

Reality Management /Doing what  
you don't know how to do

Beyond nice problems, discrete solutions  
and rational methods.

## Non-problems

Business as usual

## Problems

Determine a "best" course of action.

## Contradictions

Action required, choose from impossible  
choices of best.

## Dilemmas

Action required, choice not

# Mechanical thinking:

Thinking about machines until you think like a machine thinks. (AI)

# Systemical thinking:

Thinking about connections between things until you stop thinking of things.<sup>1</sup>

- First solves problems via reductionism where problem parts are disassociated, “solved,” then re-associated with the whole.
- Second resolves “problems” via expanding them into their context.

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<sup>1</sup> Some management theorists (e.g., Burns and Stalker) have called this “organismic,” but that seems to close to a misspelling of sexual delights to be general useful for understanding management.

From controlling situations,  
to managing them, to  
negotiating with their  
characteristics.

Appreciation of dilemmas is critical.  
Three reference points may help.

- Catch 22s – Joseph Heller, 1960s.
- Double-binds – Gregory Bateson, 1970s.
- Hopelessness – Mother Teresa, 1980s.

Examples.....

Warfare,  
Mental disorders,  
And life.

**Specialist** – One who learns more and more about less and less until he eventually knows everything about nothing.

**Generalist** – One who learns less and less about more and more until he eventually knows nothing about everything.

Or

**Artist** – One who looks at generalities and sees particular differences.

**Scientist** – One who looks at particular differences and sees generalities.

*Find the Proverbial  
3<sup>rd</sup> Paradigm?*

# A search for truth, at ever higher levels

| <u>Form</u>                       | <u>Level of thought</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mythological <sup>1</sup>         | 4 <sup>th</sup>         |
| Metaphorical <sup>2</sup>         | 3 <sup>rd</sup>         |
| Modeled and measured <sup>3</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup>         |
| Manifested <sup>4</sup>           | 1 <sup>st</sup>         |

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<sup>1</sup> As in cultural stories about “woodsmen,” “tradesmen,” “inventors,” “criminals,” “gods,” “vikings,” and “barbarians.”

<sup>2</sup> As in descriptive adjectives like: best, strong, stable, energetic, light, heavy, cool, hot and regular.

<sup>3</sup> The focus of operations management, classical research, product design and development, etc.

<sup>4</sup> The thing in itself.

# Problem solving & time

Ackoff, R.L. - 1974

|                     | Past | Present | Future | Outside |
|---------------------|------|---------|--------|---------|
| <i>Reactive</i>     | Yes  | No      | No     | No      |
| <i>Inactive</i>     | No   | Yes     | No     | No      |
| <i>Proactive</i>    | No   | No      | Yes    | No      |
| <i>Inter-active</i> | No   | No      | No     | Yes     |

## **Logic**, a noun representing:

“The art of thinking and reasoning in strict accordance with the limitations and incapacities of human misunderstanding. The basis of logic is the syllogism, consisting of a major and minor premise and a conclusion. Thus:

