Laurie Cox, recipient of the 2003 Talbot Winchell Award

Edward MacNeal
French-American Misunderstandings

Martin H. Levinson
An Extensional Approach to Drug Legalization

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Textbook Laundering — Offend No One, Teach Nothing

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The Chinese Wall Metaphor

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Snooping Around the Time-Binding Attic, Part 3

Gregory Sawin
The Structural Differential Diagram

Philip Vassallo
Writing Correctly is Not Necessarily Writing Well

Charles G. Russell
A Very Immodest Proposal

Daniela Kramer-Moore and Michael Moore
Pardon Me for Breathing: Seven Types of Apology
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*Copyright © 2003 by the International Society for General Semantics*
The recipient of your smile glares back. You’ve caused offense and don’t know why. How do you avoid another gaffe? Different cultures have widely different assumptions about the minutiae of everyday behavior, observes Edward MacNeal, whose insights into *French-American Misunderstandings* can be applied to a broader canvas as well.

Discussions of drug laws often seem long on argument and short on facts. Martin H. Levinson takes *An Extensional Approach to Drug Legalization* "... questions whose answers can be, at least partially, measured or tested rather than simply argued about." Levinson confirms that there are few simple answers to a complex problem often presented in oversimplified terms.

Guidelines from pressure groups keep our student textbooks politically correct — and as lifeless as pasteurized flea powder. Introducing us to watchdog watcher Diane Ravitch’s frightening exposé of the language police, Kate Gladstone’s *Textbook Laundering — Offend No One, Teach Nothing* gives examples of insidious censorship that has been going on for years.

*Science forever! Not long live science!* — although we wouldn’t argue with that — rather, "... the scientific method is about asking the question, and asking it again, and asking it yet again. It’s about testing the facts as well as the theory, forever." So says author David Gerrold in his practical portrayal of *Science* from his book, *Worlds of Wonder: How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy.*

*Question:* "What do you call an angry gorilla who has just escaped?"
*Answer:* "Sir." Joking aside, too often we take such an attitude toward
corrupt and cruel leaders whose decisions and actions lead to human suffering. We use a language of respect they do not deserve and this helps give their wrongdoing apparent respectability. Charles G. Russell submits *A Very Immodest Proposal* which might help divest oppressors of their influence — instead of addressing these misery-mongers with such titles as *Sir, Mister,* or *President,* we could apply the murderous appellations they have earned, and let the disparagement fit the crime.

*How do I apologize? Let me count the ways* (with apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning). In their unapologetic analysis, *Pardon Me for Breathing: Seven Types of Apology,* Daniela Kramer-Moore and Michael Moore illustrate how an apparently simple apology can mean much more than just “I’m sorry.”

*The Chinese Wall Metaphor* gives the illusion of separation and fortification against intrusion, yet this wall that wasn’t there did great harm during the dot-com boom, notes Raymond Gozzi, Jr. “Analysts hid behind the metaphor as they made ‘buy’ recommendations on stocks they knew were poor prospects.”

In 1950, it was with some trepidation that instructors began the first General Semantics Seminar-Workshop to be held after Korzybski’s death, but the event was well attended by enthusiastic and engaged participants. For fascinating entries from the attendees’ diaries, see Steve Stockdale’s *Snooping Around the Time-Binding Attic, Part 3.*

His high school English teacher gave good marks to nonsense, as long as it was grammatically correct, but writing instructor Philip Vassallo urges us to beware of logical errors and other mistakes in content, as he decidedly demonstrates that *Writing Correctly is Not Necessarily Writing Well.*

Jumping to conclusions can lead to accidents. In other cases it might injure our relationships or our self-esteem. Gregory Sawin gives practical tips on using the *Structural Differential Diagram* to help prevent errors in our thinking, which can produce anything from mild annoyance to serious disaster.

Do we semanticists sometimes get so bogged down in theoretical disputes that we fail to see the usefulness of other people’s creations? David F. Maas offers a healthy antidote to formulational tunnel vision and a tribute to the inventions of other thinkers in his *In Defense of Bessie: Distortion or a Serendipitous Application?*
I had no idea how biculturalism worked or that it was working on me.

FRENCH-AMERICAN MISUNDERSTANDINGS

EDWARD MACNEAL*

I happen to have had an American father who lived essentially all his life in the United States and a French mother who came to the U.S. two months shy of turning twenty-one. They married a little over a year later and went on to have three children, of which I was the second. Hence, although I didn't understand it at the time or even for many years afterwards, we three children grew up in a bicultural household.

I knew my mother was French, of course, and that we lived in America, and that my father was an American. I knew that none of my friends had French mothers. Still, I had no idea how biculturalism worked or that it was working on me.

Now, to increase your enjoyment and understanding of this paper, you might like to ask yourself before going further whether by any chance you also happen to have grown up in a bicultural household. If you do ask, you may find it's not always an easy question to answer.

* Edward MacNeal, also known as the Mathsemantic Monitor, has written many articles for ETC, and has published several books, including MacNeal's Master Atlas of Decision Making: A New Kind of Guide to the Maps People Use in Making up Their Minds, available from ISGS.
I believe the answer doesn’t depend simply on whether your parents es-
poused the same or different cultures while you were growing up. If they had
different cultures, that, of course, makes it easy. You grew up in a bicultural
household and you know it. But what if your parents, like mine, outwardly es-
poused the same culture? Then the household’s biculturalism may still be
there, but in a hidden, rather than obvious, form. That explains why I didn’t
notice the biculturalism.

Accordingly, I’ve come to believe that the best quick test for biculturalism
lies in whether or not your two sets of grandparents were raised in the same
culture. If your two sets of grandparents didn’t have the same culture, then
the chances are that you grew up in a bicultural household, even if, like me,
you didn’t notice.

So, now using this “grandparent test,” would you say you grew up in a
bicultural household or not? If you did, then you’ll probably understand this
paper very well. It may bring to mind events in your own history that you may
not have connected to biculturalism.

The examples in this paper would, of course, be particularly telling if you
had one set of American and one set of French grandparents, because then
you might have had experiences very similar to mine. The chances are, how-
ever, that your biculturalism differs from mine. Then, because the cultural
differences you experience will also differ from mine, you’ll have to treat my
eamples as merely suggestive.

If you grew up in a monocultural household, that might make it more diffi-
cult to understand this paper. I’m not sure. Perhaps everybody, or almost ev-
erybody, who would read this journal has enough familiarity with bicultural-
ism to understand. I don’t know. I would be interested in hearing from you
about it.

Let me put my own family situation into historical perspective. Mother
knew only the French language and French culture before coming to the
United States as a young adult. Nevertheless, she made every effort to be-
come thoroughly American, going to a special school in Chicago, speaking
only English to her children and friends, none of whom were French that I re-
member, and training us to eat in the good American Midwest manner,
switching knife and fork from hand to hand, to cut and eat, if you know what
I mean. We all took French in school out of loyalty. This was years ago, “be-
tween the two wars,” as the French currently say, and the only other modern-
language choice offered in our school at the time was German.

It dawned on me only gradually, and mostly only during the last twenty
years, that I’d grown up in a bicultural household. I knew mother had grown
up in France, of course, but I hadn’t even appreciated that other people thought she had a French accent. She overcame, for example, the difficulty French speakers have with the “th” sound, a sound that requires placing the tongue between the teeth, unnatural in French, so that many seem to say “zis and zat” for “this and that.” The problem was she overcompensated. I grew up thinking one of my chores was “to put the thrash out.”

Laughing over that came early in my twenties. However, it didn’t alert me to the extent of the cultural assumptions that differed between France and America. I’ve studied these only in the last few years before going to meet some of my French cousins, in the hope that I wouldn’t make a complete fool of myself.

Let’s take something simple. In America you walk into a store, a bakery, say, and approach the clerk with a smile on your face. You then ask for what you want, “Two éclairs, please.” Try that in France and in an extreme case they might even refuse to serve you; in France the customer has no automatic right to service.

What could be so wrong? Well, first of all, the French don’t smile at people they don’t know. They think it’s hypocritical. Let me see if I can explain this. Think of the last few unsolicited telephone sales calls you’ve received. At first you find nobody’s there, just the sounds of a telephone boiler shop in the background. Then a voice comes on,

“I’d like to speak to [say] Mr. Thomas Carlson.”

“Yes,” you reply, “he’s speaking.” This earns you something like,

“Hi, Thomas, this is Suzanne Brown. How are you today?”

So here’s someone you don’t know who’s calling you by a name only your grandmother ever used and asking you a friendly personal question just as if she’d known you for years. You cringe, wondering what sales pitch comes next.

Well, that’s something like the way the French respond to your innocent smile. So, the thing that’s wrong to start is that the French expect you, a stranger, to approach with no expression.

Second, the French expect you to acknowledge them in words. If the shopkeeper is a woman you don’t know or don’t know well, she’ll expect you to acknowledge her (in French, of course) and then to state what you’d like. It helps to be scrupulously correct, and that’s why I’m going to use here the French convention of capitalizing “Madame.”

“Good day, Madame. I’d like two éclairs, please.”

She’ll give them to you and ask, “And with that?”
Now you say, "That's all, Madame; thank you," you pay, and then you say "Good day, Madame," once again as you depart.

Of course, if you shop in this same bakery often enough, you'll ultimately be rewarded with a little smile that means you've been recognized as a regular customer. You might then engage in a bit of small talk, if it suits you. Don't expect this to happen any time soon. You may recall that in Saint Exupéry's Le Petit Prince, the Prince and the fox just sat a little closer each day, without speaking, until they could become friends. (1) Well, that's more or less how it works in France.

This simple transaction in a store reflects deep, different, unchallenged, and hence hidden cultural differences.

Now, what makes this difficult is that it's not just a slightly different custom sitting on the surface of a basically similar set of American and French cultural assumptions. To the contrary, this simple transaction in a store reflects deep, different, unchallenged, and hence hidden cultural differences.

The general, unstated, initial assumption in America — if you like, the default assumption — is that we're all friends. The initial assumption in France is that we're strangers, not necessarily enemies, but certainly not friends. Friendship in America may imply nothing beyond a momentary conjunction of place or interest, and even those you consider as your friends probably don't know your other friends. Friendship in France usually implies a lifelong commitment. One takes on a more active burden of concern for friends in France than most Americans would knowingly accept. Your obligations to a friend in France might be likened to those you would have to a family member that you personally selected. In France, then, one shies from making friends casually and most of one's friends probably do know each other.

One can translate the American word "friend" into the French "ami" and "amie," and, except for the gender specification, sense no cultural difference, certainly not a deep one. Yet, the cultural difference not only exists, it's profound. Understanding it helps explain why Americans typically find French "friends" initially too standoffish and then, on getting to know them better, too demanding. It also helps explain why the French typically find to their dismay that their American "amis" offer only "superficial" friendship.

However, difficulties begin long before friendship can occur. For example, Americans often say that the French are rude and won't help one out. Now, it
so happens that I’ve always found just the opposite; that is, that the French
are extraordinarily willing to help, much more so than most Americans. My
judgment, of course, is based on my experiences, which clearly differ from
those of the average American. I now attribute my experience with French
helpfulness to something I probably learned at home from my mother when
she didn’t know she was teaching me and I didn’t know I was learning.

This “something” was the French code of conduct toward strangers. The
first thing you need to know is this: Don’t expect the French to help unless
you ask. They are taught not to intrude on strangers. Even if they see you
standing on a street corner staring at a map, they probably won’t ask if you
need help, for to them that would be tactless, even insulting. It would be like
suggesting that you don’t know how to read a map.

What you have to do when you want help in France is signal with the
French code. French people use it all the time. It goes like this. Approach a
French person, wait to be acknowledged with a look, and then say exactly
this, “Excuse me, Sir [or Madame], for disturbing you, but I have a problem.”
They will then be all ears and eagerness to help you out of your predicament.

A parked motorist having a snack in his front seat whom I asked to help me
with directions in a Grenoble suburb got out of his car, explained he didn’t
know the address I sought, went across the street, flagged an approaching
bus, half-boarded the bus, and asked its driver. I could hear the bus passen-
gers volunteering information. Then my benefactor escorted me to a vantage
point from which he could point out where I needed to go.

On another occasion, this time in Montpellier, my wife and I couldn’t find
our hotel. Every time we seemed to get close, we found ourselves plunged
into a tunnel that brought us up, we learned later, on the other side of a huge
downtown pedestrian-only area. After more than an hour of total futility, we
were completely lost and, besides, I was in urgent need of a bathroom. I ap-
proached the only person in sight, a young woman standing on the curb ap-
parently waiting for someone.

When she looked at me, I said in my best schoolboy French, “Excuse me,
Madame, for disturbing you, but I have a problem, two in fact. I can’t find our
hotel and I need a bathroom.”

She immediately led me a few steps to a tailor shop and talked them into
letting me use their toilet. By then her boyfriend had driven up. She told him
the story. After a little consultation, they determined there was no way they
could give directions that we, without my being more fluent in French, could
surely follow. They then did the French thing: they led us across town by car
to our hotel.
These are only two of many such incidents. When you ask for help in France in the accepted code, they'll help you more than you can imagine. If you don't ask, they won't intrude.

Be warned, however, that still another assumption goes with asking for help in France, and that is that you put yourself in the hands of the people you've asked. If you don't follow their directions, they'll come back to correct you.

Late one night, completely lost on an unlighted local road in Provence, I asked how to find a certain town because I knew that from there my wife and I could find the way. A local car — which had, in a gesture remarkable in itself, first passed us and then returned, presumably because its occupants had noticed our Paris license and uncertain course — led us out to the main highway that I'd lost twenty minutes before. On reaching this highway, we saw that going west to the town I'd named — about three miles — would only require us to come back east the same three miles. Yet, knowing the furor we could trigger by driving immediately east, we dutifully followed our helpers three miles west to the town in question and only then waved them a friendly farewell.

I could tell you more such stories, stories that include assumptions about privacy, the house, conversation, friendship, love, the couple, and how to raise children, and not just from my personal experience, but also from three wonderful books.

The first book is especially helpful on the deeper, hidden, aspects. It's by Raymonde Carroll, and in English carries the title Cultural Misunderstandings. Its title in French is Évidences Invisibles, which you might translate as "invisible facts." (2) I take the French title as pointing to the power of unrecognized assumptions. Carroll should know. She was born in Tunisia, educated in France and the United States, lived for three years on a Pacific atoll, married an American, and teaches French culture and cultural analysis at Oberlin College in Ohio.

If you're primarily interested in the immediately practical, say as a guide for dealing with business people or French friends in Paris, you couldn't go wrong with either of two informative and entertaining books by Polly Platt. She's an American who married a European and founded a company in France that teaches executives and their families from both countries how to get along in the other. Her two books, both in English, are French or Foe and Savoir Flair. (3)

The three books all start from the same premise. This is that cultural assumptions can be so automatic you don't know they're there. Yet, as they
point out in example after engaging example, a failure to have the right assumptions for the country you’re in can lead to helplessness and inappropriate behavior. What too often happens in the ensuing confusion is that the French go away thinking that the Americans are rude and vice versa.

Carroll argues, correctly, I believe, that when cultural differences are actually brought up — at least outside such specialized places as this journal — the focus almost always falls on the behaviors, and not on the underlying cultural assumptions. The discussion that ensues, whether tending toward agreement or dispute, typically centers on which behavior (in this case, the French or the American) is better.

If the topic is conversation, for example, the Americans point out that the French keep interrupting. The French say the Americans are long-winded. It just so happens that the conventions regarding conversation differ that much. Yet, if you know the differences in the assumptions, either kind of conversation works well. That’s generally true of the rest of the behaviors within the two cultural systems. Most people in both countries are friendly, helpful, and lead interesting and productive lives.

It’s not easy to explore unconscious assumptions about such things as privacy, conversation, friendship, love, and how to raise children. So what happens when Americans and French marry? I don’t know of any pertinent scientific study. However, judging from these three books, other histories I’ve heard, and my personal family experience, I gather that most American-French couples eventually run into serious trouble.

My own father and mother, for example, despite evidence of having loved each other greatly to start, gave up after fourteen years, separated, and eventually divorced. Perhaps if they’d focused on assumptions rather than behaviors, they might have made it. (4) As it is, my memory gives me not a single instance of their ever having discussed underlying cultural assumptions.

“Ah,” you might say, “now I see why this matter of cultural misunderstanding interests you so much.” And you’d be right. I’ve seen the effects of unconscious assumptions up close and personal. I’ve seen the futility of focusing only on behaviors. It may be one of the things that prompted my interest in general semantics. I don’t know.

I don’t know either how far a difficulty with underlying cultural assumptions goes in disrupting marriages. Fortunately for me, it just so happens that my wife, Priscilla, also comes from a bicultural family. Hers was Austrian and American, so we don’t share exactly the same deep assumptions about behavior. On another level, however, we share an awareness of the difficulty of assumptions about behavior. Our common biculturalism has probably
given us that bit of something extra. It’s hard to put a finger on the result. Perhaps one could say that it has given us both a bit more than the usual amount of tolerance of behavioral confusion.

I believe that any set of unconscious assumptions can occasionally cause serious behavioral misunderstandings, whether in one’s personal life, in business, or when dealing with strangers. The assumptions embedded in cultures are typically taken for granted by members of that culture. Hence, they’re difficult to sense and analyze.

A basic tenet of general semantics is that one should usually not attempt to change behavior without changing underlying assumptions. Therefore, in a world in which intercultural misunderstandings have become increasingly disruptive on a global scale, I would like to suggest seriously that the underlying assumptions, and not just the behaviors, deserve more of our attention.

Many different pairs of cultures make important news — the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Pakistanis and the Indians, for example — and may ultimately prove globally more important than the French-American pair. Yet the American attitudes about the French and vice versa may provide an example particularly worthy of further study, because the differences, though longstanding, are virtually free of bloodstains and hence probably more amenable to dispassionate study than other clear examples.

Despite some real admiration by the people of each culture for certain aspects of the other, the attitudes of both Americans and French often appear to be mostly negative when it comes to recounting personal encounters and world politics. I won’t get into the politics. I recognize that America and France disagree about Iraq, the importance of the French language, the role of France in Europe, and the increasingly global hegemony of America, and that much could be said about these matters. Indeed, much has been said and is being said daily about them, as your scanning news magazines can quickly demonstrate.

I’m more interested in why two democratic nations, both strong partisans of individual liberty, two of the oldest allies in the world, dating back to the inception of the United States of America, and reaffirmed in blood in two world wars, misunderstand each other so profoundly. I want to know why Americans and French seem to enjoy insulting each other. Why would Americans enjoy referring to the French as “cheese-eatin’ surrender monkeys,” and why would a French sign in a rally go so far as to read, when translated, “Say no to Bush’s butchery”? (5)

I can say from personal observation that the discussions of the differences between the Americans and French seldom — indeed almost never — ex-
plore the *évidences invisibles*, the hidden assumptions. I suspect that our inability to bridge the cultural differences at the level of personal behavior, seemingly unimportant on the global stage, actually has great and unfortunate effects. It seems to me that the misunderstood personal behaviors, which generate bewilderment and accusations of insensitivity, rudeness, bullying, and ingratitude, at the very least exacerbate the differences at the political level.

Korzybski pointed out the futility of attempting to change behavior while leaving underlying assumptions intact. (6) From the point of view of a general semanticist, then, it seems justified to label most current discussions of French-American relations as futile. Their primary function would seem to be self-justification.

If either country, America or France, were seriously interested in changing the other's behavior, wouldn't it have to explore and understand the underlying assumptions of the other? Do Americans and French really think they can understand each other at the level of political behavior without understanding each other at the level of individual behavior? It seems to me it's time we acknowledged that we've been trying to do this for a long time and that quite clearly it doesn't work.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. But then perhaps they wouldn’t have married in the first place, in which case you wouldn’t be reading this because its author wouldn’t have been born.


