



The History of Neuro-Semantic Programming, NSP

(All history can be written either short and succinct or long and verbose. Everything possible has been done to write this history in as concise and precise a manner as possible. However the scope of material is so large and significant that to configure this narrative in an easy readable form has been very challenging. Everything possible has been done to accomplish this. Of course, the quotations cannot be modified.

The history will be in three parts. Depending on your preferences you can opt to read the one of your choice.)

The History of Neuro-Semantic Programming, NSP, deals with three critical interconnecting issues:

- I.** the pivotal and pre-eminent role of the philosophy of Causality in our lives and above all the emerging understanding that it is critical to displace it from its position. Causality is also known as the Aristotelian system of Cause and Effect, **A**. NSP also knows it as the **Blame Frame**
- II.** the system in us that unfolds our fabric-of-subjective-reality-to-context, automatically and unconsciously¹
- III.** how the core seminars of NSP unfolded.

Part I: The pivotal and pre-eminent role of the philosophy of Causality, A, in our lives and above all the emerging understanding that it is critical to displace it from its position.

Causality is today, **THE** universal philosophy for all humankind. There is no person who does not think by it and in it. No one has ever seriously questioned its validity and verity from the time when Aristotle assembled his formats about the system until today²⁰¹⁰. With our power to adapt, we have fully habituated and accommodated to it and all its downsides.

It was in 1737 that David Hume posed his query about it:

But when one particular species of event has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other, and of employing that reasoning, which can alone assure us of any matter of fact or

¹ **the fabric-of-subjective-reality-to-context, automatically and unconsciously:** And whatever it may be, our ontology¹ is invariably appropriate-to-context; it may subtend the arc from are partying with friends till 2.30 A.M. to how it is when one is at a wake in a funeral home and all else in between.

existence. We then call the object Cause; the other, Effect. We suppose that there is some connexion [sic] between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainly and strongest necessity.

It appears, then, that this idea of a necessary connexion among events arises from a number of similar instances which occur of the constant conjunction of these events; nor can that idea ever be suggested by any one of these instances, surveyed in all positions. But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only that after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist. This connexion, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion. Nothing further is the case.

David Hume: *Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Clarendon Press, 1979, page 74 - 75.

Then in 1933, 196 years after Hume, in his work, *Science and Sanity*, Alfred Korzybski² did five critical discoveries about A. They were that:

1. Cause and Effect relationship was not tenable
We “feel,” and try to “think,” about “cause and effect” as *contiguous* in “time.” But “contiguous in time” involves the impossible “infinitesimal” of some unit of “time.” But, since we have seen that there is no such thing we must accept that the interval between “cause” and “effect” is finite. This structural fact changes the whole situation. If the interval between “cause” and “effect” is finite, then always something might happen between, no matter how small the interval may be. The “same cause” would not produce the “same effect.” The expected result would not follow. This means only that in this world, to be sure of some expected effect requires that there must be nothing in the environment which can interfere with the process of passing from conditions labelled “cause” to the condition labelled “effect.” In this world, with the structure which it has, we can never suppose that a “cause,” as we know it is *alone* sufficient to produce the supposed “effect.” When we consider the ever-changing environment, the number of possibilities increases enormously. If it were possible to take account the *whole* of the environment, the *probability* that some event would be repeated, in all details, thus exhibiting the assumed two-valued relation of “cause”

² Alfred Korzybski is the father of the field study of General Semantics. His work, *Science and Sanity* is the foundational work to General Semantics.

and “effect” which we took for granted in the old days, would practically be nil.

Alfred Korzybski: *Science and Sanity* The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company 1958 page 216.

2. the Aristotelian system of Cause and Effect, **A**, had a language system unto itself.³
3. the language system of Cause and Effect was UNSANE
4. there was an alternative system to **A** that he named the Non-Aristotelian system of Relativity and Relatedness, \bar{A}
5. there is a language system to \bar{A} and it is the conduit to human sanity.

Richard Bandler and John Grinder, the co-founders of the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, NLP, corroborated the finding that the language system of Cause and Effect was insane. They did this in their work, *Structure of Magic* that was published in 1975:

We have generalized the notion of semantic ill-formedness to include sentences such as:

My husband makes me mad.

The therapist can identify this sentence as having the form:

Some person causes some person to have some emotion.

