

Language and Politics

Politics--An Unrecognized and Unexplored Branch of Anthropology, Psychology, and Human Ethics

In “Science And Sanity” Korzybski cautioned: **“...mankind represents an interdependent time-binding class of life, and any group of people who possess physical means for destruction and still preserve infantile standards of evaluation become a menace to the culture of the whole race.”** (S&S, page 547) **“A ‘democracy’ without intelligence of the masses under modern conditions can be a worse human mess than any dictatorship could be.”** **“In general semantics we believe that some such things as healthy human intelligence is possible, and so somehow we believe in the eventual possibility of ‘democracy’.”** (Science And Sanity, 5th, Ed. Page lxxvii). **“Mans’ achievements rest upon the use of symbols. For this reason we must consider ourselves as a symbolic class of life, and those who rule the symbols, rule us.”** (S&S, page 76) **“The progress of science is due in the main to scientific methods and linguistic revisions...”** (S & S, page xciii) **All our doctrines, institutions, etc., depend on verbal arguments. If these arguments are conducted in a language of wrong and unnatural structure, our doctrines and institutions must reflect that linguistic structure, and inevitably lead to disasters.** (Science And Sanity, page 59) **The more languages (theories) we have for analysis and structural comparison, the more glimpses do we get at the structure of the world.... If we want to progress in any line of human endeavor, this progress is always dependent on the language we use, since what we call ‘progress’ is always a co-operative affair and therefore dependent on means of communications and languages.** (Science And Sanity, page 725)

General Semantics, a meta-system of interrelated principles as generalizations of the methods and approach of science and mathematics, provides foundations for an epistemology, a theory of values, a theory of ethics, a theory of psychotherapy, and a theory of sanity. Based on these theories, **we could think of general semantics as “meta-anthropology”, “meta-epistemology”, “meta-communication”, “meta-psychology” and “meta-ethics”.** General semantics principles including **“consciousness of abstracting, non-identity, non-allness, non-elementalism”, “conscious time-binding”, and others, can be thought of and taught as “general problem-solving tools”.** As **“critical thinking standards, and reasoning tools”** general semantics principles being about language and human behavior are **applicable at all levels of our human relationships—personal, social, national, international, artistic, ethical, economic, artistic, and political.** Anyone using these tools can improve their language, reasoning, and communication skills, and could lead to a general understanding of, and ways to improve political processes for anyone concerned not to leave politics only to politicians.

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To the extent that political governance involves, authoritative direction, institutionalized management of human relationships, social conditioning through education and other institutions, control of human behavior...and sometimes abuse of people; to the extent that persistent abuses eventually lead to dissatisfactions, frustrations, anger, protests, and rebellions; to the extent that governance involves language based constitutions, laws, rules, regulations, policies, etc., as ways to maintain certain levels of social order through restraining the otherwise spontaneous creative human expressions, attitudes, and behaviors; to the extent that politics involves the ways 'citizens' are treated by leaders...We could think of **"politics, as an unrecognized and unexplored branch of anthropology, psychology, and human ethics"**.

With increasing numbers of people and technologies, human interactions are getting more and more complex. Based on their attitude and language, and many laws, and policies, there is little evidence that politicians are getting correspondingly smarter in the field of governance. Ideally, anyone or group seeking to represent, and govern millions of people, would have a reasonably sound historical, anthropological, and psychological (not mythologized, idealized, or romantic) understanding of human nature and relationships. Ideally, the policies and institutions (especially education) that politicians create, and political language, being about human governance, would be informed by, and reflect an appreciation of, human histories, and the diversity of human ways of being--including earlier, and ongoing 'tribal' behaviors, the differences, range, and intensity of human values, aggressiveness, generosity, greed, beliefs, ideas, interests, creative expressions, ingenuity, concerns, fears, competitiveness, need for power, recognition, status, and so on. **Appropriating its history, not as an academic exercise, but as "time-binding events to learn from and improve"**, would provide a nation with important clues to a broader understanding of its present state of affairs and could also contribute to better governance.

