



Semantography Series No. 309

THE MAN WHO WANTS ONE MILLION DOLLARS  
FOR COMPILING A SYMBOL DICTIONARY -  
AND CAN'T COMPILE ONE

See also Semantography Series 310 which is a sequel to this issue and titled VARIOUS MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES DEPRECATING BLISS' WORK AND LAUDING THAT MAN WHO WANTS A MILLION DOLLARS FOR COMPILING A SYMBOL DICTIONARY.

This issue is being written in November 1971.

I was all my life an idealist, and I am still one, only a little bit wiser. I believed that the educators will open up their arms to me when I show them a new idea in education. Exactly the opposite happened. I believed that all those men who are working in the same symbol field will greet me as a friend and co-worker and will co-operate with me. Exactly the opposite happened. They explode in enmity and envy, as they have not been able to evolve a set of pictorial symbols, least of all a complete system of a symbol language covering the whole range of languages.

Among my antagonists, the worst is that man whom I am going to take to task in these pages. He must have known of my work for years without however contacting me, whereas I did not know of him until I read about some of his symbols, which however, were rejected by the firm for whom he designed them. Yet, he went on boasting that he had designed them and that the firms are using them. I took great pains to ascertain that they don't.

Encouraged by these "successes" he got the idea to compile a symbol dictionary. But first he needed money for "exploring the idea and its feasibility" and hence he was able to get \$6,000 from a foundation for such a study. He was then told by others (as I found out later) that he cannot ignore me and my work, and so I received the following letter in September 1968.

Dear Mr. Bliss

September 16, 1968

In the Summer 1968 Glyphs newsletter some of the symbols you have developed were illustrated. We are writing to Mrs. E.O. Barnes for a copy of your travel folder, but because of our current project of researching the feasibility of publishing an international dictionary of symbols, we would be very interested in seeing other symbols you may have developed.

To give you some idea of what we have in mind, enclosed is a copy of a memorandum issued by the USA Standards Institute. It briefly outlines the work which we intend to undertake toward the compilation of the dictionary.

Since we want this research to be as inclusive as possible, we are contacting various industries and disciplines, as well as those we know who have already developed symbols for particular needs. Any material you can send us, or any other information you can give us, will be gratefully received. Do you know of anyone else in your country to whom we might write about the use of symbology?

Thank you very much for your co-operation, and we look forward to your reply

Sincerely,  
Henry Dreyfuss.

I answered immediately

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

Just received your kind letter of September 16, and I am glad because I wanted to write to you since I learned of your symbols for the Deere Co. The trouble is that I am in my 72nd year, and my desk is simply overflowing with letters and work. My friends have to wait sometimes for months to get an answer.

I am writing immediately today without going into the problem of a dictionary in this letter. This I shall do in a later letter. Today I want to say this:

You may have received already my Tourist Travel Folder, and you may have even ordered my book from the American distributor. But if you haven't, please don't do it. Something is wrong with my distributor there. They don't carry out orders and don't answer my letters. For this reason, I would prefer to send you a copy of my book from Sydney, which would then reach you within 4 - 6 weeks by surface mail. This book (of which I include the first 4 pages) contains a long "Dictionary Index of symbolized meanings", but only the half of a dictionary, that is English - Symbols. The other half, Symbols - English is simple to make,



especially for me who has been in China, and who has learned to find my way in the Chinese telephone directory. It's easy. I am an engineer (graduate of the Vienna University of Technology) and my friends call me a systematist. I can surely help you with suggestions for your dictionary.

But today I want only your reply whether you have ordered my book from Acme Code (see page 8 of the Travel Folder), and if you have ordered it, whether you have received it or not (you may never get it). If you haven't ordered it, tell me and I shall send it from Sydney.

Nothing more for today than my best wishes for a happy and fruitful co-operation in the future.

Sincerely yours,  
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

That first letter of Mr. Dreyfuss was accompanied by a number of letter copies. He has written to various organisations about his idea of compiling a symbol dictionary and they endorsed his plan. Among them are the following.

Industrial Designers Society of America.  
International Council of Societies of Industrial Design.  
The American Institute of Graphic Arts.  
The American Institute of Architects.  
The United States National Commission for Unesco.  
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards,  
United States of America Standards Institute.

Apparently Mr. Dreyfuss attached the greatest importance to this last organisation as he compiled and printed a three page memorandum on the advantages of symbols addressed to the United States Standards Institute, which memorandum he illustrated with a lot of symbols. He committed the common fallacy of describing the Egyptian hieroglyphics as interlinguistic symbols not knowing that the pictures represent letters of the alphabet only. And then he printed the answer of the Managing Director of that Institute. As I have written a number of times to that Standards Institute without ever getting an answer - though I have evolved a system and Mr. Dreyfuss wants only to compile a dictionary - I shall reproduce the letter of the managing director which runs:

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

New York October 15, 1968.

On behalf of the officers and directors of the USA Standards Institute, it is my pleasure to inform you of the endorsement and support of this organization for the development and eventual publication of an International Dictionary of Symbols. Dr. Allen Astin, Director of the National Bureau of Standards, gave a most impressive presentation to the Board at its September 26 meeting following introduction of the mailing we did to international standards organizations.

Now that the article you have authored has been published in the MAGAZINE OF STANDARDS, we will do a special mailing to all Member Bodies of USASI and to technical committees working on standard symbols.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Peyton. Managing Director

He followed his letter up with a letter to all Standards Organizations which reads:

Gentlemen,

August 30, 1968.

How many technical committees of ISO and IEC are developing standard symbols as a part of their program of work? How many have recognised the critical need for adoption of universal or what might be termed generic symbols that can be applied to specific applications? Have any ISO Member Bodies and/or IEC National Committees considered the need for an International Dictionary of Symbols?

With this brochure we want to share with you the thoughts and ideas of an outstanding industrial designer, Mr. Henry Dreyfuss, for compilation, publication and hopefully, international adoption of a Symbol Dictionary. We believe that the program envisioned by Mr. Dreyfuss merits the serious consideration and support of all who believe in international standardization.

The USA Standards Institute foresees an excellent opportunity for ISO and IEC to assume world leadership in this important work both through the development of necessary symbols and through their adoption as International Standards Recommendations.

We hope that an early opportunity will be provided to discuss the need for an International Dictionary of Symbols in the Councils of both ISO and IEC. In the interim, we have extra copies of the brochure which we will gladly make available. We will appreciate having your reaction!

Sincerely,

Donald L. Peyton. Managing Director

Now that Mr. Peyton, the managing director lauded symbols so highly and Mr. Dreyfuss' intention to compile a dictionary, I found it urgent to write to him the following letter:



Donald L. Peyton,  
Managing Director,  
United States of America Standards Institute,  
10 East 40th Street, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016 USA

Sydney March 24, 1969

Dear Mr. Peyton,

Only today do I find at last the time to write to you with regard of your circular letter to all members of the ISO etc. concerning the support of a Dictionary of Symbols as envisaged by Mr. Henry Dreyfuss.

Laudable as such an effort is, and there is no doubt that it will help in the confusion at present created by the various symbol designers - the fact remains that an international "language" of symbols will not be created by such an effort. A complete language of symbols is one where (like in any spoken language) the same symbol "letters" (as it were) can be used to express anything, even long explanations of the handling of the machinery, etc. including an international science abstract for scientists of any science, which abstract can be read in any language - without translation (just as  $1 + 2 = 3$ ).

I wonder if you know that I am the first and only man who has evolved such a complete symbol language, which also contains a simple symbolic logic. The second edition of my book "Semantography - Blissymbolics" (first edition was published in 1949) is available, and I hope that your Institute will acquire one copy. Price is \$12.00 considering that it contains 882 pages - and a symbol dictionary too.

How many symbols do I use? I say on the title page 100, but I can do with about 60 which I call "symbol elements". Of these the first 10 are the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0, the next 6 are the symbols for mathematical operations  $+$   $-$   $\times$   $:$   $=$   $>$  etc. altogether 30 international symbols, and about 30 of my own. Tests with children have proved that they grasp my symbols within one hour, can form combinations, or can read combinations they have never seen before. My book contains large chapters in which I show the application of my symbols for all fields of human endeavour, communication, commerce, industry and even science. All that is needed now is "recognition"! And that can come (as the history of all new ideas prove) only when I am dead for good. At present I am a pain in the neck of most symbol designers who wish me dead. These bitter words are born out of bitter experiences through 27 long years. No valid counter-argument has been brought forward against my system. I am a scholar, a graduate of a university, and a lecturer - which makes it worse for many, to admit that: The Problem has been solved!!! And mind you, my symbols are NOT abstract. They are pictorial!!! And they even can be typed on an IBM typewriter 72.

Now you know a bit of me and my work. Will you then order the book for your Institute? I am with my best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

The knowledge that I have done the job already, even a symbol dictionary, must have been quite a shock to Mr. Peyton. He ignored my letter and of course did not order my book. So let me return to my correspondence with Mr. Dreyfuss. He did send me a story of his achievements, his affiliations and publications and awards and honours. Among them are three honorary doctorates given to him by the Occidental College, the Pratt Institute, and the Otis Art Institute. I never heard of these institutes but I know of a number of institutes which issue doctor degrees which cannot be evaluated as being equivalent to degrees given by universities. Consequently, Mr. Dreyfuss, who could call himself Dr. Dreyfuss three times over, never uses these much coveted letters "Dr." I received the following letter from his associate:

Dear Mr. Bliss,

September 24, 1968

Thank you very much for your kind letter of September 21, which arrived while Mr. Dreyfuss was on a trip to the east. We are answering it in his absence, because we wanted to respond promptly to your questions.

We have NOT ordered your book from Acme Code Company, but are extremely anxious to acquire a copy. We would therefore, like to accept your offer and have one sent to us straight from Sydney. If you would be kind enough to advise us of the cost of the book, we would be happy to forward a check to you by return mail.

Incidentally, we received your Travel Folder from Mrs. O.E. Barnes at Glyphs, and we appreciate the reprint of the pages from Semantography, which were enclosed with your letter.

Mr. Dreyfuss has worked extensively on symbols and, most recently, a great deal of his efforts have been directed toward the international dictionary. As soon as we have had an opportunity to analyse this information and begin to put it into the form of an index, we will certainly be in touch with you and accept your gracious offer to be of assistance. We know that you have been interested in symbols for many years and your experience will be invaluable.

Sincerely  
Paul Clifton



When I realised that Dreyfuss had committed the same fallacy of all symbol designers of omitting completely any explanatory word underneath the symbols, believing that they will be understood at first glance and without a moment's learning, I wrote to Dreyfuss.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss and dear Mr. Clifton,

September 24, 1968.

Thank you for your letter of September 24. The book has been despatched on October 3, to go with the next steamer and I enclose my invoice. You can send me your cheque after receiving the book. As you might have seen from my tourist folder the price is reduced to \$9.00 for libraries. If you would buy it for the library of the Foundation which supports your research into a dictionary the price will be reduced to \$9.00. To this I wish to say that the book has 882 pages and the price of \$12.00 retail is indeed below my own cost. I consider every purchase of a copy of my book as a spiritual and financial support of my work. I have received not a penny from any Foundation though I peddled them all.

May I use this opportunity to correct an error in the comprehension of symbols which is almost universal, namely, the belief that symbols should be so designed that they should be understood at once without an explanatory word underneath. The British Ministry of Transport has put up over 1½ million road signs without an explanatory word underneath and with disastrous results. Today four years after, polls have shown that over 30% of the interrogated people still don't understand the meaning of a number of road signs though they see them daily. Three years ago, Punch the British humorous magazine wrote a hilarious article about some of these signs, and I am enclosing a reprint of part of this article. Some of my British friends are sending me new jokes about them quite often, the latest joke refers to the sign MEN AT WORK, see page 2 of my reprint with the suggested meaning "Unusual Roadman Ahead". British people say that it means a man holding his umbrella down indicating STRONG WIND, WATCH YOUR UMBRELLA.

If such symbols are not readily understood, people nevertheless believe that an arrow must be instantly understood. But even this is not correct. Every second new babies are born, grow up to little tots, and see then arrows for the first time. The meaning must be explained to them. If, however, some words are added, children who learn to read, learn soon the meaning of the symbols without bothering anyone. Had the British Ministry of Transport added the explanatory word underneath, confusion and ignorance would have been eliminated. Now you too mention in your memorandum that "At first our clients were reluctant to abandon the familiar wording on their products", and consequently your symbols for farm equipment don't show words underneath. I shall continue all this in my next letter, because I want to add to this letter my series No. 303 and still be within the air mail weight. I am

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

He answered and of course he felt the sting of my remark that he had omitted words underneath his symbols. His "explanation" is of course very lame, as the farmer using tractors has to be taught what the symbols mean. I found out later that the Deere firm had indeed issued some sheets showing the symbols and their explanations, but had not, or had abandoned using Dreyfuss symbols in any of their farm and tractor equipments. (about my correspondence with the Deere firm and with their Australian representative see later) Mr. Dreyfuss wrote

Dear Mr. Bliss

October 16, 1968

Your letter of October 10th and the attachments are at hand and are of course of real interest to all of us. The Punch excerpt is not only entertaining but does indeed illustrate a real problem in the acceptance of symbols.

Our own philosophy is entirely in agreement with yours in that we feel that at least until a symbol approaches universal recognition (Mathematical plus and minus for example), word explanations are a necessary factor. However, we also recognise that symbols used in context need this additional explanation considerably less.

For example, a farmer who runs a tractor daily and understands its mechanism completely will quickly understand symbols designed to help him manipulate the tractor -- whereas, those same symbols to the layman would be utterly confusing. We look forward to receiving the book you have been kind enough to send us and enclose our check herewith. We are also looking forward to your next letter which you mention will be forthcoming.

Kind regards,

Henry Dreyfuss

I answered immediately as follows

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

23 October, 1968

Thank you for your kind letter of October 16, and for all your explanations and thank you too for your check of \$12.00 for my book. I suggest that you wait now until you get my book and then we can continue our discussion. There is one fascinating thing coming up. I might come to the States in May, 1969, and you may rest assured that I shall visit you, and then we can discuss all our problems to our hearts desire. I renew my pledge to help you and to co-operate with your work for a symbol dictionary.



Believing that my book will arrive around Christmas time, allow me already to wish you and your associates a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

Then Mr. Dreyfuss sent me a reprint of an article titled

A NEW SIGN LANGUAGE - STRAIGHT AHEAD

written by a Mr. George A.W. Boehm. The name is German, and I assume that he is a refugee from Germany or Austria. I was amazed, and confused and enraged when I found that Mr. Boehm has found it in order to laud Mr. Dreyfuss' intention to compile a dictionary" as the beginning of "A new sign language - straight ahead" and at the same time has found it wise to deprecate my work. It becomes clear from his description of some of my symbols that he has not seen my book and indeed he did not mention it, though it is standard procedure with anyone in the science field to mention any reference to books. I am sure that Mr. Dreyfuss has instigated his deprecating remarks by sending him only the travel folder, and Mr. Boehm has taken one symbol from the top of page 7, has described it in a cursory manner, not saying and not explaining how the symbol elements are composed, and leaving the reader in the sure conviction that my symbols are apparently not to be taken seriously. I shall quote the full article in the next issue Semantography Series No. 310 and reflect on Mr. Boehm's insincere deprecation of my work.

This article appeared in the journal of the IBM Organisation which carries the title THINK (the slogan of the old Watson who founded the International Business Machines Organisation, now the largest producers of computers).

This dreadful deprecation of my work gave me the first sleepless night, and an "appreciation" of the unhappiness which is in store for me from that Mr. Dreyfuss. To be sure, he instigated other articles in other papers all lauding his idea of a symbol dictionary and all deprecating my own work in very mean terms. These articles too are reprinted in the next issue S.S. 310.

I suppressed my anger and unhappiness and wrote to Mr. Dreyfuss as follows  
Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

Sydney 5 March, 1969.

Thank you very much for sending me the reprint from THINK from which I learned of your ambitious project of a symbol dictionary to cost \$1,000,000. I refer to my first letter to you where I promised my wholehearted support at a time when I did not know that you have received any grant, or that you are trying to raise such a huge amount. This my first letter should prove that I have unselfishly rallied to your efforts in support of an idea which one day will span the world.

However, the few words that Mr. Boehm devotes to my work indicates to me that he has never heard of my book nor ever seen it. He speaks of "hundreds of standardized symbols" of mine whereas the title cover of my first edition (1949) and the title page of my second edition (1965) tells of "100 symbol elements" and not more. Furthermore, I have not received word from you that you have received my book, which I posted at least 4 months ago. I usually send my book registered, so please let me know whether or not you got it. If not I would have to make enquiries at my post office.

Now to your ambitious work. If you have seen my book you surely have seen that I have already worked out a symbol dictionary with thousands of entries and should you realise your project there will be thousands of entries in your dictionary where only my own symbols would have to be shown, because there are no others in many fields. I can prove to you that a computer engineer with the name of Bruno Owe Fahlke who learned my 100 symbol elements had no difficulty to write down in my symbol language highly scientific terms of computer technique. I can also prove to you that a professor of philosophy, and a psychiatrist (and other scholars) had no difficulty to compose with my symbol elements philosophical terms, psychiatric terms, and others. This means that a comprehensive dictionary for our modern world would be incomplete if no symbols were shown which scholars and scientists are using today. And this means that I would be one of your valuable co-workers to help you compile your dictionary. In the Boehm article I read that you "want to enlist a staff of advisers from every part of the globe" and the sum you have in mind indicates that the work of such advisers would have to be compensated - and taking all this in consideration allow me to come to you with a plan for a personal lengthy discussion about the whole problem, a discussion which may take a week to clarify all the problems ahead, so that I would know what you want to do, and what can be done. And this means a visit to the U.S.A. for me. And this brings me to my problem, which I submit to you for your kind consideration.

You may know that the wholesale distributor of my work in the U.S.A. is the book firm of ACME CODE CO. of Hackensack, New Jersey. Mr. Mitchel the president has built up this firm (38 employees) over the last 40 years, and during the last years he was the largest contractor for books for the U.S. Armed Forces. This proved his undoing. The Pentagon has ruined my firm by suddenly cancelling huge



contracts, and this has happened to Mr. Mitchel. He had to close down, and is at present winding up his business and transferring the stock of my books to a warehouse. This is a great setback to me, because I have found that public and university libraries buy the book on sight - provided they can see it by sending it to them on approval. Mr. Mitchel wanted to start this campaign but the Pentagon put a stop on all his book wholesale activities.

My own solution to this problem is now that I come to the U.S.A. stay say a week in New York (near to Hackensack N.J.) and post all the books to those libraries who have never received nor ordered it. I tried to induce some of my friends to do the posting for me, but as this involved travelling to and working in Hackensack I could not find anyone to do it. And nobody would do it as good as I would. And this brings me to my plan which I put before you.

I have not the money for the fare and the stay in the U.S.A. A sum of \$2,000 would be needed for the air fare and the hotel expenses. I suggest that I stay one week in Pasadena to confer with you again, because I am sure that after our first talks new ideas would have cropped up in your mind which you would like to discuss with me. As you know by now I was an industrial executive in my younger years, and have managed all commercial and industrial problems with great success. I am sure I could be of invaluable help. Can you help me now by providing the \$2,000 for my trip to you and my books?

I am sure that this sum is not large by any standards, and I believe that you already have a number of contacts which would provide you with some money for your ambitious project.

I don't want to think that I would plead with you in vain. Indeed, as you know from our previous correspondence I have offered my services free, and this offer still stands. But having read that you have received already a grant, and that you are trying to enlist more financial support I ask you now to help me with the fare and the hotel expenses - and nothing more. Not a penny for my work, for my advice for you. And so dear Mr. Dreyfuss I appeal to your generosity to help me overcome the worry about my books and to help you in your project. \$2,000 is a small sum, and its only for expenses.

Hoping to have your approval of my proposal I remain,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

I hoped that Mr. Dreyfuss, who appears to be a wealthy man, would send me the money for my fare to the U.S.A. as I would surely be his most important co-worker in his compilation simply because I have a symbol combination for every word needed in commerce, industry and science, whereas (as I know only too well) nobody else has evolved such comprehensive symbols in a comprehensive system. In other words, if Mr. Dreyfuss' idea of a symbol dictionary would come about, at least half of the dictionary would be filled with my symbols only. I read in that article by Boehm that he has already received a grant for "A feasibility study for a symbol dictionary" and thought that money from this grant would be well spent for letting me come to the U.S.A. to organise the compilation of that dictionary. Mr. Clifton informed me that all the money is gone, and that I cannot get a penny. He wrote:

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 14, 1969

Your letter of March 5 arrived during Mr. Dreyfuss' absence from the office on a trip east, and we did not want to delay thanking you for it. Please rest assured that it will be brought to his attention upon his return.

The grant to which you referred was a small one, given to us by the National Endowment for the Humanities, to cover a six-month feasibility study for an International Dictionary of Symbols. This was actually completed in November, 1968, and the time and expense we expended greatly exceeded the amount of money we had been granted.

We are assuming the costs of our present activity ourselves and are currently exploring funding for the major program. We greatly appreciate your generous offer to co-operate with us but, at this stage, are not in a position to make any financial commitments. Once adequate funding is established our plans include visiting a number of strategic geographic areas and consulting with outstanding authorities throughout the world. Undoubtedly, Mr. Dreyfuss or I will be in Australia and by all means would like to get together with you then.

You had mentioned in one of your earlier letters that you may come to the United States in May of 1969. We hope, at that time, you will feel free to stop by our office in South Pasadena so that we might show you the amount of material we have collected to date.

We did receive your excellent book, and apologise for not having acknowledged it at that time. It appears to contain a great deal of very useful symbol information, and will take us a while to assimilate it fully.

Sincerely,

Paul Clifton.



I then asked to see that feasibility study and I wrote:

Dear Mr. Clifton,

March 21, 1969

Many thanks for your quick response to my letter, though your response is negative. Nevertheless, you assured me that Mr. Dreyfuss will read my letter on his return, and perhaps he might agree to my proposition. I do not consider this as a "financial commitment". The fraternity of symbol seekers is very small indeed. As I am the man who has gone furthest in the search for symbols, and who has accomplished something which no man has ever accomplished - and as Mr. Dreyfuss is thinking of compiling a symbol dictionary - I am one of the most important men to him. The amount I ask, compared with the estimated sum of \$1,000,000 is so small, that I consider Mr. Dreyfuss' help an act of friendship which would bring in turn invaluable help for the great task he has in mind. Moreover I am in a predicament, as my American wholesaler has gone into liquidation. I ask you therefore, to submit my letter and my request to Mr. Dreyfuss for his serious consideration.

Naturally, I am tremendously interested in everything done in the field of symbols and I would be only too happy to read the feasibility study for an international dictionary of symbols which you have made for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Hoping that there is no secrecy about it, I would be much obliged if you would kindly send me a copy of it which I would return immediately after reading. I ask you for this favour because after reading your letter I am not sure about the aims of the intended symbol dictionary. You wrote that your "plans include visiting a number of strategic geographic areas and consulting with outstanding authorities throughout the world". I assume that you intend to bring out a modern dictionary of modern symbols. Surely you are not going to include all the ancient and medieval mythical, mystical and other nonsensical symbols. I assume that your dictionary will contain only modern symbols for our modern times. For this reason I would be much obliged to you if you could enlighten me by sending me the feasibility study. As to the "outstanding authorities" who are they? I know only of Mr. Dreyfuss and Mr. Modley who have done something positive and: then those "authorities" who have devised symbols for Expo 67 etc. I believe to know everyone in the world who has done anything in symbols because I have written my heart out for the last 27 years to all of them.

So dear Mr. Clifton please enlighten me. I am with my best regards,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

He answered,

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 31, 1971

Your March 21 question concerning ancient symbol coverage in our dictionary is one to which we have given much thought. The answer is actually three-fold:

1. On a passive basis, we are interested in all symbols as they present a continuum from the caves of Lascaux to 1972 German Olympics.
2. On an active basis, we plan to incorporate in the Dictionary symbols which have survived - essentially unchanged graphically - and are in contemporary use.
3. Also actively, as part of the Preface of the Dictionary, we will discuss the evolution and history of symbols and this, by necessity, will include ancient symbols.

But, as you suggest, our basic intent is "...to bring out a modern dictionary of modern symbols." That, in itself, will be quite a task.

I think you would find the enclosed report very interesting and would appreciate very much your comments concerning the overall project and its implementation. Even at this stage, there are still many areas to be refined.

When we mentioned "outstanding authorities", we were thinking basically of two groups: those with a broad grasp of the entire field of symbology - Rudolph Modley, to be sure, as well as people like Marie Neurath, Martin Krampen and Ernst Lehner. We, of course, would welcome any recommendations you might wish to add. The second group includes those who have specialised in a particular field like the medical sciences, safety, engineering, agriculture and transportation. In some instances, these are organisations rather than individuals.

We are extremely grateful for your interest in our project and trust you will continue your correspondence with us.

Sincerely,

Paul Clifton.

Mr. Dreyfuss who was back from his "trip to the East" added his own letter in which he firmly told me that he did not want and did not need my co-operation by saying "Somehow or other I hope our paths will cross".

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 31, 1971

How nice to get your letter of March 21. I have asked Mr. Clifton to answer in detail and his letter will be attached to this.

We are enclosing a copy of the report we did for the National Endowment for the Humanities. There is no need for you to return it. Somehow or other I hope our paths will cross.

Very sincerely, Henry Dreyfuss.



When I read through the report I could not sleep that night nor could I find peace the following days and nights. It was the most shameless thing I have ever read in that "Feasibility Study". I cannot quote the whole study for which he received \$6,000, an incredible sum for actually doing nothing, except writing some letters and making some calculations how to spend the one million dollars. And he did not mention my books at all, nor my contribution to this field, nor my own symbol dictionary.

BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT OMISSION IN THIS "FEASIBILITY STUDY" IS THIS: THERE IS NOT A SINGLE WORD HOW HE WILL OVERCOME THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY NAMELY THE SECOND PART OF THE DICTIONARY SYMBOLS-ENGLISH. HOW HE WILL ARRANGE THE MANY, MANY SYMBOLS WHICH MANY PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY DESIGNED IN A SUCCESSIVE SYSTEM LIKE THE ALPHABETICAL SYSTEM IN A NORMAL DICTIONARY WHICH ALWAYS HAS TWO PARTS AS IN ENGLISH-FRENCH, AND FRENCH-ENGLISH. THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE WORD IN THE WHOLE STUDY HOW HE WILL DO IT. BUT HE GOT \$6,000 FOR IT.

APPARENTLY THE MEN WHO PAID FOR THIS STUDY AND STUDIED IT, FOUND OUT THAT ALL HE HAD DONE WAS WRITING SOME LETTERS AND COMPILING SOME SALARY EXPENSES TO THE TUNE OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS AND CONSEQUENTLY, MR. DREYFUSS DID NOT GET A SINGLE CENT FOR HIS DICTIONARY.

A few years later he had given up the whole idea and when I write this page a book will come out, similar to other books before, showing an array of symbols without any system, but compiled by Mr. Dreyfuss. About this book and my troubles with him about it, I shall report at the end of this issue. Let us now study the important parts of that \$6,000 Study.

However, I am going to make my personal remarks as we proceed with our study, and in order to distinguish my own comments from the text of Dreyfuss' "Feasibility Study" I shall underline my own comments throughout. The reader must become aware of the machinations perpetrated in this demand for one million dollars for nothing but salaries, travel expenses and other useless spending, BUT NOT FOR EVOLVING ANY COHERENT SYMBOLS LEAST OF ALL A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF SYMBOLS FOR OUR MODERN NEEDS. So here we go with the title page of Dreyfuss' study:

November 6, 1968

THE DESIGN OF A RESEARCH PROJECT TO DETERMINE THE  
NATURE AND FEASIBILITY OF AN INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY  
OF SYMBOLS.

