Law, Logic and Communication

Walter Probert

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If I had to choose, I think I would rather have a legal discourse which was informative than one which was merely "logical." By "logical" I mean what usually passes for "good reasoning" in legal circles, a matter of verbal consistency. If you are not familiar with general semantics, or at least the various notions that form its bases, then you may be inclined to think that verbal consistency is the epitome of any discourse. I must agree that verbal consistency is important, but my quarrel comes with those who would stop there. There are too many legal professionals — judges, lawyers, teachers, etc. — who stop right there.

Actually, this business of being verbally consistent is no easy task. In the effort, we legal professionals have built up a particularly complex scheme of "logic" or verbal consistency over the years. To begin with, we have syllogistic reasoning built deeply into our language structure. You need know nothing about the syllogism to use its form, for you can barely speak without colloquializing a syllogism. Classification is the form involved. Any time you classify you may be said to start or end or jump right in the middle of a syllogism. Of course, legal discourse is replete with classifications. Legal rules are classifications. A decision to treat corporations like people is a classification. "Rights" and "duties" are classifications. Understand, legal discourse has no corner on this technique. Everyday language as well as legal discourse is actually structured, patterned, habitually used as a vehicle of classification. This is our basic logic.¹

A somewhat related form, very much represented in legal discourse is the analogy. The doctrine of stare decisis of course depends upon the analogy for survival. Calling upon the authority of some previous decision is in the main pointing to factors in that case which are "like"

¹The form of the syllogism is: All A's are B's, all B's are C's, therefore all A's are C's. Inherent in the form is a system of logic of classification. Lacking the form, but equally "syllogistic" in derivation are such statements as: Republicans favor the high tariff, Americans are capitalists, dogs have four legs, tenants owe a duty to use due care toward their invitees, every contract must have consideration, etc.
factors in some case at hand. The process becomes so easy that we tend to identify the one case with the other and go zooming off into the purely formal stratospheres of legal classifications and abstractions. But note that the process of analogizing is at heart the process of classification, so that the analogy tends to rise and fall with the logic of classification, falling where the classifying technique blocks imaginative inquiry and research. Comparing two cases, finding something "similar" about them, is classifying them, grouping them together. Differentiating two cases, finding something different about them is the setting up of two classes.

A seemingly much more involved form of legal logic is that of "syntax." Syntax refers to a system of symbolic relationships. Should you take the formula \( a + b = 6 \), then supply a value of "2" to the letter "a," you would conclude that the appropriate value for "b" was "4." You would thus have engaged in pure syntactic reasoning. You would have relied on symbolic consistency. The basic relationships involved were represented by the plus and equal signs. These signs represent operations you have learned to perform in your head, so to speak. The symbolic manipulation can be translated into bodily movements in dealing with things "outside" the body, but these latter operations are not the "in the head" manipulations involved in the simple algebraic formula. Picking out six apples to feed six guests is one thing. The syntactic logic preceding the picking another. We have learned to correlate the two, but we recognize fairly readily the separateness of these operations. Indeed we learn very early in elementary school that we must correlate our arithmetic (syntactic) formulae with our world environment if we are to make any sense out of them. Thus we are told not to multiply "feet" by "yards" else we will get an "answer" which will not fit the non-symbolic terrain — the map will not accurately represent the territory.

A road map is a kind of syntax. You know that a road map of the state of New York is not actually the state of New York. It is symbolic; it represents. As in the arithmetic maps, the road map involves a structure. In this case, the road map looks so much "like" the terrain represented that we quite easily correlate the structure or syntax of the map with that of the terrain; but just as we get into trouble by multiplying feet times yards, so we get into trouble when the structure of the map is not correlated with that of the terrain. If a superhighway is said to run north and south when personal reconnaissance proves it to run east and west, somebody will surely go astray.

Our use of everyday language involves the making of and reacting to verbal roadmaps. You cannot see these maps in the same way you see
roadmaps, so the existence of a structure may be harder to detect. Yet recall that you may be given verbal instructions on how to go from one location to another. Your travel between these two spots requires a correlation between the verbal structures involved and the non-verbal road structures.

Even more difficult to detect are the esoteric structures of legal discourse. Yet the breakdown of that discourse into areas of law — into property, contracts, torts, criminal law, etc. — is the building of a pattern. If nothing else, this structure helps you to get around a law library, just as a roadmap helps you to use your automobile. I shall shortly question how well this kind of structure, alone, helps you to get around in your total world of experience, legal and non-legal, "internal" and "external."

Now come "down" a bit in the strata of legal abstractions to a very interesting and highly significant legal syntax or doctrine, the doctrine of the "tort" of negligence. As with the earlier arithmetic formula, as with the roadmap, we find here key symbols and definite relationships between them. Their use leads to definite "in the head" operations and ultimately to such operations as entry of judgment, seizure of goods, etc. The formula is easy to state. In order to find a person "guilty" of the tort of negligence, you must find that he owed a duty to a prospective plaintiff to use due care, that he breached this duty and that in so doing he proximately caused damage to that plaintiff to his injury. Duty + breach + proximate cause + damage = injury = liability. Should one of the four "elements" on the left hand side of the equation be missing, then there is no liability. On the other hand, the duty road leads into the breach road, the -breach road leads into the proximate cause road, etc., into liability and subsequent authoritarian operations. There is no doubt that this syntax serves as a map insofar as it is correlated with the authoritarian activities symbolized by the judge's gavel. What is not so clear is whether this syntax, this map, accurately represents or allows to you movement around your world of total experience, "internal" and "external." More of this anon.

The complexity of legal syntax is further revealed by its service as a device of classification and analogy. Not only does it provide a pattern for analysis and operation as already suggested, it provides a means of high level comparison and differentiation. One may, if he wishes, decide a case being argued on a theory of contract without once involving himself very deeply or at all in a specific prior judicial decision. The letter dropped in a mailbox is an acceptance at that moment, and who cares the name or the nature of the case(s) giving rise to that generality, that high level abstraction. If you do use this generality and
do so in the name of stare decisis, you are reasoning by analogy. You have chosen to compare one act out of a context of a current situation with what seems to be a "similar" act in a similar yet different context in an historical situation. Should you refer to the cases giving rise to this generality, you would also be analogizing although you might then detect differences which have been left out in the current abstractions of contract syntax. Please do remember that differences have been left out. We do leave out differences when we abstract.

