

## Psychotherapy<sub>2005</sub> - A Revisit

by

Dennis K. Chong, Jennifer K. Smith Chong & Astrid C. Chong ©

What is Psychotherapy? At one logical level of consideration it is about how to change that aspect of a person that is exhibiting a problem condition that he cannot undo.

How this might be done was indexed in the work, *CHANGE*, authored by Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland and Richard Fisch and published in 1974:

**To summarize what has been said so far: Group Theory gives us a framework for thinking about the kind of change that can occur within a system that always stays invariant; the Theory of Logical Types is not concerned with what goes on inside a class, i.e., between its members, but gives us a frame for considering the relationship between member and class and the peculiar metamorphosis which is in the nature of the shifts from one logical level to the next higher. If we accept this basic distinction between the two theories, it follows that there are two different types of change: one that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged, and one whose occurrence changes the system itself.<sup>7</sup> To exemplify this distinction in more behavioural terms: a person having a nightmare can do many things *in* his dream – run, hide, fight, scream, jump off a cliff, etc. – but no change from any of these behaviours to another would terminate the nightmare. *We shall henceforth refer to this kind of change as first order change.* The one way out of a dream involves a change from dreaming to waking. Waking, obviously, is no longer a part of the dream, but a change to an altogether different state. *This kind of change will from now on be referred to as second-order change.* (The equivalence of this distinction with Ashby's cybernetic definition of the two kinds of change, quoted earlier, is evident.) Second order change is *change of change* – the very phenomenon whose existence Aristotle denied so categorically.**

**Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland & Richard Fisch: *CHANGE Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* W. W. Norton & Co. 1974 page 10 - 11**

7. The Greeks seem to have known only the first of the two. "Nothing comes into being or is destroyed. Rather, a thing is mixed with or separated from already existing things," asserts Anaxagoras in his seventeenth fragment. Similarly, for Aristotle change is the passage from potentiality to actuality. And he expressly rules out what we nowadays would call a shift from level to metalevel, when he writes: "There cannot be motion of motion, or becoming of becoming or in general change of change." (9). The latter Greeks and the Middle Ages tended to see change as the antimony between being and becoming. Only Heraclitus, it appears, envisaged change in a different perspective. In addition to his well-known dictum about the impossibility of stepping into the same river twice, he asserts in another fragment, "All change is contradictory, therefore, contradiction is the very essence of reality." The evolution of the concept of change is well summarized by Prior: "It would hardly be too much to say that modern science began when people became accustomed to the idea of change, e.g. to the idea of acceleration as opposed to simple motion."

Psychotherapy is therefore about evincing 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change.

To understand the business of accomplishing this requires the professional to know what a system is? A system is any domain that undergoes transformations. All transformations within a system depend on the underlying principles that govern them. The principles can either be structured and ordered or they can be random and chaotic. In any case, because of them, the system is invariant unless the governing principles are changed.

The living evidence before us is that most human beings are invariant as a whole and in any of their subsystems. Even in cases where behaviour is bizarre and illogical, there will be a pattern. This means that there is some underlying governing principle. If you can change the underlying principle, you will bring about 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change. Here are three examples:

1. in the work edited by Jay Haley, *Advanced Techniques of Hypnosis and Therapy, Selected Papers of Milton H. Erickson, MD*, is the case of a John Doe in a psychiatric hospital that Erickson had come as a resident. He was a word salad schizophrenic. Erickson assiduously worked out his word salad patterns and when he mastered them, he conversed with him by word salad. One day, in one such conversation this exchange took place:

**Patient replied: Talk sense, Doctor.**

**Erickson: "Certainly, I'll be glad to. What is your last name?"**

**Patient: "O'Donovan and it is about time somebody who knows how to talk asked. Over five years in this lousy joint . . ." (to which he added a sentence or two of word salad.**

**Erickson: "I am glad to get your name, George. Five years is a long time" (about two sentences of word salad were added).**

