

LISTENER'S GUIDE TO ALFRED KORZYBSKI'S
1948-49 INTENSIVE SEMINAR

by

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Introduction

This Listener's Guide will introduce you to Alfred Korzybski's 1948-49 Winter-Holiday Intensive Seminar. It is also known affectionately as the 'flood seminar' after the heavy rains and flooding which forced its relocation from Lime Rock Lodge to Indian Mountain School, both in Salisbury Township, Connecticut. The twenty-nine attendees (excluding staff) represented a broad cross-section of occupations, including physicians, therapists, educators, homemakers, engineers, students, musical and dramatic artists and others. They ranged in age from eighteen to fifty-five, with an average age of about thirty-two. (This 'mix' of students by the way, is still obtained at today's seminars.)

The thirty-seven hours of cassettes, covering eight days, contain a wealth of material impossible to characterize in a few sentences. They have not been edited -- Korzybski comes across informal and relaxed, with war stories, anecdotes and personal comments still intact. Here also is to be found much rich new material, formulated and refined well after Science and Sanity appeared in print. Listening to these tapes, I hope you get a feel for Korzybski-the-man as well as Korzybski-the-formulator, because as he says in the seminar, to get the full benefit of a book you must study the author.

I must also thank David Levine and Ralph Hamilton, two young students of Korzybski at the time, for the countless hours they spent preparing a transcript and index, respectively, to the original Sound Mirror recordings. Their time-binding energies contributed enormously to my effort.

Instructions for Use

The alpha-numeric references used throughout this guide consist of two parts. The first part designates which side of a particular cassette the reference appears on. For example, "13B.51" refers to cassette 13, Side B, while "2A.34" refers to cassette 2, Side A.

The second part of a reference consists of its relative offset from the beginning of a side. For example, "13B.51" refers to a point 51% past the beginning of Side B of cassette 13 and "2A.34" refers to a point 34% from the beginning of tape 2, Side A. For the most effective use of these offsets, you will need a cassette or tape player with a "number wheel", which associates an arbitrary number with the length of the tape played. To calibrate the cassettes for your machine, choose four cassettes, rewind each, set the number wheel to zero and then "fast-forward" to the end. The number wheel reading at the end of each cassette represents its 'length' on your particular machine. As each side runs very close to a half-hour, you need only average the length of about 4 sides to arrive at a figure that can be applied to all your tapes. This average 'length' will now enable you

to locate any reference fairly easily. For example, to locate reference 13B.51 you would reset the number wheel to zero, insert cassette 13 (side B), and advance to $0.51 \times$ the average length of a tape. If this happens to be 775, you would advance to 0.51×775 or 395. For reference 2A.34, you would advance to 264 (0.34×775) of cassette 2A, remembering to rewind the tape and reset the number wheel to zero whenever you insert a new cassette. For frequently accessed references you could write your calculated offset next to the relative offset that's printed in this guide. With the margin of uncertainty involved, you should come to a given reference in less than 30 seconds of listening. (The references usually point slightly before their actual occurrence on the tape in order to place the given remark or name in its context.)

Table of Contents

LECTURE I: Monday 27 Dec 1948, 2:00-5:00 p.m. Tape 1A.04

Dealing in extensional facts. Impossibility of speaking about 'all' numbers. Impossibility of separating 'space', 'time', 'matter'; 'body' and 'soul'. Improvement of paranoiacs and epileptics through general semantics.

LECTURE II: Monday 27 Dec 1948, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Tape 3A.53

The small revision of premises which led to non-Euclidean and non-Newtonian views. Explanation of Einstein's theory. Interpolation; impossibility of knowing 'all' the facts. Silent levels (and diagram). Identification. Structure, predictability. Delayed reaction. How Korzybski began his functional analysis of man.

LECTURE III: Tuesday, 28 Dec 1948, 2:00-5:00 p.m. Tape 5B.47

'Thinking' by definition instead of 'facts'. 'Thinking' by interpolation, revising generalizations. Cartesian system. Vector calculus. Tensor calculus.

LECTURE IV: Tuesday, 28 Dec 1948, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Tape 6B.31

Elimination of hallucinations. World not an 'illusion' but an abstraction. 'Wave' and 'bullet' theories reconciled in new wave mechanics. Question about god. Fallacious definitions of man. Topology. Frege and Russell's definition of number. Character of number discovered through relation. Types of relation. Plato's objectification of 'ideas'. Aristotle. Importance of hyphen. Psychogalvanometer. Word 'sex' has elementalistic implications; the gonads vitalize the whole 'body'. Arguing from premise₁ to theory₂. Order of Structural Differential from top to bottom has meaning; relativity of 'up' and 'down'.

LECTURE V: Wednesday, 29 Dec 1948, 2:00-5:00 p.m. Tape 9A.46

Critics who refuse to listen. Korzbyski's experiences lecturing to the insane. Psychiatric social worker who suffered too keenly. The four 'is'es. Positional

notation of semitic origin.

LECTURE VI: Wednesday, 29 Dec 1948, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 11B.54

Two-valued orientation. Danger of translating into the 'old' language. Miss Kendig's three girls and the matchbox trick; over-verbalization and reliance on inference. Combinations and permutations. 'Symbolic logic'. Atomic bomb explained as exponential function. Process character of nature. Colloidal behavior. 'No beginning or end'. Over-dispersed colloids in children and dementia praecox.

LECTURE VII: Thursday, 30 Dec 1948, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tape 14B.40

Demonstration of electrical repulsion and colloidal coagulation. Inference and revision of inferential knowledge. Death of 'vitalism'. Tropism. Animals and men living when fatally injured. Brain waves. Electro-colloidal. Preserved brains. Eye a part of brain. Visual 'thinking'.

LECTURE VIII: Thursday, 30 Dec 1948, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 16B.83

Mousetrap demonstration of atomic chain-reaction. "Predominantly cortical (thalamic) region." Complexity of the brain. Psycho-somatic diseases. Getting the feel of a diagnosis. Telepathy. Speculation on origin of 'mental' energy. Not continuity but 'jumps' account for electro-colloidal phenomena, evolution. Blood pressure. Psychotic applicants to seminar. Role of cortex. 'Inhibition' and differential activation.

LECTURE IX: Friday, 31 Dec 1948, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 19A.56

'Thalamic' reactions. Evolution through environmental change. Cat and mouse experiment. 'Thalamo-cortical' integration. 'Finding yourself' in an insane person. Logic of the insane. Differential activation. Vertical and horizontal analysis of society. A fault of American government.

LECTURE X: Saturday, 1 Jan 1949, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tape 21B.30

Analysis of 'one', 'two'. Misinterpretation of symbol. Cyclops. One-to-one correspondence. 'Class of classes' definition of number. "Natural number." Human reactions not fitting formulation of relation types. 'Crazy' numbers. Relations, structure.

LECTURE XI: Saturday, 1 Jan 1949, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 24A.38

Map-territory correspondence. How creative workers think. Chimpanzee experiment in tool-using. The three non-A premises. Self-reflexiveness. Tensor calculus, based on relation. Multiordinality. Canalization. Extensional devices.

LECTURE XII: Sunday, 2 Jan 1949, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tape 26B.36

Extensional devices. Levels of integration. Soft spots on brain. 'Sex' put into mathematical equations. Effects of changed environment on spurs, razors. Dating. Etc. Mathematics 'perfect' within its limitations. Quotes. Hyphen.

LECTURE XIII: Sunday, 2 Jan 1949, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 29A.14

Non-elementalism. Intension, extension. Life non-additive. Second order evaluations. Importance of knowing a situation is 'hopeless'. Graicunas chart, exponential function. Application of devices.

LECTURE XIV: Monday, 3 Jan 1949, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tape 32A.16

Intensional use of 'sex'. "Throwing of labels." Similarity of manic-depressives to present 'normals'. Logarithms. 'Miracles' of mathematics -- positional notation, logarithms. First and second order enjoyment. "The idiot and the bitch." Case of hallucinations. Experiments producing neurosis in animals. Nervous breakdown of Ed.

LECTURE XV: Monday, 3 Jan 1949, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Tape 34B.06

Two-valued certainty and disillusion. How Structural Differential was conceived. Kaleidoscope. Circularity of knowledge. Undefined terms. Anglo-Saxons trained not to use hands. Multiordinal terms explained. Cone of integration. Over- and under-defined terms. Neuro-semantic relaxation. Questions and answers.

List of Illustrations

Note: Only the main definition of each illustration is given. In addition, five of the figures in this 1944 diagram were apparently not used by Korzbyski in his 1948-49 seminar.