Of course, legal syntax, that is legal doctrines and legal rules, involves the process of classifying and tends to rise or fall with that kind of logic, falling when used in a purely formal or arithmetic way. Legal syntax also involves the making of definitions. Again we may turn to elementary mathematics for an analogy. In the syntax of Euclid's plane geometry, a point is dimensionless, by definition, and two parallel lines never meet, by definition. There are those who would argue, quite persuasively, that you can find a "point" and "parallel lines" nowhere but in these definitions. Fortunately this act of "pure reasoning" on the part of Euclid does not prevent use of the definitions to solve problems in the work-a-day world. Measurable differences between line$_1$ and line$_2$ and between point$_1$ and point$_2$ may be ignored; the possible ultimate convergence of two "lines" drawn on paper may be ignored. These differences may be ignored, but should be ignored only for some purposes. Unfortunately for legal discourse, an habitual process of reasoning by definition cannot be so readily explained away. To find out whether ignored differences in pertinent situations called cases ought to be ignored, we must first recognize that presently we do engage in this kind of decision by definition. Then we must see what we can do about it.

To follow up the previous examples, we may define a duty to use due care as an expectancy, backed up by legal authority, that one person will take reasonable precautions in his conduct and/or in his living habits to protect others from harm. Aside from the presence of many "weasel" words in this formula, such as "reasonable" and "harm," which themselves must be defined, such a definition when accepted stands a chance of becoming a verbal satellite, related in definite ways to the mother syntax, yet following its own defined path. As with any words, the definition stands a chance of being reacted to not as if it were composed of words, but as if it were flesh and gavel. Examples of this kind of conditioned response are scattered throughout the following text. In addition, the

*Such a definitional emphasis blocks consideration of underlying relationships. The ostensible language of "negligence" cases is notorious in this respect. Reaction to a life insurance company-beneficiary conflict, later elaborated, as if it were a horse-trading situation, a "general" contract situation, is another example.
observer may, in reacting automatically to definitions, fail to see underlying variances in those definitions. The fact that one judge uses "duty" in explanation of his decision does not mean he is defining that word the same way as another judge. A seeming agreement to use the same map may actually involve an agreement to use different maps. The disagreement between judges Cardozo and Andrews in the famous Palsgraf Case stems at least partly from differing definitions of the word "duty."

One cannot get down to the more vital disagreements of those judges in that case until he satisfies himself on that point.

There, quite briefly for all the complexity involved, are the forms of logic which tend to appear in our legal discourse. Admitting that different stages of legal inquiry and problem solving do call into play differing psychological and physiological processes, still the language used by appellate courts runs through almost all of legal discourse. The forms mentioned find their way into the smallest cubbyholes of the legal building.

Running through the preceding description is this thread of warning: Verbal consistency, whether in classifying, analogizing, applying rules or defining, may be achieved with little or no reference to the world of "fact." Maps may be made without reference to the terrain supposedly represented. General semantic theory thus raises serious questions for legal professionals: Do your verbal maps fairly and accurately represent the human terrain? May you be stepping on "rights" and lives not accurately located on your verbal maps?

The warning may be stated in another way. We need to pay attention not only to the form of our statements but also to the information embraced in the form. We need to use discourse as a means of communicating. There should be no argument about that. Yet we ignore the communication factor, not purposely but through a lack of awareness of the role of language in the individual's human process of reacting to the totality of experience in the world about him. As a result we assume

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8Palsgraf v. Long Island R.R. Co. 248 N.Y. 339, 162 N.E. 99 (1928). Two guards on one of defendant's trains helped a late passenger aboard a moving train. As a result a package of "fireworks" was dislodged from the passenger's grasp. The ensuing explosion knocked over a scale onto the plaintiff some distance away.

Judge Cardozo writing for the majority found as a matter of law that the duty-breach of duty requirements of negligence syntax had not been satisfied because no harm to the plaintiff was "foreseeable" under the circumstances.

Judge Andrews writing for the minority found defendant breached its duty in taking an unreasonable risk of harm to the passenger. The minority declared satisfaction with leaving the final decision to the jury under the concept of proximate cause.

4Furthermore, failing to see this definitional flexibility, one then stands a very good chance of having the conditioned response to whatever definition seems to him to be the most "logical" in itself. Such a response is nothing but "word magic."
we are communicating with each other (or else we care little about that factor so long as we get the results we want). However, an intelligent pattern of legal activity can hardly be built without some sort of substance, a substance of community experience.

Take what is thought to be the heart of legal reasoning, the doctrine of stare decisis. Here is involved a noble effort, an effort to bring past experiences to bear upon new situations. But what is the channel of communicating that past experience of various individuals to the personal experience of a particular judge? The channel consists of either very high level abstractions in the form of legal syntax previously referred to or the sources of this syntax, judicial reports. Now the judicial reports are considerably more informative than the legal syntax, they tell us considerably more of the history of several judges' reactions to one litigational situation. Yet how very little these reports actually do tell us about that reaction or that situation. Again, we are faced with abstraction, at a relatively "high" level.

This is no call for abolishing judicial reports. Don Quixote would not be so brash. However, you should see that this particular channel of communication, while not completely blocked, is considerably cluttered and that there may be other valuable channels of communication, not only for the transmission of historical experience but contemporary experience as well. Such is the call too of sociological jurisprudence. Given a wide awareness of this communication problem, the reforms will come.

Likewise there is here no call for changing legal discourse or its forms. That call must await many years of education, but we can investigate that discourse to see what some of the obstacles may be as they are spotlighted by a general semantic kind of analysis. Awareness of the obstacles can not help but bring a greater effort to remove them. I can predict that result with assurance for I know I am dealing with practical people.

LEGAL CONCEPTS AND THE PROCESS OF ABSTRACTION

Having suggested in a very general way the need for correlating our verbal maps with our non-verbal experiences, let me now discuss some of the reasons why we may not be doing all we can in this direction. As it is with every man and his every day language, so it is with the lawyer. The main obstacles to communication come from a prevailing unfamiliarity with the process of abstraction. We bring all our language habits to bear upon our seemingly technical language. While we may be attempting to build a kind of a mathematical language, we suffer from the disadvantage of having to use not mathematical symbols
but words very often in common use. If not that, then we use technical words in non-technical ways, in the customary ways of our everyday discourse. These obstructing habits may be lumped together for convenience under the label of "identification." We identify one verbal level of abstraction with another, the non-verbal level with the verbal and one non-verbal configuration with another. Thus, to break the grouping down, we: (1) ignore or forget the changing patterns of human response to seemingly static words (shifting meanings v. static classification); (2) "thingify" words (objectification, classified reactions); (3) fail to see the widespread ambiguity in seemingly one-meaning words (one-word-one-meaning); (4) suffer from hardening of the categories (confusing verbal levels of abstraction, rigidity of classifications); (5) forget the varied relationships which are not yet embodied in our doctrine (two-valued thinking, elementalism, classification fascination); (6) etc.