**Within a year he had left the hospital and was gainfully employed, and at increasingly longer intervals returned to report to the hospital to report his continued and improved adjustment.**

Jay Haley (Editor): *Advanced Techniques of Hypnosis and Therapy, Selected Papers of Milton H. Erickson, MD*, Grune and Stratton Inc., page 502

2. the second case is of a John Doe catatonic schizophrenic in a veteran's hospital in San Diego that Richard Bandler interfaced with before the entire staff complement. He applied an extra-ordinary analogical manoeuvre in which he progressively pulled clumps of his hair starting from his symphysis pubis and up. Finally, the catatonic broke state at Bandler and screamed, "Get away from me." With that, was the catatonia that was!
3. the third case concerned a referral of a lady to the senior author of this paper. In the referral she was said to have a schizoid personality. At the first consultation, in answer to the question, "How are your children?" she replied:

*"The grandparents are the way they are and as a result they spoil those apples in the basket and I had to get rid of them on Tuesdays when the garbage men come round for all those lovely things that I had bought at Square One Mall in Mississauga at Christmas with such passion on the cross of life with its pain in my right heel after I had slipped on the ice and at the Emergency Room they told me there were no fractures, just a sprain and that I could go for my holidays in Mexico on the deal that my friend told me about . . ."*

Aware of the structure of her manoeuvre, I replied:

*I can appreciate what you are saying because there is nothing I love more than my wife's lemon meringue pie and her beef pie that is so robust and strong as the Spartans at Battle of Themopylae who fought with her the other day; it was just a misunderstanding because I thought she said she would come back to the office and she waited for me at home and*

*watched the Jerry Springer show with all its silliness that can sometimes be so ill-formed like my girls when they were growing up and would throw the snow ball in our back yard...*

For six arduous consultations, the exchanges were in this manner and form. At the conclusion of the sixth, she said, “Dr. Chong, I want you to know that I thank you for all your help. I will not be returning to see you.” I replied, “That is fine.” That was the verbal gibberish that was!

Neuro-Semantic Programming believes that this axiom from the book of Proverbs remains true-to-fact:

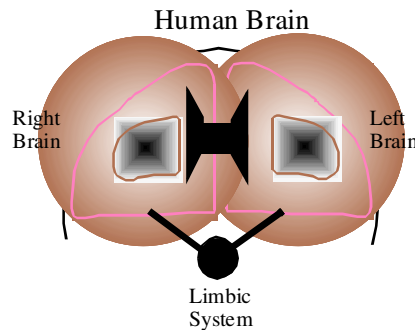
As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

In the language of today<sup>2005</sup>, this saying is translated to read:

As a man internally processes or computes, so is he.

The ancient Israelites spent an extended period of time in Egypt. We know from extant skulls, that the ancient Egyptians did neuro-surgical operations successfully. It is therefore, some mystery that the saying from the Book of Proverbs does not say that it is from the thinking “in the mind” that a person’s ontology emerges.

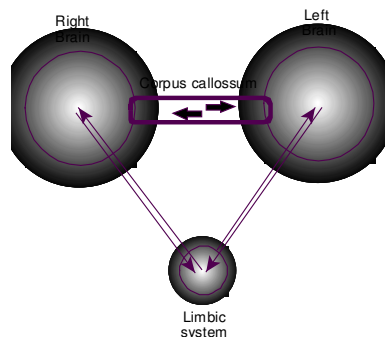
NSP has now concluded that the heart referred to in the axiom is the sum of three entities – the Left brain, the Right brain and the Limbic system:



This diagram shows the two cerebral hemispheres linked to each other by the cerebral commissural. The Limbic system is the oldest lump of gray matter in which are the encodings for the minimal behaviours for a living entity to survive:

- aggression or fight**
- fear or flight**
- hunger or need**
- sex or reproduction.**

The above can be schematically represented in this way:



NSP, views this triangle as “the heart” that the axiom from the Book of Proverbs refers to. The information flow between them is the internal processing or computing. It is also known as “thinking” or metamentation.

