

# A New Logo for the IGS (2009)

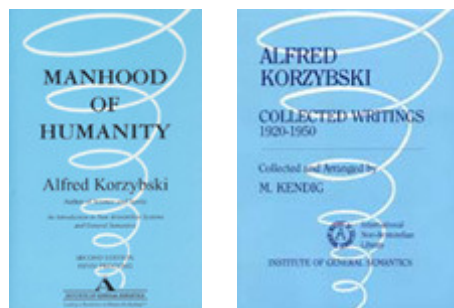
by Lance Strate

As you may have noticed, we have adopted a new logo for the Institute of General Semantics, and our thanks go out to Valerie Peterson for her work on the initial design of the logo, and Peter Darnell for producing the finished product, one version of which appears below:

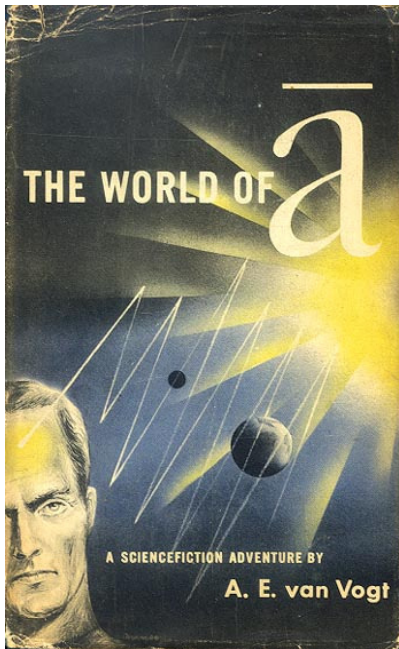


INSTITUTE OF GENERAL SEMANTICS

In keeping with the spirit of time-binding, our new logo is actually a retrieval of one of the original symbols used by the Institute, the null A sign (the letter A with a line over it), which stands for *non-Aristotelian*, Alfred Korzybski having introduced general semantics as a *non-Aristotelian system*. Two earlier versions of the null A logo can be found on the covers of some of the books published by the IGS, such as Korzybski's *Manhood of Humanity*, and his *Collected Writings*:



The null A symbol was also popularized by the science fiction writer, A. E. van Vogt, as can be seen on the cover of the first edition of his novel, *The World of Null A*, originally published in 1948:



In making reference to the symbolism of null A, it is worth recalling that non-Aristotelian does not mean anti-Aristotelian; the point was not to oppose or denounce Aristotelian logic, but to move beyond it. Had Korzybski introduced general semantics at some point over the last few decades, he no doubt would have dubbed it post-Aristotelian instead, and indeed general semantics presages many basic elements of postmodernism, including paralogsism (in the sense of going beyond logic--which was after all first codified by Aristotle--and its established rules and formulas).

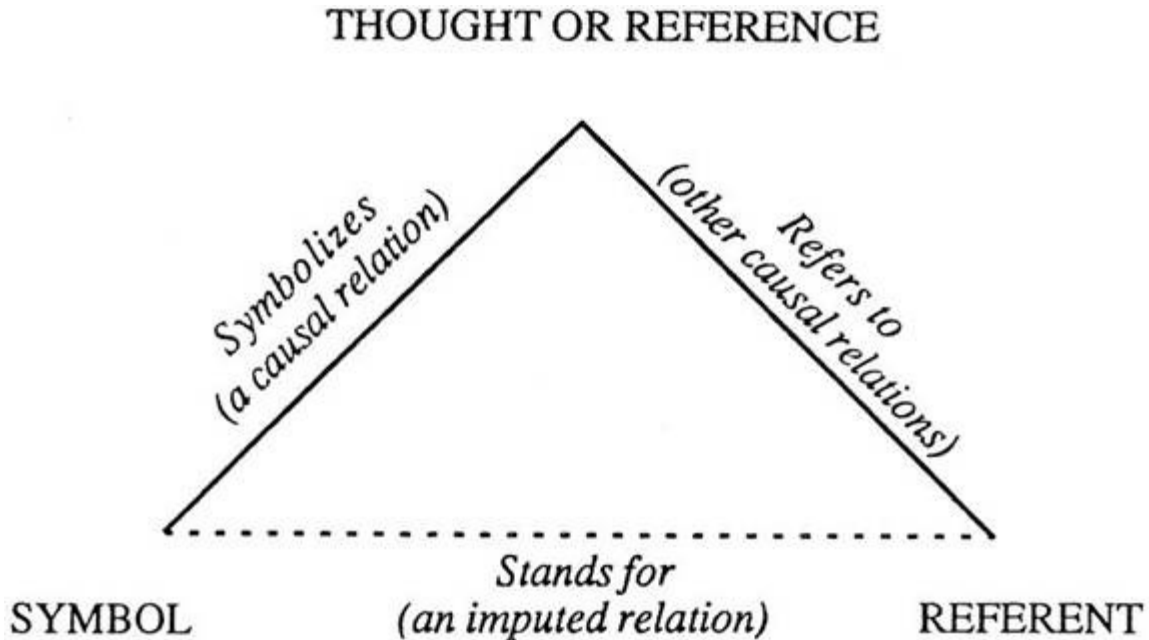
It is also worth recalling that Korzybski forwarded post-Aristotelian thought as a complement to post-Euclidean mathematics and the post-Newtonian physics introduced by Einstein at the turn of the 20th century. And we might further connect the non-Aristotelian to the nonlinear, a characteristic associated with the electronic media, and with systems theory, especially concepts such as chaos and complexity. The circular component in our new logo is intended to suggest a nonlinear orientation, and a holistic one as well. According to Carl Jung, the archetype of the circle also connotes community, and the IGS is indeed a community, a virtual community in some ways, but also a learning community.

We have given the logo a more modern, three-dimensional look for its aesthetic appeal and ability to attract attention, but also because general semantics itself represents a multidimensional outlook, consistent with a multi-valued rather than two-valued orientation. Moreover, in *Manhood of Humanity*, Korzybski described time-binding itself as a third dimension that only human beings have access to, as compared to the first dimension of chemistry-binding that plants engage in, and the second dimension of space-binding that other animals are associated with.

Additionally, our new logo has an element of visual paradox of the sort associated with the artwork of M. C. Escher. And as Douglas Hofstadter notes in *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, Escher's artwork exhibits the quality of recursion or self-reflexiveness, which of

course is Korzybski's third non-Aristotelian principle.

By a happy coincidence, there is also some resemblance between our new logo and the triangular diagram that appears in the classic work by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, originally published in 1922.



As a referent, the Institute of General Semantics needs a symbol that communicates something about who we are and what we are about. We need a symbol that, for those of us familiar with the IGS, connects to our collective perceptions and conceptions of the Institute and the discipline of general semantics as best as possible. And we also need a symbol that hopefully will attract the attention and interest of those who are new to the IGS and gs, that will invite them to ask questions and learn more about our non-Aristotelian approach. Of course, there is a sense in which change, indeed almost any kind of change, in and of itself can function as a means of publicizing our organization and all that it represents. More significantly, change can serve as a symbol of life and renewal, and it certainly is true that we must change, adapt, and evolve in order to meet the challenges of a dynamic environment. With this in mind, now, at the close of the first decade of the 21st century, we introduce our new logo for this, our contemporary non-Aristotelian moment, to symbolize our evolving non-Aristotelian movement.