Language matters. Words matter: Look closely at Abraham Lincoln's words related to a democratic ideal: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people": By removing the first comma, we get **"Government of the people by the people...for the people"**: It is possible that this 'simple' modification could have provided a foundational political paradigm for democratic practices where emphasis was directed away from "government and management of people" to **"government by the people"**. A national political attitude and approach where **"government by the people" was a recognized and respected value** could result in significant changes to political processes involving both politicians and the

people they campaigned to represent. A more sensitive approach might be more effective than present practices where politicians' talk and behavior generally follow a traditional pattern "We know best...we know the right thing to do...just leave things to us." If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes all the people (not only those called politicians) to attend to, repair, heal, and keep a nation from falling apart.

It is possible that for democracies to survive, there has to be a radical political paradigmatic **conscious time-binding shift** from "Government of the people" ...to "Government by the people". If the word "democracy" was understood and talked about as "a label for a political ideal", and an "ongoing political experiment to be pursued, revised, and "refined based on scientific discoveries, technological developments, and changing circumstances", a nation might pursue this ideal through constant improvements of political, and institutional operations towards better governance. A nation valuing and pursuing the idea of democracy as a political experiment, might, based on a heuristic, scientific approach, arrive at questions including the following: "What kind of a nation have "we" been creating?" "What kind of nation are "we" creating? What kind of nation do "we" want to create? And "How do "we" go about achieving this? (with emphasis on "we") This paradigmatic political change would involve an attitudinal shift from the usual way of debating, exploring, and handing down conclusions in the traditional political form of "**top down edicts**": Leaders would instead, address these questions to the nation as "**bottom up developments**"—to be explored as part of education programs, and encouraged as an ongoing national conversation, towards fuller political participation in keeping a nation healthy. As present politicians as a group, are not likely to benefit from introducing such radical changes, they are also not likely to help citizens develop politically...so it's up to individuals in a developing democracy to develop more awareness of the power of words, advance their own critical evaluation skills, and become more politically savvy. With training in general semantics and from a base of conscious time-binding intelligence, citizens in a developing democracy would express "their" political leadership", and let would-be leaders know that they could no longer be wooed by charisma, specious promises, well chosen words, phony debates, photo-'ops', and so on. Citizens would require would-be leaders to talk about ways they have developed "their" management and political governing skills--an exercise that people in dictatorships cannot pursue.

The power of words

Words can be considered as "semantic variables", "powerful physical and psycho-semantic forces", constituting light waves, sound waves, and tactile signals of particular patterns. These word-waves are transduced into electro-chemical impulses, processed at neural levels and emerge at psychological levels as curiosity, creative, and destructive impulses, beliefs, values, images, thoughts, ideas, insights, memories, feelings, meanings, words, confusion, understanding,

certainties, and so on. **Through words and other symbols, we pass on and build on what we have learned across times. Alfred Korzybski labeled this “natural communication across generations”, “time-binding”.** Conscious time-binding (a higher level of time-binding) emerges when we time-bind on time-binding. Conscious time-binding enables us to learn from, and avoid some of the harmful effects, involving attitudes and behaviors resulting from natural time-binding. We could think of time-binding as “psychological evolution”. But as our biological evolution has not kept pace, it’s possible that a great deal of our psychological distress, and biological malfunctions could be a consequence of the demands and strain put on our nervous systems by this asymmetric relationship: a sign that we are not using our nervous systems as well as we could.

Our human world is one organized and mediated by words, meanings, beliefs, and values. Some psychoanalysts propose that the human ‘mind’ is organized by words. From this, it could be proposed that since words and minds play such a big part in the creation, interrelationships and interactions that constitute our human world, from a psychological, non-elementalistic perspective of “minds at work”, we could learn a great deal about human minds from exploring socio-cultural and international issues, and vice versa. A great deal of our human problems at personal, social, national, and international levels can be attributed to a general lack of awareness of the power of words. Words are one way the human mind, stores, processes, retrieves information, and keeps track of its operations at psychological levels. With words, we create the neuro-linguistic environments we call tribes, societies, cultures, and nations. **Words will have power over us to the degree we do not recognize the power of words as neuro-semantic forces, or have tools we can use to minimize words’ influence in directing our lives.** In the fields of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and psychology, practitioners help individuals recognize and deal with the havoc words play in their lives.

