

Semantography Series No. 45

Note: This excerpt is typed directly onto the wax stencil as the thoughts came into my mind. Kindly excuse all the shortcomings from this procedure, I have not the time for editing and re-typing.

SEMANTOGRAPHY FOR YOUNG MINDS

A Talk given to the Ngunnagan Club of Sydney by C.K. Bliss
on the 14th October 1951 at the Y.M.C.A. 325 Pitt Street

Dear Friends,

I like to talk to young people. Life is before you, the greatest adventure of all, and all of you want to make a great success of it. But you know, life is not easy, and sometimes you will find yourself in situations which will demand all your courage, all your determination, and often your self-sacrifice. Will you be able to stand up to it?

This thought worried me when I was a boy and later a high school student. Often I asked myself the following questions: If my best friend would fall into a deep whirlpool or be in a burning house - would I jump into the deep water or the roaring flames to save him, knowing that it may mean certain death to me? Perhaps similar thoughts have assailed you too. But no answer can be given unless the situation really arises.

But there is one question which perhaps everyone has put to himself and answered in the affirmative: AM I ABLE TO RECOGNISE NEW IDEAS WHICH CAN BENEFIT MANKIND, AND AM I READY TO HELP SUCH NEW IDEAS ALONG? Every man and woman would answer this question with a firm YES. Yet, in reality - not 1 in 10, or not even 1 in 100 can really do it. Unbelievable?

Well, today is the day, and now is the hour. Everyone will be able right now, after I have finished my talk, to answer this question for himself or herself. The difficulty is in the word "new" idea. A new idea, a really new idea is so unconventional, so far from our habits of thoughts, that it seems at first strange, even absurd, ridiculous, cranky, outlandish. And indeed the history of almost every new idea shows that the men who pioneered such new ideas were ridiculed, abused, driven into despair, bankruptcy, general contempt, until they died an untimely death of frustration and embitterment.

Now, you might say that this refers to new philosophical systems - ideas which are difficult to grasp. No - even pioneers of technical inventions, the bicycle, the motorcar, the airplane, the wireless, even the umbrella, had to go through the ordeal of being laughed at, of being despised, deserted even by their friends and families. And I ask you, should it be so? And this refers also to new ideas in music and paintings. I see from your programs that you have evenings of recorded music, that you listen to music by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, etc. Very nice, very nice indeed. But do you realise that in Mozart's and Beethoven's time, the Youth Clubs of Vienna had other musical heroes, they listened to. Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert were musicians among many, indeed they were so much secondclass, that they were not able to make a living by their music. Schubert lived and died a pauper. Beethoven could not make so much as to have a weatherboard cottage for himself. He was forced to move from one furnished room to another, always harassed by stupid landladies. And Mozart, the greatest musical genius of all times, a prodigee who played before Queens and Emperors, he left not enough money for a decent burial. He was thrown into a mass grave and the monument in Vienna's central cemetery is a fake and a swindle. No bones are buried underneath it. Nobody knows where Mozart was thrown into when he was carried out to be buried.

What does this mean? It does not mean only that he could not make enough money, even for his burial. It means too, that he had no friends ready to pay him a decent burial. And I tell you, right now in our time - the Schuberts, Beethovens and Mozarts of today are fighting a grim battle, just to make ends meet - somewhere in the slum areas of Paris, London, New York and even here in Sydney. I am convinced that here in our city there are at least a few creative musicians who have composed a symphony, a concerto, a quartett, a sonata, and unable to make their names known, live in bitterness and frustration, craving and yearning for a few gentle souls to listen to them. I tell you DON'T WORSHIP THE DEAD, LISTEN TO THE LIVING. FIND THEM! GIVE THEM THE FEELING THAT THEIR CREATIVE WORK IS APPRECIATED.

Now, you might wonder, what I am going to say next. Perhaps that I have made something, which will live long after I am dead. Well, for 8 long years of work I often believed that I shall go down the grave a crank. Except for a few enlightened friends - no one believed that my work has any value whatsoever. Now, very great scholars have recognised the value of it. Still, it's uphill going and very difficult. Indeed many years may pass, until this idea will be firmly adopted and used for the benefit of mankind.

Why it is so difficult with new ideas? It is, because many of the experts in the field of an idea - have other ideas. Indeed, they fight new ideas of "other guys". They would not give them recognition, let of all adopt them - although it is their business. How then is a new idea carried forward?