LECTURE I

figure 38: tape 2A.67

LECTURE II

figure 37: tape 3A.64
figure 39: tape 3A.93
figure 40: tape 3A.93
figure 4: tape 3B.74
figure 5: tape 4A.48

LECTURE IV

figure 28: tape 7A.85
figure 20: tape 8B.27
figure 3: tape 9A.05
figure 1: tape 9A.28

LECTURE V

figure 11: tape 11A.22

LECTURE VI

figure 21: tape 12A.00
figure 22: tape 12A.55
figure 23: tape 13B.20
figure 24: tape 14A.40
figure 25: tape 14A.86

LECTURE VII

figure 30: tape 15A.25
figure 10: tape 15B.20

LECTURE VIII

figure 26: tape 17A.45
figure 27: tape 19A.10

LECTURE X

figure 2: tape 22A.56
figure 29: tape 23B.30
figure 7: tape 24A.07

LECTURE XI

figure 6: tape 24A.41
figure 9: tape 25A.67
figure 33: tape 25B.44
figure 12: tape 25B.57
figure 15: tape 26A.13
figure 16: tape 26A.13
figure 18: tape 26B.04

LECTURE XII

figure 19: tape 27A.05
figure 32: tape 27B.45
figure 17: tape 28B.69

LECTURE XIII

figure 13: tape 29A.24
figure 8: tape 29A.27

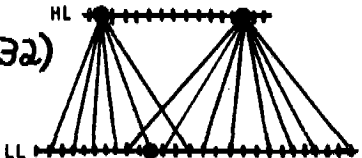

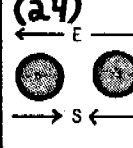
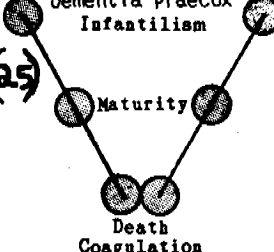
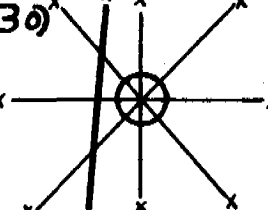
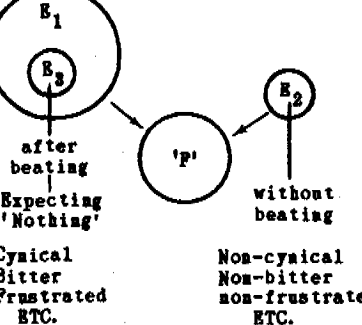
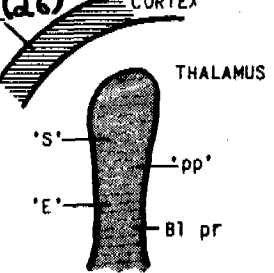
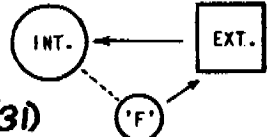
LECTURE XV

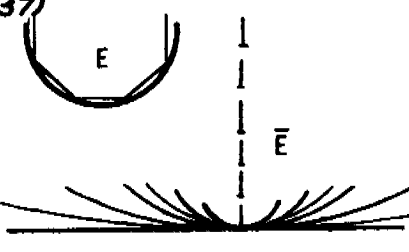

figure 36: tape 34B.06
figure 14: tape 34B.39
figure 31: tape 34B.39
figure 35: tape 35A.82
figure 34: tape 36A.18

BLACKBOARD NOTES FROM LECTURES

<p>(1) ABSOLUTE</p> <p>ABSOLUTE</p> <p>RELATIVE</p>	<p>(6) PROPER EVALUATION PREDICTABILITY</p> <p>T: SF C NY M: C SF NY</p> <p>Maximum predictability Similar in Structure Structure - Relations Relations - ORDER</p>	<p>(10)</p> <p>C_1^+ C_2^- C_3^+</p>	<p>(16) EXTENSIONAL DEVICES</p> <p>Working { (1) Indexes (2) Dates (8) ETC. Safety { (4) Quotes (5) Hyphens</p>
<p>(2)</p> <p>1 + 1 = 2</p>	<p>(7) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>(11) 'IS'</p> <p>(1) Auxiliary (2) Existence (3) Predication (4) Identity</p>	<p>(17) 'Industry₁^t- in action₁^t- demand₁^t, etc.</p>
<p>(3)</p>	<p>(8) ORDER</p> <p>(1) Non-elementalistic (2) Bridging term between exact sciences and life (8) Ordering reactions-Delayed Reactions</p>	<p>(12) CANALIZATION</p>	
<p>(4) INTERPOLATION</p> <p>etc.</p>	<p>(9) \bar{A} PREMISES</p> <p>(1) M <u>is</u> NOT T (2) M NOT <u>all</u> T (3) M self-reflexive</p>	<p>(13) ELEMENTALISTIC NON-ELEMENTALISTIC</p>	<p>(18)</p> <p>—SIMILARITIES 1—DIFFERENCES</p>
<p>(5)</p> <p>I</p> <p>Happenings External or internal</p> <p>Silent</p>	<p>II</p> <p>NERVOUS IMPACT (electro- colloidal OF I</p> <p>Silent</p>	<p>III</p> <p>FEELINGS ORGANISMAL REACTIONS (electro- colloidal) TO II</p> <p>Silent</p>	<p>IV</p> <p>IMMEDIATE VERBAL REACTIONS TO III implying identifying I, II, III, and IV</p> <p>Verbal</p>
			<p>(20) 9/10 1/10</p>
			<p>(21)</p> <p>2 valued degree ∞-valued</p>

OF ALFRED KORZYBSKI -- IGS SEMINAR, JULY 1944

<p>'and' 'not' 'for all' 'member of'</p>	<p>(27) CORTEX (1) Dynamogenic effect (2) Differential activation ETC. Delayed reactions</p>	<p>CONE OF LEVELS OF INTEGRATION</p> <p>(32) </p>	
<p>(22) AND 2-valued - 1 3-valued - 256 4-valued - 14,500,000</p>	<p>(28) RELATIONS Symmetrical Asymmetrical</p>	<p>(33) MULTIORDINALITY</p>	<p>Over Under (34) DEFINED TERMS</p>
<p>(23)  (24) </p>	<p>(29) $3 > 2$ $3 + 1 = 4$</p>	<p>(35) NATURAL ORDER OF EVALUATION (1) Process more important than (2) Object " (3) Description " (4) Inferences of low order " (5) Inferences of high order ETC.</p>	
<p>(25) </p>	<p>(30) </p>	<p>A (36) \bar{A} Two-valued 'certainty' Maximum Expectation ∞-valued Maximum Probability Minimum Expectation</p> <p></p>	
<p>(26) </p>	<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{1000}$ $\frac{1}{\infty} = 0$</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 etc. 2 4 6 8 10 etc.</p>		
	<p>(31) </p>		

<p>(37) </p>	<p>(38) </p>	<p>(39) $v = \frac{s}{t} = 0$ $\beta = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$</p>	<p>(40) $W_N = V + V'$ $W_E = \frac{V + V'}{1 - \frac{W}{c^2}}$</p>
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Some Sample Passages

- 2B.45: "Whatever you say something 'is', well it is not."
- 2B.66: "The only claim I have is prevention. Prevention. Not therapeutic."
- 3A.42: "Let me give you [some] advice when you read a book. Read not only what you read, but study the author."
- 6A.04: "If I can only convey to you as the net result of the whole seminar, if you can only learn how to 'think' in terms of 'facts' instead of definition, we will have achieved what we wanted to achieve. It's one of the most difficult things to do. It will take you a long 'time' to do that."
- 13B.66: "This is based on a new world outlook... We have made a methodological summary of what we know, practically in every field, without going into the details of it. I had to extract the method and 'all' I teach you is scientific method...It takes infernal work to do so, and without time-binding... I could not have produced general semantics, which is method, method, and nothing but."
- 16A.52: "...psycho-logically science is the opinion of the race...If your personal opinion is well based or you are informed enough and you base your personal opinion on the opinion of the [human] race, which means science, then your private opinion may be valid."
- 24A.01: "...speaking about the human nervous system, we have to speak about the results of the working of the nervous system; therefore we have to talk about the best -- mathematics and physics -- to have a standard, and then we have to know the rudiments of psychiatry, to know the worst."
- 28B.61: "The linguistic hyphen is extremely important because it connects disconnected stuff. It makes a whole out of parts...Speaking to psychiatrists, they use "psychosomatic," "psychobiology;" officially there is no hyphen there. Now what happens to the readers when they see one word, "psychosomatic"? They fancy that this is an entity by itself because there is one word for it, and it is a fraud played on the public because you cover up endless complexities by covering up the hyphen under the simplicity of one word."

Index

- Abacus, 11B.14
 'Absolute' calculus. See 'Tensor calculus'.
 'Absolute up and down', 9A.28
 Abstracting, analysis of, 4A.80
 'disk where there is no disk', 12A.01
 human vs. animal, 35A.18
 mechanism, 34B.95
 on Structural Differential, 9A.29
 'Silent Levels' diagram, 4A.23
 Abstraction, 'bullets' and waves, 6B.51
 in dogs, 34A.30
 mathematical, 'all' characteristics included, 26A.04
 'real', 12A.03
 world as an, 6B.36
 Abstractions, higher order as a measure of a society, 37A.43
 man-made, 6B.39, 8A.24
 Additivity, at dinner table, 29B.65
 vs. non-additivity, 29A.91
 Administration, 21B.69
 Adrian, 16A.31, 18A.54
 Agnosticism, a 'religion', 5A.43
 Alcohol, effects on brain, 15A.16
 Alcoholics, brains of, 15A.29
 Aleph, 2B.13
 Algebra, vs. arithmetic and calculus, 23B.07
 Allness, in 'thalamic' learning, 26A.48
 Allocation, for extension, 31A.43
 of level, 36A.04
 of symbols, 6B.92
 'And', additive, 29A.91
 in additivity, 29B.88
 in many-valued logic, 12A.51
 Anecdotes, 'Alka-Seltzer bottle' and girl, 33B.47
 arithmetic vs. algebra vs. calculus, 23B.04
 'Aunt Jemima', 1A.04
 'bag of pus' for a brain, 4A.12
 "beggar and the 'Almighty'," 4B.18
 'beginning and end of world', 14A.26
 Birkhoff and finger pinch, 4A.41
 'boy out of window', 5B.52
 'cannot out-talk you', 2A.06
 'cannot sit on a noise', 26A.98
 Cantorian alephs, 2B.12
 chimpanzee 'genius', 25A.21
 clairvoyant and Korzybski, 18A.41
 'divide body-mind', 2B.25
 'do not quote me to me', 9B.54
 epileptic student of Korzybski, 3A.26
 'etc.', edited from manuscript, 28A.68
 in the Bible, 28B.16
 'evaluation' at MacLean Hospital, 5A.19
 Eve from dog's tail, 27A.39
 experiments with dogs, 34A.30
 'explain why' -- Sommerfeld, 1B.06
 Fermi and exponential function, 13A.83
 five old ladies in seminar, 10A.40
 Galois and theory of groups, 30B.29
 General semantics students and hellish parents, 2B.79
 hay fever and paper roses, 11A.57
 homicidal paranoiac and Manhood of Humanity, 3A.15
 'idiot and the bitch', 33B.23
 'insane', from incest, 27B.07
 and Virgin Mary, 20B.58
 from too many assistants, 29B.26
 who killed mother, 17B.13
 Kelley and general semantics for soldiers, 2B.55
 Korzybski, and psycho-galvanometer, 8A.93
 and social worker, 10B.43
 and the bull, 5A.50
 and the lioness, 5A.74
 'electrocuted', 25A.05
 fencing, 17B.21
 on Woolworth Building, 5B.16
 relaxing 'psychotics', 36A.52
 sitting on broken chair, 26A.60
 Korzybski's brain-waves, 16A.21
 'insane' counterpart, 9B.89, 20B.29
 lectures to male psychotics,