Like many other systems: Nations come and go. Nations evolve, progress, and regress: A proposition: **“If the health of a nation depends on good governance (among other variables), “Good governance ought to be considered an important aspect of national wellbeing, and national security.”** Among the many variables that can ruin the health of a nation are the following: Without good governance, self-promoting interests will bring a nation to ruins. When parts, including parties, become more important than the whole, more and more people will lose respect, become frustrated, angry, and be ready to accept anyone whose language they interpret as showing sensitivity and readiness to champion their cause. A nation becomes unhealthy when business interests help make laws, prisons become a business, (more prisoners...more profits), and lobbyists have more access to leaders than do people in general. When concerns for the economy, and loyalty to political parties are promoted, treated, more talked about, and given more importance than the values of the nation and the welfare of people, a

'nation' hurts itself. A 'nation' will become sick when some people feel they are being unfairly treated compared with others. A 'nation' loses its 'soul' when it forgets its values. If a 'nation' does not have goals, and keep its eyes on its goals, it could end up anywhere. In a fast changing world of international relationships, scientific, and technological developments, social-international media, etc., a nation not attending to, or seeking to update many of its usual ways of thinking, talking about, and doing things, could be considered as "a 'nation' not moving forward, but regressing". If the attitude "What can the country do for me" prevails; if a nation's values are not known, shared, and promoted by the majority, the nation will flounder and its developing democracy will be at risk...This raises the possibility that someone will emerge, a-charismatic-would-be-leader, skilled with words, and determined to save the nation. **It's not difficult to imagine that a 'nation' not sensitive to its "always present internal self-indulgent-fragmenting forces", might wake up one not so fine day to discover it has elected a dictator.** A nation progresses and remains healthy when earlier stages of time-binding developments are recognized and revised in the light of new scientific discoveries, technological developments, international changes, and expanding human awareness with its related dissatisfactions, and demands for change. Would all this be considered crazy talk?

If a nation's political talk does not promote and heuristically pursue its 'democratic', moral values and ideals (simply put: what it stands for what, what it does not stand for as a nation), **millions of people and thousands of groups will live by their own less restrained, "live free or die, greed is good, free speech no restrictions, do my own thing, and other individual and group" values.** With millions of less restrained, competing and conflicting values, the nation's values expressed or not, will be eroded by constantly active semantic entropic forces, and lead to a nation's decline. A nation constantly at war with itself will eventually tear itself apart. (Semantic entropic forces involves individuals and groups, and their ideas, beliefs, determination and actions designed to promote their own agendas).

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Democracy as an ideal to be pursued
Workers in many fields are required to meet legal, professional, and other standards: If the word "**democracy**" was considered as representing a "**label for an "ideal", political standards** might be one of the requirements for those seeking the important job of creating policies, laws, and regulations that will affect the lives of millions of people for generations to come. If the idea of "democracy" was

accepted, explored and promoted as an ongoing political experiment, more people might become more engaged with politics, and accept their responsibilities as nation builders. **If the word “democracy” was accepted as proposing “an ideal to be pursued”**, this could generate more discussions on improving present political behaviors? For a ‘developing democracy’ to survive a ‘nation’ has to constantly work at political improvements. The armed forces and other agencies are engaged in protecting the nation against outside hostile forces. But a nation also has to protect itself from “friendly fire”—internal self-indulgent disintegrating forces. A ‘nation’, accepting “politics as a branch of psychology, anthropology, and human ethics”, in its explorations, based on applying its critical evaluating skills, might come to recognize and take actions to minimize the possibility of electing a dictator or other disagreeable and unsuitable characters. **“Crazy talk”?**

