

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

A tribute to Alfred Korzybski

THOMAS M. WEISS*

In 1915 Alfred Korzybski, polish Count, mathematician, and engineer, came to the United States. War clouds hung over Europe, and Korzybski was revolted by wars, forced military conscription, and man's general inhumanity to man. As a consequence of his concern for the future of Mankind and his deep and abiding faith in the sane methods of science and engineering, he published a theoretical model explaining how he believed man could move from infancy to manhood. Korzybski had long studied and reflected on how men in general behaved and how differently scientists and engineers behaved. Korzybski speculated that if man who had a unique capacity to symbolize, dissimilar to any other class of life, utilized this capacity he could rise above the levels of animal behavior. His initial formulations, his speculations, and his general theory took shape and were published in 1921 as a book entitled *Manhood of Humanity*.

Essentially, the book suggested that engineering, science, and mathematics better fitted life facts, and that therefore, predictions could be made from them. If *all* men utilized the method *and the ethics* of science, man could

* Editor of *ETC*.

rise to greater heights. By redefinition, by operating on different assumptions about man, Korzybski foresaw a time when mankind would pass from the brute level, the infantile level, and the adolescent level to full manhood. As M. Kendig has said, ". . . he verbalized the obvious in his functional definition of man as a *time-binding class of life*. Not what man *is*, what men *do*, as an exponential function of time." Thus, fifty years ago the basic formulations of General Semantics (human engineering) were developed and published.

Korzybski, even then, had his admirers and his detractors. The proof of the value of the Count's work is to be seen in what happened since. His formulations have stood the test of time. They have been bought in the market place of free ideas. An International Society, whose membership numbers in the thousands, exists as a living memorial to him. Included among society members are leaders in almost every field of human endeavor — bankers, lawyers, industrialists, doctors, government officials, and *educators*. Scores of prominent universities teach one or more courses based on Korzybski's original work. An Institute grew up around him — and still exists — to which are attracted luminaries in many fields. Both the Institute and the International Society for General Semantics continue to publish books and periodicals related to *human engineering*, as he defined it.

Twelve years after *Manhood*, Korzybski published a far more comprehensive book entitled *Science and Sanity*. Between 1921 and 1933 this Polish emigrant was corresponding with thousands of the foremost thinkers of the time. In addition, he conducted intensive seminars for scholars and for others. It is self-evident that he made a profound impact, for many of his students would be unknown today had they not utilized and promulgated his basic hypothesis.

The intensive study of human interaction from communication theory to "sensitivity training," in very large measure, rests squarely upon principles enunciated fifty years ago. To the best of this writer's knowledge, Korzybski was the first to articulate clearly what man does when he abstracts and how important nonverbal communication appears to be when man interacts with himself and his surrounds.

One need only review writings between 1921 and 1971 by great thinkers in diverse branches of inquiry who refer to Korzybski's work to understand why the theme of this issue is "Time-Binding 1921-1971." After all, that is where it all started.

The following correspondence from Mrs. Allen Walker Read, trustee of the Korzybski estate, introduces ETC. readers to a letter written by Korzybski and previously unpublished.

DEAR TOM: When you asked me about some early writings of Korzybski that would be appropriate for this time-binding issue, I thought there might be some letters of special interest. This one to William Benjamin Smith seemed to me quite illustrative of his feelings and points of view at the time *Manhood* was published. It also brings out some aspects of the book not stressed much, such as dimensionality. Some readers of *ETC.*, if they are not put off by the unfamiliar style, may also find it of interest in this rough, informal form, typed by him in his not-perfected English of that date. Robert Pula has kindly done some very minimal editing, carefully indicated. I request that no further editing be done, as I believe we should let this 1921 expression of Korzybski remain "as is." As Bob Pula wrote me,

"On rereading, much that had seemed a little strange at first now strikes me as suggestive, brilliant and occasionally prophetic. For anyone familiar with the full range of Korzybski's writing, no explanations would seem needed. But as you know. . . ." Perhaps *ETC.* readers will be charitable, as Korzybski asks of Smith. You are welcome to use all or parts of it as you wish.