By Henry Dreyfuss

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Bliss:

I shall quote from this article SYMBOLS: COMMUNICATING WITHOUT AN ACCENT after having dealt with the complete text of Dreyfuss' study. And now, at the bottom of the first page he mentions the foundation that gave him \$6,000, and he has the temerity to say that this study is "a report of the accomplishments". "Accomplishments"? my foot. The reader will soon see for himself. But it is noteworthy that Mr. Dreyfuss and the foundation are both residing in Pasadena, and this explains in part how he got the \$6,000.

A report of the accomplishments under National Endowment for the Humanities Grant No. H68-0117 (5/15/68 - 9/30/68) of \$6,000.00, administered by Californian Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California.

Bliss:

Now he starts with a Summary, and states that there are "many symbol systems" without mentioning any.

SUMMARY

The value of graphic symbols as a means of communication is well established. Symbols promote safety through quicker comprehension and faster reaction.

They convey their message irrespective of the language of the observer.

They achieve greater efficiency by communicating more rapidly while requiring less space in which to do so.

And, finally, when properly designed and applied, they can transfer information among people who might not otherwise be able to understand one another.



While there are many individual symbols and symbol systems in use throughout the world, there has been little concerted effort to co-ordinate these. We feel that an authoritative compilation of this material--an International Dictionary of Symbols--would increase the value of this form of visual communication and would provide a common reference for those charged with the design and application of symbols. Furthermore, it would avoid duplication and promote consistency.

To obtain this goal, we propose to establish a small central staff to co-ordinate the efforts of knowledgeable individuals and organisations in collecting, cataloguing and verifying graphic symbols on an international scope and from all areas of human activity and knowledge. This collection will be analysed and a manuscript will be prepared for submission to a publisher. During the course of the total activity, an authoritative International Advisory Board will be consulted as to developments.

Bliss: Watch that "International Advisory Board". It will give you the jitters.

It has been suggested, in addition to meetings covered in the project outline, that an international organisation might summon a worldwide symposium as a seminar to discuss directions and application.

As a result of this preliminary study, we have collected an appreciable amount of symbols and background information. Personal contacts with a variety of interesting people and organisations--both here and abroad--have suggested expanded areas to be explored. Many prominent organisations have given the project their unanimous endorsement and several publishers have expressed encouraging interest in publishing and distributing the Dictionary.

From this initial research, we feel strongly that an International Dictionary of Symbols would be a significant contribution to increasing international communication, and its execution is both feasible and practical.

#### BACKGROUND.

As an industrial designer, I first became professionally interested in symbols more than 20 years ago. My basic concern was safety. A simple form or colour is much more quickly comprehended than even the shortest explanatory word or phrase. In an emergency, when instant recognition of a signal is imperative, symbols offer a vital advantage.

Universality is another significant characteristic of symbols. Symbols provide multilingual communication that can overcome all language barriers, even illiteracy. Obviously, such an "instant communication" provides many benefits in international trade, transportation and dissemination of technical information and knowledge, and can serve as a vital tool in international understanding.

Finally, symbols are more efficient than words in many ways--especially where important instructions must be inscribed on small control surfaces, or on signs that are observed only fleetingly by motorists or tourists.

Our work in designing products to be used both nationally and internationally involved us in the utilization of symbols. Our first significant application of symbols was for a major farm equipment manufacturer, who wanted us to design a set of symbols to be installed on the equipment manufactured in the United States but distributed and used throughout the world. Symbols were to be used to increase safety and facilitate identifications for foreign use.

To do an adequate job, we realised we must learn as much as we could about symbols--how they are designed and applied, how they are interpreted by the operator of the equipment. We wanted to know what symbols already existed, the extent of their recognition, their derivation, their relationship to other symbols and symbol systems, and what the experience of others had been relative to designing and using symbols.

Bliss: And now he brazenly states that no authoritative reference source exists. I shall soon prove him false by his own words.

We quickly found that little had been done along these lines and that no authoritative reference source existed. It was then we decided to undertake a research program that would result in an International Dictionary of Symbols, which would serve as an authoritative worldwide standard.

The objectives of this research program--culminating in the publishing, distribution and maintenance of the dictionary--therefore, were to answer the questions we had raised initially and to make this information readily available on an international basis and in thoroughly understandable and useable form, to promote safety and intercultural communication.

#### PROJECT ACTIVITY

In order to determine the nature and feasibility of this International Dictionary of Symbols, we resolved that two basic questions must first be answered:

1. What has been done already in the development and application of graphic symbols?
2. Is there a definite need for such a dictionary?

These two basic areas are fundamentally interrelated. However, we determined to answer the first question first--by surveying the general field of signs and symbols and learning what does exist.



We began by contacting all of the 51 national member organisations of the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) by correspondence and requesting information in this general area. This led to contacts with other standardization organisations--both governmental and professional.

And now here is the proof that he has deliberately left out, DELIBERATELY LEFT OUT, my own books, and a recent book featuring prominently my work. It is the easiest thing to find the Library of Congress Cards related to signs and symbols. Wait for the list of books which he has found.

We obtained from the Library of Congress a set of catalog cards relating to "Signs and Symbols". We subsequently reviewed these books and acquired the most promising ones for the nucleus of a symbol reference library. The bibliography in these books, of course, led us to other sources and began to introduce us to authorities in the field. These people were subsequently contacted and made aware of our study.

As a result, additional potential sources emerged in progressively increasing numbers. Sources were explored to the fullest extent possible through personal interviews both here and abroad, wide areas of observation and research.

As material was obtained from these various sources, it was divided into two categories:

1. Actual graphic symbol illustrations--including a picture of the symbol, the appropriate application and the circumstances of its creation. Many of these were hung on the wall of a room set aside for this purpose.
2. Supplemental or support material--defining the background or derivation of the symbol or symbol system, information about the designer, research, generic symbol philosophy, methodology, etc.

Within each category, the material was further divided by the field of knowledge embracing the symbol (Safety, Medicine, etc.) and by its reference source (Organisation, Individual, etc.).

And now he mentions that he was instrumental in helping to make <sup>public</sup> ~~illustrated~~ articles on symbols. These articles will be quoted in the following issue S.S. 310. In these articles he induced the article writer to laud his idea of a symbol dictionary into high heaven, but at the same time to deprecate my own symbols in (sometimes) shameful terms. But though he mentions my work in these articles, he does not mention it in his "Feasibility Study". This study is dated November 8, 1968, and at that time he had already my book, my travel folder and other papers.

While gathering this information we were asked by several organisations and publications to present our ideas publicly. This involved verbal presentations illustrated by colour slides, and illustrated articles for books, magazines and organisational publications. This not only made an interested segment of the public aware of what we were doing but it also stimulated their thinking and resulted in beneficial "feedback" to us.

In order to develop a tentative working program and preliminary budget for the development of the Dictionary, we retained a research organisation experienced in these areas and worked closely with them.

As more and more data was accumulated, we began to analyze it in the framework of a reference source or dictionary. We realized that the anticipated volume of such material would soon require a better handling system than our current "standard" files. With this in mind, we presented our problem to several companies which specialize in information storage and retrieval systems. We investigated various systems ranging in complexity from manually-read punch cards through electronically encoded microfilm to full computerization.

While collecting the graphic material, we were able to answer the second question regarding the need for the dictionary. We met with constantly enthusiastic response, and the people involved--directly or indirectly--felt an authoritative single reference source for symbols was definitely needed and encouraged its creation.

Potential publishers and Foundations were contacted in an effort to evaluate future interest and involvement. Definite interest has been shown and currently two major publishers and one leading Foundation are actively pursuing the program.

And now he lists the results of his accomplishments.

#### RESULTS

The results of this feasibility study can be summarised under three headings:

"WHAT EXISTS?"

"IS THERE A NEED?"

"HOW CAN NEED BE SATISFIED?"

#### "WHAT EXISTS?"

1. Many graphic symbols currently exist and are used, either individually or as parts of a system, in a wide variety of applications throughout the world.
2. Numerous individual groups are developing symbols for their respective needs, independent of other groups. Co-ordination among such groups is either inadequate or nonexistent.

Expo '67 vs Hemisfair  
Tokyo Olympics vs Mexico Olympics



3. Where even minor co-ordination has taken place, the resulting symbol system has become a more effective tool for communication.

European road signs

Material handling symbols

(Fragile, This Side Up, Keep Dry, etc.)

4. Several small groups of concerned individuals have been and are attempting to act as co-ordinators in symbol design and application.

Glyphs, Inc.

ICOGRADA

5. The profusion of conflicting symbols reduces the effectiveness of any one system, and limits the sphere of its influence.

Triangle on road sign

- Caution

Triangle in ground-air emergency code

- Safe to Land

6. Of existing symbols, some are well conceived and meaningful, while far too many are not.

7. Graphic and colour symbols are used to one degree or another in practically every major area of human knowledge.

Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Cartography,

Machine Tools, Farm Machinery, etc.

8. Many areas exist that could use symbols effectively, but for which no symbols have been developed.

"IS THERE A NEED?"

1. Symbols have been and will continue to be needed and used, interculturally and commercially.

2. No single reference source for graphic symbols exists.

3. Symbols are a most effective means of communication, and a major aid in overcoming language barriers and problems of illiteracy.

4. As the complexity of communicative ideas increases, the need for symbols will become even greater.

5. Safety requires immediate recognition of warnings, which can best be achieved by symbols as opposed to written language.

6. The increase of international tourism, world fairs and athletic events emphasizes the need for symbols (transportation; public facilities; street directions; traffic signs; in hotels and public places).

7. Unless a consistent and concerted effort is made to catalog and disseminate the information that already exists, the present confusing situation will worsen rapidly.

8. An authoritative dictionary will provide a vehicle of co-ordination to eliminate duplication of effort.

9. Those most deeply involved with symbols are the most acutely aware of the problem and would welcome and support an authoritative study of the problem.

"HOW CAN NEED BE SATISFIED?"

We feel this need can best be satisfied by the completion of a five phase program, of which Phase I is this feasibility study.

Phase II would involve the preparation of symbol material for a dictionary to promote an international and intercultural visual language. The necessary organisation, personnel, equipment, facilities, activities, and estimated budget are outlined in detail under "PROJECT OUTLINE AND BUDGET".

Phase III would involve the actual organisation and production of the dictionary.

Phase IV would concentrate on the distribution, dissemination and use, promotion of the dictionary in order to assure maximum utilization on an international basis. Co-operation by various international, authoritative groups will be encouraged.

Phase V will see the establishment of an institute, periodical, or other vehicle to continue accumulation and dissemination of symbol information. Additions and revisions to the dictionary should be issued on a periodic basis.

It should be noted that to date, several organisations have offered co-operation in the development of an International Dictionary of Symbols and have given the project their official endorsement.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA)

The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)

Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA)

United States of America Standards Institute (USASI)

United States Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards

The United States National Commission for UNESCO

The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID)

Bliss: It is amazing to see that here Mr. Dreyfuss ends his "Feasibility Study". The last 10 pages are devoted to columns of figures how he wants to spend one million dollars. But the most important thing, namely whether it is feasible to compile a dictionary listing first the symbols in some sort of system and then the words in English, this problem he didn't mention with a single word. Indeed, the problem is not feasible except if my symbols are used as a guidance for all other symbols.



Continuation of Bliss comment: And now Mr. Dreyfuss explains the budget in the following words.

#### PROJECT OUTLINE AND BUDGET

##### OBJECTIVE

The objective of the task is to establish the basic framework for successful implementation of this project and its continued operation. The organisational process will operate for the full life of the project--three years. The first major responsibility of this task is to acquire the staff and equipment which will in turn begin to organise the necessary staff and equipment for implementation of the other task areas. These task areas and their time sequences are shown in Figure 1.

As currently planned, the first three months will be required to organise the necessary staff and equipment for the organisational task. At the end of this period three tasks will begin simultaneously. The Collection of Data phase will be concentrated in the first year; the Classification and Cataloguing of data task will operate for 30 months. The third task area, the Formation of the International Advisory Board, will be initiated at this time, with its operation consisting of consultations, communications and meetings throughout the three year life of the project. The preparation of the manuscript for publication will take place in the last year of the project.

The Project Director will assume overall responsibility for the successful completion of this report. The selection of the 6 men board will be his responsibility. The Assistant Project Director will be responsible for the in-house design function and classification and cataloguing of symbols.

##### PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The Preliminary Budget is based on the assumption that the total project will be developed by an independent, newly formed separate group, and a complete manuscript, including artwork, turned over to the publisher. Estimated overhead has been itemized but when the final budget is established, it is recommended that overhead be calculated as a percentage factor applied to professional time.

If the publisher takes over any of the research, collating data, writing, etc. the budget will be reduced accordingly.

No dollar allowance has been made for administration by a sponsoring university or other non-profit institution, and no overall contingency has been budgeted.

Bliss: Now Mr. Dreyfuss comes to actual figures and it is nice to see that he gives himself and his two assistants quite a lavish salary of altogether \$55,000 per year and \$165,000 for 3 years. Furthermore he wants to pay a consultant psychologist and semanticist (1 person only) \$250 per day. Nice doing. He intends to rent a big office and to buy all the typewriters, etc. etc. and things he will monthly telephone for \$1,000. And then he wants \$10,000 for travel expenses. As Mr. Boehm has told us in his article, Mr. Dreyfuss thought it necessary to seek for symbols in the Soviet Union (where he couldn't find Soviet symbols). He thinks that \$30,000 travel expenses within three years will do nicely. And now here is the outline of expenses making up nearly half a million dollars.

##### ORGANISATIONAL PROCESS

Establishing the basic framework for successful implementation of the project and its continued operation.

Time 3 years

##### Staffing

|                                                                                                       | Average<br>Annual Amount | 3 Year<br>Cost |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Project Director                                                                                      | \$ 30,000                | \$ 90,000      |
| Assistant Project Director                                                                            | 15,000                   | 45,000         |
| Executive Secretary                                                                                   | 10,000                   | 30,000         |
| Consultant-Psychologist/Semanticist                                                                   |                          |                |
| 20 days @ \$250 per day                                                                               | 5,000                    | 15,000         |
| Bookkeeper part-time 2 days per week                                                                  | 2,600                    | 7,800          |
| Clerk Typist                                                                                          | 6,000                    | 18,000         |
| Professional services (legal, accounting)                                                             | 3,000                    | 9,000          |
| <u>Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits</u>                                                              |                          |                |
| F.I.C.A. tax, disability insurance/medical and<br>life insurance benefits computed at 10% of salaries | 6,360                    | 19,080         |
| <u>Equipment</u>                                                                                      |                          |                |
| Office furniture                                                                                      |                          | 10,000         |
| Office space - 2,500 square feet at \$5 per square foot<br>(includes utilities and maintenance)       | 12,500                   | 37,500         |
| Copy machine                                                                                          |                          | 500            |
| 2 - typewriters at \$750 each                                                                         |                          | 1,500          |
| Equipment maintenance                                                                                 |                          | 1,500          |
| <u>Utilities</u>                                                                                      |                          |                |
| Telephone \$1,000 per month                                                                           | 12,000                   | 36,000         |



|                                                                                                            | Average<br>Annual Amount<br>\$ | 3 Year<br>Cost<br>\$ |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Miscellaneous Expenses</u>                                                                              |                                |                      |
| Office supplies, stationery, postage,<br>books, duplication, photographs and other<br>incidental expenses  | 12,000                         | 36,000               |
| Translation service                                                                                        | 6,000                          | 18,000               |
| <u>Travel (U.S. and Abroad)</u>                                                                            |                                |                      |
| Air                                                                                                        | 10,000                         | 30,000               |
| Subsistence allowance (includes local transportation,<br>accommodations, food, laundry and other expenses) | 2,400                          | 7,200                |
| Total cost                                                                                                 | \$132,860                      | \$412,080            |

Bliss: How will Mr. Dreyfuss collect these symbols? He won't do it himself. Instead he thinks of paying lavish salaries to 25 foreign and domestic correspondents and pay them \$6,000 per year. Altogether this would make \$150,000 in the first year. In addition these correspondents would get travel expenses at \$750,000 though each correspondent would consider this as travel expenses within his own allocated area, (see below). Now how many days and weeks and months would these correspondents have to work collecting symbols and getting \$6,000 salary plus travel expenses and plus other expenses as accommodation, food, laundry, etc.? Believe it or not Mr. Dreyfuss thinks that each of these correspondents would have to travel only two days per year, incredible but true. Altogether this would make an expenditure of over \$200,000 dollars per year.

And now here is the complete list.

#### COLLECTION OF DATA

Collecting from those countries designated (see Table 2), all symbols that exist in those countries. In addition, the project director will contact major groups and sources, such as International Standardization Organisation, UNESCO, International Council of Graphic Design Associations, United States of America Standards Institute, International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, Industrial Designers Society of America, International Council of Scientific Unions, United States Embassies, universities museums and libraries from which symbols would be available.

Time: 12 months

#### Staffing

|                                                                                                                                                                          | 12 - month cost |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 25-key foreign and domestic correspondents<br>listed in Table 2 at \$6,000 average per person.<br>Fee includes all travel and expenses within their<br>respective areas. | \$150,000       |
| Contributions to societies and/or individual experts                                                                                                                     | 50,000          |
| <u>Travel</u> (orientation meeting)                                                                                                                                      |                 |
| Air - 25 persons at \$750/person                                                                                                                                         | 18,750          |
| Subsistence allowance (includes local transportation,<br>accommodations, food, laundry and other expenses)<br>2 days each at \$40 per day                                | 2,000           |
| Total cost                                                                                                                                                               | \$220,750       |

Bliss: When I have read the following page I felt sure that I would be the correspondent for Australia and New Zealand. When I turned to the next page of his budget he had indeed a correspondent assigned for these two countries but I soon found out that he does not think that I shall be that correspondent. In previous pages I have quoted Mr. Clifton as saying that he will visit me when in Sydney, and Mr. Dreyfuss said that - "somehow or other - our paths will cross". Now here below are the areas assigned to the 25 correspondents.

#### MAJOR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

| Major Areas                         | Total Manpower |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| A. Africa                           | 3              |
| 1. North and East Africa            |                |
| 2. West-Central Africa              |                |
| 3. South-South Central Africa       |                |
| B. Asia                             | 7              |
| 1. China                            |                |
| 2. Israel                           |                |
| 3. India-Nepal-Pakistan             |                |
| 4. Phillipine Islands and Indonesia |                |
| 5. Middle East                      |                |
| 6. Southeast Asia                   |                |
| 7. Korea-Taiwan                     |                |



MAJOR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY Continued:

| Major Areas                       | Total Manpower |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| C. Australia - New Zealand        | 1              |
| D. Europe                         | 8              |
| 1. England, Ireland, Scotland     |                |
| 2. West Germany - France          |                |
| 3. Italy - Greece - Turkey        |                |
| 4. Russia                         |                |
| 5. East Europe                    |                |
| 6. Scandinavia                    |                |
| 7. Switzerland - Spain - Portugal |                |
| 8. Benelux - France               |                |
| E. North America                  | 2              |
| F. Central America                | 1              |
| G. South America                  | 3              |
| 1. Brazil                         |                |
| 2. Argentina                      |                |
| 3. Peru                           |                |
| Total                             | 25             |

Bliss comment: Now Mr. Dreyfuss lists the helpers he will need. Though he himself is a designer and has given himself a salary of \$30,000 a year he needs another designer whom he wants to pay \$10,000 a year. Altogether these expenses will amount to over \$130,000 in three years.

CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION OF SYMBOLS

Developing the most efficient method of cataloguing and classifying symbols. This method should afford access to any symbol or symbols within the shortest period of time. Major classifications are presented in Table 3.

Time: 30 months

| Staffing                                                                                             | Average Annual Amount | 30 Month Cost |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1 - Graphics designer                                                                                | \$ 10,000             | \$ 25,000     |
| 1 - Draftsman                                                                                        | 9,000                 | 22,500        |
| 1 - Office help                                                                                      | 5,200                 | 13,000        |
| Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits                                                                    |                       |               |
| F.I.C.A. tax, disability, insurance, medical and life insurance benefits computed at 10% of salaries | 2,420                 | 6,050         |
| Equipment                                                                                            |                       |               |
| Drafting equipment                                                                                   |                       | 5,000         |
| Miscellaneous supplies                                                                               | 3,000                 | 7,500         |
| Storage and retrieval system                                                                         |                       | 50,000        |
| Travel                                                                                               |                       |               |
| Mileage at 50 dollars per month                                                                      | 600                   | 1,500         |
| Total cost                                                                                           | \$ 30,000             | \$130,550     |

Bliss comment: Now comes a very impressive list of all the areas in science, industry, commerce, etc. in which Mr. Dreyfuss wants his 25 researchers to go out and find symbols. They will find few in some areas, but the list is very impressive. Here it is:

CLASSIFICATION OF SYMBOLS

| Major Classifications          |
|--------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture                 |
| 2. Architecture                |
| 3. Anthropology                |
| 4. Astronomy                   |
| 5. Automobiles                 |
| 6. Business                    |
| 7. Building                    |
| 8. Botany                      |
| 9. Biology                     |
| 10. Customs, folklore          |
| 11. Chemistry                  |
| 12. Communication              |
| 13. Economics                  |
| 14. Education                  |
| 15. Earth sciences             |
| 16. Engineering                |
| 17. Finance                    |
| 18. Fisheries                  |
| 19. Forestry                   |
| 20. Home Economics             |
| 21. History                    |
| 25. Medical Services           |
| 26. Manufacturing              |
| 27. Mathematics                |
| 28. Music                      |
| 29. Machinery                  |
| 30. Physics                    |
| 31. Painting                   |
| 32. Photography                |
| 33. Public Services, utilities |
| 34. Public Administration      |
| 35. Petroleum                  |
| 36. Philosophy                 |
| 37. Religion                   |
| 38. Real estate                |
| 39. Retail trade               |
| 40. Recreation                 |
| 41. Sculpture                  |
| 42. Statistics                 |
| 43. Safety                     |
| 44. Textiles                   |
| 45. Transportation             |



## CLASSIFICATION OF SYMBOLS Continued:

- |                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 22. Law        | 46. Wholesale trade |
| 23. Language   | 47. Zoology         |
| 24. Literature |                     |

Bliss comment: And now comes the formation of an international advisory board. This should consist of 6 persons who will get a very lavish salary for doing nothing else but saying that Mr. Dreyfuss' work is O.K. For this O.K. they will meet only three times each year. They will get an annual honorarium of \$1,000 per person for not more than three days work. In addition they will get \$100 extra for every day of these three days a year. In addition they will get \$1,000 per person for air travel to come to the meeting. In addition they will get allowances for food, accomodation and laundry and other expenses for these three days a year saying "O.K. Mr. Dreyfuss, O.K. Mr. Dreyfuss". The reasons for this advisory board are too obvious and equally obvious is that <sup>the</sup> men who will be selected by the grace of Mr. Dreyfuss will be very distinguished persons who will gladly pocket the money to say "O.K.". Now here is the list.

## FORMATION AND OPERATION OF INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Organising a six man international board whose major responsibility will be to review and evaluate the project and prepare papers for publication if required. The six man board will consist of top caliber authoritative persons appointed by the Project Director. The board is expected to meet three times.

Time: 3 years

Staffing

|                                                  | Average<br>Annual Amount | 3 Year Cost |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 6 man board \$1,000 annual honorarium per person | \$ 6,000                 | \$ 18,000   |
| \$100 per day per person at three day meetings   | 1,800                    | 5,400       |

Travel

|                                                                                                                         |          |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Air - \$1,000 average per individual per meeting                                                                        | 6,000    | 18,000   |
| Subsistence allowance (includes local transportation, accomodations, food, laundry and other expenses) at \$40 per day. | 720      | 2,160    |
| Total cost                                                                                                              | \$14,520 | \$43,560 |

Bliss comment: Now follows a cost list for the preparation of manuscripts which will be a trifle of \$32,700. But not a single cent for the actual printing of the dictionary itself. I think it is not necessary to list the items of this last expenditure. And now we are coming to Appendix A which is titled: CONTACTS ESTABLISHED TO DATE. This list contains nothing more than addresses of institutions and persons to whom Mr. Dreyfuss wrote for support, (but not for collecting symbols) altogether there are about 250 letters which will surely contain the very same text throughout. With an electric typewriter and photo-offset printing and a typist who would put in the addresses with the same typewriter, this should be a work not taking up more than a week. It is interesting to note that he mentions some people who have worked in symbols like Rudolph Modley and a few others who have already written about symbols. I am glad to note that I am among these addresses at the last before the last. But almost all people addressed have nothing to do with symbols and have done nothing about symbols. This long list is however, very impressive for those who gave Mr. Dreyfuss the \$6,000. Alas, it did not impress them and Mr. Dreyfuss who pleaded for \$1,000,000 got exactly \$0,000,000.

And now we are coming to the most interesting part the bibliography which proves beyond doubt that Mr. Dreyfuss has deliberately left out my own books.

Naturally I looked first to all the listed books under B in this alphabetical bibliography and found the following:

Beyer, Dr. Hermann, Mito Y Simbolismo del Mexico Antiguo, Sociedad Alemana Mexicanista, Mexico, 1965.

Bickham, George, The Universal Penman, London, 1743, Facsimile Edition - Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1941.

Boy Scouts of America, Boy Scout Handbook, New Jersey, 1965

Bliss comment: I was thunderstruck when I couldn't find my own name. I turned the pages to look up the letter S for Semantography and I found the following books listed who's author's name began with an S.

Shahn, Ben, Alphabet of Creation, Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, NY 1954  
 Sloane, Eric, American Barns and Covered Bridges, Wilfred Funk, Inc., New York, 1954  
 Sloane, Eric, The Cracker Barrel, Funk & Wagnalls, Division of Reader's Digest Books Inc., New York, 1967.

Spencer, Herbert, The Penrose Annual, 1968, Vol. 61, Hastings House, Publishers N.Y. 1968.

Stafford, T. Albert, Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches, Abingdon Press, New York and Nashville, 1942.



Bliss comment: But not a word on Semantography. I beg the reader to realise that in accordance with the quoted correspondence at the beginning of this issue, Mr. Dreyfuss had already with him first the tourist folder and then my large book Semantography. There is only one explanation to the omission of my name and the name of my work and this is: Mr. Dreyfuss deliberately omitted my name and the name of my work for obvious reasons. The men who gave him \$6,000 and whom he wanted to persuade another \$1,000,000 should not know that I have worked out the symbol system for a complete language and a dictionary to boot. I shall deal with this amazing omission in the next analysis which I wanted to send to Mr. Dreyfuss but I didn't finish it. I have mentioned before that I had many sleepless hours at night and many unhappy days about this dreadful feasibility study, and I simply didn't know how to get rid of my unhappiness. In such cases I usually work off my unhappiness in an issue or a letter. I intended to send my analysis to Mr. Dreyfuss as a personal letter and here below it is.

CONFIDENTIAL

A N A N A L Y S I S  
of the paper titled

THE DESIGN OF A RESEARCH PROJECT  
TO DETERMINE THE NATURE AND FEASIBILITY  
OF AN INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF SYMBOLS

By Henry Dreyfuss

A report of the accomplishments under National Endowment for the Humanities Grant No. H68-0117(5/15/68-9/30/68- of \$6,000.00, administered by the Californian Institute of Technology Pasadena, California.

This analysis has been written in the form of a letter by C.K. Bliss (Dipl.Ing. Chem. Vienna) Inventor and Author of "Semantography-Blissymbolics" a complete scientifically constructed pictorial symbol language.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

Sydney 1 July, 1969

Thank you for sending me your feasibility study for a Symbol Dictionary, and also for your letter of March 31, ending with the words that you "enjoy our correspondence." So did I - until I studied your feasibility study. I hesitated for 3 months writing to you, but then I realised that your quest for \$1,000,000 for a Symbol Dictionary may be seriously impeded if some of the men who have the power to give you so much money may point out certain facts which you have overlooked in your study.

I wish to assure you, and I refer to all my previous letters of goodwill and co-operation, that I am prompted by the same goodwill and co-operation when I now point out these facts. I am seriously interested in your work, and I want that your project of a symbol dictionary should come true. So please take my analysis in the spirit of co-operation.

