

# IDEOLOGICAL OR IDEA-LOGICAL

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*Note from ME: this little paper was written in the middle of an effort to rid the CCE of Open Systems Theory and the Emerys in particular. One prong of the attack was to label OST as an 'ideology', some sort of extremist or whacko belief system.*

This counterpoising of accepted spellings is necessary now that some people have only one gut reaction to the word "ideology", and wish to throw away the dictionaries which suggest that at least the two reactions in the title are historically appropriate. As Orwell pointed out, we can get to Newspeak "...chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and *by stripping such words as remained, of undesirable meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever*" (1949 p. 241). It would be better if educationalists did not foster the trend toward Newspeak.

Both ideology and idea-ology convey the meanings of:

- a. A set of ideas that provide a common ground against which a large number of individual ideas are viewed. The identifying response is in the form of "Ah, but that is what is seen from an X viewpoint". X could be Catholic dietician or econometrician.
- b. A set of ideas that arouse human affects (passions). Both ideology and idea-ology are concerned with ideas moving people to translate them into practice. (So, I think, is education. In fact, I think education as distinct from training, can be only ideology or idea-ology).

The distinctive characteristics of ideology and idea-ology emerge when we consider the affects (passions) they seek to arouse. Ideologies such as fascism, communism, catholicism or hinduism seek to arouse the negative affects of fear, anger, shame and

contempt (e.g. Tomkins). Their dynamism is class-hatred, caste-hatred, ethnic-hatred and the dire fears of hidden manipulative powers. There is another dynamic, equally firmly based on the mobilization of affects. This is the dynamic of the positive affects of joy and interest/excitement, on which is based scientific and technological advancement.

The dynamic based on the negative affects is reflected in (a) the gross simplification of ideas; (b) a narrowing of the areas of real life that is granted 'reality'; and (c) a marked polarity that makes it very difficult for alternatives to be considered (Asch, 1952).

The dynamic based on the positive affects of joy and the excitement/interest is driven as much as by the expectation of an exciting breakthrough, and by a fascinating new idea as by a beautiful (joyful) theory that closes gaps or synthesizes differences. Idea-ology is based on this dynamic. Idea-ologist like Darwin, Wegener (the tectonic plate man) as Pasteur tend to push their ideas but they pushed their ideas in ways that challenge the generation of more facts, more ideas. When a particular idea-ology becomes a scientific paradigm, it gets ideological (Kuhn) but it retains and legitimates the basic means for its own destruction (which could hardly be said of Hitlerism and Stalinism).

If a particular development is to be labeled as 'ideological' rather than 'idea-ological' then it behaves the critic *to prove* that set of ideas is such that it is:

- a. Excluding other related ideas they have relevance (i.e. over simplifying).
- b. Defining as 'real concerns' a much narrower range of *things* than appear in experience to be interdependent.
- c. Polarizing rather than seeking consensus e.g. 'who is not with me is against me'.

Establishing such proof may not be an easy matter. An established ideology will have defined many ideas as relevant which are not so. E.g. the arguments that Thorsrud and myself had to get acceptance of the label 'industrial democracy' for the Norwegian program on work. These were so many barnacles on the word democracy that they threatened to sink the ship. Careening of the ship can, however, be seen as 'over simplification'. Similarly, an established ideology will have evolved a perception of what things are really inter-dependent with each other that just does not make sense to the new idea-ology. The new idea-ology will be seen as narrowing perspectives insofar as it denied these pseudo-interdependencies. Lastly, the emergence of a new idea-ology threatens not just another set of ideas but also the statuses and power of those who have built their social position on the ideology. This is a fertile field for polarization, e.g. the Velikovsky affair.

The difficulty of establishing proof is no excuse for not making the effort. The challenge of an idea-ology is different from that of an ideology and this difference would guide the process of establishing proof. With an idea-ology there should be evidence of more and more new ideas being drawn into the debate, not the hammering away at the 'Big Lie'; experimental and empirical studies should emerge that were previously not even thought to be relevant; those who had least to gain personally from the array of statuses about the old ideology should least show signs of polarization.

This note was inspired by a specific ideological (idea-ological) conflict. Some of us are deeply involved in reversing the relation between people and their institutions and social organisations. The established paradigm is that people must accept servitude to the institutions for the preservation of MAN. We have asserted that institutions must serve people for the preservation of HUMANITY. (i.e. that we confront a choice between 'basic social designs 1 and 2'; or between 'variety-decreasing' and 'variety increasing' organisations). It is charged against us, that in passing our case for this reversal, we have become ideological, in the pejorative sense. If this charge is to be evaluated the above mentioned criteria may be helpful.

The course we have pursued would appear to have:

- a. Considerably widened the universe of discourse, not narrowed it. It has called into question the assumptions of education. Economics, technology, political science, etc. 'Quality of Work Life' and 'Quality of Life' notions represent an opening up of preceding notions of 'job satisfaction', 'citizen morale'. At the level of pure theory, we have seen an increasing contribution of systems theorists like Beer, Emery, Herbst, Mesarovic and Sommerhoff to notions on non-hierarchical systems and non-dominant hierarchies. Hardly a 'simplification' of intellectual endeavour.
- b. Field experiments in industry were once as rare as hen's teeth. They are now occurring with relatively great frequency in the West, India and the U.S.S.R. The interdependencies between work, family, education, forms of government, etc, are now receiving attention they rarely received before. Hardly a 'narrowing' of reality.
- c. The pushing of this 'idea-ology' has resulted in Australia with consensus being an acceptable and desired state. (This is because of us, as I can easily document). The Green Paper on Manufacturing Industry is a prime example, but it could also be exemplified in the fact that the CCE has been asked to advise governments of both party groupings.

I have been concerned that the critics make no attempt to research what they say. They rely simply on Newspeak and cocktail party gossip. Why? I am inclined to think that they act from the assumption that the status quo is here to stay and hence no facts or exercise of reason is called for.

By way of summary, I can simply reiterate that:

- a. One can take the position that ideas are simply cold bricks that the recipient can use to serve his pre-existing motivation or that ideas are hot things that shape how a person sees the world and his own involvement. Clearly, I take the latter position. Ideas are the stuff which people form their idea-ologies or ideologies.
- b. If one is unable to distinguish between the passions (affects) of hope, interest and excitement and the negative passions of hatred, contempt and fear, then one is incapable of debating whether they are confronted by ideology or idea-ology. Those who are so blinded speak not their thoughts but the thoughts of others.

A Postscript. The CCE appears ideological to some people. Nothing will be achieved by acting to *appear* different in their eyes. The most important thing is that we insist people try out our ideas not just adopt them.

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