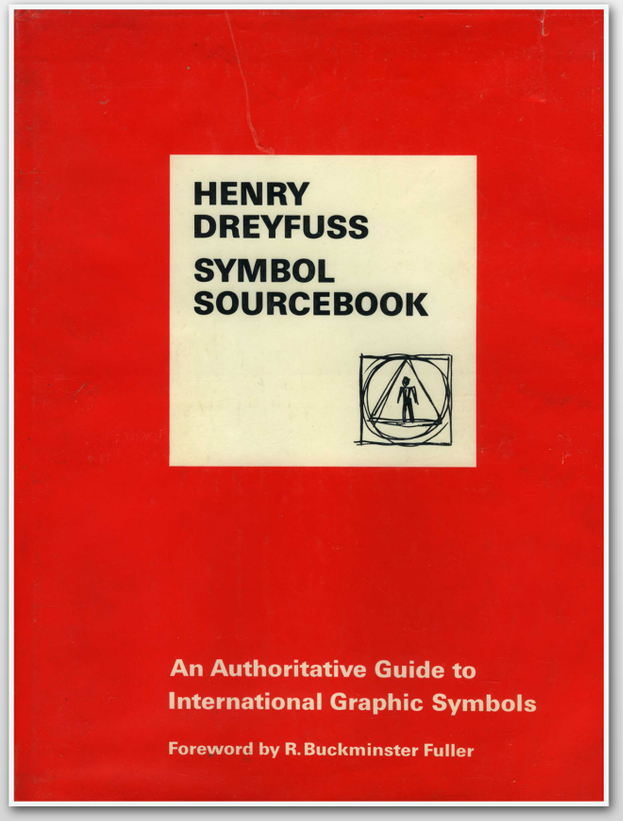
A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook*

Dr Sue Perks



Symbol Sourcebook
published January 1972
McGraw Hill

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



Jorge Frascara stated **'The design of the design method and the design of the research method are tasks of a higher order than the design of the communications'.**

This is could be said of the process that Henry Dreyfuss' used to design the 1972 *Symbol Sourcebook* thirty years before Frascara began writing about design methods. So, to try to chart the effectiveness of Dreyfuss' process, I'm borrowing from Frascara's nine step design process.

Jorge Frascara's nine step design process

1. Contact with the client (or identification of a need)
2. Information gathering
3. Development of the design strategy
4. Design development and prototype production
5. Evaluation
6. Redesign/refinement
7. Fabrication and Implementation
8. Performance evaluation
9. Design revision/adjustment

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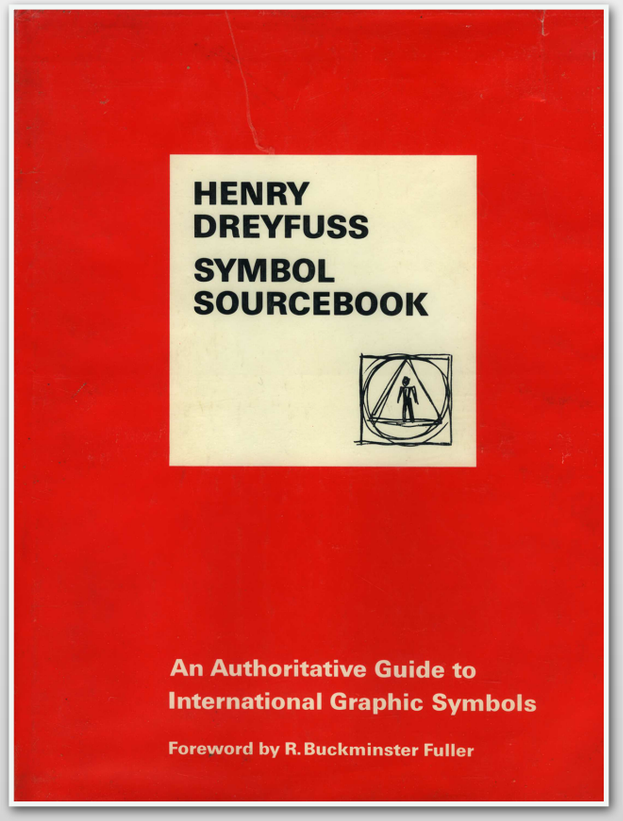

This book is, as its subtitle suggests, 'An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols'. It was published in 1972 and has been reprinted many times. It contains an extensive collection of western symbols and for a long time, it was the classic go-to-book for information on symbols. This may still be the case. The *Symbol Sourcebook* is constructed using 'discipline', 'subject' and 'form' to categorize symbols. It consists of the following sections:

Contents (in 18 languages)
Foreword by Richard Buckminster Fuller
Introduction by Henry Dreyfuss
Charles K Bliss on Semantography
Marie Neurath on Isotype
Basic Symbols
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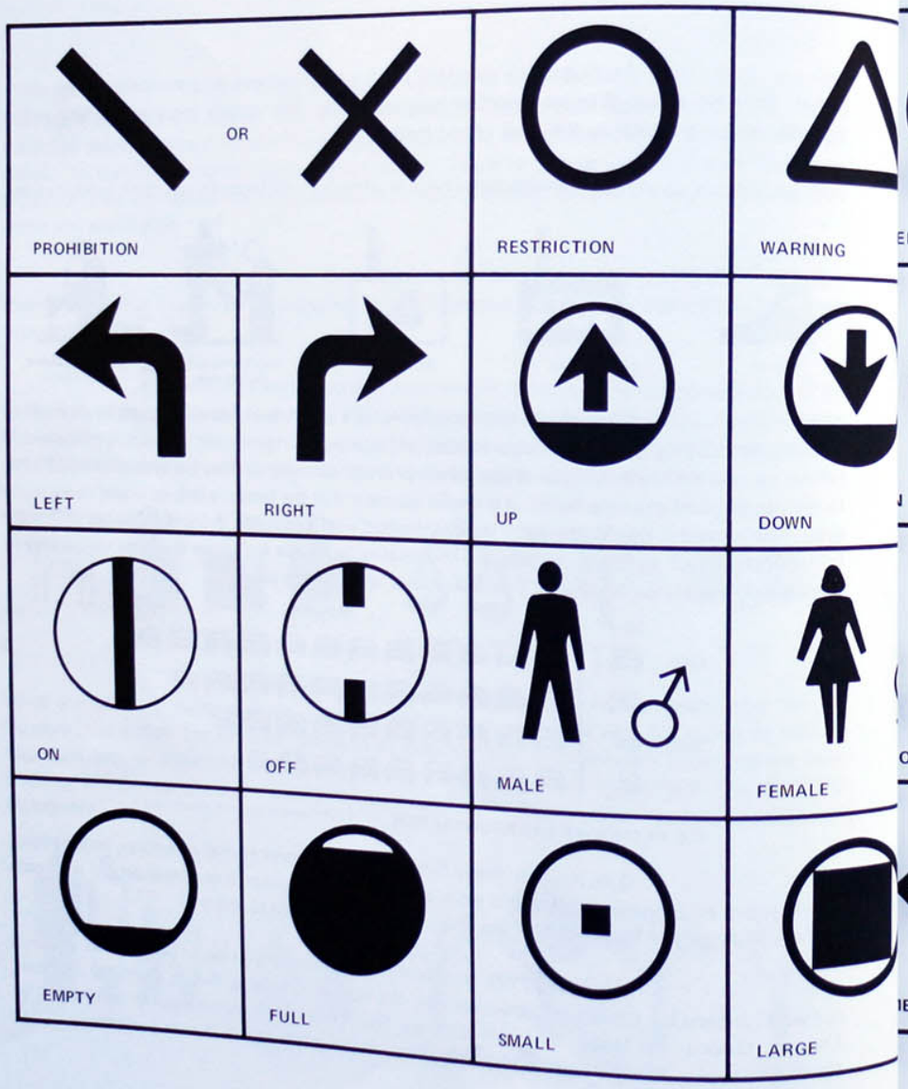
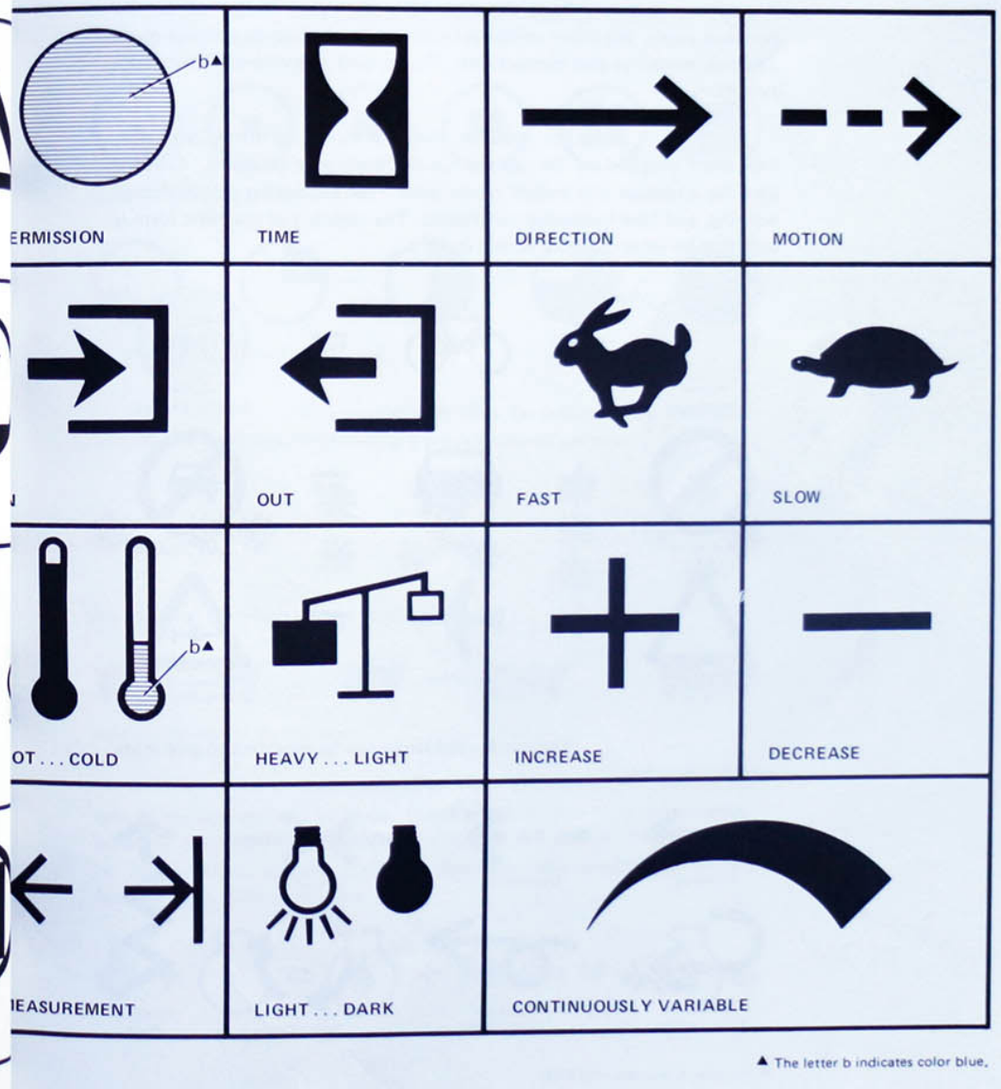
A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***

BASIC SYMBOLS

Certain symbols have become basic to semiotic communication. They appear and reappear, are consistent among disciplines, and their meaning remains constant. They reassure us in our interpretation of complex directions and are fundamental to the understanding of any symbol system. They are the foundation – the ABC's – of graphic symbols.



Although such symbols are not a clearly defined group like the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet, the following selection represents examples extracted from many disciplines which, in my personal judgment, can be called Basic.



▲ The letter b indicates color blue.

Symbol Sourcebook
Safety – one of the 26 Disciplines

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A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



Symbol Sourcebook
Colour and Graphic Form

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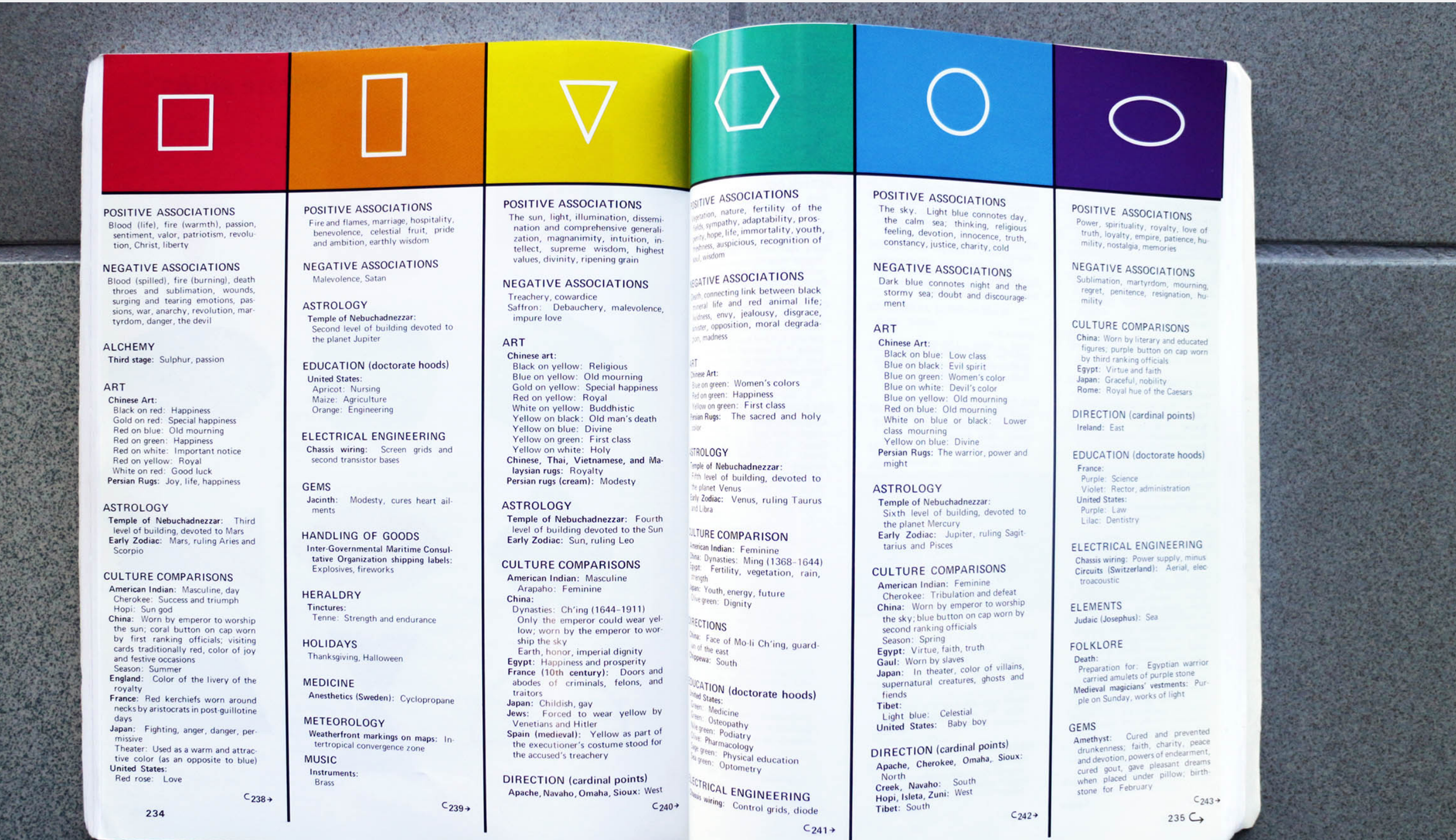

POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Blood (life), fire (warmth), passion, sentiment, valor, patriotism, revolution, Christ, liberty

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Blood (spilled), fire (burning), death throes and sublimation, wounds, surging and tearing emotions, passions, war, anarchy, revolution, martyrdom, danger, the devil

ALCHEMY
Third stage: Sulphur, passion

ART
Chinese Art:
Black on red: Happiness
Gold on red: Special happiness
Red on blue: Old mourning
Red on green: Happiness
Red on white: Important notice
Red on yellow: Royal
White on red: Good luck
Persian Rugs: Joy, life, happiness

ASTROLOGY
Temple of Nebuchadnezzar: Third level of building, devoted to Mars
Early Zodiac: Mars, ruling Aries and Scorpio

CULTURE COMPARISONS
American Indian: Masculine, day
Cherokee: Success and triumph
Hopi: Sun god
China: Worn by emperor to worship the sun; coral button on cap worn by first ranking officials; visiting cards traditionally red, color of joy and festive occasions
Season: Summer
England: Color of the livery of the royalty
France: Red kerchiefs worn around necks by aristocrats in post-guillotine days
Japan: Fighting, anger, danger, permissive
Theater: Used as a warm and attractive color (as an opposite to blue)
United States:
Red rose: Love

C238→

POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Fire and flames, marriage, hospitality, benevolence, celestial fruit, pride and ambition, earthly wisdom

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Malevolence, Satan

ASTROLOGY
Temple of Nebuchadnezzar:
Second level of building devoted to the planet Jupiter

EDUCATION (doctorate hoods)
United States:
Apricot: Nursing
Maize: Agriculture
Orange: Engineering

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
Chassis wiring: Screen grids and second transistor bases

GEMS
Jacinth: Modesty, cures heart ailments

HANDLING OF GOODS
Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization shipping labels: Explosives, fireworks

HERALDRY
Tinctures:
Tenne: Strength and endurance

HOLIDAYS
Thanksgiving, Halloween

MEDICINE
Anesthetics (Sweden): Cyclopropane

METEOROLOGY
Weatherfront markings on maps: Intertropical convergence zone

MUSIC
Instruments:
Brass

C239→

POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
The sun, light, illumination, dissemination and comprehensive generalization, magnanimity, intuition, intellect, supreme wisdom, highest values, divinity, ripening grain

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Treachery, cowardice
Saffron: Debauchery, malevolence, impure love

ART
Chinese art:
Black on yellow: Religious
Blue on yellow: Old mourning
Gold on yellow: Special happiness
Red on yellow: Royal
White on yellow: Buddhistic
Yellow on black: Old man's death
Yellow on blue: Divine
Yellow on green: First class
Yellow on white: Holy
Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, and Malaysian rugs: Royalty
Persian rugs (cream): Modesty

ASTROLOGY
Temple of Nebuchadnezzar: Fourth level of building devoted to the Sun
Early Zodiac: Sun, ruling Leo

CULTURE COMPARISONS
American Indian: Masculine
Arapaho: Feminine
China:
Dynasties: Ch'ing (1644–1911)
Only the emperor could wear yellow; worn by the emperor to worship the sky
Earth, honor, imperial dignity
Egypt: Happiness and prosperity
France (10th century): Doors and abodes of criminals, felons, and traitors
Japan: Childish, gay
Jews: Forced to wear yellow by Venetians and Hitler
Spain (medieval): Yellow as part of the executioner's costume stood for the accused's treachery

DIRECTION (cardinal points)
Apache, Navaho, Omaha, Sioux: West

C240→

OSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
egetation, nature, fertility of the elds, sympathy, adaptability, prosperity, hope, life, immortality, youth, ealthiness, auspicious, recognition of oul, wisdom

EGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
arth, connecting link between black ineral life and red animal life; ickness, envy, jealousy, disgrace, inister, opposition, moral degradaion, madness

RT
hinese Art:
lue on green: Women's colors
ed on green: Happiness
ellow on green: First class
ersian Rugs: The sacred and holy olor

STROLOGY
emple of Nebuchadnezzar:
ifth level of building, devoted to he planet Venus
arly Zodiac: Venus, ruling Taurus nd Libra

ULTURE COMPARISON
merican Indian: Feminine
hina: Dynasties: Ming (1368–1644)
gypt: Fertility, vegetation, rain, trength
apan: Youth, energy, future
live green: Dignity

IRECTIONS
hina: Face of Mo-li Ch'ing, guardan of the east
hippewa: South

DUCATION (doctorate hoods)
nited States:
reen: Medicine
reen: Osteopathy
ale green: Podiatry
live: Pharmacology
ge green: Physical education
ea green: Optometry

LECTRICAL ENGINEERING
hassis wiring: Control grids, diode

C241→

POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
The sky. Light blue connotes day, the calm sea; thinking, religious feeling, devotion, innocence, truth, constancy, justice, charity, cold

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Dark blue connotes night and the stormy sea; doubt and discouragement

ART
Chinese Art:
Black on blue: Low class
Blue on black: Evil spirit
Blue on green: Women's color
Blue on white: Devil's color
Blue on yellow: Old mourning
Red on blue: Old mourning
White on blue or black: Lower class mourning
Yellow on blue: Divine
Persian Rugs: The warrior, power and might

ASTROLOGY
Temple of Nebuchadnezzar:
Sixth level of building, devoted to the planet Mercury
Early Zodiac: Jupiter, ruling Sagittarius and Pisces