NSP says that we use the blueprints of life or semantic paradigms that are embedded in us to think in order to understand ourselves, others and the world in which we live. What is the evidence that we do this?

Think of this - you have just completed the building of your 150,000 square feet villa in your private isle on the South Pacific Ocean. To celebrate this event, your invited guests are now assembling at your Carrara marble patio. They include:

George W. Bush	Laura Bush	Hilary Rodham Clinton
Pope John Paul II	Jimmy Swaggart	Pat Robertson
Ayatollah Khomeini	Kim Jong-il	Osama bin Laden
Tammy Faye Bakker	Jim Bakker	Jessica Hahn
Gary Condit	Monica Lewinsky	William Jefferson Clinton
Mohammed Mahathir	Richard Perle	Tariq Ali
Paul Wolfowitz	Mahmoud Abbas	Hugh Hefner
Larry Flynt	Michael Moore	Dick Cheney

How long do you think it will take before you will have a “slight” disturbance at your patio. This commotion is inevitable because all your guests have powerfully different and conflicting life blueprints that they use to think to understand themselves, others and the world in which they live. They are arriving at different and conflicting semantics<sup>1</sup>.

NSP says that there are three classes of paradigms:

- a. General
- b. Specific
- c. Meta.

The General paradigms are so named because they are general or common to the members of a social or national group. They include:

Race & its history	Family & its history	Language & its history
Religion & its history	Culture & its history	Politics & its history
Myths, Lore & Traditions.		

These General paradigms will segment and reform into these General Paradigms:

Social System & its history	Legal System & its history	Science & its history.
-----------------------------	----------------------------	------------------------

There is an indefinite number of Specific paradigms, so called because they are unique to a person. We cite here a few:

Women cannot be trusted.	Others come first.	Good will win.
All politicians lie.	We must care for the sick.	Always be punctual.
No one can break his word.	Do to others as you wish done to you.	Woe to the wicked.
Respect the old.	The fit shall survive.	Give to the poor.

---

<sup>1</sup> semantics is a word that is often used in a derisory and dismissive manner. Yet all of life for each of us is how we understand each moment of it. And that is semantics.

There are two Meta paradigms

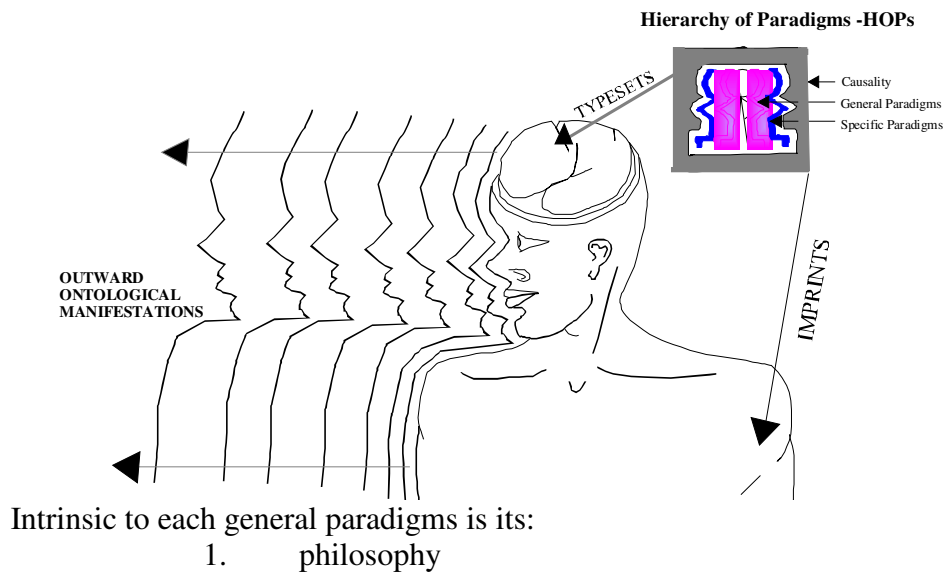
- a. Aristotelian system of Cause and Effect, **A**
- b. the Non-Aristotelian system of Relatedness and Relativity,  **$\bar{A}$** .