Language and politics

When politicians (and others) using words and language as carrier waves for false information, self-serving promotions, false claims, specious promises, prolepses, ‘fake news’, unrealistic claims, advertisements, and so on, they operate as “mind-brain hackers”. Hacking, involving “unsolicited access”, is successful to the degree that victims do not recognize they are being hacked. Like trees, walls, and computers, ‘minds’ are constantly vulnerable to grafts, graffiti, and hacking. Minds are more easily hacked and grafted, when there is a lack of awareness of **“language as maps, and language as metaphors”**...**Without this understanding, without these distinctions--**“the word is the thing” and “the map is the territory” for many. Constant applications of **general semantics principles can operate as “critical evaluating-self-protecting-mind-brain-hacking-detection programs” against harmful verbal and memetic intrusions**. A self-protecting program against mind-brain hacking can intervene to minimize the severity of the damage to nervous systems, societies, and nations. If old ways of thinking and talking about things predominate, old biases, prejudices, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, will spread across generations. Like many other systems (a body, a building, a car, an institution), a nation, with no self-preserving protection from constantly bombarding internal entropic (usually verbal) disorganizing forces under constant hacking, could fall apart. (“Entropic neuro-semantic forces” include verbal memes and sound bites representing shortsighted thinking, ideas, belief, values, and so on.)

Words matter: Applying general semantics principle “structuring” is a way to move from words to situations related to what words are about. Visualize for instance, diverse reactions to the words “socialist”, “populism”, ‘whistle-blower’, “activists”, “liberal”, “conservative”, “great”, “losers”, “trickle down economy”, “first”, “affordable care act”, “the economy”, “populist”, “fake news,” “alternative facts”, “the best”, “the right decision”, “leader of the free world”--to mention a few. Re. “leader of the free world”: A ‘nation’ that keeps referring to its leader as “leader of the free world” can expect resentment and challenges from leaders of other

nations who would not want to be seen as being led. Re. the words “best” and “right”: How can one know that a decision or policy is the right or the best one...before any action is taken? Re. **“alternative facts”**: Following the **principle of non-allness**: If no one knows all about anything...what is labeled “alternative facts” might be thought of not as “contradictory facts” but “other facts” since one **factual statement about something is not the only fact about the thing**. (It might be to person’s “A” advantage to select and talk about some aspects of an actual occurrence, and it might suit person “B” to select and talk about some other feature of the ‘same’ happening. Person “B’s” selection could be legitimately considered as pointing to an alternative fact to person “A’s” selection.) Individuals labeled “whistle-blowers” or “activists” might be treated with more respect if they were referred to as “concerned citizens”. From one level of abstracting, deliberate lies euphemistically called “fake news” could be thought of as being similar to advertisements...consisting of words about things that exist only in the creative minds of advertisers. But shifting to the object level of abstracting: Words labeled “fake news” are actual occurrences, and as such are worth recognizing as “news of a goings on in the world”. Words labeled “fake news” could serve as reminders to **apply the “non-identity principle”**: **“Words are not the ‘things’ processes, situations, people, etc., that words are about**. For instance: What is often presented as “news”, now includes panel discussions, interviews with leading questions followed by agreeable responses, personal opinions, commentaries, ‘news’ analysis, psychologizings, speculations, and slanted and embellished statements. Such offerings could qualify as “fake news” since this kind of presentation is not a report on an outside occurrence, but is actually what’s going on in the studio. Where have all the talks of impartiality and objectivity gone? (Read Chapter “Aims, Means And Consequences”, S & S.)

Words matter. Concerns arise from talks about being “great”: Can a nation be “great” in all respects? Are nations that do not focus on pursuing military and economic greatness, “losers”? If the idea of “greatness” has no limits, will national leaders not seek to elevate their local and international stature, and use any means in striving to become the greatest of all? Thinking of resentment as an aspect of human nature: **Any nation claiming to be the greatest or great should expect varying degrees of open and hidden resentful reactions**. Predictably, other leaders or nations will not suppress resentment and magnanimously help one nation to become or remain “great”. **If being great is ‘good’, wouldn’t it benefit all nations if more politicians and leaders promoted the idea that “What is good and great for one is also good and great for all--and consequently help each other become great?”** (At least, this approach might diminish resentments from those left behind...“the not so greats”...and possibly avoid their predictable usually military competitions, to ‘prove’ which is the greatest.) It suits nations to help each other become great: Nations helping each other could lessen global hostilities, lessen uprisings, diminish the problem of dealing with sudden influx of thousands of refugees, and other problems that countries, great or not great, could eventually be forced to deal with. A ‘nation’ engrossed with the idea of being great, unconsciously supports an attitude of invincibility, and a related underrating of an opponent’s or enemy’s

intelligence, ingenuity, and creativity--this could be disadvantageous and dangerous for a nation in times of conflicts and war. The “United Nations” (an acceptable great idea) could be more effective in pursuing its goals if members were strongly urged to leave their biases, prejudices, and personal agendas at home, and communicate more co-operatively towards creating a “great world”. **Perhaps one of the most damaging aspects of a ‘nation’ believing and talking about being “great”, is that this attitude encourages cover-ups; and it also discourages and belittle talk about mistakes and bad behaviors that could discredit the claim of greatness. In effect, talk about being great could be self-defeating: such talk could retard a nation’s corrective time-binding advancement towards its possible greatness.**

