

A VETERAN'S RE-ADJUSTMENT AND EXTENSIONAL METHODS

By ALFRED KORZYBSKI *

Director, Institute of General Semantics, Chicago

* Author of *Manhood of Humanity; The Science and Art of Human Engineering*, E. P. Dutton, 1921; 2nd ed., Institute of General Semantics, 1946 and *Science and Sanity; An Introduction to Non-aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, Science Press Printing Co., Lancaster, Pa., 1933; 2nd ed., 1941.

A VETERAN'S RE-ADJUSTMENT AND EXTENSIONAL METHODS¹

ALFRED KORZYBSKI

[FOREWORD BY LT. COL. DOUGLAS M. KELLEY, M.C.* *In this paper, 'A Veteran's Readjustment and Extensional Methods,' Korzybski has attacked a problem which so far has been generally ignored by most therapists. This is not because the problem has not been recognized but results from a lack of trained personnel available to give therapeutic guidance to returned veterans.*

The actual psychiatric casualty in most instances is receiving some type of therapy, but there are simply not enough adequately trained physicians available to care for the returning veterans who, though not psycho-logically wounded, are definitely psycho-logically bruised. Such veterans can and usually do make a satisfactory reconversion to civilian status without help, but simple techniques and training in extensional methods would certainly smooth their path and result in more rapid and at the same time a more complete reconversion to civilian life.

War produces a series of situational stresses which result in the development of profound changes in an individual's psychosomatic structures. Korzybski's paper demonstrates many excellent examples of these changes which are best understood in terms of Pavlovian conditional

systems. The veteran's reaction to rice and maggots, his aversion to special noises, his fear of low-flying aeroplanes, and his basic feelings of irritability and resentment are born of a conditioning, the like of which civilization has previously never experienced. No human being can conceive of a more adequate mechanism for twisting human emotion and for developing organismal responses to specific stimuli than is achieved in an active battle zone.

Following the development of primary symptoms we find, as Korzybski puts it, the occurrence of second-order reactions 'such as fear of fear, nervousness about nervousness, and worry about worry.' General semantics, as a modern scientific method, offers techniques which are of extreme value both in the prevention and cure of such reactive patterns. In my experience with over seven thousand cases in the European Theater of Operations, these basic principles were daily employed as methods of group psychotherapy and as methods of psychiatric prevention. It is obvious that the earlier the case is treated the better the prognosis, and consequently hundreds of battalion-aid surgeons were trained in principles of general semantics. These principles were applied (as individual therapies and as group therapies) at every treatment level from the forward area to the rear-most echelon, in front-line aid stations, in exhaustion cen-

¹ Submitted November, 1945.

* Chief Consultant in Clinical Psychology and Assistant Consultant in Psychiatry to the European Theater of Operations.

ters and in general hospitals. That they were employed with success is demonstrated by the fact that psychiatric evacuations from the European Theater were held to a minimum.

Korzybski's paper, together with the actual report of the use of general semantics by a veteran, points to the next important step in the employment of these principles—the reconversion of the returning soldier, sailor, or marine. Through the use of group therapy large numbers of individuals can be trained in extensional methods, and this type of training should prove of value to any individual who has suffered from the searing contact with actual warfare, the problems inherent in his displacement from his previous environment, or the general trials and tribulations resulting from forced adjustment in the armed services. Such individuals may not present overt symptomatology but would nevertheless be benefited by a knowledge of extensional methods which would result in a better understanding of their problems.

Korzybski's paper indicates the value of these techniques and should be carefully studied not only by psychiatrists but by all persons concerned with the tremendous problem of the readjustment of the returning veteran.]

THE following case report on himself by a Pacific war veteran is most revealing for our work. This veteran was a student in Professor Elwood Murray's class in general semantics in the University College (evening division) of the University of Denver. He was discharged from the army because of his 'nervous disability,' the sort of reactions described in this report. The veteran attended one lecture a week, and his class paper was written at the end of ten weeks. Professor Murray is Director of the School of Speech and the author of a book and a

number of articles on speech personality and general semantics. He also lectured on general semantics to the medical staff of the military Fitzsimons General Hospital, to the staff of the Psychopathic Hospital, University of Colorado Medical School, and the faculty of Colorado Woman's College.

