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Instances of {adjustment}

Managerial work

has to make adjustments - to implement {adjustment} - almost continually. An employee becomes unreliable and has to be encouraged, helped, warned or dismissed. Doing nothing is failure of {adjustment} and is penalized. Suppliers, competitors, legislation, the buying public impose demands and demand {adjustment}. An unvarying response, failure of {adjustment}, would be disastrous.

A scientist's unvarying adherence to a scientific theory

will be disastrous too. New experiments make demands of the theory. The theory may be capable of meeting them, with {adjustment} applied to the theory. Or the theory may be completely incapable of meeting them and may need to be completely replaced, so that {adjustment} is more radical. Whatever the case, good science is in continual need of {adjustment}.

Pseudo-science

illustrates failure of {adjustment}. Karl Popper's criterion of falsifiability demands, in effect, {adjustment} of a scientific hypothesis if a scientific experiment provides evidence which contradicts the hypothesis. Pseudo-science evades this demand: This may be by {adjustment} applied to the evidence instead of {adjustment} applied to the hypothesis. Another false use of {adjustment} is by what I call **alignment**.

Commercial pressures

Recognizing commercial pressures and failing to resist those pressures or willingly adapting to them, may not be, but often is, an indefensible implementation of {adjustment}. If such commercial monsters as Wal-mart are driving small businesses to extinction, if the mass media seem to be making marginal intelligent thought and comment, there is more than one way of practising {adjustment}. We can practise {adjustment} by active resistance, by intelligent action.

Nietzsche

Here, I concern myself only with Nietzsche's recommendation of hardness and avoidance of pity. One of the most important of all statements of Nietzsche's position can be found in 'Beyond Good and Evil,' Book Four, Section 338. Here, as elsewhere, his **survey** is defective. He sees no need for {modification} of hardness, no need for {adjustment} of hardness because the examples of pain and suffering which he gives are of one kind, the kind that leads to insight, the kind that enriches. 'The whole economy of my soul and the balance effected by "distress," the way new springs and needs break open, the way in which old wounds are healing, the way whole periods of the past are shed - all such things that may be involved in distress are of no concern to our dear pitying friends: they wish to *help* and have no thought of the personal necessity of distress, although terrors, deprivations, impoverishments, midnights, adventures, risks, and blunders are as necessary for me and for you as are their opposites...No, the "religion of pity" (or "the heart") commands them to help, and they believe that they have helped most when they have helped most quickly.' (Translation of Walter Kaufmann.)

A much fuller and better survey than Nietzsche's would have to include the severe and intractable pain that goes on and on, with never the healing of 'old wounds' but only newer and worse wounds, giving not the least opportunity of reflection, constructive thought or growth. Nietzsche's thought would lead to the abandonment not just of pity but of analgesics and anaesthetics.

In 'The Gay Science,' in Section 326 (*The physicians of the soul and pain*) he resorts to outright falsification. Nietzsche's survey includes only suffering of lesser degrees, not unendurable suffering. 'It seems to me that people always *exaggerate* when they speak of pain and misfortune, as if it were a requirement of good manners to exaggerate here, while one keeps studiously quiet about the fact that there are innumerable palliatives against pain, such as anaesthesia or the feverish haste of thoughts, or a quiet posture, or good or bad memories, purposes, hopes, and many kinds of pride and sympathy that almost have the same effect as anaesthetics - and at the highest degrees of pain one automatically loses consciousness.' Knowledge of these words would have consoled those being broken on the wheel - bones of the legs and arms smashed with a heavy iron bar - being burned alive or racked or crucified. But perhaps, after the flogging which tore open the back, after being nailed to the cross, after being conscious for a day without automatic loss of consciousness, all that could be hoped for was the breaking of the legs which put an end to the ordeal. To anyone not damaged, the Roman practice of crucifixion, like the killing of the gladiators in the arena and the killing of the wild animals in the arena, are blots on Roman civilization. Nietzsche's commendation of hardness, such as the Roman hardness, is a failure of {adjustment}. Hardness has to be modified, it has to be replaced by pity when necessary.

Goya and violence

The need to distinguish avoidable violence and the violence of the world which isn't easily avoidable. (It's a gross error, of course, to assume that all the violence of the world is easily avoidable. In the word-sphere it is, but not in reality.) The failure to distinguish the two is to fail to apply {resolution}.

