



SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES NO. 160

PROFESSOR LYMAN BRYSON AND SEMANTOGRAPHY

Professor Lyman Bryson is an Authority on Symbolism. He and others have written recently "Symbols and Society" New York Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life 1955 (Distributed by Harper and Brothers.) \$6.00.

This book has been reviewed by Professor Oliver L. Reiser. The review appeared in the Annals of the American Academy 1956 page 171 which reads as follows:

"This is the second of a two-volume study of the part played by symbols in the life of mankind. The articles included were prepared for the Fourteenth Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life. The sixteen papers and the comments on them by other participants thus represent the collaboration of some forty scholars who met at Harvard University in the fall of 1954 to explore the ways in which symbols influence social thought and action.

This volume surveys the role of symbolism in establishing relationships between individuals, groups, and nations. The studies range from the physical sciences (Philipp G. Frank), politics (T. R. Adam and Karl W. Duetsch), law (F.S.C. Northrop), prestige (Lyman Bryson), education (Robert Ulich), and the Old Testament (Louis Finkelstein) to cultural values and the arts (by various writers). The conclusions which emerge from these diverse and sumptuous offerings illustrate the manifold uses and abuses of the symbolic expressions of human purposes.

The work is described as "the first comprehensive study of its kind." Yet one comes away from it with the impression that the group was not entirely representative of all approaches. For example, there is no treatment of the semantics movement, whether in the form of general semantics (Korzybski, Lee, Hayakawa, Stuart Chase, et al.) or the more restricted logistic approaches of Bertrand Russell and Rudolf Carnap. Nor does the work of Bliss's Semantography, the fundamental research of Carl Jung or archetypal imagery, or the contributions of Oriental philosophies and religions find adequate recognition. The international symbolism movements - for example, Leibniz's *characteristica universalis*, Esperanto, Interlingua, and others - find no place in these discussions. On the other hand, Harlow Shapley's article on "Galaxies and their Human Worth," included in an Appendix, is a masterly summary, but seems rather irrelevant in this volume. Hudson Hoagland's valuable paper, "Some Considerations of Symbolization and Nervous Action," is quite relevant; but in that event one can only regret that Ralph Gerard's article along similar lines was not also included. But criticism aside, this book and its companion volume, "Symbols and Values", provide extremely useful source materials and documentation for all serious students of these important topics.

Oliver L. Reiser,
University of Pittsburgh."

Previously on hearing that Professor Lyman Bryson has received Professor Reiser's "Unified Symbolism for World Understanding in Science", I wrote to him the following letter : -

Professor Lyman Bryson
450 Riverside Drive,
New York City.

Sydney, 20th September, 1955

Dear Professor Bryson,

Professor Oliver L. Reiser has informed me that, thanks to the good offices of Dr. Hoagland, you have expressed interest in Professor Reiser's monography UNIFIED SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE. I consequently despatched a copy to you. Later I learned that Prof. Reiser has done the same. Will you

then please be kind enough on receipt of the second copy (due to arrive in a few weeks) tear up the bill and send the copy to Prof. Reiser. Or you may interest the librarian of one of your institutions to acquire it - whichever procedure is more convenient to you.

Professor Reiser's monograph contains an exposition of my Semantography, and I have been thrilled to learn that you, an authority on symbolism, will have an opportunity to see my symbols. So far, Columbia University or any other learned institution in New York has not responded to my suggestion to acquire my 3 books on Semantography or to subscribe to my Semantography Series. This has been done by Harvard and other libraries. As far as I know my 3 books are available in the library of the Rockefeller Foundation, in the Public Library of New York and in the Queensborough Public Library. I hope that you will find an opportunity to look into them, and to convince yourself that less than 100 symbol elements (mountable on an ordinary-sized typewriter) can indeed express any meaning in science, industry, commerce, communication, etc. The unbelievable can now come true: a letter, a paper, a book, even a poem written, typed or printed in my symbols can be read in all languages of the world, just as in fact the symbols of mathematics have the same meaning for scientists and technicians, grocers and housewives, no matter what languages they speak.

I myself am an industrial research chemist who worked in the electronic industry. Consequently, the ideographic symbols of chemistry and the pictographs of electronics exerted a powerful influence. What, however, intrigued me most was the logic and semantics of chemical semantography. That H_2O means water in all languages of the world is of little consequence. What is most important is that the meaning elements of chemistry show the inherent components of water. Girls and boys in the high schools of the world have learned to operate the symbols of chemistry. I maintain that similarly, the knowledge of my symbols, when learned in school, will prevent much heated and useless debates at the breakfast table and the conference table.