You are stating in page 4 of your study that you studied the catalog cards of the Library of Congress on books on signs and symbols. On page 8 you say that your dictionary would "promote an international and intercultural visual language". This is exactly what I have done already, including even a dictionary (partly both ways); as proved by the second edition of my work which I sent to you in 1968. Consequently, I was most interested to read the Bibliography (page 37ff of your study) hoping to find another author who has done what I have done. Happily I found that you don't list any such man, but unhappily I have found that you have missed out some important books.

Of the 61 books and pamphlets listed in your bibliography, roughly one third may have limited interest for the researcher into systems of symbols, as for instance

- A Brief Dictionary of American Superstitions
- Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania
- A History of the War
- Encyclopedia of Superstitions
- Pennsylvania Dutch Stuff - A Guide to Country Antiques
- American Barns and Covered Bridges, etc.

Other books deal with ancient symbols of no use and interest to modern man as for instance

- Heraldic Designs
- Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico
- Symbolismo del Mexico Antiguo
- Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia
- Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches
- The encircled Serpent
- Serpents in Symbolism
- The Third Bank of the River and other stories.
- The Cracker Barrel
- Westvaco Inspirations
- The Penrose Manual etc.

There is only one book which has a direct bearing on your feasibility study  
A Dictionary of Symbols by J.E. Cirlot



But the title is misleading. Very few symbol and graphic lines are shown. The whole book is a verbal mythical and mystical hocuspocus with no reference to symbols in our modern world. There is nowhere a real dictionary showing in two parts symbols arranged according to a dictionary, and the counterpart to these symbols. And as said before the whole book is of no use for modern man. For instance we find under "Swastika" lots of verbal ancient blabla, but not one single word about the use of the Swastika by Hitler and the Nazis - though the book was published in 1962.

Bibliographies are produced in scientific papers to show how thorough the researcher has studied his subject. But then why have you not included important books on signs and symbols which are also listed in the library of Congress catalog index cards? I mention only 4 such books.

BOOKS ON BLISSYMBOLS in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Bliss, Charles Kasiel.

Semantography, a non-alphabetical symbol writing, readable in all languages:

A practical tool for general international communication, especially in science, industry, commerce, traffic, etc. and for semantical education, based on the principals of ideographic writing and chemical symbolism.

Sydney, Institute for Semantography, 1949

1. Pasigraphy. 1 Title

Z102.B55 419.2 52-65550

Library of Congress 60B $\frac{1}{4}$

Institute for Semantography, Sydney

The Semantography series. no 1-

Sydney, 1949

v. illus., ports., digrs. 34 cm. irregular

Some numbers undated

Editor: No. 1 - C.K. Bliss

1 Pasigraphy 1. Bliss, Charles Kasiel, 1897 - ed.

Z102.1 5 58-41205

Library of Congress 3/5

Bliss, Charles Kasiel

Semantography (Blissymbolics) A simple system of 100 logical pictorial symbols, which can be operated and read like  $1+2=3$

in all languages...by C.K. Bliss, 2d enl. ed. Sydney,

Semantography (Blissymbolics) Publications 1965

882p. illus., facsim., ports. 23cm

"Bibliography and list of quotations":p.77-80.

1. Pasigraphy. 1 Title II Title: Blissymbolics.

Z102.B55 419 65-9219

Library of Congress I

Helfman, Elizabeth S

Signs and Symbols around the world by Elizabeth S. Helfman

New York, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1967

192 p. illus. 24cm.

Bibliography: p 180-182

1. Signs and Symbols. 1. Title

AZ108.H44 419 67-22596

Library of Congress 7

You cannot have overlooked at least my last book, because I sent you the title pages about August, 1968 and you had before this my tourist folder which contains on Page 8 a complete outline of the content. My book arrived before you sent off your feasibility study.

There is only one explanation for this omission of my work: you don't want my books be mentioned in your bibliography, nor my work to be considered. This unfavourable impression is fortified by the following:

1. A number of books listed in your bibliography contain references to my work, show some of my symbols and give full credit to my book. Here are only two such books listed by you:

Professor Gyorgy Kepes of the M.I.T. Cambridge Mass. SIGN, IMAGE SYMBOL

Professor Oliver L. Reiser of the University of Pittsburgh UNIFIED SYMBOLISM

FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE

You state on Page 4 of your study that you studied the bibliography mentioned in the 61 books listed in your bibliography and thus arrived at other sources, which must have led you to my work. Yet, no mention of it in your bibliography.

2. On Page 13 of your study you propose to engage 25 correspondents in all parts of the world (including one for Australia and New Zealand). They would receive quite a lavish salary which would cost your sponsors the sum of \$220,000 over 3 years. At the same time when you made these salary plans you knew already about me and my work, but apparently you did not want me as a correspondent, otherwise



you would have given me the good news long ago. I assure you that there is none among the Australia and New Zealand scholars, designers, etc. who can claim to have an expert knowledge on the laws of symbology, none except me, as proved by my large chapters on the scientific basis of symbols in my book.

3. Mr. Clifton told me in his letter of March 14, 1969 "Our plans include visiting a number of strategic geographic areas and consulting with outstanding authorities throughout the world. Undoubtedly, either Mr. Dreyfuss or I will be in Australia and by all means would like to get together with you then".

"By all means" but not as your correspondent.

4. You said in your letter of March 31 "Somehow or other I hope our paths will cross." Hope - somehow or other - means in plain words that you have no intention to appoint me as correspondent.

The 4 facts mentioned above prove to me that you don't want my symbols included in your dictionary, because this would mean an extensive co-operation with me. Your omission of my books in your bibliography is therefore not an oversight. It has been made deliberately.

Now, you have stated in your study that "no authoritative reference source on graphic symbols exists." And as you are approaching scholarly foundations and institutions for 1 million dollars you want to convince them that you will fill this gap. But then, can you exclude me and my symbols from such an "authoritative reference source?" I don't think you can do this. I am the only man in the world who has invented a simple system of 100 pictorial symbols which in combination can be used to express every notion in commerce, communication, industry and even in all fields of science. No other man has done this.

You state on Page 8 of your study that the ultimate aim of your dictionary would be the "promotion of an international and intercultural visual language." On page 2 you say that an "authoritative compilation" of the "many symbols and symbol systems" would "provide a common reference for those charged with the design and application of symbols". This means, that if you heartily dislike and despise my symbols you would have to include them in your dictionary. Surely they are more important than ancient symbols which you want to include (Mr. Clifton's letter of March 31), and a thousand times more important than symbols on American barns and covered bridges, country antiques, or those dealing with superstitions and the like.

Thinking the matter over and over for the last 3 months I have no valid explanation for the undeniable fact that you want (and did) exclude my work in your bibliography and in your forthcoming dictionary. I believe the men whom you approach for so much money as 1 million dollars will have no valid explanation either. Some of them may know of my work already. I am amazed how many in most parts of the world (including Russia and China) know of my work. As for the knowledge of my work within the United States here is an interesting fact. You have omitted, or overlooked the following book

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS No. 67-22596 SIGNS AND SYMBOLS AROUND THE WORLD

By Elizabeth S. Helfman published in 1967

The author informed me that the book has become a bestseller, and is bought by advertising agencies and designers "in quantity". Chapter 9 of this book carries the title "Sign Writing for Today" has 15 pages of which 9 pages are solely devoted to an exposition of my work. Many symbols are shown and how they combine. And now comes the most interesting part of this story.

No part of this book has aroused so much interest than that about my work. The editors of "Scholastic Publications" who publish a number of educational magazines for teachers and children have chosen my work "Semantography" for the cover story in the magazines SCHOLASTIC TEACHER, SCHOLASTIC NEWSTIME, and others.

This has created more interest in my work, and now the author informed me that a publisher of school text books is now preparing the inclusion of my work in a textbook for 6th grade school pupils. You can imagine how proud I am to know that soon my symbols will be taught in American schools. The publisher is HOLT, RINEHART & WINSTON, New York. The school book will come out in 1971.

And all this means that the men who will give you the million dollars will not understand nor agree that you have deliberately left my work out in your bibliography and apparently want to leave it out from your dictionary. Now, such an attitude could be justified if there are other men who have done much more than I have, so much more that my work can be neglected. But who are those men?

I asked Mr. Clifton to name "those outstanding experts" with whom you want to co-operate. In his letter of March 31, he mentioned Mr. Modley, Mrs. Neurath, Mr. Krampen, and Mr. Lehner. I honour these people and their work, because whoever works on symbols helps make mankind aware of their importance. This in the end can only help my work along. But what have these "outstanding authorities" done for your ultimate aim: a complete international symbol language?

Mrs. Neurath, and Mr. Modley were co-workers of Otto Neurath who used small pictograph in statistical demonstrations, his isotypes. He also wrote a miniature booklet "International Picture Language". In this book he admits that his pictographs for public signs cannot be used for a "complete language"



in which a statement can be expressed word by word. In short, the title of his booklet is a misnomer. Moreover, his (and Mrs. Neurath's and Modley's) pictographs can express a variety of the most diversified things. For instance, the outline of a wavy flame } could mean fire, also damage done by fire expressed in money, or fire insurance policies contracted in countries or timespans, or it could mean insurance refunds paid out on account of fires, or it could mean gas production, or gas consumption, or coal production, or coal consumption, or it could mean energy in general, and a host of other things. In short, the Neurath and Modley pictographs have no value for an international complete pictorial language. All their symbols need explicit explanations in words.

Now to Mr. Krampen. He too has not devised any consistent set of symbols least of all a system for a complete symbol language. He has only done research of some kind. For instance I have before me a recent paper by Krampen which is most revealing for the state of mind prevalent among designers and researchers of symbols. Namely, he thinks that symbols should be so designed as not to need any explanation, and any learning in words underneath. Mr. Modley has many times declared that every pictorial symbol must be explained in words and must be learned.

In order to realise the importance of this fact, and also its disregard by symbol designers let me cite your own words from your article SYMBOLS from the Magazine of Standards November 1968.

In the first paragraph you begin "Recently I visited the USSR, and while there bought more gifts to bring home than my luggage could accomodate. The overflow was packed in a carton. There was no lettering on the carton but there were three symbols stenciled on it:"

Bliss comment: The symbols show first a horizontal line and two vertical arrows to mean THIS SIDE UP. The next symbol is the well known outline of a wine glass with a thin stem to mean FRAGILE and the third symbol is an umbrella with rain drops coming down above it to mean KEEP IT DRY. To this Mr. Dreyfuss wrote jubilantly that he suddenly understood Russian. This would make the reader believe that these symbols are Russian symbols but in another article they will appear again with the note that they are from a German cardboard box. And I quote Mr. Dreyfuss' jubilant words.

"Suddenly I could understand Russian! In all the years I had spent collecting and devising symbols, nothing had more vividly brought home to me their importance than these three stenciled on a battered old box".

Suddenly you understood Russian Mr. Dreyfuss? You did not. You were victim of the same fallacy which has misled Krampen and almost all other designers of symbols. You understood these symbols because previously in America you have read in English or been told in English what these three symbols really mean. I quote again Mr. Modley who said forcefully what I have said for 27 years, namely that all pictorial symbols no matter how pictorial they look must be explained as to what they mean. Haven't you read about the experiments which have been made with these three symbols. They have been shown to people to whom no explanation was given in their own language. Did they recognise the meaning? Most of them did not. Few guessed them only. The two arrows meant anything but THIS SIDE UP. The wine glass meant that the box contains glasses, not that its content is FRAGILE. And the umbrella meant to many that the box contains umbrellas. It did not mean KEEP THE CONTENT OUT OF RAIN AND WATER.

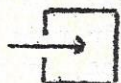
Just 2 years ago something similar happened. The Toronto designer of the Expo 67 in Montreal was asked to develop 24 symbols. He too fell under the same fallacy and consequently, did not put words in English and French underneath the symbols. They must speak for themselves was his and was (and still is) the general opinion of symbol designers. And what happened when Expo was opened? TIME magazine of May 12 tells of harrowing experiences when the "esoteric" outline of a man and a woman was not understood to be an indication of a toilet and that many "desperate enquiries" had to be made by desperate visitors.

When you wrote to me for the first time I immediately pointed out this common error, and sent you a humorous reprint from the British magazine of Laughter PUNCH ridiculing the street symbols (all pictorial) of the British Ministry of Transport. I said that years later 30% of the people questioned still had a false notion as to the meaning of the street symbols. And I chided you for saying in your memorandum that you have persuaded the Deere Company NOT to put words under the symbols. I regret to see that in spite of explanations you still adhere to the notion that there is no need to put the words in the native language underneath the symbols - though it would cost no more to do so, and though there are thousands of meanings which are abstract and therefore it is impossible to picture them with pictographs. The only possibility is given by my symbol elements which are pictorial throughout.

In the same article SYMBOLS in the Magazine of Standards you show 4 symbols of mine but without the words underneath - and this had disastrous consequences as I shall explain in later paragraphs. Let us now return to Mr. Krampen who too believed that symbols need no words underneath, and consequently he showed a number of symbols to a number of travellers and asked them for an opinion of what these



symbols may mean. Some of these symbols have been already introduced in some airports, and therefore some travellers guessed them rightly. Others tried their best on guessing and came to disastrous misconceptions.



As said before, most of the symbols which Krampen selected are already in use in a number of airports - and carry the explanation in words underneath in English and/or the native language. Consequently travellers who had seen them gave the correct answer. But as to the others Krampen made real discoveries.

I show here only one symbol from 31 symbols he selected. But some of these symbols are only variants of the same meaning. Now the official meaning of the symbol shown above means ENTRANCE. How many travellers guessed it rightly?

Only one third. Another third of the travellers questioned, strained their brain, but were unable to guess any meaning. The last third of travellers came to catastrophic conclusions. Here is according to Krampen what they think the symbol means:

Dead End, No Thoroughfare  
Hall, Waiting Room  
Parking  
Lift  
No Exit  
No Entrance

and some even suggested

Jail  
Auschwitz  
Rape, and other false guesses.

Said Krampen: "The very powerful arrow pushes into an enclosure, from which there is no escape. Therefore it is felt as an attack on individual freedom."

Now it may be said that this symbol is somewhat abstract, and hence the many misunderstandings. But other symbols are real pictures, and yet there were a lot of false guesses. For instance the picture for Baggage Delivery was guessed to mean the opposite Baggage Check-In.

Did Krampen in his summary suggest that it may be wise to put the words in English and/or the native language underneath? Not at all. I have asked in desperation why for goodness sake the word underneath MUST NOT be shown? The symbol designers questioned, could not give an answer. They agreed that putting words underneath the symbols would cost not a penny more in the manufacture of the symbols by printing or transfer. And yet, so much time, labour and money is wasted to prove a false point.

What has Lehner done? A compilation of American Symbols. What has Kneebone of Icograda done? He has not evolved any symbols. He has however, approved 24 symbols which won the student designers prize of Icograda. Here are four of these symbols



Men's Toilet



Women's Toilet



Information



Doctor

You may judge for yourself, or you may try to answer the "Why?"

What have the Glyph people, Margaret Mead and Rudolph Modley done? They have not evolved new symbols, least of all a system for a complete language. They have written a number of pamphlets and an article in "Natural History" titled "Communication among all People everywhere." They show some symbols, and they recommend that mankind should learn a second language for international communication. Which language? You won't be able to guess. It's Armenian.

I have written to all these symbol researchers. I have offered my heartiest co-operation. I have pointed out that I have discussed all the arguments in lengthy chapters, and I have asked them all almost on my knees just to realise that my pictorial symbol elements can do the job in combination for any meaning needed. It was all in vain.

These are the outstanding authorities - and here am I wondering all the time what dreadful thing I have done to be disregarded and even abused (as you will soon hear in later paragraphs). I don't know. I can't understand human nature. In desperation I am writing these lines. I cannot understand why you too have decided not to mention my work in your bibliography and why you don't want my symbols and my co-operation in your symbol dictionary.

And here I come to another aspect. How big should your dictionary be? Mr. Boehm wrote in his article "A New Sign Language - Straight Ahead!" in THINK the IBM Magazine:

"The dictionary is bound to be an extremely fat book - more likely - several volumes. During his preliminary study, which includes a personal visit to the Soviet Union, Dreyfuss uncovered more raw material than he had anticipated. Actually bits and pieces of a serviceable universal graphic language have been accumulating for thousands of years. Cave dwellers...."



And now Boehm elaborates on ancient symbols, etc. to which we shall come later. But I cannot imagine that you are going to include all the old and forgotten and useless symbols designed by ancient people. Who knows of these symbols and who needs these symbols. What we need is in the words of Boehm as said in the title of his article: Symbols for a new sign language. And such a language must be scientifically constructed, not haphazardly put together by ancient and modern designers. The symbols must be typeable on a modern typewriter. They must be easily printable. In short, they must be constructed from an "alphabet of basic symbols" or in other words from a number of symbol elements which must be pictorial not abstract. Or in other words they must be what my work is: a complete pictorial symbols language.

So I cannot imagine that you will fill hundreds of pages of several volumes with ancient symbols of no use to anyone. These symbols are explained in various archeological and historical books, and there is no need to put them into a symbol dictionary, apart from the almost unsurmountable difficulty to which I shall come in later paragraphs.

In short, your symbol dictionaries must contain modern symbols for modern mankind. Only this will have any value, and only for this will you receive money. How many symbols are there used by modern man?

To find out let us look into the most authoritative dictionary, the Webster Merriam under SIGNS. You will find that they list not more than 12 pages. These include also the scientific symbols used in chemistry, physics, mathematics, etc. The Encyclopedia Americana has less than 3 pages. Take all the symbols standardised by the International Standard Organisation (ISO) and you may get perhaps 10 pages. Take all the traffic signs of all the countries and you may fill again say 10 or 20 pages. Then there are some 20 to 50 symbols produced for railways, airports, world fairs, olympiads, etc. Another 5 to 10 pages. In short, your symbol dictionary - if it should fill a real need - would be a slender volume only. Is it worth to spend 1 million dollars on it?

There is only one group of symbols which may fill hundreds of pages, and these would be of real help to modern man who seeks symbols for the use in communication, commerce, industry and all the faculties of all the sciences. This group of symbols would provide a consistent system of symbols. And this group consists of combinations of my 100 basic symbol elements. The IBM organisation is ready to cast a special ball with my basic symbols to be used in their ball typewriter model 72.

As said before - whether you like my symbols or not - if you want to fulfil the pledge to your sponsors that you will produce an authoritative dictionary of all the symbols there are, you would have to include my symbols, and they would fill hundreds of pages of your dictionary. All my symbols, their likely combination, derivation and even deviation are protected by copyright, and this extends well beyond the year 2000. If you really want to satisfy the men from whom you ask the 1 million dollars, you would have to co-operate extensively with me.

Why have Modley and Mead, Mr. & Mrs. Neurath, Krampen and Kneebone, Lehner and all the others who have worked on symbols not been able to produce a consistent system of simple pictorial symbols? And why have I been able to do so? The answer is that I have a university training, and a life long practice for just this kind of work: for the analysis of matter into the elements, and for the synthesis of these elements to new meanings. I am a research chemist and the methods of analysis and synthesis are my life-long modes of work. This has also an important bearing of one aspect of a symbol dictionary which you have omitted altogether, though it is inherent in the very question inherent in the words of your study: Feasibility Study. You have tried to answer whether a symbol dictionary is feasible. Knowing what I am going to say now will surely annoy you, and hence referring again to the spirit of co-operation which prompts me to say things no matter how annoying. I must say that you have not answered the question whether a symbol dictionary is feasible. You have only shown that it is feasible to spend one million dollars in engaging people and correspondents to look for symbols everywhere, and then compile the symbols found into some sort of dictionary? No! A dictionary must have two parts. A dictionary of say English and French, must consist of two parts: English-French and French-English.

Consequently, a symbol dictionary must consist of two parts: Symbols-English and English-Symbols. Unfortunately the first part is almost impossible to compile in a way that a person searching for a certain symbol can find it in a systematic arrangement of symbols. Take for instance the symbol of the umbrella and the raindrops. How will these pictures be classified in a systematic way. It is almost impossible. Symbols of any kind consist of geometrical outlines and forms. How can they be graded in a logical way into geometrical classes which would form sections of a dictionary and be so simple that the ordinary man and woman can find their way in the same way as they can find their way in an ordinary dictionary? This problem is almost impossible to realise - and you haven't said one word about



it, nor shown a way how you would go about this. In other words: a symbol dictionary containing the part Symbol-English is conventionally NOT FEASIBLE. All your studies prove that you can compile symbols for only one part of a dictionary ENGLISH-SYMBOLS, but not the other way around.

You cannot say that you have omitted or overlooked this important question. The very word FEASIBILITY demands an answer, and when used for a symbol dictionary the answer MUST include that part which seems not feasible at all: a simple system of classification of complex pictures and picturegraphs, as they are in use for instance in industry.

You have submitted your Feasibility Study to your sponsors in November 1968, but already in September I directed your attention to the important and most difficult part of your dictionary, namely the part Symbols-English, and I said in my letter of September 21:

"I can surely help <sup>you</sup> with suggestions for your dictionary."

Apparently your sponsors thought of a two-way dictionary, and doubted whether this is feasible to make. Hence the title "A Feasibility Study". I was disappointed to see that you have not mentioned this most difficult part with one word, neither have you given any hint how you will overcome this difficulty. I am sure that some of your sponsors will think the same thoughts, and they may be against giving you one million dollars for something which as yet seems NOT FEASIBLE.

I am sure I have the answer how to make that second part, and I have shown it in a number of pages of my book. I renew herewith my pledge of co-operation and help in spite of all the indications that you don't want anything to do with me and my work, and thus have even excluded my books from your bibliography.

And now I come to another part of my analysis, the one which has given me the greatest concern and the greatest unhappiness. It is bad enough if a creative man finds himself and his work shunned, but it is intolerable for him to see that other men are trying to downgrade his work, and even to create a false impression about it. Having written more than 9 pages, allow me now to concentrate on this unhappy part, and be it only for working off my deep unhappiness, and perhaps finding your understanding and willingness to make good.

It is clear for everyone else <sup>who</sup> reads the article by Boehm that you have inspired it, indeed asked for it as a support for your aspirations. It is also clear that you must have given Boehm some information about my work - but very little. But perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps you have given him the most lavish information about my work, also the tourist folder, and the book, and it was Boehm himself who has taken on the unkind task to down-grade my work in the eyes of the readers. Here is what Boehm had to say about my work:

"Dreyfuss is also studying synthetic symbol languages. Perhaps the most ambitious of these was formulated by an Australian Charles K. Bliss who 20 years ago published hundreds of standardised symbols with rules for combining them. For example, he uses a straight line for "earth", a circle for "mouth" and an inverted "Y" for "man". The first two together mean "food", all three in a cluster stand for "waiter".

Giving so little information, and not giving at least this one symbol combination in a drawing (though Boehm is extremely lavish to show on almost a whole page some hieroglyphics about which we shall speak <sup>later</sup>) is extremely unkind. The reader is left puzzling and must conclude that <sup>that</sup> Bliss bloke is a man devoid of the ability to draw understandable symbols.

But how can Boehm write that I have published "hundreds of standardised symbols with rules for combining them?" If he has before him the second edition of my book (given by you) he must have seen what the title page says, namely

"A simple system of 100 logical pictorial symbols..."

I attach to this page (as page 11) this title page which I sent to you already in August 1968. On page 16-17 it shows the title page of the 1st edition published 1949 which title reads

100 SYMBOL ELEMENTS TO OVERCOME BABEL IN READING, WRITING AND THOUGHT.

How then could Boehm speak <sup>of</sup> "hundreds of symbols and rules to combine them" when my books speak right on the title page of 100 only? How did he get the information that I did this 20 years ago? True enough, I published my 3 volumes in 1949 (1st edition) but had Boehm this before him? If so he must have seen the big words 100 SYMBOL ELEMENTS. Excuse me when I come to the conclusion that you must have given him very little information. Maybe you told him of the 20 years. Maybe you drew on a piece of paper that symbol for "waiter" without giving him any explanation as to why and how. Otherwise he would have learned that my symbol for "man" is NOT an "inverted Y" but the outline of a human being standing upright with legs apart thus .

Unhappy thoughts all this. I don't want to think that you gave him so little information. I want to believe that you gave him my tourist folder and showed him the symbol combination for "waiter" on top of page 7 - but without giving



him any further explanation. And maybe Mr. Boehm took no trouble to look into the complete folder except to see there "hundreds of standardized symbols".

Now if you kindly look up the top of page 7 of my tourist folder (there is indeed my symbol combination for the meaning of a "waiter") you will see something else beneath the word waiter. There are the explanations printed in small print which show how the meaning elements expressed in pictorial symbols have been combined to the meaning of "waiter". But even if you have given Mr. Boehm the tourist folder he should have taken the few seconds to read the meaning elements and explanation how they are combined.

Apparently Mr. Boehm has read the first words underneath and has realised that a "circle" means "mouth" and a horizontal line means "earth". But there is another word there, not "earth" alone. The line reads as an explanation for

FOOD = mouth and Mother Earth

Speaking not of earth, but of "Mother Earth" should tell anyone that this is indeed the most general symbolisation of the meaning of "food". It means all our mouth takes in from our "Mother Earth". It does not mean "food" only. It means also all "drinks", and even the air we take in for burning all the food in our body, including the nutritional drinks, as for instance milk. Can anyone construct a more simple or more general symbol for the meaning of FOOD? Show me please!

Mr. Boehm has read (or heard from you) the words mouth and earth, but he must have seen also the words "Mother Earth". But no explanation is being given in the line above for the symbol for "man". No wonder that Mr. Boehm describes it as an "inverted Y" - not as what it really is: the outline of a man with legs apart. If he had before him the tourist folder he could have seen right in the beginning the following on page 2.

#### 29 PICTORIAL BLISSYMBOLS

The very first two symbols show the difference in the symbolisation of a man and a woman, the man with legs apart, the woman with a skirt. How on earth he got the fallacious idea to speak of an inverted "Y" is beyond me unless I must assume that it was his desire to confuse the reader deliberately. But there is more in these 29 symbols.

Had Boehm glanced on this part of the tourist folder he would never have written of the symbol man being an inverted Y only. He would have explained that it means a man standing upright with legs apart. But maybe he has seen all this. Maybe he wasn't interested to explain to the reader the simplicity and sense in my symbols.

He wrote of my "hundreds of symbols". But I show only 29, and combine them to hundreds of meanings. Moreover some of these 29 symbols are combinations already as this is explained in the lines below my 29 symbols:

In these lines I say the following: some of these symbols are already combinations, as for instance: a HOUSE can be symbolised by ROOF over GROUND, a SHIP by VESSEL over WATER, etc. etc. But it is simpler to use an auxiliary Outline Symbol for HOUSE, SHIP and other meanings, as shown throughout this folder.

Do I then really operate with 100 symbol elements only which are my own invention? Not at all. The first 30 symbols are already international and I produce them on top of page 2 of the tourist folder:

These symbols are the 10 numbers, 6 mathematical signs, the dot, exclamation mark, and the question mark, the arrow as a direction sign, the outline of the sun, the moon, the star, the outline of lightning for the meaning of electricity, the outline of a letter, the triangle as an international safety sign, a music note, the oblique line for the meaning of crossing out, and the thousands of years old symbols for medicine and trade.

These 30 international symbols reduce my 100 symbol elements to 70, but even some of these 70 elements are already used for thousands of years as the following paragraphs will explain.

The symbol for mouth is a circle. At the same time <sup>it</sup> is exactly the letter o, a picture of the form of the mouth when it utters the sound o. The symbol for hand is pictured in Roman number 5 thus V indicating the hand (with 5 fingers) of which only the thumb and the index finger are shown.

In other words: the symbol elements I use are mostly known and used for many centuries, and above all, my symbols are all pictorial. But Mr. Boehm has not said anything about "pictorial" not, that I use international symbols and many used already for centuries. All he has done is a short description of the symbol for waiter without any explanation, leaving the reader thinking the worst of my symbols.

Now you dear Mr. Dreyfuss have surely given him some information, and I assume that you have given him my tourist folder. But on page 8 of it there is a complete description of my book with title publisher, address, pages and price. It is an unwritten code of honour among science writers and reviewers of the works of authors to mention the author's book, title publisher, address, pages and price. Why has Mr. Boehm not done this?