About {theme} theory

{adjustment} is a {theme}. The most important single {theme} is {linkage}, < >, which, like other {themes}, plays a fundamental role in the mind's making sense of experience, as well as concepts not originating in experience. For more detailed information about the {themes} and my approach, a study of Introduction to {theme} theory would be very useful (I have to say, indispensable). From the introduction:

'{theme} theory is completely general and philosophy is only one *application-sphere*. These illustrative examples are very diverse in subject matter and in degree of abstraction; for example ethical argument, concrete problems in applied ethics, Nazi atrocities, Stalin, the death penalty, mathematical and philosophical relations, the completion of a proof, scientific correlation. There are also marked differences in tone: the tone appropriate to abstract and systematic subject matter but also forthright criticism, for example of Nietzsche, the juxtaposition sometimes of the abstract and 'the impassioned.'

'{theme} theory is based upon the conscious, and justifiable, ignoring in many cases of *sphere-boundaries*, such as the boundaries separating the material sphere, the conceptual sphere, the spheres of the different senses. A mathematician may *attack* a problem in the mind just as a soldier may *attack* an all-too-concrete machine-gun post. A scientific model may be material, the model constructed from materials of different kinds, such as wood and plastic, or the model may be purely conceptual, without material expression. Scientific modelling is an activity which can be practised in material or conceptual ways. Linkages may be material, such as a connecting rod in a mechanical system linking mechanical components or non-material, such as the ties of shared history linking, in some cases, nations.'

List of {themes}:

- [{adjustment} Å](#)
- [{completion} □](#)
- [{contrast} \(\)](#)
- [{direction} →](#)
- [{distance} D](#)
- [{diversification} √](#)
- [{linkage} < >](#)
- [{modification} Δ](#)
- [{ordering} Ö](#)
- [{resolution} @](#)
- [{restriction} ==](#)
- [{reversal} «](#)
- [{separation} //](#)
- [{substitution} S](#)

In the list, the name of each {theme} is followed by the symbol for the {theme}. Clicking on the {theme} gives access to a page which gives *instances* of the {theme}. These instances show something of the *range* of {theme} theory, which addresses the most diverse areas of human experience and knowledge.

Of course, not all Goya's paintings are preoccupied with violence but many of the best known examples are: his series of pictures 'The Disasters of War,' such masterpieces as 'The Third of May, 1808: The Execution of the Defenders of Madrid' and 'Saturn devouring one of his children - and his pictures of bullfighting scenes. Bullfighting would have been difficult to abolish in Goya's time, and it will be difficult to abolish it now, but there's a difference between bullfighting and the violence of war, or between bullfighting and the extreme violence of so many people. The violence of bullfighting is more akin to the violence of the death penalty, which perhaps seemed with us for ever, but which has been abolished by a very large number of states in law or in practice. Not many states are active executioners.

Obsessions can be justified or not. An obsession with numbers and other mathematical objects (or ideas) seems to be necessary for great achievement in mathematics. An obsession with violence was necessary if Goya was to create some of his masterpieces - but it led him to depict too the unjustifiable violence of the bullfight. An obsession is usually not linked with the cool analytical insights needed to detect the limitations of an obsession, beyond which it should be replaced.

Goya is linked with Dostoevsky in the obsession with violence and the failure - the understandable failure - to detect its limitations. Dostoevsky's obsession with violence was fruitful. It was necessary for the writing of his immensely important novel of a double murder, 'Crime and Punishment.' But his obsession was incapable of [adjustment]. Angus Calder, 'Russia Discovered: 19th-Century Fiction from Pushkin to Chekhov.' 'His reaction in the *Diary* to the outbreak of war between Turkey and Russia in 1877 - 'We ourselves need war for our own salvation, for war will clear the air we breathe and in which we were in danger of suffocating' - exposes in a most unattractive light his fascination with murderous violence.'

A comparable case, the failure to distinguish avoidable suffering from the suffering which is so deep-seated as to seem at present embedded in the world. Here, C P Snow, in his lecture 'The Two Cultures' is exemplary. He urges us, in effect, not to have false hopes but not to abandon hope either. There's such a thing as suffering which can be avoided and eliminated. This is an author, now not so much deeply unfashionable as all but forgotten, who deserves to be read again. If I say not, perhaps, for his novels, this would be unjust. His novels are neglected, perhaps, for a good reason, but I haven't read any of his novels from beginning to end and have to defer judgement, although I can say that they are deeply traditional. So are many novels still in print and still read and discussed. But his book 'Variety of Men' is extraordinary, his discussion of the pure mathematician G H Hardy, H G Wells, Einstein, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, the UN leader Dag Hammarskjöld and Stalin full of insight.











