letter. Best wishes and good luck in your endeavors.
sincerely,



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PS. I am sure you get too many books to read, but... You might enjoy a little book by a cultural anthropologist, "Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches" by Marvin Harris.

UTOPIA

Piet Hein wrote some lines that capsulize what has motivated me:

"I'd like to know
what this whole show
is all about
before it's out"

Philosophy was 'born' in the golden age of Greece. That is, the oldest attributable recorded history of 'lofty' thoughts about various 'consistent or logical sets of beliefs' pertinent to several different basic assumptions was found in the writings of the scholars/teachers of the schools of Athens. Most cultures have evolved from one philosophy or religion - the Golden Age of Greece attempted to tolerate and investigate all of them - *id est*, to 'generalize' philosophy.

The implication that "society" is required to behave morally/ethically is not far-fetched. Nations result from a 'society' declaring itself to be politically authorized - claiming land 'sovereignty' and rights to exist and establish itself by a constitution. Such a declaration constitutes establishment of responsibilities and rights for the whole and all its parts down to its individual members in perpetuity - as long as the 'nation' exists.

Utopians we seem to be (we aspire to evolve to perfection). The majority of us (want to?) believe we will somehow live forever. This wish may be a major cause of the incompetence the human race has demonstrated in not being able to correct the ancient distortion - *i.e.*, the assumption that there are supernatural beings. This error has distorted our thinking - from the beginning of thinking!

I encounter great resistance within every individual to whom I communicate this thought. It is labeled 'heresy' by some. I am labeled "crazy" by some. Most admit they do not know about any proof of life after death - and that they have chosen to "have faith" - "to believe" - what they were taught by parents, church, nearly everyone.

The book "Toxic Parents" by Susan Forward tells that each of us is likely to have been "taught" - learned some distorted or incorrect values and beliefs. I suggest 'psychic toxicity' applies to the collective "memes"/values-and-beliefs of homo sapiens! Much fear and superstition is resultant in/from the concept of supernatural, personified Evil - labeled the Devil or Satan - or the concept of God - when God is vengeant, judging, and punishes for all eternity. Some of the 'religious thinking', especially in India, portrays a non-violent, loving-only God. I find this better thinking - better philosophy, but still not correct. The tendency of believing the future is pre-destined (because God or Gods created the cosmos and planned its evolution) is negative - as is philosophy with any basically negative premise such as "everything we know is in doubt". These do not encourage responsible living which is caring/change/growth/evolution/improvement/doing.

Philosophy, if understood to be a word-symbol-label for the process of seeking to know the true reality, is intrinsically comprised of all science, religious thinking, curiosity-driven-learning-education. The correcting of errors-distortions-incompleteness in our overall state of knowledge is equivalent to evolution of the epitome-core of homo sapiens. It often seems, after we learn-accept the corrections, that advancements in science are

obvious. The abstract knowledge of early man-kind was rudimentary.

It is my opinion that the uncertainty principle 'quantified' by Heisenberg - and necessary in Einstein's theory of general relativity - and necessary in all 'quantum mechanics' - is also 'proof' that the postulate that creation of the cosmos is possible with pre-knowledge of precisely how it would evolve is incorrect-inaccurate-false.

The needed correction in thinking (of 'religious' or 'philosophical' thoughts) is that random-chance events must occur. The evolution of the cosmos included the origin of living matter on this planet many years after matter-time happened to start. The first self-replicating molecules were not nearly so complex as the simpler of the majority of the species of plants and animals here now. I believe - am of the opinion - that the "Identity" (a word-symbol combination that Alfred Korzybski seems to have been obsessed against), "God is Love", may be an 'answer' to the question in Piet Hein's poem. The 'gospel' (gospel = god's word = 'label' applied later as a validation for John's best thinking) of John starts "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with god, and the word was god.". Was he trying to say that homo sapiens came into existence when homo individuals learned to use verbal-thought symbols? Semantics evolved from non-verbal to verbal-language-symbol mental capability?