6. See the diagram reproduced on the cover of each issue of the *General Semantics Bulletin*, published by the Institute of General Semantics, Brooklyn, NY.
"To devise specific legalization inquiries, I will use in this article the general semantics technique of forming 'extensional' questions— these are questions whose answers can be, at least partially, measured or tested rather than simply argued about."

AN EXTENSIONAL APPROACH TO DRUG LEGALIZATION

MARTIN H. LEVINSON, PH.D.*

Many who have studied American drug policy believe our nation's drug laws have been ineffective and that changes should be made. For example, we could shift the current stress on law enforcement to more prevention and treatment, allow judges greater sentencing flexibility for drug crimes, provide arrestees with more opportunities for treatment in lieu of incarceration, and fund more research on the medical benefits of marijuana. I agree with these suggestions and believe implementing them might have positive effects.

But others, such as conservative writer and journalist William F. Buckley Jr., Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman, and former Governor Gary Johnson of New Mexico, argue that a more radical approach is needed. They contend that America's drug laws have been grossly inadequate in reducing the drug problem and have in many ways made the problem worse. They maintain that in a free society, the government should not regulate what kind of drugs people can and cannot take. They want drugs made legal and here are some more of their arguments.

* Martin H. Levinson, Ph.D., director of PROJECT SHARE, a New York City school-based drug prevention program, writes the ETC Books feature. This article is adapted from a chapter in his book, The Drug Problem: A New View Using the General Semantics Approach (Praeger, 2002), available from ISGS.
ARGUMENTS FOR LEGALIZING DRUGS

- Drug laws have resulted in a black market that has led to an increase in violence and property crimes.
- Keeping drugs illegal has encouraged corruption among politicians and law enforcement officials.
- Laws passed to curb drugs have not significantly reduced the demand for them.
- Legalizing drugs would minimally impact current levels of drug use because users now buy the drugs they want for a price.
- Legalization would mean that money spent on drug law enforcement could be reallocated to fight “real” crime.
- Taxing legalized drugs would provide additional money to the government.
- If drugs were made legal, otherwise law-abiding citizens who use them would not be subject to draconian drug law enforcement.
- Drug smuggling would not be a problem if drugs were legal.
- Under legalization, users would not have to worry about receiving adulterated substances or passing on illnesses related to drug use (such as AIDS or hepatitis).
- Foreign experiments with legalization have been successful.

While these contentions may have some merit, abolishing a well-entrenched, decades-old policy of drug prohibitions without more intense scrutiny and analysis seems irresponsible. It could be calamitous for teenagers, the largest at-risk group for taking drugs, who will experience a massive growth in numbers in the next few years. (In 2010 it is estimated there will be 35 million teens in America. The baby boomers topped out at 33 million.) (1)

To further explore legalization, we could examine specific questions as if we were actually developing a legalization proposal (e.g., How would the sale, manufacturing, and distribution of drugs be regulated? What provisions would there be to deal with America’s violation of international drug control treaties? Would age limits be set on drug buying?). Doing this might reveal some hidden complexities connected with drug legalization and perhaps increase our appreciation of the difficulties involved in constructing a viable legalization plan.
To devise specific legalization inquiries, I will use in this article the general semantics technique of forming "extensional" questions — these are questions whose answers can be, at least partially, measured or tested rather than simply argued about. Scientists use extensional questions in formulating experiments. Such questions add rigor to discussions by forcing us to seek more precise answers.

To create extensional questions, a variety of extensional strategies can be employed. These include the use of quantifying language (how much, how many, to what degree, at what point); the use of qualifying phrases (under these circumstances, as far as it is known); and the use of standard journalistic interrogatories (who, what, when, where, and how). I have applied all these strategies to produce one hundred questions that are divided into ten sections.

**ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN FORMULATING A DRUG LEGALIZATION PROPOSAL (2)**

**Manufacturing, Distribution, and Sales**

Many of the questions in this section deal with fundamental and important regulatory matters that are not discussed in legalization debates. A number of them also underscore the reality that legalized drugs, like drugs that are now currently legal, can never be completely free from government regulation and control.

1. What drugs will be legalized — heroin, marijuana, cocaine, LSD and other psychedelics?
2. Who will manufacture the drugs — the government, private industry, or a quasi-governmental entity such as the post office?
3. If private industry is chosen to produce the drugs, how will individual companies be selected to do the manufacturing?
4. How aggressively will private industry be allowed to market drugs — will there be coupons, physician's samples, and so on?
5. If private industry is involved in marketing drugs, what sorts of limitations will there be on price competition?
6. Where will drugs be sold — drug stores, clinics, mail-order outlets, special drug distribution centers, vending machines?
7. Where will drugs be dispensed — in restaurants, on planes, at catered parties?

8. Will drug “saloons” similar to bars be permitted — which drugs could be served and in what quantities?

9. Where will advertising be permitted — on billboards, TV, in print media, on radio?

10. What will the content of drug ads look like? — “Had a hard day? Mellow out and smoke a joint.” “Can’t afford a vacation to Europe? Take an LSD trip instead.” “Tired and depressed? A little cocaine will get you going.”

11. Will drugs be marketed in dosages and potencies similar to the way prescription drugs are sold — will marijuana be sold by the potency of its active ingredient THC (5%, 8%, 10%), will drugs be prescribed as tabs, lids, rocks, lines, and so on?

12. Will drug paraphernalia, such as freebase cocaine kits, bongs, needles, and syringes, also be made legal?

13. Where will drug paraphernalia be sold — in supermarkets, department stores, specialty shops, etc.?

**Specific Drug Considerations**

This next set of questions highlights the fact that all drugs are not the same. Each drug is unique and presents special problems based on its particular pharmacology, the way it is taken, and how it impacts and inconveniences others.

14. Will drug-using and nondrug-using sections be provided in public places for marijuana smokers, similar to how cigarettes are regulated?

15. If marijuana is made legal, what are the chances that there will be an increased demand for legalizing other drugs?

16. If marijuana is legalized, how will the issue of its side-stream smoke, which can cause others to get high by just being near the smoker, be dealt with?

17. Instead of legalization, what advantages would there be in making marijuana a Schedule II drug like cocaine? (A Schedule II drug can be pre-
scribed for medical purposes, but can still be prohibited for non-medical use.)

18. Will manufacturers be liable for lawsuits by those who become addicted to drugs like heroin, which have a strong potential for addiction?

19. Many American soldiers stationed in Vietnam during the Vietnam War took heroin because it was freely available and stopped taking it when they returned to the United States, where heroin is harder to get and there are legal sanctions against using it. How relevant is that Vietnam experience to the question of heroin legalization?

20. If cocaine is legalized, will crack, a freebase form of cocaine that has been responsible for tremendous amounts of violence and addiction, also be made legal?

21. Cocaine promotes feelings that are highly valued in American culture — pleasure and power. If cocaine is made legal, what is the likelihood that many Americans will take it to achieve these feelings?

22. Will designer drugs (analogues of illegal drugs that are made in laboratories) also be legalized — all of them, some of them, what will be the selection criteria?

23. If the legal prescription of the “love drug” Quaalude is restored, how likely is it that the overprescribing that went on during the 1970s, when Quaaludes were legal, would reoccur?

24. What are the dangers of legalizing long-acting psychoactive drugs like LSD, whose effects can last for 12 hours or more?

**Medical Use and Distribution**

The following questions center on who should be permitted to receive legalized drugs and who should be authorized to furnish them. These questions also raise awareness of the abuse of legalized drugs sanctioned for medical purposes.

25. If illegal drugs are licensed for medical use, how will leakage to unauthorized users be prevented?

26. If legalized drugs are made available through prescriptions, will a visit to the doctor be required?

27. What will be the policy on drug refills?
28. What kind of security measures will pharmacists need to safely store legalized drugs?

29. Who will set the criteria for the conditions under which drugs licensed for medical use can be prescribed — physicians, marijuana clubs, the Justice Department, others?

30. What kind of warnings will be issued with legalized drugs — what form will they take — similar to the warnings on cigarette packages and wine labels?

31. What will be the impact of drug legalization on medical insurance rates — how likely is it that premiums will rise due to increases in drug-related illnesses?

32. If drugs are authorized only for addicts, will those who have multiple addictions be permitted to obtain all of their drugs?

33. If only addicts are given legalized drugs, what is the possibility that a good number of them will illegally sell part of their supply to nonaddict users?

34. If certain drugs are distributed to addicts only, what are the chances that non-addicts who want to use these drugs will become addicted to obtain a legal supply?

Work Problems and Legalization Alternatives

Some of the questions in this section deal with the effects of legalized drugs in the workplace. Others address legalization alternatives, such as decriminalization — a term often used interchangeably with legalization even though it actually refers to the removal of criminal sanctions for the possession of small quantities of drugs for personal use.

35. How likely is it that workers who use legalized drugs will have increased absentee rates and more accidents on the job?

36. What are the odds that problems will develop when workers get together after work to relax over a joint, a crack pipe, or a hit of heroin?

37. How conceivable is it that legalization will produce a greater need for drug testing in the workplace?
38. What will be the time span for prohibiting workers in "sensitive" jobs, like airline pilots or firefighters, from using particular drugs — a day before coming to work, a week, more?

39. How many additional auto accidents and auto fatalities will likely result from legalizing drugs?

40. How probable is it that the tax revenue raised on the sale of drugs will make up for the income lost from poor productivity as abuse and addiction limit the ability of people to work?

41. The former mayor of Baltimore, Kurt Schmoke, has suggested setting up a national commission to study alternatives to our current drug policies. What are the pros and cons of this suggestion?

42. Would a decriminalization policy for certain drugs have greater benefits than legalization — what drugs, what benefits, how would the benefits be measured?

43. Instead of legalizing drugs, would it be cheaper and more effective to provide additional resources to parents, schools, and agencies to prevent and treat drug abuse — how would costs and effectiveness be measured?

44. Will age limits be placed on buying and using drugs — which drugs, what ages — lower age limit for marijuana, higher age limit for heroin?

45. If legalization normalizes drug use, what are the chances that this will make it more difficult to persuade young people not to take drugs?

46. How likely is it that celebrity endorsements of drugs, by athletes, musicians, actors, and so on, will significantly increase the rate of drug use among young people?

47. If juveniles are barred from legalized drugs, but adults are allowed to use them, what is the possibility that this will result in a "forbidden fruit" allure and produce considerably more drug use among the young?

48. Will young people be allowed to buy drug paraphernalia?

**Drugs and Young People**

The questions included here are concerned with how legalization would affect young people. Since young people are the nation’s future, a poorly designed drug policy could end up having long-lasting negative consequences. Avoiding such consequences should be a primary concern for policy makers.

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48. Will young people be allowed to buy drug paraphernalia?
49. If drugs are prohibited to young people, what is the possibility that the black market will seek them out as customers?

50. Alcohol and cigarettes are readily available to those under twenty-one. How probable is it that legalizing drugs will also make these substances as readily available to young people?

51. Legalizing drugs would end the goal of a drug-free America. To what extent does this goal help motivate adults and children to fight against drugs and not to use them?

52. In studies done in New Jersey and California, students report that the fear of getting into trouble with the authorities is the major reason they do not use drugs. (3) Since legalization would remove much, if not all, of this threat, how likely is it that the result would be an increase in drug use among teens?

**User Considerations**

Will legalizing drugs greatly increase the number of drug users and the problems associated with drug use? The following questions spotlight these concerns.

53. To what extent will legalizing drugs increase public intoxication and people making nuisances of themselves?

54. If drugs are cheap, as they would be if they were legal, how likely is it that many more people would be tempted to buy them?

55. How probable is it that a smorgasbord of legalized drugs will encourage people to try different drugs?

56. What limits will be set on the quantity of a drug that a person can buy?

57. If legalization is done on an experimental basis in a particular locality, what are the chances that drug users from outside that area will be attracted to that locale?

58. What is the possibility that legalization will significantly increase the number of curiosity seekers who decide to use drugs?

59. If drugs are made legal, how likely is it that more treatment facilities will be needed to serve an increased number of abusers and addicts?

60. How many more people will seek drug solutions to their problems if legalization goes into effect?
61. What is the probability that legalizing drugs will create the same large-scale public health problems we now have with alcohol and tobacco?

62. Americans are attracted to novelty. If drugs are made legal, what is the prospect that their new position in society will create added interest in them and result in a drug craze?

**Crime and Law Enforcement**

Those on both sides of the legalization debate tend to oversimplify issues involving law enforcement and drug-related crime. But, as the next group of questions indicates, these issues are complicated and should be given serious thought.

63. How much does the stigma of illegality prevent people from taking drugs?

64. Instead of legalizing drugs, would it be more effective to increase law enforcement efforts — how much more effective, how would effectiveness be measured?

65. Many individuals arrested for drug sales have previous records for other criminal acts. How likely is it, if drugs are legalized, that these people would go into other criminal lines of work, such as prostitution, gambling, extortion, and so on?

66. If drugs are made legal, to what degree will declines in systemic violence (violence associated with drug trafficking and distribution) be offset by increases in psychopharmacologic violence (violence from biochemical reactions caused by drugs)?

67. If illegal drugs that are now in use become legal, what are the odds that black marketeers will look for and develop new drugs to sell?

68. If a legalization policy sets a quantity limit for drug users, how probable is it that a large percentage of them will turn to the black market for an additional supply?

69. How conceivable is it that drug legalization will encourage legalization of other victimless crimes such as prostitution and gambling?

70. Some say we should legalize drugs because the current drug laws are poorly enforced. What is the evidence that drug regulations necessary in
any legalization scheme would be better enforced; what would be the costs of enforcement?

71. What would the penalties be for violating legalization regulations?

72. How will federal, state, and local governments enforce legalization regulations — will there be new agencies and bureaucracies, will there be a super agency?

73. To what extent does present drug policy cause corruption among police and public officials, and to what extent is corruption due to the weak moral character of those who engage in it?

Neighborhood and Community Concerns

Drug legalization would not impact all communities equally. The following questions call attention to this fact as well as the need to minimize legalization’s negative effects in vulnerable localities.

74. How will the location of marijuana, cocaine, and heroin clinics and stores be determined?

75. What sort of impacts will these clinics and stores have in the areas where they are located?

76. If drugs become more accessible because of legalization, how likely is it that this will have a particularly devastating effect in many inner-city locations where hopelessness and despair already contribute to high rates of drug use?

77. Drug ads for legalized drugs will probably target areas where drug use is now most prevalent. How will this affect the people living in these places?

78. Would providing more job opportunities, social service supports, and educational funding to marginalized communities be more beneficial and cost effective than legalizing drugs — how could this be measured?

79. What are the chances that legalizing drugs will create heroin, marijuana, and cocaine “skid rows”?

International Ramifications

Legalizing drugs in America would have international consequences involving foreign drug growing and trafficking, multilateral conventions, and
bilateral agreements. The significance of these effects is rarely mentioned in drug debates even though the United States has been the principal sponsor of many international drug control pacts.

80. If drugs are made legal, will exotic substances from other countries be allowed into our markets — qat from Yemen, bekaro from Pakistan, and so on?

81. Legalizing drugs would involve violating a number of our international agreements and treaty obligations. What effects might this have on American foreign policy?

82. How would we explain a drug legalization policy to countries like Mexico and Colombia where we have encouraged drug crop eradication and have contributed to police and military efforts to crack down on drugs?

83. What would be the guidelines for importation of drugs from other countries — would there be quantity limits, open trade, tariffs?

84. If we allow American farmers to grow marijuana for domestic consumption, would we also permit them to export it to the rest of the world?

85. Under a legalization policy, will foreign drugs be marketed like foreign coffee — freshly grown marijuana from Colombia and Mexico; high-quality opium from Burma, Laos, and Pakistan; top-of-the-line cocaine from Bolivia and Peru?

86. Every country has its own unique population and sociocultural values. To what extent do these factors limit the usefulness of comparing drug policies among nations?

87. Countries with liberal drug policies, such as Holland, tend to attract "drug tourists" from other places. What are the chances that legalization in the United States would produce a similar situation?

88. How likely is it that legalization would encourage domestic and international drug companies to look for additional psychoactive drugs to sell?

Et Cetera

These last questions cover a wide range of topics such as how to evaluate whether legalization is working, historical considerations, economic concerns, attitudinal factors, and more. The final question suggests that complacency has no place in developing a drug legalization proposal.
89. What are the chances that the problems that will come about because of drug legalization will shift our attention from the problems we now have with alcohol and tobacco?

90. Pressuring arrested addicts to go into treatment rather than sending them to jail has had good results. Since legalization would do away with this policy, what is the probability that it will lead to fewer people finding their way into treatment?

91. If drugs are made legal, what can be done to teach moderation to those who decide to use them?

92. What criteria will be used to evaluate the success of a legalization policy?

93. What fallback mechanisms could be put into place in case legalization does not work — what problems would there be in reinstating criminal penalties?

94. Public opinion polls indicate that most Americans would not try drugs even if they were legally available. But this public attitude of resistance to drugs was formed during a period of drug prohibition. How likely is it that such resistance would continue in a climate of drug legalization?

95. If legalized drugs are taxed, how will the tax revenue be allocated — to drug prevention, treatment, law enforcement, a general fund, road construction, and so on?

96. What do those in law enforcement, treatment, and prevention think of legalization?

97. In 1993, U.S. Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders was politically vilified when she suggested that legalization might be beneficial and should be studied. What can be done to keep public debate open on this issue?

98. At the end of the nineteenth century, when drugs were legal, America had the highest per-capita rate of drug use in its history. How relevant is this observation to the current legalization debate?

99. To what extent will legalizing drugs promote a hedonistic philosophy of life that will cause people to turn away from their obligations and duties to others?

100. Can you think of at least one more question that might be useful in formulating a drug legalization proposal?
NOTES


SELECTED ANNOTATED REFERENCES

The following are some key references that were used to devise the questions that appear in this article.

Drug Enforcement Administration. *Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization* (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1994). This guide, which evolved from the Anti-Legalization Forum held at the FBI/DEA Training Academy in August 1994, presents arguments against legalization and a list of prolegalization and antilegalization books, newspapers, magazine articles, reports, and organizations.

Evans, Rod L., and Irwin M. Berent (editors), *Drug Legalization: For and Against* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1992). This book gives a fair and balanced presentation of the legalization debate and includes important articles by many of the major players in the debate. It contains a foreword by Linus Pauling and an introduction by Hugh Downs.


The editor of this almost 700-page book examines the legalization question through contributions from experts involved in anthropology, economics, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology.


PROFILE
Laurie Cox

Laurie Cox, recipient of the 2003 Talbot Winchell Award for furthering general semantics, is a remarkable humanitarian who began using general semantics to help resolve his own "psychological" problems, and later became a dedicated general semantics teacher, counselor, and author — as well as co-founder of the Australian Society for General Semantics. I first met Laurie at an IGS general semantics Seminar-Workshop in 1989, and I enjoyed his warm personality, his appetite for learning, his enthusiastic sharing of ideas, and his concern for the welfare of others. We had many wonderful discussions. On learning that Laurie had received the Winchell Award, I asked him to tell ETC readers about himself, and I was touched by his frank and open response. Here, in his own words, Laurie tells us about his life and general semantics. — PDJ

Laurie Cox:

I believe that my long term study of general semantics has been a major factor in recovering from a damaging family upbringing.

I was born illegitimate and my mother's ultimate marriage to a man who was not my biological father had many unfortunate 'neurotic' results.

One of these was the failure of my first marriage. I lacked skills in handling interpersonal difficulties or responding to sensitive issues.