- 10A.68
 Lenin — 'quarter of a brain', 4A.05
 Liberty Bonds lecture, 1B.98
 Loeb and caterpillars, 15B.09
 man disorganized about golf, 31A.18
 'mathematical sexology', 27B.77
 'mathematics which no one can use', 12A.14
 monkey, in Korzbyski's lap, 28B.41
 throwing excreta, 32A.83
 monkey's escape from cage, 5B.00
 Mrs. Tom Catt's lectures, 11B.20
 nails hampered electrical experiment, 29A.07
 neurologists and delayed reaction, 3A.09
 'ninety men or ten', 1B.98
 non-Euclidean geometry and insanity, 10A.03
 non-Newtonian physics and suicide, 10A.07
 origin of the Structural Differential, 34B.56
 paranoiacs and Korzybski, 2A.06
 patent for Structural Differential, 26A.66
 psychiatrist and 'fact', 'reality', 35B.62
 'psychologist' in quotes, 29A.36
 "psychologist's" monkey wrote Shakespeare, 28B.41
 psychotic fake 'psychiatrist', 10B.35
 Rainich and 'mass' in space-time, 12A.19
 Rajah and Queen Mary, 22B.08
 razors and environment, 28A.43
 Richards and finger pinch, 4A.70
 'Roosevelt has no values', 8B.52
 sanity a matter of degree, 1A.35
Science and Sanity and Bleuler's text, 1A.40
 selfishness and banker's son, 30B.11
 'sex' and rats, 8B.13
 Shapley and finger pinch, 4A.41
 'shaven or shorn', 5A.84
 silver spurs into 'lead', 28A.36
 'spider spider spider', 3B.24
 'splashes of color', 37B.20
 student who pounded fist, 34A.54
 who stuttered, 35B.34
 student's unanswerable question, 9B.53
 suicidal schizophrenic, 1A.38
 'telepathic' boy and mother, 18A.25
 the 'Amoeba', 18B.27
 three girls and matchboxes, 12A.88
 Tower of Babel, 25A.54
 'very little baby', 3A.57
 'we are not brutes', 8A.62
 'what can be done', 7B.82
 woman with 'bone tumor', 17B.48
 Anglo-Saxons and 'use' of hands, 35B.28
 Animal, abstracting of vs. human, 35A.18
 implications of the term, 8A.62
 no Polish word for, 8A.62
 Animals, behavior of, Korzbyski and bull, 5A.50
 Korzybski and lioness, 5A.74
 space-binders, 5B.22
 'thinking' in, 5A.95
 Aphasia, semantic, 5A.16, 5A.30
 Application, vs. 'understanding', 1A.53
 vs. verbal simplicity, 2A.16
 Arbitrary unit, 6A.62
 Aristotelian premises and modern science, 1A.68
 Aristotle, 15A.94, 15B.08, 29A.48, 37A.51
 Aristotle's system, 8A.12
 Arithmetic vs. algebra and calculus, 23B.04
 Art, and maximum expectation, 37B.20
 Arts, and general semantics, 37A.17
 Assumptions, 6A.18
 unconscious, 'flat earth', 9A.28
 Atheism, a 'religion', 5A.41
 Atom, structure of, 13B.18
 Atomic bomb, 27A.04, 29A.77
 demonstration model of, 17A.06
 exponential function, 13A.83
 'Aunt Jemima', anecdote, 1A.04
 Authority, in teaching, 12B.45
 student and professor, 9B.53
 Automaton, 'insane' as, 1A.23
 Autopsy, correlation of brain and behavior, 4A.18
 Lenin's, 4A.05
 at St. Elizabeths, 3B.98, 6B.23

Babel, Tower of, 25A.54
 Bahnung, 25B.52
 Becquerel, 2A.30
 Bees, 21A.28
 'Beginning' and 'end', and Manhattan
 Storage, 14A.26
 and origin of life, 14A.16
 Behavior, and brain structure, 4A.18
 Bell, E.T., 7A.46, 8B.96, 10A.15,
 29B.49
 'Bibliotherapy', 3A.15
 Biology, complexity of, 2B.44
 experiments with insects, 2A.60
 Birkhoff, and finger pinch, 4A.41
 Blood-pressure, and general semantics,
 18A.84, 18B.13
 mechanisms, 18B.13
 Body-mind, inseparable, 2B.25
 Bohr, 2A.34
 Bolyai, 2A.75
 Books, exhibit 'human nature', 5A.46
 Born, Max, 13B.51
 Bragg, W.H. and W.L., 2A.34
 Brain, develops until 18 years of
 age, 19A.94
 electro-colloidal mechanisms,
 17A.25
 'softening' of, 27B.58
 structure and function of, 17A.17
 structure of -- correlation with
 behavior, 4A.18
 work of Rosett, 16B.18
 Brain waves, 16A.21, 18A.50
 and seminar students, 8A.82
 testing seminar students, 16A.21
 Bridgman, 13A.75
 Buddha, 37B.11
 Burrow, 4B.47

Calculus, vs. Arithmetic and Algebra,
 23B.04
 tensor. See 'tensor calculus'.
 Calories, inadequate for 'mental'
 energy, 18A.68
 Canalization, 25B.54
 in adults vs. children, 2B.50
 Cantor, 2B.12, 4A.26
 'Capitalism' vs. 'communism', 7A.07
 Carbon, radioactive, 18A.61
 Carmichael, 10A.16, 29B.52
 Carrel, 8B.41
 'both marble and sculptor',

37A.04
 Cartesian system, origin of and use,
 6A.35
 Castration, consequences, 30A.08
 Cats, neurotic, 34A.09
 'Cause-effect', chain reaction,
 27B.18
 'effects' become 'causes', 2B.87,
 4B.16
 in weather, 29B.08
 Chain-indexes, 26B.35, 27A.74,
 27B.24, 29B.55
 application of, 27A.08, 28A.30
 in environment, 28A.43
 show chain reactions, 13B.09
 Chain reaction, 27A.04, 29B.55
 demonstration of mechanism,
 17A.06
 exponential function, 13A.83
 in human progress, PR^t, 13B.01
 in life, 27A.73
 in medicine, 27B.07
 Character, human, and 'facts bumped
 into', 4B.84
 Characteristics, included vs.
 omitted, 26A.05
 Chemistry-binder, plants, 5B.21
 Children, born extensional, 2B.50,
 29A.69
 flexible, 2B.50
 Chisholm, G.B., 37A.50
 Circle, as a helix in 'time', 3B.62,
 5B.89
 becomes helix in 'time', 24B.37
 built of straight lines, 3B.09
 definition vs. performance,
 5B.89, 23B.79
 Circularity, 'cause-effect', 4B.16
 of knowledge, 35B.05
 Clairvoyance, 18A.41
 'Class of classes', 7A.49, 22A.01
 Cleckley, 'semantic dementia', 5A.31
 Coagulation, vs. death, 1B.45, 14A.74
 Colloidal behavior, 13B.92
 chemistry, 13B.92
 Colloids, aging of in man, 14A.92
 demonstration of mechanisms,
 14B.40
 discussion of, 13B.92
 dispersed in dementia praecox,
 14A.98
 examples of, 13B.92
 in psychotics, 14B.30
 mechanisms of, 15B.41

- structure of, 13B.92
- 'Common sense', in psychotherapy, 5B.68
- Communication -- human, 9B.18
 - verbal levels of, 4B.50, 6B.42
- 'Communism' vs. 'Capitalism', 7A.07
- Complexity vs. simplicity, 17B.32
- Conditional reaction. See 'Reaction, conditional'.
- Conditioning, experiments with dogs, 34A.28
 - pike and minnows, 19A.63
- Confucius, 37B.11
- Consciousness, 20A.87
- Consciousness of abstracting, and genius, 4A.24
 - lack leads to identification, 4B.25
 - 'Silent levels' diagram, 4A.24
- Consciousness of mechanisms, 2B.41
 - effects, 30A.61
 - remedy for identifying, 4B.25
- Convergence of data, 15A.50
- Cortex, 17A.34, 19A.50, 20B.05
 - and process orientation, 11B.93
 - dynamogenic effect of, 19A.09, 20A.67
 - function of, 19B.78
 - role of, 18B.96
 - thalamo-cortical integration, 2A.15
- 'Cosmic corn', 19A.02
- Cosmic rays and 'mental' energy, 18A.59
- Counting, primitive, 23A.74
- Criminals, as 'insane', 17B.02
- Criticism, blocks learning, 9A.80, 9B.12, 9B.60
- Cultures, neurosis of, 37B.11
- Curies, the, 2A.31
- Curve, as a 'limit', 3A.62
- Cyclops, 22B.48