William Benjamin Smith (1850-1934) was a very interesting, highly respected scholar. He was born and went to college in Kentucky, then received his Ph. D. *summa cum laude* at the University of Goettingen. He taught physics and mathematics at the University of Missouri, and later was Professor of Mathematics and of Philosophy at Tulane University. He had a hard time starting out in his teaching career after he exposed some creeds and dogmas of the Christian Church. He was a warm friend of Cassius Keyser. For biographical and bibliographical information about Professor Smith, see *The University of Missouri Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 3, January 20, 1936, Columbia, Missouri.

There is a good deal of correspondence in Korzybski's files between Keyser and Korzybski, and Smith and Korzybski *about* this letter and what Smith wrote, but the manuscript of the review which Korzybski is responding to has not turned up so far. It seems quite certain that it was not published. A detailed scholarly bibliography of Smith's writings, book reviews and unpublished manuscripts does not include it. Smith wrote that he did not send it anywhere for publication. Nevertheless, I believe the following letter has value by itself.

— *Charlotte Read*
New York City



LETTER FROM ALFRED KORZYBSKI TO WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH

Edited by ROBERT PULA and CHARLOTTE READ*

December 18, 1921
Professor Doctor William B. Smith
7004 St. Charles Av.
New Orleans, La.

My dear Doctor Smith:

I have to apologize for so long a delay in writing this letter. To be frank, I wrote a long letter a month ago but did not send it; it was not a satisfactory letter, and I did not want to bother you with such bad letters.

I was very glad to have your invitation to be frank about your review. In one place in your letter you write that the "Materialists and the Naturalists somewhat irritate" you; well, your review in several instances impressed me as being irritated.

I will have to go around the problem before I strike the kernel. My language also will be far from being correct. In many instances I will try to give you the feeling only of what I want to say; please be charitable to this form.

I repeatedly and in many places said in my book that this book is only a suggestive sketch, and deliberately asked the reader to be lenient to the form. In the appendix

* New York, New York.

I went even further and said that although the form is far from satisfactory, I thought that it is better to give to the world in an imperfect way than maybe delay for many years the publishing of this suggestive sketch. I also said that it is out of the question for a SINGLE man to work it out. I thought that such precautions would be understood by the public. In several instances you say that some passages are not elaborated enough or that not enough proofs are given. I simply could not do it in this first book, although I admit and admitted it all the time that this sketch is by far not complete and perfect.

The title of the book is *Manhood of Humanity* THE SCIENCE AND ART OF HUMAN ENGINEERING. Once the book is an engineering book it means it is a book which uses science for practical constructive purposes, and this very fact gives me much more freedom of action than a scientific treatise. As long as my method works it is all right.

You made a very definite and in the way it stands destructive attack on my use of *dimensions*. The term dimension is used NOT ONLY in geometry but it is also used in physics and in the theory of the continuum. If I would use it in the strictly geometrical sense, well, your attack would be maybe justified, but I use it in a much wider sense which is even indicated in the footnote on page 63 where I speak about the continuum. I consider that this footnote alone is enough to warn the reader that my use of the word dimension is *not* only geometrical.

You say also that some other beings have in a degree the time-binding capacity. I am not able to agree with this USE OF WORDS; the *facts*, whatever they are, remain, BUT the expression in such form would not be correct. If in a problem, let us say, a train made 150 miles in 3 hours and the question is what is the velocity of the train. If I call my unknown velocity X, it would not be correct for some-

one IN THIS problem to call the velocity, let us say, of the electric fan in the smoker by an X. Time-binding as I have defined it is this peculiar HUMAN CAPACITY, and therefore it cannot be applied to something else.

Generally speaking, I think that several points in my book need to be clarified, not to be misunderstood by the reader.

In many instances I used words without definitions because the definition of some words is a rather large proposition and in this first volume I did not want to be too CLEAR or too specific. You point out, and justly, that the biological concept as such is not old and that the biological concept did less harm than the mythological ones. I agree with [your comment] in this form. But I intermixed the word biological with zoological which at once ADDS to the antiquity; and also I spoke a lot of MIXING the dimensions and classes, which covers BOTH. [If I had followed] my heart's desire, I would have put at once the whole stress on the mythological concept, but friends did not advise me to do so. I obeyed and DID WELL.

