

Dear Scholars of General Semantics:

Let me first acknowledge my deep sense of thankfulness to Martin H Levinson, the President of the Institute of General Semantics, New York, and the distinguished members of the selection committee for awarding me the Hayakawa Book Prize for the year 2018.

I feel deeply honored and privileged to accept the Hayakawa Book Prize for this year. Though I am not able to attend the award event because of health reasons, I would like to recount here the great excitement I experienced as I was carrying out my research on Alfred Korzybski mainly in relation to Indian language thinkers, and the comparative epistemics involved in my study of General Semantics.

Korzybski came to me, initially, as a great surprise on account of the commonalities he shared with the core premises of Indian thinkers (say, a series of negations to start with and the parallel journey they both in their separate ways, seem to undertake in formulating their reflections on how we create and make sense of our life-worlds).

Now, to be specific, I would like to mention just two things: First, it was the notion of 'labeling,' and the emphasis it gains in K's core semantics that really struck me as unique: Since 'labeling' things and persons is germane to human species, I could see how we need to 'unlabel' what we have labeled with little thought, and maybe, after due introspection, relabel them. This points to the notion of re-evaluation of our perceptions, and Korzybski makes us aware of this core epistemic problem that we all inherit.

The second thing that struck me as crucial is the notion of 'abstracting,' the way we all abstract from the world out there, and in a hierarchy of layers of the 'structural differential,' which Korzybski calls his 'metaphysics' --- this notion indicating the possibility of Indian thinkers, say, like Aadi Shankara, moving up in higher levels of abstraction till one attains what can only be called "pure consciousness." There are several possibilities to this 'metaphysics.' And what I have tried to mention here constitutes hardly a minuscule of the Korzybskian universe of semantic discourse that one encounters. This is my summing up for the occasion.

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Now, I need to remember here the generous fellowship that the Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics (located in Baroda, India) offered me in order to carry out my research, the reading of Alfred Korzybski through inter-theoretic negotiations among language thinkers, both Western and Indian.

Let me once again thank the President of the Institute of General Semantics, Martin H Levinson, and the members of the Selection Committee for honoring me with the Hayakawa Book Prize for 2018.

Sincerely, TRS Sharma