

Four introductory pages from the second edition of
SEMANTOGRAPHY (Blissymbolics) by C. K. Bliss.

THE STORY OF THIS PIONEERING WORK

and the story of this book, first mimeographed with all the faults and imperfections of a typewritten manuscript, and now reproduced by the photo-offset process, is the old story of most pioneering works ahead of their time, not understood and recognized, and without funds to produce a finely written and printed book.

In 1950 Bertrand Russell wrote: "Any man or men who will spend the money necessary to get this work printed will, in my opinion, be performing an important service to mankind."

Year after year, the inventor went a-begging for a publication grant, but found no men willing to perform this "important service to mankind".

You, dear reader, must therefore kindly excuse all the shortcomings of this book. Please see beyond them the vision of a great idea, which could bring understanding and unity to our divided world.

Babel, mankind's greatest handicap

Slowly mankind begins to realize that the learning of languages in school will not overcome Babel. Even an international language like Esperanto will not help, because the billions of people go on babbling in their thousands of different mother tongues.

Slowly mankind begins to realize that the only way to overcome Babel are pictorial symbols which can be read and understood in all languages.

On the motor roads of the world, where understanding in all languages is a matter of life and death, road warnings in the native languages are being taken down, and replaced by pictorial symbols. A bent arrow means a CURVE in all languages.

This book belongs to the new generations

A few educators have made private tests, and they reported that children were "fascinated and thrilled" by the simplicity, semantics, logic, and ethics contained in these symbols.

A time will come when these pictorial symbols will be taught to the children of the world as a new medium of understanding across all languages. Then this book will be ready to serve mankind.

Meanwhile may it rest in the libraries of the world. May it come into the hands of young people who will recognize its value, and who will pioneer this new world-embracing idea. It is dedicated to them and to all mankind.

The vision of one writing for one world

Today blind mankind write in Braille.

**A day will come when seeing and thinking
mankind will write and think in Bliss.**

This is the vision of the friends of Bliss, who realize that no man has done this before:

A writing which can be read in all languages

A writing which can give literacy to all

A writing which can expose illogic and lies

A writing which can demask the demagogues

**A writing which contains a simple semantics and logic which even
Children can use for their problems**

**A writing which contains a universal ethics without religious legends,
and acceptable to all**

**A writing which can unite our world, so disastrously divided by languages,
legends, and lies**

The story of semantography

The inventor of semantography, Charles K. Bliss, was born in the Babel of old Austria, where 20 nationalities hated each other, mainly because they spoke and thought in different languages.

In 1922 he graduated from the Vienna University of Technology, and entered the electronic industry as a research chemist. Soon he realized that the Babel of scientific publications is the greatest handicap to scientific research. This in turn led him to the following thoughts.

People, be they professors or primitives, don't like to learn foreign languages, and this includes Esperanto. Everyone likes to talk in his familiar mother tongue. However, $1 + 2 = 3$ can be read in all languages. H_2O means water in all languages, and the pictorial symbols of radio wiring diagrams are also understood in all languages.

Pictorial symbols are already a reality on the highways of the world. Motorists traverse linguistic frontiers in a matter of hours, and some die in a matter of minutes if they can't read the warning signs in the native languages.

But a Babel of misunderstanding exists even between people who speak the same language. Demagogues, who want to dominate their nation, and the world, use vague, ambiguous, and fallacious words. Children and adults are not taught in any school how to recognize such words, which bring misery upon mankind.

Adolf Hitler used demagogic language to drive his nation and the world into war. When he overran Austria, Bliss was deported to the death camps of Dachau and Buchenwald. He went through horrors from 1938 to 1939. He saw how men can be induced by words to kill with a clear conscience.

Freed through the heroic fight of his good wife Claire, they fled to China. There Bliss saw in amazement how people, who speak different languages, can nevertheless read the same book and the same paper, and can write letters to each other.

Scholars of China's history informed him that the pictorial and ideographic writing of China was the main unifying factor which brought together people of different languages, and formed them into the largest nation on earth. Even the many invaders learned to read it in their own languages, and it made them Chinese in the end.

These scholars are convinced that a European nation would have been a reality centuries ago if Frenchmen and Finns, Englishmen and Estonians, Greek and Germans, Romans and Russians, and all the others, had a common bond in a common writing which they all could read in all their languages.

Bliss saw in Shanghai schools that children pick up these partly pictorial symbols much quicker than the laborious alphabet. He saw that only 1500 basic words, expressed in symbols, are sufficient for reading the papers, and for writing letters.

For centuries Chinese governments tried to introduce a Western type phonetic writing. It always failed. The Japanese have had a phonetic writing since the 9th century. Yet, the 1500 symbols they took over from Chinese writing still prove simpler and better, and this in a highly industrialized country where 100 million people speak one language only. They use their phonetic letters to indicate grammatical inflections only.

Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain summed it up in the amazing prophecy: **"Ideographic writing will surely achieve the final victory over phonetic writing."** It can be read in all languages. It can unite the world.

Bliss soaked all this up in ever growing enthusiasm. Then he set to work to develop a modern, simple, scientifically constructed, pictorial symbol writing, which can be typed on a typewriter of ordinary size, and can be used in international commerce and communication, industry, and even science.

And then he learned of the dream of Leibnitz.

A mathematician's dream came true

Leibnitz, the great mathematician, dreamed of this idea 300 years ago. He was fascinated by the writing of the Chinese, but dismayed by its archaic complexity. He speculated therefore about a Universal Symbolism "better than theirs". It should be simple, popular and pictorial. It should also contain a simple mathematical logic as an "Algebra of Thought," just as anyone can read $1 + 2 = 4$ in any language, and can realize that it contains a lie.

But for 300 years, linguists and logicians, mathematicians and philosophers considered Leibnitz' idea a mere "philosopher's speculation," impossible to realize.

Prof. I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden wrote in 1922: "Leibnitz' speculation still remains where Neibnitz left it."

Prof. E. T. Bell wrote in 1937: "The very diffusion of Leibnitz' genius made him capable of the dream which Archimedes, Newton and Gauss missed, the 'Universal Symbolism'. Others may bring it to realization. Leibnitz did his part in dreaming it to be possible."

Prof. Oliver L. Reiser told in 1951 the American Association for the Advancement of Science: "Bliss realized the ambition of the great mathematician Leibnitz."

Bertrand Russell wrote in 1950: "I think very highly of it. The logical analysis is good. The symbols are ingenious and easy to understand. Any man or men who will spend the money necessary to get this work printed will, in my opinion, be performing an important service to mankind."

Prof. Julian Huxley wrote: "Bliss' semantography provides something of real importance."

Prof. G. P. Meredith: "Sheer fascination . . . semantography is such an important creative advance in language design."

Prof. Lancelot Hogben: "Fascinating . . . stimulating . . . ingenious."

Prof. V. A. Bailey: "Deserves every encouragement by private and public means . . . would be of great value to scientists."

Principal Librarian John Metcalf: "Bliss' books should be available in the larger public and university reference libraries throughout the world."

Other scholars expressed similar views.