As a matter of fact, man bifurcated himself from the beginning in an animal body and a soul, and he carried this bifurcation in his life. I have put so much stress upon Space-binding and Time-binding because I wish to establish firmly the LOGICAL fact that if there is such a thing which we call ANIMAL, man is NOT an animal BUT A CLASS BY ITSELF. The logical consequences are so far reaching that it will take me several volumes to go through with it. Today I am able to *prove* that through this bifurcation we have established ALL our standards on [an] ANIMAL base, not on [a] HUMAN base, and therefore it becomes obvious why we have collapses all the time. I have only given a glimpse of it in my first volume, namely, when I reverse the base of Spencerian ethics. This can go in every field of human activity. This bifurcation at

once *since man began* established a class of parasites (the priests), dealers of souls, dealers in gods, dealers in goods which they could not deliver; they were the forerunners of all privileged classes and at once the natural beginnings of all class distinctions, capitalism, etc. Today, also, they all stick together. **TO PROVE ALL THIS** is a giant task, a very bitter and dangerous task. . . .

Latest discoveries in physics and mathematics and particularly the Einstein theory have given a deadly blow to the old "materialism" and many other philosophies. I may accept your statement that all are **SYMBOLS**, but if so we must agree that if I speak in symbols, everybody else is speaking in symbols also. . . . As an Engineer I am **NOT AT ALL** interested in how philosophies look **IN BOOKS** in libraries or in the head of one scientist. I **AM INTERESTED HOW** those philosophies look in life and how they influence life. This is essentially my attitude; I suppose I would have [done] better to have said this plainly in the preface of my book. All human activities have at their bases **SOME** doctrine, no matter how wrong or stupid. The 'lowest' . . . worker is **ALWAYS** hired for his **HUMAN BRAIN**; otherwise, we would hire monkeys: their hands are stronger and have more speed. It is obvious that **MAN** as such may be also defined as a logical class of life or a philosophical class of life, and therefore it is of all importance what man **THINKS HE IS**. I have to refer you here to the *Principles of Science* by Jevons, to his chapter on combinations and permutations. If, let us say, an animal has 7 characteristics, the number of possible logical combinations (permutations) is 5040; if there are 8 characteristics, one **MORE**, the number of logical combinations at once jumps to more than 40,000. So the **WAY** we manipulate this one additional characteristic is of **GREAT IMPORTANCE**, and it is a **CRIME OF LOGIC** to take man as an algebraic sum of an animal body and a

soul. The only correct way is to treat him as [in] a class by [himself], natural but higher in dimensionality. Then our "logic" will be without flaws, and the problems will be easy to handle and obvious.

This method of treating man has many advantages over the old ones. First, it eliminates the terrible danger and logical difficulties in handling human affairs. It makes many, many things about which many best men dreamed obvious and A NATURAL ISSUE. It abolishes capitalism and religious prejudices and establishes . . . what we call the "brotherhood of man," etc., etc., on a base which leaves practically no arguments. . . . We had one answer and hope: "Education"; but this is a slow, very slow, process. Wrong education, in the meantime, does more harm than good. Life in the meantime does not wait; the barriers burst all the time. Time-binding has this practical value, that it is understandable to all NO MATTER of how low mentality. I had experience with children and uneducated workers; they grasped the whole thing like a shot.

Supernatural ethics are not *tangible*; time-binding IS IN A WAY TANGIBLE. We all know what a year or a century is, or THINK we know, which in this case is good enough. At once our obligations to the past are recorded and our obligations toward the future: this is the beginning of CIVIC MORALITY.