Only by the Amateurs ! And this word is meant in its literal sense, Latin amator Lover. The bicycle, the wireless, the motorcar, the airplane and many other new ideas were carried forward by amateurs, who did it for the love of it. And I have consented to this talk only in the hope that among you young people there will be a few who will realise the great satisfaction, which comes with the work for a new idea.

Now, although I am an engineer and inventor, I am not going to talk about an invention however so good as a technical gadget. Although I was quite a musician in my haydays, and have even dabbled in art, I am not going to show you something of this kind. My idea goes to the root of the great troubles of the world. One of the greatest scholars of our time BERTRAND RUSSELL, the eminent philosopher and mathematician wrote that the men who will help my work along "will be performing an important service to Mankind". Professor OLIVER L. REISER of the University of Pittsburgh, U.S.A. a prominent modern philosopher refers to it with these words "Bliss heroic work, ... a powerful stimulus and aid to President Truman's "Point Four Program". What is it then - this idea of "Semantography".

You will agree that we are living in a mad world. We are fighting each other not only on the battlefield, but even in the community, and even within the family. What's wrong with us? What's wrong with our thinking? Well, the scholars tell us, that our language is to be blamed. Somehow we think in words, but we haven't find a system to recognise words with vague, ambiguous and even fallacious meanings. We use the same word and mean different things. We fight each other with words, then with swords. Our speech is muddled and consequently our thoughts are muddled too. No better example can be given for this disastrous situation than the example of how the German nation was driven into utter ruin, by a flood of fallacious propaganda. And today, this propoaganda is carried on by other people.

In short - what we need most and cannot find, is MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLE. Let us now examine the obstacles to mutual understanding.

- (1) Firstly, there is the fact, that the peoples of this planet are divided by thousands of languages and dialects. The Greek of old used to imitate the "ridiculous" speech of foreigners by uttering "barbarbarbarbar". From this they formed the word "Barbar", a foreigner.
- (2) Now we have writing, and we have gone so far, that the Latin alphabet is now used for many languages. But unfortunately, the very same sound symbol, a letter, is used to indicate different sounds in different languages. Do you know the story of Mr. Abel of Vienna? He had to go to England on a business trip, could not speak English and did not know that the same letters are pronounced differently. A friend told him that in England his name would be pronounced Ebel. So he had such visitcards printed. On crossing the channel, he handed over his card to a new acquaintance who addressed him as Mr. Ibel. Immediately on arrival in England he had new cards printed with the name of Ibel, only to find that his name was now pronounced Aibel.
- (3) Thirdly, we find that even within the same family of languages, the very same words take on other meanings. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon word to become, is referred to in German as bekomm, but means here to get. You might know the story of the refugee, who in a London Cafe, after waiting for half an hour for his ordered cup of coffee, said angrily to the waiter: "Waiter, when shall I become a cup of coffee?" Very gravely, the waiter answered: "Never, Sir, I hope, never!"
- (4) Now, we have translations from one language into another. But here again, there are certain words (and Semantography makes it possible to point to those words) which almost defy translation, or are usually wrongly translated. A very good example I can give from my own experience. In Central Europe, before World War I, and later, up to 150,000,000 people spoke German, and cited German proverbs and statements. And one statement, which made me furious every time I heard it, was: "Die Ausnahme bestaetigt die Regel", which translated means: "The exception proves the validity of the rule". I could not understand this, because I was a great amateur in chemistry and physics and I knew that if you find only one exception for a chemical or physical rule or law, the rule or law must go. It has proved its unreliability.

You simply cannot imagine how often this "proverb" was used and with incredible consequences. If a man was a "teetotaler" and preached water, and you caught him drinking wine, he said: "Die Ausnahme bestatigt die Regel", and indeed people believed that this exception extenuates a man from breaking the rule. If a father always spoke that children should not be beaten, and you found him beating his child, he would again say that statement and feel justified. Here is a classical example how a statement in words, allowed people to step out from their professed convictions, and still feel that they are right..