These two paradigms are opposites of each other in their operations, functions, properties and consequences. In essence, **A** is the universal paradigm of today<sub>2005</sub>. Every human being on this planet uses it to think with and to think by.

**$\bar{A}$**  as a paradigm is today<sub>2005</sub> known by less than five thousand persons. It has far even fewer than 5 people who know how to use it elegantly, intuitively and unconsciously.

In 1933, in the foundational work to the field study of General Semantics, *Science and Sanity*, Alfred Korzybski showed that **A** is “unsane.” In our view, this was the first of the two greatest discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but unfortunately the least known. Then in 1975, in *Structure of Magic*, the foundational work to the field study of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, John Grinder and Richard Bandler proved that **A** was semantically ill-formed. To say this of it is to say that Cause and Effect determines meanings for its users that are bent, warped, twisted, kinked, illogical and perverse. In 1991, *Don't Ask WHY?!*, the first co-foundational work to the field study of Neuro-Semantic Programming delineated all the ill-formed semantic logical levels of the **A**. It was Korzybski who found that the  **$\bar{A}$**  is sane and well-formed! This discovery was the second greatest discovery of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; but like the first, it is also the least known. In 1993, in its second foundational work to the field of Neuro-Semantic Programming, *Power and Elegance in Communication* was finally mapped out the  **$\bar{A}$**  language system. It was something that Korzybski tried so hard to unravel but did not.

NSP proposes that all the paradigms form a coherent unity, called the Hierarchy of Paradigms, HOPs<sup>2</sup>. By its operation it underpins the unfolded ontology of a person:



<sup>2</sup> Hierarchy of Paradigms, HOPs is the Epistemological Operating System, EOS of our mind and of our being. It is therefore, the equivalent of the DOS of Bill Gates and of the computer. It is obvious that this is how 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change is possible in Therapy, (ref *CHANGE* by Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch).

2. doctrines
3. metaphysics
4. beliefs
5. rules of thinking, feeling and behaving.

NSP holds the view that from any of the above categories is the element that determines either the cognitive or analogical problem state.

In turn, Psychotherapy becomes an exercise in which a counter-argument is posed to undo or unravel the underpinning of the problem state. It is about how to undo or unravel the glitch in the subsystem of the HOPs that compels the problem state to remain and prevail in the person's life even though he cognitively he does not want it.

In a general sense we can divide human problem states into:

1. cognitive
2. analogical

Now, it is critical to note that sometimes the resolution of the problem can be as simple as the turn of language suggests, i.e. "a counter-argument is posed." And when it is offered – *Abracadabra*, the problem is solved.

However, what is truer is that the counter argument takes the form of:

1. a debate over an extended period of time to undo the underpinning of the cognitive problem state
2. a scenario that is scripted and is played out; in this way, it is the counter-argument to the underpinning of the analogical problem state.

Time is required because the principles underpinning the problem state are sentient processes that do not just surrender their operations. Anyone who has debated with another will know the effort and the time needed to win a position.

The embedding of the HOPs began with our parents and continued on with our grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, babysitters, our teachers, priest/rabbi/pastor and friends.

**The facts are that a baby is, from the first, subjected to a treatment based on the semantics, structure of language, doctrines, understanding, knowledge, attitudes, metaphysics. , of his parents or their substitutes, which shape his semantic reactions.**

**Alfred Korzybski:** *Science and Sanity*, AN INTRODUCTION TO NON-ARISTOTELIAN SYSTEMS AND GENERAL SEMANTICS, The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company page 556 – 552.