But you dear Mr. Dreyfuss (forgive me saying this) have also not mentioned my book in your study, nor in the article attached to this study. This article



appeared in the Magazine of Standards under the title "SYMBOLS Communicating without an accent." However, you have shown 4 of my symbols and combinations. Alas, you have done worse than Mr. Boehm. You have shown these my symbols and combinations without however given an explanation as to the combinations. The result was disastrous.

In this article of your<sup>s</sup> titled "SYMBOLS: COMMUNICATING WITHOUT AN ACCENT" which appeared in the Magazine of Standards of October, 1968 you show 8 different designs for the meaning of woman, bus, telephone and restaurant.

You show these and other, but very similar pictographs, and should the reader be in doubt as to the meanings, he can read them in those symbols used in some airports which carry the words in English and the native language underneath. It then becomes obvious that my symbol for woman and bus are pictorial, but for Heaven's sake how can those crazy symbols of mine come to mean telephone and restaurant??? No wonder when the reader finds all other designs sensible, but rejects my symbols because he cannot make head nor tail of them.

Would it not have been fair and proper to tell the reader how my symbols combine? You took them from the tourist folder page 6 and 7, and there is in small print the explanation of the combination.

Here is the symbol combination for TELEPHONE as shown and explained in page 6 of the tourist folder:

|               |              |          |                            |           |
|---------------|--------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| ○             | )            | o        | ⚡                          | o⚡        |
| mouth(speech) | ear(hearing) | language | electricity<br>(lightning) | telephone |

Communication through the spoken word is done through the mouth (speech) and the ear (hearing). Both together stand for language, but not only the language of man. We know that animals, birds and even fish communicate through the mouth and ear. Can you show me Mr. Dreyfuss a more general and more simple symbol than mine? Nobody can do this I venture to say.

Now what happens when we add the symbol for lightning, the zigzag symbol seen everywhere today to mean electricity, high tension wire, etc. The cluster now means communication by mouth and ear through electricity. And this is indeed the most general symbol for TELEPHONE. All other designers have shown the usual outline of a telephone receiver. But this outline is sometimes unknown in far away communities who still have the hand cranked telephone of the wall. And even in millions of homes and public telephones of many countries, there is not the receiver those designers drew, but the ear piece and the mouth piece separate. Moreover, the usual outline of the receiver as drawn by the designers is already obsolete, because now we have the Ericophone where the dial is set in the base which contains also the mouth piece. And now we have even a newer model where the number to be called is not dialled, but pressed by buttons. Again another outline, soon to be made obsolete by technology advance.

Against those clumsy drawings of designers my symbol combination means a TELEPHONE regardless of outline or shape or design. It is timeless and can be used for any electric or electronic communication of words, including those where the "speaking" piece is a microphone put on the larynx and the "hearing" piece a little button put into the ear (as these are used by the military men of many armies.)

But alas, all these explanations you did not give in your article, though you could have explained in one sentence: "The Blissymbol for mouth (circle) plus ear means communication by word, and the lightning outline means electrical communication TELEPHONE." This sentence would have been fair and would have told the reader that my symbols are well designed. Instead, you said not a word, and, what's even worse, you let the outline of the lightning come out defective, thus adding to the reader's perplexity.

And now to the second symbol of mine which you have presented in your article without giving any explanation. The reader could easily understand that the crossed knife and fork means RESTAURANT, simply because this symbol is at least 100 years old and has been displayed on millions of time tables for the indication of a dining car. And this I have pictured and explained on page 7 of my tourist folder and here it is:

|       |       |      |      |            |
|-------|-------|------|------|------------|
| ○     | —     | o    | □    | □o         |
| mouth | earth | food | room | restaurant |

The food symbol (Mouth and Mother Earth) has been explained before. But the symbol for the restaurant has been explained on Page 3 of the folder in a number of examples. What does this square symbol really mean?

As it stands it means an ENCLOSURE, but an enclosure with an opening at the side and this indeed may mean a room, a hall, in our case a RESTAURANT, because of the second symbol showing the mouth by which we take in all our food and drink. By adding the earthline we indicate what our mouth takes in from Mother Earth. I have explained this in a previous page, but I must repeat it in my desperate quest and question why you haven't found it worthwhile to explain this to the reader.



And why haven't you mentioned my work in your bibliography and why haven't you mentioned the fact that I have already worked out a symbol dictionary working both ways? Why, why, why??? Questions and no answers.

Premature End of my Analysis.

And here I gave up and did not go on to conclude my analysis, and did not send it off to Mr. Dreyfuss. I realised the futility of all. He would not admit his guilt. He would find enough words to justify all his omissions, as he found enough words to justify his omission of words beneath his symbols for farm equipment in one of his previous letters to me. And thus I put the whole analysis aside. I don't want to make more enemies than I have already, and perhaps Mr. Dreyfuss will realise what he has done to me and will make amends. And so I wrote to him.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss, and dear Mr. Clifton,

Sydney 9.7.69

Kindly excuse that I acknowledge your kind letters of March 31 and your Feasibility Study only today. Time and again I started on an analysis of it, which I wanted to send to you in the expressed spirit of co-operation. But I could not find the time to do it full justice.

Meanwhile I hope that your endeavours to get the necessary funds have been successful, and I shall be happy to hear from you how things are.

As for me, I have good news to report. Maybe you know the latest book published 1967 "Signs and Symbols around the World" by Elizabeth S. Helfman, published by Lothrop Lee & Shepard, New York, Library of Congress catalog card No. 67-22596. The author informed me that the book has become a best-seller and is bought by designers and advertising agencies "in quantity".

The greatest interest aroused by the book was (and still is) the excerpt of my work featured there. The publishers of Scholastic Magazines Inc. New York have chosen my semantography for the cover story of their magazines edition Scholastic Teacher, Scholastic Newstime, etc. and have done it beautifully in colours. Now another publisher is preparing my work for inclusion into a school textbook for American 6th Grade children. More and more libraries in the United States and elsewhere are buying my book as a result of this publicity. And all this means that my symbols are now more than ever part of the knowledge of many people and soon part of American education too.

I am now looking forward to see that my symbols are incorporated in your dictionary where designers, engineers, and scientists will find them for many notations for which there are no symbols available. No wonder that I wish your endeavours all success.

So please dear Mr. Dreyfuss and dear Mr. Clifton let me know your good news and be thanked for it.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Mr. Dreyfuss did not feel it necessary to answer my letter. Neither did his associate Mr. Clifton feel this necessity. Hence, I wrote again 4 months later Dear Mr. Dreyfuss and dear Mr. Clifton,

Sydney 15 Nov, 69

I hope you are both in the best of health and I hope that you have received my letter of July 9. Having not received your answer it may well be that my letter got lost. Here then is a copy of my letter with some good news about developments in the U.S.A. with regard to my work.

You may remember that I was in a predicament a year ago, when my book wholesaler went bankrupt and I was in danger of losing my books. At that time I thought that I have to go to the U.S.A. and save them. I appealed to you for support believing that my co-operation in your forthcoming venture will be worthwhile for you. However, you turned my request down, and I had to think of something else. I set in motion a campaign by which I sent the books in the States to selected American university, college and public libraries. The result exceeded my expectations, and I am glad to inform you that many libraries now have added my book to their collections, apart from those who had it already. I include some of my circulars, labels, etc. to show you how I did it.

And this brings me back to my promise of co-operation with regard to your work on a symbol dictionary. I am eager to know how far you have gone to interest foundations in your million dollar venture. Indeed, apart from you two, dear Mr. Dreyfuss and Mr. Clifton, I think I am the man most interested in the success of your venture.

So, please give me the good news about the state of affairs. Allow me also to wish you both and your families A MERRY XMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 1970.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

And Mr. Dreyfuss did it again. No answer. So Let's take a look at an article which appeared in the Los Angeles Times and duly inspired by Mr. Dreyfuss himself. It contains even a picture of him an old bald man who shows the skull and crossbones to a negro boy and is distressed that the boy does not recognise this symbol as to mean POISON, but instead insists that it is the Bucaneer's Jolly Roger's flag of pirate days. And all because Mr. Dreyfuss does not put a word underneath, and thinks it is not necessary. The skull and crossbones appears on millions of



of medicine and chemical bottles but there is always the word POISON underneath. The boy in the picture is old enough to be able to read. He would not say that it is the Buccaneer's pirate flag had Mr. Dreyfuss put the word POISON underneath. The boy would learn quickly that the skull and crossbones means DEATH by POISON.

Needless to say that Mr. Dreyfuss did not send me this article which is from beginning to end an eulogy to Mr. Dreyfuss whom the female reporter calls exuberantly "the high priest of industrial design". And needless to say that he didn't mention me with one word. I got this article from a friend of mine, Mr. Celco of Atlanta Georgia who got the article from Mr. Dreyfuss with his personal visit card attached. To Mr. Celco yes, to Mr. Bliss no. I shall make my remarks to various paragraphs after I have printed here below the article.

Los Angeles TIMES Section E Sunday, March 29, 1970. MAGGIE SAVOY

#### WANTED: GLOBAL LANGUAGE THAT USES SYMBOLS

The world speaks a babel of a thousand tongues.

Is there some way of "instant communication" that would make it easy for you to drive from Leningrad to Vladivostok without missing a meal or a gas station to send a package of crystal goblets to Mme. Soeharto and know they'll arrive unbroken, to fly around the world and be able to find the men's room or the ticket agent in any airport, for a 3 year-old in Gambia and a 3 year-old at Pacific Oaks to read "Don't touch - danger!" clearly and instantly?

Henry Dreyfuss, for decades high priest of industrial design, thinks there is.

For years, in his travels, he's been putting little scraps of paper in his pockets, collecting symbols from all over the world. And now in his elegant office-and-digs in South Pasadena, he and his assistant, Paul Clifton, and his life-long partner Miss Doris Marks (Mrs. Dreyfuss when she steps through the gardens into their redwood and rock home a few yards away) are busily charting, classifying and editing and collecting the world's symbols for a dictionary. He hopes it will make "instant communication" possible in the jungles of Borneo, the villages of Ghana, the airport of Tokyo, the barrios of Brazil.

It's fascinating absorption for the august design pioneer. And one with practical applications.

"A Japanese plane may fly through nine language barriers," says the tall, greying designer. "If they try to say 'fasten your seat belt' or 'no smoking' in all those languages, the plane would be one big classified ad section."

Traffic symbols - more or less standard in Europe, thanks to inter-country agreement which makes it possible for a stranger to drive from Caen to Positano with nothing more than a smile and a map - have a stake: Safety.

"Suppose you had to read all the information?" he asks. "You'd bump into the car ahead of you or the car behind would bump into you."

But a triangle - which means "caution" in France, means "stop" in England, "yield" and "helicopter landing" in America, and "birth control" in India.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if a three year old anywhere in the world would immediately "think caution" every time he saw a triangle? In any kind of panic, symbols can be read faster than words." Some signs and symbols are already universal.

"Intelligent people seeking to exchange information have invented ways of making themselves instantly understood," says the man who already has collected, classified and filed 8,000 such symbols according to (1) graphic form, (2) discipline, (3) alphabet. "A Hindu musician can play Beethoven. A Russian scientist can read an American equation. A yachtsman in the Aegean Sea can read an ocean liner's messages. For that matter a Nigerian camera buff can read Polaroid's range symbols" (symbols Dreyfuss himself invented to make it easy to convert in either meters or feet.)

But Dreyfuss would like to see a universal graphic vocabulary that would speak to a caveman and king alike, and could show a tractor driver in Afghanistan how to operate a Deere tractor manufactured in America.

Some are easy. After all, pictographs are the basis of many languages (Chinese, for example). A silhouette of a cow would indicate a cattle crossing in any country in the world.

#### SKIRTS AND TROUSERS

But how would<sup>a</sup> pictograph of a man (in trousers) and a woman (in a skirt) go over in India, where men often wear skirts and women wear trousers? Or even maybe soon in America where women wear pantsuits?

Dreyfuss is working on this: At the moment he tends toward the classic biological glyphs - a circle with an arrow going up (easy to remember if you think of Mars, a shield with spear), and a circle with a cross going down (Venus - a woman with a hand mirror). Though Margaret Mead disagrees.

She says "the only way to positively identify a woman all over the world is a figure with breasts", Dreyfuss said.

Pictographs can work even in a country where they have to be learnt. He set up a tortoise (slow) and hare (fast) and tried it out. Even the middle African



can recognise them. They're arbitrary in a land which has neither tortoise nor hare. But they work.

Which brings us and him to glyphs, abstract symbols that convey a common message. The easiest to note is an arrow: That tells you where to go. The S-curve is another (there's a curve in the road ahead). Up, down wavy lines (indicating water), left, right, are obvious.

Others must just be arbitrary.

Symbols instantly recognised in our culture are simply non-existent in others. Take the Red Cross, a symbol of mercy in America, adopted as the reverse of the Swiss flag because the Red Cross was formed there. The Moslems who refuse to use a cross use a crescent. In Iran where they refuse to use a crescent, the sign is a lion with sunburst. In Israel the cross is six pointed. They won't even use a cross for a plus sign: It's a vertical line stopped by a horizontal.

Nevertheless, Red Cross has coded relief packages that can be read in any country. Colour bands (red for food, blue for clothing, yellow for medicine, green for blankets) and figures (man, woman and baby) indicate what's inside a package.

All signs and symbols - to be accepted - must be continuously tested. Dreyfuss and others thought a package with two arrows pointing up, a goblet and an umbrella denoting rain would mean - everywhere - "This Side Up," "Fragile," and "Keep Dry". The original goblet, (fragile) had a crack in it. A Turkish longshoreman threw out a whole crate thinking it meant the "goblets were broken".

TAKE CRACK OFF

Dreyfuss advised his client to take the crack off the goblet, on the theory that "what can be misunderstood will be misunderstood".

Dreyfuss welcomes any and all signs, symbols, ideas, and examples. Just mail them to Henry Dreyfuss, 500 Columbia Street, South Pasadena, 91030. Doris, who reads German, French, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, can translate some. Volunteers from Caltech, Berlitz, Westridge and UCLA help. And cigarboxes full are happily received, charted, mapped and readied for his dictionary. Which he adds, like all dictionaries will have "second meanings".

He's hoping that the dictionary, once compiled, will have a sort of "authority" which will lure all to "come aboard an international language". So a package mailed from New York will be instantly understood in Yugoslavia or Japan. And so a tractor made in America for shipment to Berlin, can be diverted to Tokyo. And so a symbol for peace (a circle, worldwide for total, international semaphore for "n" and "d") will be read everywhere as total nuclear disarmament. So far he's bushed on one. "I've yet to see a good symbol for 'push' or 'pull'".

Frustrated on another point "America has not adopted the international traffic signs. I know - I just took a driver's license test and had to learn all over again what the shapes meant."

Why? "Who knows - they can't even get 50 states to agree."

Puzzled on another. "Why don't children recognise the skull and crossbones poison sign?" (He continuously tests children - on the theory that pre-language signs are even more important to children, whose very life is at stake). Nine out of 10 laugh and say "Pirates!" And absolutely fascinated by the hobo signs.

NONE MATCH

Not a single one matches any sign we recognise as international, either in history or usage. They have totally invented a language of their own. They are trying to talk to each other and no one else."

And so a closed circle which should mean "encompass", means the opposite, "This community is indifferent". And the "X" which means to us "no, cross off" means to the hobo "okay".

And what about the two fingers up, which once meant "victory" and now means "peace".

Henry Dreyfuss doesn't know. But it's in his dictionary. Along with the middle finger up.

"The world communicates," he says.

The End.

The text underneath the picture of Dreyfuss with the skull and crossbones showing it to the negro boy contains the following text

INSTANT COMMUNICATION - Industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss is collecting the world's symbols to create instant communications. Will it work? If this young student with Dreyfuss is an example, a worldwide graphic language is near.

My comment: A graphic language is near, isn't it Mr. Dreyfuss? Or is it already here Mr. Dreyfuss? Why didn't you mention me that I have worked it out already?

That female reporter calls Mr. Dreyfuss not only the "High priest of Industrial Design," she calls him also "The August design pioneer." And now she mentions Mighty Margaret Mead another high priest of symbols who has not evolved a single one.

She writes "Dreyfuss welcomes any and all signs, symbols, ideas and examples." BUT NOT MINE, damn it! And Mr. Dreyfuss thinks that his dictionary will lure all



to "come aboard on international language".

And then she quotes Dreyfuss saying, "I've yet to see a good symbol for 'push' and 'pull'." Why, in the devil's name won't you look into my book, you will find there a good symbol for 'push' and 'pull'.

Enough of this article about the high priest of symbols.

Now another article which Dreyfuss attached to his feasibility study... It is a reprint from the Magazine of Standards of the American Standard Association, the head of which a Mr. Peyton thinks it worthwhile not to answer my letter (see previous pages). This article tells us what Mr. Dreyfuss did with the \$6,000 he got from that foundation for his "feasibility study". Mr. Boehm and his article repeats it. He took the money and hopped to Moscow to seek for symbols in the Soviet Union. And did he find them? All he found there was a German cardboard box and the symbols on that makes him exclaim in exuberance, "suddenly I could understand Russian". The article is preceeded by an introduction by that Mr. Peyton. Here is the full text.

As a service to its members as well as to technical committees of all voluntary standardization organisations the U.S.A. Standards Institute is pleased to present this special reprint of a most interesting and provocative article on "Symbols: Communicating Without an Accent" prepared by <sup>one of</sup> America's foremost industrial designers, Mr. Henry Dreyfuss.

The concept of a truly international symbols dictionary and the need for expanded standardisation as well as harmonisation of symbols for international useage has been endorsed by the Institute's Board of Directors.

Development, Promulgation, and adoption of symbols as a means of effective international communication present one of the most far-reaching challenges to voluntary organisations and technical committees having a basic need for symbols to further their standardisation efforts.

Your views and suggestions on how best to accomplish the objectives outlined in Mr. Dreyfuss' article and examples of symbols now in use will be welcomed and appreciated. The Institute fully realises that there are many practical problems involved but feels that these should be treated as opportunities to provide a needed service to society.

You may obtain additional reprints from the USA Standards Institute at nominal cost.

DONALD L. PEYTON  
Managing Director.

S Y M B O L S:  
COMMUNICATING WITHOUT AN ACCENT  
by Henry Dreyfuss

Henry Dreyfuss and Associates, Industrial Designers.

Recently I visited the USSR and while there bought more gifts to bring home than my luggage could accomodate; the overflow was packed in a carton. There was no lettering on the carton but there were three symbols stenciled on it.

Suddenly I could understand Russian! In all the years I had spent collecting and devising symbols, nothing had more vividly brought home to me their importance than these three stenciled on a battered old box.

As an industrial designer, I first became professionally interested in symbols more than twenty years ago. My basic concern was safety. A simple form of colour is much more quickly comprehended than even the shortest explanatory word or phrase. In an emergency, when instant recognition of a signal is imperative, symbols offer a vital advantage.

Universality is another significant characteristic of symbols that is of concern to a designer. Symbols provide multi-lingual communication, overcoming all language barriers. A man atop the Empire State Building and a native in the Congo will receive the same message from the same symbol. Obviously, such an "instant language" has great economic benefits in international trade and transportation. An enormous amount of unnecessary time and expense is devoted to changing directions and legends on products manufactured in one country and sold in others. The problem disappears when symbols are accepted.

Finally, symbols are more efficient in many ways than words, especially where important instructions must be inscribed on small surfaces, such as control knobs, or on signs that are observed only fleetingly by motorists:

Our work in designing products has naturally involved us in the utilization of symbols. Although our office-and other industrial design firms - have been experimenting for many years in this direction, it is only relatively recently that major manufacturers have realised the advantages to be derived from symbols in place of words and have approved their use. Today several of our clients have replaced the conventional written instructions on their products with symbols of our design.

For John Deere, for instance, which sells its farm equipment all over the world, gauge readings and operating instructions have been reduced as far as possible to graphic representation:

Symbolic directions and identifications are not, of course, restricted to industry. World fairs and olympic games offer excellent opportunities for the use of multi-



multi-lingual graphics. They also provide interesting examples of how different designers approach the problem of abstracting the same concept into symbolic terms:

There is also a need for standardisation of symbols. If they are indeed to transcend the barriers of language, the same symbols must be used in all countries. Some important strides have already been made in the internationalisation and standardisation - of traffic signs, at least in Europe.

Through the efforts of the Air Transport Association, moreover, standard signs have been adopted for use in the major airports of the world.

When our office was designing a new terminal in Dallas, Texas, we used these symbols. Later, when I landed at the Moscow airport, I found the identical signs and was able to find my way around in a country where I did not understand the language:

Graphic symbols - sometimes called glyphs - generally are of three basic kinds: pictorial - which represent the actual object, such as a horse or engine: conceptual - which suggests the object indirectly, as wavy lines indicating water: and the purely abstract or arbitrary, which have no direct relation to the subject, such as the diagonal bar used in many international signs to indicate prohibition. Obviously the less representational a symbol is, the more difficult it is to "learn". Some education in the meaning of generally used symbols - especially those affecting public health and safety - is essential.

Some organisations - including UNESCO, the International Organisation for Standardisation, and the International Chamber of Commerce - have taken steps to standardise international symbols, but much work in this direction remains to be done. I have recently been encouraged by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, to explore the feasibility of preparing an international dictionary of symbols. We are proposing that an international task force comprised of representatives from all geographic areas be assembled to accumulate and evaluate the symbols of their respective countries. The responsibility of the representatives would be to research their particular locale and gather all relevant material. This information would be assessed and edited by an international board and, upon their authority, the symbols and signs would be carefully indexed into a dictionary.

Several major publishers have already expressed interest in participating in the project. Eventually we would also like to see the organisation of an institute to continue accumulation and dissemination of information on symbols and issue periodic revisions and additions to the dictionary.

The more easily the peoples of the world can communicate among themselves, the better they will understand each other. And with understanding - and only with understanding - can we have peace. The international language made possible by symbols may be a giant stride in this direction.

Though Mr. Dreyfuss shows among many others also four of my symbols,

he doesn't explain how they combine and doesn't mention my name at all.

And here is another article by Mr. Dreyfuss which appeared in the Rosicrucian Digest March, 1970.

#### BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WITH SYMBOLS

by Henry Dreyfuss\*

Speaking in a thousand tongues. \* Mr. Dreyfuss, for many years head of the industrial design firm, Henry Dreyfuss & Associates, has recently extended his interests to other areas of corporate taste and policy - including the development of an International Symbol Dictionary under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A delicate and complex piece of business machinery was recently shipped from West Germany to a purchaser in New York. Carefully packed and crated, it was stamped with the following marking:

It arrived in perfect condition but the recipient, when he unwrapped it, discovered that the keys and levers and switches were all labeled in German, which he was unable to read. Until he found someone to translate for him his new machine was useless.

The incident illustrates, in a small way, how symbols can transcend language barriers. No one needed to explain to the French stevedores or Dutch merchant seamen or American longshoremen that the crate was to be kept upright, that its contents were fragile and should be kept dry. If the machine itself had utilised symbols instead of words, as on the package, the English-speaking purchaser would have been able to operate it at once.

As airplanes become faster and the world grows smaller, the need for nations to communicate easily among themselves becomes increasingly acute... Artificial universal languages have, so far, failed to bridge this global communications gap. But symbols may ultimately provide the answer. I say ultimately because there is still resistance, in our highly verbal society, to abandoning words for pictures even when we know the words will not be understood.

I first became aware of the problem when, as an industrial designer, I tried



to persuade our clients to substitute symbols for written instructions on products designed for export. For several years I got absolutely nowhere. Then Deere & Co., agreed to let us use symbols on some of the new farm machinery we were helping design. Before we had finished we had developed an entire vocabulary of signs and symbols that has since become standard for the industry (Deere did not copyright these symbols in the hope that they would be accepted by other manufacturers to the benefit of all farmers everywhere). Here, for example are a few of the signs developed at the time for Deere, and subsequently adopted as standard by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers:

Our primary concern was safety. A simple quickly-comprehended form of colour is translated to the brain faster and more directly than a written word. The milli-seconds saved in reaction time could save a man's arm - even his life.

There were practical dividends too. Deere ships its products all over the world. The need to translate the various instrument identifications and instructions into the languages of the respective import countries was time-consuming and expensive. Symbols obviated this entirely.

From a design point of view, moreover, pictures proved far more practicable than words. Symbols could be used on buttons and small controls where there would be insufficient room for written instructions. For another client - Polaroid - we substituted symbols for the conventional range scale, which, for foreign markets, would have to be calibrated in meters as well as feet.

Eventually, most American manufacturers will recognise the commercial advantages of utilizing symbols on their products rather than words, but their usefulness will still be limited unless there is standardisation. A few industries via their associations have made valiant attempts to adopt standard symbol systems, but they represent the exceptions to the rule. On the whole, a tremendous potential of this wordless lingua franca is being dissipated for want of codification and control.

Recently, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I explored the feasibility of an international dictionary of symbols. The idea - was and is - to bring together, with the help of a worldwide task force, the historic and contemporary symbols of different countries and, from this great mass of material, select existing symbols that would provide the elements of a universal graphic vocabulary.

It would be a staggering task. But I was encouraged to discover that the idea found almost instant support - not only among professional societies such as the American Institute of Architects, Industrial Designers Society of America, etc. but such agencies as the United States Department of Commerce, United States of America Standards Institute, and UNESCO.

This immediate and enthusiastic response is an indication for the need of such a work. From the cave drawings at Lascaux to the computer tape at IBM, man has relied on symbols to represent, instantly and succinctly, certain concepts that would take him far longer to express in words. Yet never before has there been any full scale attempts to collect and catalogue these symbols.

Symbols fall into several general classifications. There is, first of all, the representational symbols - sometimes called a pictograph - which presents a fairly accurate, if simplified, delineation of the object or action in question. A silhouette of a cow to denote a cattle crossing, or a crossed knife and fork to indicate an eating place, would belong in this category. This type of symbol is naturally, the most easily interpreted by the largest number of people, including illiterates and children, and generally requires only a modicum of prior education on the part of the observer.

There are limitations, however, even to pictographs. Many signs and instructions do not lend themselves to direct, literal picturization. Sometimes the symbol becomes outmoded: the steam locomotive used to denote train crossings in most signs bears no resemblance at all to modern diesel engine. And occasionally national customs invalidate the symbol: the conventional silhouettes of a man and a woman cause only confusion in India where men often wear skirts and women trousers! Indeed the prevailing trend in American fashion for women to wear slacks and pants suits may make this familiar symbol completely obsolete in time.

Far more prevalent is the use of abstract symbols, or glyphs, that reduce the essential elements of the message into graphic terms. The S-curve that denotes a corresponding curve in the road ahead, or the horizontal wavy lines indicating water are typical examples. The most common glyph is probably the arrow to indicate direction. In fact, most of the highway signs in general use today are glyphs. They have the advantage of simplicity and - theoretically - universality. But they have drawbacks too. When they become too removed from reality - too abstracted - they lose their immediacy and fall into the third general category of symbols, the arbitrary.

Arbitrary symbols must be learned as words are. For example the diagonal bar or interdict is widely used to denote prohibition, especially in Europe. Thus a cigarette crossed by such a bar means no smoking: a diagonal on a sign in Great Britain means Do Not Enter. To someone not familiar with this particular



"language", the sign would be meaningless as a foreign word. And sometimes the same symbol means different things in different countries or in different disciplines. The triangle with its apex at its top, for instance, which is generally accepted as a shape denoting caution, especially to European motorists, signifies "all clear to land" to a helicopter pilot. Nevertheless arbitrary symbols are by far the most common in the cultures of the world. Punctuation, for instance - indeed most alphabets - are no more than organised systems of arbitrary symbols.

