

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

A Non-Profit Institution for the Promotion of Semantics and Semantography

5 Maroubra Bay Road, Pagewood, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia

FOUNDER and DIRECTOR: C. K. BLISS, B. Sc.



SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES NO. 110

SEMANTOGRAPHY AND PROFESSOR WILLARD QUINE OF HARVARD

Senior Lecturer H. D. Black of Sydney University, who is President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs has helped me in the past to meet Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and other important visitors to Australia. In 1951 he went for 5 months to America on a Fulbright Scholarship and told me on his return that he has mentioned my work to Professor Willard Quine of Harvard University. He urged me to write to Quine, as Professor Quine is a Professor of Philosophy and specially interested in logic and here below is my letter:

Sydney 10th October, 1951

Professor Willard Quine,
Harvard University,
CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

Dear Sir,

Senior Lecturer H. D. Black of Sydney University told me that he has informed you about my work during his recent visit to Cambridge. He advised me to write to you. I am doing so, being very grateful to Mr. Black for his kind introduction.

Semantography is a modern Picto-Ideography, which contains also a simple Semantics and Logic. It seems to be the first practical realisation of Leibnitz's speculation about a *Characteristica Universalis*. I enclose leaflet-invitation to my lecture before the Physical Society of Sydney University. It contains the prophetic words of Sir Richard Paget and Leibnitz's words, also Bertrand Russell's praise of Semantography. Sir Richard in a recent letter to me, has acknowledged my work in relation to Leibnitz's speculation and prophecy.

For more than 9 years, I work on this idea, being driven to it by two great perplexities of human life:

- (1) The diversity of languages, blocking mutual understanding between different linguistic groups - a major handicap to scientific research, to mention one problem only, of which I have become painfully aware by my scientific library research.
- (2) The diversity of meanings even within the same linguistic group. We are witnessing a terrifying spectacle. Totalitarian doctrines, which - in the respective countries - cannot dispense with coercion and the concentration camp, are still be able to gain millions of "fellow-travellers" in the free countries - simply by the use of vague, ambiguous and even fallacious words.

In accordance with Leibnitz, a useful Symbol Writing must be so simple that even illiterate peasants should be able to grasp it. I enclose reprint of a newspaper article "Here is a New World Writing", which contains some samples. Such a Picture Writing would be ideal for the establishment of Universal Literacy in the backward areas of the world - the first necessity for improvements of living.

Professor Oliver L. Reiser of Pittsburgh University said: "Semantography provides a powerful stimulus and aid to President Truman's "Point Four Program". I enclose leaflet-invitation to my lecture before the Student's Geological Society of Sydney University, containing samples and an outline for a Universal Science Abstract in Semantography.

You will, of course, be most interested in the Semantics and Logic of Semantography. I shall endeavour to give a short account here. As Semantography must fit all languages, it's grammar must be based on the natural sciences. Here is the basic postulate: Our world consists of material things which perform physical actions in space and time. We have therefore the two aspects of nature: MATTER

AND ENERGY. My symbol for a material thing is this $\square$. I have chosen the square to indicate that matter is not the product of chaos. On the contrary. We find a geometrical harmony in the molecular and crystal structure. My symbol for a physical action is this $\wedge$. This outline may indicate a primeval Action on our planet: the thrusting up of volcanos and mountains. It may stand too for the first letter in Actus.

At the left you see a practical example, the symbolisation of a hammer ($\square$) and its relevant action to hammer ($\wedge$). It becomes obvious that for all words pertaining to things and actions, there is a counterpart in nature outside of our brain.

Then there is the third aspect of nature: the life or mind force, that inexplicable property of organic matter to multiply, to repair its own tissue, and to think. For all words pertaining to activities inside of our brain I use a symbol indicating the outline of the upper skull, seat of the brain $\cap$. Confusion, doubt, certainty, etc. are words for which there is no counterpart in nature outside of our brain. As there is not a mind-X-ray machine invented (thank Heavens) we are not able to ascertain the validity of such meanings in the same way as we are able to observe and measure material things and their actions. Someone might think ($\cap$) that Bliss's ideas ($\cap$) are confused ($\cap$), someone else might think, that they are not confused at all. I shall not be able to convince ($\cap$) him, unless he "changes his mind" (see below).

Sometimes we make abstractions from material things, or actions. We may speak of the hammer-like (we don't say hammerlish or hammerly) head of something, which is not a hammer. We refer sometimes to a piggyish person or a sunny person. In these cases we have made an evaluation from a hammer, a pig, or the sun. This symbol $\vee$ is then used for the adjective or the adjectival noun as in piggyishness ($\vee$). As such human evaluation differ from mind $\cap$ to mind $\cap$, such evaluation are vague and ambiguous and even fallacious. Debates what is piggyish lead nowhere.

The "mathematical logic of Semantography" (if I may use these terms) is rather disheartening. However, I take heart and tell you about it, hoping to have your approval, or at least your understanding. $1 + 1 = 2$ is an abstraction made inside our brain. In nature, there is always 1 something + 1 something, never $1 + 1$. 1 apple + 1 apple never equals two equal apples. In nature "something never equals something" or as Julian Huxley put it: Differentiation is universal. Not 2 apples are alike. 2 screws turned out by an automatic machine may be found unfit to replace each other in a high-precision instrument.

If this is applied to 2 human minds, we find that $\cap_1 \neq \cap_2$. Consequently 2 minds will differ in their evaluations. What one mind will evaluate beautiful, the other will hotly contest - unless they both agree that it is beautiful. No use trying to convince them, that the thing is "in fact" ugly ($\vee$). What seem "certain" to one mind, may seem "doubtful" to another. Disputed statements, and even syllogisms, which contain a meaning, which in Semantography must bear the $\vee$ or $\cap$ symbol, may be true for one mind and false for another. How this dilemma is resolved, I shall show in another letter, if you have found Semantography interesting enough to hear more about it.

I have written a large work in 3 Volumes, containing over 500,000 words and over 20,000 drawings, showing the application of Semantography as an inter-linguistic mode of communication for chemistry, physics, medicine, agriculture, and other sciences, for industry, commerce, communication, etc. etc. As such a work on such a novel idea is not yet a publisher proposition, I have duplicated this work and I sell it. The Librarian of Harvard University Library has received all promotion material. I shall be grateful, if you would kindly recommend to him, the acquisition of my work. In any case I enclose an order form.

Yours sincerely,

Enclosures:

C.K. Bliss

Metcalf letter (S. Series No. 5)

Wolsky Letter (S. Series No. 21)

Brochure (S. Series No. 6)

Telegraph Article (S. Series No. 7)

Geology Lecture (S. Series No. 43)

Physical Society Lecture Leaflet (S. Series No. 37)

Order Forms for the 3 books on Semantography.

Note by Bliss: The result of my letter was worse than nil. Quine ignored completely my letter. He did not even accord to me the courtesy of his secretary acknowledging the receipt of the material sent. Another hope gone. Another instance of professorial discourtesy and disinterestedness in new ideas.