Therefore, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, teachers, members of the religious clergy, babysitters, unconsciously, have powerful roles in shaping how a child will become. Our friend, David Gordon<sup>3</sup>, once postulated that in the first 10 days of life, all the critical semantic paradigms are in *situ*. The Jesuits hold the view that if a child is given to them up to the age of six, they will be able to shape the child's future.

---

<sup>3</sup> David Gordon is one of the leading lights in the field of NLP and the author of the critical work, *Therapeutic Metaphors*.

NSP holds the view that by 15 years of age, a person's HOPs is more or less formed. From then on, it is not open to the ease of changing a child's beliefs or mind as per one's wish or whim. It can happen only if a person wants it and finds a professional operator who has the know how to do it.

It is for this that, HOPs can be well-formed or ill-formed. However, NSP holds the view that, in the end, a person owns his HOPs. His HOPs do not own him. In one sense, we always use our HOPs for our ends and for our ends.

Thus, on one hand, John von Neumann<sup>4</sup> and Oscar Morganstern observed that whenever a person is doing something, he is doing it for the payoff that he wants.

On the other hand:

**It is not a novelty that a moron cannot go 'insane'. A moron lacks something; only the more gifted individuals, the more human (as compared with animals), break down. I know of many psychiatrists who say that 'it takes a "good mind" to be "insane"'**

**Alfred Korzybski:** Science and Sanity AN INTRODUCTION TO NON-ARISTOTELIAN SYSTEMS AND GENERAL SEMANTICS The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company 1980 *Sixth Reprinting* page 105.

If what is cited above is true, then it would logically follow that all forms of mental ill-health are derivatives of ill-formed ways of thinking and being and can manifest as:

1. ill-formed or deviant or defective forms of thoughts and/or thinking
2. ill-formed and deviant internal states that are also derivatives of ill-formed styles of being for the pay offs that the individual wants
3. ill-formed and deviant forms of behaviours which are derivatives of ill-formed styles of thinking and being for gains that the individual is after.

Finally, we would like to offer a way to look at problem states. They can be:

1. cognitive problem states. In this category we would put certain forms of schizophrenia with their bizarre illogicality, mental retardation, delusional disorders, certain types of dissociative disorders, autism, developmental arithmetic disorder, gender identity disorder, identity disorder, body dysmorphic disorder and so forth. In some of these cases, whereas there is a sense that their root origin is cognitive, they are associated with a body language component.
2. analogical problem states, i.e. problem forms of the body language, such as smoking, alcoholism, drug taking, anxiety states, panic, depressive states, oppositional defiant disorders, ADHD, conduct disorder, eating disorders, tic, Tourette's disorder, speech disorders, mood disorders, conversion disorder, somatization disorder, sleep disorders, multiple personality, depersonalization disorder, sexual disorder, factitious disorders, impulse control disorders, adjustment disorder and so forth.

---

<sup>4</sup> John von Neumann's contribution to our lives has been awesome. He contributed significantly and critically in the Manhattan Project, in the development of computers and to field of economics.

We distinguish these two classes because the evidence is that cognitive problem states amend to cognitive solutions. Analogical problem states, however, amend to analogical therapeutic manoeuvres.

**References:**

**Richard Bandler & John Grinder:** *Structure of Magic* Science and Behavior Books, 1975

**Dennis K. Chong & Jennifer K. Smith Chong:** *Don't Ask WHY?!*, C-Jade Publications Inc., 1991

**Dennis K. Chong & Jennifer K. Smith Chong:** *Power and Elegance in Communication*, People Paradigms and Paradoxes, C-Jade Publications Inc., 1993

**Alfred Korzybski:** *Science and Sanity*, AN INTRODUCTION TO NON-ARISTOTELIAN SYSTEMS AND GENERAL SEMANTICS, The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company

**Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland and Richard Fisch:** *CHANGE*, Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution, W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 1974 p79.