In 1952, shortly after my marriage breakup, I was introduced to general semantics and read Stuart Chase's The Tyranny of Words and Irving Lee's Language Habits in Human Affairs. I then enrolled in Wendell Johnson's correspondence course, based on People in Quandaries, through Iowa University, gaining an "A" grade two years later in the final exam.

The following year my ex-wife remarried. Her choice was a man whom I thoroughly disliked. I correctly predicted that this would exclude me from my two children. I experienced some depression and embarked on a long term psychotherapy with a psychiatrist. By this time I was also reading Science and Sanity.
The psychiatrist was unique at that time, in the sense that he combined group with individual therapy. Because of my background, including my skill as a shorthand typist, I acquired the role of recorder of groups, both small and large, in the psychiatrist's practice. This proved, for me, a very valuable experience over a number of years. It was followed by some years of further counseling by a psychologist who took a wide-ranging cognitive and social science approach. This relationship might partly be classified as a friendship in which we shared a great deal. It culminated by my returning to Sydney University where I gained first a bachelor's, then a master's degree in anthropology.

In 1979, I met Betty, who became my second wife. In that year we attended a theatrical production which turned out to be personally very significant. The production was a factual representation of the life of a New Zealand female novelist who was diagnosed with a terminal illness. On hearing the diagnosis the novelist said, "I hope I can finish the work I must do before I die."

On hearing these words I became ill. I had to be helped from the theater by Betty and a member of staff.

The message was clear: I had to do something with my acquired understanding of general semantics. It led directly to my running short courses in communication with adult educational bodies. These ran eight to ten weeks, one evening a week. At the end of each course I invited some participants to join me in a follow-up course which I organized.

In 1986, Betty and I went to England where I met two well-trained general semanticists, Lawrence Inkster and George Doris. I met them again on our second trip two years later, when they urged me to enroll in an Institute annual Seminar-Workshop. I attended this in 1989. I made friendships with many at this seminar, including Paul Johnston, who invited me to spend a few days as the guest of himself and his wife June in the San Francisco area.

Returning to Australia I followed the advice of Paul and others and contacted Andrew Lohrey, an Australian friend and colleague of members of the International Society. Andrew and I co-founded the Australian Society for General Semantics. Andrew's idea being to abbreviate the name to A.G.S. My small group of students who continued from their initial short courses became the foundation members of the new society.

Thus general semantics has been a very significant factor in my personal growth. In my present leading (or facilitating) a general semantics group, I am using Bruce and Susan Kodish's book Drive Yourself Sane. In my future work I plan to combine their writings with General Semantics in Psychotherapy by Isabel Caro and Charlotte Schuchardt Read.
"When the error of confusing the wording with the reality is uncovered, the way is often cleared for the solution of the conflict."

Self-Management in Difficult Situations

**THE STRESS OF CONFLICTING VIEWS**

Laurie Cox*

Our conflicts and disputes inevitably involve stress or indignation. This may become visible in our facial expression, voice tone, or gestures. Behind these visible reactions lie our attitudes, beliefs, and convictions.

Being firmly convinced of the ‘correctness’ of our beliefs and attitudes, we tend to respond accordingly. This may be diagrammed as follows:

Suppose that you and I are communicating, and we hold strongly differing convictions. A possible conflict between us might ensue:

What we say and do

What usually happens as a result?

Possibly part of the following:

Stress reactions in each of us, including increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, muscular tension, altered breathing pattern, and other things of which we may or may not be aware.
Our over-all response to any happening or situation may be usefully diagrammed as follows:

1. **HAPPENING LEVEL**
   - Something happens outside of you.

2. **NERVOUS IMPACT-1**
   - Which impacts on you beneath your level of awareness.

3. **NERVOUS IMPACT-2**
   - Leading to your ‘awareness’ of ‘thoughts’, ‘feelings’, etc.

4. **VERBAL LEVEL**
   - Leading in turn to what you say and ultimately what you do.

This brings us to the importance of:

**DISTINGUISHING THE HAPPENING FROM THE WORDING.**

My colleagues and I see it as of the highest importance not to confuse level 4 with level 1. That is, we see it as a fundamental mistake to treat these two levels as one and the same. In the above diagram the happening comes first, and is more important than the wording which comes last. Here, we are particularly indebted to Alfred Korzybski’s formulation of general-semantics.

We see the following as a useful statement to be constantly aware of:

"DON’T TAKE THE WORDING TO BE THE REALITY."

The mistake of confusing these two levels may be seen constantly in conflicts and disputes in which, of course, many other factors are also involved. But when the error of confusing the wording with the reality is uncovered, the way is often cleared for the solution of the conflict.

Unfortunately it is not always easy to detect this error, and many people do confuse these two levels in the sense of assuming that the wording IS the thing.

In general, it is fairly easy for us to detect deliberate lying. The media, for instance, often exposes untruths, but despite constant exposures of this kind it is so easy for us to assume — quite unconsciously — that levels 1 and 4 are equivalent or the same.
TEXTBOOK LAUNDERING —
OFFEND NO ONE,
TEACH NOTHING

KATE GLADSTONE*

THE TEXTBOOKS our children use at school avoid bias, misrepresentation, and censorship — or so we might like to believe.

Those who care about accurate description, and who assume textbook publishers care too, may read with alarm a new book that exposes the behind-the-scenes expurgation, which, in the name of political correctness, can reduce educational content to distorted, sterilized, inoffensive nonsense.

In The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn (Knopf, April 2003), Diane Ravitch reveals how attempts to reduce bias have gone awry, resulting in inaccurate or incomplete portrayals of history and current events, as well as the banning or rewriting of classical literature. Sometimes, guidelines forbid words or phrases but offer no alternatives. We must then assume that the publisher expects students simply not to think about such matters.

* Kate Gladstone lives in Albany, New York, and operates a handwriting-remediation service. Interest in other fields of education stimulated this, her first contribution to ETC.
The material cited here from Ravitch also appeared in Ravitch’s article “The Language Police” on pages 82-83 of the March 2003 Atlantic Monthly. Ravitch’s article and book quote verbatim from “bias guidelines,” which various USA educational publishers and state agencies require writers, editors, and illustrators to use in preparing textbooks and tests for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

As you read my excerpts and comments on material Ravitch cites, remember: these come from “guidelines” already active — not proposals, but existing practices over the past decade at least.

Ravitch’s comments appear in parenthesis after the banned words listed below. My comments follow in italics.

Banned Words, Phrases, and Imagery

BUSYBODY
(“banned as sexist, demeaning to older women”)
But “busybody” doesn’t specify the body’s gender! Several biographers have used “busybody” to describe (male) US presidents. Does calling John Adams a “busybody” (some contemporaries did so) demean women?

CASSANDRA
(“banned as sexist”)
Banning “Cassandra” — presumably because it attributes gloom-and-doomsaying to a woman — means deleting the Trojan War from the history books, unless you leave a main figure nameless.

DEVIL
(“banned”)
The publisher banning “the Devil” also bans “God,” “Hell,” and “Satan.” How do you cover the Inquisition without mentioning beliefs which motivated it? You could teach that Inquisitors killed people — but you couldn’t say why. I’ve seen some textbooks/curricula “solve” the problem by omitting the Inquisition or other events motivated by banned ideas.

JUNK BONDS
(“banned as elitist”)
The bias-list doesn’t suggest what to call them if you can’t say “junk bonds.” Perhaps the ban-masters want nobody mentioning junk bonds to
anyone under 18 — so how do you explain recent USA economics and politics without “junk bond”?

MAJORITY GROUP
(“banned as offensive”)
Yes, the list banning this also bans “minority group.” Here, too, the ban-master doesn’t suggest what to say (or think) instead. Presumably someone disapproves of the “offensive” fact that a few groups outnumber others.

OMBUDSMAN
(“banned as sexist”)
Several USA state/city governments — and two Scandinavian countries — have (or recently had) a government officer titled “Ombudsman.” So much for hoping that textbooks accurately describe political entities.

TOMBOY
(“banned as sexist”)
So what do they want you to call “a girl who enjoys sports usually played by boys”? Since the ban-masters provide no permissible substitute for “tomboy,” I can only gather that they disapprove of the notion itself — the reality that, like it or not, more boys than girls play certain sports, and we may sometimes want to talk about that.

Ban-lists prohibit not only words but also certain types of pictures or mental imagery of events. From Houghton-Mifflin’s taboo-list, Ravitch cites the following “Stereotyped Images to Avoid in Text, Illustrations, and Reading Passages in Tests” —

• “Women portrayed as teachers, mothers, nurses, or secretaries”
  If they don’t want women portrayed as mothers, just whom do they want portrayed as mothers?

• “Men and boys larger and heavier than women and girls”
  Never mind that this reflects biological reality: publishing-house employees tell me that, e.g., their human biology textbooks cannot mention the “sexist” datum that males generally average somewhat taller/heavier than females, or even show male and female bodies/skeletons side-by-side if the female’s height/bulk doesn’t equal or exceed the male’s. If
your employer has tabooed the "sexist" average height/weight discrepancy, you mustn't depict any male as taller/heavier than any female in the same fictional or non-fictional passage. When 6-foot-4-inch President Lincoln had himself photographed with his 4-foot-10-inch wife, he couldn't anticipate that later editors would excise her to fight sexism.

• "People of color being angry"

The same list also bans depicting "people of color as politically liberal." Only whites, it seems, feel angry or vote Democratic.

• "Korean-Americans owning or working in fruit markets"

Never mind that in much of the USA fruit markets do overwhelmingly belong to Korean-Americans — the ban-masters don't want stories or factual text describing a universe where this has happened. Apparently they disapprove of such a universe although we live in it. If textbook authors can't acknowledge "politically incorrect" events — Koreans dominating the fruit-market industry, men having bigger bodies than women, etc. — then they cannot ask, or encourage asking, what causes those events.

• "Hispanics wearing bright colors, older women in black, girls always in dresses"

This ban forbids accurately depicting dress customs of some Hispanic cultures.

• "Older people in nursing homes or with canes, walkers, wheelchairs, orthopedic shoes or eyeglasses ... [or] have twinkles in their eyes, need afternoon naps, lose their hearing or sight, suffer aches and pains ... [or] are fishing, baking, knitting, whittling, reminiscing, rocking in chairs, or watching television"

In textbook-land, only the young — those not "older" than some unspecified age — need glasses or watch TV. Just how old can you get, I wonder, before a publisher wipes the twinkle from your eyes? Over 60? Or over 50 or 40, perhaps? Drop that whittling knife! Pull that loaf from the oven and hide it NOW!

These decisions (and others, below, cited in Ravitch's book) show a certain grand disdain for the actual universe: e.g., publishing maps that leave out, or
arbitrarily reposition or reshape any state, city, road, boundary, or landmark whose existence and/or present position displeased the mapmaker.

Ravitch reports, for instance, that one educational publisher refuses to mention owls because a Native American people (the Navajo) regards owls as evil and unlucky; several publishers forbid mentioning or depicting cake in any context, including birthday cake at birthday parties, because of complaints from those who regard cake in any quantity as intolerable "junk food" and therefore oppose admitting that people sometimes eat it.

What do we want to teach our children? If we want them to grow into adults who can function well, we need to give them useful, accurate maps—not maps homogenized, sanitized, and (dare I say it?) emasculated into sheer uselessness.

In conclusion, I would like to offer you a children’s story that I have written in accordance with the rules laid down by the “language police.”

WISH ON THE BIRTHDAY ZUCCHINI

by K. Gladstone

(author's first name deleted to prevent gender stereotyping)

Kim remembers the best birthday party ever. Her friend Joey gave it, and invited the whole second grade. When they arrived at Joey’s place (not specifiable as a house, for fear of alienating children whose families don’t own a house, and not specifiable as an apartment, for fear of alienating children with other living arrangements), Joey’s father had baked the biggest birthday zucchini you ever saw.

As the children sang “Happy Birthday,” Joey’s father proudly carried the twenty-pound vegetable to the table — no, he didn’t, of course, because that would stereotype men as performing heavy labor. And Joey’s mother didn’t bring it either, to avoid sexist stereotypes of women serving food. The editors considered making Joey’s mother a pre-operation transsexual and therefore still technically “male,” which would permit her/him to serve food without supporting a stereotype, but the editor-in-chief wondered how more
politically/socially conservative areas of the country would respond. The publisher has begun market research on the feasibility of making Joey’s mom a pre-op transsexual for the second edition. For now, though, by some unmentionable method, the traditional birthday zucchini, glowing with candles, arrived at the table. To persuade young readers that vegetables taste good to everyone, at the behest of several influential lobbies, the children uttered a heartfelt “Mmmmm!” at this marvelous sight.

“Wow!” said Kim. “That zucchini looks much yummier than...”

“Than what?” Joey asked.

“Than ... than stuff my mom and dad used to talk about, that people used to eat on birthdays.”

“What stuff?”

“Oh, it doesn’t have any name. Just stuff that stopped existing one day. Or it could have never existed.”

Someone shouted “Make a wish!” Joey closed both eyes, breathed deep, and blew out every candle at once (to avoid deflating the self-esteem of children who identify with Joey) while at the same time needing extra puffs for some candles and blowing out all but one (to avoid deflating the self-esteem of children with asthma who find it difficult or impossible to blow out candles). To avoid deciding whether Joey had blown them all out, each of his friends closed both eyes, too, and huffed and puffed in case he needed help — no, they didn’t, since the editorial committee has decided that any suggestion that people with disabilities might have difficulty at any task may prevent young readers from regarding those with disabilities as valuable, competent, and worthwhile human beings.

“What did you wish, Joey?” Kim asked.

“Well, I tried wishing, but I couldn’t think of the words, or imagine whatever things those words stood for. It felt weird — like someone hitting a DELETE button and erasing my wish before I could even wish it.”

Joey’s strange words troubled Kim, but not for long. In the nick of time, the author consulted the educational publisher’s editorial guidelines and deleted this paragraph.

“What did you wish, Joey?” Kim asked.

“I wished you and I and everyone else would have lives just like this party, forever and ever.”

And they did.
"The core of science is the scientific method — a procedure for determining the difference between knowledge and belief."

**SCIENCE**

**DAVID GERROLD**

*A true scientist doesn’t believe anything.*

*He is the ultimate agnostic.*

*He is all question and no answer.*

Unfortunately, a lot of people seem to think science is just another kind of magic. Or worse, they think that science is a kind of religion, and that it’s just a different kind of faith. Or that science is mutable, and that reality can be voted on. Some people even think that science is the enemy of religion. No, it is not any of those things.

**Science is an access to knowledge.** It is a rigorous and unforgiving discipline. It is unsentimental — it discards old ideas on the trash heap of history as fast as they are discredited. (1) It accepts few concepts only so far as they explain the facts at hand better than the old ones.

Science is not — as some people think — the place where answers are found. It is the place where questions are asked. Science is not about knowledge — it is about ignorance, because science is about nothing if it is not about the search for greater knowledge. In science, an answer is only the place where you stopped asking the question. (2)

The core of science is the scientific method — a procedure for determining the difference between knowledge and belief.

Belief is kind of like wishing. It exists inside yourself. It’s a derivation of what psychologists call “magical thinking.” Belief is a conviction that the universe works a certain way, even though you have no physical evidence at all to prove it, only your faith. Faith is useful, very useful, but it’s not science.

Knowledge, on the other hand, is evidence. It exists outside yourself. It is measurable, it is testable, it is repeatable, and it is demonstrable. Most important, it can be communicated to other people. They can repeat the measurements and tests and demonstrate the same facts for themselves. In other words, knowledge is what we can all agree on, because we can each verify it for ourselves.

So the scientific method is a procedure for determining the evidence. It is a way of establishing agreement.

It works like this: You observe a phenomenon of some kind — a condition, a behavior, a curiosity — something that you do not understand. Other people observe it too, so you know it exists, but you have no explanation for it. So you postulate a theory.

Is your theory accurate or not? How do you find out?

You test it.

You design an experiment that allows you to test only that single question, nothing else; i.e., the only variable is the one you are testing; everything else is a constant from one test to the next.

Whatever the specific result of the experiment, it is always a success — because it always gives you information. It is either information about what works, or it is information about what doesn’t work; but either way, the result of the experiment is a fact, and each fact is a piece of knowledge.

Even if the experiment confirms your theory, you’re still not done. That’s the annoying thing about science — you’re never done. One of two things can
happen: Either a better theory comes along and you throw out the old one, or another fact comes along that doesn’t fit your theory and you have to come up with a new one.

So the scientific method is about asking the question, and asking it again, and asking it yet again. It’s about testing the facts as well as the theory, forever. To the scientific mind, there is no end. Theories aren’t proven, they are simply used — and only as long as they are useful.

A theory is a map of a specific terrain of knowledge. It’s not the territory, it’s just a representation of it. Depending on what we need to do, we specify what kind of a map we need. Road maps are different from weather maps, rainfall maps are different from geological survey maps, terrain maps are different from maps to movie stars’ homes. Every map is useful for the purpose it was designed for — and useless for the purposes it was not designed for.

As the researchers in our world continue to refine the different maps of the terrain we’ve discovered, the various maps become more accurate and more useful, and we become more powerful in what we can accomplish. That’s why we make maps, and that’s what science is about — mapmaking.

NOTES

2. “Truth in science can be defined as the working hypothesis best suited to open the way to the next better one.” — Konrad Lorens.
I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout. — Jonathan Swift (1729)

A VERY IMMODEST PROPOSAL

CHARLES G. RUSSELL*

Almost three hundred years ago, Swift satirically suggested using poor Irish children as food — his A Modest Proposal aroused a public outcry of indignation and disgust. History has shown that many people take more offense at the words we use to describe events and they take less offense at the events themselves. Below, I immodestly propose that we strongly endorse using cruel words to describe inhuman actions and the cruel people who cause human suffering.

Samantha Power’s Pulitzer Prize winning A Problem From Hell tellingly illustrates problems people have with using the word genocide to name brutal acts committed against millions of people. She documents many examples of the inhumane treatment of ordinary citizens by those in various positions of power. Examples from Turkey’s Talaat massacre of Armenians in 1915, through Hitler’s atrocities, Pol Pot’s killing fields, Rwandan Hutu slaughter

* A retired Professor of Communication, now working as a business consultant, Dr. Russell has spent much of his life in both academia and the business world. He currently serves as President of ISGS. Many of his articles have appeared in ETC. His latest book, Culture, Language and Behavior, is available from ISGS.
of Tutsi, Milosevic and Raznjatovic slaying of Muslims, and Saddam Hussein's 1987 gassing of Kurds, paint a picture of little public outcry over brutal slaughter, but considerable official outcry over Raphael Lemkin's efforts to have genocide officially defined and labeled a crime.

Yet those who operate organizations that pass repressive laws, distribute destructive drugs, oppress, terrorize, defraud, torture, or otherwise contribute to human wretchedness often seem to receive respect from the very people that they victimize.

Such "respect" appears in the language. Those who live such unhappy lives often address their oppressors with language that indicates respect.

Historically, many people have allowed relatively few individuals to "get away with" behaviors commonly recognized as "inappropriate," or much worse. We have examples of ancient and modern tyrants savagely beating or working innocent people to death. More recently, we see politicians passing laws that enrich themselves and those who "contribute to their campaigns" at taxpayers' expense. We see drug dealers distributing drugs to people who become addicted, and "respectable" CEOs who steal millions from their shareholders.

Names Can Indicate Respect or Contempt

Consider the names reporters use for known and convicted drug dealers, or for public officials who accept bribes. Reporters often refer to such persons as Mr. Jones or Officer Smith. Yet the titles Mr. and Officer both indicate some respect. Can you easily conceptualize as "human garbage" someone called Officer? Do not these two classifications seem so far apart that they could not possibly represent the same individuals?

