



SCIENCE-UPDATE:
NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY
by Jeff Mordkowitz

In the 1950's the advent of neuropsychopharmacology ushered in a new era for psychiatry. The development of drugs for the relatively specific treatment of mania, depression, and psychoses without altering consciousness revolutionized the treatment of patients and transformed the custodial, 'mental' hospitals of Korzybski's days into treatment centers where patients had a good chance of improving and returning home to their communities. Given the profound influence that pre-1950 psychiatry had upon Korzybski and his formulations (he often advised his students to study in 'mental' hospitals) these changes need to be evaluated and general semantics brought up to date.

One such evaluation appeared in the introduction to a major work organized by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology: "...the advent of psychotropic drugs represented a major blow to Cartesian mind-brain dualism. That drugs could influence mood, thought, and perception without altering consciousness was revolutionary. ...To the extent that they influence...they do so by altering chemical events in the brain. The mind, then, is now generally accepted as a behavioral manifestation of anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the living brain." While this evaluation is not the last word, it does provide strong evidence for the continuing validity of Korzybski's most important generalization.

1. Lipton, M.A. et. al. Introduction to Psychopharmacology: A Generation of Progress. NY: Raven Press, 1978, p. xxvi.

2. Korzybski, A. Casette recordings, 1948-49 Intensive Seminar. Institute of General Semantics, tape 20B, 42.

3. Lipton, M.A. op. cit., p. xxiv.

PAULSON--PULA SHARE SPOTLIGHT
AT BARBIZON PLAZA

The annual Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture was followed on November 10 by a Conference on Writing General Semantics. This conference, held at the Barbizon-Plaza, had as its featured speaker Dr. Ross Evans Paulson, Professor of History at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

Dr. Paulson, holder of the Frederick Jackson Turner award, chose as his topic: Language, Logic and Behavior in Intellectual History - Some Methodological Considerations. Dr. Paulson discussed issues and problems related to his work as a historian in evaluating general semantics. Following his presentation, Dr. Paulson fielded a wide variety of questions from members of the audience, many of whom chose specific points to challenge and to seek further clarification. Dr. Paulson demonstrated his mastery of his topic in his handling of the discussion period.

The afternoon session was led by Robert Pula, Director of the Institute. Titled "The Challenge of Popularization: Opportunities and Pitfalls," Mr. Pula outlined for the audience the problems presented by various writers who have attempted to make general semantics easily accessible to the general public. Of special concern is the loss of rigor that results when popularizations focus on the "easy" parts of general semantics without the underpinnings of the structure that is their source.

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NOTICE? WITH FINANCES
STILL A TENUOUS MATTER,
YOUR SUPPORT IS
ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT
THIS YEAR.

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