Does "God is Love" attempt to express the same concept - I d est "parenting-nurturing-teaching-the-ability-to-use-languages--abstractions-as-symbols was the origin of homo sapiens"? Is the "creation" of mental abstract-symbol languages which eventually included philosophy, science, history, technology, et cetera existent because "Love" was "recognized" by some children of nurturing homo parents? Does the origin of "consciousness" in homo sapiens individuals emanate from the chance event that a naked ape accidentally "connected" - "saw the light" - "understood" (for the first time (ever or effectively) that he or she survived because of others. This ability to recognize one's self as distinct-individual but connected by nurturing which includes teaching-learning is part of the "eureka" of consciousness - which may be 're-enacted' in our 'passage through puberty'. We are 'confused' by the changed sequence of the process of learning. To try to say this sentence/thought again (I am aware that it is not clear-precise-well put; but, this is not a simple thought) - we now learn to use the language of our parents-environment and become conscious via this learning before we 'realize' the 'consciousness of individuality' - which occurs 'after' several events-processes: conception, fetal (dependent) growth-evolution, birth (separation completed physically), (dependent) early childhood, languages (non-verbal and verbal/abstract) thinking learning ('creates' some independence), (protected) childhood, adolescence (individuation), maturing. Each individual matures along a unique 'path' and 'travels' further or less than others.

I suggest that homo sapiens prioritize evolving/creating a 'universal' code of ethics. Perhaps each 'society' could prepare a draft that places "loving, caring, nurturing, and educating self and others" as the goal to be taught/sought. This proposal is utopian! I am assuming that each nation/society has mature leaders willing to assert that altruism (love) is the primary value that should be placed/ensconced as humanity's "prime directive". However, correcting our general perceptions (widely-held beliefs) is crucial!

Survival of species may be very high on the priority list of those who are mature; but, at present, the human species does not appear about to become extinct. (We do recognize that we depend upon most of the other forms of life - the whole environment.) However,

the means of major set-back exist in technology. And, not all physically-mature humans have mature psyches.

And, the possibility of a large asteroid impacting the earth, or the sun, and causing major disturbance or obliteration of life on the planet is not zero probability. The possibility of other forms of life coming to the planet with unknown benefits, or negative effects, is also quite credible. These thoughts are 'disturbing' thoughts. I prefer pleasant thinking - positive outlook. I do what I can to help - and urge you to also do your best. It is 'fun' to be euphoric.

To return to the discussion of ethical utopia, I declare the following statement to be worth some consideration. Maturity itself may be measured, if I use my prime directive, by ranking one (self or other - or group) using the criteria of effective performance in achieving maximum proficiency in the processes: loving, caring, nurturing, and learning-teaching. (Loving defined as the highest degree - the process of choosing to give what is best for the recipient while at the same time expecting nothing in return - even avoiding thanks by acting anonymously.)

Doing this rating/ranking intrinsically implies acceptance of some definitions (agreement on what is meant) and assumptions of veracity and accuracy in my, and your, knowledge of reality.

Freedom of choice is a value as well as a privilege. "Free will" may be considered equivalent to "freedom of choice". "Free will" may be considered the theologian's defined characteristic of mankind that is, for some of them at least, declared to mean/signify that each individual has choice of being good or bad - because a mature individual knows or thinks of alternative actions as part of deciding what to do. Choosing to act lovingly (positively /well/fairly) is morally/ethically choosing to 'be' good. "Being 'bad'" means choosing to act less than one's best. The extreme degree of bad is hate (choosing to act negatively). (It can also be detrimental to behave ignorantly; id est, not know what is beneficial and what is detrimental.)

These 'definitions' are man-made - as are all language-based concepts - and are, in a sense, "group rules" for individuals and groups. "Universal" rules would be those applying to "everything" or to all members of homo sapiens or to all 'conscious' living entities perhaps. The 'scientific method' or "General Semantics" discipline cannot be applied to prove ethical principles per se. However, accepting any principle, then analyzing or theorizing effects that can be measured, and then measuring these predictions comprise the 'scientific method'! We approach Utopian/ultimate understanding as we eliminate errors and distortions in our perception of reality.

Ethics/moral-laws are the bases/principles of political/governance laws that we are using to control ourselves in the aggregate as well as individually. Ethics evolves in politics/religion/business via evolving in the thinking of individuals which is then accepted by the larger grouping(s). The ultimate would be agreement by all to one, unified set of ethics principles/definitions/rules/laws. Sort of comparable to the "Grand Unified Theory" of physics. Both must be congruent with reality. The ultimate "generalized semantics" would include a dictionary of word-symbols each being unique with completely consistent rules of grammar et cetera and ability to describe every detail of reality.

The constitutional guarantee of freedom is limited. My favorite quote may be "Salus populi suprema lex esto," which is translated "The will of the people is the supreme law".