We are desperately short of psychiatrists and we will continue to be that way, as it takes a long time to train a physician to understand 'mental' difficulties. The main point in connection with general semantics, or, if you wish, a non-aristotelian orientation, is in the fact that non-medical men giving group classroom training in scientific method can convey through extensionalization (*i.e.*, evaluating in terms of facts), constructive techniques which *do work*. The following report of this veteran, who was the only survivor of a Japanese bombing of a group of fifteen of his buddies, is most instructive.

The importance of non-medical, scientific methodological training for extensionalization must be emphasized here. In our work we are striving for neurological thalamo-cortical integration through scientific method alone, which occurs empirically, if the students are willing enough to co-operate and work. This particular veteran did co-operate, and took his retraining seriously. Without medical help in the narrow sense, he did improve steadily, and probably will recover completely. He is probably not psychiatrically ill but just naturally disturbed. We will have to deal with large numbers of such cases with a very restricted number of available psychiatrists. In our records we have a number of similar communications from all battlefronts about the benefits derived from studying extensional methods through *Science and Sanity*, etc., which might be called 'bibliotherapy.'

In many ways such results should be expected because modern extensional methods are *prior* to any science, medicine and psychiatry included. It is not accidental that the greatest modern scientific achievement, the release of atomic energy, was not accomplished by physicists alone or mathematicians alone but by *joint* efforts of specialists in those fields, epitomizing the physico-mathematical methods of finding the relations between map-territory, to use our language. On human levels we find their expression in psychosomatic trends, which present initially serious methodological difficulties similar to the notion of space-time in the history of relativity.

However, the principles are very simple, and extensionalization can be conveyed even to small children, also to grown persons who get into evaluational difficulties. Let us recall that in general children are born extensional, and we eventually do endless harm by training them in intension, for which they usually pay the price later in life. Non-aristotelian extensional methods are not a medical discipline, but any psychotherapist in re-training the patients in adjustment to 'facts' or 'reality' must knowingly or unknowingly depend on some sort of extensionalization. In practice it is more efficient and adequate to start with an entirely general technique for extension, which also remains valid in classroom use by non-medical educators. Medical men do not need to be apprehensive, since general semantics has nothing to do with medical problems as such. Physicians who apply the new methods find that they simplify their own professional tasks. They are able to reach their patients sooner and with less effort, since they begin on neutral and general grounds which involve the important factors of thalamo-cortical integration. It must be stressed

that in a non-aristotelian re-training we are dealing with *method* alone which any individual can apply *by himself* in any life situation or profession without medical help, or with it if necessary.

Probably almost any psychiatrist could have helped this disturbed veteran. However, this would probably require time-consuming individual work not applicable to group or classroom non-medical use. Let me repeat that this veteran is probably not psychiatrically ill; he simply reacts as most living human beings would react to his experiences, which certainly were not happy, to say the least. On the battle-fronts one cannot help but see the dead and dying, hear the screams, curses and prayers, smell the blood and stench of decaying flesh, etc., and so feel personally the indescribable terrors of war. These horrors become impressed on our nervous systems and so naturally we respond to them for some time to come.

In practice it will probably appear that the veterans returning from the Pacific front will present different problems than those returning from the European theater of war. So far psychiatrists have not paid enough attention to these differences, which would be instructive and educational.

I speak from my own experiences as a veteran of World War I. In many ways my experiences were similar to and comparable with those of many of my colleagues. I could go through practically paragraph after paragraph of the veteran's report and show normal similarities, differing only in degree. Let me explain the type of some of these reactions. In World War I aeroplanes and bombings were child's play as compared with those of World War II. On the Eastern front the Germans mostly bombed the general staffs, other headquarters, some bridges, railroad centers, etc. The bombings were

comparatively innocent in the first two years of the war, yet there was a curious psycho-logical reaction quite natural and normal at first. We often felt that the aeroplane was 'just over our heads,' which was seldom true. Even today when I hear an aeroplane is passing over me, I feel similarly, and without being disturbed I still cock my head a little—not unconscious by now of such accidents as occurred to the Empire State Building in New York. The veteran of this report is at present disturbed by planes. This is simply natural, since he returned recently from the front. But of course a friendly plane in the United States *is not* the same thing as an enemy plane anywhere on the battle fronts. By extensional techniques he is learning not to identify them.

