

A P R O P O S A L

for the printing and publishing of one or two little children's booklets titled

LET'S HEAR ABOUT BLISSYMBOLSLET'S PLAY WITH BLISSYMBOLS

The general layout of these booklets should be the same as in most picture books for children from say 4 to 8 years of age. Real life pictures should carry a few lines of text underneath, to be read to the little child by its mother, or elder sister, until a child has learned to read, and can read these lines by itself.

Thinking of what text and what pictures would interest most the parents who are the ones making the decision to buy or not to buy a children's book, I came to the conclusion that my symbols for road safety, in conjunction with other road safety symbols now in use would be best, because it would acquaint every child with the dangers on the roads, something which is at the back of the worried mind of every parent. Thus, these booklets would serve a vital purpose, and may indeed save the lives of children. Seen from this angle, these booklets would immediately be acclaimed by all road safety authorities, by all teachers and educators, and last but perhaps foremost by the newspapers who are going to review these booklets.

The following text and ideas have been worked out in co-operation with Miss René Irene Smith, a teacher who came over from Canada to learn something of Australia. When she is going back to America, these booklets could become an item of interest to Canadian and American parents, as Miss Smith would do her utmost to propagate these booklets which bear her name as co-author. Naturally, this is only a first draft, and this should be born in mind.

TENTATIVE TEXT FOR THE BOOKLET "LET'S HEAR ABOUT BLISSYMBOLS"W h a t i s a s y m b o l ?

A symbol is a sign, and a sign is a symbol. The word symbol comes from the Greek word symbolon, and the word sign comes from the Latin signum. Both words have the same meaning.

A n y t h i n g c a n b e a s i g n a n d s y m b o l .

(PICTURE of falling leaves, and picture of new leaves coming out with snow still on some branches.)

The falling leaves ~~are~~ a sign and symbol for the coming of autumn. The coming of new leaves symbolize the arrival of spring.

(PICTURE of red and green traffic lights)

The red traffic light is a sign for the motorist to STOP. The green signal means GO.

(PICTURE of red and green disks, with two other disks in different shades of grey) But some people are colourblind. They cannot distinguish between red and green. They see only different shades of grey. They are a danger to themselves and to others.

(PICTURE of a red traffic light with the word STOP, and a green one with GO) To help colourblind people, the red glass/disk shows the word STOP, the green glass disk carries the word GO. But these are English words, understood only by English speaking people. They are meaningless to motorists speaking other languages.

(PICTURE of a crossroad with a child crossing, and warning sign HALT, which is disregarded by a motorist who crashes into the child.) Millions of motorists travel today through many countries in a matter of hours. Some of them, and some unlucky children and adults, die in a matter of minutes, because the foreign motorists just don't understand the words on the warning signs.

(PICTURE of the scene of a crash collision of 2 motorcars, with ambulances, stretchers, corpses carried away, weeping people, etc.)

More people are crippled and killed on the highways of the world than in many a war. International understanding across all languages is today a matter

of life or death for many millions of people.

(PICTURE of children running out of a school house, and one child being knocked down by a motorcar)

Innocent children die by the thousands in all countries. Why must they die?

(PICTURE of various warning signs with the native words SCHOOL, SCHULE, SCHOOL, ECOLE, etc. with the names of the countries underneath)

Travelling motorists who tour a foreign country whose language they don't know, cannot understand these foreign words on the warning signs. Often it is too late. A child is killed, it's father and mother are left in terrible grief and sorrow.

(PICTURE of a street with a flag CHILDREN CROSSING, and an unrushing motorcar. It is a foggy day with darkness closing in)

But even motorists who can read the native language often kill a child. They often drive at dangerous speed, in fog, or rain, or darkness, their minds being worried, or being drugged by beer, wine, whisky, brandy, gin, vodka, etc.etc.

Suddenly they are confronted with a jumble of letters C and H and I and L and D and R and E and N. And then in the next line C and R and O and S and S and I and N and G. They have to get all these letters and their meaning into their mind fast, but their mind is drugged, and they drive too fast - too fast for the little child to jump. It dies.

(PICTURE of the warning sign in Great Britain showing a torch)

In Great Britain the picture of a torch is shown to symbolize SCHOOL. Why a torch? Because a torch is an international symbol. It symbolizes the idea of holding up a light in the darkness of ignorance. It is a sign signifying enlightenment, a sign with the significance of learning and knowledge, in short a SCHOOL.

