

**A NEGLECTED ASPECT OF
TIME-BINDING:
REJECTING *TACIT 'IDENTITY'***

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My job here-now:

Two parts:

To convince you

1. That the previously-hidden, untenable, lethal assumption which I have just mentioned forms the basis of what we currently call “Civilization”. Moreover, that assumption underlies our principal disciplines and so induces us to commit (produce) species suicide and to sterilize the biosphere; and
2. That at least one small group has already rejected and replaced that untenable assumption, and has worked out the foundations for alternative disciplines which appear capable of supporting humans to generate viable, sustainable, life-affirming ways for humans to live.

Korzybski (1933) advises us to hold the logical construct of ‘*identity*’ as **invalid** – unable to survive scrutiny. Outrageously, he says, “Don’t rely on it.”

(However, he neither tells nor shows us how *not* to.)

Further, he suggests reserving the term ‘*identity*’ to discuss the topic of “a human making a mistake”.

PREMISES THAT I TRUST:

Korzybski framed his premises as three **undefined terms**, and three **postulates**. He wrote his undefined terms as noun-forms: **structure, order and relations**.

I don’t trust the assumptions encoded in the *noun-verb* distinction (see below), and prefer to express the undefined terms as verb-forms:

to structure, to order, and to relation.

That confers the advantage that it makes them *feel* a bit unfamiliar.

PREMISES (CONT.)

His three postulates he expresses in two wordings, the first of which uses the '*map*'-'*territory*' analogy:

1. The map *is not* the territory.
2. the map represents *not all* the territory.
3. The map is *self-reflexive*.

He then offered an alternate list, using *word-referent* or *language-referent* terms:

1. A word is not the fact, feeling, situation, etc.
2. A word covers *not all* the characteristics of an object, fact, feeling, etc.
3. Language is also self-reflexive, in the sense that in language we can speak about language.

E-Prime Version of the Postulates

- **Non-identifying:** Presume that no structuring, ordering, or relationing satisfies the criteria as *identical with* any structuring, ordering or relationing (including itself).
- **Non-alling:** Presume that no structuring, ordering, or relationing can represent all aspects of any structuring, ordering, or relationing.
- **Self-reflecting:** Presume that no structuring, ordering or relationing can occur free of aspects which refer to itself and/or to the organism which elaborates it.

I summarize these postulates by declaring any **abstracting**, or any **product of abstracting**,

- 1) **inaccurate**,
- 2) **incomplete**, and
- 3) **self-referential**.

REVIEW: TIME-BINDING

Korzybski posits that humans accumulate a **HERITAGE**
-- composed of “human knowledge”.

(I prefer to say “composed of **tested guesses**”.)

- Each person inherits it freely; each assimilates a unique portion of the-heritage-at-that-date.
- Each contributes to the heritage.
- Each passes the enhanced heritage on to peers, progeny and to the generations yet un-born.

This doctrine **IMPLIES** the ‘territory’ – including the **NICHE** in the universe which humans occupy.

(DOCTRINE₂)

THE OTHER HALF OF TIME-BINDING: REJECTING TACIT IDENTITY

**TO ‘UNDERSTAND’ AN INNOVATION:
ONE MUST DEEPLY ‘UNDERSTAND’ JUST
WHAT IT *REVISES* OR *REPLACES***

**The “Received Wisdom” – received non-verbal
expectations concerning “human nature” – which
Korzybski proposed to replace:**

- (a) “Man ‘is’ an animal [+ something supernatural]” or
- (b) “Man ‘is’ somehow DEFECTIVE.” (Quinn, 1991)

(DOCTRINE₁)

THE KEY POINT ABOUT THIS “RECEIVED WISDOM”:

Those who have “received” that “doctrine₁ concerning human nature” **HOLD** it as NOT A SUPPOSITION – as not a theory – as **in no way tentative**.

- For them, it expresses “**The way things really ‘are’.**” - - or “An Absolute Certainty” or even a “self-evident truth”.

In other words, it expresses what I sometimes call “a ‘map’-‘territory’ *identity*”.

AT THE LEVEL OF ‘MAP’:

Within any culture, the local language ‘maps’, and creates, the shared ‘World-View’ of that culture.