To give another example, I had to deal very often with artillery fire, including heavy guns. I got accustomed to it and artillery fire did not bother me at all. Not so with machine guns, or 'type-writers,' as they called them here; I did not like them, as I had seen too much of what they can do, and I still do not like them. Even at the Petawawa proving grounds in Canada when observing the effect of high explosives, I seldom sat in my dugout but sat instead on the surface. I remember vividly how I was 'on the carpet' before my superior officer after a splinter smashed my table and telephone. I had to listen patiently, but when the sermon got too lengthy I simply asked my superior where *he sat* when he formerly performed my task on proving grounds. He got quite embarrassed and admitted that he also sat outside. I saluted and left his office. He never bothered me again. The reader should not fancy that my behavior was foolhardy; with training one learns how to dodge high explosive splinters. But I treated shrapnel more respectfully; I would not have trusted myself

dodging machine gun bullets, which I heard others could do.

The Intelligence Department of the Second Army utilized me in a new experiment as an 'expert' in German language and 'psychology,' and the organization of the German army. My chief duties were to follow closely at the front the movements and concentration of German troops between the Eastern (Russian) and Western (French) fronts and report immediately to the Army Staff by field telephone any significant movements or changes affecting the Second Army, and *predict* what the Germans with their methodical make-up would eventually do. With these aims in view, in collaboration with local Intelligence officers, I had to interview prisoners, our own agents, and scan many letters and other writings taken from the prisoners and found on the dead. This had to be done on the spot so that I could make immediate preliminary telephone reports, saving many precious hours of inevitable delay in transit of some important, new and unexpected developments which the Army Headquarters should know immediately. The joke was that I deliberately used perfectly good two-valued aristotelian either-or 'logic' which the Germans methodically followed, and so I often predicted quite successfully. Now with the report of General Marshall and the news which filters from Europe we see how 'logical' the Germans were and how their predictability was very poor, hence their errors. I believe it was not Hitler's so-called 'intuitions' but the rigid two-valued and ultimately ignorant 'logic' of a sick man which was responsible for their disasters. From the beginning of their world adventure he left out too many factors, 'human nature' included, and so the Germans were bound to lose in spite of tremendous preparations and actual power.

Although it is all past history now, many of my later reactions were similar to those the veteran describes, but in a milder degree. I practically never did actual fighting but in my 'psychological,' more or less scientific work I was kept mostly in battles and was exposed to danger all the time. When I was sent to North America as a technical expert in the Artillery Commission there still remained some old battle reactions, which bothered me for some time. For instance, when I first landed in New York and stayed in a most noisy Broadway hotel I could not sleep because of lack of artillery fire. At the front we 'knew' that when artillery stopped firing at night there was something 'wrong' and we got restless and could not sleep; we felt 'forgotten,' or 'abandoned,' which of course was very seldom true. It took me several months to overcome that fiction. I later learned that when artillery stopped firing at night it mostly indicated that everything was under control. Yet the feeling we got at the time was that of impending disaster, and that anticipation of danger remained with me for a longer time. Such hypothetical anticipation of danger may in some instances, if generalized, become anxiety.

Similarly, I used to carry important general staff papers in the breast pockets of my tunic, and I knew from experience that the Germans would like to get hold of them at any cost. So I always slept with my arms crossed over my chest. It took me several years to overcome this habit.

World War I was entirely different technically from World War II, yet many veterans share some common habits. Thus those who actually were familiar with battle fronts never liked and in fact often refused to speak about their tragic experiences. Some could look at war moving pictures, but could *not speak* about them.

Some could not even look at them. Such reactions lasted sometimes many years. However, such veterans could speak quite happily about funny or idiotic experiences which abound in wars. Kipling in his *Barrack Room Ballads* pictures the soldiers' reactions quite correctly. To keep masses of young lively chaps in hand in the trenches was a difficult job by itself. They had the most silly and dangerous outbursts, such as jumping out of the trench and exposing their behinds to the enemy to show them their contempt. Enemy sharpshooters were watching, and such frolics ended most of the time in wounds or death, depending on the sense of humor of the sharpshooter.