A ‘nation’ talking of “becoming great again” might benefit from recognizing the labels “past” “present” and “future” as convenient but elementalistic way of referring to periods of time that are not separate but continuous. To the degree that the language, attitudes, and behaviors of the so-called past are not changed but continues in the ‘present’, the ‘future’ might just be a more expanded and complex continuation of the ‘present’. Applying the principle of **“structural similarity (this “a”, is somewhat like that “b”)**: It could be proposed that: “Political practices, politicians’ policies and talk and behavior, might significantly improve in terms of “management skills”, if a ‘nation’ valued, and to some degree, copied as **“a model of good management”** one of the most successful of human enterprises in management...“science”. (**“Good management” in terms of understanding and working with the forces of nature**). The method and approach of science involves (among other factors), a **heuristic experimental approach**: Following this, political policies, laws and regulations would be tested for effectiveness and if necessary, time-bindingly revised by checking their effectiveness, and also recognizing undesirable consequences. In a scientific approach, mistakes and malfunctions are acknowledged--leading to **critical inquiry based on a structural approach, and followed by time-binding corrective actions**. Mistakes and malfunctions are not hidden, covered over, or excused away with skillfully chosen words--as is often the case in politics. In a scientific approach, there is **“symbolic specificity”** and **“linguistic revisions”**...new terms are introduced to reflect scientific discoveries and ongoing and changes in the field-- and practitioners avoid time-wasting verbal controversies by not giving their own meanings to technical terms based on their personal values, definitions and beliefs. In a scientific approach, being clever with words, being the most charismatic or impressive speaker with well chosen words expressing what sh-e imagine, think, or believe is going on, are not the standards accepted for resolving conflicts. Scientist (as scientists), address controversies by accepting **structural evidence supporting a propositions or hypothesis**.

Politicians (not all) instead of extending an invitation to work together, sometimes say such things as “We have to get the “X’s to “join with us”, “work with

us”, “get them to...”, and so on. This kind of talk is likely to discourage cooperation: national leaders and opposing political parties are unlikely to risk losing face in being seen as following another leader’s lead. Think of the words “trickle down economy”: How sensible would this approach be considered if some thought was given to the word “trickle”--“to issue or fall in drops”? The words “affordable care act” (in place of “health insurance”) might be considered “stupid talk” since politicians and governments do not set insurance premiums, hospitals’ costs, and pharmaceutical prices. Political parties and politicians that ignore the psycho-social-economic structures labeled “populism” miss opportunities to improve their political attitudes, behaviors, and standing: In not addressing people’s dissatisfactions, politicians also disadvantage themselves since the so called “common people” are usually more numerous than other groups.

It’s worth mentioning: In setting out to change our own language habits, or those of others, we are faced with enormous lifelong challenges: Put in algebraic form, here are some of the challenging variables (potentially changeable behaviors) anyone so challenged will have to contend with: As “organisms-as a whole-in environments”, **our language habits and other attitudes, are functions of (conditioned by, related to) our “sociocultural environments”** ...and vice versa; the way we use words, is a function of the way we think-feel about things...and vice versa; the way we think-feel about things is a function of our beliefs, values, and meanings we give...and vice versa; our attitude is a function of our beliefs, values, etc. and vice versa; what we do and how we do what we do, is a function of all the above...and more. For anyone courageous enough to think of introducing change, it’s worth recognizing that these self-maintaining, self-reflexive, mutually supporting, neuro-semantic operations, are well established and well organized to resist change. (For more on general semantics principles, read “Some General Semantics Principles An approach to Developing Our Thinking And Reasoning Skills” at <miltondawes.com>)