Shifting Meanings

What lawyer has not taken his turn at "pouring new wine into old bottles"? We all know full well that the old rationalizations are often used in new ways to meet changing conditions in the community. What we do not so readily realize is that this process goes on continuously. Every use of a word involves actually a redefinition of that word. This must be so if it is true that our world-environment is in perpetual dynamic process. The "chair" of 10:00 A. M. is simply not the "chair" of 10:01 A. M. For one thing, the observer cannot possibly retain the identical perspective from one moment to the next.

Think of this in another way. We all have observed the use of fictions in legal discourse. You are aware that a corporation, for instance, is not really a person. That is just a convenient way to think of the corporate situation in order to solve certain conflicts that arise from day to day. Yet, in a sense, every time a word is used it is used in a fictional way. Without thinking about it, you may identify a corporation with a "person." Similarly you identify this moment's reaction to the word "chair" with your reaction a moment ago to that word. But consider the difference in context, consider the changes that have taken place in your entire nervous system, etc. The "you" of this moment is not the "you" of a moment ago. Your reactions cannot be identical in the two instances. In more familiar language, the meanings of words change constantly. Unfortunately, our classifying tendencies tend to rigidify our reactions. We are not as amenable to change as we might be.

Now you may conveniently ignore some of these changes and con-
continue to operate in your environment, except that this kind of unaware-
ness acts as a blanket in all of communication, stifling efforts to see
under the static word. Perhaps you still need a reminder that “due
process now” is something altogether different from “due process 1900
or “due process 1030.” That is, you need not respond to “due process”
always in the same way — you need not have a purely conditioned
response. In tort law, “unavoidable accident” has been a convenient ex-
pression to attach to “non-liability” situations. While the word-expres-
sion has remained constant, the kind of situation referred to has not.
“Unavoidable accident 1600” may have been applied only to situations
where a defendant was involuntarily involved; only then was he not
liable. “Unavoidable accident 1900’s” surely applied to a larger group
of situations including those in which defendant acted voluntarily but
“reasonably”; the courts in the 1900’s were not so strict with defendants.
The word “fault” shows a similar amorphous quality, although we get
some impressions from some portions of legal discourse that not everyone
is aware of its changing content. Actually, a similar analysis can be
applied to any key term of legal discourse with interesting results.

The failure to take such an attitude toward our key legal concepts
blocks communication in at least two ways. A lawyer and a judge in a
court room may be conversing but not reaching each other, there may
be a by-pass of information. They may not be aware that possibly they
are reacting differently to the same word. “Consideration” is a grand
old concept in contract law, but there is absolutely no guarantee that two
people are talking about the same ideas simply because they use that
word. What is perhaps worse is the blocking of intra-personal com-
munication. A lawyer seeking a solution to his problem, or a judge seek-
ing a “proper” decision may fail to realize the creative role he can play.
He fails to see the alternative ways he may respond; he takes the chance
of playing the robot rather than the highly imaginative human role
available.

Objectification

Despite their undoubted sincerity, in the main, legal professionals
have not been able to avoid what may now be called a primitive tendency
to embody certain words in flesh and bones or wrap them in some kind
of tangibility and treat them as touchable, reacting parts of their environ-
ment. This thingifying, objectifying, conceptualizing; this failure to ap-
preciate the chiefly symbolic nature of words provides one of the chief
examples of the conditioned or automatic response of the language-animal.

Evidence that we are not so far removed from primitive man’s re-
actions of the same sort may easily be uncovered. Have you ever seen
a corporation? What does it look like? It is only because of the habitual objectification of this word-idea that judges sometimes find it necessary to “pierce the corporate veil,” and then of all things, almost apologize for doing so. Such piercing is simply a treatment of the corporate situation as it is perceived behind one of the iron curtains in our language. The legal world’s sometimes treatment of this situation is remindful of the view that most educated people take toward “electrons.” They think of little round balls floating around in each table top, although no physicist can establish the existence of such little balls. Indeed, a possible view of the electron is that it “looks like” a tetrahedron. But you need not imagine floating tetrahedrons. This is only a figure of speech, a way of drawing a map of physical events. Do you try to drive your car over a road map to get where you are going? It is conceivable that someday we will come to the conclusion that the “person” notion of the corporation is not the best map we can draw.

Some people have already come to that conclusion about the word “title” in sales law. Have you ever seen a “title”? Now I am not talking about the certificate you may carry around with you as “evidence of your title” in an automobile. In sales law, “title passing” was once a convenient shorthand for a legal implication of a commercial event. Today the figure carries the potential of bringing a nonsensical reaction in lawyers and decision-makers because of the tendency to analogize title to a button, leading only to “title, title, who has the title.” Blocked off from observation are human interactions and the complexities of their conflicts. Yet I predict with complete assurance that many intelligent lawyers will never give in to the idea of reducing “title” to obscurity in sales law. There is more than commercial conservativeness involved. There is simply a preoccupation with language symbols.

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6 We in the United States have not had our vision obstructed by this “person” idea as have the continental jurists who have worried a great deal about the “real” organic nature of the corporation, or the existence of a corporate soul. Citations to some of the discussions are collected in Farmers' Loan & Trust Co. v. Pierson, 130 Misc. 110, 222 N.Y.S. 532 (1927). Justice Bijur there shows the kind of sophistication often shown by many of our judges in recognizing the point of the text that the “person” idea is no more than a figure of speech.

6 Justice Bijur in Farmers' Loan & Trust Co. v. Pierson, 130 Misc. 110, 119, 222 N.Y.S. 532, 543 (1927). The opinion suggests “that a corporation is more nearly a method than a thing... [It is] a name for a useful and usual collection of jural relations, each one of which must in every instance be ascertained, analyzed and assigned to its appropriate place according to the circumstances of the particular case... (T)he word 'corporation' has a variable, not a constant meaning.” (emphasis supplied).

7 Of course, there is now abroad an attempt to bring just that obscurity to the title concept in the law of sales. See UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE, Art. 2 (Proposed final draft 1950). Karl Llewellyn has been chiefly responsible for the crusade against the "title" objectification.
Consider the "reasonable" man. Law students have a terrible time with that notion. I wonder about jurors. The attempt to visualize that "man" blocks consideration of information at hand. The effort of visualizing that fine fellow actually hinders an observer from seeing other possibly more valuable configurations. If you have ever stopped to think about it, you realize how very difficult it is to give completely of your attention to another person, whether in listening to his words or seeing them written on the page, but effective communication requires just that complete giving. Primitive reactions immediately frustrate the effort.