CULTURE COMPARISONS
American Indian: Feminine
Cherokee: Tribulation and defeat
China: Worn by emperor to worship the sky; blue button on cap worn by second ranking officials
Season: Spring
Egypt: Virtue, faith, truth
Gaul: Worn by slaves
Japan: In theater, color of villains, supernatural creatures, ghosts and fiends
Tibet:
Light blue: Celestial
United States: Baby boy

DIRECTION (cardinal points)
Apache, Cherokee, Omaha, Sioux: North
Creek, Navaho: South
Hopi, Isleta, Zuni: West
Tibet: South

C242→

POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Power, spirituality, royalty, love of truth, loyalty, empire, patience, humility, nostalgia, memories

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
Sublimation, martyrdom, mourning, regret, penitence, resignation, humility

CULTURE COMPARISONS
China: Worn by literary and educated figures; purple button on cap worn by third ranking officials
Egypt: Virtue and faith
Japan: Graceful, nobility
Rome: Royal hue of the Caesars

DIRECTION (cardinal points)
Ireland: East

EDUCATION (doctorate hoods)
France:
Purple: Science
Violet: Rector, administration
United States:
Purple: Law
Lilac: Dentistry

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
Chassis wiring: Power supply, minus
Circuits (Switzerland): Aerial, electroacoustic

ELEMENTS
Judaic (Josephus): Sea

FOLKLORE
Death:
Preparation for: Egyptian warrior carried amulets of purple stone
Medieval magicians' vestments: Purple on Sunday, works of light

GEMS
Amethyst: Cured and prevented drunkenness; faith, charity, peace and devotion, powers of endearment, cured gout, gave pleasant dreams when placed under pillow; birthstone for February

C243→

Symbol Sourcebook
Colour and Form

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



COLOR SECTION *(continued)*

occupations — and a spectacular mobile mosaic results as the men climb about the girders.

Although many authoritative studies have been published, we found no single source which explained the traditional and contemporary meanings of specific colors in specific contexts — and these vary widely in different cultures. Nor could we find material divided according to *color*, rather than subject.

The listing on the following pages is presented with real humility; both time and space preclude its being all-inclusive, for the subject clearly deserves many years of research and volumes of its own. But our selection has been made considering primarily the needs of those who have the task of selecting colors for a given environment, structure, product, sign, or other graphic design.

We are indebted to Faber Birren for permission to use his geometric forms to symbolize the first six colors listed and also for the interesting information that, although these geometric forms were original with him, he discovered sometime later that Wassily Kandinsky had made very similar associations of forms and colors — an example of coincidence of ideas so prevalent in basic thinking. As a matter of convenience in organizing this Section we have assigned shapes to the remaining colors as well.

The meaning of color has interested men from all cultures throughout the centuries — from the royal purple robes of ancient Greece to the red carpet we roll out for diplomatic occasions. The robe and the carpet each signals its special message by virtue of its color; take away the color and the message is gone.

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Accommodations and Travel

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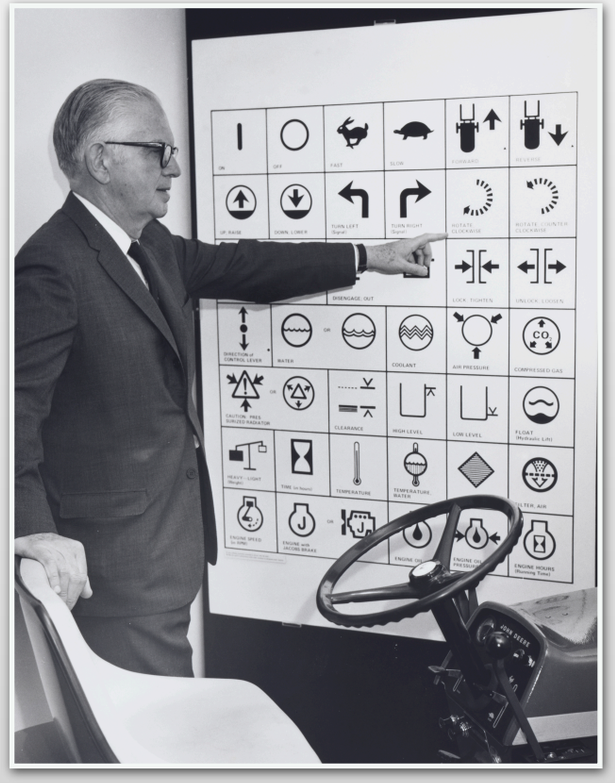
top Dreyfuss with symbols for John Deere tractors
below Symbol Sourcebook promotion
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***





Henry Dreyfuss' lifetime involvement with symbols

Industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss (1904-1972) was one of the most successful American industrial designers from the 1940-1960s. With his company, Henry Dreyfuss & Associates Dreyfuss was actively involved with individuals and organisations who wanted to develop and standardise symbols. The universal tractor symbols he designed for John Deere and his work on distance symbols for the Polaroid Swinger camera ably demonstrate his expertise in symbol design.

In 1969 Dreyfuss stepped away from his company to make way for the Symbol Project. Henry Dreyfuss & Associates dropped the ampersand and moved to New York under the leadership of new president Donald Genaro.

‘Breaking the Language Barrier’
Washington Post June 1967

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss’ *Symbol Sourcebook***



Expo Accelerates Pace

Breaking the Language Barrier

WASHINGTON—The capital's highway department has recently cluttered the cityscape with a new work of pop art that might be mildly amusing if it weren't so hideous, insipid and possibly even dangerous.

It points up the need for Alan S. Boyd, new secretary of transportation, to see that the United States gets with it and moves toward adoption of the new international language of traffic symbols.

The new sign, of which about 40 have been put up along Washington's residential streets, consists of a yellow diamond bearing the exhilarating message: "PED XING."

The idea, I surmise, is to warn drivers that a pedestrian might be crossing those streets.

The danger is that the mental exercise involved in deciphering this disingenious code may prove so diverting to the driver that some poor ped gets hurt while xing.

Past Tense

I'll admit that given some effort anyone with a college degree in cryptography and an above average IQ can figure it all out within a minute or two which, driving at legal speed, should be no farther than half a mile from the point the ped is presumed to X.

But what about people who never finished high school? There are rumors that there are quite a few of them on our roads. And what about the increasing number of foreign visitors.

There would be no trouble at all with the now internationally accepted road and traffic symbols. This one, being a warning sign, shows a red-framed triangle showing a man about to cross. The mandatory signs are circular. Information signs are square. All have simple pictures or pictograms on them and are "read" as quickly as they are seen.

The idea began in England over 40 years ago. At that time the British were fond of discreet little signs informing people, for instance, that:

British Railways
Hereby Give Notice
That This Way
Is Not Dedicated
To the Public.

It was a polite way of saying that a snorting steam engine might kill you if you trespassed and the lettering was handsome. But it took a bit of time to read and everyone was suddenly in a hurry. The British Motor Car Act (BMCA) of 1903 therefore decreed a uniform and more quickly intelligible system of road signs which began the use of simple symbols.

This system was subsequently refined by the automobile clubs of England, France and Germany. The old League of Nations and later the European Council of the United Nations officially adopted it and so, in 1965, did Canada.