Only years later, did I found out the fallacy. This is originally an English statement and it runs: "The exception proves the rule". Now, the English word "proves" has 2 meanings, one is "proof", and apparently the German translator took this meaning in his translation. But there is a second meaning, which is best said with another word: "probes". Any exception probes the validity of the rule, whether the rule should not be abandoned. In my opinion, a grammarian made this false translation and no grammarian proved him wrong, because to all grammarians the rule seemed O.K. In grammar, there are exceptions to every rule, and the grammarians instead of fighting for the elimination of many of these non-sensical exceptions, try to preserve them and to harrass young students.

(5) Another hindrance to mutual understanding is what I shall call "Bla-bla language". I shall ask you to give me any theme, and I shall make a speech about this theme in bla-bla language. As this written excerpt is made before the lecture, I shall take here my own example. Let us assume that I have to make a speech about the problem of road casualties.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are here to discuss a very grave problem, indeed a problem which concerns us all, and which demands a solution. In studying this problem, we must take into account all the factors, which play a part, and we must not miss even a factor which on the surface may seem unimportant, yet in the final outcome may prove the decisive factor. Moreover we must go seriously to work, we must think about it, ponder about it, study it, consider it, view it from every angle, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla... I could go on for hours, without saying a single relevant word.

(6) Then there is highbrow language. Almost every educated intellectual finds it becoming to speak in a language, which to the simple man and woman is incomprehensible. Well, here goes about the road casualties:

Ladies and Gentlemen, The problem which we shall discuss today needs the knowledge of relevant factors pertaining to physics, physiology and psychology. First we must realise that the impact of matter against matter is in direct proportion to the mass involved, also in direct proportion to the speed, but here we find the square of speed. In other words, not only the mass involved, but even more the speed attained is to be considered. We shall go into this later. As to the factors pertaining to physiology, we must understand that there are certain delaying factors involved in the transmission of signals from one nerve centre to the other.... well, I might as well say bla, bla, bla, bla,

(7) The seventh hindrance to mutual understanding is the most disastrous one. Here we see how demagogues and propagandists use vague words, which have different meanings to different people. Let us take one word very much abused these days, the word "Progress". Every party declares to be the only progressive party. Anyone who is against the aim and means of this party, is of course not progressive, in fact he is regressive. If he disagrees with the action to be taken, he is in fact for reaction, he is a reactionary.

Now all this is not so dangerous in a modern democracy, where freedom of speech is assured. But in the countries under totalitarian doctrines, such meanings take on a horrible reality. Indeed millions of people have been shot, killed, gassed, sent to concentration camps, just because of a word, which had for them another meaning.

All those bla-bla speakers, highbrow talkers, demagogues use language in a correct grammatical way. But apparently, the grammar we learned in school does not give us any hint how to be wary of such talk. Neither can logic us help, and by us I mean the people who have no university education. Most people in a nation have only primary school education.

When I was a boy I hated grammar with all the fibres of my heart. Chemistry and physics was a "natural" with me. I think it is quite in order that I have evolved a new "grammar" which is no grammar at all, but a new approach to language. And here is the thought which led me to the new approach.

Languages are sounds which we produce with our larynx, or which we write down in sound symbols. All the words of all the languages are used to describe the physical world in which we live. We speak and write about the events of our world, about the phenomena of our world. Consequently - as this physical world is governed by physical laws - language must conform to these physical laws. We ^{must} classify all words according to Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, in short according to the natural sciences.



Now look at these 3 symbols mounted on a wooden stand. They represent the 3 aspects of nature, and I shall prove in the discussion that any statement can be analysed with it in order to find out whether debate will be futile or whether it will lead us somewhere. I visualise a time when such a little gadget will stand on every breakfast table, every office table, every conference table, where it will help to stop useless debates.

The symbol lowest on the stand represents MATTER, any material thing. I have chosen the square to indicate that matter is not the product of chaos. A divine simplicity and harmony reveals it-self to us in the beauty of a crystal. There are many words in all languages which refer to a material thing, like hammer, table, man, etc. Then we have words which indicate a physical Action performed by a material thing. For instance hammering, running, etc. Furthermore there are words which fall in both groups, as for instance a hammerer, a runner, etc. We have here the 2 aspects MATTER and ENERGY.