Until now we tried to solve the problem of MAN in terms of capital and labor. Can the problems of man be solved in SUCH TERMS? No. Why not? Because there is an inherent vicious circle in it. Who made this typewriter? Labor will say, "We did." Capital will say, "No. If we would have not bought the factories and machines and hired you, you would not have made it." The engineer comes and says that without him they would not have done it, etc., etc., etc. We escape this INHERENT VICIOUS circle by speculation, playing upon words (legal-

ism) and by FORCE. Now I am able to make a very simple, childish statement: **THE AFFAIRS OF MAN CAN BE SOLVED ONLY AND EXCLUSIVELY IN TERMS OF MAN.** What is man? A time-binder; therefore, the affairs of man can be solved in terms of TIME, . . . If we put what I call the "dead screen" behind the last generation, we can at once and for good solve human problems.

Until now the privileged classes had a permanent EXCUSE: "We made culture, we made civilisation and, therefore, **WE ARE ENTITLED** to it." (On the assumption that they had more "soul" and that the others were more "animal.") The laborers fought desperately, but they could NOT disprove this statement of the capitalists (I use this word in the broadest sense, historically).

How about the base of time? At once, the whole thing becomes childishly obvious. They produced civilisation because they had *LEISURE TIME*. So on the base the slaves gave them **THEIR LIFE TIME**. So on the base of time at once it becomes obvious that **NO** man can take the credit and therefore the benefit of the production of civilisation because **ALL** we possess is the accumulated work of *all* men, and therefore we all are equally entitled to it. Will political and economical science do this theoretical revolution by themselves? No. They won't dare and maybe they won't care. The plain people have to have such a philosophy of life which, first, will be simple, not sophisticated, requiring common sense to grasp it, and **THEY** will bring about the changes. Time-binding knocks out the last theoretical strongholds of capitalism; it also will bring **SANISATION** to socialism which, equally as capitalism, was built upon animal standards. The attitude of the great masses of people is equally hostile toward capitalism as toward socialism. If a theory can be produced which would clarify those problems in the mind of

the masses in such a form that they can see light **BY THEMSELVES** by using sound **NATURAL** mathematical logic, the changes will be swift and *painless*. In Europe capitalism is dead; the workers on three days notice, through a general strike, can overthrow any order. Are they ready? **NO**. Existing **NEW** social theories are not appealing to the masses and the intelligentsia is also shy; they don't see their way clear. I hope to clear this problem in a purely logical way and therefore help the inevitable. When a baby is to be born, this cannot *be avoided*; a surgeon helps the issue.

The socialists persist [in] their pet expression, "the dictatorship of the proletarians." Until now there was no possible way to induce them to drop this so dangerous expression to themselves.

A little logical analysis with the correct use of words at once clarifies the situation. Let's suppose that the average 9/10 of mankind hear a speaker urging "the dictatorship of the proletarians." He does not know well what proletarian means. He goes home and looks in a small dictionary or asks somebody who [has] one. There he finds that the proletarian is the lowest class in a community. What community are we? **HUMANS**. What are **HUMANS**? Time-binders and therefore producers and creators. Who is the lowest in the community of producers and creators? Obviously, the **NON** producer and the **NON** creator. Obviously, being ruled by bankers, lawyers and politicians, non-producers and non-creators, **WE ARE ACTUALLY UNDER THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE LOWEST IN A COMMUNITY OF PRODUCERS AND CREATORS**. This may be the dictatorship of the highest among monkeys, but the lowest among **MEN**. Many socialists have already taken a dislike for this expression when they were told my little joke, which, by the way, I will insert in my next book.

In one place you connect the difference in dimensionality with special creation. How you do it, I fail to see. Let me illustrate this by an example. Loeb, through chemical treatment of the eggs of a frog, produced healthy frogs. Now you will probably agree that the eggs, the chemicals and the frogs are different classes of things, of different dimensions. Is therefore Loeb a "special creator?" To be frank, this passage and the one wherein you say that there is no dimensional difference between man and animal, kills my whole work, irrespective of all the compliments.