The "inalienable rights" or just plain "rights" provide further examples. Nobody carries these "things" around in their pocket — but a person may act in a certain way toward another because of some personal moral code or because of some fear of future prosecution or litigation or because he has been trained to act that way. This is the stuff of rights and duties, but you can not mount these activities or "thoughts" on cement blocks. Again, the failure to understand this point leads to purely emotive arguments and leads legal observers far away from the possible avenues of maximum information.

One-Word-One-Meaning

What is the meaning of "possession," or what is "possession," or what is a "tort"? You would not have to look far in legal literature to find attempts to answer these questions. Perhaps there is no harm in the attempts, but the real harm can come from thinking that human responses to a word should or can be fixed for once and for always or from thinking that the kind of social situations which will arise can be predicted with certainty by reference to those situations which have arisen in the past.

The one-meaning fallacy is a kind of a definition seeking. As has been already suggested, definition seeking may be a kind of a verbal chess game, where purely syntactic rules are followed and the verbal definition maps come to bear little resemblance to the social terrain. Furthermore, the observer who believes words can have but one meaning fails to be alert to the "by-passing" situation, the situation where the sender is reacting to his own words in one way and the receiver reacts to those words in an entirely different way. Perhaps you are more familiar with the idea of ambiguity. One kind of ambiguity has already been discussed, the kind that comes from the relativity of each person's experience, from the uniqueness of each human being and his responses. There is another kind which Korzybski chose to call "multiordinality." Involved here is the potential of a word to refer
to different levels in the process of abstraction without any sign except context to indicate what level is involved. Further, not even context gives the clue on many occasions. A non-legal example is the word "blue." When the word appears, it has the potential of referring to Smith and his impression of the sky, or it may instead refer to the physicists technical expression of wave-length in description of the external events which give rise to the impression in Smith of blueness.

One of the best legal examples is the word "fact." We tend to think dogmatically about this word and not realize the wide range of possible references involved. We speak of the "objective facts," the electrons of the judicial process, which only an omniscient, non-human observer could know but which we purport to find via the trial techniques. What of an individual witness who reports the "facts"? He is actually giving his recollection of the sense impressions he received from the on-going events around him, colored by his particular personality, attentiveness, physical condition, etc. No need to belabor what Jerome Frank among others so well emphasized, the untrustworthy nature of much of our evidence. Yet here, for better or for worse, is where our facts come from, not from the omniscient observer. The "facts" finally "found" by a jury are not the objective facts any more than my impression of a table on the sensory level is that table on the sub-microscopic level. They are statements coming out of the intermeshings of twelve experience-machines. Then, of course, there are the "facts" reviewed on appeal and the "facts" appearing in the judicial report and the "facts" presented in a student's brief of the case or the lawyer's description of a precedent. Can you give the definition of "fact"?

Incidentally, another confusing reference of "fact" exists in the law vs. fact dichotomy. Here is involved a nice way of referring to our tradition of having a judge and a jury in the trial court. If the judge keeps a case from the jury, we have a decision as a matter of law, but if the jury is allowed to decide the matter, then we have a decision of fact. In this reference, understanding of the word "fact" comes not from looking for the "real meaning" of the word, but from analyzing the relationship between the many trial judges and the many juries as it has worked out in practice.

Particularly blatant examples of the one-meaning problem arise under statutory construction situations. Interpreting a statute is often

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8 His ideas on the subject may be found collected in COURTS ON TRIAL (1949).
9 Leon Green has helped work out this "meaning" for "facts" in his pioneer JUDGE AND JURY (1930) and RATIONALE OF PROXIMATE CAUSE (1927). Far too little has been done in this direction in other areas.
said to be an attempt to find the "intent" of the legislature or an attempt to find "the meaning" of the words used by the legislators. It might be better to say, statutory interpretation is an attempt to react to the words appearing in a statute in a manner reasonable under the circumstances. There is perhaps no area of the legal process where general semantic sophistication is more needed than in the drafting and interpreting of legislative mandates in the form of statutes.

A comparatively recent Ohio case\textsuperscript{10} presents something of the kind of problem involved here, or at least shows that one may seem automatically to respond to words in a statute without considering the context of the problem, proceeding then to clothe the response in a one-meaning formula. This case involved the petition of a plaintiff employee who claimed that he had been hurt on the job in such a fashion as to allow him a remedy under the Ohio Workmen's Compensation Act.\textsuperscript{11} Defendant employer, a self-insurer, had led plaintiff to believe that defendant had filed plaintiff's claim with the appropriate agency, even going so far as to make weekly payments to plaintiff of the kind he would receive if the appropriate machinery had been set into motion, as it had not. By the time plaintiff discovered the sham, he was barred from pressing his statutory remedy by the two year statute of limitations. Thus in the petition for relief, plaintiff set forth a cause of action based on deceit on the part of the employer. It was at this point that the response-to-words-in-a-statute problem arose.

Some of the words were to be found in a section of the Ohio Constitution enabling the Ohio legislature to enact a workmen compensation scheme: "For the purpose of providing compensation to workmen and their dependents, for ... injuries or occupational diseases, occasioned in the course of such workmen's employment. ... Such compensation shall be in lieu of all other rights to compensation ... for such injuries."\textsuperscript{12} The Ohio court dismissed the plaintiff's suit. Citations were given to show how the court had responded to those words in previous situations to exclude any remedy except that explicitly provided for by the Workmen's Compensation Act. "The intention," said the court, "was to relieve a complying employer from any liability ... for ... injury ... suffered by an employee in the course of and arising out of his employment."

Not only is the court guilty of the conditioned response to the words in the constitution, but it is quite probably guilty of confusing

\textsuperscript{11} OHIO REV. CODE, Chap. 4123.
\textsuperscript{12} OHIO CONST. Art. II § 35.
levels of abstraction in construing those words. Under the workmen's compensation act, an employee may receive compensation for injuries occurring "in the course of and arising out of" his employment. The phraseology is usually thought to refer to physical hurt on the job, the kind of damage the plaintiff in this case had originally suffered. The technical phrase ("in the course of and arising out of") is a statement about that class of cases. True enough, the deceit was an ("in the course of and arising out of") kind of harm, but these seemingly identical word patterns occur at different levels of abstraction. The latter statement includes any hurt or harm which is occasioned through the employment. The earlier statement embraces a smaller class of hurts which are remediable under the act. A dissenting judge in the Ohio case put it neatly enough by saying that this particular wrong, the alleged trickery or deceit, was not within the comprehension of the act, therefore the suit for fraud should not be barred by reference to a section of the constitution which refers only to injuries within that comprehension.