- Darwin, 18B.00
- Dates, 26A.14
 - application of, 26A.80
- Dating, 28A.51
 - 'boy out of window', 5B.52
- De Broglie, 15A.77
 - wave mechanics, 6B.59
- 'Death' vs. coagulation, 1B.45, 14A.74
- Decimal notation, 11B.12

- Deductions, from premises, 3B.16
- Definition, extensional, 29A.48
 - intensional, 29A.48
 - mathematical vs. vernacular, 26A.04
 - omits characteristics, 26A.04
 - orientation by, 5B.92, 13A.31, 29A.48, 30A.15
 - river as running water, 13A.24
 - vs. facts in mathematics, 23B.79
- Degree, in mathematics, 11B.64
 - orientation vs. two-valued, 11B.54
 - vs. 'right or wrong', 11B.60
 - vs. 'touch or not touch', 11B.82, 13A.71
- Delayed reaction, 20A.09
 - and neurologists, 3A.02
 - beneficial, 3A.02
 - Korzybski and the artillery shell, 31B.18
 - protects thalamus, 21A.09
 - result of devices, 26A.14, 26A.60
- Dementia, semantic, 5A.31
- Dementia praecox, dispersed colloids in, 14A.98
 - dream 'is reality', 4B.07
 - lecturing to, 1A.62
- Democracy, 21A.62
- Descartes, 6A.35
- Devices -- extensional, 26A.14
 - and Freud's work, 2A.57
 - application of, 26A.60, 28A.54, 28B.61, 31A.15, 31A.30
 - applied to 'sex', 32A.21, 32B.73
 - chain indexes, 26B.35
 - change structure of language, 29A.21
- DeVries, 18B.00
- Dewey, 34B.62
- Diagnosis, 18A.11
- Differences vs. similarities, 26B.20
- Differential activation, 19A.10, 20B.93
- Djugashvili. See Stalin.
- Dirac, 6B.62, 15A.78
- Discontinuity in life, 18B.00
- Diviner of water, 8B.75
- Dogma, 2A.91
 - 'good christian', 9A.77
- Dogs, conditioning experiments with, 34A.30
- Dominance, in levels of integration, 27B.40

Doubt of doubt, 30A.46
 Driesche, 15B.09
 Dynamogenic effect, 19A.09, 20A.67

Eddington, describes structure of
 'matter', 13B.25
 'footprint on unknown', 37A.08
 Education, and general semantics, 2B.77
 and prevention, 2B.67
 defects, 22A.80
 has electro-colloidal effect,
 16A.57
 'Effect' as 'cause', 2B.87
 Einstein, 1A.11, 2A.32, 2A.34, 2A.95,
 2B.25, 8A.40, 21B.76, 24B.33,
 25B.38, 37A.54
 and Korzybski, 1B.18, 1B.24
 and Minkowski, 3B.59
 and quantum theory, 6B.54
 and religion, 1B.18, 1B.26, 1B.32
 background, 1B.18, 1B.24, 3B.41
 his theory, 3A.93, 3B.13
 reversal of old, 5B.41
 'thinking of', 24B.87
 Einstein theory, 3B.13, 3B.39
 difference from Newton, 3B.32
 space-time-matter, 5B.82
 velocity, 3A.94
 'Either-or', discussion of, 11B.54
 Electricity, not Euclidean or
 Newtonian, 2A.87
 Election, mechanisms of, 21A.63
 Electro-colloid, 'bag of pus' for a
 brain, 4A.11
 Electro-colloidal, behavior not
 Newtonian, 2A.87
 mechanisms in brain, 17A.32
 mechanisms in nervous system,
 17A.93
 orientation, 16B.78
 'photograph' in nervous system,
 4A.52
 Electro-colloids, discussion of,
 13B.81
 high-pressures in, 13A.76
 Electron, component of 'matter',
 13B.16
 in quantum mechanics, 15B.04
 Elementalism, 30A.15
 in language, 29A.24
 'Emotion', thalamic, 19B.07
 Energy, 'mental', 18A.59
 Energy-binder. See 'Chemistry-

 binder'.
 English, as international language,
 26B.40
 'th', 26B.55
 English, Basic, 26B.71
 Enjoyment of enjoyment, 33A.73
 Environment, adaptation to, 19B.19
 adjustment to, 15B.14
 complexities of, 28A.35
 human, 8B.46
 in chain indexes, 27A.05
 neuro-linguistic and neuro-seman-
 tic, 29A.10
 Epilepsy, nature, 3A.26
 Epileptic, student of Korzybski,
 3A.26
 'Etc.', 26A.14, 28A.60
 as 'junior infinity', 2B.11
 in the Bible, 28B.16
 'Ether', theory of, 6B.70
 Euclid, 2A.66, 3A.90, 3B.34, 23A.19
 postulational system, 35B.12
 Euclidean geometry. See Geometry,
 Euclidean.
 Evaluation, general applicability,
 5A.18
 human, foundation of, 2A.65
 in MacLean Hospital, 5A.18
 mechanisms of, generality, 1A.23
 similar in 'normal' and 'insane',
 20B.25
 non-elementalistic, 5A.18, 29A.28
 sane, difficulties in, 4B.01
 Eve from dog's tail, 27A.39
 Evolution, description, 19B.16
 theory of, 18A.96
 Examples, '9/10 and 1/10', 8B.29
 'absolute up and down', 9A.34
 additivity at dinner table,
 29B.65
 animals surviving 'mortal'
 wounds, 15B.92
 automobile as a structure,
 24A.13, 24B.13
 'bird dropping something', 9A.63
 'boy out of window', 30A.86
 breaking toe vs. soft spots in
 brain, 27B.53
 bridges vs. human civilization,
 5B.09
 castration non-additive, 30A.06
 cat and mouse, 19B.61
 cathedral of flies, 13B.40
 chain-indexed 'chair', 27A.09

- crossing river twice, 15A.98
 'disk where there is no disk',
 6B.31
 drinking whiskey non-additive,
 29B.65
 effects of sunspots and volcanoes,
 27B.34
 egg coagulating in alcohol,
 15A.15
 finger pinch, 4A.40, 4A.70
 first general semantics congress,
 34B.18
 forgetting house keys, 32A.73
 fraudulent checks and language,
 29A.45
 'g-o-d', 6B.76
 "Gravitation, darlink.", 3B.38,
 9B.83
 hand a serial structure, 4B.70,
 6B.17
 hating 'mother', 31A.33
 heliotropic caterpillars, 15B.19
 honey as goods or wealth, 7A.10
 hysterical painter, 17A.70
 'industry-in-action', 28B.69
 Korzybski's heart palpitations,
 3B.20
 Leopold and Loeb, 17B.04
 lobster digesting self, 15B.73
 manic-depressive fluctuations,
 32B.18
 mathematicians and Swift's
 'flappers', 13A.65
 'neurotic' rats, 34A.47
 non-additive human relations,
 29B.74
 of permutation and combination,
 12B.88
 pigeons and pearls, 15A.35
 pigs executed for murder, 17B.00
 pike and minnows, 19A.63
 pith balls and colloids, 14B.40
 'possession by devils', 17A.82
 powers of two, 13A.01
 premises-consequences diagram,
 9A.05
 Prince Rupert drops, 14B.87
 'scientific table' vs. ordinary,
 13B.33
 second-order mechanisms, 30A.26
 'snake in the bed', 3A.73
 'son-of-a-bitch', 4B.00
 space-time-matter in a cane,
 2B.36
 'step into the same river',
 13A.23
 striking match and expectation,
 34B.25
 sun not 'hot', 28B.07
 'think in terms of the other
 fellow', 2A.12
 'touch or not touch', 11B.78,
 13A.71
 'want a drink?', 35B.83
 'world not bad -- hopeless', 30B.23
 'Existence' and Samuel Johnson, 2B.22
 Expectation, maximum vs. minimum,
 34B.06
 Experience vs. inference, 6A.10
 Explanations, in lecturing, 1B.05
 Exponential function, 20B.16, 27A.80,
 29A.77, 33A.36, 30B.48
 and chain reactions, 13A.83
 demonstration of chain reaction,
 17A.09
 in atomic bomb, 13A.83
 in management, 29B.15
 powers of two, 13A.00
 Extension, 29A.48, 30A.15
 and over/under definition, 36A.19
 and 'simultaneity', 2A.95
 and thalamo-cortical integration,
 2A.15
 effects of on life attitude,
 4B.00
 in children, 2B.52
 in reading, 3A.42
 in theory of happiness, 34B.06
 introduced by Aristotle, 8A.22
 method, 30B.01
 methods of, 31A.15
 methods of -- example, 33B.43
 vs. intension -- results, 34B.40
 vs. maximum expectation, 10B.75
 results of -- example, 26A.73
 'son of a bitch' example, 4B.00
 training in -- example, 12A.88
 Extensional devices. See 'Devices --
 extensional'.
 Extensional 'thinking', and Korzyb-
 ski's background, 1B.20
 neurological factors, 1A.51
 Extremes, in two-valued orientation,
 11B.54
 Eye, extension of brain, 16B.59
 and visualization, 16B.62