I avoided to speak in my first book about the continuity or DISCONTINUITY of the universe. I did so because this problem is very serious and cannot be solved so easily. There is a growing feeling in modern science toward the discontinuity of nature, or rather, if I may say so, (which is not satisfactory) a discontinuous continuity. Well, this requires further analysis and coordination with facts. What would happen to a continuum if we would take an *infinity of dimensions* and interplay infinities of different *orders*? I do not say that I am following the spirit of mathematics because I occasionally use a formula or use the word "dimension"; this would not be the spirit of mathematics. To use YOUR LANGUAGE, I take SYMBOLS (words in this case) and do FORMAL thinking, DO NOT mix my symbols, and am not *afraid* to use those symbols, and am CONSISTENT in my symbols. This is what we DID *not* do until now. We used words in an absolute way. We were afraid of using them; because of it we always irritated somebody who took words in an absolute way. We did not do formal thinking and we were very sadly inconsistent, and all the time MIXED our classes, types and dimensions. I may add that in my views on matter, space and time I am entirely modern, acquainted with Minkowski and Einstein and very sympathetic to them. We are told that space and time are categories of thought.

I am not really convinced BUT in my formal thinking it does not matter, let us accept that space and time are categories of thought. *I USE THEM AS SUCH. UNTIL NOW WE DID NOT DO SO.* The natural classes overlap. *SPACE AND TIME FORM ONE MANIFOLD ALSO.* As categories of thought they are distinct and I use them as such. The inconsistency in the use of symbols may be roughly shown this way (it is again not satisfactory):

BY DEFINITION, energy is a function of matter, space and time. We formulated the universe, man EXCLUDED, in terms of matter, space and time. Obviously, we are short all the time on one equation because we ELIMINATED man. We formulated man in terms of souls or spirits and therefore in terms of energy. Here is where we put ourselves in scientific troubles. When we become consistent in our USE OF SYMBOLS and therefore become MATHEMATICAL, a great many difficulties vanish at once. "Materialists" as well as "spiritualists" are equally *legitimate provided* that BOTH ARE CONSISTENT. As a matter of fact, BOTH WERE INCONSISTENT. The materialists SHOULD HAVE formulated man in the same terms as the universe; the spiritualists should have rewritten the existing sciences in terms of energy and not in terms of matter, space and time. Do I have any preference [for] any of these methods? NONE WHATEVER. I selected the m,s,t, system because it is more economical, the existing sciences being written in these terms. The philosophers did not realize that m,s,t, are so closely united that they cannot really be divided in nature. If man cannot be covered in terms of m alone or s alone, he can be covered in his special functions with the emphasis on t. That's what I did. I refuse to be placed in the category of materialists or spiritualists or anything of this kind; all of these theories are equally valid to me as long as they are consistent, which they are not.

Here I see the unifying principle of my theory. I can afford today to be absolutely impartial to ALL theories and point [to] the inconsistencies. In the brotherhood of theories will begin the brotherhood of man; otherwise, brotherhood is a dream which will never be fulfilled.

Of course, I am aware of the tremendous task and difficulties which are awaiting me, and this is why I am anxious to have many people to understand this [and] HELP, and am eager for *constructive criticism*. Destructive criticism built upon the absolute use of words may be harmful but it is not constructive. In my further writings, of course, I have to make it clearer and clearer. I must also say that DON'T expect me to undo at once what was not done for untold eons of time, and don't blame me for not putting in a small volume what will take several volumes.

You seem also to dislike the Polish nobility. As a matter of fact, Poland fell because it was TOO democratic among imperialistic neighbors, which, to cover their crime for 150 years, slandered their victim. What the world knows about Poland are mostly slanders of Russian and German origin. Under separate cover I am mailing a little pamphlet which will prove that it is not a Human shame to be a Polish nobleman. In Poland the title "Noble" became the synonym of noble. When you [are] through with this pamphlet, mail it back to me, please; I have use for it occasionally.

Do you expect to publish your review? If so, when and where? I am very anxious to see [the] amendments of which you wrote to me.

When writing this letter, I just received your book, *Ecce Deus*; many, many thanks for it. I looked it over and it looks very interesting to me. I had a shock to see how the English has spoiled my German. 3-5 years ago I spoke German nearly as a German, and now I have some difficulties; it will take me probably several months to be con-

versant again with this language. The study of your books will be a good German lesson to me.