U.S. Holds Out

The international road signs are now in use or being introduced in virtually all civilized countries in the world, including those behind the iron curtain. Only the United States, or, more specifically the Bureau of Public Roads, is still chauvinistically sticking to a rather chaotic roadside isolationism on the grounds that even a gradual changeover to the international pictograms would be too expensive. Why a new pictogram should cost more than old lettering is not explained.

The rest of the world, meanwhile, is extending the international symbol language to other areas to make international traffic and commerce easier for everyone. Every recent international event, such as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, advances the cause, and Expo 67 in Montreal is no exception.

Many of Expo's signs follow patterns established in other countries that are perfectly obvious. Restaurants, for instance, are represented by a stylized drawing of a plate, knife and fork; coffee shops by a coffee cup; public telephones by a receiver; public lockers by a suitcase and key and so forth.

Things that are prohibited, "interdict" or "verboten," are indicated by a red diagonal bar much as the international sign for "no parking" shows a P that is crossed out. "No standing," for instance, shows a standing man crossed out with another sitting unbothered right next to him.

But not all of Expo's pictograms are equally successful. "No admission," for instance, shows a hand held up, much as a policeman would. It is a little confusing and has misled some people, I am told, to thinking they should push against the forbidden door.

Another source of some confusion are the signs on the toilets. At close look they depict a man and a woman. But the silhouetted figures are so stylized that the difference is rather slight unless the two are placed close together for detailed comparison. (Expo is planning to enlarge the figures.)

This whole problem also troubles Soichi Kato, a Japanese-born business man in New York, who, as executive director of the International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier (ICBLB), devotes much time and energy to just that.

The Expo woman, with her short dress, he points out, would not do at all in many Asian and African countries where women do not wear short dresses. In these areas, in fact, it is the men who wear dress-like attire, while in Scotland it is the men who wear skirts.

Nor would Expo's use of a cross to designate "first aid" go very well in Moslem areas where the "moon and star" is the preferred symbol. And how do you symbolize "police?" Or any of the symbols vitally needed in the international trade of machinery, such as "stop," "start," "push," "pull," etc.?

Endorse Idea

Kato's committee has launched an ambitious research project to find the right pictograms for all of this. Many governments, he says, have already indicated their willingness to make use of the symbols that have found acceptable. And at a recent conference of the U.S. Standards Institute, various U.S. government and business organizations have endorsed the program.

Kato believes that by 1970 we will be able to travel in any city in the world and find our way around with the help of universally familiar pictures rather than a dictionary.

Expo and the Canadian example will undoubtedly help matters along in the U.S. According to Kato, New York's powerful traffic commissioner, Henry A. Barnes, strongly favors adoption of the international road symbols to bring the U.S. in step with the rest of the world.

In fact, Washington's two timid efforts to use symbols have been successful. One is the circular "no entry" sign with the white cross bar and the other is a sign at a tunnel warning by pictogram that there are traffic lights ahead.

Some day, perhaps, foreign visitors may move about in the U.S. without a dictionary. They'd never find PED XING in it, anyway.

Special to The Montreal Star from The Washington Post

Some Expo symbols that have become familiar

Lost-Found · Handicapped · Women's WC · Men's WC · Restaurant · Coffee Shop (refreshments)

Montreal Star May 6/67

Identification of need

The Symbol Project was something Dreyfuss had been actively working on since at least 1967 and was destined to be his retirement project. He conducted the project from his Pasadena office, which was built on the grounds of his home on 500 Columbia Street, South Pasadena, California.

Dreyfuss initiated the Symbol Project through a real desire to facilitate communication through symbols, and ‘break the language barrier’ a subject influencing many designers’ agendas during the ‘jet and machine’ age of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

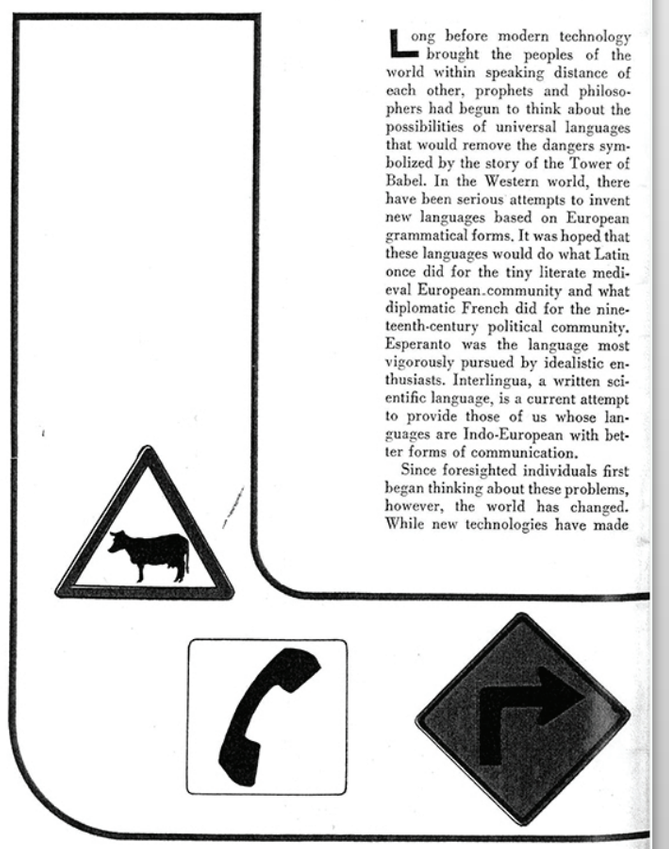
This article written as work for Expo ’67 picked up pace introduces the work of Soichi Kato from New York who launched an ambitious research project ICBLB - The International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier. to find the right pictograms to help navigate the city.

Pages from *Natural History* magazine
Margaret Mead and Rudolf Modley
August 1968

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***

COMMUNICATION AMONG

While preserving man's wealth of languages, we can achieve worldwide communication by adopting two languages and a system of signs that will be universally understood



Long before modern technology brought the peoples of the world within speaking distance of each other, prophets and philosophers had begun to think about the possibilities of universal languages that would remove the dangers symbolized by the story of the Tower of Babel. In the Western world, there have been serious attempts to invent new languages based on European grammatical forms. It was hoped that these languages would do what Latin once did for the tiny literate medieval European community and what diplomatic French did for the nineteenth-century political community. Esperanto was the language most vigorously pursued by idealistic enthusiasts. Interlingua, a written scientific language, is a current attempt to provide those of us whose languages are Indo-European with better forms of communication.

Since foresighted individuals first began thinking about these problems, however, the world has changed. While new technologies have made

by Margaret Mead and Rudolf Modley

ALL PEOPLE, EVERYWHERE

former dreams obsolete in detail, they are still relevant to the world's needs. Today we have to deal with new and demanding conditions. Anyone on this planet can travel to any part of it in 36 hours. But the people of the earth speak some 2,800 languages, and it would be impossible to provide enough interpreters at airports to aid these potential travelers. Even the simultaneous arrival at an airport of aircraft from a variety of countries, whose pilots speak only their own languages, occasionally causes difficulties at control towers.

These conditions present a challenge to the inventiveness of the modern world. To people who cannot travel, get on and off trains, ships, and airplanes, or find an inn because of language barriers, the new freedom of movement is meaningless.