Then there is the 3rd aspect of nature, which I shall term the Life or Mind Force. Let us consider this table, a wooden thing. If I break it in two with a blow of my hammer, the 2 pieces will never grow together. Now, if I break a bone in my arm, something terrific will happen. Alarm bells will ring in all nerve centres. New chemicals will be produced and sent to the place of the accident. Leucocytes will swarm in millions to ward off septic intruders, and myriads of cells will be busy to mend the 2 broken pieces together to form a strong bone again. Who does all this? Surely not me. I can't help it. Apparently the cells of my body directed by cells in the brain think for me, and they display a skill, a wisdom, a knowledge incredible to behold.

But the cells of an animal think in the very same way. And even the cells of that piece of wood, when it belonged to a living tree displayed the same thinking and skill, and would mend two pieces of a branch, as long as that branch belongs to the living body. Moreover, biologists have proved that even the lowest organisms, which have no brain and even no eyes are thinking indeed, and can be taught lessons which they will remember, as for instance, avoiding an object which gave them an electric shock. Apparently there is a tremendous difference between MATTER not living and MATTER ALIVE. MATTER ALIVE CAN THINK.

This incredible 3rd aspect of nature is symbolised by the 3rd uppermost symbol, which is similar to the letter V. In this group fall all words which refer to our MIND. We see the events of our physical world and evaluate them in words, and I call these words human evaluations. Now let us suppose that we are debating furiously. But for any statement, the words of which fall in the first 2 groups, we shall find quickly an agreement. For instance we debate whether that horse is galloping or not. We shall quickly find an agreement. But let us suppose that you say that Semantography is complicated. Now, the word complicated does not refer to a material thing (□). You can't put it on a scale. Neither can you film it with a movie camera, it is no Action. It is a meaning in your mind. It falls in the 3rd group. And if I state, that Semantography is not complicated, we shall not be able to convince each other, no matter how hard we try. Debate is useless.

Take this statement: "Is World War III inevitable?" What a question. The future of mankind depends on this. Now world is a material thing, our planet. War are terrible Actions with terrible material things. But the word inevitable is a meaning in our mind. It has no reality outside of our brains, and as there are not 2 brains alike, every brain will evaluate this meaning differently. This may have terrible consequences. For instance, Russian theoreticians maintain that Karl Marx said, that the final clash between the forces of capitalism and socialism is INEVITABLE. Consequently they maintain that it is of no use to find a modus vivendi with the West. On the contrary. Every overture made by the West is only a strategical trick, and the best to do is, not only to prepare, but to attack.

Imagine that the peoples of this planet could live in peace would it not be of this evaluation, made by the men in the Kremlin. Such is the power of words. And we have seen how Hitler drove the whole German nation into madness by similar evaluation words.

Now it may seem quite strange to think about statements in this way. Let us therefore contemplate an apparently silly question. Today the sun rose in the Eastern sky. Is the rising of the sun to-morrow morning INEVITABLE OR NOT? We will have to ask an astronomer. And he would say: "It's a very good guess. In all probability the sun will rise tomorrow morning in the Eastern sky. But it is NOT INEVITABLE. The sun may explode in the very next minute." Now if we study the word inevitable from the standpoint of the natural sciences, we will realise that it means man cannot stop an event. Surely man cannot stop the sun, but man can stop his own activities. He can stop war.

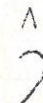
This example may suffice to explain the working of this gadget. In the discussion I shall examine any statement you will submit to me. Now, you may realise that here is a new approach to language, and you have now an opportunity to decide for yourself, whether it is a new idea which can help mankind - or whether you are not able to see it as such.

Now, I am a chemist and I maintain that this is no mere co-incidence. We chemists are furthest ahead of all other scientists in abandoning words for our meanings. We have evolved a new kind of writing a more meaningful writing than any phonetic alphabetical writing. We have evolved a chemical Semantography. Semantics means in Greek significant meaning, and Semantography means a meaningful writing.

Now I ask you what water is in relation to the gadget shown before, you will correctly point to the square (□) symbol. Yes, water is a material thing. Now, if I write down the meaning of water in chemical Semantography it H_2O . This new writing tells us more about water, than the phonetic sound w-a-t-e-r. It shows us the real meaning of water, a composition of Hydrogen and Oxygen. And there is another advantage. H_2O means water in all the languages of the world.

Now what I have done, is to evolve symbols for all the meanings of all the languages. Consequently the symbols of Semantography can be read and understood in all languages. It is now possible that a man who understands only his mothertongue, can write a letter in Semantography to another man, who speaks quite a different language; nevertheless he will be able to read the letter in his language. This may be of tremendous importance in international communication.