Pejorative Names Can Significantly Alter Perceptions

In March 1992, a newspaper headline read, "Saddam defies U.N.'s effort to destroy arms." The article that followed referred to the head of the government of Iraq as Saddam Hussein. With or without a title before his name, Saddam Hussein reportedly ordered the invasion of Kuwait and stood accused by many journalists and various officials as directly responsible for poison gas used on some citizens of Iraq. Yet news reporters frequently identified him by name or as the head of the government of Iraq. What do you think would have happened to Saddam Hussein's ability to behave as he did if every reporter and citizen of Iraq used the words "human garbage," "murderer," or some equally pejorative name when talking and writing about him?
Print and broadcast journalists continued to refer to Saddam Hussein by either his name or with titles such as President or Leader in the days leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Two months later, when reporting about the man who directly and indirectly inflicted inhumane punishments on countless thousands, news reporters still identify him in the language they use when referring to other heads of state.

Does the thought of actually calling the head of a government a “bad name” violate your sense of how we should communicate? I predict that you probably find my suggestion about referring to anyone, let alone a head of a government, by a “bad name” unacceptable. After all, “civilized” and “educated” people just do not express themselves that way!

History Offers Examples of Deplorable People Given Linguistic Respect

Please think back to one of our species’ more despicable characters — Dr. Joseph Mengele. We have ample documentation that he personally ordered and supervised horrible and depraved treatment of thousands of fellow human beings, and called his work “medical experiments.” Such cruel behavior generally evokes within us feelings of contempt and disgust. Therefore, calling such people as Mengele by the name barbarian, psychopath, or scum, rather than Doctor could reduce their ability to function credibly as if they deserved respect.

Historians offer too many examples of people behaving as if laws and basic human rights did not concern them. Their behaviors reflected contempt for fellow human beings, and yet they continued to have the appearance of respectability confirmed by the words others used to address them. How did you conceptualize such people in the privacy of your thoughts? Did those private thoughts match your public names for those individuals who may well hold positions of importance?

Language Can Quickly Strip Away Pseudo Respect

If you recognize that you have, from time to time, perceived those who harm others as worthy of contempt, perhaps you can also acknowledge that such people do not deserve the language that allows them the pretense of social acceptability.

*Ability to function in society depends very much on social acceptability. Words showing respect generally contribute to that acceptability, and words showing contempt can quickly strip it away!*
Our leaders, public officials, and other “merchants of misery” who make
decisions that contribute to human suffering do not deserve words that help
them “pretend” they deserve respect. Yet our elected officials address public
officials in China as if they did not imprison dissenters, conceal SARS, or
authorize slave labor. Could dictators throughout the world continue to sur-
vive if world leaders and average citizens all addressed them with “bad
names”?

Words Have Only the Power We Allow

Some who understand language and its role in perception appreciate that
words have only the power we allow them to have. Unfortunately, many do
not recognize this important effect of language.

We give words enormous power. Pejorative words can have a powerfully
destructive effect on our stimulus-response behaviors. In a figurative sense,
some words have the destructive power of nuclear weapons. How can we use-
fully use this “ultimate weapon” to improve our lives?

Words Can Remove the Pretense of Respect

We have noted that words can have a power to stigmatize those who know-
ingly and deliberately contribute to human misery, and perhaps bring about
their rejection by society. Individually and collectively we have the power,
through our words, to reject and isolate members of society who place them-
selves above others to destroy basic human rights. We just need to remove
our linguistic pretense that we accept people who have not earned our
respect.

An Immodest Proposal

My immodest proposal places on our shoulders the responsibility for stop-
ing behaviors known to destroy people’s lives and spirits. You can join the
ranks of those who know the power of language and choose to use the “ulti-
mate weapon” when more conventional approaches have failed to deter what
destroys us. Whether or not you think calling someone human garbage,
crook, butcher, or psychopath will better deter what you and others want to
stop, please recognize that following social norms and using “polite
language” has little chance of stopping them.
Linguistic Pretense Remover

When political candidates appeal to racial division to defeat their opponents, when businesspersons use fear of joblessness to gain concessions, when neighbors spread rumors to gain the upper hand, we can recognize their destructive actions and immediately offer them linguistic disapproval.

We do not have to use profane or obscene language, we only have to use words that strip away the facade of acceptability.

How long would a dishonest political candidate last if most people addressed the candidate as The Dishonorable Jones, The Liar from New York, or The Crook Smith? Would tobacco executives remain powerful if repeatedly called Merchants of Death? Roger Rosenblatt quotes Steven C. Parrish, a senior vice president of Philip Morris U.S.A., who said “Anybody would feel hurt if somebody says you are a merchant of death and you shouldn’t be able to look yourself in the mirror in the morning. I wish they wouldn’t say things like that.” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 34)

If You Had the Chance to “Stop” Hitler Before He Unleashed Madness on the World, What Would You Do?

Daily, we face the moral equivalent of meeting Hitler in the beginning of his campaign to eradicate the Jews, while knowing what will happen if no one stops him.

Perhaps we do not have to kill or physically harm the Hitlers of this world in order to stop their destruction. Consider this immodest proposal. The use of powerful language to show disapproval of the unacceptable and intolerable actions may suffice. The power of words can contribute to ending behaviors we know should end.

Solzhenitsyn (1985) offers a vigorous example of words that stopped oppression. In The Gulag Archipelago, he describes how prisoners at one camp began calling guards “Beria-ites” (Beria had “fallen from favor” in the Soviet system) to express their disapproval of the treatment they received. The guards and other prison officials felt “pain” from the prisoners calling them “Beria-ites” and complained about prisoners using the term. Solzhenitsyn tells us:

For this reason the head of one of the Kengir Camp Divisions was compelled to deliver the following address from the platform: “Men!” (In those few short years from 1954 to 1956, they found it possible to call the prisoners “men.”) “You hurt the feelings of the supervisory staff and the convoy troops by shouting ‘Beria-ites’ at them! Please stop it.” To which the diminutive V. G. Vlasov
replied: "Your feelings have been hurt in the last few months. But I've heard nothing but 'Fascist' from your guards for eighteen years. Do you think we have no feelings?" And so the major promised to cut out the abusive word 'Fascist.' A fair trade. (p. 455)

If powerless prisoners receiving the most inhumane treatment imaginable could confront their guards and bring about a change for the better through the use of language, what might happen if free and courageous people adopted such a strategy?

REFERENCES


ABSTRACTIONS

The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.

Winston Churchill

How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese?

Charles de Gaulle

A cheese may disappoint, it may be dull, it may be naive, it may be oversophisticated, yet it remains cheese, milk’s leap toward immortality.

Clifton Fadiman

I have an existential map. It has “you are here” written all over it.

Steven Wright

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.

F. Scott Fitzgerald
I knew I was going to take the wrong train so I left early.

It was impossible to get a conversation going; everybody was talking too much.

Half the game is ninety percent mental.

You can observe a lot just by watching.

I didn’t really say everything I said.

Attributed to Yogi Berra

It depends on what the meaning of the word “is” is. If “is” means is and never has been, that is not — that is one thing. If it means there is none, that was a completely true statement .... Now, if someone had asked me a question in the present tense, I would have said no. And it would have been completely true.

William Jefferson Clinton

As we know, there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns. The ones we don’t know we don’t know.

Donald Rumsfeld

It is the individual who knows how little he knows about himself who stands a reasonable chance of finding out something about himself.

S. I. Hayakawa

Compiled by Jeremy Klein
"Serious difficulties arise on the many occasions where
the motivation behind an apology has some ambiguity."

PARDON ME FOR BREATHING:
Seven Types of Apology

Daniela Kramer-Moore
and Michael Moore *

I'm sorry. Excuse me. Please forgive me. I beg your pardon. I apologize. What do we mean when we say we're sorry? It would seem that we can mean anything from remedial expressions of regret to sarcastic intimations of blame.

In our analysis, we have demarcated seven types of apology. To further understand these seven types, we have employed five etymologies, which we can use as formulas for investigation.

We shall assume that these five etymologies (marked a through e, respectively, and arranged in descending order of frequency of use (1)), have a rough analogy, even though one cannot necessarily replace them with one another, due to restrictions of syntax, context, and usage.

* Daniela Kramer-Moore is a Senior Lecturer at Oranim, College of Education of the Kibbutz Movement in Tivon, Israel. Dr. Michael Moore, a social psychologist, is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Education in Science and Technology at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology.
Five Etymologies for Apology

(a) "Sorry" derives from sore; has a similarity in use to German 'es tut mir leid', and to French 'je suis fâché de ....'

(b) "Excuse" (ex-causa, structurally analogous to German 'ent-schuldigen,' to Russian 'iz-vinit' and to Spanish 'dis-culpar') directly speaks of the removal of accusation.

(c) & (d) "Forgive" (for-giefan), as well as the English/French "pardon" (per-donare) and the German 'vergeben,' indicate to give completely.

(e) "Apologize" (apo-logos, somewhat similar to Russian 'prostit') denotes speaking off, or a speech in defense.

We further explore these etymologies in the footnotes. (2)

For the purpose of analysis, we may regard these etymologies as formulas. Consider these recent news items. Following each item, we have put in parenthesis the letters indicating which of the five formulas/etymologies these apologies employ:

"Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized for the captives' deaths [held by Chechen rebels in a Moscow theatre] in a television address saying: 'Please forgive us. The memory of the victims must unite all of us'” (10-27-02 CNN). (e, c)

"Les excuses de Saddam Hussein au peuple koweitien: 'Nous demandons pardon à Dieu pour tout acte ayant soulevé sa colère dans le passé ... et dans cet esprit, nous vous présentons également nos excuses’” (3) (12-7-02 Le Monde). (b, d, b)

Cardinal Bernard Law, on his resignation from the Archdiocese of Boston: “To all those who have suffered from my shortcomings and mistakes, I both apologize and from them beg forgiveness” (12-14-02 CNN). (e, c)

"Fighting for his political life, Republican Senate leader Trent Lott offered a public mea culpa for comments that appeared to endorse segregation: 'I apologize for opening old wounds and hurting many Americans who feel so deeply in this area.' ... He asked people to ‘find it in their heart’ to forgive him” (12-14-02 CNN). (e, c)

In these news items, the speakers use several different formulas interchangeably, occasionally employing more than one for the sake of strengthening their statement (and perhaps in order to drive home its sincerity; see Moore, 2001 on such uses of tautologies). (4)
In spite of their highly varied sources, all of these expressions seem to convey the speaker’s acknowledgment of some wrongdoing, coupled with a request to extenuate blame. And yet avowals of apology may greatly differ from one another with respect to the degree of regret involved. We have arranged the following in descending order on this “scale of compunction.” (5, 6) We must keep in mind that recipients have no valid information about senders’ intentions. Specifically, they do not know whether senders freely choose to apologize or feel coerced to do so, act out of sincerity or hypocritically distort their apologetic statements. This scale has no objective basis; furthermore, nuances of intonation and other aspects of non-verbal communication will affect it.

**Seven Types of Apology**

1. **I’m sorry for having stepped on your toe.**

   I know I’ve hurt you. Believe me that I didn’t intend to. I wish I hadn’t done it or that I could undo it. Given another chance I would be more careful. I regret having done it. (Formulas a, b, c, d, e)

   This type of apology serves as the prototype for the expression of religious repentance. In none of the other types can we find the element of regret and a promise not to repeat the offense:

   O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. (Act of Contrition in the Catholic liturgy. There exist many forms of the Act of Contrition; the above standard form appears in such sources as the Baltimore Catechism). (7)

   Even this seemingly most remorseful expression carries no information about its sincerity. To clarify this point, consider that not only religions exact a request for forgiveness (by making such set formulas mandatory); identical mechanisms appear in such widely different frameworks as diplomatic relationships and family interactions. As an illustration of the former, consider a 2001 incident, when the Chinese government refused to release a U.S. plane and its 24 crew members, until the U.S. administration apologized (more about this incident below). One can find many similar incidents in the annals of diplomacy. (8)

   At the family level most of us have probably heard parents warning their children: “Apologize, or else!” or: “Say you’re sorry!” (See Kramer-Moore &
Moore, 2002, pp. 167-168, for several examples, as well as an analysis of the pathogenic family process involved). A well-known literary example appears in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

"— O, Stephen will apologize. 
Dante said: — O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes. 
— Pull out his eyes,/ Apologize,/ Apologize,/ Pull out his eyes. /Apologize,/ 
Pull out his eyes,/ Pull out his eyes,/ Apologize.” (Joyce, 1916/1965, p. 8.)

Both of these examples demonstrate the use of empty phrases. Those who extract an apology (as in the often used formula: “I demand an apology!”) encourage whitewashing and the word magic (see Moore, 1995/96) inherent in substituting words for deeds (or maps for territories; see Korzybski, 1958).

2. Sorry for interrupting.
I know that you consider what I’ve done wrong or impolite. I wish I hadn’t had to do it, but I had no choice. Given the same circumstances, I’d do it again. (a, b, c, d, e)

This polite formula has some practical value in that it smoothes interaction in formal social encounters. While it may also contain a modicum of regret, it certainly lacks a promise of non-repetition. The following formula bears this out: “Excuse me! Excuse me!” (Same as the French “Pardon!”), said when pushing through a crowd, bumping into people repeatedly. (a, d)

3. I’m sorry you’re sick (or have lost your job, or did not hit the jackpot).
I’ve got nothing to do with this, but if I could, I’d change it. I say this just to make you feel better, to show that I commiserate. (a)

We have moved further down on the “scale of compunction.” While expressing misgivings about the addressee’s situation, this speaker does not assume any responsibility for it. Consequently s/he can logically express no regret, nor offer any promises regarding the future. The above quoted Sino-American diplomatic incident comes close to this type of apologizing, but only from the American perspective. According to Wanderer’s report (2001) the solution of the diplomatic standoff hinged exactly on the ambiguity of “I’m sorry.” The following excerpts bear out this interpretation:

“... the United States issued a statement expressing ‘sincere regret’ over the lost Chinese pilot, and stating it is ‘very sorry the entering of Chinese airspace and the landing did not have verbal clearance.’ Chinese TV translated this ‘very sorry’ with a Chinese word connoting an admission of fault.” (Wanderer, 2001, p. 218).
“In his letter, Powell expressed regret for the missing Chinese pilot, presumed dead, after his fighter jet collided with the spy plane. But he stopped short of issuing an apology and instead urged Beijing to end the standoff.” (CNN April 5, 2001).

“There was nothing to apologize for,’ Powell told reporters in Paris on Wednesday. ‘To apologize would have suggested that we had done something wrong and we accepted responsibility for having done something wrong. And we did not do anything wrong. Therefore, it was not possible to apologize.’” (CNN April 11, 2001).

We feel obligated to add that the Chinese language permits four levels of apology, ranging from a mild ‘sorry’ to the formula used by a criminal in capital crimes (Marquand, 2001; Japanese has a similar wealth of apology expressions (9)). No wonder Seekins (2001) observed, in this specific context that: “…the politics of apologies is a fascinating, ambiguous blend of moral indignation and coercive arm twisting. In daily life as well as international relations, one needs to be most careful about saying ‘I’m sorry.’”

4. Excuse me?

I didn’t hear/understand you; could you please repeat what you’ve just said? I know this causes you some inconvenience and I wish I didn’t have to do it, but I have no choice. (a, b, d)

This type bears some similarity to Number 2, above (both belong to the “polite” category), but it appears in different situations. It implies neither regret nor a promise of future avoidance. One can see its distance from apologizing through common dictionary substitutions, such as the less courteous “Come again?”

5. Sorry if I’ve hurt you.

I don’t think I’ve done anything wrong, but if you feel I have, I’ll give you the benefit of doubt and apologize. (a, e)

Not only does this speaker show no regret, s/he even condescends and blames the other for over-sensitivity (in contradistinction to the slight empathy discernible in Number 3, above). What choices does the addressee have? By accepting this left-handed apology s/he accepts the label of touchiness. By rejecting it s/he becomes a bad sport.

6. Excuse me! (ironic, with two exaggerated stresses).

I know that you’d prefer that I didn’t exist, but I won’t give you that pleasure. I have no intention of apologizing. (b)

Rather than illustrating apologizing, both this and the following type provide examples of verbal aggression (cf. Lederer & Jackson, 1968, pp. 141-
Instead of offering an apology, the speaker hints that the recipient should feel guilty and apologize. A triple-message characterizes irony and sarcasm: The speaker’s unstated agenda, and the two opposing messages these tropes contain. “Irony and sarcasm” wrote Kramer-Moore & Moore (2002, p. 137) “mask violence through clever repartees no less deadly to a relationship than less abstract forms of fighting.” Recipients of such a message find themselves in a double bind: If they complain of the insult, they lack a sense of humor; if they ignore it, they lack understanding.


I can’t believe what I’ve just heard, so I pretend, ironically, that I’ve misheard you. *(a, b, d)*

As in both of the above types, the ambiguity of this utterance puts the listener at a disadvantage. If s/he takes it at face value (regarding it as Number 3, above) and repeats the message, the recipient will most likely retort: “I heard you the first time!” Any other response constitutes joining the fray.

To conclude this short stroll through the thorny garden of apology, we want to touch upon its relevance to matters psychological.

When perceived as sincere, an apology entails the admittance of guilt (sometimes with legal ramifications). According to Mussen, Conger & Kagan (1969) guilt (“moral anxiety” in Freudian terminology) “is a special state of anxiety that does not appear until about age 3 to 4” (p. 138). Both classical psychoanalytic theory and its neo-Freudian version concur: In the third stage of psychosexual development the superego evolves. It contains two components: the ego ideal, containing the desirable and rewarded aspects of one’s personality, and the conscience, responsible for self-reproach and feelings of guilt. Apologizing releases the stress produced by guilt feelings, thus serving as a defense mechanism. Sincere apologies, in which the individual takes upon self the responsibility for some wrongdoing, absolves one’s conscience through so-called undoing. At the other end of the above continuum, the use of apology as a method for blaming the other puts the recipient on the defensive, and thus entails the projection of guilt.

Erikson’s neo-Freudian approach regards the development of guilt as the negative outcome of the third crisis of psychosocial development. Children who grow up in a restricting environment, where significant adults often block ambition and curiosity, soon experience guilt associated with inevitable transgressions. Instead of gaining this stage’s highly valued outcome (i.e., initiative), they may become subject to self-doubt and to underachievement.
In existential psychology, primary guilt starts at birth: “Man’s existential guilt consists in his failing to carry out the mandate to fulfill all his possibilities” (Boss, 1963, p. 270); such inescapable guilt ends only with the death of its bearer.

Virginia Satir’s communication model (Satir, Stachowiak & Taschman, 1975; see Moore & Kramer, 1999/2000) also bears on this issue. Two of her four pathological communication patterns, the placater and the blamer, may both manipulate their target through “apologizing”: the former by using types 1, 2, or 3 of the above list; the latter by resorting to types 5, 6, or 7 (type number 4 has a neutral quality in this respect).

The topic of forgiveness has created in recent years considerable psychological interest, as attested by the proliferation of texts dealing with it, e.g., Enright (2001), Enright & North (1998), Flanigan (1992), McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen (2000), the last one containing articles from the religious to the neuropsychological aspects of forgiveness. Many of these (e.g., Walrond-Skinner, 1998) dwell upon the positive, to some extent healing, aspects of the act of forgiving. Yet from the psychological point of view, any asking for forgiveness, even the most honest and sincere apologizing, has considerable disadvantages. In intimate relationships (such as family interactions) both the demanding and the acceptance of an apology, on the one hand, indicate unhealthy stratification and power differentials between the parties. The offering of an apology, on the other hand, especially when done repeatedly, may not only become manipulative (10), but also creates the impression that by a mere utterance one can erase previous deeds, without coping with the underlying conflict and the painful issue of guilt. As we have seen above, even more serious difficulties arise on the many occasions where the motivation behind an apology has some ambiguity: Guilt shifts back and forth between sender and recipient, and mystification (Kramer-Moore & Moore, 2002, pp. 139-144) prevents congruent communication.