The Instantaneous Message

A first requirement, then, for our technologically developed world is a set of clear, unambiguous signs that can be understood by the speakers of any language, and by the members of any culture, however primitive. These signs 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.

Such signs are necessary for all travelers—for the boy riding a bicycle as well as for the motorist in a large city. We call these signs glyphs.

Glyphs are the only universal graphic communications device that is in public use. They are beginning to appear on highways, in world's fairs, at hotels and inns, and on machines and appliances the world over.

Glyphs communicate visually. Their message provokes "visual thinking" instead of "verbal thinking." Visual thinking has a direct and immediate impact on the viewer: a picture of a horse is an image of a horse to all men. No further interpretation is required. Verbal thinking, on the other hand, requires a more complex process. The word *horse*, or *cheval* (French), or *Pferd* (German) has to be heard or read first, and only then (if he can speak or write the specific language) can the intended recipient of the message interpret the meaning.

The advantages of a glyph are thus twofold:

1. Glyphs don't require knowledge of a language, spoken or written. The message of a glyph is unambiguous, simple, and understandable to anybody who has once "learned it." An arrow pointing right means "turn right"; two moving legs mean "go."
2. Glyphs create a direct and immediate impact and thus permit immediate response. This applies as well to those who know a language as to those who do not. This immediacy of response saves thinking. What Alfred North Whitehead has said of mathematical notations applies also to glyphs: "By relieving the brain of

Glyphs—universal graphic symbols—should be immediately understandable. A symbol that shows an object's image fills this need, but such symbols (the telephone, for example) may become badly outdated. Concept-related symbols—the bent arrow (turn right), walking legs (go), and wavy line (water)—are clear and timeless. The question mark and plus sign are arbitrary symbols and give no clue to their meanings.

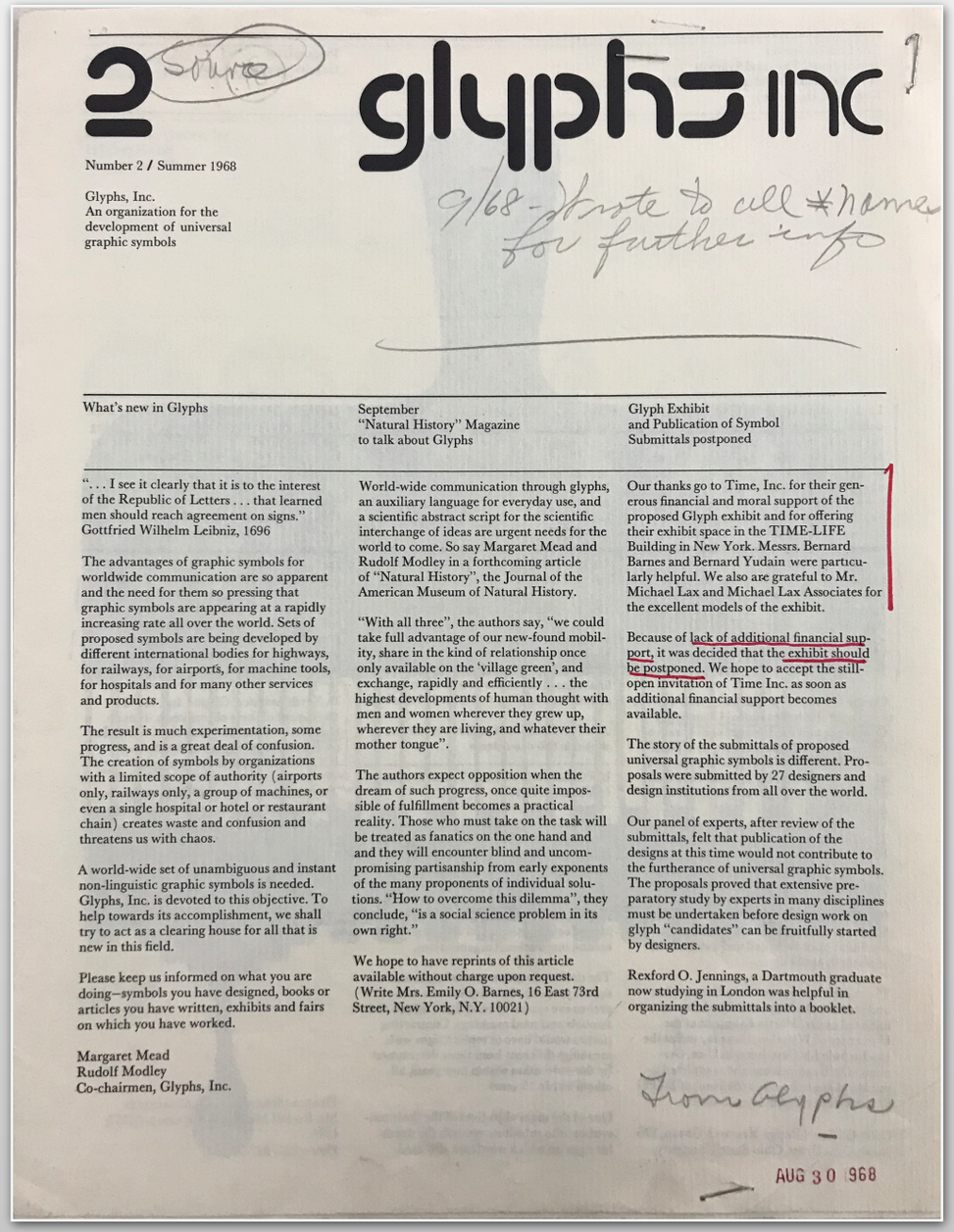


1. **Identification of need** 2. Information gathering 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development
5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

1

Pages from Glyphs inc., Newsletter 2 1968
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



2 glyphs inc

Number 2 / Summer 1968

Glyphs, Inc.
An organization for the development of universal graphic symbols

9/68 - Wrote to all *Names for further info

What's new in Glyphs

September
"Natural History" Magazine
to talk about Glyphs

Glyph Exhibit
and Publication of Symbol
Submittals postponed

". . . I see it clearly that it is to the interest of the Republic of Letters . . . that learned men should reach agreement on signs."
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, 1696

The advantages of graphic symbols for worldwide communication are so apparent and the need for them so pressing that graphic symbols are appearing at a rapidly increasing rate all over the world. Sets of proposed symbols are being developed by different international bodies for highways, for railways, for airports, for machine tools, for hospitals and for many other services and products.

The result is much experimentation, some progress, and is a great deal of confusion. The creation of symbols by organizations with a limited scope of authority (airports only, railways only, a group of machines, or even a single hospital or hotel or restaurant chain) creates waste and confusion and threatens us with chaos.

A world-wide set of unambiguous and instant non-linguistic graphic symbols is needed. Glyphs, Inc. is devoted to this objective. To help towards its accomplishment, we shall try to act as a clearing house for all that is new in this field.

Please keep us informed on what you are doing—symbols you have designed, books or articles you have written, exhibits and fairs on which you have worked.

Margaret Mead
Rudolf Modley
Co-chairmen, Glyphs, Inc.

World-wide communication through glyphs, an auxiliary language for everyday use, and a scientific abstract script for the scientific interchange of ideas are urgent needs for the world to come. So say Margaret Mead and Rudolf Modley in a forthcoming article of "Natural History", the Journal of the American Museum of Natural History.