In short, the court either decided the case in automatic response to the words of the constitutional section, as if they could have only one meaning, or it did not inform the bar of the reasons for its decision. In the first event words were used in such a fashion as to create an obstacle between the judges and possible contact with the problem presented. In the alternative event, the court has blocked off our contact with its total reaction. The process is disappointing at best.

By way of further example, take the word "reasonable" so often found in the judicial maxims and so in much of legal literature. I am quite sure that many people think they respond to this word as if it should bring the same response from all observers, but no word has such precision about it. This word may more properly be regarded as being "emotive" in nature rather than quantitative or "logical." Such a word calls for a feeling of approval or for side-taking, and that is about all. One could obtain more wisdom about the legal process in trying to discover the responses that have actually been given to such a word than in trying to discover what it "really" means or should mean. As with the word "fact," predictive content can be given to such a word as "reasonable" by seeing it, for example, in a context of allocation of function between trial judge and jury.

The example of "reasonable" also serves to exemplify the problem of communication blocking that pre-occupation with "one-meanings" creates. Legal discourse is filled with other examples of this kind of definition seeking which prevents legal professionals from doing intelligent research for relevant information in the clarification of legal
problems. Different results may be reached by the same person depending upon whether he is looking for a definition or for a "suitable" solution. Thus the Ohio court which was faced with the situation of a defendant throwing outrageous insults at a pregnant lady on a public sidewalk would have had a different perspective in considering whether or not to impose liability on the defendant if it had not been preoccupied with its definitions of "assault," "battery" and other nominate torts.\footnote{Barrow v. Smith, 149 Ohio St. 301, 78 N.E.2d 735 (1948). The court, in a close decision, held that there could be no recovery for psychological disturbance, as extreme as this one was, unless it was associated with an "assault" or a "battery" or a "false imprisonment," etc.} If you understand that a word is redefined with every use and if you appreciate that considerable definition-stretching does also go on in legal discourse (providing needed flexibility, but also blocking communication), then you would have little trouble in accepting a definition of "assault" to include that situation. Better yet would be a recognition that the nominate torts do not cover all the sins that man may some day invent — the recognition that there may be no yet accepted label to cover the situation but that a rose without a label does not lose its identity. A cause of action may be found in uncharted seas. The vital point to see is that superimposing one-meaning definitions from the past, and doing that alone, completely thwarts the vision of the present and the future, prevents the observer from observing, from reacting to new and relevant social conditions and contexts. To put it again, such discourse blocks communication.

A respected expert on the "nature" of tort pigeon holes has in my opinion made much ado about almost nothing recently.\footnote{Prosser, \textit{False Imprisonment: Consciousness of Confinement}, 55 Col. L. Rev. 847 (1955); Smith and Prosser, \textit{Cases and Materials on Torts} 64 (2nd ed. 1957).} His concern arose over the possibility suggested by other commentators that a plaintiff must have awareness of his confinement in order to recover for a false imprisonment. He lists some situations that scream for liability to prove his point that awareness of confinement should not be required, such as the day old infant who is locked in a time vault. I have the feeling that most courts will find as happy as possible a solution to such a case. It is conceivable that some court might find the way blocked if it worries about the definition of false imprisonment. Such a court might not react to the total situation, only a definition.

The problem of definition-seeking is by no means restricted to the area of torts. Pre-occupation, for instance, with "what is an offer" presents exactly the same problem. Some other "what is" examples...
include: contingent remainder, control, trust, mens rea, corporation, 
jurisdiction, an equity, holder-in-due-course, res gestae, a right, due 
process, a cause of action. Asking what "these things" are simply points 
in the wrong direction, merely to verbal map levels rather than non-
verbal levels of map-terrain correlation.

Confusion of Levels of Abstraction

The kind of human responses so far discussed all have in common 
the failure to see diversity, the uniqueness of on-going facts, events and 
processes, the actually unconscious identification of one part of ex-
perience with another. Another way of viewing this large scale re-
striction of the potential of the human nervous system is in terms of 
the process of abstraction and the confusion of the so-called "levels" of 
abstraction. If there seems to be some overlap with the previous sec-
tions, it is because the basic problem of identification is here too 
involved.

1. Verbal Levels. Higher order abstractions may be evolved at 
will, just as things and events may be classified in possibly an infinite 
number of ways. So one may talk about Smith, Jones, Brown, Doe, 
etc., as Republicans, humans, men, animals, etc. In talking about them 
in this way, something is left out of the beginning characterization, 
their separate identities are merged into some aspect(s) held "in 
common." This ability to abstract at higher and higher levels is a mar-
velous tool, yet at the same time it provides a basis for misleading over-
simplifications. Whether an abstraction is marvelous or misleading de-
pends, recall, entirely upon the responses of human observers. Demo-
crat-minded Roe might find much of value in the company and advice of 
Smith, Jones, Brown, Doe, etc., until the label Republican blocks any 
further effort at information gathering on his part. He may easily stop 
looking at their words and actions. Such a response is automatic. 
Humans need not respond automatically.

The tendency of legal observers to react to legal abstractions in a 
similar fashion is in some respects alarming. Not that all such ob-
servers do react this way at all times, but all observers do react this way 
on at least some occasions, and too many do so on too many occasions.

The earlier discussion of the title concept involves an abstraction in 
point. Actually, "title" as it is involved in a series of statements about 
sales law refers to unique commercial events, a reference readily for-
gotten because these events are so easily tied together by the title string. 
The events are regarded as fungible. On the one hand you may have 
a situation involving a seller who has decided not to carry through on 
a promise to deliver certain goods because of the subsequently in-
creased market value of his goods (involving title\textsubscript{1}). On the other hand you may have a buyer who fails to receive the desired goods from a seller because of the derailment of the goods-carrying train (involving title\textsubscript{2}). The difference in the situation-contexts is forgotten because of the abstraction, the similarity-pointing symbol, "title." An advocate or decision-maker or any observer can too readily miss seeing that these situations are subject to different commercial handling, a handling which is each equally predictable in its own sphere.\textsuperscript{15}

Can you imagine walking along a sidewalk and suddenly tripping over a hole in that sidewalk? Can you too imagine some person finding his living conditions intolerable because of the noxious fumes of nearby industrial factories? Of course some points of comparison between these two situations can be found, but they do not hit you first; you first are struck by the differences. Yet these differences can be subsumed in a pun on the word "nuisance." Described were nuisance\textsubscript{1} and nuisance\textsubscript{2}. If the words were spelled differently or did not sound the same, then perhaps the two situations might not be confused. Yet courts have talked about applying the doctrine of contributory negligence to one situation simply because it might be applied to the other.\textsuperscript{16} One might better dwell on the impact of liability insurance upon each of these varying social situations rather than get caught up in a mere coincidence. It may be that intelligent observation will indeed lead to a similar handling of the two situations. But how can you tell until you look?