When the first person, the one doing the causing, is different from the person experiencing the anger, the sentence is said to be semantically ill-formed and unacceptable. The semantic ill-formedness of sentences of this type arises because, it, literally, is not possible for one human being to create an emotion in another human being thus, we reject sentences of this form. Sentences of this type, in fact, identify situations in which one person does some act and a second person *responds* by feeling a certain way. The point here is that, although the two events occur one after another, there is no necessary connection between the act of one person and the response of the other. Therefore, sentences of this type identify a model in which the client assigns responsibility for his emotion; rather, the emotion is a response generated from the model in which the client takes no responsibility for experiences which he *could* control.

Richard Bandler & John Grinder: *The Structure of Magic* Science and Behaviour Books Inc. 1975 pages 51 - 52.

They used a rather fine and genteel turn of language by describing Cause and Effect thinking as **semantically ill-formed**. However, if you examine this phrase closely,

³ **No philosopher knew this before Korzybski’s finding:** There are many who might say that even today, it is probably true that many philosophers do not know that there is a language system to Causality.

you will see that what they are saying is that by Cause and Effect the meaning you get is warped, bent, twisted, misshapen, deformed, perverse and anomalous. Thus, this critique by Bandler and Grinder is therefore, far more ferocious and fierce than Korzybski's. In fact, some might even say that Korzybski's term, unsane, was quite benign.

Then, in 1991, in the first of the two foundational works to the field of NSP⁴, there were further questions about the ill-formed consequences of thinking by Cause and Effect:

Cause/effect thinking creates inconsistencies. It creates misperceptions that become incorporated into the definition of ourselves as individuals and as society. For by thinking in cause/effect, we perceive in cause/effect and vice versa. Previous attempts to remove cause effect from language failed as a new language system was necessary⁵.

Dennis K. Chong & Jennifer K. Chong: *Don't Ask WHY?!* C-Jade Publications Inc. 1991 page 7.

Don't Ask WHY?! mapped out how the language of **A** was the way to human insanity. In the jargon of Star Wars, it showed how by its language, human beings skid into the Dark Side of the Force.

Then in 1992, the connection between Cause and Effect was seriously undermined:

The causality principle requires that every effect be preceded by a unique cause. This idea had served for over a century as a basic assumption of practically every form of rational research. The French mathematician Laplace is credited with perhaps the simplest definition of causality as applied to Newtonian mechanics: if the position and momentum of a particle are accurately known at a given moment, then, its motion is fully determined by the mechanical equations for all future time.

The uncertainty principle, Heisenberg asserted, denies this: "in the strict formulation of the causal law - if we know the present, we can calculate the future - it is not the conclusion that is wrong but the premise. The initial values of the momentum and position cannot be measured simultaneously with absolute precision. As such one can calculate only a range of possibilities for the position and momentum of the particle at any future time. The causal connection between the present and the future is lost, and the laws and predictions of quantum mechanics become probabilistic, statistical, in nature.

⁴ two foundational works to the field of NSP are *Don't Ask WHY?!* and *Power and Elegance in Communication*, PEOPLE, PARADIGMS and PARADOXES.

⁵ **new language system was necessary:**

With time this new language system was unraveled. It is delineated in the two foundational works of NSP – *Don't Ask WHY?!* and *Power and Elegance in Communication*, PEOPLE, PARADIGMS and PARADOXES.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle was profound and far-reaching in nearly every respect.

David C. Cassidy: *Heisenberg, Uncertainty and the Quantum Revolution* Scientific American May 1992 pages 110-111.

Every mathematician knows that every equation is a description of an event or a reality in which there is no Cause and Effect between the elements in the equation. Thus:

$AB^2 = AC^2 + BC^2$ – Pythagoras' Theorem relating the hypotenuse of a right angle triangle to the other two sides.

$S.G. = m_1/m_1 - m_2$ – Archimedes equation for the Specific Gravity of an element or compound

$C = 2 \pi r$ – the equation for the circumference of a circle

$s = k \log w$ – Boltzman's equation for entropy

$e = mc^2$ – Einstein's equation relating mass and its energy

$G = 8 \pi T$ – Einstein's Field Equation

$y = mx + c$ – equation for a straight line.

$a^2 - b^2 = (a + b)(a - b)$ – Algebra's famous quadratic equation

etc.