"With all three", the authors say, "we could take full advantage of our new-found mobility, share in the kind of relationship once only available on the 'village green', and exchange, rapidly and efficiently . . . the highest developments of human thought with men and women wherever they grew up, wherever they are living, and whatever their mother tongue".

The authors expect opposition when the dream of such progress, once quite impossible of fulfillment becomes a practical reality. Those who must take on the task will be treated as fanatics on the one hand and and they will encounter blind and uncompromising partisanship from early exponents of the many proponents of individual solutions. "How to overcome this dilemma", they conclude, "is a social science problem in its own right."

We hope to have reprints of this article available without charge upon request. (Write Mrs. Emily O. Barnes, 16 East 73rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021)

Our thanks go to Time, Inc. for their generous financial and moral support of the proposed Glyph exhibit and for offering their exhibit space in the TIME-LIFE Building in New York. Messrs. Bernard Barnes and Bernard Yudain were particularly helpful. We also are grateful to Mr. Michael Lax and Michael Lax Associates for the excellent models of the exhibit.

Because of lack of additional financial support, it was decided that the exhibit should be postponed. We hope to accept the still-open invitation of Time Inc. as soon as additional financial support becomes available.

The story of the submittals of proposed universal graphic symbols is different. Proposals were submitted by 27 designers and design institutions from all over the world.

Our panel of experts, after review of the submittals, felt that publication of the designs at this time would not contribute to the furtherance of universal graphic symbols. The proposals proved that extensive preparatory study by experts in many disciplines must be undertaken before design work on glyph "candidates" can be fruitfully started by designers.

Rexford O. Jennings, a Dartmouth graduate now studying in London was helpful in organizing the submittals into a booklet.

From Glyphs

AUG 30 968



BDMW Associates Ltd.
3 Bloomsbury Place
London WC 1

Peter Wildbur, the author of "Trademarks—a handbook of international designs" (Reinhold Publishers, New York) has sent the symbol for Resilience, Ltd., designed for a wire manufacturer specializing in wire springs. The other symbol was designed for Sound Systems, Ltd. and uses the initial letters as a printed circuit.

Selame Associates, Inc.
2330 Washington Street
Newton Lower Falls, Mass. 02162

An author of many articles on design and a teacher at Boston University/Metropolitan College since 1961, Joseph Selame has designed symbols for Stop and Shop supermarkets, Montessori Children's House and others.

Stop & Shop

Who is doing what

Willemijn and Pieter Brattinga
Prinsengracht 628, Amsterdam, Holland
have published signs and signatures in the Drukkers Weekblad/Autolijn. Pieter Brattinga is active in ICOGRADA.

Lawrence K. Frank
18 Goden St., Belmont, Mass. 02178, USA
is a director of Glyphs. He has written the lead chapter of "The World as a Communications Network" for "Sign, Symbol, Image," edited by Gyorgy Kepes (Braziller, New York)

Gerd Frankel
George Peabody College for Teachers, Box 81, Nashville, Tenn. 37203, USA
has published an excellent little book called "Writing Systems" (Ginn & Co., Boston, Mass.). He is planning a short review of Blissymbolics.

Professor James J. Gibson
Graduate Research Laboratories, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850, USA,
author of "The Perception of the Visual World" has two chapters on the structuring of light by the environment and by artifice in his "Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems" (both published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston). Pictures, writing, and their intermediates are included.

Elizabeth S. Helfman
1031 East 32nd Street,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210, USA
has written a book "Signs and Symbols Around the World" which was published by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York.

Leon A. Jacobovits
Center for Comparative Linguistics,
107 West Oregon, Urbana, Ill. 61801
reports on the work on a "Graphic Differential." The Center has administered 64 graphic scales to monolingual subjects in six different cultures. The goal is to develop a graphic equivalent of the Center's pancultural semantic differential.

Gyorgy Kepes
Professor of Visual Design, Mass. Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
"Sign, Image, Symbol," the sixth volume in the Vision and Value series has been published in England by Studio Vista. The jacket design is by Peter Wildbur. The volume has contributions by Glyphs directors L. K. Frank and Rudolf Modley.

Peter Kneebone
Chairman of the Commission on International Signs and Symbols of ICOGRADA, 37 Ennerdale Road, Kew Gardens, Surrey, England
addressed the International Typographic Association during a Congress devoted to "The Sign in the Century of the Image."

Martin Krampen
Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, Germany
is working on a research program for ICOGRADA. Dr. Krampen attended the Montreal meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Panel on Airport Signs.

Dr. Bernard I. Levy
Department of Psychiatry, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA
has laid out "symbol spelling principles" in a paper on the "Orthography of Chart Symbols." In it, he discusses a possible research program for a small-craft chart series.

Robert Meldau
Technische Hochschule,
Hannover, Germany
has recently published "Zeichen, Warenzeichen, Marken" (Verlag Dr. Max Gehlen, Bad Homburg v.d.H., Germany).

Marie Neurath
Isotype Institute, 116 Haverstock Hill, London NW 3, England
has published the most recent one of her Isotype books, "Living with one Another" (Franklin Watts, New York).

* Ryszard Otreba
Faculty of Industrial Design,
Academy of Fine Arts, Cracow, Poland
published comments on the information values of road signs in "Fragments of Scientific Research Qualifying for Diploma Papers." The volume also contains interesting photographic and abstract experiments on showing hand and finger motions for "Press," "Push," and "Pull."

Prof. Mario Pei
Philosophy Hall, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027, USA
His discussion of nonlinguistic forms of communications in the most recent editions of his "Story of Language" and "Story of the English Language" (Lippincott) mention graphic symbols.

Oliver L. Reiser
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213
participated in a symposium on "Language and World Order" at Central Washington State College. Reiser believes a world language is needed for satellite communication. He is much interested in graphic communication, especially in the work of C. K. Bliss.

Jaques Richez
Avenue des Chenes, Rhode-St. Genese, Belgium
has recently published "L'Art Graphique appliqué à la Publicité" (Editions Comptables, Bruxelles I). He has designed a poster for the Belgian Technical Week in Warsaw and a symbol for "Belgian Quality."

Herman M. Weisman
National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. 20234
is interested in the General Purpose Scientific Document Image Code (GPSDIC) which will relieve scientists of the chore of changing notations to meet arbitrary limitations imposed by machine processing. GPSDIC permits a scientific typescript with complex symbolism to be transferred to digital machine form.

Design: Gerhard Doerrié New York, N.Y.