When I started 13 years ago on this work (which has been considered an impossibility for 300 years since the great mathematician Leibniz posed the problem, I thought that the achievement will create a sensation in scholarly circles. Exactly the opposite happened (with few blessed exceptions). For the majority I am a crank and publishers and science editors, universities and learned societies shun me and my work, lest they be tainted by showing the faintest interest in an obvious crackpot idea. All my approaches to foundations for a small grant to have my mimeographed publications typeset, have all failed. The scholarly outsider is an outcast. For 13 years I have walked through the abyss of despair, and were it not for Professor Reiser, I might have given up the struggle. His belief in my work, his good words, his encouragement and the fact that he alone brought my work to the knowledge of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, all this gave me courage and hope.

May I be allowed to ask you the following question: Is it right that the pioneer of a great idea should be shunned to-day as other pioneers have been shunned yesterday? Is it right that I, in whose mind this idea is well ordered, should be condemned to live in obscurity and be forced to make a living by some means in fields which have nothing to do with my achievement? And would it not be right and just to put me to work on this idea so that I may work out the primers for chemistry, biology, medicine and any other science and also the primers for technology, commerce, communication, etc. Millions are given away in grants for lesser, much lesser work. For me, there is not a single penny or cent available - not for making a living. I did not ask for this - but for working out the unbelievable of which Professor Reiser writes in p. 15 of his monograph; An international science abstract which scientists and technicians, doctors and researchers could read in any and all the languages they speak? Please consider my question, and realize that for 13 years I have gone begging in vain. The only man to help me actively was and is Professor Reiser, whom I owe so much.

Enough now of the wailing. I want to draw your attention to a discovery which I have made and which Professor Reiser discusses in p. 28ff. In my search of primary symbolism, I studied the writings of the early Chinese, Babylonians, Egyptians, etc. until I arrived at the earliest records of man, the paleolithic cave paintings. I believe that I have made here a discovery of breath-taking importance. Professor Clyde Kluckhohn who thought on similar lines, was so much impressed that he, as associate editor of PSYCHIATRY,

Washington, commissioned me to write an article. However, he was unable to place it, against the wishes of the chief editor. The reason is - as I have found out with editors of other scientific journals - that editors are afraid of lowering the scientific standard of their publication when allowing an obscure Nonety, who is not a Director or Professor of This and That to express his views in their journal. In my case, what makes it worse is that the discovery was there, for everyone to see. It was not that I stumbled on it by uncovering another cave unknown to the archeologists.

I am writing all this to you because you are an authority on symbolism and therefore you will be interested in the symbolism of early man. So far, archeologists and anthropologists when uncovering a cave and finding a symbolism which baffled them, had a stereotype answer as an explanation. The symbolism, they said, is Magic, or sacred ritual, or religious or something similar. I have found a much simpler explanation, but it is one which goes against all our ingrained thinking. As Prof. Reiser relates, I have found other scholars who too thought similarly. But no one would listen to them. Who, I ask, will now listen to me, the more so, as this explanation opens up a controversy in which I shall be violently opposed by the vested interests of magic, sacred ritual and religion. It would not help me in the least that I have only followed up the suggestion of a world-famous psychiatrist.

Since my boyhood I was intensely interested in all archeological discoveries and I was heartened by the fact that the great discoveries were made by amateurs, the French officer who found the Rosetta stone, Rawlinson, Schliemann and all the others. Comparing my find with theirs, I must muster all my immodesty and proclaim that my discovery far surpasses all others in importance for the human race. And I make this boisterous claim in a desperate attempt of drawing your attention to my work. I sincerely hope you will do so too, and thus give me an opportunity to go on working for mankind through the remaining years of my life - I am now 58. Bertrand Russell wrote that active assistance to my work (he spoke of money for publications) means 'performing an important service to mankind'. He said this 6 years ago, and through these years I have canvassed his words around the world - in vain. Now I have approached you, hoping that you will add your scholarly authority to Prof. Reiser's authority.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss B.Sc.

When after 3 months no answer came, I wrote the following second letter :

7th December, 1955

Professor Lyman Bryson,
450 Riverside Drive,
NEW YORK CITY. N.Y.