I can recount only two of these war stupidities, both with happy endings. The list could be expanded indefinitely, hence the grim humor of veterans as expressed by fighters' cartoons and such expressions as 'snafu,' which may become a classic and permanent monument to some brass hats. 'Snafu' represents an abbreviation of one of the bitterest indictments, yet full of what used to be called '*galgen humor*' or '*gallows humor*.'

In one instance a battery was ordered to 'advance.' In those days the relations between maps and territories were very unsatisfactory. The unknown territory was muddy Carpathian mountains. The single battery was isolated and without support. But 'orders is orders,' so the battery tramped in the dark and the mud, until they came to an abrupt drop of the ground. Further advance was impossible at night. The horses and men were dead tired, so the captain in charge ordered a stop, and they had some food and went to sleep. At dawn the ever-present sergeant peeped at the valley below and discovered a whole Austrian division with artillery and all the trimmings. He reported to the captain, who was too sleepy to think

A VETERAN'S RE-ADJUSTMENT

twice and gave a suicidal order: point-blank shrapnel. Well, instead of attacking our single battery, the whole Austrian division fled, leaving a lot of equipment, documents, and even the division funds.

In another instance, my colonel of the general staff ordered me with six men to blow up a bridge *behind* the German lines, which we accomplished successfully. After sneaking through the enemy lines we were going 'home.' Suddenly we heard marching soldiers. Not knowing whether they were friends or enemies we dismounted, hid our horses in some bushes, and discovered they were Russian soldiers. I yelled at them not to shoot and we went to contact them. It was a company of infantry, about 350 men. Owing to the shortage of officers, one captain was in command of three companies. Two of them had strayed apart and the three were supposed to meet again in a village a few miles away which we had by-passed. We knew this village had just been occupied by a whole division of Germans. The captain and his men were dead tired, worn out, and in no mood to listen when I reported the situation to him. Because we were in the cavalry, for which the infantry captain had no use, he became very abusive. He told me in so many words that he did not believe me because 'all cavalry men are cowards,' etc., and decided that he and his men would sleep in that village, Germans or no Germans. There was no sense arguing with him so ultimately I offered him our services; after all, the lives of about one thousand men were at stake and a few cavalry men could have been useful. Suddenly the two strayed companies met some German patrols and shooting began. Well, the whole German division retreated and the captain and his men had a few hours sleep in the village. When at dawn the situation became clearer so that the captain realized that

he was confronted with an entire division, believe me, the three companies retreated P.D.Q., and my men and I got away as fast as our horses could carry us. Such incidents happen quite often; as neither side can ever assume the complete stupidity or carelessness of the enemy, and we have to assume that the other fellow knows what he is doing.

I have recounted some of my own experiences and reactions to *reassure* veterans as well as the public that many little disturbances as a result of war experiences are not always serious and often disappear after some rest and return to civilian life. What should be avoided are second order reactions, such as *fear of fear*, *nervousness about nervousness*, *worry about worry*, etc., which may seriously aggravate the originally normal reactions under abnormal conditions. For the reader who is not familiar with the applications of physico-mathematical methods or non-aristotelian orientations to life, perhaps a word of forewarning would be useful. I can do no better than to quote the eminent mathematician, Professor Hermann Weyl: 'Indeed, the first difficulty the man in the street encounters when he is taught to think mathematically is that he must learn to look things much more squarely in the face; his belief in words must be shattered; he must learn to think more concretely.' In other words, we must evaluate in terms of facts, *inner facts* included. Unfortunately the difficulties of application in life are not realized even by mathematicians. They have the same blockages in the application of their own professional methods to life as any layman has.

Endless books and articles are written telling us what is wrong with the world, education, etc. Everybody tries to tell us *what* to do, and so far, outside of a non-aristotelian system and its techniques, no

body *teaches* us *how* to do it.

