

# EDITORIAL

## CLICHÉS

“Today is the first day of the rest of your life.” This seemingly profound statement implies that tomorrow will be the second day of the rest of your life, and the day after tomorrow will be the third day of the rest of your life. Yesterday was probably not special, because yesterday was only the last day of the past of your life, and likewise for the day before yesterday which was the next to the last day of the past of your life. On the other hand, today is apparently special, because it is the first day of the rest of your life. However, by tomorrow, tomorrow will be the first day of the rest of your life, and today will be yesterday. By the time you reach the day after tomorrow, that will also be the first day of the rest of your life, and by then tomorrow will be yesterday. It turns out that every day of your life is the first day of the rest of your life.

Another cliché tells us that we “love tomorrow” because it “is only a day away.” To be consistent, we should also love yesterday because it, too, is only a day away. We probably should also love the day after tomorrow, because it is always two days away, even if it happens to be Monday, and the day after the day after tomorrow is always three days away, and that should also evoke love, even if it happens to be the day that taxes are due. However, by tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or the day after the day after tomorrow, we will be faced with today, and it won’t be a day away.

Then consider what happens when you cross the international dateline going west and suddenly today becomes tomorrow, and when going east, today becomes yesterday. Today is not special of itself, neither is tomorrow or yesterday. Yesterday does not deserve any more love than tomorrow, because tomorrow will be the third day of the rest of your life, if you begin counting from yesterday.

Seriously, clichés are often trivial, misleading, and unfortunately, very influential. In our efforts to be analytical and cautious, clichés deserve more critical attention than they receive. Their modicum of acceptance can cause unconscious incorporation into our thought matrix. This must be avoided. Clichés often reflect accepted thinking that represents over-generalizations that become an unrecognized danger to our task of finding truth. They stereotype by giving stock images that too

often distort reality. Their varied approaches, be it from speeches, songs, television, conversation, writing, or pictures, impinge on most areas of thought. The arena of political activity is prime turf for clichés that are suspect but that we hear so often we come to accept. In national and international conflicts such as the fulminating Middle East crises, we often suggest simple popular solutions that seldom reflect an understanding of the concerned factions. In theology, the cliché “facts are not significant, meaning is” can provide an open field for almost any idea, as long as it is considered meaningful. However, meaning based upon erroneous concepts should be suspect, and a knowledge of the facts is highly essential. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of unreliable clichés.

Some examples of erroneous clichés that are pertinent to the question of origins follow.

“Evolution is fact” — however, major changes in organisms have not been demonstrated.

“Creation is science” — this depends on one’s definition of science, and only some aspects of creation quality.

“Evolution is religion” — this depends on one’s definition of religion.

“Creation is religion” — concepts of creation *per se* do not mandate the commitment associated with religion.

Many clichés turn out to be oversimplified and unwarranted conclusions that will only isolate us from the unavoidable complexities of reality. The remedy is more thorough study today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow . . . every day.

Ariel A. Roth