Colour provides another dimension to the utility of symbols, and the use of red to signify stop or danger, yellow to indicate caution, green to mean go and orange as a distress signal are so widely accepted throughout the world that one can almost speak of a universal language of colours. In time, this colour vocabulary may be extended: purple, for example has been suggested as a colour to be used on traffic signs to indicate a children's school crossing. And there is no reason why the symbolic spectrum could not ultimately be even further extended. But there are problems here too, white for example which the western world considers the colour of chastity, signifies mourning in China, where the brides wear red.

Other difficulties lie in wait for the symbologist, as we have found out ourselves. When we were working with Bell Telephone Laboratories on the forthcoming picturephone, symbols were developed for the control panel - the knob between each two symbols is turned to activate the control.

Bell instituted a series of carefully controlled consumer tests to determine how "readable" these symbols would be to the general public. Every pair of symbols passed the tests with one exception and that, ironically, was a set that had been accepted as standard for the machine tool industry by the International Standardisation Organisation, namely, the symbols indicating ON and OFF.

We substituted instead the ON, OFF symbols in general use in electronics and they proved, in testing, to be quickly and easily comprehended by the average consumer.

Not all problems are solved so simply. One of the gauges we developed for Deere and Company was a simple one indicating fuel supply.

No difficulty was encountered until the symbols, designed as black outlines on a white background were reproduced in reverse.

The confusion was finally resolved by slightly redesigning the symbols, so that the empty tank was not quite empty and the full tank was not quite full.

Thereafter it made no difference how they were reproduced: the meaning was ambiguous.

Another example of how the frame of reference affects the meaning of symbols is the story concerning the attempt made by...authorities in South Africa to enlist the natives' help in clearing the local mine tracks of rocks. A sign was developed that carried the following message

It was a notoriously unsuccessful campaign. Indeed the rocks seemed to multiply rather than disappear until someone realised that the natives were reading the sign from right to left rather than from left to right.

Symbols as we have seen, are as old as civilisation itself. The signs of the zodiac, Egyptian hieroglyphs, the elaborate ecclesiastical symbology of the Middle Ages all bear witness to man's continuing efforts to communicate with his fellow beings on a non-verbal level. And, though, we may not always be aware of it, we still use an astonishing array of symbol languages in our daily life.

Many of these vocabularies - most notably musical, mathematical and scientific notation - long ago transcended all national barriers. Now we face the challenge of codifying similar sets of symbols for other activities and occupations which also bring together people of many different cultures.

High on the priority list is transportation. Under the guidance of the United Nations, most of the member countries...some time ago adopted a set of standard traffic signals which have since undoubtedly saved thousands of lives and averted general chaos on the highways and byways of Europe. Today, with millions of multilingual travelers taking to the air, it has become a matter of pressing importance to provide similar guidance in the major air terminals of the world. "These signs", writes anthropologist Margaret Mead, "will enable mankind to use the great new freedom of worldwide travel. Without them, hungry, frightened, confused people will continue to clog the travel lanes, come to grief on the roads, return disenchanted to their small provincial worlds, and contribute to the isolation and hostility in which many human communities live today."

A good start has been made already in this direction with most U.S. airports - using symbols developed by the Air Transport Association.

And their use was spread well beyond our own national frontiers. Not long ago, when I landed in Russia, I was surprised and pleased to find in the Moscow airport the same signs that we had already installed in a new terminal building in Dallas. Suddenly I was not a stranger.

Another encouraging utilization of symbols has been in recent world's fairs and



and at the Olympic Games where much imagination and taste have been devoted to the development of whole systems of glyphs and pictographs.

With these examples before us as proof that symbols can indeed speak in a thousand tongues, we must now approach the greater task of assembling, systematizing and disseminating this great wealth of graphic material. Then, with the aid of an international advisory group who will evaluate the material, an authoritative dictionary will be produced, and through its use people all over the globe will be able to better understand one another. End of Leaflet

All the time when I went through Sydney or through the countryside and saw a farming truck or an industrial truck carrying the manufacturers name of Deere and Company I went near to it to look for Mr. Dreyfuss' symbols which he claims to have designed and which, according to one article writer has increased the production of Deere and Company to a great extent. Look as I may I could not find a single truck or other equipment which carried Mr. Dreyfuss' symbols. Puzzled by this I wrote the following letter to the Deere Company.

The Management,  
Deere and Company.  
MOLINE. ILL. U.S.A.

Sydney 9 Oct, 70

Dear Sirs,

Kindly give me the information on the question asked below, by writing to me an airletter for which I attach the necessary postage stamp of 13c.

In an article I read that you have put symbols on some of your industrial and farm equipment. Now, here in Australia a lot of your equipment is in use in the cities and on the land, but whenever I go over to have a look at them there are no symbols on them.

Have you abandoned these symbols, and why? I am much interested in symbols and would like to learn from your experiences with symbols in general. Thanking you for your reply, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

and got the answer

Dear Mr. Bliss,

I regret the delay in answering your letter requesting information about our system of symbols. Enclosed, you will find an article which appeared in The Wall Street Journal\* and a reproduction of John Deere symbols used in manuals of instruction for Deere Equipment.

I do hope that these will be of help to you.

Thanking you for thinking about John Deere,

Sincerely,  
W.H. Crosson, Jr.  
Director,  
Overseas Public Relations

This letter puzzled me even more. If the symbols are contained in the manual why are they not put onto the machines themselves? I then went to the Australian distributor for Deere and Company in Sydney. I was delighted to see the yard full of Deere machinery and when I met the engineer in charge I showed him some of the Dreyfuss symbols from his articles and asked him to show me these symbols on the farm machinery in the yard. He told me that they have never received any machinery with these symbols but only have got some sheets with these symbols which were however contained in the manuals. The manuals themselves were printed in the language of the country to which the machinery went. He went even further and after some searching could indeed show me the sheets with these symbols.

It became now clear to me what really happened. The Deere Company ordered Mr. Dreyfuss to design symbols. Then they put these symbols on sheets, but decided not to put them on the machinery themselves and thus Mr. Dreyfuss' symbols were never displayed but put in to the grave of a file. This ends my quest for the Dreyfuss symbols for the Deere Company, and this ends also the boast of Mr. Dreyfuss that the Deere Company is using his symbols. They don't.

Now to another facet of Mr. Dreyfuss' quest for symbols. He distributed to Australian design magazines hundreds of prints, informing all designers what he is up to. He asked all designers to send him information about their own or other symbols.

As said before, he approached hundreds or even thousands of people in Australia with these sheets which were contained in copies of the design magazines. But the most important symbol man in Australia, which is me, Mr. Dreyfuss left conveniently out and I had to rely on a friend of mine Mr. Baldwin of Melbourne who sent me a copy of these sheets. And here below it is. There is no need to draw into these stencils the symbols shown again and again in previous sheets of Dreyfuss. Needless to say that he refrains totally from showing any of my symbols.

\*the article which appeared in the Wall Street Journal is reproduced in SS 310.



OUR SEARCH FOR SYMBOLS

## INTRODUCTION

My interest in symbols as a means of graphic communication goes back more than 20 years. As industrial designers, we designed and applied them to many consumer and industrial products. I was fully convinced of their value in every field of activity and with a small staff, began to collect and catalogue a functional data bank of all the material that was available, on a broad international and interdisciplinary basis. My ultimate goal is to compile the results of this research in a single reference available to everyone involved with the development, application and standardisation of graphic symbols.

## WHAT IS A SYMBOL?

Practically anything - person, place or object - can be given symbolic significance. However, for purposes of this research we are concerned with the kind of graphic devices which replace written captions. Their interpretation is independent of any written or spoken language.

Prescription

Barber

Music

Railroad

## WHY USE SYMBOLS?

Safety - A graphic symbol can convey a message faster and more precisely, thus promoting quicker and more appropriate reaction, it demands greater attention.

Language Barrier - Since a symbol is independent of any one language, it can be understood equally well by all nationalities.

Even children, who have not yet learned to read, can recognise and respond to graphic symbols.

Consistency - Once a person has learned a given symbol under one set of circumstances, he can readily apply it to another.

Efficiency - Within a limited space - as on a control knob or keyboard button - the legibility of a single graphic form is much greater than a written legend.

## WHAT KIND OF SYMBOLS?

We are interested in every kind of symbol. The following are a few examples.

Tourist information

Machinery controls

Olympic games

Electronic diagrams

Traffic signs

We are not concerned with trademarks or logotypes which identify or have limited application to a specific company or organisation. However, some marks, such as the "red cross", have gone beyond merely identifying an organisation and are considered as generic symbols.

Humanitarian assistance organisations (National Red Cross, Israel's Red Star of David, Moslem's Red Crescent and Iran's Red Lion and Sun.)

## WHERE TO LOOK

Symbols can be found practically anywhere in daily life. They are often encountered in local business, on public transportation, along the streets and highways, at parks and recreation facilities, on home appliances and industrial machinery, in hospitals, hotels, schools and other buildings, at special sporting and cultural events and in numerous other places.

General literary sources include libraries, periodicals, academic journals, governmental bulletins, trade publications and newspapers.

Specific discipline information can be obtained from national standardisation organisations, professional and trade associations, schools, universities and research institutions, consumer and governmental agencies, unions, and philanthropic organisations.

PUSH AND PULL - Sometimes the simplest phrases are the hardest to symbolise!

We have yet to find good symbols for PUSH and PULL. If you come across any please include them with your other research material.

## NOTE:

To expedite our research findings, it will be appreciated if this information can be sent in as quickly as possible, and preferably in English.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Geographic Area: \_\_\_\_\_

## SYMBOL QUESTIONNAIRE

We are asking that you collect symbols for us particularly in the disciplines circled on the following pages. However, symbol material in other disciplines will also be appreciated. Often published industrial or professional standards, specifications, recommended practices, graphic design manuals, or other basic documents will contain all the necessary information and no additional comments will be necessary. If the information in such publication is not complete, however, please add as much pertinent information as you can.

Printed examples of symbols can either be pasted on sheets of paper (preferably no larger than this one) on which the information is given, or



numbered and labeled to correspond with the number and label you use to identify the corresponding information. Please try to leave a border of approximately 1 inch (2.5 centimeters) around each symbols, even if this border area is not blank, and do not place the identifying number too close to the symbol.

A specimen of the kind of response we are seeking appears on page 3, but if you cannot follow this form, please give us whatever information you can.

To be of maximum value, your researchers should supply us with all the symbols you can gather in your assigned field, and with as much of the information described below as possible!

- (A) ILLUSTRATION: of symbols with meanings in English: may be original document, photographic copy or facsimile. If illustrations are available only in black and white, but colour is significant to their meaning please add appropriate notations. (If illustrations are in colour, tell us whether colour is essential to their use.)
- (B) APPLICATION: How and where symbols are used: photographs of typical usages, or actual samples of knobs, dials, or the like would be helpful.
- (C) SOURCE: Official authority (name and address). Is permission to reproduce required? Also, if available, date of adoption and name of symbol designer.
- (D) OTHER INFORMATION DESIRABLE: Have symbols been officially standardised? How widely used? By which Disciplines? How were they derived? Tested? Is meaning affected by shape, texture or movement?

#### SYMBOL SPECIMEN

This specimen is intended to serve only as an example. The symbol illustration can be any convenient size and need not be exactly the size shown here. Information related to each symbol should be either typed or written legibly.

in this space appears  
the drawing of a cigarette - crossed out by  
2 crossed lines thus X

Symbol 26  
Meaning: "NO SMOKING"  
Application: On Signs in French  
Railroad Station.  
Color: red "X" is essential.  
Source: Int.I. Union of Railways  
14, rue Jean Rey  
75 Paris XVI, France.  
Comment: more symbols shown in  
booklet UIC 413 or available  
from source above.

#### STANDARD DISCIPLINE NAMES for SYMBOL CLASSIFICATION

THIS LIST SHOULD IN NO WAY BE CONSIDERED ALL-INCLUSIVE OR LIMITING. THE SUB-HEADINGS SERVE ONLY TO NOTE SOME OF THE AREAS WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE BE OVERLOOKED.

##### AGRICULTURE

including Agronomy, Crops, Dairy & Poultry, Equipment and Machinery, Fishery, Forestry, Livestock, Safety.

##### ANTHROPOLOGY

including Archeology, Cultural and Physical.

##### ARCHITECTURE

including Building Construction (materials, equipment), Commerce and Public, Drafting, Landscape, Planning Residential.

##### ARTS

including Art Galleries and Museums, Drawing, History, Painting, Print Making, Sculpture.

##### ASTRONOMY

including Astronomical Geography, Celestial Navigation, Chronology, Descriptive Astronomy and Astrophysics, Observatories, Theoretical.

##### BIOLOGY

including Embryology, Marine Biology, Microbiology (Microscopes), Organic Evolution.

##### BOTANY

including Plant Pathology.

##### BUSINESS

including Advertising Machines for Printing, Publishing and Bookbinding, Management, Marketing, Office Equipment, Procedures and Techniques.

##### CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY

including Ceramics and Masonry, Cleaning and Dyeing, Food Technology, Fuels,



## CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY continued

Metallurgy, Paints, Varnishes, Adhesives and Plastics, Perfumery and Cosmetology.

## CHEMISTRY

including Analytic, Crystallography and Mineralogy, Inorganic, Laboratory Apparatus and Equipment, Organic.

## COMMUNICATIONS

including Motion Pictures, Photographic, Radio, Telephone, Television.

## CUSTOMS AND FOLKLORE

including Costumes, Uniforms and Symbolic Clothing, Gypsies, Hobos, Witches, Public and Social Customs.

## EARTH SCIENCES

including Cartography, Geography, Geology, Meteorology and Climatology, Paleontology, Surveying.

## ECONOMICS

including Banks and Banking, Economic Planning, Labor organisations, Money, Prices and Production.

## EDUCATION

including Building and Equipment (audio-visual, etc.) Curriculum, Methods of Instruction and study, Professional and Technical.

## ENGINEERING

including Automotive, Civil, Electrical/Electronics, Mechanical, Sanitary and Municipal, Structural, Tools, Weights and Measures.

## HISTORY

including Genealogy, Heraldry and Flags, Political and Historical Geography.

## HOME ECONOMICS

including Clothing and Personal Appearance, Consumer Products and Services, Food, Household Appliances, Household Furniture.

## LANGUAGES

including Etymology, Lexicography, Nonverbal Communication (Signs and Signals).

## LAW

including Criminal and Martial, Commercial (Business), Diplomacy and Diplomatic Service, International Maritime, Medical Jurisprudence, United Nations.

## LITERATURE

including Literary Composition, Proofreading, Speech and Public Speaking, Writing in special fields.

## MANUFACTURING

including Basic Materials, Finished Product, Processes and Procedures, Tools and Hardware.

## MATHEMATICS

including Computation Instruments and Machines (Computers).

## MEDICAL SCIENCES

including Diseases, Equipment, Hospitals and Public Health, Human Anatomy, and Physiology, Hygiene and Heredity, Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Professions, Safety, Surgery, Veterinary.

## MUSIC

including Instrumental, Theory, Techniques and Types, Vocal.

## PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

including Ethics Hypnotism, Logic, Memory and Learning, Sensation and Perception.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

including Equipment and Supplies, Specific Fields, Techniques.

## PHYSICS

including Electricity, Magnetism, Heat, Light, Sound, Mechanics, Nuclear, Optics.

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

including Armed Services, all levels, Governmental Agencies, all levels.

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

including Domestic and World Trade, Metrology and Standardisation, Postal Communication and Regulations.

## RECREATION

including Athletics and Sports, Entertainment and Games, Fairs and Exhibitions, Theatre, Tourism and Related Activities.

## RELIGION

including Comparative, History and Theory, Mythology.

## SAFETY

(all areas of activity) Warning Signs and Labels, Visual and Audible.

## STATISTICS

including Demography, Statistical Methods.

## TRANSPORTATION

including Air, Automotive, Marine, Rail, (Traffic, Terminal and Vehicular - in all areas).

## ZOOLOGY

including Animal Ecology and Zoogeography.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

All enquiries regarding this Questionnaire as well as all collected material should be sent to the following address. Additional copies of this Questionnaire are also available from the same address.

Henry Dreyfuss  
P.O. Box 70  
South Pasadena, California, 91030  
U.S.A.

And now my good friend Dr. Everingham, to whom I sent the last Dreyfuss article reprinted from the Rosicrucian Digest March, 1970, sent off a letter with the letterhead of the Australian Parliament to the Editor of the Rosicrucian Digest. The Editor

Rosicrucian Digest

10th August, 1970

Dear Sir,

I am dismayed to see that your March, 1970 article by Henry Dreyfuss on international symbols made no mention of the authoritatively acclaimed, readily available and increasingly promoted universal writing of Charles Bliss. Its transcendent importance in this field I believe warrants your publishing an even longer article by Bliss.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,  
Douglas N. Everingham  
M.B., B.S., M.H.R.

Everingham wrote also a letter to Mr. Dreyfuss and went to the trouble to draw up a number of symbols comparing the symbols which Dreyfuss has shown with my own symbols which are simpler and better.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

11th August, 1970.

I am surprised that, having embarked on an International Symbol Dictionary and written such a sound and punchy article as you have in March Rosicrucian Digest you are apparently unaware of Bliss Symbols (Semantography), now listed in leading libraries throughout the English-speaking world.

There is a Bliss symbol used on a street sign in N.S.W. since 1950:



('HOLE' SYMBOL)

This was erected at my request by a hospital manager who constructed the dip to slow down speedsters in his hospital grounds.

There are symbols in use all over Australia since one of our Transport Ministers saw it in Ceylon:



The same Transport Ministry, has spurned Bliss Symbols before the Minister's trip. Here is Bliss' 'glyph' for the same idea



('LEGS' SYMBOL)

(He prefers triangle signs for danger, discs for other information.)

The latter symbol could, of course, replace the common warning painted on our roads:

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AHEAD

Bliss symbols are less "dated" than some you mention:



This reminds people of Stephenson's "Rocket" or the modern diesel with its roof exhaust, according to taste.



man



woman

These are less likely to confuse in India because they are derived from the Chinese symbols based on outlines of reproductive organs. Also, artists are aware that women are wider in the hips than shoulders, men the reverse.

You are not quite accurate in dismissing letters and punctuation as "arbitrary". (See section on alphabet and tongue gestures in "Human Speech" by R. Paget: and note the derivation of ? from Q = Latin "questio", ! from "interjectio", and from "et", \$ from U.S. (the two \$ letters superimposed) I think you will agree that period, (hence comma, hence apostrophe) brackets (hence continental European quote marks) and hyphen are not totally arbitrary.

Finally, I do not think a dictionary is enough to teach symbols. You must put the local language under the sign as every country does for traffic symbols. The foreigner can ask the meaning of the odd sign which his own country does not use and will then be helped to read the local language as well as the "Glyph".

Yours sincerely,  
Douglas N. Everingham, M.B., B.S., M.H.R.



I wrote the following determined letter to Mr. Dreyfuss:  
 Dear Mr. Dreyfuss, Sydney 15 September, 1970

I received from Dr. Everingham the attached two letters (of which I have cut off the blank paper to comply with the airmail weight). He asked me to post them on to you, as he doesn't know your address, and he assumed that I know your address. But I don't know the address of the Rosicrucian Digest, so will you post the attached letter of Dr. Everingham on to them. Many thanks.

Frankly I am sorry that Dr. Everingham has used so much of his valuable time as a member of parliament in telling you about my work. I have come to the conclusion that you don't want to hear of my work. You have ignored a number of my letters, and you have even ignored to mention my work in the article you have written on your inspiration and information about your attempt at a symbol dictionary.

And this brings me to this point. I enclose a U.S. airletter and beg you to write just one word in it, and nothing more. The word is YES or NO. And it is the answer to my following question:

DO YOU INTEND TO INCLUDE MY SYMBOLS IN ALL YOUR SUBDIVISIONS OF YOUR INTENDED SYMBOL DICTIONARY? YES or NO?

I hope that you will answer this question and that you will also answer Dr. Everingham. Thanking you I am,

Yours sincerely,  
 C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

Neither Mr. Dreyfuss nor Mr. Clifton answered my letter but his secretary Mrs. Kathryn Bray wrote to me and she let the cat out of the bag by telling me the secret which Mr. Dreyfuss has kept away from me namely that he just can't make a dictionary. Here is the letter of Mrs. Bray.

Dear Mr. Bliss, September 21, 1970

Thank you very much for your letter of September 15. Mr. Dreyfuss is currently in New York on a business trip and it will be brought to his attention when he returns the middle of next month.

Thank you too, for sending on Dr. Everingham's letter. We appreciate his interest and comments. Incidentally you might tell him the article he saw in the Rosicrucian Digest was a reprint of one which appeared in another publication in March of 1969.

We thought you might like to know that the book Mr. Dreyfuss is compiling will not be referred to as a "dictionary". Mr. Dreyfuss discarded the term as he felt it was pretentious, implying international acceptance based on a vast amount of recognition, sociological research, and other similar investigations which could not possibly be accomplished within the time allotted. Instead, the publication will be a sourcebook. We are happy to say it will be published by McGraw-Hill, and hopefully will be on the market by mid-1972.

Sincerely  
 Kathryn Bray  
 Secretary to Mr. Dreyfuss

I answered

Dear Mrs. Bray, Sydney 27 Sept, 1970

Many thanks for your prompt and detailed letter replying to my letter of Sept, 15 sent to Mr. Dreyfuss. He must be a busy man as he hasn't answered any of my letters. Before you wrote me your first letter of November 21, 1969, just about one year ago it was Mr. Paul Clifton who answered my letters. Is he not more with you and if so could you give me his new address? He showed great interest in my work.

Thanks for keeping Dr. Everingham's letter for Mr. Dreyfuss. I hope Mr. Dreyfuss will answer him personally as he is an important member of the Australian Parliament. As for me see below.

Please convey Dr. Everingham's letter to the Rosicrucian Digest, and as you informed me that this article is a reprint from another publication of March, 69 I would be much obliged if you would send me a copy (xerox or the like) of that article. It is not curiosity which prompts me to ask you for this help. I edit the Semantography Series which has now over 300 Issues, and which is contracted by a number of universities. There I enter any work and any endeavour on symbols so that researchers have a complete picture what is going on in the symbol field. You will find the catalog of over 200 issues in my large book (green hardcover) which Mr. Dreyfuss bought some time ago. Look up the pages 796 to 808 where over 200 issues are listed. And when you have this my book in hand you will also realise something, namely:

Quite frankly, I am unhappy that Mr. Dreyfuss chooses to ignore my letters. I am a very important man in the field which Mr. Dreyfuss has chosen during the last years. In fact (being fed up with eating humble pie for 28 years since I began to write that long book in your hands) I am the most important man in the world in the field of symbols, and no kidding. I am the only man who has been able - what Professor Oliver Reiser told the American Association for the Advancement



of Science:

"Bliss heroic work...he realised the ambition of the great mathematician Leibnitz." (see page 2 of my large book). Leibnitz dreamed 300 years ago of a pictorial symbol writing which would also contain a simple symbolic logic (see p. 10 the story of semantography) and also numerous references in the book to Leibnitz' ideas (look: up the page numbers in the index). You will also see from the 40 odd pages beginning on p. 827 that I have even compiled a symbol dictionary English - Symbols and (as I informed Mr. Dreyfuss years ago) I have the draft for the second part Symbols - English. Convince yourself when looking through the book that I have covered every field of human endeavour, not only commerce, industry and science, but also philosophy, religion and even poetry. And speaking of poetry, look up page 738 "Poetry in Semantography" and learn from the pages why the pictorial Chinese symbols make for the finest poetry in the world. Then look up p. 741 and see the beauty of my symbols expressing a poem by William Wordsworth. Look up p. 734 and see the Lord's Prayer in my symbols. Look up p. 732 and see the verses of the Bible in my symbols. And speaking of poetry again look up p. 813 where I tell of my wonderful late wife Claire and show one of the poems I wrote to her. And here in this letter to you I enclose another poem to her with a few words for you personally. I do so thanking you for your kind and detailed letter to me. And now, please inform me which division of McGraw-Hill will publish Mr. Dreyfuss book. I am intensely interested in any book on symbols. Perhaps you can tell me also whether or not this new book is subsidized by a Foundation and which one? And when you see Mr. Dreyfuss ask him to say YES or NO to my question on the post-paid air-letter, ask him now to modify his answer not to a symbol dictionary (which project he has abandoned perhaps) but to the new book to be published. And thanks a thousand times. All this is so intensely interesting for me that I thirst for every good news. I am, sincerely yours,

C.K. Bliss.

At last Mr. Dreyfuss wrote to Dr. Everingham as follows:

Dear Dr. Everingham,

October 2, 1970

Mr. C.K. Bliss was kind enough to forward to me your letter of August 11, which arrived here on September 23. Forgive the delay in acknowledging it but I have just returned to my office after a long business trip in the East.

Please be assured that we do indeed know of Mr. Bliss and his very important work. There is no question but that he is one of the real pioneers in this whole field and has had a wide influence in the signs and standards which have been adopted throughout the world.

We appreciate your concern and are grateful to you for your co-operation. I must close by saying that no one working in the field of symbols could possibly be unaware of Mr. Bliss' contribution.

Sincerely,

Henry Dreyfuss

And to me

Dear Mr. Bliss,

October 2, 1970

Your letter of September 15, Mrs. Bray's answer of September 21, and your letter of September 27 were on top of a big pile of material for my attention when I returned to the office this morning.

Before anything else I must tell you that I am deeply distressed that you feel that your correspondence has been ignored and that you in any way feel slighted. You must know that I recognise you as a great pioneer in the whole field of symbols and have the utmost respect for the vast amount of intensive work that you have done.

Perhaps I should clarify our office set-up which will explain why your letters have been answered by people other than myself. (Incidentally, we have searched our files and find no letter unanswered.)

Paul Clifton has been associated with me for the past nine years and has been actively involved in all symbol work we have done. He is currently assuming responsibility for heading the project which will culminate in our Sourcebook of symbols.

Mrs. Bray is my secretary and also serves as Office Manager, and consequently is involved in all of my personal correspondence. As I am out of town a great, great deal, we have always had a policy that any letters addressed to me which arrive in my absence, should be turned over to someone in the office for immediate answer. We have always felt that this policy is more courteous and efficient than holding all correspondence for my return. This explains why you have in the past received from Mr. Clifton and Mrs. Bray answers to letters which were addressed to me. Please do not feel slighted by this, as we intended it to be a courtesy rather than an insult.

Now to answer your question about additional development and content of our Sourcebook. The book is tentatively titled "Henry Dreyfuss' Sourcebook of Symbols", and is scheduled for publication by the McGraw-Hill Book in early 1972. We have a staff of six people working full time on our project and it



is a horrendous one. The work is not subsidized by a Foundation or anyone else: I decided to take it on as my own "pet project" and finance it myself so as not to have to follow anyone else's directive.

As we have approximately 20,000 symbols in our files currently, and as the book will include only about 6,000 - 7,000 symbols, we have limited ourselves to those graphic symbols which are used as existing standards in the various disciplines which we cover. Unfortunately, we have found that we cannot identify specific symbols, giving credit to an individual designer or group, as this would create a very grave problem of identifying unknown designers, determining the original designer of a symbol used in several countries, etc.

I am sure you will understand this problem, especially as so many groups have developed their symbols from your original studies and have incorporated them or variations of them, in their standards. (Along this line I should point out that we will not be credited for any of the symbols that we have designed, even though many of these have been accepted by the American standards group and by ISO.)

ISO is the only group (because it is <sup>the</sup> only international standards group) whose symbols we are identifying specifically in the book. To answer your question specifically, therefore, we plan to include in our book, in whatever discipline they may appear, those of your symbols which have been accepted as standards, and hope that this will meet with your approval.

In lieu of giving specific credit to designers for specific symbols, we are planning to give editorial credit in the front of the book to some of those leading designers and groups whose contributions and co-operation make this book possible. In this way we will express out appreciation and recognition to you.

Also, although our bibliography will be primarily developed according to specific disciplines, we do plan to have a symbol section (General) in the bibliography and would naturally list your book in this section, as it is so very comprehensive.

One other point, we are currently working on the idea of perhaps having a few "supplements" included in the book, to give recognition to noted philosophies on symbols which may not appear specifically in the text of the book. If we do this, we would certainly want to direct one such supplement towards your work as it is clearly one of the most informative and pioneering studies in this field.