Throughout history, empires, nations, and cultures, have emerged, became powerful, expanded through conquests, lost power and status, and disintegrated. So-called democratic societies or nations where developing critical evaluation skills has not been promoted as a national value, will support parties, and elect individuals and politicians, based on charisma, and enchanted by their skills with words presented as facts and truths, and accepted as such. Based often on simple-minded, one cause one effect thinking about complex situations, and not taking human natures into consideration, politicians create laws, regulations, policies, and institutions, that often result in actions which often create even more problems. Empires and nations come and go: **Is this unfolding avoidable?** Possibly: But **if a nation (not just politicians) indiscriminate use of words remains the norm, language and words will not only serve to advance a nation, language and words will also contribute to a nation’s decline.** Since politicians do not elect themselves, the quality of their representations and the language they use could

be considered as their recognition of, their taking advantage of, and their benefiting from the poor critical evaluating skills of their electors.

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Crazy talk Stupid talk

Applying non-allness and non-identity principles in seeking a higher more comprehensive dialectic structural-extensional approach", there is much to learn from what is labeled "crazy talk", or "stupid talk". We could diminish the frequency of our own "crazy, stupid thinking and talk", if we accepted and explored the proposition that "Whatever we think, believe, say about any one, or any 'thing', gives us clues to our own standards, values, beliefs, and much more". (Read "Power Over Word Power" at <miltondawes.com>) Our individual, unexamined 'crazy' and 'stupid' ways based on unexamined and 'crazy' thinking and talk, tend to increase the numbers, size, and complexity of our problems. Our human problems are also increasing in numbers, size, and complexity, from ongoing technological and electronic expansion and improvements, and an asymmetrically slower development in our understanding of ourselves, our human natures, our relationships, and the world. From the "organism-as-whole-in-environments" principle, children growing up in a world where a great deal of uncritical thinking is the norm---unless guided otherwise, will accept, practice and defend what some label "crazy and stupid" thinking as the norm.

Appreciating the diversity and range of human beliefs, values, curiosity, creativity, ingenuity, time-binding intelligence, aggressivity, generosity, interests, fears, concerns, actions, interactions, drive for power, status, and so on, politicians might be more motivated to improve the quality of their representations, become more 'longsighted' regarding the laws they introduce, the language they use, and the institutions they create. Paraphrasing Voltaire observations in "The World as It Goes": "After all, when one tries to change institutions without having changed the nature (attitudes, ways of talking, and behavior) of men, that unchanged nature will soon resurrect those institutions."

Language can be thought of as "words combined according to certain written or unwritten rules". When there is a lack of awareness of the psycho-semantic power of language and words; that the physical world around us is not ordered following the rules of grammar; **that the "goings on (ideas, beliefs, definitions, impulses, etc. that words evoke in nervous systems, are not the same as the goings on in the outside world that words are about"; when there is lack of awareness that words, as variables, are given different 'values' evoking different mental and physical**

reactions in different individuals--this awareness lack (**examples of “identification”**) results in talk, attitudes, and behaviors that invariably lead to and support increasing personal, social, national, and international conflicts and turbulence. If the idea that “a word is not the thing it is about” seems “simplistic”, “obvious” and “not worth mentioning”--reflect for a while on the power of advertisements, religious injunctions, political, and political campaign talk, and how they influence people’s attitudes and behaviors, and the state of a nation.

As human beings, we can use language as a tool to help us understand our ways of being human, the ways we use language, and the ways language use us. This self-reflexive power of language, without critical thinking interventions, can lead to the retardation of personal, political, and national development. To be critically rigorous, **based on general semantics principles as “guides”, and “evaluating standards”**, each one of us might remember some of our own “crazy” and “stupid” talk. But ‘crazy and stupid’ talk, and any talk from politicians need special attention. Political talk can build, and can also destroy a nation. (B.T.W.: Students of general semantics applying general semantic principles might not label talk as “crazy” or “stupid” but might see such talk as examples of “identification, allness, elementalism, not being conscious of abstracting”, among others.)

Scientists and engineers as problem-solvers succeed to the degree that their thinking and language operations are informed and restrained by their knowledge of the structures they deal with. Similarly, we could assume that higher states of governance, more effective, less coercive, less forceful, management and control of individuals’ attitudes and behaviors, will depend on politicians modifying their thinking and talking, their wording of policies, laws, and regulations, and the kind of institutions they create.