This symbol is better, because it is international, and its "translation" is faster: torch = school = children = slow down = watch out = STOP.

(PICTURE of a sign in Italy, showing the picture of a child running. The school and the running children are seen in the far distance. A motorist slows down near this sign)

But Italy has the best warning sign, the actual picture of a child running. Here no mental translation: torch = school = children running is necessary. Why is this symbol best?

(PICTURE of 3 warning signs, the first saying SCHOOL, the second showing a torch, the third showing a child running, with the following words underneath)

PICTURE OF	word SCHOOL	TORCH	CHILD RUNNING
	sound symbol	idea symbol	picture symbol

Now let us use scientific words for these 3 different symbols. In Greek phone means sound, and graphein means to write.

phonetic-graph	ideo-graph	picto-graph
this needs knowledge	this needs knowledge	this can be grasped
of the native language	of the symbol meaning	at a glance in all languages

Let us then end this chapter with "Three Cheers for the Italian Official" who grasped the truth that

PICTORIAL SYMBOLS ARE BEST, BECAUSE THEY CAN BE READ IN ALL LANGUAGES.

(PICTURE of a street with the school nearby showing the Italian words for PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, and workmen erecting the pictographic warning sign)

More than 40 years ago these pictographic symbols were erected in Italy. Why haven't officials of other countries followed this example?

(PICTURE of the complete chart of road warning symbols of the Australian Standard Association)

Why do we still have many thousands of warning signs in the native languages in many countries, where many foreign tourists come year after year, and where many people are killed on the road, killed even by their own countrymen who can read the warning signs? Why must this be so? Why haven't they followed the example of the Italian official?

This is a sorry story of sorrow. And here begins the happy story of the Blissymbols.

What is a Blissymbol?

This word signifies those symbols which have been invented by an Australian with the name of Bliss.

(PICTURE of a baby in a cradle with his mother talking to various people)

The Bliss baby was born in the Austria of old where 20 nationalities hated each other mainly because they spoke and thought in different languages, and simply refused to learn another language. The Bliss baby heard his mother speaking in different languages, in Roumanian to the housemaid, in Ukrainian to the milkman, in Polish to the greengrocer, etc. For the baby this was a Babel of blablalabla, and he didn't like it at all. Why?

(PICTURE of an optician's shop)

Papa Bliss was an optician and mechanic. Mama Bliss stood in the shop. They both had to learn the different languages, because they had to learn a living to feed their four children. And so they learned to speak to their customers in Roumanian, Ukrainian, etc. etc. How then did they speak to their four children?

(PICTURE of Papa and Mama Bliss speaking to their four children.)

Papa and Mama Bliss spoke to their children only in German, because in Austria German was the language of culture. And so German became the mother tongue of the Bliss children. They could understand every word in German, but only a few in Roumanian, Ukrainian, Polish, and others. But it was different with the Roumanian, Ukrainian, and Polish children.

(PICTURE of three mothers all in different national costumes, speaking to their babies)

The Roumanian mothers babbled only in Roumanian to their babies. So Roumanian became their mother tongue. The Ukrainian mothers babbled only in Ukrainian, the Polish mothers babbled only in Polish to their babies. And so the thousands of different mother tongues became a permanent obstacle for understanding between the people of this earth.

(PICTURE of a map of North America, and a map of Australia showing tiny figures of immigrants coming in ships from all sides into these continents)

In Australia there are towns, and suburbs where many people speak German only, or Italian, or Greek. In Canada, and in the United States millions of people speak French or German, or Ukrainian, although their forefathers came into the countries centuries ago. But the mothers make them speak the mother tongue.

(PICTURE of 3 mothers, all in similar housedress, each washing and bathing their baby in their different bathrooms with the words in English, French and German underneath)

"And now we are washing the little mouth. And now we are washing the little nose. And now we are washing the little ears, etc." same in French and in German

And so we must realise that

THE MOTHER TONGUE IS AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

People go on babbling as their mother babbled to them when they were babies. Most people don't like to learn a foreign tongue and the Bliss boy was one of them.

(2 PICTURES showing the same classroom, teacher, class, with a boy standing in front of the blackboard. On the first blackboard are written the different words for water in different languages wasser, water, eau, aqua, agua, voda. On the second blackboard is written in large letters H₂O.

The Bliss boy found it illogical that the same thing water should be pronounced and written so very differently in the different languages. He was fascinated by the chemical symbols H₂O which means water in all languages of the world.