NOTES

1. Frequency in a 5-million-word sample used by grades 3 to 9 in 1969 (Carroll, Davis & Richman, 1971): apology and related words 40; excuse etc., 104; forgive etc., 43; pardon etc., 41; sorry 282.
2. In other languages one finds interesting, occasionally surprising, sources for words related to our topic:

Russian 'prostit' (v.) means both forgive and take leave; derives from 'prost,' simple, open, free, natural, which in its turn derives from 'pro-' and 'sto.' The former stands for the prefix 'for,' while the latter has to do with abundant, copious, rich, far, remote, away, in good repair.

Hungarian 'bocsánat' (n.) (pardon) derives from Turkish sources, where it indicates: free, empty, become or let free; related to 'búcsú': leave-taking, farewell, religious indulgence, pilgrimage. The root carries a double meaning analogous to Russian: 'megbocsát' (v.) (pardon) and 'elbocsát' (dismiss, release).

German 'Verzeihung' (n.) (pardon) denotes the negation of 'zeihen,' to accuse, related to 'zeigen,' to point, to show, and to 'sagen,' say. Hence 'verzeihen,' to refrain from, to forgive, pardon, excuse. Another German word related to this topic, 'bedauern,' regret, be sorry, derives from 'teuer' (dear).

Hebrew has several expressions: The root SLH (forgive, pardon) comes from Accadian, where it meant: to throw water (perhaps indicating some ancient forgiving custom). When used in this context, the root NTzL (apologize) means: remove from oneself. The root TzA'R, closest in meaning to English sorry, indicates sorrow, sadness. MHL (forgive, pardon) may derive from wipe away, clean. Finally KPR (excuse; as in Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement) derives either from Accadian (to sweep, to clean), or from Arabic (to cover).

3. "Saddam Hussein’s apologies to the Kuwaiti people: ‘We ask God’s pardon for all the actions that have raised his ire in the past ... and in this spirit we similarly offer you our apologies.’"

4. See also the formula: “forgive us, pardon us, and grant us atonement” in the Jewish liturgy for Yom Kippur.

5. Additional formulas and expressions abound:

I’m so sorry; you’ll be sorry!; I’m sorry to hear that.

Accept my apology; I owe you an apology; my [most] sincere apology; my apologies; a thousand apologies; I apologize in advance; a formal apology; I demand an apology.

Inexcusable; lame excuse; may I be excused?; I want [wish] to excuse myself; what’s your excuse?

I beg for forgiveness; please forgive me; forgive and forget; to err is human, to forgive, divine; to understand is to forgive.

Tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner; pardon my French!

Related idioms, not using any of the above roots: to eat humble pie, dirt, crow, one’s own words.

6. Consider the nuances of the following: absolution, amnesty, atonement, clemency, compassion, compunction, confession, contrition, exculpation, exoneration, forbearance, indulgence, getting off, mea culpa, mercy, penitence, regret, remission, remorse, repentance.

7. Note the expressions equivalent to the English “I am heartily sorry” italicized in German, French, Spanish and Latin:
Alle meine Sünden sind mir leid von Grund meines Herzens... (Akt der Reue).
J'ai un très grand regret de Vous avoir offensé... (Acte de Contrition).
Me pesa de todo corazón de haber pecado... (Acto de contriacion).
Ex toto corde poenitet me omnium meorum peccatorum... (Actus Contritionis).

8. A few recent incidents involving the demand for a formal apology:

- China has demanded an apology from the United States for the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Monday (5-10-99 CNN).

- East Timorese protesters demand apology and reparations from the U.S. for Washington's support for Indonesian invasion and occupation of their country (7-4-00 AP).


- South Korean President Kim Dae-jung has demanded that North Korea apologize for the "provocation" that sparked a naval battle that killed four South Korean sailors (7-2-02 BBC).

- North Korea demanded that Japan apologize and pay for its past colonial domination (10-30-02 Agence France-Presse).

- The United States said on Friday it had demanded an apology from Zimbabwe for detaining and questioning a U.S. diplomat for about an hour this week (2-15-03 CNN).

9. "I shall give the House the briefest of lessons in the Japanese way of apology. In English, one says, 'I am sorry,' or, 'I apologise,' and there are not many more ways of expressing apology. In Japanese, there are a great many ways. One says, 'shitsurei shimasu,' or, 'gomen nasai,' if one accidentally bumps into someone. The word used by the Japanese Prime Minister on behalf of the Japanese Government was 'owabi,' which is translated as 'apology.' That is a formal, high-level apology. Many representatives of the prisoners of war and internees want the word 'shazai' to be used. It is not possible to translate 'shazai' other than in the same way as 'owabi' — 'apology.' Many former prisoners of war and civilian internees argue ... that an apology is meaningless without further compensation." (Jane Griffiths, M. P., in the UK Parliament, 29 April, 1998). See also the following regarding yet another expression of apologizing in Japanese culture. "Sumimasen" means "I cannot make up for what you have done for me well enough!... It's pro-forma, but the authorities will be impressed by how you've learned your lesson. That's sumimasen: apology without end. It's the Japanese version of throwing yourself on the mercy of the court" (Chrichton, 1992, p. 138).

10. In his foreword to Enright & North (1998), Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes: "When you say to me 'I'm sorry,' in my Christian understanding I am then constrained by the Gospel imperative to forgive" (pp. xiii-xiv).
REFERENCES


Dear Editor:

In light of the Spring issue’s article on autism, I should let you know that I have an autism-related condition called Asperger’s syndrome (as does my husband).

We recently gave a joint presentation on Asperger’s at a large local conference dealing with autism, and my part of the presentation did mention some helpful mental strategies for dealing with this condition in oneself or others (e.g., one’s children/students). Some of the mental strategies I described (and some of the strategies used by others who presented at the conference) “just happen” to make sense in terms of general semantics, and/or to relate to/derive from GS (though I didn’t find any opening for saying so at that particular event — I didn’t want to get into terminology and “buzzwords” from an unfamiliar field, but I did teach some things — things that “just happen” to exist within GS — as helpful teaching-techniques for compensating for this and related conditions).

KATE GLADSTONE
ALBANY, NY

Dear Editor:

For what it’s worth, I wrote the article, “Leadership, Shared Meaning, and Semantics” (Fall 2002 ETC), using E-Prime. My custom involves writing “serious” or formal documents this way. I find it an ongoing challenge, but worthwhile. I think that the only violations you will find involve the use of the phrase “that is” (for which I haven’t found a satisfactory substitute) ... and of course in the quoted material!

I actually fell under the influence of E-Prime in 9th grade (1962?), when Mrs. Heggen insisted that in all our writing assignments we banish amisare-waswerebebeen (am, is, are ...). In her mind these individual words came together as a single concept. Since I prefer to automate that sort of proofreading, I developed an MS Word macro which searches for those words, tallies them, announces to me how many offenses it found, then positions me at the first one so I can begin the correction process.

MICHAEL AYERS
Minneapolis, MN
THE CHINESE WALL
METAPHOR

RAYMOND GOZZI, JR.*

IN APRIL, 2003, ten of the nation’s biggest investment firms agreed to pay regulators $1.4 billion in fines. They were being prosecuted because they had “lured millions of investors to buy billions of dollars worth of shares in companies they knew were troubled and which ultimately either collapsed or sharply declined,” according to The New York Times (Labaton, April 29, 2003).

One of the big problems was that the firms’ stock analysts were generating false reports on companies to induce investors to buy their stock. This would benefit the investment firm, which was underwriting the stock offering. In one case an analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston kept a “strong buy” recommendation on a small telecommunications company named Winstar, even as the stock fell from $17 a share to 31 cents a share from January to April, 2001. The hapless Winstar never showed a profit and filed for bankruptcy.

* Dr. Raymond Gozzi, Jr., is Associate Professor in the TV-Radio Department at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY. His most recent book, The Power of Metaphor in the Age of Electronic Media, Hampton Press (1999), is available from ISGS.
Regulators contended that the analysts had “failed to disclose the risks inherent in the company” (Morgenson, April 29, 2003).

In some cases, brokerage firms paid competing bankers’ analysts for positive reports on companies whose shares they were offering. “This practice made it appear that a throng of believers were recommending these companies’ shares” (Morgenson, April 29, 2003).

Two high-profile analysts were banned from the securities industry for life, according to the settlement, and the president of Citibank was barred from talking with his own firm’s analysts. The business press was filled with lurid details about deception, and ideas about how to regain investor confidence. The metaphor of the “Chinese Wall” played a prominent role.

There are many walls in China, but the “Chinese Wall” metaphor refers to the Great Wall. This massive structure is over 3,700 miles long. It was begun in the 7th Century B.C.E., and extended incrementally until the 1500s C.E. It is a marvel of engineering and persistence, which has rightly caught the world’s imagination. It graces countless postcards and tourist snapshots.

So it is not surprising that the Great Wall of China should easily become a metaphor for separation, lack of contact, and defensive fortification against intrusion. The metaphor was first used in the financial world during the reforms of the 1930s, following the stock market crash of 1929. The government insisted on separating the functions of investment banking (which are supposed to provide objective analysis of investment opportunities) from brokerage functions (which make money from offering stocks for sale). Even though the same company often provided both services, there was to be a “Chinese Wall” between the functions (Wayman, n.d.).

The “Chinese Wall” metaphor extended to cover any situation where employees in one part of an organization should not exchange confidential information with other departments. The “Chinese Wall” was supposed to block “price-sensitive information” from being leaked. For example, news of an impending takeover bid might lead to illegal insider trading activity (Reuters, 2000). Other “material information” could include advance information about a divestiture, new products, or management changes (InvestorWords.com, n.d.).

Like any good metaphor, the “Chinese Wall” allowed people to talk about complex events in a coherent and colorful way. A research analyst who participated in brokerage functions was said to be “brought over the wall” (InvestorWords.com, n.d.).
After the dot-com crash of 2001, the role of financial analysts was scrutinized publicly. "Holes develop in Chinese Wall preventing analyst conflicts," read a headline (*Financial Advisor Magazine*, August, 2001). "Are there cracks in that Chinese Wall?" asked an article. "Regulators have become increasingly concerned that the objectivity of those analysts has been, or may be, compromised. Will the Chinese Wall come tumblin' down?" (*StockPatrol.com*, July 5, 2001). "(Jack) Grubman danced along the Chinese wall that separated research from banking on Wall Street" (Cresswell, 2002).

The metaphor also contributed to discourse about reforms. "Rebuild the Chinese Wall" editorialized *Fortune* magazine (Nocera, June 9, 2002). "Merrill puts a brick back in the Chinese Wall" ran a headline after the firm's settlement with New York State (Gaffen, 2002). "A Chinese Wall — or several fences?" asked an article opposing the complete separation of research and investment banking (Stone, October 14, 2002).

The "Chinese Wall" is undoubtedly a colorful metaphor. But how accurate is it? Or is it misleading, as used in financial firms' affairs?

"Wall? What Chinese Wall?" asked a news story about the settlement with Merrill Lynch (Goff, April 22, 2002). "There is no Chinese wall anymore" opined a *Fortune* magazine story (Nocera, June 9, 2002). Apparently in the London banking district there is a saying, "...there is no Chinese wall over which a grapevine cannot grow." (Kingston, February 11, 1999). On the face of it, the concept of employees of the same company not discussing profit opportunities with each other seems unlikely. This is especially true when the analysts stand to profit from any deals which might result. The real Great Wall was patrolled by 11 garrisons of soldiers, but who patrols the metaphorical "Chinese Walls" in financial firms? Apparently, few enforcers were present, or effective, during the dot-com boom.

It appears as though the "Chinese Wall" metaphor did a great deal of harm during the dot-com boom years. The colorful imagery called up associations of sturdy structures separating analysts from brokers, and could be used to reassure investors. Yet the metaphor was part of an elaborate deception. Analysts hid behind the metaphor as they made "buy" recommendations on stocks they knew were poor prospects.

There is another problem with the "Chinese Wall" metaphor — it "is offensive to many folks in the financial and legal worlds who are of Chinese ancestry" (Lishinsky, April 29, 2002). Indeed, the metaphor calls up associations of inscrutable Asians building barriers to understanding. We would all do better without these stereotypes.
So the next time a financial analyst, or anyone else, assures you there is a "Chinese Wall" between players on the same team, you might want to examine the situation a little more closely. Don’t let the metaphor do your thinking for you. While the real Great Wall has stood for over two thousand years, organizational "Chinese Walls" have a flimsy existence at best.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES
EDITOR: STEVE STOCKDALE

SNOOPING AROUND THE
TIME-BINDING ATTIC, Part 3

Bob Kenyon, O. R. Bontrager, Dick Brenneman,
Gwenn Hermann, Stanley Rittenoure,
and Bucky Fuller

Compiled and edited by Steve Stockdale*

This student-produced ‘diary’ provides a record of the 1950 Summer Seminar-Workshop conducted by the Institute of General Semantics. Held at The Barrington School in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, from August 14th to September 5th, this seminar is noteworthy as the first after Alfred Korzybski’s sudden death six months earlier. The original manuscript, found recently among the Institute’s archives, contains more than 40 photographs and roughly twice as much material as that edited and excerpted here. All of these photos can be viewed online at: http://www.dfwcgs.net/etc/1950.html. The contributing authors are credited as: Diary Editor: Bob Kenyon; Contributors: O. R. Bontrager, Ph.D., Dick Brenneman, Gwenn Hermann, Stanley Rittenoure.

— Steve Stockdale

* Steve Stockdale serves as Director for Programs and Archivist for the Institute of General Semantics. He has established The Dallas-Fort Worth Center for General Semantics (www.dfwcgs.net), which houses the Alfred Korzybski Research and Study Center. In this series of articles, he relates some of his ‘discoveries’ with hopes that students of general semantics might find in them something informative, interesting, applicable, etc.
1950 Seminar-Workshop Photo, Barrington School


4th Row (L-R): Lynn Gates, Dr. Sam Stein, Warner Clements, Dick Brenneman, Albert Diaz, Len Guttersen, Dave Levine, Stanley Rittenour, Bob Barone

3rd Row (L-R): Bev McGee, Lloyd Gilden, Harry Holtzman, M. Kendig, Ray Bontrager, Charlotte Schuchardt, Sam Bois, Bill Pemberton, Dr. Wolf, Bob Rea

2nd Row (L-R): Dot Holtzman, Mrs. Stein, Gwenn Hermann, Gerry Jackson, Luella Dunning, Pat Fordyce, Esther Milner, Sonia Leskow


DIARY EDITOR'S STATEMENT
(by Bob Kenyon)

This first summer seminar-workshop after the death of Alfred Korzybski had been anticipated by students and members of the Institute with somewhat of a wary attitude — how might this seminar without Korzybski turn out? Certainly there must have been a number who, in the past, gathered to Korzybski in the cultish way they would have gathered to anyone who sym-
bolized some certain something-or-other to them. I think, rather, that the major portion of his students felt important and valuable implications in their study of general semantics.

However, I have learned to extensionalize and shall do so in terms of this particular seminar-workshop. I observed, during the first day or so, an atmosphere of questioning and speculation as to just how effective this seminar would be without AK, who had formulated general semantics and introduced the notion of non-Aristotelian systems.

The man chosen to present the seminar was Dr. J. S. A. Bois, a clinical psychologist of Montreal. Dr. Bois attended several of Korzybski's seminars and has been applying the principles of general semantics professionally for the last four years. As I saw it, after the first day the students began to warm to Dr. Bois, with his French-Canadian mannerisms and expressive gesticulations. The students seemed to get the idea, after a while, that Bois could not attempt to teach general semantics as Korzybski had; he must give them his own brand simply because Bois is not Korzybski is not Kendig is not Bontrager, etc. This critical point, I believe, was passed during the first week, because at the first Saturday night party a characterization of Bois was given and received with apparent delight by the whole crowd.

A group of forty people lived together for three weeks with a common bond.

Toward the end of the seminar-workshop I heard a number of people comment to the effect that the seminar hadn't collapsed without Korzybski after all; they seemed quite satisfied with the activities of the three-week period. I would say there was a structural similarity to be seen in comparing Korzybski's "Theory of Happiness" ["Happiness = Minimum Expectations + Maximum Motivation"] and the semantic reactions of the students toward events related to the seminar. Coming to the first seminar after the 'coagulation' of Korzybski induced a sort of automatic 'minimum expectation' such that there was a high probability the seminar would turn out effectively.

At any rate, what has happened has happened. A group of forty people lived together for three weeks with a common bond. We studied a non-Aristotelian system for evaluation that promises much toward future successes in all areas of our life-efforts. I overheard several students remark that this was one of the most intellectually stimulating sessions of their lives. We
each met people from all parts of the country who were curious, who liked to think and who felt that general semantics might provide them with a valuable tool for evaluation and adjustment in life.

Now we've returned to our own fields. Many of us will contribute, in our capacity as Time-binders, to the growth and development of general semantics and its applications to the welfare of people. I have heard people say that general semantics is now only in its adolescence. I have come to think, in reference to my experience at this particular seminar, that general semantics has only now become 'weaned' from the 'mother' who bore it. This (diary, chronicle, brochure, or whatever you care to call it) is not for the purpose of presenting the formulations of general semantics, nor to give rigorous treatment to any of the studies of the seminar. We have learned to think of individuals and groups as ascending, widening, spiraling process-bundles — as one might think of a developing stream. Try to see in these random 'slices' an assembled complex from that process stream. Let this 'diary,' then, represent a structure of 'frozen moments' similar to that of the group-of-students-living-together-at-Barrington-School-at-the-Summer-Seminar-Workshop-of-August 1950.

Barrington School and Daily Activities

The students found the school an interesting place. Within its 98 acres the estate has a golf course, tennis courts and a lagoon in which the students spent a lot of time swimming. Girl students had no cause to complain for they were much in demand on those beautiful evenings when a low ground mist rolled across the golf course and the moonglow created an especially picturesque wonderland. The veranda and terraces were popular places for homework, reading, non-verbal exercises, or just plain basking in the sun. Some students found an appropriate background for meditation down at "Aristotle's Temple," a facade at the far end of the lagoon.

Classes at the seminar came three times a day — one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The six to nine hours of class each day were interspersed with discussion periods, special classes in semantic relaxation, and plenty of time for homework, reading, and such activities as swimming, tennis, and golf. During sunny days, the students preferred the veranda and terraces to staying inside the 'old barn.' Someone was heard to remark that Raymond, host of the "Inner Sanctum" radio show, must have gotten his idea for the squeaking door from the glass door in the lecture hall at Barrington School.
Evening classes usually concluded about 9:30, after which the evening activities began. Charlotte Schuchardt saw to it that there were always refreshments on hand — beer, cokes, potato chips, pretzels, etc. This was the time of day when the students had completed their studies, their nervous systems were boiling over with newly installed relationships, and they were just itching to communicate with someone. So after the evening class came the time for the ‘mellowest’ bull sessions, etc. There was usually some dancing, record playing, and a group gathered around the speaker of the evening for post-lecture discussions.

The custom of bringing wine bottles to the supper tables became a fairly constant practice among the students and people at the seminar. One student was heard to remark that from the standpoint of homogeneity he felt this well-knit group might get to be a “well-lit” group. I don’t remember whether he was the same wit who fabricated the classic, “Let’s bind a little time.”

