

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

A Non-Profit Educational Research Organisation.

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SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES No. 122

JULIAN HUXLEY AND SEMANTOGRAPHY

Report on a Meeting with C.K.Bliss

comprising Semantography Series No. 122, 123, 124, 125.

Professor Julian Huxley
31 Pond Street, Hampstead
London N.W.3

Sydney, 3rd September 1953

Dear Professor Huxley,

The President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (N.S.W.) has consented that I shall write to you, because you might be interested to see my work when you visit Australia. Three years ago, Bertrand Russell on his visit to Australia asked me to demonstrate it to him and he then wrote in high terms about it (see enclosed pamphlet, Semantography Series No. 6). Other scholars responded similarly. I have lectured with great acclaim at the University of Sydney. However, the idea is so unorthodox, publishers so much afraid that they might lose money on it, that a generation might pass until it will become general knowledge. The more so do I believe that it will interest you. As it cannot be demonstrated in a short letter, allow me to give you herewith a short indication only.

In some of your writings you have indicated 5 stages in the evolution of the dissemination of thoughts and ideas, namely:

- (1) the "invention" of human speech,
- (2) the invention of writing,
- (3) the invention of printing, and
- (4) of power printing,
- (5) the invention of the gramophone, the cinema, radio, etc. etc.

However, you pointed out that the subsequent inventions are nothing but multiplication apparatuses of the primary invention of speech and writing. Indeed, all the vagaries of speech, all the fallacies of thoughts perpetrated daily by big and small demagogues and dictators are now multiplied by those machineries with disastrous results. Natural disasters by flood and famine, by tremors and tornados are rare and of little harm. Mankind devastes itself by world-wide disasters of our own making. Millions of human beings kill and are killed because of muddled ideas, expressed in muddled languages.

It has been the common belief that the Babel of languages is the cause of the disasters of misunderstanding. Consequently scholars have devoted themselves to the idea of an international language. These efforts have come to naught, simply because the mother tongue defies the learning of foreign languages even in the most literate countries of the world. In the United States, or Canada, or Australia settlers use for centuries almost exclusively French, or German or other languages but English. Moreover, Esperanto or Novial or Basic English can also be used by demagogues and dictators to pervert and falsify any idea.

A new evolutionary stage in the dissemination of thoughts must therefore not be another multiplication invention, but a new method which overcomes the fallacies of human thought and speech. This new stage has already been reached in the restricted field of mathematics, and to some extent in the symbolism of chemistry.



The symbols of mathematics are operated according to a simple logic which even children and housewives can learn to operate. Moreover, boys and girls in the highschools of the world have learned how to resolve vague and ambiguous meanings commonly symbolized by x y z . As a happy by-product of this algebraic symbolism, the symbols have the same meaning in all languages. $1 + 2 = 3$ can be read and understood in any idiom. H_2O means water in all languages and highschool students have learned to operate the Semantics of this "meaningful writing" the Semantography of Chemistry. H_2O shows the "meaning elements" of which water is composed.

Threehundred years ago, the great mathematician Leibnitz was very much taken with the advantages of mathematical symbols. He dreamed of a simple "Algebra o Thought" in which every meaning can be expressed and operated. He wrote

"This true method of a Universal Symbolism...would guide the mind as do the lines drawn in geometry, and the formulae in arithmetic..."

However, he wanted this symbolism to be "very popular" and demanded that it must be pictorial, in order to distinguish abstract and vague meanings and "to give thoughts less surd and verbal than we now have."

He realized too the happy by-product of such a universal symbolism, that it would be of "service for easy communication with distant nations." (see Semantography Series No. 6)

He prophesied: "I think these thoughts will some day be carried out, so agreeable and natural appears to me this writing...for rendering our conceptions more real."

Now, Professor O.L. Reiser of the University of Pittsburgh declared at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science:

"Bliss realized the ambition of the great mathematician Leibnitz." Other scholars have expressed the same view.

The advantages of Semantography are quite phantastic. On the simplest level it represents a picto-ideography, a picture writing for the illiterate billion of Asia and Africa and the whole world. A letter, a paper, a print, even a poem can be read and understood in all languages without translation. In three large volumes I have shown its application for commerce and industry and for all the sciences. Yet, Semantography operates with less than 100 symbol elements and Underwood Typewriter Corporation has agreed to adapt an ordinary typewriter model, by substituting the capital letters only by symbol elements.

But the most important advantage of Semantography is that a short training in it enables anyone, even children, to realize ambiguities and fallacies of speech. As such it represents a simple Logic which can be taught even in the primary schools. We need this Logic now more than anything else in order to recognize the fallacies and pitfalls of totalitarian doctrines.

As said before, Semantography cannot be demonstrated in a short letter. Bertrand Russell invited me to his hotel room and gave me any statement he could think of to write down in Semantography and to analyse it with the simple operational rules of Semantography. After that he wrote that assistance to my work means "performing an important service to mankind." It is my hope that you too will invite me for a demonstration.

Moreover, I have in the course of my study made a discovery in the records of paleolithic man, which has already found great acclaim with some anthropologists. As I am not a salaried scholar I have my difficulties with publishers and editors and this delays the knowledge of my work. However, a number of great libraries are collecting all my writings even in mimeographed form.

Will you see my work, Sir? I expect your call.

Yours sincerely
C. K. Bliss
C.K. Bliss

Note:

To this letter, Huxley answered on the 2nd October from Perth, thanking for my "interesting letter" and saying "I hope it will be possible for me to see you and hear something of your work when I am in Sydney." I prepared then the following Notes (Semantography Series No. 123).