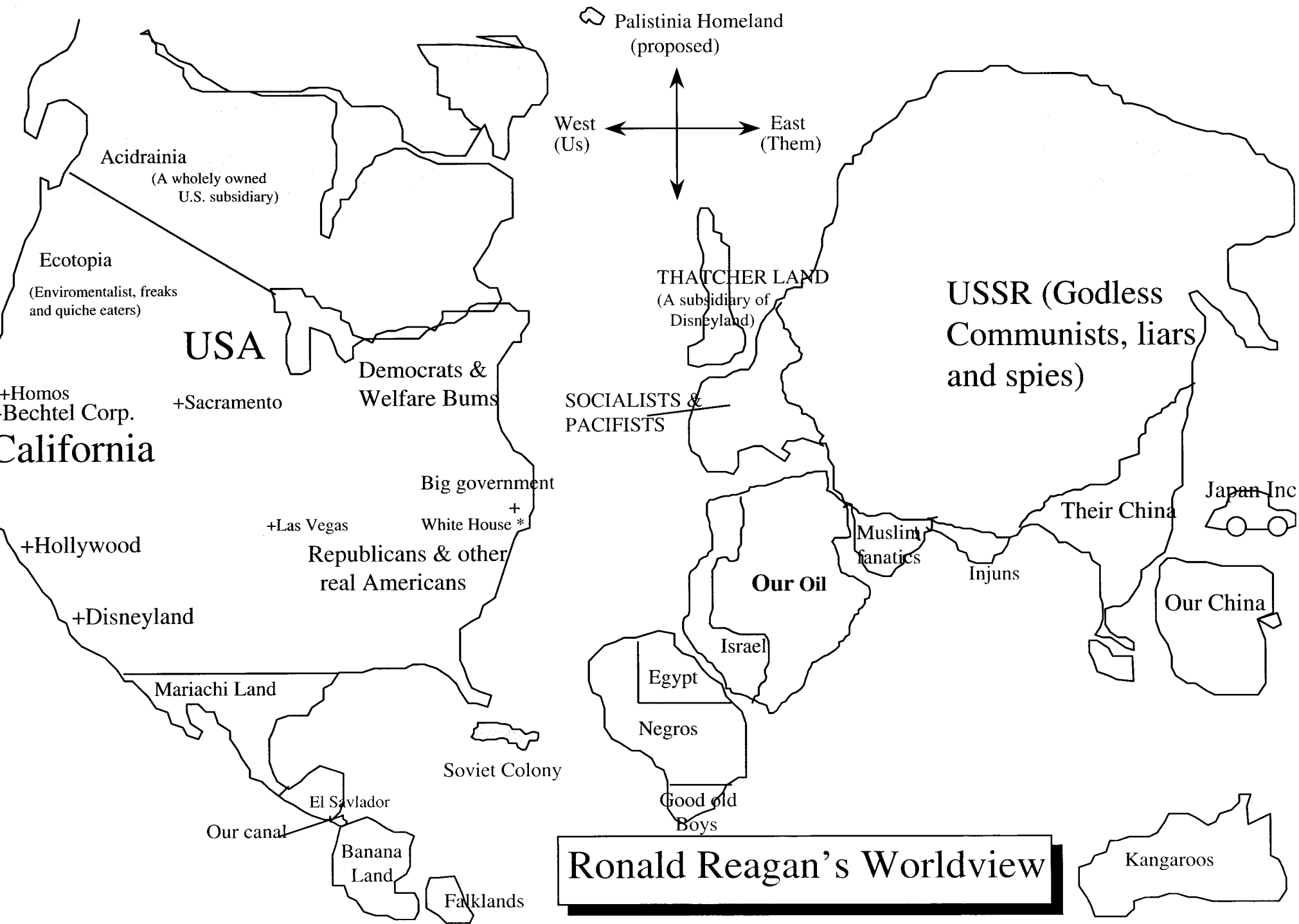
**Major premise** – 60 men can do a piece of work sixty times as quickly as one man.

**Minor premise** – 1 man can dig a posthole in 60 seconds, therefore,

**Conclusion** – 60 men can dig a posthole in 1 second.

By combining logic and mathematics we obtain a double certainty and are twice blessed.

Source: Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*, 1888



**Ronald Reagan's Worldview**

Palistinia Homeland  
(proposed)

West (Us) ↔ East (Them)

Acidrainia  
(A wholly owned  
U.S. subsidiary)

Ecotopia  
(Enviromentalist, freaks  
and quiche eaters)

**USA**

Democrats &  
Welfare Bums

+Homos  
+Bechtel Corp.  
**California**

+Sacramento

SOCIALISTS &  
PACIFISTS

THATCHER LAND  
(A subsidiary of  
Disneyland)

**USSR (Godless  
Communists, liars  
and spies)**

Big government

+Las Vegas

White House \*

Republicans & other  
real Americans

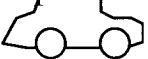
+Hollywood

+Disneyland

Muslim  
fanatics

Injuns

Their China

Japan Inc  


**Our Oil**

Our China

Mariachi Land

Egypt

Israel

Negros

Soviet Colony

Good old  
Boys

Our canal

Banana  
Land

Falklands

Kangaroos



# Management Education:

Why you can't get  
there from here,  
&  
other Dilemmas of the  
Human Condition

## **Mechanical thinking:**

Thinking about machines until you think as a machine thinks. (e.g., AI)

## **Systemical thinking:**

Thinking about connections between things until you stop thinking of things.<sup>1</sup> (I)

- First resolves problems via reductionism. This is the process whereby parts of problems are first disassociated, then “solved,” and then re-associated with the whole.
- Second resolves “problems” via expanding them to include their environment.

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Can you manage a  
project if you can't  
manage yourself?