Every Saturday night during the seminar a group party was held. Students were encouraged to bring their musical instruments, and as much as possible was done at these parties to increase the effective inter-relatedness of the students. High point of the first Saturday night party came when Dick Brenneman presented a characterization of Dr. Bois, complete with his French-Canadian accent and gesticulations.

Charlotte showed up with part of an album of western square dance records, and a bunch of people learned to square dance for an exhibition to be given on party night.

A little later that evening, a barbershop quartet murdered several songs until they came to “Alouette.” Dr. Bois then jumped up and vowed he’d not let that one be murdered, so he lead the whole crowd in singing “Alouette” as he said it should be sung. We all enjoyed it very much.

Warren Robbins acted as emcee at the parties and did a great job. We’ll never know where he collected all those puns, but he was full of them. Bob Rea, through a new system of musical notation, learned several classic pieces in a very short period of days.

Toward the end of the workshop some of AK’s lectures were played from a tape recorder on the veranda. This took place in the evenings after lectures, so that the full moon added to the enjoyable situation, and also sometimes in the mornings when the group could listen and soak up the warm sun. Near the end of the three-week period came some coolish rainy weather. So the course was concluded, you might say, in front of the roaring fireplace in the main hall of the ‘old barn.’ Beer, songs, and opinions were consumed by all. Common talk indicated that the students felt momentarily ‘isolated’ from the
world, in an environment conducive to GS-ers savoring their attempts to live GS-ly.

**DR. BOIS**

(by Dick Brenneman)

[Bois’ opening remarks at the seminar, as noted by Dick Brenneman, were included in the “Time-Binding Attic” feature in the Fall 2002 *ETC*, and are not repeated here. Below are Brenneman’s concluding comments concerning Bois. — Ed.]

One of the most enchanting episodes of the whole seminar came during one of Dr. Bois’ lectures in which he was telling of the process of abstraction carried on by all living organisms. His personal aptitude for ‘manner-ismic’ expressiveness reached a point of perfection when he stood up and with circling arms and gulping mouth tried to make like an amoeba. The lights and shadows were just right and the effect was, well — unspeakable. He received an ovation on that one.

During his lecture on non-allness and the use of the *et cetera*, Dr. Bois told us this story. There was a fellow from Canada who went to France for a time and took the opportunity to acquire a mistress. After awhile he developed a bad skin condition after each time that he visited his mistress. He went to a doctor who, unable to diagnose it, and responding to the latest trend in medicine, referred the patient to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist diagnosed it as a neurodermatitis resulting from feelings of guilt associated with the new mistress. This made the fellow feel pretty bad and he paid out a lot of money to get analyzed. However the skin condition still appeared after each visit with his mistress. There seemed to be no way to account for it. Then one time he spent a weekend at his mistress’ apartment while she was out of town, and the rash occurred again. The fellow decided he must have a look around the apartment and upon doing so found that there were bedbugs in the girl’s bed! Just shows to go ya that you’d better check your assumptions.

His amoeba imitation; his references to the “big executives;” the violin-playing gesture admonishing us to “tune our fiddles;” the disconsolate expression when ruffling through our homework exercises; the poised, satirical erectness when exclaiming “I cut a pretty nice figure in the pulpit;” the animalistic gesture used to communicate the word sex; the wry, explanatory
smile; and the belly-shaking, foot-stomping laughter of party nights .... this is what I’ll remember of Sam Bois.

And I’ll remember the sincere testimonial offered at the conclusion of the seminar by Dr. Stein. Being close enough to overhear Sam Bois’ response to the many compliments directed his way, I report it as exactly this: “Sometimes it’s great to be alive.”

But more yet will I keep. There is the et cetera which, to borrow Bucky Fuller’s language, “goes out the window and over the hill.” For me, Sam Bois opened that window. And the hill, which is in effect the exponential curve, shall find us climbing rapidly ... and together.

After Dr. Bois completed the seminar proper, an impressive selection of guest lecturers gave us valuable insights as to the work-a-day applications of general semantics.

BUCKY FULLER — AN ENERGETIC GEOMETER
(by Stanley Rittenoure)

Buckminster Fuller brought a unique approach to the workshop. His presentations to the students were accompanied by animated gestures in the same manner as a Toscanini who brings out the best from his musicians when conducting a symphony. He began his lecture on “Energetic Geometry” with this introduction to the subject of energy in relationship to universal phenomena:

“Energies go from one impoundment to other impoundments in a continuity of energy behavior. Universal energy may be considered as inherent. Man, as a phenomenon of universal life, becomes characteristic of all life and, as such, gains by systematic applications of energy utilized. This begets industry. Industry, conceived by man, becomes a continuity of the work of all men in all history.

“Man, as a phenomenon in his second derivative span of life, has developed tools to aid industry, and this activity may be referred to as man’s extra-corporeal process. This process is demonstrated by man’s ability to produce and accelerate his own mutations in an ever-increasing upward sweep. Man now becomes a function in the universe and as such is not ‘Man as a thing,’ but as ‘things.’

“Man’s progress has the capacity to inhibit all chemical processes or actions, the largest phase of energy improvement, and therefore man may be termed ‘the energy impounder.’”
From this introduction, he proceeded to demonstrate his theory with many models, correlating universal structure to man and his ability to better his life and the lives of those to come. Bucky made no claims of GS knowledge. However, he demonstrated thinking parallel to that of Korzybski's notions of man as a 'time-binder' and exponential progress.

In my opinion, our group readily comprehended this 'parallelness,' even though we may not have understood the mathematical text of Energetic Geometry. Also, I think — no, I opine — that Bucky Fuller completely captivated us by his personality and his unique ability to communicate with us from his vast store of technical data — all without the aid of notes.

SILENT ABSTRACTING, THE HOLTZMAN WAY

(by Gwenn Hermann)

This section of the workshop was 'something' ... but what? Kid's play? Boring? Exhausting? All these and a few more labels could be attached. But why use words? It wasn't that sort of class and, anyway, whatever we said it was ... it wasn't.

The first day we met 'Professor' Holtzman in the lecture hall, he began: "Whatever you say I am, I'm not, and you say I'm an artist so that proves the GS adage. Seeeee?" (Magnanimous smile. He always hoped there would be a toothpaste advertising man at the seminar.)

"Now what do you think of these?" he asked, showing us three works of art by Mondrian. They were an awful mess, but we knew Mr. Mondrian was a good friend of Harry's, so not wishing to offend, we said they were beeautiful. Two hours later, when we left the lecture hall we 'knew' that Harry Holtzman was not an artist and, no matter what we said art was, he wasn't doing that anyway.

The next day, we were each presented with a pencil, an eraser, a piece of paper and these instructions: "Stay within thirty yards of the building and do something with these." So everyone sat around in the sun and exchanged puzzled glances, finally turning in various sorts of 'pitchers.'

We took our bewilderment with us to the following session, in which we found Harry's lecture slightly improved, and our own artistic productions were more or less on par with each others.' We learned that we each have 'insides,' but some of us experience greater difficulty (or 'blockage') than others in expressing what's 'inside' us on paper. The fact that our mentor seemed a screwball only added to the 'blockages.'
However, by the time we expanded our artistic efforts to ink and pen (some of us “ink and trousers,” others “ink and floor”), we were producing nearly sellable material. We had acquired more than artistic ability — we were courteous, perhaps even appreciative. If you came upon an ‘artist,’ grimacing at his work from all angles, you hastily asked, “Did you do that? It’s most fascinating!”

But verbalism came a dime a ton the day we took off to cut colored paper. Then with our cuttings, with pen and pencil, plus a little household cement, we converted our mirrored hallway to a rogue’s gallery beyond reproach.

For what purpose did we do this — all this ‘art stuff’? Well, it seems our authoritarians have long told us what to do and how to do it. Then along comes this screwball Harry, who left us with no rules and expected us to play the game. Well, by gosh, we did it, and I don’t know who felt the better for it. Among the students there were various degrees of ‘better-ness.’ I’m writing from my own world and the comparatively small area it overlaps with others’ worlds, but I think there were far fewer ‘raspberries’ for ‘Professor Holtzman’ after the twentieth hour than there were after the fourth.

‘Spirally’ Speaking about the Staff

M. Kendig did a very effective job of managing the seminar-workshop. The schedule of daily activities was extremely flexible during the seminar, constantly changing in light of group reactions so that the greatest harmony could be achieved in terms of group dynamics. Miss Kendig said she felt that ‘shaking up their colloids’ was good for the students anyway.

Dr. O. R. (Ray) Bontrager directs the reading clinic at Pennsylvania State Teachers College. He spoke on personal evaluation in our reading and in teaching children how to read. I think many of the students will long remember Dr. Bontrager for his numerous ‘junior seminars.’ He made it a point to be available in the library, around the fireplace, or on the veranda, to stimulate discussions wherever he could. Many of the students evinced delight over trading views with Dr. Bontrager.

Charlotte Schuchardt held several training sessions in semantic relaxation during the course. Miss Schuchardt has become quite skillful in training people in the particular form of relaxation that Korzybski found so useful in alleviating neuro-physiological tensions.

Guthrie Janssen spoke on the problems of interpersonal communication in the Near East, where he taught at an Egyptian University. He told of his use of Science and Sanity as a text for his course in communication. Mr. Janssen also compiled the book Selections from Science and Sanity.
Lillian Lieber, co-author (with her husband) of *The Education of T.C. Mits* and *Mits, Wits, and Logic*, spoke on mathematics and logic. Dr. Lieber was quite effective in getting over the nature of logic — no matter whether your premises are consciously chosen or tacit, from them will come consequences. Using examples from our cultural inheritance, she showed how we often agree to one premise and then live by another — as revealed by the resulting consequences, what we do, and how we behave.

Dr. Allen Walker Read spoke on the subject of ‘modern linguistics.’ He showed how the syntax, or structure, of our verbalisms influences us in projecting meaning into them, such as in, “T’was brillig and the slithy toves ... ;” etc. He also spoke on the use of contextual meanings and an attitude with which to regard the use of dictionaries.

Robert Redpath, a Trustee of the Institute, spoke on how he applied the formulations of general semantics to training executives in the insurance business. Near the end of the seminar, Mr. Redpath talked to the students about our continuing relationship with the Institute after we go back to our own fields, and how we might apply general semantics in own lives. He spoke of the growing need for a center of coordination as a sort of clearing house for GS ideas, applications, news of activities, etc., and a center to integrate research and study in general semantics. He emphasized the need for us to support the work of the Institute, and we very much wish to underscore Mr. Redpath’s message here.

Other speakers included: Sam Rosen, M.D., who talked about how he applied general semantics to the non-verbal level of surgery; William Exton, who spoke on ‘Audio-visual Aids to Education’; Dr. Irving J. Lee, who spoke on ‘Communication’; and Dr. William Pemberton, who spoke on ‘projection’ in reference to studies in psychology.

**Closing**

I think everyone enjoyed the parties and evening activities during the seminar. We all carried away memories with us of a period in our lives which will variously affect each of us. The Summer Seminar-Workshop of 1950 lies in the past now, but is not dead because it lives in each of our nervous systems. From the interrelationships formed at the 1950 Seminar will develop attitudes, ways, ideas, and outlooks which will aid us all in realizing more of our individual potentials as time-binders.

Let us close here with a comment we heard often during the closing days of our time together: “Good Luck, and maybe we’ll see you at another seminar sometime.”
Writing correctly is not necessarily writing well

Philip Vassallo*

During a recent discussion with a student about her assigned report, I indicated two serious logical flaws: unequal comparison and hasty generalization. Both undermined the validity of her report, which argued for increased training for New York City Transit train operators, especially experienced ones. After reading my assessment of her analysis she responded, “Yeah, that’s the technical stuff. But what about my writing?”

“I am talking about your writing.”

“I mean my writing. The sentences, words, grammar, punctuation.”

“Your writing reflects your thinking,” I answered, “and your thinking is your writing.”

* Philip Vassallo holds a doctorate in educational theory and provides communication consulting services to corporate, government, nonprofit, and academic organizations. His book on business and technical writing, The Art of On-the-Job Writing (2002), is available from the International Society for General Semantics.
"I'm expressing my opinion," she retorted. "I just want to know how well I'm expressing it."

Her response made me remember one of my high school English teachers, who graded student essay assignments by deducting points for errors in grammar, diction, and punctuation, with far less regard for content. Thus, a well-reasoned paper that showed one error in punctuation — but one error committed 11 times — would receive no better than an 89 percent, and an ineffectual essay that showed no grammatical errors had a chance at a 100 percent score.

This reasoning never made sense to me. To illustrate why, imagine standing in Times Square, New York City, and receiving directions for walking to the United Nations from two strangers. The first, Eve, speaks limited English, and the second, Bob, speaks English proficiently. Their directions appear below.

**Eve's Directions**


**Bob's Directions**

I'd be happy to get you there. Which way would you like to go? The scenic route? The direct route? You could go north then east, or east then north. It's entirely up to you because this is a free country. Isn't it wonderful to have options? Some of those countries in the UN don't offer their citizens such options, as you well know. I am sure you know what I mean. You do, don't you? By the way, that's a nice outfit you're wearing. You have excellent taste. If you don't mind my asking, where did you buy it? I remember purchasing something similar as a gift for a dear friend. I used a store coupon and got a great bargain. Where did you say you were going?

With her limited English, Eve achieves her objective: to get you to the UN. On the other hand, Bob, with his strong command of language, finds numerous ways of elegantly telling you nothing you need to know.

The validity and usefulness of our ideas matter far more than their grammatical correctness. I do not mean to minimize the importance of attending to proper English; however, the relevance of the idea comes first and the fluency second. With this thought in mind, let's return to the writer proposing increased training for New York City Transit train operators, and look at her two rhetorical flaws.
First Flaw: Unequal Comparison

To prove her point that New York City Transit train operators had an excessive number of accidents, the writer argued that they caused more than double the number of accidents caused by Washington DC train operators. She did not, however, point out that New York has roughly 6 times as many train lines, 6 times as many stations, 7 times as many track miles, and 11 times as many riders, as highlighted in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>Washington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Lines</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stations</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles of Tracks</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekday Ridership</td>
<td>6,976,355</td>
<td>613,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing these two subway systems is like comparing the spending power of two people, one of whom has six to seven times the disposable income of the other, or staging a boxing match between a heavyweight champion (over 190 pounds) and a light-flyweight champion (under 108 pounds) in the same ring. The comparisons may be interesting, but not a valid measure of the wealthier person's spending ability or the heavier fighter's boxing superiority. If anything, her comparison may prove that New York City subways are relatively safer than those of Washington DC.

Second Flaw: Hasty Generalization

The author's second rhetorical flaw appeared in the concluding section of her report. She wrote:

Interestingly, experienced train operators had more accidents than train operators with one year of experience or less.

This point, she asserted, was sufficient cause to roll out an intensive training program for experienced train operators. To test the weakness of this unsubstantiated proposition, I asked a group of adult students from another course what, other than the need for training, could account for the problem
— assuming the tabulations were accurate. In a list they created, they noted that experienced train operators:

1. far outnumber inexperienced ones, which means they could be expected to have a higher number of accidents over all;
2. may be assigned to more accident-prone lines, increasing the likelihood of accidents;
3. may be assigned to more antiquated or faulty trains, increasing the possibility of mechanical, not human, error;
4. may work longer hours, which contributes to fatigue and not a lax attitude;
5. may work a particular shift when accident rates are highest because of a lack of signaling or support personnel, or other circumstances beyond their control;
6. may suffer from greater family stresses, which may contribute to accidents;
7. may have a greater incidence of substance abuse — this is an employee assistance issue, not a training issue;
8. may be assigned to new lines, creating a learning curve during which accidents are more likely;
9. fitting a particular group (e.g., operators with 1 to 5 years experience) may be the cause of most accidents, suggesting that not all groups of experienced operators are accident-prone;
10. caused relatively minor accidents, involving limited or no physical or property damage, compared to those caused by new train operators;
11. were not responsible for many accidents that may have been caused by passengers.

Of course, if the train operators simply lost interest in their work or found it difficult to maneuver newer trains that are controlled by advanced technology, then they would be candidates for training. But the writer did not discuss these possibilities.
Writing It Right

Unquestionably, good writing calls for far more than a good command of standard language rules. For instance, causal analysis requires far more reasoning than stating a contributing cause of an occurrence. It demands the ability to distinguish among the contributing, necessary, and sufficient causes. The contributing cause helps make an event possible, but it alone cannot make the event happen. The necessary cause must be present to make an event occur, but it cannot by itself cause the event. A sufficient cause can by itself cause an event to occur. A possible scenario of these three causes appears in the example below.

**Effect:** In a nation besieged by terrorism, a suicide bomber walks into a restaurant and detonates a bomb that was supplied to his organization by a rogue nation.

**Contributing Cause:** Security was nonexistent at the restaurant.

**Necessary Cause:** The rogue nation made the bomb available to the terrorist’s organization.

**Sufficient Cause:** The terrorist organization had at its disposal someone willing to kill himself.

The besieged nation’s consideration of all three causes is imperative. All the currently available security in its own country could not prevent the necessary cause, and the complete destruction of the rogue nation would not prevent the sufficient cause. The problem, then, may be minimized — but not eliminated — by civilian or police vigilance and military strikes; therefore, the government needs to look in many places if it wants to solve the problem.

Regardless of the level of panache with which we express ourselves, our readers will see our flawed thinking if we do not think things through. Answering the questions that our ideas raise is even more important than our ability to follow the conventions of language.
THE STRUCTURAL DIFFERENTIAL DIAGRAM

GREGORY SAWIN*

Part II of this article appeared in ETC, vol. 60, no. 1, Spring 2003.

Part III
APPLICATIONS

This section contains various applications of the structural differential, which illustrate how we think about events in everyday life.

These examples do not always show "good quality of transition" in going to higher levels of abstraction. They are only meant to show how some people

* Gregory Sawin, author of many ETC articles, serves as VP/Publications of ISGS. His book, Thinking & Living Skills: General Semantics for Critical Thinking, is available from ISGS. He is Assistant Editor of the Administration and Policy in Mental Health journal, and also works as a freelance medical editor. He wishes to thank Dr. Bruce I. Kodish for his 1993 and 2001 critiques of the manuscript, and Jeremy Klein and Paul D. Johnston for their editorial assistance.
get to their higher level abstractions. With each example, I provide a comment for clarification.

Although each of these examples shows the same pattern of attached and free-hanging strings in the parabola and object level disk, to be technically more accurate, each example should show a different pattern since we are dealing with different situations (and therefore different combinations of 'energies' of 'reality') in each example.

Comment
A more appropriate inference would be, "Mona might be at home."

The conclusion is unjustified — the car could be in the driveway for other reasons.

Description
When I drove by Mona's house, I saw her car in the driveway.

Inference
Mona must be at home.

Conclusion
Being home at this time of day must mean that she is home from work because of illness.
Comment
It is possible to look for something and not find it because you did not search well enough.

The conclusion is unjustified.

Description
I cannot find my keys. I looked for them in several likely places but did not find them.

Inference
My keys are not in the places I have looked.

Conclusion
Someone stole my keys.

Criticism of Conclusion
It is possible that the keys are in one of the places I looked, but I missed seeing them. I will look again.

FIGURE 2
The person who saw the smashed-in door jumped to an inference (a guess), jumped again, and then caught himself by noticing that he had jumped to a conclusion that was beyond what he really knew for a fact.

**Description**
The driver's side door of Minnie's car is smashed in.

**Inference**
Minnie was in a car accident.

**Conclusion**
Minnie had an accident because she is a reckless driver.

**Criticism of Conclusion**
But how do I know that? Minnie may be a safe driver who bought the car secondhand with the door already smashed in. There are many other possibilities as well.