I hope this letter clarifies some of the questions in your mind, and apologise for its length. (I usually confine myself to one page!).

With renewed expression of appreciation for your interest and co-operation.

Kind regards,  
Henry Dreyfuss

P.S. (1) Mrs. Bray is currently on vacation but I know she will be most grateful for the poem which you so kindly sent to her -- it was very thoughtful of you to send it to her.

(2) I shall answer Dr. Everingham's letter within the next day or so.

(3) Enclosed herewith is a Xerox copy of The Conference Board Record reprint from which the Rosicrucian Digest article was taken.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

December 1, 1970

Our Sourcebook of symbols is progressing at a great rate, and we are now in the process of organising our final layout.

Recognizing the great and valuable contribution you have made to the language of symbology, we would like to include in our book a statement about the importance of the work you have done, accompanied by re-production of your basic symbols shown in "Semantography". We feel this would be of great interest to anyone working with symbols and would also be a way of expressing our recognition of your vital position in this whole field.

This letter, therefore, is to ask for your official permission to include this material in our book, as well as in future editions and related material.

The only other author to whom we are planning to give similar recognition is Otto Neurath in connection with his Isotype system, and actually Marie Neurath suggested this and has given her permission to do so.

In sincerely hope that you will feel that inclusion of your symbols in our book would be of public value, and I am only sorry our very limited budget precludes the possibility of reimbursement.

I will look forward to hearing from you at your early convenience as we are rapidly approaching our deadline dates.

One day I hope we can meet to thank you personally for your interest in what we are doing.

Very sincerely,  
Henry Dreyfuss

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

Sydney 5 December, 1970

Received your kind letter of December 1 and answer immediately in response to your urgent question. Let me first congratulate you on the rapid progress you are



making. Then let me state again what I said in my very first letter to you more than 2 years ago, namely that I shall co-operate with you to the hilt in making your book the most comprehensive book on symbols ever written.

Allow me also to thank you for your detailed letter of October 2. It is constantly on my desk and I want to answer it as detailed as you have done. Furthermore there is a draft of a letter to you, which draft I have worked on for the last 2 years, and which I hope to finish within the next two weeks, as I feel it is very important for our future co-operation.

Now to the inclusion of my work in your book. A friend of mine did give me a four page leaflet from you printed in black and red, and which leaflet was incorporated in some Australian journal for designers. It appeared to me that you conceived this leaflet and your request to everyone to contribute symbols for your intended symbol dictionary. But perhaps it is still valid for your forthcoming book too.

Now in this leaflet you give some standard disciplines for symbol classification beginning with Agriculture, Anthropology, Architecture, etc. etc. My question is: do you intend to adhere to these division also in your book? This is very important for me to know.

Now to my contribution to your book. My long letter on which I have been working for two years deals in the main with the incredible difficulties, and anguish and unhappiness I have encountered in seeing my work and my symbols discussed and displayed by various pseudo-scholars and various non-pseudo-hacks. I cannot tell you of the many sleepless hours I have suffered. Considering the fact that I am now well in my 74th year, and knowing that my time is limited and that such unhappiness can only shorten my life disastrously,

I simply don't want to die on a heart attack seeing my work displayed or discussed by people who have only a smattering knowledge of it.

Therefore I have altered my copyright conditions in such a way that only I have the right to present my symbols in the way they should be presented. Maybe you know how a hack referred to my symbols as "Bliss' squiggles and doodles". WHY? Because my symbols are all combinations of a few symbol elements and anyone who does not know of my symbol elements FIRST, cannot realise the simplicity and logical composition of my symbols.

Therefore, please tell me how many pages you will give to the presentation of my work. If you say you will devote 2 or 4 pages I will tailor my explanation exactly to the space allotted by you. This will save you much work, and me much unhappiness. Tell me also the size of the page in lines and letters and perhaps the typeset (8 or 10 pt,) and whether you would allow also 6 pt underneath the symbols to explain the elements used.

Now, I have no objection, indeed I ask you strenuously to add a page or two written by yourself and devoted to "A Critique of Blissymbols". Dr. Everingham has written a large paper and I have incorporated it in the Semantography Series. I am ready to send you his Critique. I ask a similar critique from anyone who is interested, promising that his critique will be printed and incorporated in my Series which goes into a number of university libraries. This is the only way to prepare a workable symbol writing when the time will come to agree on a system. This will be in say 100 years, or even later. Then all the critiques of my system will be available to the judges. But if you agree to add such a critique you must allow me say half a page to answer <sup>to</sup> your counter-arguments, and even if I say "I agree with Mr. Dreyfuss" I am an engineer who will admit readily that someone else has designed a better mousetrap. And now wait two weeks for my long letter. I am sure it will help you in the writing of the book. I am, again with my promise of co-operation,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

December 15, 1970

This note is just a brief acknowledgement of your very nice letter of December 5, but Mr. Dreyfuss is off on another business trip. Please be assured that your letter will be brought to his attention immediately on his return in a couple of weeks, and you will hear from him soon thereafter.

Incidentally, this note will also give me an opportunity to thank you for the poem you sent me in September, and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn Bray

Sydney 10 Dec 70

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

This is going to be a long letter and I am going to send the parts of it to you in instalments. Please consider this my endeavour as a sincere effort to make you my real friend - by understanding my person, my mind and my motives. In order to understand me I would have to begin at the beginning; so here goes.

I am born a Jew. If you have seen "Fiddler on the Roof" you know where I come from and my upbringing. I have seen this memorable musical 6 times and



each time I cried my heart out. All the persons in the play are very familiar to me.

You are bearing a very proud Jewish name. When I was a little boy of 4 I was already able to read, as all boys at 4 were, first in Hebrew, and then in German. I well remember that every Jewish home I visited (including the home of my parents) showed a picture of 3 men. Alfred Dreyfuss, Emile Zola and George Clemenceau. When I was a little older, another name came upon my conscience: Beilis, the man who was convicted by a Russian court of ritual murder. Now Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has made a memorable film of this trial: The Fixer, after Malamud's story.

When I began going to school, children ran after me and shouted "Hep, Hep!" I didn't know what it means. Neither could anyone else tell me what it means, but it must have been something very bad, because they shouted it at every Jew, young or old. When I began to read the newspapers I read that the members of the Greater German party in the Austrian Parliament shouted "Hep, Hep!" when the only Jewish member (from my hometown) rose to speak. Again nobody could tell me what it means.

In later years, and having become a scholar (or rather a student) of semantics I found at last the answer. "Hep, Hep" was shouted at the Jews in Rome, in Alexandria, in Madrid, and in any other town of the ancient and medieval world for 1900 years. The letters HEP stand for the first letters in the words "Hierosolima est perdita" - Jerusalem has perished. When I visited Rome and stood before the Titus arch of triumph, Jewish postcard sellers told me in Italian not to go through the arch in disrespect of that scoundrel Titus who destroyed the temple in 70 A.C. If you have seen that arch, you may have also seen the reliefs inside showing Jewish captives bearing the holy things of worship through the throngs of Rome. It is from these reliefs that we know of the shape of these things, especially the Menorah, now the symbol of Israel.

And so on, and so on through all the years of my life until I arrived half beaten to death, together with many more and some of them being carried as dead, before the concentration camp of Dachau. The time was exactly 5 a.m. on the 16th June 1938. Allow me to pass over the time and torture of Dachau and Bucherwald in silence.

That I have remained, in spite of all, a fervent believer in the goodness of man, that I have thought it worthwhile to work for a better future of mankind, that should speak in my favour. And I have done it for the last 28 years in spite of the terrible treatment I and my good wife have received at the hands and the words of the orthodox professors of linguistics who viewed my endeavours with scorn, and in spite of the worse treatment I have received at the hands and the words of those whom I call the "Symbol Seekers" who are trying to work in the same field - provided they get the money. That you have now decided to work on your book on symbols with your own money speaks highly of you. I have done the same thing.

To put my life and work in the proper perspective, let me tell you that my good wife was born a Roman Catholic, was raised by nuns, was reared a good Prussian - and defied them all. She married a Jew. Because she too believed in the goodness of man, and that it is worthwhile to work for a better future of humanity. Since I began to work on my semantography in the Japanese ghetto of Shanghai, she was always at my side and helped me with all her might. When we arrived in Sydney we believed that now all our troubles have ended. We both were idealists who believed that any good work on a good and new idea will be appreciated by the men of the Alma Mater, the fostering mother of all new ideas.

But we were mistaken. My work and I myself were treated with scorn by the professors - and this in spite of (or perhaps because of) the fact that my lectures at Sydney University were greeted by the students with enthusiasm. These lectures did not confer upon me any academic status with regard to the university itself. That I have a university degree did help, but not much. I was of course delighted with the students reaction who wrote in their official journal, among other words of praise "You could not forget having heard Bliss. He delighted his audience."

But with the professors it was stern apathy. Nevertheless, Claire and I were undaunted. We began to print with our own hands first our three volumes which we published in 1949, and then a series of leaflets and brochures which I numbered for convenience sake as the Semantography Series No. 1, 2, 3 etc. I received my first boost when librarians in America, Australia and elsewhere took to my idea as something bound to come. The first to give me tremendous courage was the chief librarian of the Library of Congress Dr. Luther Evans. He bought my three volumes and gave a standing order for all the issues of my Semantography Series, and be they only typed on sheets of paper. If you take to hand my large book (the second edition of the typewritten first edition) you will find beginning on page 796 the Catalog of the Semantography Series which I titled

"The Story of the Struggle for Semantography".

This catalog lists only the issues from 1 to 203. But in the meantime the



list has swollen to well over 300. A number of American university libraries, foremost Harvard, have also given a standing order of the Series. Alas, I am continuously broke and cannot employ a full-time typist to bring all the issues into the libraries who clamour for them. One day, when I will be dead (I am now in my 74th year, and I can't last much longer) people will marvel about all the tremendous amount of work I and my late wife have put into all this. Indeed we both lived like hermits on the most frugal food and denied ourselves the meanest physical comforts. Alas, it was all in vain, and when all the thousands of letters, sent out with informative literature to the thousands of educators, produced very little result, the heart of my Claire broke. She lived on for another 8 years helping me with all her frail powers, and died in 1961. If you care to open my large book on p 813 and read the following pages titled - IN MEMORIAM CLAIRE BLISS you will learn about this wonderful woman, and also a little about myself.

Alas, she could not live a few more years to experience a sudden interest in symbols. It would have given her perhaps the courage to hold out a little longer. It was the "tourist explosion". Suddenly people all over the world realised that pictorial symbols are indeed the only way to overcome the language barrier, And I began to hope again.

Alas, my hopes were soon dashed. The greatest hopes were induced by Icograda, the group of designers who were determined to bring about an International Symbol Language. "Here I am," I cried out, sent them my work and was sure that the Icograda men will embrace me with outstretched arms. Haven't I done what they cried out must be done? I did it and I deserve at least their acknowledgement, and perhaps - praise.

Imagine my consternation when I received a letter from Mr. DeMajo telling me that they are "so sorry" but my work just does not meet with their ideas. But at the same time the letter said that they haven't had time to study my work. I cannot tell you of the many sleepless nights I suffered, of the nightmares I had, of the frustration and unhappiness I felt. And please realise that all the time I made it clear that I don't want money for my work.

How can a man who believes in the goodness of humanity get over such a disappointment, and still preserve his belief that these Icograda men really want the creation and fostering of an international symbol language? I knew from the biographies of men who gave men a new idea, a new work, and got rejection of it. Many of them died an untimely death, embittered and in despair.

You know how good it is to go to a man of God and confess your troubles, or to talk it over with a friend, and get some relief of your pent-up emotions. I don't go to men of gods, and my friends would become weary of my wailing. I have found a better outlet. I put the whole case down on paper, the letters and my replies, and then make it an issue of my Semantography Series with the proviso that it should be incorporated long after my death within the issues which universities are collecting. Having written everything down, I feel much better. In some cases I do not mention the name of the man who offended me and abused my feelings.

And then there is another way too. I am a fighter, and always was one. How else could I have been selected to be one of the first whom the Gestapo seized in Vienna. I decided to fight the Icograda men, but again without mentioning any specific men. Some of them disregarded my pleading letters. Some answered with some well-meaning phrases, and some were definitely on my side, but confessed that they are outnumbered.

Then came the announcement of Icograda that a Congress will be held in Jugoslavia in 1966. Had I have been in Europe at that time I would have attended and would have given a withering speech to the gathering of symbol seekers. Such thundering speeches occur on many congresses and they are just the spice of congresses when a man goes up and tells the assembly of some injustice done, etc. etc.

But I could not go to Europe, because I simply have not the money to go to Europe at any time. All the money I earn is going into my work. There remained therefore the written protest. Such protest papers are quite often presented at congresses and they are in fairness read. And so I wrote such a protest paper under the title

#### "I PROTEST AND I ACCUSE

and to make sure that those present who can't understand English will get my message I issued a translation in French and one in German. These 3 issues became the Semantography Series No. 283, 284, 285 and I submit to you the English version and beg to realise that I have not mentioned any name at all.

What happened with my protest paper? Unbelievable as it seems, it was suppressed. I have sent some hundreds of them for distribution to the participants, and I have sent dozens of them to all the top men of Icograda. And they suppressed my paper. It was as it has never existed. As you know, there was a competition involved for 24 symbols. A number of Australians came to me and presented me with their designs which they submitted. Imagine my shock



when I saw the winning design of Icograda. Undoubtedly Professor Maldonado was instrumental in the selection, because these symbols with their heavy circle around all of them is his idea. But the symbols themselves are sometimes utterly meaningless. Open the special issue of PRINT and you will see 5 of them which are utterly senseless.

This was the end for me of the Icograda men. I did not write to them, I did not accuse them of this or that. I simply buried my unhappiness in my protest paper and this went into the libraries of a number of universities.

In the foregoing page 1 I told of my upbringing. In page 2 of my work on this idea, and in page 3 I told of the disappointment I suffered from the Icograda men. And now dear Mr. Dreyfuss, here comes an opportunity for you to prove to you and to me what kind of man you really are, whether or not you can understand a man like me, whether or not you can say "I am sorry, I wronged you!"

This was the situation when I received the preliminary survey of the feasibility of a symbol dictionary for which you got \$6,000. Before that, we did some exchange of letters, and I want to recall that all my letters to you were of the utmost politeness and friendliness and were overflowing with my expressed desire that I want to help you in your endeavours to the utmost.

But when I received your survey on the feasibility of a symbol dictionary it was a terrible shock to me, and I did not sleep the whole night afterwards. I had consecutive nightmares in the following nights, weeks and months. I tried my old remedy: writing all down, but then I had more important things to do, and in the end I buried the file somewhere among the hundreds of files on my shelves. I buried it so deeply and wanted so desperately to forget it, that I am unable to find it now, much as I searched for it. Perhaps this is all to the good. Maybe you would not agree to my way of seeing how badly you have treated me in this survey, and how badly your friends treated my work in the articles they published where they lauded you skyhigh, and deprecated me helldown. I hope to find the file one day, but I hope that in the meantime your attitude towards me and my work has changed so much to the better, that I can leave unsaid things better unsaid, and buried unhappiness remain buried. And so let me therefore close this part of my letter to you. I hope you will understand me, I sincerely hope so.

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NOW HERE IS MY PRELIMINARY ANSWER TO YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 2 IN WHICH YOU OUTLINED YOUR NEW SOURCEBOOK ON SYMBOLS. I say preliminary, because I don't want to get this letter too long, and moreover, I want to hear your answer to my preliminary proposal put forward in my letter of December 5. However, there are some points on which I would say something right now, quoting your words and my answer to them.

You wrote: "We plan to include in our book, in whatever disciplines they may appear those of your symbols which have been accepted as standards, and hope that this will meet with your approval." My answer: I know very well what's going on in the symbol field, because I receive newspaper articles, etc., from a number of friends in the world BUT I DON'T KNOW OF ANY OF MY SYMBOLS WHICH HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AS STANDARDS. Could you show me one of my symbols which has been accepted as standards? I don't think you can. Nobody has approached me in this respect and nobody has told me that he has accepted my symbols as standards. If I should take these your words at face value, they would mean to me that you are not going to show any of my symbols in any discipline, because NONE so far has been accepted as standards. YOUR URGENT REPLY TO THIS CRUCIAL POINT WILL BE MUCH APPRECIATED. You wrote: "So many groups have developed their symbols from your original studies and have incorporated them or variations of them." My answer: I am amazed. I am stumped. Good gracious, how can this be possible without me knowing anything about the "So many groups!" Please, dear Mr. Dreyfuss, as you have six people working full time on this book, it should not be difficult for you and them to send me some xerox copies of the symbols of "so many groups". Give me their names and addresses. If this is true that my symbols have been the basis of the designs of "so many groups" then my symbols assume an importance much more than I have ever given them. The more so do I think that everyone of my basic symbols in every discipline should be marked as such in order to stress the great importance of my designs for the many more designs already made and still to be made. I do not hesitate to say that I want my book to be in the hands of all those who want to design symbols.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

S December 28, 1970

Although two weeks have come and gone since receipt of your letter of December 5, your long letter has not yet been received, but I still am looking forward to it. Meanwhile, deadlines are moving up on us and it seems the fastest way to reach a decision is to tell you exactly how we are planning to give recognition to your work in our book.



We expect to devote one full spread (two pages) to C.K. Bliss, and in that space we would include a brief comment concerning the importance and historical significance of the work you have done: this will include no "critique" as our book does not lend itself to this. We would like to take the statement you wrote for the ICOGRADA issue of "Print" as our point of departure, perhaps including some quotes and illustrations used in "Print". We would probably however, combine and/or enlarge some of them and would like to feel free to add examples such as the facsimile "telegram" which appeared in the pamphlet "Universal Pictorial Bliss Symbols for the International Traveler".

Because of time limitations and almost daily discussions with our publisher, as to type size, margin size and other technical details, I am afraid it would be impractical to accept your kind offer of writing a piece especially for us, although I am flattered you would be willing to do this. We have all the material we need in our files and I hope you will have sufficient faith in our appreciation of your work and ability to present it intelligently -- including of course emphasis on your symbol elements -- to permit us to proceed according to the above plan.

Your book "Semantography" will be listed in our General Bibliography, the category in which we are placing the few books which we feel are of value to anyone concerned with symbols, regardless of where, how or why.

As I mentioned before, the only other special recognition of this sort that we are including in the book will be for the Isotype system and here too, we are working out the details of presentation ourselves, as time does not permit a co-operative effort.

You ask specifically about standard Disciplines for classification in our book. We are indeed adhering in general to the disciplines listed in our questionnaire, but the material we have received has necessitated that we combine some of them and delete others where no symbols are available.

As you can judge by the tone of this letter, we are being very much pressed on our schedule and would appreciate word from you by return mail, if possible, as to whether we may proceed to include your work as stated. I dislike putting you in the "yes" or "no" position, but I am afraid the days are creeping up on us and we have to give our publishers a definite answer. I sincerely hope your answer will be "yes" for I feel our book would be incomplete without your work.

I shall look forward to receiving your word. Please accept my good wishes for everything prosperous in 1971 -- perhaps it will even include a visit to California which we would thoroughly enjoy.

Kind regards,

Henry Dreyfuss

P.S. Do you prefer to be referred to in our book as C.K. Bliss (which is the way we always think of you) or Charles K. Bliss as "Print" called you?

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss

7 Jan 71

Received your most urgent letter, asking for my definite statement on your representation of my work in your book. I have therefore abandoned finishing my long and rambling letter, and am trying to come to the point in this letter. I started it two years ago in utter desolation and I continued it through the following months and years - and did not finish it. I buried somewhere the whole file and cannot find it. What did I write there?

You may be distressed by my <sup>dis</sup>closure, and I am sure you will find good arguments for you. I have tried to find them too for you. After all, you are a very busy man, and cannot think of everything, especially if some words could offend. I on the other hand have a good excuse. I am an artist, a poet, a musician and a creative scientist. Such men are easily thrown off balance. They suffer more than other men. Now here Mr. Dreyfuss is a good opportunity for you to prove to yourself whether you can understand the feelings of another man working in the same field as you do. Even if you would say "I am sorry! Forgive me!" It could not eradicate the unhappiness of the past 2 years.

It all began on the day I received your \$6,000 "Feasibility Study" on a symbol dictionary. After reading what you have said there I could not sleep the whole night. I could not sleep many hours in many nights afterward. In the end I sat down and put all my anger and rage to paper. but as said before I have buried the whole file and cannot find it. Hence, here is the only item which I remember, simply because it took some time to collect the proof. for you, and I found this proof now.

In your feasibility study you said you had researched all there is in the catalog card index of the Library of Congress, and then you mention about 60 books you have unearthed. Some are so far-fetched that I could not understand how they got into your list as for instance (I quote badly from memory): a book on "covered bridges" and another on "Pennsylvania Dutch Antiques" or something similar BUT ALL MY BOOKS AND ONE OF THE LATEST BOOKS WHICH FEATURES PROMINENTLY MY WORK ARE ALL MISSING!!!!!! Even if you and your helper could claim a humanly



understandable oversight - you had all the time my book before you. You had it since August, 1968 (if I remember rightly) and your feasibility study dates from November 1968. AND THE CATALOG CARD NUMBERS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OF MY BOOKS ARE MENTIONED IN MY LAST BOOK. Surely, you have a good explanation, but can you understand my unhappiness and anger? I am sure you can and I am sure you will understand what I am going to write in the following paragraphs.

There are more things in that feasibility study which have convinced me that you simply did not want to stress the fact that I have done all there is to do in the field of a "complete symbol language" which your dictionary would "initiate". I could find only my name and address in the study and nothing more. Or another point: you mention you will appoint someone in Australia and New Zealand to report on symbols - against a fantastic fee. But there is no indication in the study nor in the accompanying letters that you ever thought I might be the man. I know all which is going on in all the universities here and even abroad to some extent. There is simply nobody here who has even a smattering of symbols and their problems. And there are other points in your study which simply made me cringe in rage.

It took me some months until I got from the Library of Congress the relevant catalog cards. I pasted them on a sheet and I present to you this sheet. YOU HAVE NOT MENTIONED ONE OF MY BOOKS, nor the recent Helfman book which features my work.

But my troubles were not over. Worse was to come. The fact is that I have friends all over the world - even in far-away Japan - and when somewhere an article appears - even in far-away Japan - I get it. Sometimes 3 friends from different countries would send me a copy of the same article they have found. And so, one day an article from the LOS ANGELES TIMES May 29, 1970 fluttered on my desk. There a certain Maggie Savoy cried out in the title WANTED: GLOBAL LANGUAGE THAT USES SYMBOLS. There is a picture of you and the whole article is a worship to "Henry Dreyfuss for decades high priest of industrial design" (Maggie's words). What did this article mean to me? More sleepless nights, more anguish, more anger, more rage, more unhappiness. I wanted to write to that Maggie: "Take your 'wanted' sign down, the complete (repeat COMPLETE) global symbol language has been invented already and it uses in the main not more than about 60 basic symbols (and another 40 rarely used) and 30 of these basic symbols are already international as for instance the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 and so on. Go and ask Mr. Dreyfuss why he gave you incomplete information!!!" But such a letter would have been in bad taste and it would not relieve my unhappy feeling.

BUT WORSE IS STILL TO COME. During the last 28 years (since 1942) about 100 articles have appeared about my work in all continents, and ALL articles were full of admiration of my work. NONE had a deprecatory remark to offer - until a number of articles appeared which lauded you into high heaven and deprecated me into hell. Again, I have these articles buried somewhere, and cannot find them, but some of the words have burned holes in my mind which still fester. There is that article in the Wall Street Journal, another in the London Sunday Mirror, another in the IBM magazine THINK, and all lauding you and making mincemeat of my work. I still cannot believe it, but there it is printed black on white paper.

I have made a close study of these articles and the depractory remarks about my work and have found that these hacks did not take 5 minutes to study my symbols and to report honestly that they are combination of a few pictorial basic symbols. Instead they showed my symbols and made the reader realise how silly they are. Even a hack who gets my tourist folder cannot fail to read the explanatory references to the symbol elements underneath the symbols. But apparently these hacks were intent on one thing only: to make mincemeat of my symbols and to say that your symbol dictionary will solve the problem of an international language. You know only too well that it will not. On the contrary, the mass of symbols you are going to show in your new book (you speak of 6000 to 7000 symbols) would convince everyone that the problem is unsolved.

In my rage, the intention in these despicable journalistic ventures made sense. Anyone who tries to get one million dollar must use a public relation man who will beat the drum for you, Otherwise there would not be one million dollars. Kindly excuse when my unhappy feelings overwhelm me, but try to understand my plight.

But such attempts are not new to me. New is only the public denunciation of my work in print. Other "symbol seekers", as I call them, did the same to me - but not in print. There is Modley who got thousands of dollars from the Ford Foundation and produced a small brochure "The Challenge of Symbology" saying that symbols for global communication would be a good thing. And then he tried to get much more money for a 5 year project. AND ALL THE TIME HE KNEW OF MY WORK FOR TEN YEARS. When I begged him to mention my work as - let us say - a small start, he would not mention my work at all - for obvious reasons.



In rage I wringed his neck - metaphorically - (he is from Vienna and I know how to talk to him) until he cringed and apologized. But another man who worked under him, Krampen, did something worse. He produced for foundation money "An Approach to Classification of Graphic Symbols" saying in highbrow scienceslang that some symbols are round, some are square, some oblong and more of such idiotic "science." But his "paper" contains a bibliography in order to show the foundation trustees how he worked breathlessly in studying over 220 books, some as far fetched as "eye physiology" (because we don't see symbols with our back or our toe) or "algebraic curves" etc. BUT KRAMPEN DID NOT MENTION MY WORK IN HIS BIBLIOGRAPHY THOUGH HE KNEW ABOUT IT AND MODLEY KNEW IT TOO. Krampen is continuing this shameful unacademic behaviour of not mentioning my work in all the bibliographies of all his "papers" on symbols, though he had received my latest book and my cringing letter that I want to co-operate to the hilt and want to work together on our common ideal, etc. etc.

But there is a difference between Krampen and Modley. Modley and you, you have at least designed symbols. Modley worked under Neurath in Vienna. But Krampen has not designed and published one single symbol. All he did was writing on them and running around with questionnaires in airport lounges, etc. etc. That special issue in PRINT Nov/Dec 1969 is a fantastic proof to all who can see that the "achievement" of the men who work in the symbol field are miserable to say the least. No wonder that the guest editor Kneebone (whose neck I have wrung even harder than Modley's BECAUSE HE TREATED ME AND MY WORK SHAMEFULLY - no wonder that Kneebone had to come to me and had to ask me to write that article in PRINT.

And how did I react to Kneebone's request? I worked like a madman for two months trying to say within the space of 2 pages of PRINT all there is to say about my work. I produced the drawings on all instructions to the printer and was glad about the outcome. But then I went even further. I forgot about all the shameful things Kneebone did to me in the years past. When I learned that his health is very frail, that he may suffer from tuberculosis, I wrote to him: "Leave the smog and fog of London, come to sunny Australia, come to Sydney on the South Pacific where there is no winter and no summer and no autumn but eternal spring the year round. Here you will get healthy again. I shall make an application for your permanent entry, I shall guarantee accomodation for you in my house, come dear Mr. Kneebone!"

This is how I react against people who have treated me very badly. And this my action will show you dear Mr. Dreyfuss how I shall work for you if only you realise that you have done much harm to me - unconsciously or consciously. If there is a man whose contribution to your book could make it a bestseller - IT IS I. How could I say such a monstrous thing? I shall prove it to you in the following paragraphs.

Do we need a new book on symbols? Good heavens, there are quite a number of such compilations (that's what they are, and that's what your book will be too). These books are of such little significance that I have even forgotten the names of the authors and don't bother to look them up in my personal library. But there is a small book and what happened to it will give you food for thought.