Superficially it may seem 'all so simple'—'common sense,' some may say—but experience shows that this is not 'common' at all today. The 'simplicity' is only linguistic lip-service; the serious difficulty is in application, which requires a clear-cut theory and extensional technique, training in it, and serious persistent personal efforts for months if not years. The difficulty is similar to the retraining from the euclidean or newtonian systems of evaluation to non-euclidean or non-newtonian orientations, which include the former as special cases. The older systems were 'common sense' perhaps of a pre-scientific era, but the new systems represent more closely 'reality' as we know it today, and *uncommon* sense was and is necessary. In our work we are trying to make this modern 'uncommon sense' 'common' and workable. The passing from antiquated and *inadequate* aristotelian evaluations to non-aristotelian modern and more adequate systems is perhaps the most difficult.

'False' theories are less dangerous than inadequate ones. The former involve *commission* of errors, comparatively obvious, and simply discovered. The *inadequate* theories are much more harmful, as they often pass superficial inspection and require creative work to reconstruct them. They do not involve erroneous commissions, but pernicious *omissions* by default with their inevitably paralyzing effects.

The standard orthodox neuro-psychiatry is unfortunately not equipped to deal with these kinds of problems, which involve socio-cultural factors affecting our most intimate private lives. 'Intellectual understanding' will not work organismally, as any psychiatrist knows, and some of our students have discovered this by painful experience. The methods for sanity have to be *organismally* absorbed through self-

training *and* practice; then some results may be expected. Successful progress requires the individual's work and persistent efforts. Such retraining is not medical in character but educational, fundamentally preventive, and entirely general, not included as yet in our Indo-European systems of culture and education. The veteran in this case learned the new methods in ten hours of classroom re-education and began to apply what he learned by practising—and improvement followed. What is said here is borne out by experience with most of my students, in every field of their endeavor, be it personal or professional.

Learning must be *in deed* and not mere lip-service, and this is the main difficulty. The veteran describes how he applied what he learned in a non-medical class of Professor Murray and how he acquired the means to *help himself* without outside assistance.²

The report of the veteran follows. It has had practically no editing and is printed substantially just as the veteran wrote it, including the title:

² Since completing this paper, I have read the by now famous lectures of Major-General G. B. Chisholm on 'The Psychiatry of Enduring Peace and Social Progress,' published in *Psychiatry*, February 1946. (Reprints are available from the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, 1711 Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, D. C., single copies 40c prepaid.) In his lectures, Gen. Chisholm emphasizes the educational contributions which psychiatry 1946 *could* make, now that the inevitable broader basic problems of a socio-cultural character have become more sharply forced on our attention by the mass war experiences. He is stressing the emphatic need of helping mankind to *mature* by training away from the still-prevalent inadequate, sharp, rigid, two-valued types of reactions toward the broader, more adequate, multi-valued, more flexible orientations which experiences with war casualties have shown to be a solution. In our terminology, he is calling for a non-aristotelian revision, which leads empirically to the maturing he is urging.

A VETERAN'S RE-ADJUSTMENT

A VETERAN USES GENERAL SEMANTICS FOR REHABILITATION

BY THE VETERAN

It was not with willingness and whole-hearted cooperation that this veteran of four campaigns in the South Pacific consented to give the information in this study. He felt, however, that this trend may help him to relax. As far as putting to use the work of general semantics, it was a benefit; but, at first, to relate many incidents openly as in this paper was extremely difficult and he tended to relapse into the nervous condition he was in when released from the service.

There are a few phases of misevaluation that will give an example of the problems of the veteran; many are extremely difficult to put into written description.

The fear of darkness, for quite some time, hindered many of his activities after sundown. It was hard to feel safe from enemy fire even as a civilian in the United States. Most of the evenings were spent in the home rather than venture outside. The veteran put to work general semantics and took long walks down side streets at night, keeping in mind that the darkness he then encountered was entirely different from that in combat. After a week or so of such procedure, he began to relax and take part in evening activities outside.