(PICTURE of a university class)

And so Bliss decided that chemistry was wonderful. He wanted to become a chemical engineer, because chemistry helps mankind to have healthier bodies, healthier lives, and happier lives. It was Mama's and Papa's wish too. But Papa had died when Karl (Charles) returned an ex-soldier from the first world war. Now Mama and the younger children worked hard in the workshop to send Karl to the University of Technology in Vienna. And there Karl graduated with honours, and entered a firm making electronic equipment, as a research chemist.

(PICTURES of the following items as if written on a blackboard: the words wasser and water, the symbol H₂O with additional words Hydrogen and Oxygen, and then picturegraphs of radio parts, and a radio wiring diagram.)

The words wasser and water are phonetic-graphs. The symbols H₂O for water are an idea-graph, because H stands for the gas Hydrogen, and O for Oxygen, and 2 for 2 parts Hydrogen and 1 part Oxygen. All this makes up the idea water. Now Bliss learned that in the science of electronics real picture-graphs are used, to picture the parts of a radio set. Because of this, electronic engineers, and

and radio and television mechanics all over the world can read the same wiring diagram in all their different languages.

(PICTURE of a mountain road with the Italian warning sign of a running child, and a hiker)

And so Bliss decided that picture-graphs are best. He had hiked through the Italian Alps and saw there that ^{the} Italian official who invented the warning sign of a running child had the same idea: picture-graphs are best. And so Bliss began to draw his pictorial symbols from the pictures of nature.

(PICTURE of a lake with stormy waves. near the bank is a house, far away is a high tree under which are standing a man and a woman. A lightning strikes the top of the tree)

And here are the Blissymbols for

					
water	house	electricity	tree	man	woman

Of these 6 symbols one is already familiar with you, because it is used to warn people of the dangers of high tension electricity which can strike people dead. Today we know that it is very dangerous to stand under a tree in a thunderstorm.

(PICTURE of two warning signs. The first says: DANGER HIGH TENSION WIRES and show the symbol of a lightning. The second warning sign shows a bent arrow, and the words DANGEROUS CURVES)

Bliss was encouraged by the picture-graphs already used all over the world. The picture of a lightning flash to indicate electricity, and the picture of an arrow to indicate direction.

(PICTURE of a man with bow and arrow shooting an arrow, then the same arrow in flight, and then the arrow as painted on a wall with the word EXIT)

The picture of an arrow to indicate direction, is not more the picture of a weapon which can wound and kill. It now means the idea of direction. Similarly the picture of a bent arrow indicates a bend in the road ahead.

(PICTURES of warning signs already in use showing different application of the arrow symbol to indicate different direction signs, like CURVE RIGHT, CURVE LEFT, WINDING ROAD, etc.)

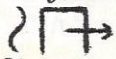
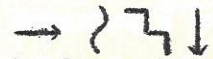
This arrow picture has already saved many lives. A motorist can grasp its meaning in any language. He can see it easily even in fog, rain, dim light, and grasp it even when drunk. Why? Because it shows directly (without mental translation) in which way he has to turn the steering wheel.

To end this little book here are a few more Blissymbols

(PICTURE of a door, picture of a fire with the flames leaping high, picture of a man, picture of a pick, and underneath the Blissymbols)

				
<u>door</u>	<u>flame, fire</u>	<u>stairs</u>	<u>man</u>	<u>hammer, pick</u>

And now here is how Bliss combines his basic symbols

			
<u>entrance</u>	<u>exit</u>	<u>fire exit</u>	<u>to fire stairs down</u>
			
<u>men at work ahead</u>	<u>detour turn left</u>	<u>detour turn right</u>	

More Blissymbols we shall see in the second booklet. And then we shall learn to write in Blissymbols. And then a wonderful thing will happen to us. We shall learn to write to children in other lands, though they speak other languages. An Australian child speaking English only can learn to write to a French child, and the French child will read the symbol letter in French. A Dutch child can read it in Dutch, and can write a letter back to the Australian child, which can be read in English, or German, or Malay, or Indonesian, or in any other language or dialect spoken on this earth.

All this will be shown in pictures and pictorial symbols in the next booklets of which the first to come carries the title:

LET'S PLAY WITH BLISSYMBOLS

How this is to be done is shown in the book "Signs and Symbols around the World" by Elizabeth S. Helfman. See Semantography Series No. 275.

The End.