- 'Fact', 'brute', 30A.22
 - multiordinal, 35B.48
 - multiordinality of, 30A.22
- 'Facts', and extension-intension, 34B.40
 - and interpolation, 3B.75, 6A.13
 - 'bumping into', 23A.38
 - kinds encountered determined by our makeup, 5A.04
 - non-verbal vs. formulations, 5B.48
 - orientation by, 29A.59
 - vs. verbalism, 27B.00
- Factual 'thinking', 1B.22
 - and thalamo-cortical integration, 2A.14
 - numbers, 2A.00
- Failure, magnifying, 32B.32, 32B.94, 33A.48
- 'False', 36A.28
- 'Falsity', 36A.33
- Family, organization of, 21A.33
- Faraday, 2A.26
- Fear, and fear of fear, 30A.85, 31A.72
 - unconscious allocation of 37B.31
- 'Feeling', on silent level, 4A.77
- Female, complexity of, 27A.64
- Fermi, 13A.85, 20B.19, 29A.77
- Fiction, verbal, 28B.69
 - vs. indexed non-fiction, 26A.38
- Filibuster, 4A.67, 5A.33
- Finger pinch, 4A.40, 4A.70
 - and Birkhoff, 4A.41
 - and Richards, 4A.70
 - and Shapley, 4A.41
- 'Flat earth', 9A.34
- 'Footnotes', in lecturing, 1B.05
- Frame of reference, 6A.43
- Freeman, autopsies, 4A.00
- Frege, 22A.06
 - definition of number, 7A.49
- Freud, 2A.92, 4A.30
 - and undifferentiated 'sex', 32A.23, 32B.74
 - terms, 2A.45
 - work, significance of, 2A.45
- Frustration, in animals, 34A.09
- Function, 29B.03
 - applied to processes, 29B.03
 - vs. additivity, 29B.03
- Gantt, 34A.29
- Gauss, 2A.75, 4A.25
- General semantics, adjunct to psychotherapy, 4B.37
 - and arts, 37A.16
 - and education, 3A.00
 - applied in war, 2B.55
 - applies methods of tensor calculus, 13A.58
 - as method, 13B.64
 - as prevention, 2B.67, 3A.10
 - origin, with time-binding, 5B.07
 - physiological results, 17B.50, 18B.18
 - results from, 12B.36
 - results of training, 3A.10
 - results with students, 16A.72
 - supplement to psychotherapy, 5B.72
 - training in, 3A.00
 - training soldiers, 2B.55
- Generalization, as interpolation, 3B.75
 - changed by new factor, 3A.48
 - limited in general semantics, 11B.06
- Generalizing, 1B.30
- Genius, and consciousness of abstracting, 4A.27
- Geometry, analytical, 6A.43
 - difference between Euclidean, non-Euclidean, 3A.53, 3B.33
 - Euclidean, human beings as a piece of, 1A.23
 - Euclidean, parallels in, 2A.66
 - non-Euclidean, 2A.66
 - revision of, 2A.66
 - 'straight' line, 3A.81
- Goats, 'neurotic', 34A.78
- 'G-o-d', 6B.75, 30B.45
- Gonads, 8B.28
 - and creativity, 9A.13
- Government, mechanisms of, 21A.62
- Graicunas, 29B.15, 30B.55
- Graicunas, diagram, 29B.23, 30B.48
- Gravitation vs. space-time curvature, 3B.35, 25A.00
- Grossman, 6A.88
- Group, effects on individual, 4B.39
- Groups, theory of, 30B.29
- Gulliver's Travels, 13A.65

- Hall, 4A.67
 Hamilton, 6A.88
 Hamlet, 37A.25
 Hand as serial structure, 24A.07
 Hands, use in speaking, 35B.29
 Happiness, extensional theory of, 34B.06
 Hardy, 10A.14, 29B.49
 Hate, of a generalization, 31A.33
 on silent level, 4A.50
 of hate, 30A.38
 Hayakawa, and reversed Structural Differential, 9A.28
 Head, Henry, 5A.15
 Heisenberg, 6B.61, 9B.33, 15A.76
 Helix, 3B.61
 result of circle in 'time', 5B.89
 three dimensional circle, 24B.37
 Heraclitus, 13A.23
 Herrick, 19A.09
 Hertz, 2A.29
 Homosexuality, dealing with, 8B.19
 Hopelessness, leads to new departure, 30B.24, 30B.36
 Horses, training by Korzybski, 1B.83
 Human abstracting vs. animal, 35A.12
 behavior, at its best, 1A.35
 at its worst, 1A.36
 character shown by way of talking, 4B.93
 evaluation, and foundations of mathematics, 2A.63
 generalizing, 1B.30
 knowledge, man-made, 9A.66
 'mind', and foundations of mathematics, 2A.63
 limitations of, 2A.36
 'nature', approach to, 1A.15
 progress, exponential function, 13B.01
 relations, as logical relations, 22B.71
 as 'Euclidean geometry', 1A.21
 Humans, as mirrors, 1B.02, 6B.35, 35A.62
 complexity of, 3B.95
 complexity of 'normal', 4B.57, 17B.35
 not quitters, 32B.42
 time-binders, 5B.16
 Huntington, 4A.42
 Hutchins, 4A.24
 Huxley, J., 1A.12
 Hyphen, applications, 28B.61
 'physiological', 8A.70, 29A.01
 value of, 8A.49
 Hyphens, 26A.17
 Hysteria, 17A.59
 'I, lay down principle in terms of, 9A.53
 Identification, 'Aunt Jemima', 1A.04
 "beggar and 'the Almighty'," 4B.18
 by Korzybski, 4B.26
 hay fever and paper roses, 11A.57
 in the structure of language, 11A.30
 objectification of words, 4B.00
 of levels, 4A.48
 source of mis-evaluations, 4B.00
 training in, 11A.33
 Incest, and 'Adam and Eve', 27A.90
 effects of theories of, 27B.07
 Indexes, 26A.15
 application of, 26A.60
 Infantes, fictitious worlds of, 5A.10
 Infantilism, and colloids, 14B.00
 Inferential knowledge, 4A.76, 35A.32
 mechanism of, 15A.47
 of submicroscopic processes, 13A.11
 'pigeons and pearls', 15A.35
 three girls and matchboxes, 12A.88
 vs. overt behavior, 22B.00, 23B.42
 Infinite-valued orientation, 12A.63
 'Infinity', 2B.08
 'junior', — 'etc.', 2B.08
 'Inhibition', 19A.30, 21A.00
 'Insane' as human behavior at its worst, 1A.34
 automatism, 1A.23
 counterparts of ourselves, 20B.29
 Europe vs. U.S., 1A.24
 inflexibility of, 1A.23
 social, not individual, 21A.22
 theories of, 20B.59
 vs. criminality, 17B.03
 Insects and drugs, 2A.59
 experiments with, 2A.59
 Integration, cone of, 36A.15
 levels of. See Levels of integration.

- thalamo-cortical, fostered by
 extension, 2A.15
 Intension, 29A.48, 30A.15
 and over/under definition, 36A.19
 in Freud's work, 2A.46
 introduced by Aristotle, 8A.22
 Laputan mathematicians, 13A.65
 orientation by, 29A.48
 orientation by map, 24B.02
 Rajah and Queen Mary, 22B.08
 vs. extension — results, 34B.40
 Intercourse of animals, 33A.59
International Tension, The Psycho-
pathology of, letter by Kisker,
 1A.08
 Interpolation, and generalization,
 3B.74
 changed by new 'fact', 6B.48
 diagram, 3B.74
 mechanism of 'thinking', 6A.14
 vs. generalization, 6A.04
 problem of, 5A.10
 Rajah and Queen Mary, 22B.08
 Invariance, 23B.57
 'Is', auxiliary, 11A.21, 11A.67
 necessary to scholastic 'knowing',
 2B.44
 of existence, 11A.21, 11A.67
 of identity, 11A.63
 of identity — no slavish equival-
 ent, 8A.69
 of predication, 11A.42
 "Is's", discussion of, 11A.21
 four kinds, 11A.67
 in Science and Sanity, 11A.84
 'Isolation, absolute', 8A.01

 Jacobson, 36A.78, 37B.09
 Jeans, 1B.03
 Jehovah, 25A.52
 Jellife, 17B.53, 27B.78
 Jevons, 12B.53, 16B.04, 28A.87,
 29A.81
 Johnson, Samuel, 2B.22
 Jung, 1A.12

 Kaleidoscope, 35A.64
 Kasner, 7A.36, 23B.61
 Kazan, 18B.35
 Kelley, D.M., general semantics
 training of soldiers, 2B.54
 Kendig, 4A.70

 Keyser, 10A.03, 20B.18, 23A.39
 on 'man', 37A.00
 Kirchoff, 2A.29
 Kisker, George W., letter, 1A.56
 Knowing, mechanisms of interpolation,
 3B.75
 Knowledge, about knowledge, 30A.30,
 35B.04
 human, man-made, 9A.62
 Köhler, 25A.21
 Korzybski, and dogs, 22B.28
 and Einstein, 1B.18, 1B.24
 and 'insane counterpart', 9B.89,
 20B.29
 and poachers, 5A.08
 and razors, 28A.43
 and religion, 1B.14, 1B.32
 and shell in dugout, 31B.19
 and silver spurs, 28A.35
 and the bull, 5A.50
 and the lioness, 5A.74
 as a fencer, 17B.21
 background, 1B.12
 background -- experience with
 humans, 5A.92
 brain wave test of, 16A.21
 childhood training, 1B.22, 1B.33
 'electrocuted', 25A.05
 experience of life, 11A.09
 extensional training of, 30B.01
 family, 1B.14
 horse training, 1B.84
 identified twice, 4B.26
 lecturing for United States
 Government, 1B.91
 linguistic background, 1B.62
 military background, 1B.62
 military experiences, 20A.19
 on Woolworth Building, 5B.16
 origin of work, 5A.88
 scientific background, 6A.08
 sitting on broken chair, 26A.60
 studying non-Newtonian and
 non-Euclidian systems, 8A.43,
 9B.63
 supervisory training, 1B.38,
 5B.02
 'thinking' of, 24B.92
 war experiences, 31B.17