This I understand/expect to be a principle of the courts. If the supreme court of homo sapiens is to evolve into existence and is guided by this principle, it seems that each nation and religion, in their most general sense, must accept this principle.

However, the will of the people is not the wishes of the people, nor can the will affect the natural laws - the reality.

One focus of this essay is not the psychology of the individual, but the psychology and morality of the species - if such can be considered to exist. It does manifest as altruism (even though many limit their "altruism" to "my group truism").

My conjecture is that early mankind developed from non-abstract-thinking, non-self-conscious animals who had sexual urges without morality - a 'psyche' without verbal language or symbolic thinking or logic. There is certainly fear and aggression as well as friendliness exhibited, and understood to large extent, among primates and many animals. However, to say they know right from wrong may be distorting the most precise meaning of those word-symbols. Perhaps 'semantics' needs to be differently 'defined' for non-verbal communication. Exactly what "semantics" meant to Alfred Korzybski, who originated-refined the 'general semantics' concept, is not precise in my own mind although I read his book "Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics" as well as many articles in the "trade" publication "ETC".

The 1961 printing edition by Britannica of Funk and Wagnalls standard dictionary gives a definition for "semantics": "*Logic* The relation between signs or symbols and what they signify or denote". I consider this a good definition. However, it is lacking in specificity and precision. The key word/symbol in the definition is "relation". The presentation of the "what" that is signified or denoted is also crucial to the author or originator of the communication in that the recipient(s) must get the message(s).

The Funk & Wagnalls definition of "general semantics" includes: "...distinguishing carefully between levels of abstraction, between statements and the events they represent, generalizations and the particular, etc., avoiding polarized (either-or) orientations, and emphasizing unity and relationships within wholes."

If you read well, you noticed that the definition of general semantics is very abstract! a high level abstraction! To the extent that one does well with this General Semantics discipline in his thinking, one thinks well. (To the extent that this discipline is incorporated into computer codes, computers "think". However, electronic computers seem unable to become "self-conscious" - even though this is implied in some science fiction. Observing is intrinsic to perception - electronic devices function but do not 'perceive' as homo sapiens is capable of learning to perceive.)

One is logical with this disciplined process as our thinking whereas another is illogical when using less-disciplined or non-disciplined or distorted word-symbols or process. Therefore, explicit, precise word-symbol meaning - only one meaning for each word - is conducive to better thinking. Using the same word to convey varying, or different, ideas - or multiple, or any of several, degrees of abstraction - is intrinsically illogical! Using adjectives, modifiers, and defining our intent/meaning help reduce this confusion problem with language.

If a universal computer language is evolving, it may be more precise than general language and less difficult than attempting to use expert's jargon of multiple specialties when one wishes to communicate eclectically. (I am referring to the higher level

computer code language - not the Boolean algebra of the machine-level code.) This effectively would be using a 'universal' dictionary and 'syntax' rules with perhaps the ultimate precision/accuracy eventually. Much of mathematics has such a 'dictionary' and sets of rules and proofs. This aids the thinking of scientists, engineers, et cetera.

Attempting to influence others is the intent of most communications. There is resistance to change in each of us. My intent is to give you impetus to think about your(our) thinking and beliefs as well as 'instincts'. This latter characteristic of "living matter", instinct, is defined: "...natural and unreasoning prompting to action..." as my choice of the multiple definitions in Webster's collegiate dictionary 5th edition.

Instinct is subordinate to reason/logic/ethics/morality - i.e., the higher capability of homo sapiens. Conscious choosing to act according to one's ethical values, principles, and beliefs is right, but choosing to act otherwise (for pleasure or gain perhaps) is wrong. Instinct is "unreasoning" brain activity. Can we consider habitual non-use of reasoning equivalent? I think not. This "gets at" responsibility for our acting as humans.

Attitudes are based upon 'training'. Our early-life training/civilizing includes parental-attitude-learning via copying what they felt and/or expressed non-verbally and verbally. Later, we were scolded or encouraged about toilet functions and taught language and 'proper behavior' et cetera. This teaching-learning included much diversity - and was seldom (if ever (for even one of us)) completely consistent of itself - nor were we made aware of the values (moral bases, beliefs, perceptions) that were involved/included in the attitudes encountered. Each parent and sibling or 'visitor' in our early life had a different attitude toward us with some ambivalences - some were positively influential and perhaps nearly un-distorted with nearly totally beneficial-to-us caring/nurturing/loving attitude. These were best for us. Others were sources of learning distorted and perverse attitudes. Knowledge of body parts, especially genitalia, and the special sensitivity and hormonal-affected changes of puberty to the breasts and genitalia and brain are acquired under vastly different circumstances by each individual.