There is a great fear of crowds noticeable. Why this should be he cannot explain, unless it is due to the isolation and small numbers of men he encountered while in the Pacific area. To overcome this, he took walks in the downtown district and forced himself to mingle with people. He has partially overcome this fear and is still advancing. Perhaps one reason for his not mixing more with people was the 'silly conception' of war they

expressed. At first, he lost his temper quickly and made many cutting remarks to people. Later he developed a sullen silence refusing to comment on or discuss the situation except with those he felt were interested and were making an attempt to ease the situation. At present, he is most objective, trying to keep in mind that though there are remarks that irritate him, there is no possible way to understand the conditions without having experienced the same. Using this method of silence mentioned has helped a great deal with delay of reactions as an aid to evaluation. Though at first he reacted within himself, and carried all the marks of ill-will, at present he uses this period entirely for evaluation.

Tension was and still is quite noticeable; however, there is some improvement. After correct evaluation of sudden sounds, relaxation came easier. The veteran was in a constant state of anxiety, tensed to move quickly should it be necessary. Movements of all those about him, no matter how slight, are observed. He found the identification in his reactions with being constantly alert for movements in trees and bushes that might be those of the enemy in combat. Realizing this, he is more at ease.

When the veteran attended movies, he always left during the newsreel. He reacts to battle scenes as though he were present. It leaves him in a state of great anxiety and what might be termed 'fresh combat fatigue.' The veteran is striving to overcome this identification. In doing so, he remains in his seat and tries to keep in mind that it is just a screen with black and white pictures, rather than actual battle. There has been a noted improvement in regard to after-effect; however, while witnessing the scenes, he sweats profusely.

Aversion to noises such as the fire siren. Sirens were used in combat to alert

soldiers for air raids. When the veteran hears sirens he breaks into a sweat and has great difficulty in controlling the desire to drop on the ground. The veteran, to make this a proper evaluation, visited a fire station and examined the sirens on the engines. Seeing them as they were and for the purpose they are now used has contributed to more self-control.

Low flying planes also greatly affected him. He experienced a bombing in the early part of the war in which he was the sole survivor among some fifteen others. With exception of great shock and unconsciousness he was not injured. The low flying plane flashes this experience to his mind. To attempt to properly evaluate the situation, the veteran gained permission to enter an airfield and examine planes. He stood close to the runway when planes came in. This has not helped too much, but he believes in time he can train himself to picture peaceful maneuvers of friendly planes landing on an airstrip rather than death-dealing Jap bombers.

This leads into his problem of insomnia. He has many nightmares; however, the dream most often repeated is that of the action described above. In these dreams he breaks into a heavy sweat and awakens. Training in general semantics has not helped this situation. When the individual is asleep he cannot have the cortical control that he has during waking hours.

An example of pure identification comes out in the veteran's dislike for rice. His first view of the enemy dead was that of a Jap soldier which was in the process of deterioration. The bag of rice the soldier had been carrying was torn open and grains of rice were scattered over the body mixed in with maggots. When the veteran, to this day, sees rice, the above described scene is vivid and he imagines

grains of rice moving in his dish. To overcome this, he has eaten rice several times trying to remember the rice before him is not the same as that on the body. Though the food is not relished, he has succeeded in overcoming the vomiting reflex at the sight of rice.

When first returned, the veteran had a great dislike for dogs resulting from experiences with native dogs. These native dogs were seen to devour bodies of both American and Jap soldiers, which, of course, was most distasteful to the observer. When mongrels in the United States were seen, or even heard, the above scene flashed to the mind of the veteran and immediate hate for canines became prominent. To overcome this, he forced himself to pet dogs and remember that these dogs were quite different from those on the islands. At present, he is fairly well adjusted to the situation.

The veteran brought with him a Jap canteen. This canteen was in deplorable condition when he picked it up and needed some cleaning. Very seldom has he seen it since he has been back. Each time he has looked at it, the smell and surrounding conditions under which he was at the time comes back to him. Also in connection with this reaction are some snapshots he brought back. These were in the same container until a short time back. They definitely had a mouldy odor; this, combined with scenes, was extremely hard on him. Since he has mounted the pictures and sunned them out, his reaction is much improved.

This veteran's reaction to soldiers who have not served overseas is most disagreeable. This reaction may come from notices put out overseas explaining that the reason for such extensive tours of duty was the shortage of replacements. When he returned and saw the great number of men on the streets, he developed a great

A VETERAN'S RE-ADJUSTMENT

dislike for them and without hesitation made slighting remarks. Since first returning there has been some improvement along this line; however, he still holds the grievance. He is trying to overcome this by keeping in mind that the individual himself cannot always help his status.