 Labeling, correct -- and time
 binding, 22A.78
 monkey and throwing gesture,

- 32A.79
 Language, affects attitudes, 5B.48
 and 'thinking', 24B.84
 as a fraud, 29A.45
 confusion of — Babel, 25A.53
 defects in, 24B.51
 elementalistic vs. non-elementalistic, 29A.20
 extensional vs. intensional, 34B.40
 hidden complexities in, 28B.61
 implications of, 5B.48
 international, 26B.39, 26B.83
 limitations of, 28A.88
 of relation, 25B.18
 self-reflexive, 25B.14
 structure of, changed by devices, 29A.23
 consequences, 5B.48, 8B.92
 consequences of change in, 12A.19
 similar to that of world, 29A.13
 vs. 'facts', 25A.00
 Languages, primitive, 26B.90
 Lavation, stomach, 17B.92
 'Lawyer and engineer', example, 2A.09
 Learning, blocked by criticism, 9A.02
 method of, 9A.02
 thalamic, 19A.57
 thalamo-cortical, 19B.52
 Leibniz, 24B.74
 Lenin, autopsy of, 4A.05, 16A.14
 Leopold and Loeb, 17B.04
 Levels, in Structural Differential, 35A.00
 of abstraction, 5A.10
 process vs. object, 11B.81, 13A.71
 silent vs. verbal in science, 24B.60
 similarity of structure of, 24B.01
 verbal vs. silent, 13A.25
 Levels of integration, 27B.47
 Lewin, topological psychology, 7A.29
 Lewis, C.I., 16B.03
 Lewis, N.D.C., autopsies, 4A.00
 'Libido', 2A.47
 Life, complexities of processes, 15B.44
 origin of, 14A.14
 potentialities of, 15B.41
 Light, travels in 'straight line', 3A.81
 velocity of, 3A.94, 3B.27
 Limitation, consciousness of, as orientation, 28A.85
 of human 'mind', 2A.38
 orientation by, 29B.62
 Limited, vs. unlimited, 9A.58
 Line, 'straight', 3A.81
 limit of increasing circle, 3A.61, 3B.09
 Lobachevski, 2A.76
 Loeb, 15B.08, 13B.92
 Logarithms, 33A.15
 'Logic', many-valued, 12A.50
 mathematical, conciseness, 2A.36
 'symbolic', 13A.36
 references, 16B.00
 'Logical destiny', 23A.38
 Lorentz, 2A.30
 Love, as a relation, 22B.71
 on silent level, 4A.50
 Lowe, 2A.34
 Make-up, change in shown by brain waves, 8A.82
 human — determines 'facts' encountered, 23A.38
 Maladjustment, from hate, 31A.33
 Man, definitions of, 7A.13, 29A.52
 'nature' of, 5B.25, 6A.18
 shown in books, 5A.44
 psycho-biological, 8A.57
 science of, 1A.68
 Management, 29B.15
 complexities of, 30B.55
Manhood of Humanity, 1A.18
 and homicidal paranoiac, 3A.17
 and psycho-logical mechanisms, 4B.30
 criticism by Williams, 1A.28
 Manic-depressive, as 'normal' make-up, 32B.03
 characteristics of, 32B.03
 electro-colloidal data on, 14B.30
 lecturing to, 1A.64
 Man-made, abstractions, 6B.31
 bridges and civilization, 5B.07
 human environment, 19B.43
 humans, 5B.44
 knowledge as human reaction, 9A.86
 mathematics, 2A.62
 number, science, mathematics,

- 22A.88
- numbers, 2B.08
- science, 1B.01
- wealth, 7A.08
- Mann, 5A.74
- Map, 'ideal', characteristics of, 25B.04
- Map-territory, 24A.41
 - disorganization of -- example, 34A.52
 - Einsteinian and Newtonian theories, 3B.26
 - hand and number system, 4B.60
 - non- Δ premises, 25A.67
- Marriage, maximum vs minimum expectation in, 34B.30
- Masserman, 34A.09
- Masturbation, dealing with, 8B.19
 - 'of salivary glands', 4A.67, 5A.33
- Mathematical 'logic', 2A.35
 - method, 2A.35
 - power of, 28A.09
 - 'sexology', 27B.80
- Mathematical Theory of Relativity, 13B.25
- Mathematics, a language, 8B.87
 - 'all' characteristics included, 26A.03
 - and 'facts' -- Weyl, 3B.53
 - and 'sex', 27B.80
 - applicability of, 12A.14
 - arithmetics, 7A.46
 - as a science, 22A.26
 - as human behavior, 2B.08
 - at its best, 1A.35, 4A.32
 - as shorthand, 13A.46
 - based on asymmetrical relation, 7B.21
 - behaves like human brain, 28A.24
 - complexities in, 10A.14
 - contradictions in, 2B.00
 - definitions vs. 'facts', 5B.92
 - easiest language, 12B.58
 - exponential function, 33A.23
 - foundation of, 2A.62, 22A.05
 - human reaction at its best, 4A.32
 - 'infinity', 2B.08
 - logarithms, 33A.15
 - man-made, 1B.01, 2A.62
 - number, 22A.01
 - origin of, 23A.75
 - permutation and combination, 12B.50
 - positional notation, 33A.39
 - predictability from, 7A.56
 - product of human nervous system, 3B.51
 - revolution in, 2A.35
 - simplest language, 2A.41
 - sources of mis-evaluations, 4A.77
 - tensor calculus, 3B.45
 - theory of groups, 30B.29
 - topology, 7A.32
 - valid for 'all' numbers, 2B.00
 - vector calculus, 6A.88, 11B.70
- Mathematics and the Imagination, 7A.38
- 'Matter', example of cane, 2B.35
 - introduced when space-time split, 12A.19
 - separate from 'space', 'time', 2B.24
 - 'solid', 13A.21
 - structure of, 13B.17
- Maxwell, 2A.24
- McPherson, Aimee, 8B.31
- Mechanisms, consciousness of, 4B.28
 - evaluative, generality of, 1A.23
 - similar in 'normal' and 'insane', 20B.24
 - second order, 30A.22
 - semantic, generality of, 1A.23
 - unconscious, 37B.31
 - example, 32A.71
- Medicine, complexity of, 2A.43, 3B.88, 8B.70
 - diagnosis, 3A.47
 - insects, experiments with, 2A.59
- Menninger, 1A.12
- Menopause, 30A.65
- Method, mathematical, 2A.35
 - power of, 28A.09
 - of tensor calculus in general semantics, 13A.56
 - scientific, in general semantics, 13B.64
 - prior to any science, 3A.10
 - simplicity of general semantics, 12A.47
- Meyer, 8A.52, 34A.29
- 'Mind', human -- and foundations of mathematics, 2A.62
 - 'limitations' of human, 2A.36
- Minkowski, 2A.33, 3B.41, 24B.33
 - space-time, 3B.58
- Mirror, nervous system, 1B.03
 - nervous system as, 6B.36

- Mohammed, 37B.13
 'Moral sense', in animals, 7A.19
 Multiordinality, 25B.44, 35B.48
 mechanisms of, 30A.22
 Multi-valued, words, 12A.63
 Mutation, 18B.00
 Mysticism, 12A.03
- Napier, 33A.15, 33A.44
 Natural order, 35A.57
 reversal of, 9A.27
Nature of the Physical World, The, 13B.30
 Nervous system, and mathematics, 28A.25
 canalization, 25B.52
 discussion of, 17A.07
 electro-colloidal, 16B.49
 human abstracting mechanism, 6B.34
 voluntary vs. involuntary, 36A.77
 Nervousness, about nervousness, 30A.61
 Neuro-semantic relaxation, 36A.38
 demonstration, 36A.59
 history of, 36A.38
 tone vs. tension, 37B.02
 Neurosis, Europe vs. U.S., 1A.24
 in cats, 34A.09
 in goats, 34A.71
 in rats, 34A.48
 Newton, 15A.94, 23A.24
 Newton theory, difference from Einstein, 3B.26
 Newtonian system, 2A.86
 Non-additive velocities, Einsteinian, 3A.96
 Non-additivity, 29B.65
 consequences of castration, 30A.06
 in drinking whiskey, 29B.64
 in human relations, 29B.86
 in management, 29B.15, 30B.76
 Non-allness, ~~non-A~~ premise, 25A.67
Non-A, 13A.41
 Non-elementalism, 30A.16
 Non-identity, 'is not', 4B.23, 6B.41
 finger pinch, 4A.39
 ~~non-A~~ premise, 25A.67
 Non-verbal experience, finger pinch, 4A.39
 'Normal', as schizophrenic-paranoiac, 32B.06
 Northrop, 37B.11
- Number, as 'class of classes', 7A.49, 22A.00
 as human behavior, 22A.75
 as labelling relation, 22A.50
 as tool, 24A.23
 definition, 23B.16
 discussion of 22A.18
 general semantics definition of, 24A.23
 irrational and imaginary, 23A.28
 origin of, 22A.08, 22B.66
 product of nervous system, 24A.00
 Numbers, man-made, 2B.09
 theory of, 29B.49
 different schools, 10A.19
- 'Obvious', difficulty of, 24B.75
 Ogden, 26B.71
 One-to-one correspondence, 24A.64
 Opinion, personal — worthless, 16A.42
 racial, as science, 16A.42
 'Optimism', vs. 'pessimism', 30B.20
 Order, basis of predictability, 24B.29
 in serial structure, 4B.60
 multi-dimensional, basis of relation, 24B.29
 natural, 35A.57
 reversal of, 9A.28
 non-elementalistic, 29A.24
 Ordering, disorganization of — example, 34A.54
 Orders, of 'facts', 30A.22
 Organization, 21B.67
 Organizations, structure of, 21A.32
 Orientation, by definition, 13A.35
 by extension, 29A.48
 by intension and definition, 29A.48
 by maps, 24B.01
 change in, consequences of, 19B.12, 23A.22
 consciousness of limitation, 28B.01
 electro-colloidal, 16B.76
 extensional, example of results, 26A.74
 vs. intensional, 34B.39
 infinite-valued, 12A.63
 intension vs. extension, 30A.16
 intensional — Laputan mathematicians, 13A.64
 Rajah and Queen Mary, 22B.08