Why treat an insurance contract\textsubscript{1} like a building contract\textsubscript{2}? Contract\textsubscript{1}, contract\textsubscript{2}, contract\textsubscript{3}, etc., is a convenient way to lump together business dickerings, but sometimes that is the only convenience in the label. The very way of life of some frustrated "beneficiaries" has been changed because some court insisted that an applicant for insurance is an "offeror" and a life insurance company is an "offeree."\textsuperscript{17} That being so, the company must "accept" before there is a "contract" of insurance.

\textsuperscript{15} Again credit for bringing this particular confusion to light must go to Karl Llewellyn, see note 7 supra. Indeed the "Legal Realists," a group of pioneer skeptics arising in a period of general skepticism in the Hoover-Roosevelt era, did much to bring a "semantic" sophistication to legal reasoning. The "group" includes Llewellyn, Green and Jerome Frank among many others. The possibility of extending their "skepticism" to all of legal discourse is overlooked by those who have not undergone a complete reorientation in their approach to that discourse, \textit{a la} general semantics. The assumption of such an orientation may be simply put: never assume you are communicating.

\textsuperscript{16} Even Justice Cardozo was guilty of the confusion, at least by way of dictum. McFarlane v. City of Niagara Falls, 247 N.Y. 340, 160 N.E. 391 (1928).

\textsuperscript{17} The cases and authorities are collected in Patterson, Cases and Materials on Insurance, 642-655 (3d ed. 1955). See also Note, 4 Baylor L. Rev. 194 (1951).
It necessarily follows, as a matter of syntax, that delay on the part of the insurance company in acting upon an application — lulling the applicant into what turns out to be a false sense of security — cannot be regarded as an acceptance because in contract law silence is not acceptance. The contract law of life insurance must be treated the way that the contract law of automobile dealing is treated because of that word "contract." Maybe the insurance company should not be made to pay. But how can a word like "contract" or all of its associated abstractions give the vital information leading to an intelligent decision.\(^8\)

In this connection it may be noted that a respected law teacher sees no good reason why life insurance (insurance\(_1\)) should be differentiated for purposes of pedagogy from liability insurance (insurance\(_2\)).\(^9\) These institutions do have features in common, but consider the differences in the kinds of events involved under these labels. Fortunately there are other teachers who do not agree.

Finally, consider the legal professionals' particular pride and joy, the legal rule, the generality abstracted from and about several or many cases, cases unique in their complexities. Who has always remembered that a rule cannot possibly tell much about even the reports of the cases involved? Or how often is there a tendency to forget that a case subsumed under one rule may quite readily be subsumed under another? If you stop to consider that any two "objects" may be classified together you may lose at least a little faith in the ultimacy of a rule-abstraction.\(^\) Add the fact that any two cases are distinguishable, and not in just superficial ways, at least if you get down to the raw low level abstraction happenings — then where are you with your uninformative rules?

2. Two-valued Thinking. There is a great tendency to oversimplify what happens in this world. We detect what seems to be a workable relationship and then quit looking. "Modern Science," involving men like you and me reacting to their environment, seems to have the fundamental assumption, now, that there may yet be other undiscovered relationships, other than now known to us, the discovery of which will somehow lead to a better way of life. To put it in familiar terms, "modern science" does a better job of keeping open the channels of communication than do we in the legal arena.

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\(^8\) Such vital information as nature, size and operation of the life insurance institution, for instance; the statutes of beneficiaries as a class in society, the alternatives to insurance as a means of providing family security, etc.

\(^9\) PATTerson, CASES AND MATERIALS ON INSURANCE, (3d ed. 1955)

\(^\) The word "object" is itself the classifying label that finds a similarity in all "things." Perform the experiment for yourself, using some other classifier. Thus a watch and a person have in common "a face," "hands," etc.
Take a well known example. There is available to a defendant who has been sued for negligence a defense called contributory negligence. If a plaintiff has negligently contributed to his own damage, the defendant need not pay, even though the defendant, too, acted in an unacceptable fashion. That is one way of solving that kind of problem, but it is not the only way. We know this because some states have not this two-valued, all-or-nothing, way of looking at it. They have settled on a many-valued approach. They call it comparative negligence. Even though plaintiff too has engaged in "sub-standard" conduct, still defendant may foot part of the bill. It is true that in jurisdictions not having the comparative negligence doctrine juries may serve to soften the harshness of the two-valued contributory negligence rule. Yet we cannot be sure. There is little flow of information under such circumstances relevant to the on-going solution of this highly repetitive problem. We cannot say that we are doing a good job in this case; indeed we may well suspect that we are not.

Closely related as an all-or-nothing proposition is the idea of proximate cause. A defendant is thought either to have caused all the damage or none of it. Consider an Ohio malpractice case. It had been established by the plaintiff that the defendant doctor had been negligent in not detecting that plaintiff's broken hip had failed to respond to his treatment. Because of the doctor's carelessness, plaintiff continued to suffer for three months in attempting to follow the doctor's dictates to "go ahead and walk." After receiving care from another doctor, she sued the defendant. While plaintiff's expert attested to the manner in which defendant should have carried on, that same expert was not ready to say that plaintiff's hip would probably have healed with proper treatment, as it had not under subsequent treatment. Assuming that the requisite causal relation was missing between plaintiff's total condition and defendant's conduct, still, open-minded analysis reveals that the doctor was responsible for a good deal of needless suffering on plaintiff's part in that three month interim. Yet it had to be all or nothing.