The oppression of army life has left him with a most serious attitude of rebellion. If asked to do something, he is most co-operative, but should someone order him, he flatly refused to co-operate. He has improved greatly, however, realizing that the situation is entirely different and in most instances, the co-operation betters his association with people.

Two weeks after the veteran had been discharged, he and his wife were visited by an elderly lady who was a friend of the family but had not been seen for several years. During the course of the conversation, the veteran excused himself from the room. As he was leaving, he overheard the visitor ask, 'Why isn't your husband in the army?' He returned to the room and not too politely informed the visitor of his status. This led to a grave dislike for all elderly women. When the veteran began applying general semantics, he discovered the above. Since, he has tried to bear in mind that all elderly women are not the same as the one described. He has partially overcome the intense dislike for them as a result.

The veteran has been using the semantic relaxation technique. It has been a very short time since he started, however, since he began he finds tension relieved during the application and is earnestly working with it in hopes of complete success soon.

A good example of non-indexing habit is found in the paragraph concerning 'dislike for all elderly women,' a result of temptation to react in terms of allnesses.

The analysis was restricted through a reduction in the number of evaluations, and a habit of seeing only one side. The assumption that no two people act or think alike, that 'This woman is not that woman,' should be constantly exercised. 'The assumption of allness leads to tension and conflict, the preservation of ignorance and blockage of further learning'.³ The preceding quotation may be applied to every example of the veteran's problems presented in this report.

Along the line of low flying planes, fear of darkness, and food, it must be kept in the mind of the veteran that '... no two in this world have been found identical...'.⁴ Seeing only similarities is a result of neglecting differences, resulting in identification mechanisms. Devices giving a sense of difference in evaluations are most beneficial. A good habit for the veteran to develop is, 'Consciousness of similarities in differences and differences in similarities'.⁵

This veteran's main difficulty lies in the fact that he is responding to similarities only, with a most static outlook. It is true, in many respects, the 'low flying planes' he encounters in this country are most similar to those of enemy planes overseas, in that both types have engines, wings, noise, and so on, which are proper evaluations. Differences must also be considered. These planes he now sees and hears are being piloted by Americans, they are not flying over a tropical island, and it is more than likely practice flights. There are numerous abstractions in this one example and the same procedure should be applied to all of his problems. The veteran's status is changed. He is now a civilian, not in a

³ I. J. Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941, p. 65.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

ETC.: A REVIEW OF GENERAL SEMANTICS

combat zone but in the United States. The fact that he has changed, as well as his surroundings, should be foremost in his mind. That there is constant change in all matter and situations should be kept in mind.

It has been observed by the family of the veteran, and his outside associates, that in the past three months there has been a marked improvement in his atti-

tudes and reactions. There is a more general easiness, expressed in both his actions and his physical appearance. The veteran himself admits more confidence in all he undertakes and relief of the absolute tension he previously experienced. He also feels, that though he was unwilling in the beginning to try to write about his identifications, this procedure has been most beneficial.

REFERENCES BY KORZYBSKI

- S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941.
- W. Johnson, *Language and Speech Hygiene: An Application of General Semantics*, General Semantics Monographs No. 1, Chicago: Institute of General Semantics, 1939.
- W. Johnson, *People in Quandaries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946.
- M. Kendig, Editor, *Papers from the Second American Congress on General Semantics: Non-aristotelian Methodology (Applied) for Sanity in Our Time*, Chicago: Institute of General Semantics, 1943.
- A. Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, Lancaster, Pa.: Science Press Printing Co., 1933, 2nd ed. 1941.
- I. J. Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs: An Introduction to General Semantics*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941.
- E. Murray, *The Speech Personality*, Revised edition, New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1944.
- E. Murray, F. Sorensen, and W. Paul, 'A Functional Core for the Basic Communications Course,' *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, April, 1946.

Reprinted from Summer 1946 issue (Vol. III, No. 4) of

ETC.: A REVIEW OF GENERAL SEMANTICS

This paper in part has also been published in

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY

July, 1946