- many- vs. two-valued, 17A.97
- 'normal', 32B.03
- old, canalization in, 25B.94
- process vs. object, 11B.78
- two-valued, discussion of, 11B.54
- Osteopathy, 23B.43
- Over/under defined, 36A.19
- Over-verbalization, consequences of, 12A.88
- Parallels, difference between
 - Euclidean, non-Euclidean, 3A.53
 - in Euclidean geometry, 2A.68
 - in non-Euclidean geometry, 2A.68
- Paranoia, characteristics of, 32B.07
- Paranoiad, assigned to read Manhood of Humanity, 3A.15
- Paranoiads, and Korzbyski, 2A.05
 - electro-colloidal data on, 14B.30
 - lecturing to, 1A.62
- Parents, call by first names, 2B.91
 - relations with children, 2B.91
- Patton, 24B.15
- Pavlov, 34A.29
- Peano, 2A.36, 26B.83
 - and foundations of mathematics, 2A.36
- Permutation and combination, 10A.19, 29B.20
 - and exponential function, 13A.89
 - discussion of, 12B.50
 - life complexities of, 10A.19
- 'Pessimism' vs. 'optimism', 30B.20
- 'Philosophers', 37A.50
- Philosophy of 'As if', The, 13A.14
- Physico-mathematical, orientations and time-binding, 4B.49
- Planck, 2A.31, 15A.67, 23A.23
 - quantum theory, 3B.13, 6B.49
- Plants, chemistry, energy-binders, 5B.21
- Plato, 'philosophy' of objectified 'ideas', 7B.75
- Poincaré, 24B.86
- Polakov, 7B.81
- 'Possession by devils', 17A.81
- Positional notation, 11B.12, 33A.28
- Postulate, 35B.08
- Predictability, and similarity of structure, 24A.64
 - basis of, 24B.58
 - factors of, 24B.01
- from mathematics-astronomy, 7A.57
- from similarity of structure, 4B.60, 6B.17
- importance, 4B.76, 24A.83, in medicine, 3A.40
- Korzbyski's, 4B.80
- Premises, automatic following of, 1A.21
 - changes in, consequences of, 3A.70, 3B.11, 5B.40
 - differences in, 17A.66
 - have electro-colloidal effects, 16A.69
 - non-A, 25A.67
 - power of mathematics and science, 3B.16
 - primitive, 17A.80
 - theorems from, 3B.16
- Premises -- consequences diagram and explanation, 9A.04
- Pressure, in molecules, 13A.74
- Prevention, through general semantics, 2B.64
- Primitives, 37A.72
 - and symbolism, 37A.43
- Prince, 11A.59
- Principia Mathematica, 24A.80
- Principles of Science, The, 12B.86
- Problems, self-made, 4B.05
 - solved when 'hopeless', 30B.23, 32B.39
- Process, 'either-or' inapplicable to, 11B.82, 13A.70
 - example of, 16A.79
 - 'step into same river', 13A.24
- Process level, 13B.17
 - complexities of, 15B.41, 28A.35, 29A.08
 - in Structural Differential, 35A.03
- Promiscuity, 33B.01
- Progressive relaxation, 36A.77
- Proton, 13B.20
- Psychiatry, post-Freudian, 2A.44
 - sources of mis-evaluations, 4B.06
- Psychoanalysts, training of -- psychoanalysis, 11A.01
- Psycho-galvanometer, 8A.93
 - Korzbyski and wife, 8A.93
- 'Psychology', 'lousy book on', 4B.34
 - post-Freudian, 2A.44
- Psychosis, electro-colloidal data on, 14B.30
- Psycho-somatic diseases, examples,

- 8A.31
 diseases in humans, 17B.38
 Psychotherapy, allocating symbolism, 6B.91
 and consciousness of mechanisms, 4A.29
 group therapy -- Burrow, 4B.47
 premises, changes in, 3A.70
 'schools', different, 4A.35
 supplemented by general semantics, 4B.37
 Psychotics, lecturing to mixed classes, 1A.63
 Punctuation, double, 28A.61, 28B.13
- Quantum theory, 3B.13
 in radiation, 6B.49
 Questions, unanswerable -- student and professor, 9B.52
 Quotes, 26A.18
 applications, 28B.26, 28B.69
 around elementalistic terms, 29A.37
- 'Race', white, 11B.07
 'Races', differences in autopsies, 3B.96
 Radiation, quanta vs. waves, 6B.49
 Radioactivity and 'mental' energy, 18A.59
 Rainich, 12A.19, 28B.33
 Rationalization, 1B.00
 Rats, neurotic, 34A.47
 Reaction, conditional, 19B.60
 delayed, 20A.82. See also Delayed reaction.
 psycho-logical, on silent level, 4A.50
 unconditional, in cats, 34A.09
 in dogs, 34A.30
 in rats, 34A.47
 pikes and minnows, 19A.64
 Reactions, human, and knowledge, 9A.61
 internal, as experience, 6A.11
 signal, 4B.43
 unconscious, 37B.31
 Reading, method, 3A.42
 sources of difficulties in, 12A.74
 'Reality', multiordinal, 35B.71
 Relation, 'absolute' in tensor calculus, 3B.46, 6B.08
 and mathematical method, 2A.41
 asymmetrical, 7A.95, 23B.30
 and mathematics, 7B.20
 and theory of values, 7B.20
 based on multi-dimensional order, 24B.30
 human relations as, 23B.66
 in tensor calculus, 3B.45, 7A.83
 intransitive, 7B.04, 23B.71
 kinds of, logical, 7A.85
 language of, 25B.27
 number as, 24A.22
 symmetrical, 7A.85, 23B.30
 and subject-predicate, 7B.30
 inadequate, 24A.72
 transitive, 7A.88
 Relaxation, neuro-semantic. See Neuro-semantic relaxation.
 progressive. See Progressive relaxation.
 Religion, atheism, agnosticism, 5A.43
 freedom from, 5A.43
 Re-orientation, children vs. adults, 2B.48
 Repetition, in lecturing, 1A.72, 5A.10
Restless Universe, The, 13B.49
 Reversal of natural order, 9A.28
 Revision of old doctrines, 2A.22
 Revolution, Freud's work, 2A.44
 in biology, 2A.43, 2A.59
 in mathematics, 2A.35
 in medicine, 2A.43, 2A.59
 scientific -- steps in, 2A.22
 Richards, 4A.70, 11A.24
 Richter, 8B.10
 Rorschach test, 8A.88
 Rosett, Joshua, 16B.21
 Royce, 21B.76, 25B.03
 Rulers, human, 20B.00
 Russell, 2A.36, 9B.33, 21B.75, 22A.07, 24A.80, 25A.80, 34B.71, 37A.87
 and foundations of mathematics, 2A.62
 anecdote -- 'little baby', 3A.56
 definition of number, 7A.49
 theory of types, 2B.00
 Rutherford, 2A.31
- St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1A.30
 autopsies at, 3B.96

- Sanity, matter of degree, 1A.45
- Schizophrenia, characteristics of, 32B.08
- Schizophrenic reactions, in standard training, 2B.46
- Schizophrenics, electro-colloidal data on, 14B.26
- Schlick, 17B.31
- Schrödinger, 6B.61, 15A.77, 21B.76
- Science, as racial opinion, 16A.42
 - man-made, 1B.01
 - revolution in -- steps, 2A.22
 - silent and verbal levels in, 24B.61
- Science and Sanity, aid to psychotherapy, 5B.38
- Science of Administration, 31A.06
- Scientific method, in general
 - semantics, 18B.65
 - prior to any science, 3A.09
- Scientific results, simplicity of, 12A.45
 - vs. complexity of work, 12A.45
- Second order mechanisms, 30A.22, 32A.16
 - and manic-depressive fluctuations, 32B.17
 - fear of fear, 31A.76
 - in 'sex', 33A.61
- Selfishness, Korzybski and banker's son, 30B.11
- Self-reflexiveness, 25A.76, 33A.08
 - and circularity of knowledge, 35B.07
 - non-A premise, 25A.69
- Semantic aphasia, 5A.15, 5A.30
 - dementia, 5A.30
- Seminars, as psychiatric testing grounds, 10A.34
 - benefit of groups, 4B.37
 - organization of, 9B.05
 - 'Roosevelt has no values', 8B.48
 - to couples, 4B.37
 - to psychotics, 1A.63, 10A.34
- Semitic languages, and positional notation, 11B.31
- Senate, United States, filibuster, 5A.31
- Senile decay, 14B.10, 27B.71
- 'Senses', unreliability, 4A.77, 18A.03
- Serial structure, hand and number system, 4B.60, 6B.17
- 'Sex', 32A.21, 32B.73, 33A.59
 - at different ages, 32A.21
 - complexities, 8B.11
 - examples, 33A.59
 - experiments on dogs, 34A.41
 - Freudian, 2A.46
 - in animals, 33A.59
 - 'mathematical sexology', 27B.78
 - '9/10 and 1/10', 8B.24
 - rats in electrified cage, 8B.11
 - second order in humans, 32A.65, 33A.61
- Shapley, and finger pinch, 4A.41
- Shaw, 35A.64
- Silent level, finger pinch, 4A.39
 - identified with words, 4B.03
 - vs. verbal, 13A.24
 - vs. verbal definition, 15A.96
- Silent levels, 7A.78
 - diagram, 4A.69, 4B.49, 6A.29
 - in creative 'thinking', 24B.82
- Similarities, vs. differences, 26B.20
- Similarity of structure, in language
 - of relation, 25B.34
 - map-territory, 24A.42
- Simplicity, of scientific results, 12A.45
 - verbal, vs. factual complexity, 1A.50, 1A.73
 - vs. complexity, 17B.32
 - vs. difficulty of applying, 2A.18
- 'Simultaneity', 2A.94
- Smell, 'sense' of, 19A.01
- Socrates, 7B.61
- Soddy, 2A.31
- Sommerfeld, 1B.07, 2A.34
- 'Space', absolute -- and 'simultaneity', 2A.95
 - in Minkowski's treatment, 3B.58
 - separate from 'time', 'matter', 2B.24
- Space-binder, animals, 5B.22
- Space-time, Minkowski's treatment, 3B.58
 - split by Rainich, 12A.18
- Space-time curvature, 3B.39
- Space-time-matter, in Einstein's theory, 5B.81
 - inseparable -- example of cane, 2B.35
 - vs. 'space', 'time' and 'matter', 26A.40
- 'Span of Control' diagram, 30B.55
- Specialization, 29B.47
- Spiral theory, in human reactions,