Re. the word “loyalty”. **Reflective consciousness applying the principle of “indexing”** asks: Loyalty to what or to whom? Is loyalty being asked in reference to a goal, an ideal, a policy, a law, a party, a constitution, a person? Does the political future of a nation depend on the choices made? When there is talk of “doing the right thing”, or doing “the best thing”, could such talk be considered “crazy talk” if there was no standard to compare and determine “right”, or “best”: How could anyone possibly know that a decision made or the action taken was the right or best thing...before they had experienced and evaluated effects of the actions or tried other approaches? Repeated talk of “no new taxes”. If a population keeps increasing, with accompanying costly demands related to health care, repairing and building new schools, and hospitals; training more nurses, doctors, and teachers; building and repairing homes, roads, bridges, and so on. etc., it could be reasonable to consider constant talk about “no new taxes” as “stupid talk”.

And talk about “walls”: Throughout history, there have been many walls. Walls can exist both as challenges and challenging. Walls have kept out many...but many others have climbed over, gone under, gone through and gone around walls. Walls work well in controlling the movement of animals: Building walls ignore human inventiveness, adventuresomeness, and determination. Time will tell how effective has been a wall in keeping people out, and if it was worth the cost...And probably more importantly, address the question: “Did the wall resolve the bigger problems which occasioned its construction in the first place?”

We believe when we don't know: and so a great deal of our living is based not on our personally acquired knowledge, but on our unrecognized and consequently uncritical acceptance as ‘true’, the language and words incorporating the promises, opinions, explanations, judgments, meanings, understandings, beliefs, logic, and values of politicians and others. Our beliefs provide foundations that generate and support other beliefs, our thoughts, ideas, reasoning, values, expectations, and our actions. Changing a belief involves changing many other aspects of our living. As such, our language based beliefs are not easily dislodged or abandoned. If a great deal of our living is directed by our beliefs, as a preemptive semantic move, it suits us to become more aware of identifying, and how our identifications support hacking and grafting when there is uncritical acceptance of the meanings given to words we use, read or hear, etc. lead to and support beliefs and also difficulties in abandoning beliefs.

With the principles of “non-allness”, “non-identity”, and “consciousness of abstracting” as guides and standards, we could consider that we are talking crazy and stupid when with regards to political and personal affairs we say such things as “The cause of...”. “The reason for...” “This can only mean...” ...and so on. As an alternative, we could apply “non-allness”, “multi-meaning” and “multi-ordinality” principles, and instead ask ourselves: “What causes, reasons, or meanings am I giving, and what other causes, reasons and meanings can I give to this situation, event, or statement. Reflecting on the words “free” and “freedom”: In a world where as far as we know, everything is in relationships, one can be free from someone or of something...but the idea of being free...without restrictions and uninfluenced by anything or anyone could be considered “crazy thinking”.

Although the internet has facilitated (as never before) two way communication between rulers, leaders, and the ‘ruled’; despite increasing incidences of protests, revolts, and rebellions, rulers, whether ‘democratic’ or dictators, continue to rule following traditional ways based on earlier attitudes, values, and beliefs. Most rulers and leaders, and a good proportion of people so conditioned, consider exchange of information, explanations, and inviting comments, not only unnecessary, but also a sign of weakness and poor leadership. Rulers, following traditional “top down management, do not tolerate talk of “bottom up development”. So rulers persist along governance lines: “My way. I am chief. I am

in charge. I know what's right and best...just leave things to me...or else..." But through time-binding people eventually become more aware of abuse: eventually there will be protests, which, when ignored or forcefully put down, will result in increasing anger, frustration, and rebellion. Unfortunately, those who are dissatisfied and rebel, if successful, are most times no smarter than the rulers they replace...With intelligence unmodified by conscious time-binding; and with no better understanding of human natures, they generally repeat the traditional ruling paradigms: and through the power of words, coercion, threats, or force, they impose on a people "their particular form" of the usual ways of ruling...with predictable historical results.