FIGURE 3
Comment
This person is good at jumping from one inference to another without verifying the correctness of Inference One before going on to Inference Two.

There is no evidence to support his conclusion.

Description
I just sneezed.

Inference One
I am catching a cold.

Inference Two
These cold symptoms must be the early stages of pneumonia. Some people die of pneumonia.

Conclusion
I will die of pneumonia.
Comment
We often create stories to explain what we see. On the basis of little evidence, we go to higher and higher abstractions by drawing a conclusion, then forming an opinion, then making a judgment about what we saw—for example, the couple wearing rings.

Description
In a restaurant, I saw a man and woman dining together. Both of them were wearing rings.

Lower Level Inference
Those must be wedding rings.

Higher Level Inference
The man and woman must be married.

Conclusion
They must be married to each other.

Criticism of Conclusion
But they could be married to other people.

Criticism of Criticism
But they may not be married at all.

FIGURE 5
Comment
There are many possibilities for why a person has not received an answer to a letter. Notice that the second verbal level is a question, which leads to an answer that is an inference.

Description
I mailed a letter to Zennie three months ago. I have not received an answer yet.

Question
Why haven’t I received an answer?

Inference 1: She is angry at me and will not write back.

Inference 2: She forgot to write back.

Inference 3: She wrote back, but her letter got lost in the mail.

Inference 4: She intends to write later.

FIGURE 6
Statement by Richard:
"I have a headache."

Maria’s Inference:
"I believe that he does have a headache."

Comment
For Richard, his headache is a fact. He feels the pain of a headache. For him, his description is a statement of fact. But Maria does not experience Richard’s headache. In this situation, the fact for Maria is that she hears Richard’s verbal report about his headache. Then she infers, guesses, or believes that Richard does indeed have a headache.

FIGURE 7
Let's call it murder. Hang the killer.

Let's call it temporary insanity. Lock him away in a mental hospital.

Let's call it an accident. Unfortunate, but take no action.

Let's call it heroism. Publicly honor the hero.

Comment
This example also shows that the basic description "one man killed another" is not sufficient as a basis for taking action. But the various conclusions can dictate what action to take.

FIGURE 8
IN DEFENSE OF BESSIE:
Distortion or a Serendipitous Application?

DAVID F. MAAS*

Consider wind, water, and fire. We can assign a multiplicity of uses to any one of these. We can use air for inflating rubber rafts, spraying paint, cooling and heating buildings, or for jackhammering tough concrete into small pieces. Humans have also found multiple uses for the tools that they have invented. We can use the screwdriver to tighten or loosen screws.

We can also find various serendipitous functions for our screwdriver, which we might use to—

• pry lids from paint cans
• chop ice or break apart frozen fish fillets
• stir paint thinner, turpentine, or linseed oil

* Dr. David Maas is a Professor of English at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, and is the author of many ETC articles. He currently serves as VP/Education, ISGS.
• hold open the "butterfly" on the carburetors of older vehicles
• prop open a door
• scrape off residue accumulating on battery terminals
• arc an electric circuit
• impale a mouse (as my late mother once artfully demonstrated)
• use as a dart in target practice
• spread peanut butter on a cracker
• scratch a hard-to-reach spot on the shoulder blade
• serve as a skewer for shish-ka-bobs

Sometimes a different and unexpected need inspires a new design and, in some cases, a different tool. The Vise-Grip, for example, has a parallel but somewhat different function from that of pliers. The crescent wrench, pipe wrench, and socket wrenches all diverged from a similar design, but have more specific uses or applications.

Similarly, theoretical constructs or scientific metaphors such as Abraham Maslow’s 
Hierarchy of Needs, Kurt Lewin’s Life Space Model, J. S. Bois’ Semantic Transactor, and yes, even the revered Structural Differential of Alfred Korzybski, have all been adapted, altered, added to, oversimplified, truncated, or made to function in ways that the brainchild’s parent never intended. Must we characterize these serendipitous or alternative uses as distortions, misrepresentations, trivializations, or heresies?

At an Institute of General Semantics Summer Seminar-Workshop at Alverno College in 1991, I was saddened as I heard one of my folk heroes (Alan Walker Read) metaphorically taking to task another one of my heroes (S. I. Hayakawa), suggesting that in his forthcoming encyclopedia article on the development of general semantics, he did not intend to mention S. I. Hayakawa’s contributions, citing Hayakawa’s unacceptable “distortions” as the reason for this omission. Personally, I found this disturbing because thousands of individuals, including myself, would have perhaps never been introduced to the deeper formulations of Korzybski’s works had it not been for an earlier exposure to S. I. Hayakawa’s Language in Thought and Action, a work primarily intended for use as an English composition text (with an application of selected general semantics formulations to writing assignments) rather than as an introduction to general semantics. Incidentally, Hayakawa once told Roy Fox in an interview, “I did more for Korzybski’s work than any other writer,” citing his book’s longevity as well as its coveted position on the
Book-of-the-Month Club as substantiation for his claim. (Cited in Kodish, pp.65-66)

During the past 60 years, ETC, the quarterly journal founded by Hayakawa, has provided a continuous forum and clearinghouse for adjustments, augmentations, emendations — and yes, occasionally oversimplifications and distortions of general semantics. As Ralph Waldo Emerson has suggested, "To be great is to be misunderstood." When looking at the whole picture, balancing the distortions (real or imagined) that Hayakawa is alleged to have fostered, with his service in behalf of the perpetuation of general semantics, Hayakawa seems more sinned against than sinning.

A lightning rod that attracted much criticism is Hayakawa’s legendary Abstraction Ladder (Hayakawa, pp.152-155) featuring Bessie the Cow, a diagram some have characterized as a trivialization or distortion of Korzybski’s Structural Differential. Specific complaints about the abstraction ladder include the following:

- It fails to explain the relationship of the higher order abstractions and the event.
- It fails to show the difference between the event and the object levels.
- It fails to show the difference between human consciousness of abstracting and the corresponding lack of consciousness in animals.
- It reifies the levels of abstracting.
- It fails to connect the notion of abstracting to mapping.
- It ignores or oversimplifies multi-ordinality or self-reflexiveness.
- It fails to connect abstracting with the mapping process.
- It focuses excessively on the “leaving out characteristics” aspect of abstracting while forgetting to “leave in” some similarity to the represented territory.
- It creates a false two-valued dichotomy praising lower order abstractions and denigrating higher order abstractions.
- It oversimplifies the intensional-extensional distinction.
- It equates maps exclusively with words and territory with experience.
- It fails to explain abstracting as a physiological-neurological process occurring on non-verbal levels.
- It ignores the time lapse occurring between the event, perception, and verbal orders of abstraction.
If the abstraction ladder were intended as an exposition of the structural differential, then these criticisms would be justified.

It would be a mistake for students to use Bessie as the *Cliffs Notes, Spark Notes, Hymarx, Monarch Outline*, or *Masterplots* shortcut to Korzybski’s thought. The most faithful abstract or digest will, by definition and function, leave out considerable detail. Cliff Hillegass, founder of *Cliffs Notes*, cautioned students not to deprive themselves of reading and studying the real thing. This caution should also apply to Korzybski’s formulations; reading any popularization regardless of how faithful the representation — Berman, DeVito, Lee, Weinberg, etc. — cannot substitute for systematically digesting the contents of *Science and Sanity*. But this does not mean that other “tools” are necessarily bad or useless.

Over the years I have learned to regard a derived popularization as an independent work of art appreciated for its own sake, rather than a substitute for the work that inspired its appearance. My master’s thesis focused upon the works of Joseph Conrad. Several of his works, including *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *The Secret Agent*, were turned into movies. As I watched these Hollywood productions, I realized that although they somewhat captured the flavor and essence of Conrad, they were not Conrad, and should be appreciated as separate works of art. Nevertheless, even these “distortions” have led many to appreciate Conrad, perhaps inspiring them to read the novel in its original form.

In a similar vein, I observed that Miklos Rozsa’s background music for the Hitchcock thriller *Spellbound* was so derivative that it almost seemed like a plagiarism of Howard Hanson’s *Romantic Symphony*. Nevertheless, the music for *Spellbound* is different and unique enough to warrant its own place of honor. I believe I appreciate Hanson’s symphonic works far more because of Rozsa, and Rozsa’s orchestral works far more because of Hanson. The same holds true for Korzybski’s and Hayakawa’s diagrams.

Steve Stockdale, in an open letter to a group of students at Alverno College, resolves the dissonance between these two structures with the following explanation:

Korzybski emphasized the scientific, physiological, and neurological bases for his explications of the abstracting process(es). Hayakawa focused on the linguistic and semantic/meaning implications of our evaluation processes. His Ladder should not be considered so much as his version of the Structural Differential, as much as his own diagram of how we abstract, through language, classifications, types, categories, etc., which result in what can be considered as different levels of abstractions. Whereas Korzybski’s model represents an
ongoing process, Hayakawa's diagram — in my opinion — does not reflect a process but instead captures the linguistic output of that process. Korzybski deals with abstracting — Hayakawa deals with abstractions.

Having taught English composition for over 37 years, I have appreciated Hayakawa's pedagogical tool as an aid to help the student internalize the structure of the standard deductive expository paragraph, requiring descending levels of specificity.

**Thesis (Generalization)**
- More Abstract
- Less Specific

**Examples**
- Specific Supporting Details
- More Concrete
- More Specific

**Thesis**
- I had a frustrating morning.

**Examples**
- I woke up with stopped-up sinuses and an earache.
- The Harrison County sheriff stopped me for speeding on my way to work.
- My driver's license had expired two days ago.

Hayakawa's ladder diagram enables the students to envision coordinate and subordinate relationships in the formal outline:

1. Beverage
   A. Juice
      1. Tomato Juice
      2. Orange Juice
      3. Apple Juice
      4. Grape Juice
B. Coffee
   1. Black
   2. With Cream
   3. With Sugar
   4. With Cream and Sugar

Hayakawa’s ladder enables students to see how inferences and generalizations build on observations:

**Inference**
Mary appears psychologically disturbed.

**Generalization**
Mary behaves in a rebellious antisocial manner.

- Observation: She put glue in the cat’s nose.
- Observation: She poured salt into the sugar bowl.
- Observation: She flushed the goldfish down the toilet.

In the 1953 movie, *The Tall Texan*, the hero Ben Trask (Lloyd Bridges) convinced heroine Laura Thompson (Marie Windsor) to become his partner in a mining operation. To extract gold, they used a rocker-box, a contraption with a series of progressively smaller sieves that separated the coarse from the fine particulate matter. This image suggests another model students can use to develop their essays with more specificity. Using a professional model essay, *The Murderous Species*, by Elaine Morgan, I illustrate to the students how to use a “rocker box” version of Hayakawa’s model to sift out details.

In her essay, Elaine Morgan takes issue with sociologists (Anthony Storr, in particular) who contend that mankind is the most ruthless and bloodthirsty of all life forms. Using inductive observation, she assembles a series of examples rebutting this popular, but erroneous notion:

Suppose we try to define this allegation a little more closely. Is a man more bloodthirsty than a shark? Or a piranha? Obviously not: so the claim probably refers only to mammals. Is he fiercer than a wolverine? Is he more murderous than a rat? No, he’s not. Perhaps the comparison had better be confined to primates. Speaking frankly, then, which would you be more chary of annoying, a man or a gorilla? (p.9)
Morgan follows up this catalogue of examples with an extremely detailed description, inspiring a term I frequently use on student essays: "I want to see more woolly-monkey details."

Or, if we withdraw the gorilla because he's bigger, compare the aggressiveness of a man with that of some of the smaller primates — for instance, the charming and cuddly-looking woolly monkey of South America, who, if he takes offense, will hurtle from a treetop onto your shoulders, get a stranglehold on your throat with his prehensile tail, and claw at your face and eyes while hammering his sharp canine teeth repeatedly into the top of your skull. How exactly has man become more maniacally aggressive than all of these? (p.9)

Using the gold sieve model, we can separate the coarse, more general elements from the finer, more detailed particles, differentiating the generalizations from the more specific details.

**Generalization:**
Contrary to Storr's contention, mankind does not appear to behave more cruelly than other forms of life.

**Examples:**
Not as cruel as:
- Shark
- Wolverine
- Piranha
- Gorilla

**Woolly Monkey) Details:**
- hurtles from a treetop onto your shoulders
- gets a stranglehold on your throat with its prehensile tail
- claws at your face and eyes while hammering its sharp canine teeth repeatedly into the top of your skull.
As an English professor, Hayakawa no doubt felt the frustration of reading thinly developed expository paragraphs in his students' essays. From the complexities of Korzybski's structural differential, Hayakawa fashioned a new pedagogical tool to help students develop their scanty expository paragraphs. They learned to use the gleanings of their abstracting to provide concrete supporting details.

Personally, I would not use Bessie the Cow as *Cliffs Notes to Science and Sanity*. Yet, Bessie does enhance a certain aspect of my students' understanding. Using my screwdriver as a skewer for shish-ka-bobs doesn't preclude me from using it to tighten screws. Perhaps we could allow our time-binding colleagues a little more slack with regard to their metaphorical eclecticism. We humans have invented many useful tools, and many of these, like wind, water, and fire, have their own special uses.

REFERENCES


AGS Founder Receives Talbot Winchell Award

Laurie Cox, founder of the Australian Society for General Semantics, has received the 2003 Talbot Winchell Award. This award is given annually by the Institute of General Semantics to persons who have significantly furthered the spread of general semantics.

Cox was awarded this honor for his founding of the AGS in the early 1990s, and for his writing on general semantics, including his book, *Self-Management in Difficult Situations*. The award will be presented at The Twelfth International Conference on General Semantics in Las Vegas, Nevada, in October – November, 2003. Cox plans to travel from Australia to the USA to attend the conference and to accept the award.

Past recipients of the Talbot Winchell Award include Sanford I. Berman, Isabel Caro, Milton Dawes, Jeremy Klein, Bruce Kodish, Susan Presby Kodish, Harry Maynard, Charlotte Read, and Robert Wanderer.

David Hewson of the AGS told *ETC*, “Laurie would like to thank the people who initially helped him set up AGS: Andrew Lohrey (co-founder), Robert James, Phillip Anthony, Brett MacDonald, Frank Rew, Sandra Swain, Jim Walker, Susie Foran, Megan Jones, Glenn Mitchelson, Heather Roger, Pauline Davis, and Gavan Callaghan. And a special thank you to Laurie’s wife Betty, whose support made all this possible.

“Laurie would also like to thank current AGS members for their continuing support of AGS: Fred and Agnus Kren, Eva Lucas, Dr. Anna Vass, Daisy and Marcel Stein, Gary Erickson, Ian Wilson, Andrew Davis, and Barbara Briggs.”

For a Profile and an excerpt from Cox’s book, see pp.138-142 in this *ETC*. For Gregory Sawin’s review of *Self Management in Difficult Situations*, see *ETC* vol. 58 no. 1, Spring 2001. For information on the book, contact the Australian Society for General Semantics (contact information below).

News from AGS

The Australian Society for General Semantics meets regularly at locations in the Sydney area. On August 10, Robert James will discuss *Personality*,

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“Nature or Nurture, Jung or Freud, Aristotle or Korzybski, dichotomy or continuum — How can we possibly comprehend the human condition?”

On September 13, Laurie Cox will speak on Application of correct symbolism to fact, which includes, “Using language to maximize predictability, communication and problem solving.”

On October 12, David Hewson will present Critical thinking from a GS perspective. “Learn how the formulations of the critical thinking movement, along with GS formulations, can help you improve your thinking ability.”

On November 8, Laurie Cox will offer Semanti-therapy, which “deals predominantly with our ‘thoughts,’ evaluations, and ‘emotions,’ as it emphasizes the cognitive aspect of a therapeutic approach.”

For more information on AGS activities, contact Laurie Cox, 15/12 Walton Crescent, Abbotsford, NSW 2046, Australia. Telephone: 61 2 9713 7950. agssoc@hotmail.com. www.pcug.org.au/~ajames/agshome.htm.

Fall Seminar-Workshop

The Institute of General Semantics (IGS) will offer its five-day Seminar-Workshop in General Semantics beginning October 26th at The Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. This seminar-workshop serves as the Institute’s primary training program, continuing the educational efforts that began in 1938. Participants will learn both theory and applications pertaining to the general semantics system for personal awareness, evaluation and development. Seminar staff will include Jeff Mordkowitz (Director of IGS), Dr. Bruce I. Kodish and Dr. Susan Presby Kodish (co-authors of Drive Yourself Sane), Milton Dawes (ISGS Director and ETC contributor) and Steve Stockdale (ISGS Director and IGS Director for Programs). Visit the IGS website (www.general-semantics.org) for details, call 817-886-3746, or e-mail steve@dfwgs.net for more information.

International Conference

The Twelfth International Conference on General Semantics will be held at The Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas October 31st – November 2nd, 2003. Sponsored by the Institute of General Semantics, the International Society for General Semantics and the New York Society for General Semantics, the Conference will feature the presentation of fifteen juried papers, five workshops and plenty of time for stimulating discussion regarding the theme of how we can cope and cooperate in an environment of conflicting world views and belief systems. Dr. Sanford I. Berman will deliver the annual Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture on Saturday, November 1st, to highlight the weekend’s activities. For more information, see the back cover of this ETC, visit the Institute’s website at www.general-semantics.org, contact the Conference Coordinator, Steve Stockdale, steve@dfwgs.net, or call 817-886-3746.
General Semantics at NCTE Convention

Four ISGS members will lead a panel session on general semantics at the annual convention for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) on November 21, 2003, in San Francisco. ETC Editorial Board advisors Gregg Hoffmann, Andrea Johnson, Steve Stockdale, and educational consultant Katherine Liepe-Levinson will present General Semantics and Critical Literacy: Interdisciplinary Approaches that Enable Students to Become Better Problem-Solvers and Critical Thinkers.


“In addition to our presentation, the Institute of General Semantics will sponsor an exhibit booth during the convention from November 21st-23rd,” reports Steve Stockdale. If you plan to attend the NCTE convention, look for the general semantics exhibit at Booth #837, located in the Moscone Center West, Level One. The theme of the exhibit will be, “General Semantics ... it’s not what you think.”

New York Society for General Semantics

At the March 13 meeting of the NYSGS, Leonard Shlain, M.D., presented The Alphabet Versus the Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image, co-sponsored with Friends of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Frank Scardilli, Chief Circuit Mediator, U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit, and Adjunct Professor of Law, spoke on How to Get What You Want by Improving Your Negotiating and Conflict Resolution Skills on April 24. Jeff Mordkowitz, Director of the Institute of General Semantics, gave a full-day stress reduction seminar, The Seven-SimpleSteps™ Way to a Stress Free Day, on May 17.

Most NYSGS meetings are held at the Albert Ellis Institute, 45 East 65th St., New York City, free to members of NYSGS and IGS. Non-members pay $20. For details, including the NYSGS 2003 lecture schedule or for a copy of the Society’s newsletter, Verbal Level, contact NYSGS President Allen Flagg at (212) 532-1467, or nysgs@msn.com, or visit www.nysgs.org.

Teaching GS

Professor Andrea Johnson, a member of the ETC Editorial Board, teaches general semantics at Alverno College in Milwaukee. As she has in years past, this summer she offers an Advanced General Semantics course, PCM-449, but in a slightly different format than the typical summer school session. Students in this advanced class will earn
three hours of course credit in an intensive one-week, seminar-type class. Professor Johnson has invited ISGS Directors Milton Dawes and Steve Stockdale to assist her in teaching the class, which will provide her students with a rare opportunity to learn general semantics from three distinctively different perspectives. If you are an educator interested in offering a similar type of learning experience for your students, contact Andrea Johnson, who will be pleased to share her course development experiences with you. Her e-mail is: andrea.johnson@alverno.edu.

