



Semantography Series No. 331

This issue was written in May 1971

SEMANTOGRAPHY BROADCAST
OVER THE AUSTRALIAN RADIO

Radio interview of C.K. Bliss by H.J.M. Brinkman Radio Information Officer of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, broadcasted by Radio 2CH in the series

"AUSTRALIA IN THE SEVENTIES"

Mr. Brinkman: "What does semantography mean?"

Mr. Bliss: "Semantography is a Greek word and means a meaningful writing, so meaningful that it can be read in all languages of the world without translation. The idea of semantography is the use of pictorial simple symbol which can be combined to any meaning in communication, commerce, industry and even science. It can be typed on an ordinary adjusted typewriter."

"You don't have to know the national language?"

"You know only your own mother tongue."

"But has it been accepted universally already?"

"No. It takes hundreds of years until a new idea is accepted. For instance esperanto is already with us for nearly one hundred years, and yet, it has not been accepted by the educational authorities and no school teaches esperanto as a compulsory subject."

"Are you the inventor of semantography?"

"I am!"

"What gave you the idea of semantography?"

"I was born in the Babel of old Austria where twenty different nationalities hated each other because they spoke and thought in different languages. I then realised that the mathematical numbers from 1 to 10 are internationally read in all languages. Furthermore, I studied chemistry and realised that H₂O means water in all languages. I tried esperanto at first but realised soon that esperanto is for all people a foreign language, and most people don't like to learn foreign languages. But everyone can speak his own mother tongue. Consequently my pictorial simple symbols can be read in all mother tongues of all mankind."

"Is it difficult to learn?"

"On the contrary. I have made tests with little children who draw the outline of things. They have grasped my little pictures in no time and were able to write whole sentences within the first hour."

"What is the practical application for every day use?"

"Well in a few days I shall demonstrate my symbols to the building inspectors of Sydney on the direction of the Minister for Building and Industry Mr. Willis. The fact is that over 60% of the workforce on building sites in New South Wales are new migrants and they can't read and speak English. I shall show how a few of my symbols can help to warn them and thus prevent accidents, as they will be able to read the warning signs in any of their languages, just as in fact the arrow is already in use on all the motorroads of the world as a direction sign."

"How long have you been propagating your semantography?"

"I started work in 1942 and this was 28 years ago. I am glad to say that my books are already in many libraries and thus I can be sure that one day my work will come into practical use. May I quote Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain who made an important prophecy. He said that a symbol writing which can be read in all languages will one day supersede all phonetic writing of today. The fact is, and many scholars acknowledge it that the Chinese people who speak different languages have been united politically into the largest nation on earth by their symbol writing which they all could read in all their different languages."

Now this is difficult to believe by people in the Western world who think that the large illiteracy in China is due to the difficulty to learn their signs. But I lived six years in China and have seen how children of five years of age can learn it quickly, once their parents can send them to a school."

"Would it facilitate the learning of other languages?"

"Yes, it would and this I think will be the first practical application of my symbols. It is possible to acquire a set of basic words in one other mother tongue and then learn the same basic words in the other mother tongue. By this process a simple communication would be possible. Furthermore, idiomatic uses which make no sense in other languages would be eliminated by the learner. For instance the English word "to have an open mind" means in other languages "to have a hole in your skull."

A few weeks ago Mr. Brinkman rang me up and told me that there was much interest about my talk, even in far away Austria. Indeed, the official Austrian radio network is going to broadcast the talk in English as it has been taped for those Austrian readers who understand or want to learn English. Of course I was very pleased about this. For the introduction on the Austrian network Mr. Brinkman asked me a lot of questions, when I have graduated from the University of Technology in Vienna, in which firms I worked, where I lived in Vienna, etc. etc.

I referred to my work in another radio interview, see Semantography Series No. 314 in the German language. I was interviewed by a representative of the German radio network. In this talk in German I took the relished opportunity to tell first the German people that I am the first man who has realised the prophecy of the great German philosopher and mathematician Leibnitz who speculated about a symbolic pictorial writing which would also contain a simple logic and semantics. I then told the German people that they have been befuddled by Hitler with vague words that had disastrous consequences. I indicated in my books that Hitler's "success" would have been impossible had my semantography been taught in German schools.