In 1967 Elizabeth S. Helfman published a small book for children and teenagers "Signs and Symbols Around the World". It became a bestseller, and last year Mrs. Helfman informed me that a second edition is being planned. More than that; the editors of "Scholastic Magazines" who publish 11 magazines in 110,000 copies chose one chapter to be the cover story (yes, with a multicoloured cover) of their magazines. And the school textbook publishers of Holt, Rinehart and Winston of New York are incorporating that chapter in a textbook for school children. Which chapter has been so much favoured in Helfman's book? THE CHAPTER ON MY SEMANTOGRAPHY. All else in the book are just compilations and nicely told to children. Only I have made a significant contribution in this field. Only I.

Now let us make a numerical comparison. Helfman's book shows not more than about 800 symbols (some of your Deere symbols too) which symbols she took from other compilations. The only creative and NEW DEVELOPMENT was contained in the chapter on my Semantography. This is the chapter which became the cover story on 110,000 copies of educational magazines. This is the chapter which Holt, Rinehart and Winston are using for the new textbook for American children.

Now, Helfman showed about 800 symbols on 182 pages. You want to show 6000 to 7000 symbols. In comparison it would mean about 13000 pages. But such a comparison is silly. I think that your book would have say 400 pages, each page to carry about 15 symbols, quite a lot. Helfman gave me 9 pages for my Semantography, which is about 5% of 182 pages. This may mean that I should get for a proper presentation 5% of the 400 pages of your book which would mean 20 pages. Instead you offer me two pages. This surely is not enough to represent my work. I need to show all I have written in the PRINT article and then half of it more, which would mean 3 pages of the Print magazine.



I didn't show in the Print article how to write whole sentences, and how to operate the symbolic logic and semantics in these sentences. I need to show how argumentative men can come to an agreement once they write their contentious statement down in my symbols, and how even children can realise soon which words are dangerous and destroy the peace in the home and in the nation. This is exactly what the great Leibnitz dreamed 300 years ago. In short, I must prove that I am the first man who has realised an idea which was considered impossible to realise for 300 long years.

Only such a presentation condensed as much as possible could be a significant contribution which you would make with your book. Only the chapter on my work could provide the sensation which reviewers would take up and libraries would follow up. This looks very much that I want to be the "lion" of the book. But I am in my 74th year and have had enough of public acclaim even as a musician. BUT I WANT THAT MY WORK SHOULD BE PRESENTED AS ONLY I COULD PRESENT IT AND NOBODY ELSE.

Furthermore, the symbols shown in the Print article are much too small. The explanatory words underneath, not those denoting the meaning, but those in less than 4 pt typeface which explain the symbol elements are much too small to be read in comfort. I was forced to this miniaturization by the small columns of Print. But in a book the symbols can be represented in the size shown in my tourist folder. This has also the advantage that I can show not only 3 symbols as in Print, but 4 or 5 symbols in one line. This would make the presentation more comprehensive. Furthermore, only I could write the text and I must supply you with the sharp and exact symbols, not your draughtsmen and designers. Why not? In 28 years of unhappiness I have seen how my symbols were mutilated and misrepresented by lots of newspaper designers. Why so? Because every draughtsman and every designer considers himself an artist. He refuses to copy exactly designs. He has to impress them with his own genius, his own interpretation. But my symbols are not designed for beauty. They are designed to combine on a typewriter. There is only one way to present them and this is my way. All in all, if your book will contain say 400 pages, you should give me say 10 pages NOT FOR MY SAKE, but for the sake of the extraordinary creation which my work represents when compared with the thousands of disconnected and unconnected symbols you are going to show. Only my work presents a coherent symbol language. Only my work shows the way into the future, not the Babel of your compilation.

Now, you spoke in your letter of a "supplement" in which you would show my work, I agree to this. But on the other hand, you tell me that you will show my symbols also in connection with other symbols by other designers. Now this is important, and I want to quote from your letter.

You wrote: "We plan to include in our book, in whatever discipline they may appear those of your symbols which have been accepted as standards." And you said: "So many groups have developed their symbols from your original studies and have incorporated them or variations of them."

This is exciting news for me. I am surprised. I don't know of any designer, nor any group, nor any symbol of mine which has been accepted as standards. Please show me such symbols, name me the designers and their addresses, so that I may get in touch with them. I don't believe that they exist.

Maybe, there are a few such symbols. It can't be many. Let us say 5 or 10. They would form an insignificant part of the book. They will simply disappear in the mass of unrelated symbols. Again, if your criterion for bringing my symbols in the general text (not in the supplement) is to hold true, then you will show little or nothing of my symbols, simply because they have not yet become standards.

And speaking of standards, this brings me to another point of your master plan for your book. Surely you are not going to show the hundreds of signs of ~~the~~ many Indian or Eskimo tribes, or the thousands of Chinese signs. Surely you are not going to show signs which have been abandoned centuries ago. Surely your book will not be a history of signs. You intend to show symbols for the future designers so that they may learn and go on from the knowledge of your book.

This may mean that only those symbols should be shown which have proved their worth, and which are good enough for future development. Symbols which have been developed and discarded, or have not been used at all should <sup>not</sup> be shown, should NOT BE SHOWN IN YOUR BOOK because they are obsolete. If this assumption has any validity you must throw out a lot of the symbols of ISO. Yes, they are all there in the standard sheets printed by ISO, BUT WHO USES THEM? I have made a study of these symbols of ISO and have found that most of them are simply not used at all by the industries for which they have been evolved. In other cases I have found that the National Standards Associations have found it worth to alter the ISO symbols, sometimes to the better, sometimes to the worse, but again THE INDUSTRY DOESN'T USE THEM. If you are printing all the ISO symbols it would only be futile repetition of what is to be found in hundreds of obsolete sheets of ISO.



Now let us take a group of symbols which you will surely show. These are the symbols you have developed for John Deere's farm equipment. I am now going to tell you something which will be very hard to swallow for you, but here again is an opportunity to show to yourself what man you really are.

Australia is a developing country, the land swarms with farm equipment and caterpillars, and bulldozers. And every time I saw one such machine I ran to it to look for your symbols. Incredible as it may seem, I could not find one single Deere farm machinery with your symbols. I went to the firm Waugh and Josephson which sell Deere farm machinery. The sales engineer opened up those heavy filing books with all the sheets they received from Deere and showed me your celebrated Hare and Tortoise symbols for FAST AND SLOW. Eagerly I asked the man to show them to me on his Deere machinery. He said, "They are without symbols. In fact, I have never seen those symbols on Deere farm machines. And we sell them."

But surely you will show them, though Deere has abandoned them perhaps for Australia, perhaps for the whole world. What then is the criterion according to which you will select 6000 to 7000 symbols? Surely you are not selecting those symbols designed for firms as Nabisco. They do not belong into such a book as yours and they do not make any contribution to your professed aim: a complete symbol language. So what symbols are you going to show?

You have made a list of fields for your symbols. It begins with AGRICULTURE (including Agronomy, Crops, Dairy and Poultry etc.) ANTHROPOLOGY (including Archeology, etc.) ARCHITECTURE, ARTS (Art Galleries, Museums, etc.) up to ZOOLOGY. Now you inform me that you may not strictly adhere to such divisions. I know why. Simply because there are in a number of such fields NONE of any symbols used. In fact, if you ask me how many symbols are really in practical use in the whole world (excluding firm symbols like deer for Deere which have no place in such a dictionary) I would say NOT MORE THAN ABOUT 300 symbols altogether.

And this means again that the most important and most sensational part of your book will be the presentation of my complete symbol language. Indeed, if you adhere somehow or in part to your divisions and disciplines from AGRICULTURE to ZOOLOGY, and are trying to show the few symbols which <sup>you</sup> may or may not unearth for these disciplines, you must allow me to show in my supplement my symbol combinations for ALL OF THESE SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES, of course only a few for each academic faculty, but enough to prove to anyone that my basic pictorial symbol elements (all in all about 50) can be used to present every meaning in every science. THIS IS SOMETHING, THIS IS SENSATIONAL. This will make your book outstanding and a bestseller. As for me, if your book will come out in 1972 as it is scheduled (usually scheduled dates are not kept, and 1973 will be a better guess) then in all probability I shall be DEAD AS THE DODO by that time. By that time (as it is usually the case) the living abused crank or crackpot has been turned into a pioneer who must be honoured. Well, you will honour the dead Bliss in your book, and thus it will become an enduring source book and by this I really mean a SOURCE BOOK FOR FUTURE DESIGNERS AND SEEKERS OF AN INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL LANGUAGE. At present, your source book will only be a source of confusion IF YOU DISREGARD MY PLEA FOR A PROPER PRESENTATION OF MY WORK.

Maybe, maybe not, you will stress the idea of a symbol dictionary; indeed your sourcebook will be just the right piece to convince those who have the one million dollar to give you, for at last not refusing you the thousand grands you have asked in your "feasibility study". That feasibility study still gives me the creeps, and I can tell you exactly why your plea for one million dollars fell on the deaf ears of foundation trustees who gave you the 6000 dollars for a FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A SYMBOL DICTIONARY. The words are important, because to everyone who ever looked into a book on symbols the idea of a symbol dictionary MUST BE WHOLE AND TOTALLY UNFEASIBLE. But why? Because - and I told you this in the very first letter I wrote to you. ANY DICTIONARY IS A TWO WAY AFFAIR. One part is say English-Spanish, then the other part must be Spanish-English. The trustees wanted from you that you should prove to them how you will make a TWO WAY SYMBOL DICTIONARY. It is unfeasible at the moment, if you care to think of your farm machinery symbols, if you realise that the very same meanings about a tractor engine can be symbolised totally different with totally different designs, and if you ask yourself how on earth these symbols could be fit into that part SYMBOLS-ENGLISH so that anyone who sees any symbol anywhere could open your dictionary and could find the symbol he has in mind and the meaning in English next to it.

Remember my first letter where I wrote to you that I can help you in making that TWO WAY DICTIONARY. Look up page 827 and the following pages of my book where I explain how a two way symbol dictionary can be easily compiled. In the pages 828 to 867 I show the dictionary ENGLISH-SYMBOLS, and in the pages 120 - 138 I show how the dictionary SYMBOLS-ENGLISH is constructed.

Now, how have you answered the disbelieving trustees of that foundation that you really can make a two way dictionary? Here comes an incredible thing to



swallow for anyone. YOU HAVE NOT MENTIONED THAT MAIN PROBLEM WITH ONE SINGLE WORD IN YOUR "FEASIBILITY STUDY!!!" This is incredible in view of the fact that I told you of this main problem in my very first letter to you written two and a half years ago. No wonder that you didn't get a penny from the trustees. Some must have felt that you have negated your promise and that you should give back the \$6000. This is what I would have demanded, had I been a discerning trustee who initially gave you the money.

What did you give them in your "feasibility study"? You told them of the 60 books you have studied about "covered bridges" and "Pennsylvania Dutch Antiques" and similar nonsense, and then you gave them a long list of people and their addresses to whom you have written about the idea of a dictionary. My name and address is among them, BUT THERE IS NOT ONE WORD MORE ABOUT ME AND MY WORK IN YOUR WHOLE STUDY." Now, how much have you spent on writing these letters, about 2.00 let us say. As these letters do contain the same story over and over again, soliciting support for your endeavour on a symbol dictionary, your good secretary Miss Kathryn Bray would have typed the letters in her own words. My secretaries did something similar many times. Cost all in all say \$500 including stationary and postage. What did you do with the other \$5500? Surely you did not pay yours and Mr. Clifton's salary from this money. These are impertinent questions, but imagine my rage when I discovered that you have not mentioned my work at all, and even not the catalog cards of ~~the~~ Library of Congress about my work.

Well, what does your feasibility study really contain? Hold on to your seat Mr. Dreyfuss, this truth will be hard to swallow. YOU PROVED TO THEM THAT YOU CAN SPEND ONE MILLION DOLLARS ON SALARIES AND STATIONARY - with no guarantee that those who will get fantastic salaries for working a few days each month will really produce something in their SEARCH FOR SYMBOLS (which are non-existent, anyway).

There is one page in your "study" which has made me cry out in anger and rage. There is the story of <sup>a</sup>triumvirat of men who will come together once a year to say "Amen!" to what you have done in the preceding year, and would underwrite the next instalment of the one million dollar to come your way. Dear Mr. Dreyfuss, you are a hard-boiled businessman, but I <sup>too</sup> am a hard-boiled businessman cum idealist, and I know exactly why you have accorded these three men fantastic salaries for coming together a few days each year. Unfortunately I have buried the whole file with your feasibility study and I can't find it now, but in the main what I say is correct.

Can you understand why your "study" has kept me awake for many, many sleepless hours through many nights - and still keeps me awake whenever I think of it? I hope you can. I sincerely hope that this letter will give you at least one solid nightmare one single night, in order to make you realise what you have done to me and to the cause of all the men who sincerely work on an international symbol language.

Why do I rave in such abusive words which will surely antagonise you to the quick and may indeed defeat all my intentions to make you realise why you should make my work prominent in your new book? I will tell you why. FOR ME, THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH. HOWZAT?

Should you go ahead unchallenged and include into your book a 2 page (repeat 2 page) summary of my work showing especially how I combine the outline of a letter with the outline of zigzag lightning to mean TELEGRAM (a symbol which others have done already without knowing of my presentation, because this is so idiotically simple: letter plus electricity) what's going to happen when I see in your finished book the presentation of my work as you propose to do it in your letter? I may get a real heart attack! I may stay awake again so many nights. I may seriously impair my health and may shorten my life disastrously. Thus, I HAVE TO STAND UP AND TO SHOUT AT YOU "STOP" NOW, not after the book is printed. I don't want to die on a heart attack. Hence I must tell you all there is on my heavy heart.

I told you in one of my discarded drafts of my letters to you a sweet early boyhood story. I told you how, as a boy of 4, there was one name which I heard everyday spoken by almost everyone. It was the name of Dreyfuss. I saw in almost every home a picture of three men: Dreyfuss, Zola and Clemenceau, framed on the wall. You are the bearer of a proud and celebrated German-Jewish name, and your name had a tremendous impact on my little boy mind. I realised then that I am born with a heavy handicap and that I have to work hard and harder to make my mark in the world. That determination which began with the name of Dreyfuss has brought about my work on semantography. That determination has also helped me to stay alive in spite of all the setbacks, in spite of all the dastardly deeds done to me.

Still, I never became a cynic. I was and still am an idealist who thinks that the best a human being can do is to work for humanity. But I believed that once I have proved to the scholarly community that I really have created a new idea that can help humanity, I would be greeted with open arms. But I was not prepared to see that my worst enemies are the men who work in the same field.



Only when I realised this did I realise the dreadful truth in the stories of most innovators of new ideas. They could not withstand the setbacks, they neglected their family, they started to drink and died an untimely death because they simply could not stand up and fight. BUT I DID STAND UP every time. For every kick I got I kicked back just as hard or harder. I have wrung the neck of many a man and the result was utter exhilaration and a happy heart. THUS YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE SMOLDERING INJUSTICE DUE TO YOUR FEASIBILITY STUDY WHICH HAS PESTERED MY MIND FOR TWO YEARS SIMPLY HAS TO COME TO THE FORE - BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO DIE BECAUSE OF YOU.

Now the letter has come to an end and I am sure you are stark raving mad. Allow me now to make a very sensible suggestion. There is a person near to you who is better suited than any other person to calm you down. This is your good wife. Maggie has told in the Los Angeles Times about this wonderful woman thus "Mr. Henry Dreyfuss life-long partner Miss Doris Marks (Mrs. Dreyfuss when she steps through the gardens into their redwood-and-rock home a few yards away...) Doris can read German, French, Japanese, Italian, Spanish and can translate some... and helps Mr. Dreyfuss compile his dictionary to be a sort of "authority" which will lure all "to come aboard an international symbol language".

Your good wife is a competent linguist, is a competent co-worker on your symbols and is the most competent of all persons in the whole world to give you the best advise, and the best help, and best soothing words in your predicament due to this letter of mine. And if she is really that wonderful person I think she is, she may say perhaps "Now that blasted Bliss, I think you wronged him, or at least we must understand his unhappiness and must help him and must help you with your book. And here are three alternatives for you and your good wife to choose from:

Alternative 1. You and your good wife are really magnanimous people, and you both will realise that a proper presentation of my work done by myself on 10 to 20 pages of your book will really help your book along and perhaps make it a best seller, and you may agree to do just this. I don't want a penny for all my work and for sending you the properly drawn and photographed symbols. I only want what is natural, that the copyright for my presentation and my symbols belongs to me and that this is said somewhere in the book.

Alternative 2. Your good wife cannot soothe your raving rage, and you will decide not to bring anything about me and my work, indeed not to mention my name at all in your book. What's going to happen then? Nothing. The book will be printed in due course and then something will happen what a TIME Essay said about many books which come on the market. It will be "instant oblivion", no matter how many hacks will beat the drum for you.

Alternative 3. You will disregard my dastardly letter and go ahead with YOUR presentation of my work as you want to do it on 2 pages only. In this case you will infringe my copyright even if you show a single symbol. You will not be able to claim the right of a critical reviewer to quote from my work, because I expressly forbid this now in this letter. On top of my book it is said ALL RIGHTS RESERVED and I told you already that I have in the meantime rigourously restricted the showing of my symbols, because only I can show them the way they should be shown. In this case, I shall inform your publisher that I shall immediately launch a court action. I have the money to do so and moreover, I have been chief of the patent department of a large firm and have conducted many court cases in which I directed my lawyers and I won the cases for my firm. A few years ago I took a whole Australian industry to court for infringing one of my patents. They settled even before the court case hearing because they knew that they dealt with a man seasoned in many a litigation. And what's more, I like a fight! Your book will be condemned by the publicity and my work will receive a fantastic publicity. I feel sure that you don't want this alternative to happen. Neither do I.

There remains therefore the most likely alternative: to mention not a word of me and my work in your book. The result will be that you will receive angry letters by almost everyone who knows about my work on symbols. So will your publisher. And your book will be tainted and discarded as incomplete - as not taking account of the only real achievement in the field of an international symbol language.

So I hope, your good wife will prevail on you to accept alternative 1. I hope then to receive a very short letter from you saying something like this: Dear Mr. Bliss,

It is true that every creative man is mad to some extent, and the best to deal with a madman is to mollify him. This I will do, disregarding all your abusive words.

So, please take note that my forthcoming book will have printed text on a page size 7 x 5 inches, composed of 10 pt Times Roman typeface, and having 60 letters per line and altogether 50 lines per page.



I cannot give you 20 pages of my book, but I will concede you 10 pages, and therefore expect your complete text and your photographed sharp symbols within four weeks from now.

Yours truly  
Henry Dreyfuss

And I shall be happy and forget all there is to forget and shall start happily on the work for your book and send it to you within <sup>the</sup> 4 weeks you want.

I remain with my best wishes to you and your good wife, Mr. Clifton and Miss Bray Bray and all your co-workers.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

To this letter I attached a special letter written in my symbols with all the explanations of the symbol elements and how they are combined in my letter. Mr. Dreyfuss has ended his letter of December 28th to me with a drawing of a sparkling champagne glass and the words Happy 1971 to C.K. Bliss. I felt I have to mollify him a little bit because of the unhappy tone of my long letter and therefore I added this letter in my symbols which says

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

I have received your letter with the drawing of a drink glass of champagne and I too say happy new year 1971. You are facing difficulties about your book but you will overcome them. I shall co-operate and hope that you will feel that this my long unhappy letter has been written with my desire to co-operate.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

The letter above has been written in my symbols with my intention to show Mr. Dreyfuss that my semantography is really and truly a complete pictorial symbol language.

I was waiting with some apprehension of his response. I could be a nasty rebuke, or it could be an admission of guilt. It was neither. He wrote to me.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

15.1.71

Your letter indicates a real sense of humour. So I take the liberty of sending this amusing cartoon which co-incidentally arrived on my desk the same day as your letter.

The cartoon itself was not very much amusing and I don't understand it. It shows two middle-east people standing before a mountain of which two sides were covered by some inscription. And the text runs "I always maintained that anything written on two sides of a mountain could be said just as well on only one side of a mountain." It may mean that we write too much and talk too much and what we say on 2 pages could be just as well said on 1 page. This indeed is true and I count myself as one of the worst offenders. However, I have an excuse. I have written many many very short and concise letters and have often found that too little said is not said enough. My letters have sometimes been misinterpreted and I had to send off another letter. This is the reason why I write very long letters to make sure that what I have to say is completely understood. And I don't mind if I even repeat myself a number of times.

Mr. Dreyfuss letter by which he answers to all my charges was very polite but he made a mistake which to me seems a disaster. A disaster because I am very distressed when I see my symbols and my work misrepresented in other mens' writing.

The mistake that Mr. Dreyfuss made was to tell me that the book will measure  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  inches. Now if somebody says this about a book it surely means the measurement of the finished and bound book. It never means the measurement of the text itself, and consequently had to reduce these measurements by 1 inch on all sides to get at the real text space. To my chagrin I found that the text allowed in this space is much too small for what I want to say.

Had I known, and had Mr. Dreyfuss told me exactly that the measurements given referred to the text only not to the bigger book size I would have told him to simply reprint the very good article which I wrote for the American Magazine PRINT (see S.S. No. 308). But as Mr. Dreyfuss gave me an incomplete and even false dimension I had to reduce disastrously the whole text and what remained was a pitiful presentation of my work.

I shall quote the text herebelow and add the few lines which Mr. Dreyfuss himself added to introduce my work.

ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD  
(Semantography-Blissymbolics) By Charles K. Bliss, B.Sc.

No book related to symbols would be complete without a bow to C.K. Bliss. In "Semantography", a word conceived by his fertile imagination, he has developed a complete system which crosses all language barriers. The lines and curves of his symbols, reminiscent of actual objects and actions, are translated into all tongues. Mr. Bliss is an intrepid pioneer: his words and ideas are proudly produced in this book. HD



Note: All the symbols shown in this text are taken from the tourist folder (S.S. No. 280) and therefore there is no need to redraw them. I indicate them only by the words.

The great Leibnitz dreamed 300 years ago that someone will some day invent a Universal Symbolism, a simple system of pictorial symbols which could be read (like  $1 + 2 = 3$ ) in all languages - without translation. It would also contain a simple symbolic logic and semantics (just as anyone can today recognise the lie in  $1 + 2 = 4$ ). Now eminent scholars have agreed that I have done just this.

Semantography can be typed with an IBM ball typewriter, and printed by computerized typesetting. It operates with about 100 basic symbols which can be combined for any meaning needed in communication, commerce, industry and science, as proved in the 882 pages of my book (see Bibliography).

Of the 100 basic symbols the following 30 are already internationally used:

|                           |                                |           |            |        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 . ! ? | NUMBERS AND MATHEMATICAL SIGNS | DIRECTION | SUN        | MOON   |
| STAR                      | ELECTRIC                       | MAIL      | SAFETY     | MUSIC  |
| CROSS                     | OUT                            | MEDICAL   | TRADE      | MAN    |
| GROUND                    | WHEEL                          | LUGGAGE   | TIME       | ROOF   |
| HOUSE                     | STAIRS                         | CHAIR     | TABLE      | BED    |
| FIRE                      | WATER                          | VESSEL    | SHIP       | FLAG   |
| WINGS                     | MOUTH                          | EAR       | EYE        | NOSE   |
| PLANT                     | PEN                            | PAPER     | EMOTION    | REASON |
|                           |                                |           | CONSCIENCE |        |

By putting a small Action indicator on top of these symbols the verbs to hear, to see, to write, to feel, to reason, etc. are formed. With this, children learned to write whole sentences within the first hour and were able to read combinations they have never seen before.

Here below are some sample combinations from my book. But first, the "line letter" for the combination of outline symbols are for instance:

|              |                  |        |               |                   |         |              |
|--------------|------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------|---------|--------------|
| LINE         | REPEAT           | LIMITS | OPEN, OPENING | CLOSED, ENCLOSURE | DOORMAN | ENTRANCE     |
| EXIT         | FIRE EXIT        | ROOM   | ROOM WAITER   | ROOM MAID         | LIFT    | WAITING ROOM |
| WRITING ROOM | ROOM WITH 2 BEDS | WATER  | SHOWER        | BATHROOM          |         |              |

For postal communication:

|             |           |           |          |         |          |               |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|
| POST OFFICE | LETTERBOX | AIRLETTER | TELEGRAM | POSTMAN | POSTCARD | POSTAGE STAMP |
| PARCEL      |           |           |          |         |          |               |

For railways, buses, airplanes, ships, time tables, etc.

|         |         |       |         |          |      |           |                 |
|---------|---------|-------|---------|----------|------|-----------|-----------------|
| CAR     | BUS     | TRAM  | RAILWAY | AIRPLANE | SHIP | TRAM STOP | RAILWAY STATION |
| AIRPORT | HARBOUR | WHARF | No. 3   |          |      |           |                 |

|         |        |        |         |         |          |     |         |     |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|----------|-----|---------|-----|
| SPRING  | SUNDAY | MONDAY | HOLIDAY | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | SUN | MORNING | DAY |
| EVENING | NIGHT  | MOON   |         |         |          |     |         |     |

For motorists:

|           |              |                 |             |             |      |                 |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| STOP      | LOOK         | LISTEN          | MEN AT WORK | ROAD REPAIR | FORD | LOOK OUT DANGER |
| PARK HERE | CAR MECHANIC | SERVICE STATION | GASOLINE    |             |      |                 |

For theatres, operas, concert halls, cinemas, stadiums, etc.

|              |                |                |            |        |       |       |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------|-------|-------|
| SHOW HOUSE   | THEATRE TICKET | SECOND BALCONY | HOUSE FULL | CINEMA | MUSIC | OPERA |
| CONCERT HALL | STADIUM, RACES |                |            |        |       |       |

Other symbol combinations in all fields of human endeavour, as commerce, banking, shipping, customs, menu cards, shows, stores, ambulances, hospitals, as well as in all industries and in all sciences, including philosophy, religion, and even poetry, are illustrated in the large chapters in my book.

But the symbols above belong only to Aspect 1 of my work. The other five aspects are even more fascinating. Aspect 2: a simple symbolic logic which even children can learn to use in their daily problems, and which would help them later as husbands and wives to avoid unnecessary quarrels. Aspect 3: a simple semantics which could help even children to recognise (and avoid) those dangerous words by which demagogues and dictators in the homes and nations threaten the peace of mankind.

By trying to find appropriate symbols for mankind's most important meanings like ethics, evolution, life, liberty, religion, God, etc. etc. I made some important discoveries already acknowledged by scholars. Aspect 4: a universal natural ethics encompassing all religions. Aspect 5: the biochemical discovery that cells act ethically in all creatures. Aspect 6: the archeological discovery that old stoneage man was not a killer of his fellowman. Cannibalism and war began with new stoneage man by the introduction of dangerous words.

The End.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

January 15, 1971.

You can imagine how distressed I was to find I have been gravely upsetting you, not only recently but over the years. Certainly this was 100% unintentional, for I have long been a sincere admirer of your work and would never want to indicate otherwise.



To clarify our current situation, I should reiterate that our Sourcebook is not intended to be a "dictionary" or a recommendation of standards, and of course, not a language, as yours is. We hope it will be a first step: namely, a selection from our Data Bank showing existing symbols which we have collected. It will of necessity not be complete, but I hope it will at least permit those designing new symbols to be aware of what already exists and thus avoid some of the confusion of duplication and contradiction.

As it looks now our book will contain about 250 pages, 8 1/2 x 11, with a minimum of text. The only special text that we had planned to include in this book would be the Bliss and Neurath articles, which would be highlighted by inclusion in the table of contents. Our publishers, after considerable discussion, have agreed to giving us a four page leeway for these two articles, although they are constantly pressuring for fewer pages so as to keep the final cost of the book down.

This will explain the request outlined in our letter of December 28, and we would still like to do this. In the article we would explain the importance of your work and base the description very much on "Print" and your International Traveller illustrations. You may be sure we would not distort your drawings or misrepresent you in any way. If you wish we would be glad to submit our draft of the article to you, but we should mention that our publisher reserves the right to edit any material we give him. I still feel this would be of major interest to our readers in explaining that a symbol language (the only one we know of) has indeed been developed.