CRITERION for a ‘MAP’ ‘SIMILAR IN STRUCTURING’ to the ‘TERRITORY’:

Accurately to represent the ‘territory’ posited by *time-binding*, each local language WOULD HAVE to make a **key distinction**: between NON-VERBAL and VERBAL abstracting.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO LANGUAGE

- By assuming that the funny noises their elders make ‘MEAN’ something, and figuring out WHAT.
- Children end up learning to make the **distinctions (non-identities)** that their caretakers make.
- We find these distinctions encoded in the grammar of the language spoken by the caretakers.
- **EXAMPLES:**

What happens when a language LACKS a key distinction?

- The children don't just “not-learn to make” that distinction – they grow up LEARNING TO NOT-MAKE IT!
- So: here, in learning to NOT-MAKE a non-identity discrimination, children tacitly, unawarely, BLINDLY GENERATE a TACIT usage of ‘identity’ – one which has the effect of ELIMINATING THAT DISESTEEMED DISTINCTION FROM CONSIDERATION.

THE WIE ‘MAP’:

The generalized grammar which underlies languages of the **western Indo-European** (WIE) family provides no means, **no grammatical MARKERS**, by which to distinguish **AT THE LEVEL OF GRAMMAR** between *non-verbal* and *verbal*.

Instead, the grammar uses a *tacit ‘identity’* covertly to mis-direct languagers into **NOT-MAKING** this distinction.

**That usage of *tacit identity* makes our
NICHE in the universe “un-seeable!”**

**In other words, until 2006, the “received” assumptions
embedded in the WIE grammar have BLOCKED
understanding and disseminating *time-binding*.**

**Even as Korzybski’s students, most of us have
failed, or refused, fully to adopt the construct of *time-
binding*. We have fallen short of rejecting the
traditional non-verbal expectations concerning
“human nature”, and the usage of *tacit identity* which
those expectations encode.**

**For observably, we have not revised the rest of our
personal and professional assumptions.**

MISCHIEF₁: Do we find anything wrong with letting ourselves rely on the logical construct of '*identity*'?

Let's test it out:

- **ASSUME**: My picture of YOU qualifies as PERFECT – I can expect to get away with treating my 'map' of YOU as *identical with* the 'territory' YOU.

Mischief₂

What difference does it make when we assume that ANY human can generate a ‘map’ *‘identical with’* the ‘territory’ it refers to?

Here, let \equiv signify *identical with*.

– **IF**

- My ‘map’ \equiv the ‘territory’ (and so, I find myself possessed of “absolute certainty”)

– **AND**

- Your ‘map’ \equiv the ‘territory’ (and so, you too find yourself possessed of “absolute certainty”)

– **THEN**

Therefore: Your ‘map’ \equiv My ‘map’.

That means that you and I “should” (operationally speaking, we **EXPECT** to) find ourselves in a condition of “perfect agreement”.

Mischief₂

(cont'd)

- In the list which follows, I only imply the “THREAT”, but name the “RESPONSE”.
- 1. Verbal put-down of the “errors”
- 2. Non-verbal and/or verbal put-down of the person in “error”
- 3. Fisticuffs
- 4. Boy Scout-level murder-weapons (rope, fire, knife, gun)
- 5. Military-grade weapons
- 6. Nuclear “devices” or other “weapons’ of mass destruction”

MISCHIEF₃: How we build our sentences

- “Languages differ not only in how they build their sentences but also in how they break down nature to secure the elements to put in those sentences.” (Whorf, 1956, 240)
- To show how, I offer a generalization, and ask a “simple” key question.

MISCHIEF₃: My key question:

- OPERATIONALLY SPEAKING:

How do we distinguish the *nouns* from the *verbs*?

In any WIE locution or WFF --
The EXTENT of the error we make:

- It appears that, whenever we build our sentences or **well-formed formulae (WFF's)** on the patterns encoded in the generalized WIE grammar (including the *noun-verb* distinction), we rely, at least tacitly, on the logical construct of '*identity*'.
- But, above, I just showed that construct as invalid, unable to survive scrutiny.
- Either generate your own grammar (free of this error).
- Or find someone else who has.
- Or extend the one that comes out of this work.

WHAT H&A HAS SO FAR REVISED AND REPLACED:

1. WIE theories of Man
2. WIE theories of 'behavior'
3. The generalized WIE grammar, replaced by a DERIVED notational 'grammar'
4. The foundations of WIE logic & mathematics
5. The foundations of modern WIE physics
6. WIE biology

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