Now you will realise that the meanings which fall into the first group (□) will be easy to depict, because they are picturable things which have an outline. Now let us write a few words in Semantography.

							
man	woman	I	she	mouth	to speak	ear	to hear

Now, I could have started with things which comprise dead matter, like a table  but I have chosen meanings which refer to living matter, that is, fall into the 1st and 3rd group. When a man acts, then we may indicate this by placing the Action indicator on top of the symbol outlining a material thing. Now let us write a sentence:

		+			.			+	
I	speak	and	you	listen .		He	thinks	and	doubts (it)

(MIND symbol shows outline of skull)

Now, as to the meanings of speak and listen. They are ascertainable. If my mouth produces sounds which make the air vibrate and if your ear is in order, these air vibrations must be received by your ear, whether you want it or not. However, in the 2nd sentence we see the symbol for the MIND. And we have no means whatsoever, to ascertain whether he thinks or just stares ahead. Furthermore if he says that he doubts what I said, than I have no means to ascertain whether he really doubts it. Nor have I any means to make him not doubt it, if he insists on going on with his doubts.

Now, such a conclusion may seem bewildering, but if you think about it you may come to the conclusion that much of our heated arguing comes from the fact, that we don't want to recognise that the fighting goes on mostly about those words, which fall into the Mind group. If a woman accuses her husband that he "does not think", he will get mad, because in his opinion he thinks very well. He will similarly get mad when someone will suggest that his ideas (○) are complicated (○), that his thoughts (○) are muddled (○), that he is not clever (○), and that he has not a clear (○) mind (○).

As you see, I have attached to each disputed word the symbol of the mind (○), which shows the outline of the upper skull, seat of the mind. But you may doubt, whether the word clear should bear the mind symbol. Indeed, the word stems from a clear liquid, a clear glass, a clear sky, nothing whatever in connection with the mind.

Here we come to another peculiarity of our speech. We are making abstractions from other meanings. We take the meaning of clear from say clear water, and transfer it to a clear mind. Such a "transfer" is called in Greek metaphora. And we call such an expression, a metaphor. AND EVERY METAPHOR IS VAGUE IN MEANING. If you assert that his mind is not clear, that he is incapable (○) of clear thinking, you have no possibility to prove your assertion. On the contrary. Consequently you may get the accusation back in your face, without being able to convince your opponent that you indeed think very clearly. Again, once we realise that we use a word which we have transferred from its original meaning, a transfer which we have made in our mind (○), once we realise that such words are fighting words, which will not bring understanding between people, we will refrain from debating with such words. This too would be realised by the system of Semantography.

This is a written excerpt, and much shorter than the lecture will be. Furthermore, I realise that you dear Reader, who are not present at the lecture will have some doubts which I cannot answer right now. I am however, ready to answer them by mail, should you want to write to me. I have written 3 large volumes in which I have dealt with the whole aspects involved and there I believe I have answered many doubts. However, I realise and respect your doubts (see foregoing page). I shall therefore not be angry about your doubts, and I shall refrain from evaluation words which might get us apart, instead of bringing us together.

I attach to this excerpt my Leaflet No 1 and Pamphlet No.7, which I beg to study carefully. You may then realise that here is a new idea, by which mankind may benefit. If you want to read more about it, write to me, but enclose 2/- for all the printed matter I am going to send you. There was a time, when I distributed all this gratis, but meanwhile I have spent most of my savings, and my earnings on this idea, and I am unable to supply you gratis with all this.

I have started a Correspondence Course on Semantography, dealing with the Writing in this new mode of international communication. If you are a boy scout, or a stamp-collector, you may derive great pleasure and benefit from this idea, and you may help its spread. You may join this Course.

If you are only interested in the Semantics and Logic of Semantography, I suggest that you join a new Course which I am preparing. In any case, working on a new and fascinating idea brings creative happiness, and I hope therefore that my lecture to this Club will not be in vain.

And now, to the question asked on the first pages: Do you think that this is a good idea by which mankind can benefit, or do you consider it outlandish? Ask yourself, and answer it for yourself.

Yours Sincerely

C. K. Bliss

Attached are: Leaflet No.1
Pamphlet No.7

For further literature write to the address shown on first page. Enclose 2/- in stamps to cover cost.