Leo Globus, 1918-2003

Leo Globus, co-author of the entertaining and instructive general-semantics-based Living & Learning children’s songs, died on May 28 in Montreal, Canada, after a long illness.

“Few who read ETC today would have known people like S. I. Hayakawa, Wendell Johnson, and Irving Lee as my father did,” his son Paul told ETC. “But his contribution to the ideas espoused in ETC runs deeper than his acquaintance with these men. Through the Living & Learning series of children’s songs he created with my late mother, Helen Koty, in the early 1950s, he touched many, helping not so much to popularize the concepts we continue to discuss and grapple with, as to make them more understandable — even to young children. In later life, he continued to ponder that which so captivated him as a younger man, concluding that education should move toward teaching people how to think as opposed to what to think. One can only hope that his vision for a world less paralyzed by dogma and foolishly straitjacketed thinking will one day come to pass.”

An interview with Leo Globus by his son Paul appeared in the Winter 2000-2001 ETC. Cassette tapes of the Living & Learning songs by Leo and Helen Globus are available from ISGS.

Gardner Gateley

ETC author Gardner Gateley, Professor Emeritus at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, died on May 26, aged 73. Professor Gateley’s refereed paper “Johnson’s Diagnosogenic Theory of Stuttering: An Update,” appeared in the Spring 2003 ETC.

Other articles by Professor Gateley were published in ETC vols. 56-3, 56-4, 57-1, 57-3.

In *Dare to Inquire*, Dr. Bruce Kodish employs the formulations of both general semantics and humanism to create a considered and reflective approach to problem-solving and decision-making. I find such an approach a welcome antidote to American society’s fixation on quick-fix thinking and fast solutions.

The Introduction, entitled “The Present Mess,” discusses the problematic world we live in, and how general semantics, humanism, and inquiry can help us to make better sense of it. In Part I, “The Humanist Tradition,” the author offers an overview of humanism as well as his ideas about becoming more fully human, and about the practice of ethical decision-making.

Part II, “Making Humanism Workable,” tells us how to apply general semantics formulations to live a more productive and fulfilling life. (I found the chapter on “Logical Fate and Freedom” particularly interesting because it not only provided theoretical knowledge but also fascinating details about the life of Alfred Korzybski, the founder of general semantics.)

Part III, “Implications and Applications” is divided into three sections: applying a scientific attitude to science, an extensional approach to religion, and time-binding ethics. Kodish courageously tackles the difficult issues of unifying human knowledge, and the even more troublesome topic, when religion and science collide. As a part of his examination of humanist ethics, he unflinchingly analyzes the abortion issue.

The Conclusion explores the possibilities of bringing human interests together under a humanist banner, and it reviews the role of general semantics and related approaches in furthering a humanist agenda. The author states
“With Korzybski, I accept that human survival depends on the extension of human sanity. I’m enough of a human chauvinist that I want the game to continue. Humans are more likely to avoid self-destruction and continue surviving as a species when a significantly large number of people begin to follow an orientation — an attitude of inquiry — which promotes beneficial time-binding.” Right on Dr. Kodish!

There is much valuable information and insightful analysis about the human condition in *Dare to Inquire*. Whether you are new to general semantics or well-steeped in the discipline, you will gain significant benefit from reading this engaging and challenging book. The author (who with his wife, Susan Presby Kodish, wrote *Drive Yourself Sane: Using the Uncommon Sense of General Semantics*) with this latest book has made an outstanding contribution to the fields of humanistic philosophy and general semantics.


In September 2000, the Modern Library — one of the most distinguished names in classics publishing — launched Modern Library Paperback Classics. All titles are selected by the members of the Modern Library Editorial Board specifically for American readers, and all have attractive new jackets, clear typeface, and wide margins for annotation.

In February 2002, *Cousin Bette*, Balzac’s great opus about envy and greed in nineteenth century Paris, made its Modern Library debut. For those of us who love literature, I highly recommend this excellent novel.

In her introduction to this edition, Francine Prose states, “Few novels have more violent beginnings, though the violence is all psychological, and, seen from a distance, might even pass for polite conversation. The fierceness of Balzac’s courage and his reckless determination to portray the Human Comedy precisely as he saw it becomes clear when we consider how few contemporary writers would risk beginning a work of fiction with a scene so repulsive, and so brave in its refusal to hint or promise that, by the novel’s conclusion, sin will be punished, virtue rewarded, and redemption freely offered to the wicked and innocent alike. *Cousin Bette* portrays a world in which almost everyone will do anything to anyone if sex and money are at stake, a milieu in which sex is routinely traded for money, in which friendships and alliances are forged to advance the most immoral motives, and in which only fools and martyrs are deluded enough to follow the outmoded promptings of honor, loyalty, and conscience.”
Jessica Lange played Cousin Bette in a recent movie, and most reviewers found the film wanting in a number of areas. That certainly is not the case with the book, a devilishly entertaining read in which Balzac reminds us that human beings are capable of all sorts of naughtiness.


Lou Marinoff, author of the international bestseller *Plato, Not Prozac!* (which he spoke about at a recent Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture), continues to advocate the application of philosophical wisdom to life’s everyday problems.

In *The Big Questions: How Philosophy Can Change Your Life,* Marinoff advises us to question “received wisdom,” and to not accept victimhood as the byproduct of modern life. To help us do this he examines differences between “disease” (something is wrong with you — e.g., the flu) and “dis-ease” (you are wronging yourself — e.g., overwhelming anxiety), and differences between “offense” (an attitude or behavior that is offered to someone, who must then decide to accept the insult or not), and “harm” (something done actively to an unwilling victim who does not have a chance to accept or reject it). Rather than presenting his arguments in an abstract way, Marinoff uses specific case studies from his philosophical counseling practice to show how wisdom from the great thinkers can help us to define our own philosophy.

I especially enjoyed these chapters in Marinoff’s fascinating book: “Are You Guided by Reason or Passion?,” “Must You Suffer?,” “Who’s in Charge Here: We, or the Machines?,” and “How Can You Handle Change?”

I also found most illuminating an Appendix entitled “Hit Parade of Ideas: Ninety-Nine Useful Thinkers in Philosophical Counseling” (Alfred Korzybski is one of these ninety-nine thinkers). For readers who may want to find out more about philosophical counseling, Marinoff also offers a list of organizations involved in philosophical practice, and a directory of counselors certified by the American Philosophical Practitioners Association.

John Dewey once said, “Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.” I think Dewey would have liked this book.

*All Reviews by Martin H. Levinson, Ph.D.*
In order to maintain entity, organisms of all kinds build walls or barriers around themselves to shut out too great impingement of externality. We are all familiar with the obvious physical barriers. The oyster has carried the business of physical barriers almost to the logical end of extinction. It lives within a thick wall of shell and simply waits for food to come its way. If none comes, there is nothing the oyster can do about it. Because of the nature of the medium in which it lives, the oyster usually manages to survive, but it has sold participation in life for comfort and security. If comfort and security were the purpose of life, however, no organism would have needed to evolve beyond the oyster. In order to make progress, organisms have had to have a certain amount of permeability.

**EARL C. KELLEY “COMMUNICATION AND THE OPEN SELF”**

Numerous studies have pointed out the difficulty of teaching children the arithmetical operations involving zero. For example, in an extensive study done by Clapp in 1924, it was discovered that, of the 100 basic multiplication combinations, the sixteen most difficult were all multiplications with zero. If
this study were repeated today, the results would certainly be less discourag-
ing since there has been considerable improvement in the teaching of arith-
metic as a result of recent emphasis on meaningfulness and on the use of vis-
ual and manipulative aids. (Both of these trends are, of course, in perfect
keeping with the teachings of general semantics.) Despite these improve-
ments, difficulties with zero still persist and are due largely, I believe, to the
improper use of language such as is displayed in Wheat’s paragraph. It does
not seem unreasonable to suppose that many of these difficulties have arisen
from teaching that “zero” is synonymous with “nothing” and also that zero is
a mere place holder, not a number, and therefore that its behavior is entirely
different from that of those numbers which are supposedly not place holders.
Those with experience in the beneficial effects of correct semantic techniques
will probably agree that a correct treatment of zero would make operations
with it not more difficult but easier for children. It is appropriate here to men-
tion the semantically and psychologically sound methods developed by Dr.
Stern. It has been her experience that children when properly taught find
zero-combinations so easy that they consider them to be jokes.

An interesting experiment in this direction which anyone can perform is to
ask others: “What is 1 divided by 0?” The two most common answers are “0”
and “1,” with explanations to this effect: “Zero just doesn’t go into one, so
the answer is zero,” or “Zero is nothing, so there isn’t really any division.
You still have the one and that is the answer.” If the person questioned has
studied mathematics through the calculus, he is most likely to give the more
sophisticated answer “infinity” and to give an explanation involving a de-
nominator which approaches zero, despite the fact that the limit process is en-
tirely irrelevant to the question. There will be very few who will answer cor-
rectly that this is a question which does not have any answer or that “1/0” is a
meaningless combination of marks. Of those answering correctly, still fewer
will have any explanation other than they remember being told this by some
algebra teacher. These people can be further tested by asking them: “What is
zero divided by zero?” The most likely answer is that division by zero is for-
bidden in mathematics. In the interest of avoiding personal enmities, it is un-
wise to create further confusion by asking why it is forbidden and by whom.
The experiment is likely to present one with a sad picture of the semantic re-
actions of the American population to a simple arithmetic problem, which can
be understood thoroughly by a well-trained fifth-grader of average intelli-
gence. Semantically, the experiment is especially interesting because of the
widespread tendency to treat the matter in a completely abstract manner or by
pure juggling of the mathematical symbols. It is an unusual person who will
attempt to answer these questions by thinking about real objects. If you have performed the experiment, contrast the explanations which you have received with the following thought pattern:

The problem is to divide one by zero. Let me try to find a real situation from which this problem might arise. Suppose I had a lot of boxes each holding a dozen pencils and I wanted 60 pencils. To find how many boxes I needed, I would divide 60 by 12. In this same way, suppose I had a lot of empty pencil-boxes and wanted to get one pencil; this would again be a division problem and I would divide 1 by 0. But it is plainly impossible to get one pencil from any number of empty boxes, so it is also impossible to divide 1 by 0.

You have also asked me to divide 0 by 0. Continuing the previous example, this would correspond to asking: "How many empty pencil boxes will be needed to supply zero pencils?" This is a very silly question but, if you insist on an answer, I would say that it doesn't matter how many boxes you take. You may use zero boxes or five boxes or as many as you want. So the original question is one which does not have a unique answer but has many answers. It could be correctly answered by saying: "Zero or any number whatsoever."

I submit that this thought pattern is well within the grasp of a ten-year old of average intelligence, provided he has not been perverted in his semantic reactions by the conventional schoolroom methods. That adults find the problem so difficult certainly suggests that they have lost the common sense and healthy reactions which they possessed as children.

ROBERT S. FOUCHE "THE UN-SANITY OF MATHEMATICS AND ITS TEACHING"

It seems to me that such a misunderstanding of Korzybski's uses of the terms "extensional" and "intensional" neatly illustrates the pernicious persistence of "flat" propositional habits. And it partly explains the feeling that general semantics has an anti-logical bias. The reasoning involved can be diagrammed on a single plane as follows. If we choose a two-valued language, perish the thought, it can be represented by two areas marked respectively "extensional" and "intensional." However, familiarity with general semantics would probably suggest a representation of "degrees" of extensionality or intensionality by means of a scale or a gradation of shading from black to white across an area. An item to be evaluated must be ascribed to one or another approximate position on the scale. For, by logical necessity (that is, the neces-
sity of this "flat" logic), it cannot be assigned to two places at the same time. In other words, it cannot be both very extensional and also very intensional.

For very good reasons, which he went to some lengths to explain, Korzybski considered "extensionality" desirable and "intensionality" a source of danger. However, he took pains to indicate the contextual meanings of these multiordinal terms. But since, for the moment, we are restricted to the use of a "flat" logic, we are obliged to ascribe "goodness" to the extensional end of our scale and "badness" to the other. Therefore we are constrained to say that something extensional "is" good, and something intensional "is" bad.

Now, extensionality implies reference to events, "actualities," "objective realities." So we are obliged in this system to evaluate items of information as "extensional-good" or "intensional-bad" on the basis of their relative immediacy of contact with events. Reports of others appear necessarily more "intensional-bad" than direct observations. In a similar fashion higher order abstractions, scientific as well as others, receive an "intensional" stigma. For they are separated from "reality" by various acts of verbalization and summation. Also they constitute the symbolical raw material of "intension." Clearly science, mathematics, logic, and other forms of essential behavior, such as time-binding, must be considered "intensional" and therefore less desirable than the sensory responses we share with the higher apes.

Although this example appears exaggerated, I believe it thereby serves to illuminate a mechanism which frequently distorts the "logic" of general semantics. I seriously doubt that Korzybski's formulations can be presented in conventional "flat" logical terms without producing the appearance of some degree of triviality or nonsense.

But suppose we attempt to operate the above terms in a non-Aristotelian fashion, that is, at more than one level of consideration, with conscious passage from level to level, and with a recognition of other than "flat" relationships. For present purposes we might ascribe the term "intensional" to the internal relationships of word-word or symbol-symbol systems. At another level of consideration we would apply the term to operations restricted to these "flat" relationships. At still another level we would label "intensional" the evaluation of such logics as constituting ultimate and sufficient criteria of analysis.

The term "extensional" could be loosely applied to the objective aspects of experience. And at another level of consideration it could apply to those relationships which, in specific situations, may connect from level to level the elements and configurations of symbol systems to specific processes and events. At another level of consideration it would also apply to operations
which recognize that such inter-level relationships control the ultimate validity of any symbol system and meaningfully affect the sense of its components.

Now, recognizing only two levels of consideration for the moment, we can speak of an item as both intensional and extensional without any ambiguity or logical inconsistency. For instance, a situation in which intensionally derived relationships apply extensionally can be labeled both intensional and extensional. We can operate extensionally through intensional means and construct intensional symbolic devices for extensional use. An illustration used by Korzybski is the extensional or matrix calculus. Scientific activity can be recognized as a cyclical extensional-intensional complex. Higher order abstractions, such as those of Korzybski, can constitute the quintessence of extensionality. And in the untutored extensional observations of the ignorant can be found some of the most devastatingly intensional evaluations that we know.

It seems to me that general semanticists have at their disposal a discipline rooted in and founded upon the very substance of modern logical analysis. They possess in the work of Korzybski a rigorously consistent synthesis and extension of the most significant developments in the field. They have, in other words, a strong theoretical position, but in many ways they fail to exploit it. There is an urgent need for more explicit discussion of fundamentals on the one hand and for more examples of rigorous and fully articulated applications of the discipline on the other. For, in the absence or impairment of its structural foundations, much of general semantics deteriorates into sheer local gossip, and many well meant writings on the subject can easily be convicted of being not "logical."

EDMUND N. TODD "DISCUSSION: IS GENERAL SEMANTICS 'LOGICAL'?

Martin Maloney, whose analysis of the whodunit as mass-literature ("A Grammar of Assassination") appears in this issue, promises in the near future to examine the peculiar fate of general semantics as it begins to crop up in the lucubrations of the private eyes. "In the article," he writes, "I omitted one manifestation of some interest. In a book called Murder in the Gunroom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), H. Bean Piper has created, in the person of Colonel Jefferson Davis Rand, a detective who solves murders by applying
general semantics. The redoubtable Colonel is given to saying things like this: 'The principles of General Semantics come in very handy in my business, especially in criminal-investigation work, like this. A consciousness of abstracting, a realization that we can only know something about a thin film of events on the surface of any given situation, and a habit of thinking structurally and of individual things, instead of verbally and of categories, saves a lot of blind-alley chasing.' Murder in the Gunroom is a better-than-average crime story, but I fear that science and sanity may not prove keys to vast popularity in this field."

Lieutenant Alexander Weaver of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, writes from Korea: "I have returned to my battalion, and we are busy building our new defense line and are training for any eventuality which may arise .... The winter is approaching and I shudder to think of it, as we depend on the weather so much. My very limited semantic training has been of extreme value to me in matters pertaining to military writing and expression under fire and generally on the front. Clear, concise, unmistakable statements and specific orders are of paramount importance, and a certain amount of semantic appreciation is never amiss. In dealing with the South Koreans and our other allies, I find that many inbred prejudices and misinterpretations can be corrected without making it obvious."

Anatol Rapoport's Operational Philosophy, the current Semantics Book Club selection, has also been chosen as the alternate selection for February 1954 by the Book Find Club. This fact is especially gratifying because some years ago the Book Find Club included among its selections a book containing a singularly obtuse and uncomprehending attack on general semantics, namely, Barrows Dunham's Man Against Myth. Rapoport's book, which has the subtitle, "Integrating Knowledge and Action," will go far to dispel the notion held by Dunham and others of his persuasion that general semantics is a philosophy of escape from reality into terminological hair-splitting.

Uses of the word Semantics: "It is time, certainly, to exclude semantics and wishful thinking from our minds and deal honestly and realistically with the question." From an editorial in Saturday Evening Post, October 31, 1953.
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Also by David Gerrold

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BOOKS FROM ISGS — NEW AND OLD

**On Writing NEW**

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**GS Fiction NEW**

**2 Kill or Not 2 Kill**
William Dallmann

Two GS thrillers, *Lobos*, and *A Dish Best Served Cold*.

In two novellas, private shamus and semanticist Dr. Christopher Raven lives and sleuths, not coincidentally, on California’s beautiful Monterey Peninsula, where the author also happens to reside.

*Bruno Power*, villain: “A is A. ... It is only common sense.”

*Dr. Raven*, semanticist: “... someone once defined common sense as that which tells us the world is flat.”

For excerpts, see *ETC* vol. 59, no 4, Winter 2002-2003. For a review by Martin Levinson, see *ETC* vol. 59, no. 2, Summer 2002, page 221.

*Nautilus Press*, 2001. 148 pages. 5 1/2 by 8 1/4 inches. Softcover. 1470KONTK. $12.95

**On Living Skills NEW**

**The Inner Game of Life**
Stewart Holmes

Learn to use general semantics methods to consciously adopt stress-reducing attitudes toward situations that arise each day.

For excerpts and information about the author, see *ETC* vol. 59, no. 1, Spring 2002, pages 4 to 24. For a review by Martin Levinson, see *ETC* vol. 59, no. 2, Summer 2002, page 221.

*Infinity Publishing*, 2001. 128 pages. 5 1/2 by 8 1/4 inches. Softcover. 1380IGOL. $11.95

**Classic Texts**

**The Tyranny of Words**
Stuart Chase

Understand how we use words and how we let words use us.

“As I read it [Science and Sanity], slowly, painfully, but with growing eagerness, I looked for the first time into the awful depths of language itself — depths into which the grammarian and the lexicographer have seldom peered, for theirs is a different business.” — Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*, pages 7 & 8.

*HBJ*, 1938, 1966. 396 pages. 5 1/2 by 8 inches. Softcover. 1878TOW. $7.95

**Explorations in Awareness**
J. Samuel Bois

As it reveals linguistic habits that restrict vision and thought, this book helps readers develop semantic skills for sharper observations and more effective thinking, as well as more productive behavior at home and in the workplace. This popular introduction to general semantics has served as a required text in college courses and seminars for business and professional groups.

*ISGS/Viewpoints Institute*, originally published by Harper & Brothers, 1957. 212 pages. 5 1/2 by 8 1/4 inches. 1210EIA. $13.50

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