Dear Professor Bryson,

Dr. Hoagland has given you the paper by Professor Reiser "Unified Symbolism for World Understanding in Science" which deals in the main with my work. I have sent you another copy and have added a letter dated 20th September, 1955 in which I have referred to the symbols contained in the cave paintings of pre-historic man. I believe that I have made a discovery which should interest every scientist and I have already found a number of them supporting my findings.

This letter will arrive shortly before the Christmas holidays, and I therefore take the liberty of sending you my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Unfortunately my Christmas time will be somewhat shadowed because I cannot help feeling that now nearly 2½ months after I sent you my letter, you may have ignored it. I beg you, therefore, to send me a short letter in answer to my detailed letter of September 20th. After all, a number of great scholars like Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and others have honoured me with their continued correspondence and have recognised the value of my scientific work. Great libraries are calling for everything I or others write about my work and be it on typewritten sheets only. I close, therefore, my letter in the hope that you will brighten my Christmas with your answer and I remain with my best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

C.K. Bliss

At last Prof. Bryson answered that illness has drastically reduced his time for work so that he has not been able to keep up with letters or to give proper attention to documents coming in. He expressed the hope that very soon he will give the brochure "the kind of careful reading which it deserves and then he would write to me. However, more than one year passed and at last I wrote the following letter in order to close this unhappy incident.

Dear Prof. Bryson

Sydney 10th Febr. 1957

Kindly excuse that I recall myself and my work to your memory. Prof. Hoagland drew your attention to the paper of Prof. Reiser which contained an exposition of my work, a new symbolism for mankind. On the 20th Sept. 1955 I wrote to you a long letter, which however, remained unanswered. Only after a second letter did you promise to give it "the kind of careful reading which it deserves."

Having not received an answer since then, I feel that I have to bother you again. What else should a man do who has worked out a new idea? Should he bother the men in the streets, or the men in the chairs, the charwomen or the chairmen, in short, the laypeople or the experts, who are indeed paid to examine and foster new ideas in their special field. You are an expert on symbolism. You have lectured on symbolism, you have held seminars and conference and you have written books on symbolism. I simply had to bother you.

Of course, men who only talk about symbolism could be ignored. But I have worked out a symbolism of utmost simplicity and utmost practicability for science, industry, commerce, communication, education, especially education in logics and semantics. How many years must a pioneer of a new idea been dead until the worth of his work is recognised? This indeed was and still is the fate of pioneers of new ideas. Is it just?

Here is an unbelievable story. However, it is only one of the many similar experiences I had during the last 14 years in approaching thousands of professors, educators, teachers and scholars. Half a year ago I sent out the enclosed leaflet No. 157 to 1500 scholars. In this leaflet I set a deliberate trap. I wrote:

"You can write in...(all) languages: "The Democratic People's Republic of Communist China." But if you write this in Semantography, it becomes as non-sensical as $3 = 1$."

Elsewhere in this leaflet I said that my new symbolism could be taught even to schoolchildren. They have been taught to realise that $3 = 1$ is an utter lie. Similarly a training in Semantography could make them realize the utter lies in totalitarian statements which today befuddle millions of minds in the free countries of the world. If Semantography can do what I say it can do, then it must rank as one of the great advances in the communication of spoken and written thought.

For every scholar who read my statement above, there are only two ways open: either to denounce me as a braggard, a liar, a charlatan, or to write to me: "Please write that statement about the People's Democracy of China down in your symbols. I am interested to see how they look and how they work." But not one of the 1500 scholars put that question to me. Apparently they have not taken the time and the trouble to read that small leaflet. Who is Bliss anyway? He is not a professor of this or that.

Through the foregoing years (14) I have studied in desperation the history of other new ideas and have found that their originators too found no ear with the experts of their time. I have realized that my fate is not different and now I have reconciled myself to my present work which is to bring as many copies of my work as I can into the great university libraries of the world. May other researchers study it and go forth in improving it.

I beg you therefore to be instrumental in seeing that the libraries of Columbia University (which have only Prof. Reiser's paper) should incorporate my 3 books on Semantography and should give a standing order for the Semantography Series. Harvard and other universities have done the same. You should therefore have no difficulties in asking that my work be incorporated.

I enclose the catalog and thank you in anticipation. Kindly excuse if I have taken too much of your time. I remain with my best wishes for your future

Leaflet No. 157
Catalog No. 100, 163

Yours sincerely
C.K. Bliss