Crazy talk, stupid talk

Labeling talk as "crazy" or "stupid", like other judgments we make, depends on "context" (frame of reference): Contexts include our tendency to 'see' things in terms of our beliefs, knowledge, experiences, standards, values, times, situations, physical and cultural environments, and so on. Some times ago, talking about traveling to, walking and driving around on the moon, would be considered not only crazy and stupid talk, but also "blasphemous talk" which could get one killed. (We can make sense of this natural self-protective reaction by remembering that talk labeled "crazy" or "stupid" sometimes leads to great changes and discoveries--and also sometimes to crazy, stupid, and dangerous behaviors.) **In terms of the "word or label not thing, situation, event labeled or named", we might realize that words some label 'crazy' or 'stupid' might be experienced as revelation and inspiration and motivate some others.**

In a world of interconnected and interacting systems; in a world we don't know all about (including ourselves)--demanding that someone "speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" could be labeled "crazy talk". With the principles of "non-allness", "non-identity", and "consciousness of abstracting" as our guides and standards, we could consider talk such as "The cause of..." "The reason for..." "This can only mean..." ...and so on, as crazy talk whether uttered by politicians or non-politicians. As an alternative, we could apply "non-allness", "multi-meaning", "multi-ordinality", and other principles, and instead ask ourselves: "What other causes, reasons, or meanings can be given to this situation, event, or statement? Reflecting on the words "free" and "freedom": In a world where as far as we know, everything is in relationships, one can be free from someone or from something...but the idea of being free without any restrictions whatsoever, could be considered "crazy thinking".

Applying non-allness and non-identity principles in seeking a higher more comprehensive dialectic structural-extensional approach", there is much to learn from what is labeled "crazy talk", or "stupid talk". We could diminish the frequency of our own "crazy, stupid thinking and talk", if we accepted and explored the proposition that "Whatever we think, believe, say about any one, or

any 'thing', gives us clues to our own standards, values, beliefs, and much more". (Read "Power Over Word Power" at <miltondawes.com>) Our unexamined 'crazy' and 'stupid' ways based on unexamined and 'crazy' thinking and talk, tend to increase the numbers, size, and complexity of our problems. Our human problems are also increasing in numbers, size, and complexity, from ongoing technological and electronic expansion and improvements, and an asymmetrically slower development in our understanding of ourselves, our human natures, our relationships, and the world. From the "organism-as-whole-in environments" principle, children growing up in a world where a great deal of uncritical thinking is the norm---unless guided otherwise, will accept, practice and defend what some label "crazy and stupid" thinking as the norm.

Applying non-allness and non-identity principles in seeking a higher more comprehensive dialectic structural-extensional approach", there is much to learn from what is labeled "crazy talk", or "stupid talk". We could diminish the frequency of our own "crazy, stupid thinking and talk", if we accepted and explored the proposition that "Whatever we think, believe, say about any one, or any 'thing', gives us clues to our own standards, values, beliefs, and much more". (Read "Power Over Word Power" at <miltondawes.com>) Our individual, unexamined 'crazy' and 'stupid' ways based on unexamined and 'crazy' thinking and talk, tend to increase the numbers, size, and complexity of our problems. Our human problems are also increasing in numbers, size, and complexity, from ongoing technological and electronic expansion and improvements, and an asymmetrically slower development in our understanding of ourselves, our human natures, our relationships, and the world. From the "organism-as-whole-in environments" principle, children growing up in a world where a great deal of uncritical thinking is the norm---unless guided otherwise, will accept, practice and defend what some label "crazy and stupid" thinking as the norm.

In "Science And Sanity", we can find a few predictions Korzybski made over 75 years ago. These predictions can be understood as propositions stating that if we do not practice more rigorous critical thinking based on general semantics and scientific principles; if our language based institutions do not seek to update policies, laws, regulations, and thinking and attitudes based on present scientific knowledge, we can expect ongoing protests, revolts, rebellions, and wars.

Milton Dawes/17

References. For more on general semantics principles, approach and practice, read Korzybski's "Science And Sanity", and "Manhood of Humanity". Martin H. Levinson's "More Sensible Thinking", Bruce Kodish's "Dare to Inquire", and visit <miltondawes.com>. Other books are available from "The Institute of General Semantics".