I hope you will not curse me too much for so lengthy a letter, but I thought it was better that I [should] explain several points which may perhaps weaken your so hard criticism in some points. I admit that if I thought for a minute this criticism justified, I would drop writing for good. What is the use to write some more nonsense? There [are] whole libraries full of them. No use to swell the literature of the world with some inconsistencies.

With best wishes and gratitude for all your bother about my book I remain with highest respect,
[Alfred Korzybski]

Please do not misunderstand this letter. It is only a kind of program and this needs many more years to be worked out. The form in which I wrote this letter is, of course, very unsatisfactory. This work of mine is legitimate; that's the point. The results will justify or will not justify the whole thing. What I am entitled to is A CHANCE to prove my case before a final judgment is pronounced. Of course, I hope that I will be able to prove my case, but I still remember that hopes are misleading.

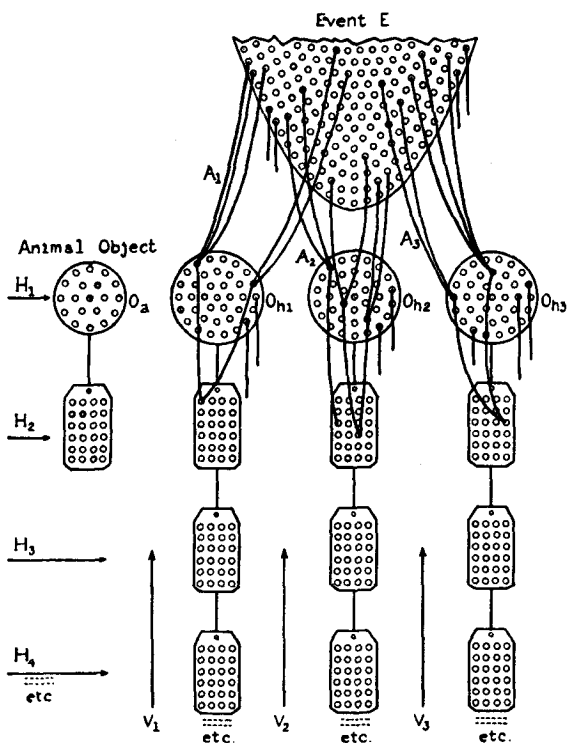
Again, if I would have no hope, I would not start this whole hard work which is [the prospect] full of bitterness before me. If we all would be afraid of new discoveries or new methods, human progress would stop altogether; so some of us at least have to "take a chance," irrespective of the results. This old good Time has a remedy for all of us; its judgment never fails.

Please be charitable to this scribbling.

By the way, the fossil animals also "bind space," only their space is moving around them.

co Doctor Ritter, La Jolla, California

Diagram of the Structural Differential *



One entire book (roughly one-fifth of the entire volume) in *Science and Sanity* is devoted to detailed explanations of the relationship between this diagram and the system called General Semantics. On page 13 Korzybski says, "This diagram, indeed, involves all the psychophysiological factors necessary for the transition from the old semantic reactions to the new, and it gives in a way a *structural summary* of the whole non-aristotelian system."

* Figure 4, page 396, *Science and Sanity*, Fourth edition. Reproduced by permission of the Alfred Korzybski Estate.

MANHOOD OF HUMANITY

1921 REVIEW*

ALEXANDER PETRUNKEVITCH

THE SCIENCE OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING

THE MANHOOD OF HUMANITY, *by* ALFRED KORZYBSKI, E. P.
Dutton & Co.

UNLIKE practical discoveries in the field of applied science or industry, new conceptions in pure science and thought have innumerable forerunners whose chief work lies in preparing the human mind for the final reception of the great truth to be formulated by some genius. Neither new religions, nor philosophies, nor theories have ever been called into being without such preliminary work, and whenever a genius put forward some thought too early for the rest of the world to grasp it, such a thought invariably perished and had to be rediscovered centuries later. Yet the time comes when the world finally grasps a new truth, makes it part and parcel of its own method of thinking and wonders how people could have been so blind as not to have seen the plain truth before. Such a truth concerning the nature of human thought is now beginning slowly to dawn on the world and, when

* Originally appeared "Among the New Books," *The Yale Review*, January 1922. Copyrighted in 1921.

once clearly conceived, will profoundly change not only scientific conceptions of energy and its laws of preservation, but human relationships as well.