A sometimes amusing dichotomy, two-valued response situation, is the substance-procedure one which finds its way into various problems, receiving special emphasis in the "conflicts" pigeon-hole, as well as in Federal decisions. Why not recognize, for instance, that the outcome of a case may very much be affected by the manner in which a party is allowed to introduce his story, his evidence — if he is allowed to introduce it at all. To call a particular rule, say the one about who shall plead and prove "payment" of a debt in a suit on that debt, merely

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51 Kuhn v. Banker, 133 Ohio St. 304, 13 N.E. 2d 242 (1938).
procedural gives no good reason for so describing it if "procedural" in this instance brings the response that a man will recover where he would not have recovered had the rule been regarded as substantive. Playing this kind of hopscotch — and courts purport to do so — often puts a premium on ignorance, i.e., lack of information about the particular case and its relation to the social context. Or again, what difference does it make whether the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur is substantive or evidentiary? You let a man recover for damages by showing simply that he was damaged by an exploding beverage bottle, and you will have more people recovering for such things than if you require him to go into the details of bottle-making to ferret out possible carelessness on the part of the bottle manufacturer. There is more than method involved.

On the affirmative side, consider the trouble we would have if we always took a one or two-valued approach to the idea of "property." The commercial interests somehow seem to weigh heavily enough in our system to overcome some of our language habits — they push information through and preserve it, for instance, in the form of split "ownership." One person has title for security, while another has some kind of a beneficial interest in use and possession under a conditional sales contract covering the vendor-vendee-chattel relationships. When the many-valued approach is taken, some of us realize that if a vendee breaches, he does not necessarily have to lose the chattel and all the money he has paid. In this connection, consider the equity of redemption in mortgage-law syntax, a concept helping to prevent one all-or-nothing approach.

The two-valued sort of reaction occurs at various levels of abstraction. On a higher verbal level than yet considered, think of the various classifications we have for the area labelled "torts." We have assault, battery, false imprisonment, trespass to chattels and realty, nuisance, negligence, defamation, right of privacy, misrepresentation, malicious prosecution, etc. I have already indicated something of the limitations on communication which occur when we emphasize these nominate torts in the form of definitions. Now consider the difficulty we may have in moving from one of these concepts to another. We have trouble recognizing that this is not the only or perhaps even the best way of organizing the lower level abstractions called opinions which are thus moated off by this classification. The traditional classification does involve certain significant relationships. Courts and juries do tend to react differently depending upon whether a defendant has harmed a plaintiff "intentionally" or "negligently." However, enough judicial reports can be found (if your thinking is not clogged by the intent-
negligence dichotomy) indicating that judges are not reacting on the basis of that dichotomy alone to make the curious observer look around for something else equally "vital."22

You cannot understand the stuff called "torts" unless you appreciate the various interrelationships involved. The traditional classification consists of words representing certain relationships. Assuming that a particular advocate or decision-maker does not confuse the word with the relationship (objectify or over-define), still his nervous system may not be adequately dealing with other observable relationships. Greater insight, increased information comes from appreciating the potential of cross-classifying. As you might group marbles according to color or according to size or according to weight or so on, you can group tort cases according to "names" or according to interests involved or so on. Thus you will come to see that a court's definition of negligence may turn more on the fact of conflict between a railroad and an individual than on continuity of definition with some other decision involving a conflict between two automobile drivers. Likewise, the categories of nuisance and trespass to land merge together and overlap simply because they are doctrines applied to landowner conflicts. Another way of looking at this organizational problem is to say, for instance, that the response to "negligence" doctrine in an automobile collision situation need not be the same as the response to "negligence" doctrine where firearms are involved. It is the total context which should arouse the particular response. Investigation over a series of problems raises the distinct likelihood that there are more convenient classifications than those based on the defendant's supposed state of mind: intent-negligence. Such a classification may be made according to the conflicting interests involved or the over-all kind of situations involved. Further investigation, openness to total fact configurations, may lead to even more significant groupings.

Some one will surely be thinking: All this is well enough, but the traditional classifications are being used in the arenas of legal discourse. What good is the cross classification? A point well made but subject to this rejoinder: awareness of the potentials of cross classification in the "mind" of one advocate will aid him in his reaction to the traditional language. The reactions, not just the words, are of main importance. The advocate will find a way to pass on his sophistication. This kind of sophistication will germinate in any but the most barren soil. The flow of information will surely be facilitated.

3. Elementalism — Misplaced Concreteness. The failure to think

22 An excellent collection of cases proving among others just this point in GREEN, MALONE, PEDRICK AND RAHL, CASES ON TORTS (1957).
contextually, hinted at in the previous section, is buried so deeply in our language and response habits that it becomes perhaps the most difficult readjustment for a person to make. Yet without this adjustment a person cannot change his response-habits to any great extent. Without this kind of flexibility, unobserved relationships will continue to go unobserved, available information will prove in effect unavailable, the potential creativity of legal professionals as a group will remain mostly potential.

Man's conquest of his world and his universe has been slow and is far from complete. Yet his technical advances seem in many ways to have outstripped his living advances, his awareness of the human relationships. Courts and lawyers deal not only with the technical, material relationships but also the human relationships. Here is one area where adjustment of the kind possible, of the kind at least suggested by general semantics, is vital.

One may turn to Gestalt psychology for the understanding which is one heavy plank of general semantics and which provides the needed clues to contextual awareness. There we find proof aplenty that we tend to grasp our environment by differentiating one part from another. Attention to objects in that environment causes them to stand out against the background of the environmental context. But it is the observer who may determine what parts of that environment to give this attending and to a great degree how he will group "parts" of that environment into some sort of an understandable whole. One may concentrate on a light bulb if he wishes and reach some understanding of it by the effort, but increased understanding comes from viewing the light bulb in its context of socket, room-position, wiring, etc. A light bulb with no context is meaningless, it does not exist. It must have external and internal pressures to give it form and function. Take away its socket support and it becomes very often a conglomeration largely of glass fragments — "it breaks." A light bulb in different contexts "means" different things, that is, sends out potentially different sense signals, calls for different human responses.

The human may abstract, to a great extent, what he wishes from the various possible configurations in his environment and attend to them and represent them by labels in various groupings. He tends to perpetuate the particular configurations of things and words which he has labelled, and the resulting habitual now preconceived configurations he super-imposes on his environment and sees largely what he expects to see. Various experiments have been set up in psychology laboratories

28 For an exciting experience and for a deeper understanding of gestalt psychology, see PERLS, HEPPERLINE AND GOODMAN, GESTALT THERAPY (1951).
and classrooms to demonstrate the kind of response here involved. For instance, a trapezoid revolving in complete circles may seem only to make successive back and forth half turns because the eye of the observer is fixed, by habit, on a particular portion of the trapezoid. He abstracts an impression which he need not receive if he merely ignores his pre-conception.