To analyze one's (early) influences and learnings is difficult - to say the least. For some, it is complicated by multiple aggressive invasions of their privacy by self-seeking others of the whole gamut of ages, sizes and both sexes. These powerful (they were larger, stronger, more aware than us) persons with 'normal' and abnormal attitudes toward themselves and others - the recipient in particular - and their actions involving us affected us - especially their attitude to our genitalia as well as their touching our genitalia and our re-actions to whatever occurred. The transition from child to adult is difficult and may reduce or increase the distortions and aberrations already existent in the mind and brain and genes of the individual.

The moral/ethical choice to have a child should occur before the insemination. Homo sapiens is a label signifying the wise, sage, or discerning man-kind genus. Insemination without conscious acceptance of the moral/ethical responsibility of parenting the potential offspring is "being" or "acting as" an animal not yet a human being. This postulate "condemns" rape, but also condemns all sexual promiscuity, aggression, seduction, and shirking of loving, nurturing, and providing the education including moral/ethical training of oneself and children one 'fathers'(man) or conceives(woman) biologically.

Immature adults will not meet these requirements - certainly children having children

is not permissible for a morally responsible society.

There is no logical or ethical justification for sexual gratification by self-stimulation at any age. The same is true for mutual stimulation that leads to male-female sexual intercourse by immature or non-responsible individuals. The concept that homosexual activity is moral or ethical activity is ludicrous in my opinion. Aberrant thinking or behavior is not moral nor ethical behavior. Tolerating aberrant behavior is moral or ethical unless harm to others results. Physical pleasure-seeking is not wrong in the ethical/moral sense unless harm to self or others is chosen.

The assertions that abortion is a right - and that homosexual aberrance is a choice that should be legally protected - are both devoid of ethical principles. Neither is justifiable. The first is a harmful-to-the-fetus process to change the result of irresponsible behavior. The homosexual orientation "choice" is not consistent with correcting distortions (includes aberrant behavior). The ploy that homosexuality may be determined by one's genes - citing similar aberrant behavior by 'lower' animals is 'seen' by me as attempting to conceal physical self-satisfaction (includes fornicating, fantasy attempts to orgasm, raping, masochistic sex, sadistic sex, other 'neuroses', et cetera) as instinctual rather than immature behavior or irresponsible (immoral) behavior. However, the determination that genes determine the brain differences of males "versus" females may also have aberrations that pre-dispose "maleness" and "femaleness" in distorted or abnormally-mixed-mode would be new data that would require further investigation. The determination about whether these aberrance(s) directly or indirectly affect the individual's freedom of choice in the ethical-psyche-maturation-responsibility process is further in the future. There are species of bi-sexual and sex-transitioning animals as well as 'non-sexual' reproductions of cells. The fertilized cell of homo sapiens is not equivalent in bio-physical configuration for every cell. It divides-evolves per a 'blueprint' labeled 'human genes' that is unique for each of us! Chance external influences change this process. Some of the chance perturbations become widespread in the species and are positive while others are negative for overall species evolution - and evolution of abstract psyche consciousness may depend upon homo sapiens.

One must become aware of one's self (know thyself as Plato advised); then, love (heal) oneself so as to approach becoming totally (if mental healing/learning is completed) liked by one's self. There is typically a portion of our beliefs, acquired as we evolve from conception to physical adulthood, that is distorted - and knowledge is always incomplete. Discovering and correcting the distortions is identical to maturing. When we learn to do only good to our self and others of all categories, we reach mental maturity - have peace, self-esteem, peak-experience, euphoria. The culmination(s) of this process may cause one to feel "born again".

An under-loved baby has little chance of becoming mature. There are many unwanted (by their biological parents) fetuses, babies and children! - not mentioning those of all ages who do not like themselves enough to care-for/love themselves. Some self-esteem is required for us to learn to love ourselves, then others - to mature. Each child born should experience loving nurture - which is the most important basic education upon which homo sapiens will thrive and evolve optimally. "Teaching undistorted thinking" is sort of like the egg and "learning undistorted thinking" is sort of like the chicken in the paradoxical, rhetorical question "Which comes first - the chicken or the egg?"

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