I do not want to convey the impression that the author of *The Manhood of Humanity* has spoken the word which will reverberate throughout the thinking world. He too, is only a forerunner, though he brings us considerably nearer the goal. His theories revolve around the idea that man is neither an animal nor a creature endowed with a spirit, but alone belongs to the "time-binding" class. By this he means that man has "the capacity to summarize, digest, and appropriate the labors and experiences of the past . . . "; and he contrasts man with animals as representatives of the "space-binding" class. Now this thought in itself would not be anything new, were it not for the elucidation of its meaning given by Korzybski. For he shows that not only do we learn from the experiences of the past, not only do we make use of things done before us and of wealth accumulated, but that in all our calculations of work done by ourselves, of wealth accumulated by us, of production based on our possession of knowledge, an inalienable element has been persistently overlooked, an element which he terms the "dead men's work." That work represents energy which may be and is being made use of in our daily life, but as yet has not been taken into account by any scientific thinker or student of human affairs. Like a true engineer Korzybski is not interested in discussing the "essence" of the time-binding power of man. That is for him metaphysics. He studies its manifestations and treats it as time-binding energy; and "the science and art of directing the energies and capacities of human beings to the advancement of human weal" he terms "human engineering."

For many years the reviewer has been pondering over the reason for the apparent discrepancy between energy

received and energy produced by different individuals. The conditions of life, food, training, the amount of knowledge, the object of study and the time and the energy put into it, may be all approximately the same with different individuals; yet in the one case an important truth is gleaned, in the other, materials wasted on results of no interest to anybody. The discovery of calculus makes the construction of modern instruments and engines possible, while the speciously serious production of the average man of science frequently only retards progress by its unwieldy bulk. It is merely a question of "talent," the average man will say. Yes, but the talented man may not have spent so great an amount of measurable energy as the other fellow, and yet may have made possible the production of things undreamt of before. Korzybski's idea of treating the "dead men's work" as time-binding energy, while it does not completely clear the problem, brings us a step nearer to its solution. We may not know for ages to come how the human brain transforms one kind of energy into another kind; but it is something to know that knowledge itself passed to us by bygone generations is not an accumulation of dead letters on dusty paper, but powerful energy stored up for the use of those among us who know how to transform it. Naturally, according to this conception, accumulated wealth itself "consists of the fruits or products of this time-binding capacity of man." But wealth is of two kinds: "One is material, the other is knowledge. . . . The first kind perishes, . . . the other is permanent in character; it is imperishable." Wealth itself, the "measure and symbol of work," is "in part the work of the living, but in the main the living work of the dead."

Having given a new definition of man and of wealth, Korzybski goes on to the next problem. To whom should wealth rightly belong? Here he is brought face to face

with the problems of capital and labor in their broadest sense. The solution that he offers is characteristic of the modern trend — the wealth produced by the use of inventions should after a certain period of years become public property. Perhaps this would be a just method of distribution of wealth, and humanity will possibly some day see its way to achieving it, but the logic of this conclusion is not binding, although Korzybski thinks that it is. For the use of capital for the development of an enterprise also requires knowledge, brains, and talent. A captain of industry may be squandering energy in one field of his enterprise and amassing it in another. Korzybski sees the negative side, but who can justly balance the one against the other?

I think that the book would have been better if Korzybski had left out all that deals with the reconstruction of human society and had limited himself to the analysis of the time-binding capacity of man and the meaning of knowledge and wealth. There will be many who will condemn it for its conclusions and who will discard the basis of the author's theories along with the theories themselves. Yet the main principles are so important that the book not only deserves a wide circle of readers, but should be very carefully studied by all men of science lest the elements of truth contained in it should be overlooked and remain idle instead of being transformed into creative energy.

ALEXANDER PETRUNKEVITCH

Yale University