As with all our habits of observation which are re-enforced by language symbols, our legal observations are similarly colored by the observations we have previously made and the concepts we have previously formed. By way of simple example, suppose a person is driving his car along a highway. He decides to make a left turn into a driveway. Immediately upon making his turn he is hit by an automobile from behind which attempts to pass him in the left lane. The usual recriminations result, but the driver of the passing automobile insists, and his other witnesses support him, that our left-turner did not either stick his hand out the window or set into operation his left turn signal. How shall we characterize this situation? Shall we call this an "omission" to act? Then shall we go on to say that there is no duty to act because there is no "special" relationship between these two drivers? One person is under no "duty to act" to aid another unless there is a special relationship. Immediately you would object. This is not a case of failing to act, it is a case of acting badly; this is "misfeasance." But do you object because you think this driver is "wrong"? I challenge you to present me one situation where a person's behavior has been characterized as an "omission" to act where it could not be also characterized as acting either rightly or wrongly. The dichotomy of action-inaction has no fixed line because it is up to the observer to decide, every time, where he will fix his attention, how large or how small a context he will choose for observation. Having chosen the context, he merely begs the question to tell us the nature of the context by calling it "action" or "inaction." He tells us what he has done, not "why" he has done it. He leaves out possibly a great deal of significant information. We may guess but we cannot know. If we agree with the context chosen, we do not fight the observation, or if we are preoccupied with our "habits," we do not know enough to fight.

Perhaps a similar difficulty from another area of operation will drive the problem home. I am told that good, intelligent doctors think of a certain portion of the brain as the "center" of seeing. Since this portion is the "center," it is the most important part of that process and deserves the most attention. It stands out from its nervous system environment because it is called the center. Vital relationships come to be ignored. What happens if you cut out the eyes? Does the "center" go on seeing?
There are cases of people who have not "seen" in the early part of their lives because of a cataract condition, a clouding of the eye lens. Removal of the condition does not allow the person to see, at least in the way you and I see. Why not? Because the whole nervous system is involved in the process of seeing. The world environment is a skittery mass of confusion. The nervous system must be allowed to adjust to the new impressions being received and to tie them in with the patterns of relationships already built from the accumulations of other kinds of sense impressions. This re-orientation takes more than the "center" of seeing, or the eye. It takes the whole configuration called man as well as his environment.

Consider the parallel for the doctrine of proximate causation. What is a "cause" or not a "cause," let alone proximate, is not determined by any particular physical law of nature but by the observer and where he chooses to let his attention fall. I am presently sure of no fixed guide to tell any observer where to let his attention fall, but I do feel that a decision on the matter should not be made until the various relationships are looked for. The advent and increase of liability insurance could change the entire concept, the method of fixing "blame." We can think in different contexts, if we wish; and instead of individual fault, we can think of social fault. The collision of two automobiles can be considered in a context which includes every driver in the United States who in some way contributes to the total traffic configuration. Where is the "cause" of a collision? Pretty much where you choose to place it.

Closely allied is the notion of criminal fault. Sufficient studies have been made to show that the "criminal" has a context. Who is to "blame," he or his social context? What primitive notion is it that ignores the conditioning aspects of many a "criminal's" behavior. We all contribute to this attitude in some way or another. The primitive notion will long remain, probably for various reasons including selfish interests, but also because of an inability to think contextually, an inability to gather in available information which can be regarded as relevant to whatever observer who wishes to regard it as relevant.

Or what happens to "freedom of contract" when you raise your attention from the individual to that individual in a social context? Is it realistic to ignore the pressures upon him, economic, psychological, physiological, cultural, etc.? Somehow the idea breaks through here and there, clears the communication obstacles, and we find courts looking, perhaps not articulately, but looking at the relative positions and contexts of the parties. Take again your life insurance contract. To look

24I am indebted for this illustration to Russell Meyers, M.D., given at the seminar-workshop on General Semantics, held at Bard College, August 16-26, 1957.
at the preliminary negotiations of this kind of a transaction in the limited light of "trading post" bargaining is uncalled for. You will accept the point only if you do not bring your preconceived notions of "contract" to bear on this situation. Away with the status-individual dichotomy!

Tests have shown that the voluntary-involuntary dichotomy is no longer informative, nor the intellect-emotion, conscious-unconscious groupings. The world is not made up of two camps of "matter" and "energy," rather of matter-energy. "Space" does not exist separately from "time"; these are correlative measurements to help man work in his environment; so it is space-time. Logic of the formal kind does not fit into two neat categories of inductive and deductive. One process necessarily involves the other.

What is the meaning of the property and sovereignty dichotomy? Is property something that an individual has by himself? If so, explain the meaning of "property" absent governmental protection. And explain how the holder of "property" exercises varying degrees of control over his neighbor without being elected to office. If you would differentiate "property" from "contract," explain a negotiable instrument to me. Which is it? I have already suggested that "intent" cannot be moated off from "negligence" and that one "tort" often occupies the skin of another.

You will see the significance of these examples and you will find many others for yourself once you realize the human potential of observing previously unobserved relationships. Here is the fountain of creativity virtually exploding its spray in your face.

CONCLUSION

General semantic theory involves a great deal more than language skill. Indeed general semantics treats mastery of language as a skill requisite to deeper individual adjustment to environmental conditions. General semantics in its deepest implications deals with personal therapy. You see, then, that I have only touched on a part of the implications of that discipline for the legal profession, and I have tried to treat that part in a relatively elementary fashion — elementary so far as the depth of general semantic theory is concerned.

It may be an unfortunate corollary that many people cannot fully

25These illustrations also come from Dr. Meyers, note 24. Dr. Meyers now sees great promise that a course on general semantics will be introduced into the curriculum of the University of Iowa Medical School. To prove the need of such a course, he has in his "possession" a fund of examples of blocks to communication, inter and intra personal, extant in the medical profession.

26As familiarity with the "process of abstraction" so well shows.
grasp the significance of the language and communication problems here discussed until they receive the kind of training which Korzybski could give or which is now being given by the General Semantics Institute. My point is that general semantics cannot be put to work by anyone who only mouths the words. Optimally, it requires for its understanding and more important for its use a reorientation of the person. Centuries of cultural accumulation stand as an obstacle to that reorientation. It just does not come easily. I only hope that I may here have helped suggest that such an orientation, however you may achieve it, could be of value to you and ultimately to your community.

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27 For information about General Semantic literature and educational courses, contact the General Semantics Institute at Lakeville, Connecticut.