Every physicist who explores the universe from the mysteries of the smallest sub-atomic particle to the largest object in the universe, describes his findings in mathematical equations. Again, intrinsic to these equations, there is **NO** Cause and Effect between its variables. In fact, they speak of the functional relationships⁶ between them, to wit, if the values in one changes, then the value on the other side correspondingly changes.

In spite of the unfolding body of questions about it, thinking by Cause and Effect is as solid as ever in human thinking, relating and communication.

When Korzybski determined that the Non-Aristotelian language, \bar{A} , was the way to human sanity, he immediately set out to discover its language. In this he failed and in *Science and Sanity*, he voiced his hope that some day some student of his would do so. This was in fact done for him in 1991 in the work, *Don't Ask WHY?!*

In 1979, the authors of *Don't Ask WHY?!* began their search of what were the linguistic elements that constituted the language system of \bar{A} ⁷. This was a piece of research that was only completed in 1983. In the process of doing so, the concept of **language structures** began to emerge. However, being unknown in the field of

⁶ functional relationships speak to the format in Formal Logic known as *modus ponens* (and its inverse, *modus tollens*). It is reflected in by this terminology – if X then Y (if not X then not Y). If I see you, then I am happy. In mathematics then if the value of the circumference is X, then value of the radius is Y. If I had a million dollars, then I can buy a place in Park Avenue, New York. The value of one is a function of the other. There is **NO** Cause and Effect.

⁷ **what were the linguistic elements that constituted the language system of \bar{A}** was an enquiry that Korzybski did enter into. We surmise that he concluded that the language system was in him and in all of us and there was no need to do so. In this he was partly correct. The language is embedded in us and is out of our conscious awareness. Therefore, we use it unconsciously. We are not able to use it cognitively and volitionally. There is an disadvantage to this because we now know that if we could do so premeditatively and deliberately our communication could be even more devastating.

linguistics, they held back their findings and conclusions about language structures. Then one day they read this:

Everything is language or more accurately the language structures of the language.

Meaning arises as a pattern of relationships among these linguistic distinctions, and thus, we exist in a “semantic domain” created by our language.

To be human is to exist in language. In language we coordinate our behaviour, and together in language we bring forth our world. “The world everyone sees,” writes Maturana and Varela, “is not *the* world but a world, which we bring forth with others.

Fritzof Capra: *Web of Life*, A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems, Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1996, page 288.

So, here was the authoritative statement for the place of language structures and that they underpin our actual languaging. It therefore, affirmed to the authors of *Don't Ask WHY?!* that they had in fact delineated all the language structures of **A**⁸.

It was then a simple matter to invert the language structures of **A** to unravel what the language structures of **\bar{A}** were. However, it was still to take some eighteen months to do so. In doing this they fulfilled the hope of Korzybski that a student of his would one day find what the Non-Aristotelian language system, **\bar{A}** .

It was then clear that no matter what is the native tongue of a people, its language would be configured by the language structures of **A** since as a philosophy the Aristotelian system of Cause and Effect is **universal**. In other words, by its language structures, the languages of all native tongues are functionally insane⁹.



⁸ . . . they had delineated the entire language structures of **A**:

This was something that Korzybski did not do. We surmise that he did not because he concluded that the language structures of **A** were already in him and all of us. There was therefore, no point to unravel them. However, he did not realize that the entire language structures in us are in our **unconscious**. For this we are able to use it with ease and facility, instinctively and intuitively. However, we have no conscious awareness of what are its language structures. This in turn determines this downside. We are not able to use the language structures cognitively and deliberately. We have no volitional say over how we use **A**.

⁹ **the languages of all native tongues are functionally insane** is evidenced by the fact in all human languages is the feature that you can use it to blame the other by the words that, it is as if, you can kill the other. We can also blame by the look that kills. And if we do so, kinaesthetically, i.e. with feelings and actions, we will kill the other if the emotion of blame reaches its semantic threshold. Indeed this is the teaching to the first author of *Don't Ask WHY?!* by John Grinder that by kinaesthetic blaming is physical killing of the other. If this is so then, it is the condition human warring. Anger is the conduit to kill another – but only one person because the anger threshold for killing subsides. However, in kinaesthetic blaming you can sustain the emotion over years and years and therefore you can war and kill for years and years by the hundreds of thousands. And to war is the **ultimate human insanity**.