- 13B.09
 Stalin, 4A.17, 21A.60, 23A.04, 24B.42
 Structural Differential, 4B.12
 explanation, 9A.27, 35A.00
 origin of, 34B.56
 patent application for, 26A.65
 reversal of, 9A.28
 Structure, basis of, 24B.09
 in verbalizing, 4B.60
 of language -- consequences, 12A.19
 serial hand and number system, 4B.60, 6B.17
 serial, hand as, 24A.07
 significance of, 24A.05
 verbal vs. factual, 29A.14
 Structure -- similarity of, 24A.63, 25B.36
 between levels, 24A.05
 gives predictability, 4B.60
 Study in hospitals, admonition to students, 20B.42
 Stuttering and handedness, 35B.28
 Subject-predicate, 11A.42
 and symmetrical relation, 7B.31
 codified by Aristotle, 8A.17
 inadequacy of, 7B.31
 rose is red, 11A.42
 Sun, not 'hot', 28B.07
 Sunday, Billy, 8B.30
 Sun-spots, 27B.35
Survey of Symbolic Logic, A, 16B.02
 Survival, 16B.13
 adaptation for, 19B.15
 Swift, 13A.64
 Sylvester, 18B.05
 Symbol, must represent something, 6B.74
 vs. noise, 6B.74
Symbolic Logic, 16B.03
 Symbolism, consequences of, 13A.46
 morte a tutti tua, 22B.36
 'right' vs. 'left', 23A.60
 Rajah and Queen Mary, 22B.07
 theory of, and 'primitives', 37A.43
 System of knowledge, value of, 21B.77
 Telepathy, 18A.24
 Tensor calculus, 6B.08, 6B.28, 7A.75, 25B.29
 and Einstein's theory, 3B.43
 general semantics applies method of, 13A.56
 Terminology, consequences of, 12A.18
 importance of, 28B.35
 translation of, 34B.50
 Terms, elementalistic -- use quotes, 29A.36
 multiordinality of, 35B.48
 over/under defined, 36A.19
 Thalamic learning, 19A.59
 Thalamo-cortical, blackboards as training aids, 2B.58
 Thalamo-cortical integration, 2A.15, 5A.17, 19B.88
 and visualizing, 4A.60
 fostered by extension, 2A.15
 through dynamogenic effect, 20B.04
 Thalamus, 17A.34, 18B.95, 20B.04
 and process orientation, 11B.96
 evolution of, 19A.57
 Theorems, empirical verification of, 3B.16
 from premises, 3B.16
 Theories, consequences of change in, 5B.40
 effects of, 27B.17
 have electro-colloidal effects, 16A.68
 of 'insane', 20B.58
 'Thinking', about 'thinking', 30A.27
 and language, 24B.85
 creative -- visual, 24B.85
 in animals, 5A.96
 neurologically about selves, 20A.67
 on silent level, 4A.50
 Thomson, J. J., 2A.29
 'Thought', energy of, 18A.58
 'Time', absolute -- and simultaneity, 2A.95
 as a dimension, 3B.58
 in Minkowski's treatment, 3B.58
 separate from 'space', 'matter', 2B.24
 Time-binding, 19B.13, 21A.14
 and communication, 6B.44
 and human knowledge, 9B.16
 and labeling, 22A.88
 definition of man, 7A.20
 depends on work of dead, 20B.02
 dictatorship against, 21A.58
 in humans, 5B.25
 mechanisms of, 5B.25

'nature' of man, 6A.18
 origin of, 5A.89
 through books, 5A.45
 Topology, 7A.30, 23B.64
 Training, in extension, 29A.67
 relapses in general semantics
 students, 3A.00
 Training methods -- three girls and
 matchboxes, 12A.89
 Translation of linguistic structures
 -- consequences, 12A.18
 Tropism, 15A.08
 'True', 36A.29
 'Truth', 36A.29
 Two-valued orientation -- discussion
 of, 11B.54
 'touch or not touch', 11B.82,
 13A.70
 Types, theory of, 2B.00, 25A.82

 Ulcers, stomach and identifying,
 4B.03
 Unconditional reaction. *See* Reaction,
 unconditional.
 Unconscious mechanisms, 37B.31
 example, 32A.73
 Undefined terms, 35B.15
 'Understanding', vs. application,
 1A.51, 1A.74
 'Unknowable', 7A.80
 Unlimited vs. limited, 9A.57
 Urwick, 29B.15, 30B.55

 Vaihinger, 13A.13
 Values, theory of -- based on
 asymmetrical relation, 7B.28
 Vascular system, 18B.11
 Vector calculus, 6A.88, 11B.71
 Velocity, in Einstein theory, 3A.94
 'infinite', 3A.94, 3B.26
 of light, 3B.00
 Verbal level, structure -- human
 importance, 4B.47
 Verbal simplicity vs. factual
 complexity, 1A.51, 1A.74
 Verbalism, vs. 'facts', 27B.00
 vs. silent level, 13A.24
 Verbosity, consequences of -- example,
 12A.89
 Vertical-horizontal, 21A.33, 21B.51,
 29B.17
 Viruses, as origin of life, 14A.22

Visualization, and eye as part of
 brain, 16B.66
 in creative 'thinking', 24B.88
 Vitalism, 15B.09

 Watson, 34B.59
 Wave mechanics, 6B.50, 13B.27
 Wealth, 21A.23
 vs. goods -- bee's honey, 7A.10
 Weierstrass, 4A.26
 Weyl, Hermann, "Mathematical Way of
 Thinking", 3B.53
 White, William A., 1A.29, 17B.06,
 35B.74
 Whitehead, 2A.36, 9B.34, 21B.76,
 24A.80, 25A.83, 34B.71,
 37A.87
 and foundations of mathematics,
 2A.62
 'Why', limited vs. unlimited, 9B.85
 unlimited, 3B.36
 Williams, Dr., 1A.27
 Williams, Professor, 8A.94
 Wilson, E. B., 27B.90
 Wisdom, isolated -- unworkable,
 21B.72
 Wittgenstein, 37A.78
 'Word salad', 5A.14
 Words, identified with silent levels,
 4B.03
 multiordinality of, 35B.48

Zamenhof, 26B.83
 Zeeman, 2A.30
 Zhdanov, arteriosclerosis of the
 brain, 4A.10

BIOGRAPHY

Jeff Mordkowitz discovered general semantics in 1977, while studying computer science at S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook (B.S. 1978, Phi Beta Kappa). He attended his first Summer Seminar-Workshop in 1979, and ever since there has been a constructive mutual impact between him and the discipline; he recently joined the Board of Trustees. He works as systems manager for the Department of

Rheumatic Diseases at the Hospital for Joint Diseases, New York City. In 1984, as reported in GSB No. 51, p. 131, he married Martha Santer, and they live in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Some of Jeff's other contributions to general semantics are noted in the Editorial Welcome and in News from the Institute in this issue.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

November 26, 1985

Dear Sir,

I have read Selections from Science and Sanity by A. Korzybski and of course the chapter "On Infantilism in Adults" where the author suggests that "If we want to grow out of the present infantilism, experimentation on humans should be encouraged... Criminals who are condemned to death should be given to science for experimenting. They would not suffer. ... and with as great benefit to knowledge as possible." (pp 255-256). I would like to know how this proposition was received in 1941 and the position of the Institute of General Semantics today.

Besides, I have read "Le rôle du langage dans les processus perceptuels" and begun "La sémantique générale aujourd'hui" by M. Saucet. I am 29 and practice is difficult for me, but I am willing to!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Jean-Pierre Faugeras
10, cité Joly, 75011 Paris, France

[Excerpt from reply]

I have not heard this particular question discussed in any of the numerous general-semantics meetings over the years, and don't think that the Institute has any position on it. But we will publish your letter in the forthcoming General Semantics Bulletin No. 52, and see what individual responses we get from our readers.

I notice that Korzybski did insist: "Let me repeat that modern science can conduct its experiments without suffering to the individual, in spite of the fact that some of these experiments would be dangerous and might easily end in the painless death of the subject. The killing off of criminals (sick individuals) as a 'revenge' or 'punishment' or 'justice' is really too antiquated and too barbaric and wasteful for an enlightened society. ... at least, let us do it without such brutalizing morbidity, and with as great benefit to knowledge as possible."

I myself object to the death penalty because it makes it impossible to correct any mistakes, and I think that many criminals condemned to life imprisonment might be willing to volunteer as experimental subjects to earn the chance of early parole; they should, however, be given the choice. But let's see what our readers think! -- Ed.

Article originally appeared in the *General Semantics Bulletin No. 52*, published by the Institute of General Semantics.

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