Much as we wish we could do a more comprehensive piece of your authorship, that is something we will of necessity have to postpone for the future. I sincerely hope you will be able to say yes to our request, but if you feel that you cannot in all good conscience and integrity do this, or do not have that much faith in our presentation of your Blissymbolics, we will regretfully understand. Certainly we would not include an article of the nature we describe without your permission, so the problem of court cases will not arise between us.

If you cannot give your permission for the article, we will certainly mention your great contributions in the preface of the book in any case.

Time is pushing harder and harder so I would be very grateful to receive a collect cable saying yes to our plan. Whatever your decision, I appreciate your co-operation -- and I am particularly delighted with your symbol letter.

Very sincerely,  
Henry Dreyfuss.

I wrote to him.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

29 Jan 71

Many thanks for your kind and understanding letter. I secretly hoped that this would be your answer and I am glad about it. I realise that you understand that I had to say what I said, as it seared my mind for over 2 years. Now I feel better and I want to bury the hatchet. After all, we are brothers in the symbol brotherhood (though I found here my worst enemies). So let's at least co-operate in friendship. You may call me Charles and I shall be happy to address you as Henry. We both are at the end of our life and whatever time we still have should not be marred by animosity. No more of this, I promise.

Many thanks for your cut of the joke about the inscriptions on two sides of a mountain. I take it that it contains also a wry indication that you are confining yourself to one page usually, whereas I blabber away on page after page. But as you and your good wife are both linguists you will understand the German saying "Wes das Herz voll ist, dem geht der Mund ueber." Whose heart is overfull, it flows over through the mouth, or in my case through the typewriter. But believe it or not, realise that all my such letters are written out of a quiet desperation as I shall soon prove to you. Apart, from this, yes I have a sense of humour which has kept me alive in the concentration camps and has enabled me to drag myself out by my own cunning. I organised in Dachau and Buchenwald Variety Shows where I appeared as the M.C. with a white shirt and tie (made out of white cardboard and worn over the prison uniform) and I had them rolling in the aisles, forgetting for an hour that we are in the darkest holes on earth.

Now look at this my new letterhead. This too is the result of desperation, and here is why. For nearly 25 years I went around and told people that I have invented something which is much more than just a "picture writing". Nobody wanted to believe this, except a few great men like Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and others. And I want to tell the world that my work does not consist of aspect 1 as numbered in the left margin, but more important of aspects No. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The late Prof. Clyde Kluckhohn of Harvard was so much impressed with aspects 5 and 6 that he tried to bring me into Harvard. He failed because my biochemical discovery is anathema to anthropologists and archeologists. If you know what Harvard astronomers did, blackmailing MacMillan to give up the bestseller "World in Collision" by Velikovsky, you will know what I mean.



Now what shall I say to your final "suggestion" that I shall not be given more than 2 pages in a book of 250 pages. I must agree to this, but I have some suggestions to make which I shall outline in the following paragraphs. And I beg you to understand that these suggestions are born out of my desire to keep within the 2 pages and at the same time contain a comprehensive account of my work.

So, understand my quiet "Desperation" when I still say that it is a shame that my work should be restricted to 2 pages only, whereas totally unrelated symbols should be given nearly 250 pages. And let me say that it is an even greater shame that you want to give me equal space with Neurath's Isotypes. What do you know about Neurath's work? Let me tell you. First, have you ever seen his booklet, or mini-booklet, or micro-booklet "International Picture Language" which appeared in a Miniature Series edited by C.K. Ogden. It is smaller than a vestpocket book, indeed, all that it contains would fill about 5 to 10 pages of my book. What's more, Neurath states clearly that his Isotypes are not usable for saying what a sentence contains word for words, and therefore that the words "International Picture Language" is a misnomer to put it mildly. Mrs. Neurath admitted this in a letter to me where she recalled how her husband said to a friend at the railway station "Au revoir à Peking;" and how he despores that he was unable to work out a real picture language.

But this is not the whole story. The Isotypes of Neurath are not his own invention. When I was a little boy, newspapers showed graphs about the size of armies, for instance a very large Russian soldier, a small German soldier, an even smaller French soldier, etc. When I studied at Vienna, I was impressed by his different presentation as shown in the "Wiener Gesellschafts und Wirtschaftsmuseum" of which Neurath was the director. He showed pictorial signs of the same size, each sign representing a certain amount. And here is a good time to show that Neurath's Isotypes are as far away from my work as I am from the moon. For instance, the outline of a flame could mean for Neurath, the damage done by fire as measured by actual damage assessment, or claims paid out by insurance companies (usually very much smaller), or fire insurance policies expressed in millions of dollars, or coal production, or coal consumption, or coal, oil and wood used for heating energy, etc, etc. you name it.

In short, Neurath's Isotypes have nothing to do with a picture language. And worse, he didn't invent his Isotypes. Who did it? The stab in the back of Neurath was given by his own pupil Modley, who, when he came to America found that Williard C. Brenton of New York has invented and used and published isotypes before Neurath even thought of them. Well, you have met Mrs. Neurath and she may have appeared a charming lady to you - BOT NOT TO ME. If you wish I could send you copies of my pleading and begging letters which I wrote to her about 20 years ago. What did I want from her? Nothing much. Only a recommendation to a British publisher who may be interested in a short booklet or brochure on my work. She would not give this to me. She refused even to indicate any publisher who might be interested, fearing, I suppose, that I shall start my letter to him "on the recommendation of Mrs. Neurath" or the like. In other words, I am a competitor to isotypes, and therefore no help whatsoever must be given to me. These paragraphs are also written out of the quiet desperation which grips me when I hear the name of Neurath. And now you want to give her 2 pages and me also no more than 2 pages. It's a shame, let me tell you.

But I must accept your verdict of not more than 2 pages, but you must agree to my presentation which I shall give you in the following pages. This is such a small demand that I am sure you will agree. And if the text goes a little more than 2 pages, then use a smaller type or take away from Neurath's presentation say half a page or more. Look up page 292 of my large book and see how I tell of Neurath's work. AND PLEASE DO LIKEWISE.

Now here are a few small conditions to which you could easily adhere, because they are very sensible. First, the note that the symbols are reproduced by the permission (to hell with the usual "kind permission") of C.K. Bliss and the Semantography Trust. This refers to my trustees, because I may be dead when the book comes out. Furthermore, please see to it that after the word Semantography a dash be made and the word added Blissymbolics, thus

Semantography - Blissymbolics

and I shall be grateful if you refer in the text to the "Blissymbols" (not within inverted commas of course - see the text that follows). Why Blissymbolics? This too is an act born out of desperation; 20 years ago I would be horrified by the idea of my self-aggrandisement with the use of my name. Consequently, I invented and used at the title of my book and my Semantography Series only the word of my own invention Semantography". But later, would-be plagiarists came up who remained would-be plagiarists because they could not evolve a system of their own. But they succeeded in grabbing my invention, the word Semantography. They wrote about all the "semantographies" - yet to come. Thus they made it impossible for me to claim that Semantography means my own system. Therefore please understand.



Furthermore, under no circumstances should my symbols be re-drawn. Please use the tourist folder, but recognise the following: Your book has a width of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches. If we take the right and left margin to be 1 inch in width, then there still remains a text length of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, a wonderful space to show as much of my symbols as possible. Now look at the width of my tourist folder. It shows within the width of 3 inches about 6 symbol combinations. This means that we could show about 10 to 12 symbol combinations within your width of 6 inches. And this I am going to do in my following draft.

Another point of great importance. People looking at my symbol combinations without knowing of the symbol elements of which they are composed, will reject my symbols because they are simply incomprehensible to them. In order to avoid this catastrophe we must show first some of my symbol elements alone, and then print underneath the words expressing the meaning of my combinations, the words containing the elements. This I have done in 4 pt print in the tourist folder. Imagine my desperation when I saw how Kneebone has misrepresented my symbols by simply obliterating the small type explanations underneath. And yet he wrote Copyright C.K. Bliss. SO, THE SMALL TYPE WORDS EXPLAINING HOW THE SYMBOL ELEMENTS COMBINE MUST BE SHOWN IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Another very important point. I don't think that the size of the symbols as shown in my tourist folder can be further reduced. I had to do this with the article in PRINT simply because this magazine is printed in narrow columns of only  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch. BUT YOUR BOOK WILL HAVE A WIDTH OF  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inch for text. SO PLEASE DO NOT REDUCE IN SIZE MY SYMBOLS. The fact is that the small print denoting the elements is so small in PRINT that it is already uncomfortable to read, and this means THAT PEOPLE DON'T READ WHAT IS UNCOMFORTABLE TO READ and this means a condemnation of my symbols and my following desperation. So please understand and comply. Just photograph the symbol combinations and all the words underneath them in caps and very small print as they are shown in the tourist folder AND NOT SMALLER PLEASE!

These are small suggestions and I hope you will adopt them. You will make an old man happy, and you won't want to make me unhappy, will you? Trusting in you, there is no need to send me the draft of the 2 (or a little more) pages. I thank you for this, and much as I would want to see it (I may be dead in 1972 when the book comes out) I shall hope for the best if the sending to me will delay their sending to the publisher. Or you may send the text to me after it has gone to the publisher, and I won't bother with alterations. The best would be to adhere as much as possible to the text suggested in the following page, and I thank you very much for following it up.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss,

Mrs. Bray answered.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

February 4, 1971

You have me again! Unfortunately your letter of January 29 and the copies of your tourist folders arrived the day after Mr. Dreyfuss left on an extended trip. I wanted to answer immediately to tell you how very pleased I know Mr. Dreyfuss will be to read your letter, and especially because you included an article authored by yourself. I will tell him about it right away but he will not actually see your correspondence until the first week in March.

Meanwhile, Paul Clifton has gone over the material you sent and he anticipates no problem whatsoever. Both of us noticed that your article, though authored by yourself, is written in the third person, but we are assuming that is the way you wish it to be. Also, we were questioning whether something should come after the last sentence in your article which ends "dangerous words:" as it is punctuated with a colon? Perhaps this is just a typographical error and the colon should really be a period.

We have noted your request about permission to reproduce the symbols but are wondering whether we should also say that they are copyrighted by C.K. Bliss-- or perhaps something like "Copyrighted by C.K. Bliss: special permission to reproduce by C.K. Bliss and the Semantography Trust." Your advice on this matter will be appreciated.

Again, many thanks for your kind letter. We are delighted that Mr. C.K. Bliss will be included in our book.

Sincerely -- and Happy Valentine's Day to you.

Kathryn Bray

I wrote to her

Dear Miss Bray, and dear Mr. Clifton,

Sydney 10 Feb 71

Received your kind letter and answer immediately. Yes, I am happy to have a letter from you dear Miss Bray and also the good news from you dear Mr. Clifton that there will be no problem with regard to the text that I sent you. Now, before I go further here are the answers to your queries:

1. I did not want that the short article should appear as written by me. Who knows, I may be dead when it comes out, and I think it should be all under one



authorship Mr. Dreyfuss'. I suppose the doubt about this arose because I wrote the subcaption to the title

ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD

SUBTITLE:

Semantography - Blissymbolics by C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

Now you may put the subtitle within brackets, or you may write invented by C.K. Bliss, B.Sc. or C.K. Bliss' Semantography - Blissymbolics, but if you really want that I should appear as the author then substitute the word "I" everywhere where I speak of "Bliss" in the third person.

2. The colon(:) after "dangerous words" is a mistake. You are right it should be a period (.) Thanks for your thought.

3. I think the best way to express the copyright would be: Copyright C.K.Bliss and the Semantography Trust. Reprinted by permission.

4. I was in such a hurry that I forgot to put a carbon paper underneath the last sheet of the article, and hence have no copy to guide me. But see to it that under Bibliography should be the name and address of my American wholesaler CAROL COX BOOK CO. Box 389, Paramus N.J. 07652 and also the name and address of Semantography-Blissymbolics Publications with address as above. Thanks for this.

And now one last request to you dear Mr. Clifton, of which I am sure you will grant it, because it is the easiest thing to do. But you must understand my thoughts. I suppose you are a young man, and therefore it may be difficult to imagine the thoughts of an old man of 74 years who must think of his death. Indeed whatever I do every day, be it a mss or any other matter filed for later reference I do it in such a way that my brother (alas he is 69) and my trustees, both younger men should know, what I want them to do, should I go suddenly. And indeed, considering my volatile nature this may indeed be my end: suddenly. Now, to avoid this and to live a little longer I must avoid stress.

Now here is one stress which you dear Mr. Clifton can help me to avoid. In previous letters I have mentioned my agonies when something was published in a book or magazine which has not been supervised by myself. There were errors and misrepresentations caused by arguments by readers which would never have arisen were the text supervised by myself.

Now, what do I want from you? Nothing much, only something which may take you a day or two, and here it is. Now that you don't see any problem, please set up the text according to my draft, paste in the lines of symbols from the tourist folder, making sure that the very small print in 4 pt should be shown wherever it appears also in the tourist folder, make a xerox copy to me for reading and possible correction. I assure you that I shall post my answer back to you within the same hour I receive your final text, or if you wish I can send you a telegram. But I don't think that a telegram should be necessary.

What is the alternative to this my proposal? The alternative would be for you to go ahead and make up the 2 pages as you think fit without sending them to me for possible correction. In this case I should go on living through the year 1971 and hopefully 1972 and all the time there would be at the back of my mind the question: "What errors will there be when I hold at last Mr. Dreyfuss' book in my hands? What unhappiness is in store for me? Imagine that I shall all the time have these questions in my mind for the next 2 years.

But if you take the time NOW to fix up the layout, text and the proper symbols in the proper lines, and if you send it to me, and I approve or correct, then I shall know exactly what will be in the book, and shall be happy. PLEASE Help me to this happiness NOW. You have to do the work anyway, so please do it NOW and be thanked for it.

Now to the end of this letter on a lighter note. Why am I so anxious? Why do I worry so much what is going to happen after my death or during the last days before me. Surely I shall not see a symbol writing installed and taught in the schools of mankind. Surely it may take hundreds of years for this to happen. Why so worried, why the many letter writings, why the pleading?

The answer to this has been given to me by Schnozzle Durante. In one of his many sketches he and a beautiful girl are marooned in an open boat, he at the oars, she looking out for land. "Do you see anything?" asks Schnozzle. "Only the horizon," said the girl. "Well," said Schnozzle, "Let's row for the horizon, it's better than nothing."

And so my friends, this is what I am doing, "rowing for the horizon" knowing for sure that I won't see it, but later generations may see the coming over the horizon of

ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD

So dear Mr. Clifton, help me in this. I enclose a reprint of the reprint from the magazine PRINT. Imagine my shagrin to see that the very small print underneath the symbols is simply unreadable. SO PLEASE USE THE SYMBOLS FROM THE TOURIST FOLDER IN THE SAME SIZE NOT IN REDUCED SIZE. I enclose a small calendar for you dear Miss Bray and you dear Mr. Clifton will get also a nice little token when I receive and send back a copy of the final layout and text. Meanwhile, I am with greetings to you both,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss.



she wrote back

Dear Mr. Bliss,

February 15, 1971

How kind of you to reply to our questions so promptly. We are now all straight about your article. Mr. Dreyfuss is still away and we will leave the decision to him as to whether it should be in the first or third person.

Mr. Clifton asked me to tell you that we will send a copy of the completed pages for your approval and this will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

Thank you for my calendar -- a very pretty one it is.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn Bray.

I wrote

Dear Miss Bray and dear Mr. Clifton,

19 Feb, 71

Many thanks for answering promptly and for informing me that my wish will come true and you will send me the properly pasted-up symbols and text for examination before you are going to send the 2 pages of my text to the publisher.

But before I speak about this, let me remove all worry from yours and Mr. Dreyfuss' head, whether to make the text in the first or the third person. PLEASE MAKE IT IN THE THIRD PERSON. I hate the I I I I I I talking like a braggard. I always maintain that's not me who worked this idea out. It is the urge in our cells to overcome the hardships caused by our environment, in this case the catastrophe of different languages. So, please let it be in the third person, and make me happy.

Then the importance of photographing (and NOT RE-DRAWING OF the symbols) from the tourist folder I sent you, and including the words underneath, the first line in capitals and even more important the second line in small 4 pt type which explains how the symbol elements combine. In order to show you what various designers have done to me and my symbols, and how unhappy they have made me, I include a reprint from the largest Australian paper (over 800,000 copies.) I gave the correct symbols to the designer, but he felt he had to re-draw them and had to make them different. He elongated the man symbol, he put the dot too low over the horizontal line in above and below, and worse he made the dot so small that it is almost not noticeable. It should be as thick as the horizontal line. But not enough satisfied with these mutilations, he had to alter even words. The symbol for DETOUR shows that you must turn LEFT in order to regain the interrupted road. I wrote LEFT, but he wrote RIGHT. Dammit!

And now to you dear Miss Bray, something interesting. Be proud that you are a woman, not a man. You are more important in the order of things than a man. I enclose a page from some of my writings. Read "THE SYMBOLS FOR MAN AND WOMAN", and especially the red underlined lines. Then turn over and read the page "HELP BILLIONS OF BABIES ARE DYING!" And then look at the postcard about the loveable kangaroo of Australia. The professional idiots think that by some stupid hit or miss chance the kangaroo got a pouch for her baby. Read what I have to say about it. AND THEN REALISE THAT MY SYMBOLS ARE MUCH, MUCH, MUCH MORE than just symbols to bridge languages. Can you now imagine how unhappy I am if I see an article lauding Mr. Dreyfuss' work and speaking of my "squiggles and doodles". It shouldn't happen to a dog.

You are a kind woman, I feel this, and you will hear more about the wonders of my symbols. Meanwhile I am,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

she wrote

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 24, 1971

Thank you for your letter of March 20, which was received today and referred to me, as Mr. Dreyfuss is away on an extended business trip.

We have noted the change in the availability of your books and, consequently, will list only the one name and address in the Bibliography. (This is where we are noting the availability of all books).

We have gone over the whole text which you sent us on January 29 and have changed the third person to first person. I can assure you that it does not end up with a lot of "I, I, I" as you had feared, and Mr. Dreyfuss greatly prefers doing it in this way, as he feels the authority of your authorship will be of real interest to our readers.

The reason you have not yet received our final layout for the pages is that we are holding them here for Mr. Dreyfuss' approval, prior to sending them to you. This is at the top of the pile of things he is to do when he returns, so you will be receiving a copy of the layout soon. Although the publisher will be setting the final text, WE shall supply the camera-ready drawings of the symbols, complete with lettering of titles and sub-titles, so as to be sure there is no change of size, etc.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your close co-operation and promptness, for which we are sincerely grateful. Sincerely, Kathryn Bray.



I am now skipping a few letters from Mr. Dreyfuss, Mr. Clifton and Mrs. Bray because they deal with small matters as for instance whether my text should be written in the first person or the third person and other things which are of no importance at all. I returned the layout and much later did I realise the mistake which Mr. Dreyfuss has made in the previous letter telling me of a false dimension of the book itself. Having now seen the layout I realised that the dimension of the text is wide enough to take my article from PRINT and that Mr. Dreyfuss has told me that the dimension given is for the text only. Instead I believed that it is a dimension of the whole book and the space of the text will be much smaller. In distress I wrote the following letter.

Dear Mr. Clifton,

Sydney 25 April 71.

This is a proposal which is very near to my heart and my mind. I suppose that you are a young man, and I hope you can understand the mind of a man on the threshold of death and concerned with only one thing: that all his life, having been a slavery for an idea, should not be in vain, and therefore whatever goes into books should be properly demonstrated in order to inspire young minds.

Now it was a revelation to me that the pages of Mr. Dreyfuss' book are of the larger size, about 8 x 10. When Mr. Dreyfuss insisted that he can give only 2 pages and not more, he did not tell me how large or how small the pages' text is. I then surmised that it will be of the usual book format about 5 x 8, and hence I restricted the text to this small size, lamenting and protesting all the time, because it is a shame, no it is an outrage (to put it very mildly) to give my work only 2 pages in a book of about 250 dealing surely with a lot of silly symbols for Nabisco, etc.

But now I see that the book is of the larger size, and hence it can easily accomodate my article in PRINT, especially if we take away the column about my life. You know the text I have sent you, in which I lament that aspect 2 and 3 are not shown at all (see aspects at left margin). But in the PRINT article I show these aspects in a very satisfactory manner. You have chosen rather large type for accomodating my short text (designed for 2 small pages) into two larger pages.

Hence, I beg you, I beg you, I beg you to damn "production schedules" and all that, but put the PRINT text into these 2 pages which Mr. Dreyfuss' "generously" and "proudly" gave to my work. Indeed I have told you in my letter of April 15 what is wrong with the hastily assembled symbols; that you have a lot of work before you. But if you take scissors and cut up the article from the Magazine PRINT (November December 1969) and fit it into the space of the two pages all will be well, and I shall be happy. The alternative, if you send that dreadfully short text to the publisher I shall hate Mr. Dreyfuss and you. It's not fair, I shall cry, and make my cry heard. After all I hold the copyright about my symbols and can see to it that my wishes with regard to presentation be followed up. I enclose a reprint from PRINT which appeared in Australia but which is for reproduction purposes not so good as the original PRINT article which you surely have. Otherwise a copy of PRINT (Nov/Dec 69) should be quickly procurable.

So please Mr. Clifton do as I say, and I am sure Mr. Dreyfuss will have no objection as we stick to his demand: TWO PAGES ONLY. It's outrageous. I beg you, I beg you, again and again.

Sincerely yours,  
C.K. Bliss.

Meanwhile Mrs. Bray wrote in answer to some pages from my book "the Invention and Discovery" where I showed her the high meaning of my symbol for woman. She wrote.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

April, 21 1971

Yes, I did receive your page explaining the symbol for a woman, and the picture of the kangaroo mother and her baby. I think I understood, but am not quite sure what you were trying to tell me? Not having been fortunate enough to have been a mother, and am too old for the possibility (!) I guess we will have to leave it at that.

Thanks, too, for the nice calendar we received a day or so ago.

Very best - and good health to you,

Kathryn Bray.

I wrote back

Dear Mrs. Bray,

Sydney 27 April, 1971

Thanks for your kind note. For me you are young, because your enthusiasm and your kindness showed up in every word you wrote to me. That you have no children please consider this as a blessing in these times of utter disregard and disrespect for the parents. My wife and I were also childless and we did not miss it. In fact, it has been proved time and time again, that children though they may be a blessing as long as they are cuddly and small, they are actually disrupting the love between the parents.

See the picture of my late wife on page 108 of the enclosed pages which I am sending you in order to tell you something, something which all our teachers



and all our preachers have failed to teach to all of mankind: namely that a power of selfless help is working in every living atom of every living cell of every living creature.

It will be very difficult for you and for anyone else to grasp what I am trying to say as a chemist and a human being. But once you have grasped it, you will agree with me that we can teach this to every child which has not yet been contaminated with the falsehood of professional theories about survival of the fittest in brute strength, etc. etc.

And show it to your friends and find out what they say to it, and write to me and send me back the pages sometimes (no hurry).

Lastly dear Mrs. Bray, a great request and a great plea, which I make to you simply because you are a woman. You are not a man who grudgingly envies the achievement of another man. What is happening here has happened with any other man who works in the symbol field, and who considers me somehow as an antagonist and an enemy, though I thought I shall be embraced by my colleagues as a friend.

Help me with Mr. Clifton and Mr. Dreyfuss to cancel that mutilated text which I have been pressed to compress into two pages in a hurry.-- Help me that these 2 pages should carry the text which appeared in the PRINT magazine, and in "The Lithographer" of which I sent a copy a few days ago. Read my letter to Mr. Clifton and Mr. Dreyfuss, and please help. In this hope I am,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss.

And then I pressed on my begging for the inclusion of the PRINT article in another letter, this time addressed to Mr. Dreyfuss and Mr. Clifton.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss and dear Mr. Clifton,

27 April, 1971

The more I think of what I have written to you a few days ago (25 April) the more so do I think that you should carry out my wish, namely abandon the text which I have been pressed to make in a hurry, a mutilated text for 2 small pages. Now that I know of the actual size of your pages I think it would be the easiest thing to do to take the scissors and cut up the text from the "Australian Lithographer" of which (for cutting sake) I include 2 copies, and simply have it inserted into the pages of your book.

And here is a sensible proposal. Calculate all the time and all the ensuing salary resulting from the wasted work of you dear Mr. Clifton for working on that mutilated text. Calculate even if you wish the time delay and respective cost which your publisher may indebt you, and tell me the whole amount this alteration would cost you and the publisher and I shall send you my cheque for this amount by return mail, a sensible proposal.

However, if you will make that dreadful text of mine which "tells" only of aspect 2 and 3, but which makes the reader believe that I am just bragging, because why have I not shown it in the book (why not? Because I was forced to cut and cut and cut the text though it was not necessary) I shall go mad.

If you dear Mr. Dreyfuss have read the book by the Italian psychiatrist Lobroso "Genie und Wahnsinn" Genius and Madness, you will know that every man of achievement, who was not considered a genius in his life time, but a madman, is actually mad, medically. And mad I am, and in this condition I cannot promise not to take action based on my copyright if you do not fulfil my wish for which I want even to pay you. I hold the copyright not only for the symbols but also for the text which appeared in PRINT. This has been agreed upon by me and the editor of PRINT. You don't need therefore ask PRINT for permission to reprint.

Please do as I say, send your bill and I shall pay up.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss.

Alas, it was all in vain. Mr. Clifton, who has dallied in a number of letters about trivialities for which he had to wait the arrival of Mr. Dreyfuss, has this time thought he could make the decision himself and he said so. And the decision was not to grant my desperate wish and include my good article from PRINT. The reader of the previous letters will realise my desperation and my pleading when I argued with Mr. Dreyfuss that two pages in a book of 250 pages is not enough to do justice to my work. Now these two pages have been disastrously cut down to a pitiful presentation due to the mis-information by Mr. Dreyfuss about the size of the book.

Mr. Clifton rejected my plea and he realised that I must hate him for this as he wrote so himself. Here is his letter.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

April 29, 1971

For a change, my boss is not in town and I have to answer your letter without conferring with him. However, I am sure he will concur what I have to say.

As your letter of April 15 gave us your approval and enthusiastic blessing on the layout we sent you, we immediately sent all our material off to the publishers and told them it was FINAL. So far as I know, it is being set in metal right now.

We are so pleased with the way the article looks (as per the rough layout we



sent you) that I sincerely believe you will feel at no disadvantage to have it appear in this form.

We are working hard to finish up last minute details and changing anything at this time would hold up the book. I am sure Mr. Dreyfuss would share my concern, and we hope that you will understand and appreciate our position.

We are sorry about this turn of events -- but if you cannot love us, please do not hate us.

Very sincerely  
Paul Clifton.

I wrote back

Dear Mr. Clifton,

May 3, 71

Received your kind letter of April 29 in which you informed me that everything had gone to the publisher and nothing can be changed anymore.

What else can I say than: let it be.

Believe me, I don't hate you and I don't hate Mr. Dreyfuss. What you are doing to me has been done by all other people working in the symbol field. And the same has happened to all men of new ideas. So, let it be. I am

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

And so ends a terrible and prolonged unhappiness caused by that high priest of symbols Mr. Dreyfuss who asked one million dollar for compiling a dictionary, who refused my participation in the dictionary, who didn't get a penny and who had to use his own money for printing a book which he calls "A Sourcebook of Symbols". This itself is a misleading title because any book on any subject is a "Sourcebook" on that subject.

Today when I dictate these unhappy words to my secretary the calendar shows the 3rd December, 1971. Mr. Dreyfuss' "Sourcebook" should come out within the next few months and I am waiting with apprehension for it. I shall discuss it in a separate issue of my semantography series - provided I shall still be alive then. I am now in my 75th year and these fights with other people who envy me

my achievement and who try to conceal even the existence of my book (as Mr. Dreyfuss himself has done in his "feasibility study") these fights do not wear me down. On the contrary. They fill me with the determination to go on fighting and fighting until my enemies will be exposed as what they are: "envious enemies".

The End.