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM LIBRARY
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HENRY DREYFUSS ARCHIVE

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1. **Identification of need** 2. Information gathering 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development 5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

1

Symbol projects 1940-1972

1940 'Dictionary of Graphic Symbols in Current Use in America' project involving Rudolf Modley & Harold Lassiter

1942 *1000 Pictorial Symbols* book compiled by Rudolf Modley

1958-59 'Preparatory Survey on Communication through Graphic Symbols' part funded project involving Marie Neurath, Rudolf Modley, Martin Krampen and Henry Dreyfuss

1962 'A Feasibility Study for the Creation of a Dictionary of Symbols and the Development of a Universal Symbolic Language' project involving Rudolf Modley & Herman Weisman

1966-76 Glyphs Inc., non profit organisation for the development of universal symbols formed by Rudolf Modley & Margaret Mead

1966-76 'Glyphs' newsletter designed by Rudolf Modley

1970 'Project for Creating Archives', 'Data Bank' archive collection projects involving Glyphs Inc. & Henry Dreyfuss

1972 Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook* published

Pages from *THINK* magazine
George A W Boehm
Nov – Dec 1968, Vol 34, No.6 published by IBM
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A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



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A New Sign Language— Straight Ahead

by George A. W. Boehm

Many a tourist has found himself losing something in the translation—his way, usually—and the problem is far more serious for international airlines, highway officials, industries heavily involved in export-import. A universal sign language, many authorities believe, could go a long way toward coping with the babel of our society.

Fragile . . . Emergency Exit . . .
Keep off the Grass . . .
Lifeguard on Duty . . . Wet Paint . . .
Turn Right to the Football Stadium . . .
Pedestrian Crossing . . . No Smoking . . .
Restrooms Downstairs . . . Free Parking . . .
Danger, Blasting . . . Oil Pressure Gauge . . .
Merry Christmas . . .

So many elementary ideas must be relayed to such a variety of people, and yet, there is no completely satisfactory way to make them clear to everyone. Ordinary languages, written or spoken, can no longer bear the whole burden of communication among people of different backgrounds. A worldwide crisis in comprehension bedevils public safety officials, managers of international airports, manufacturers of machinery, cartoonists, designers of posters, and others who want to make themselves instantly intelligible. They need a common language —one that will function as smoothly in everyday life as church Latin, diplomatic French, Morse code and mathematical notation have among specialists.

Oddly enough, the very developments that are knitting the world together aggravate the problem. With jet travel, no corner of the world is more than a couple of days away. Any two people can exchange messages electronically within minutes. And the world thrusts itself upon all people, even those who seldom venture out of their neighborhoods. Booming international trade is putting unfamiliar products with inscrutable labels into millions of homes; international television will soon fill the air with new ideas voiced in strange tongues.

What should be the new lingua franca? A sign language, more or less standardized, according to Margaret Mead, the grande dame of anthropology, and graphic designer Rudolf Modley. They are co-chairmen of a young scholarly organization called Glyphs, Inc., which aims to develop universally understandable graphic symbols. A basic requirement for a technologically developed world, they explained in a recent issue of *Natural History*, "is a set of clear, unambiguous signs that can be understood by the speakers of any language, and by members of any culture, however primitive. These signs 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."

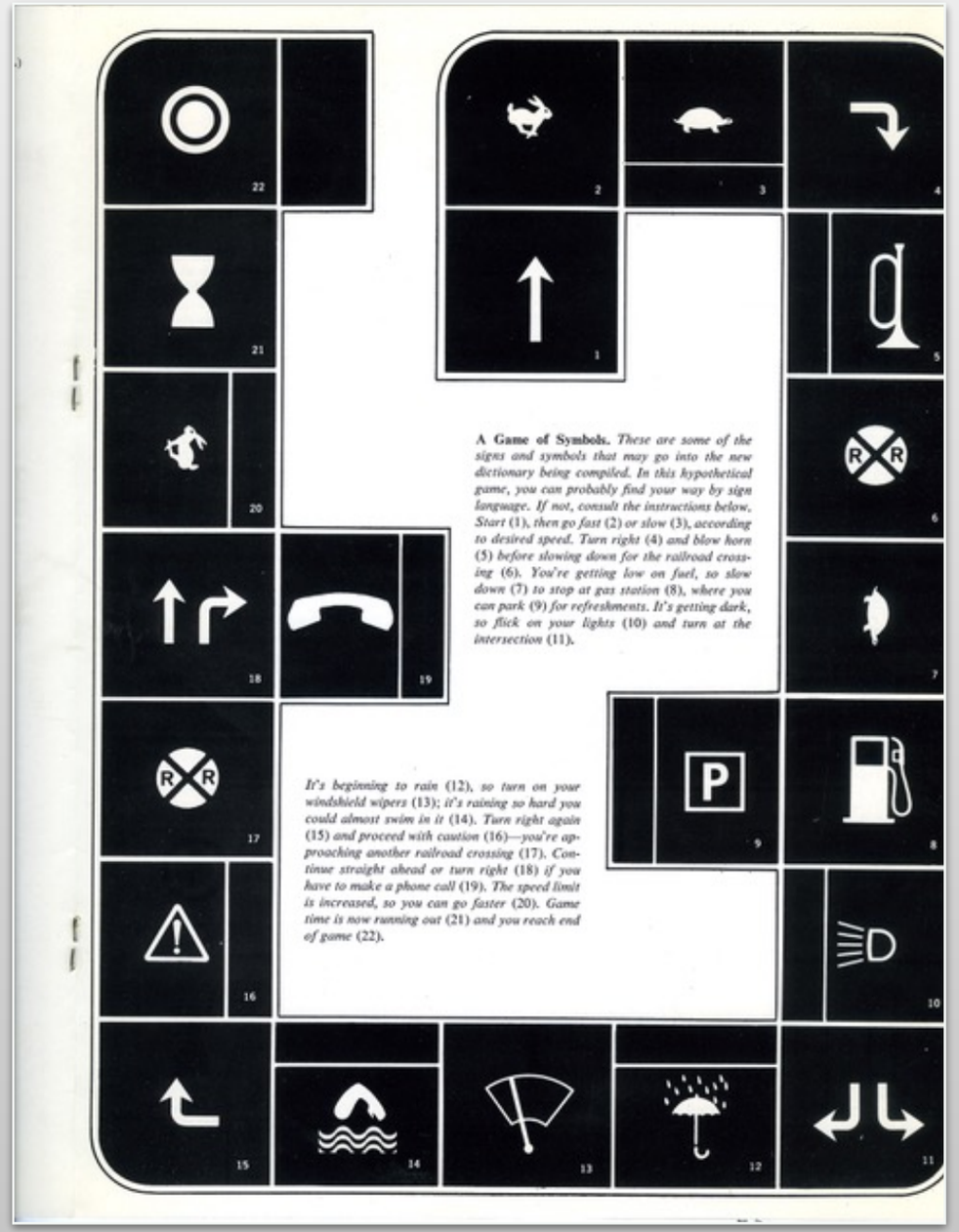
The objectives of Glyphs, Inc., have been widely acclaimed by scholars, businessmen and others who view the world as a whole. Now a somewhat more concrete proposal has stirred up added excitement.

The noted U.S. industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss has decided independently to compile a "dictionary" of all the signs and symbols in common use throughout the world, and to explore which of them work well and why. Aided by a skeleton staff in his Pasadena office, he has completed a preliminary study, which was supported by a modest grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The whole project will probably cost about $1,000,000 and will preempt a great deal of Dreyfuss' time for several years. He wants to enlist a staff of advisers from every part of the globe, who will not only help collect symbols in use but also judge which of them can be safely transported from one culture to another.

Hare-Tortoise or Cheetah-Snail?

For example, Dreyfuss himself in designing machinery has used the hare and the tortoise to indicate fast and slow. This is all very well for people whose folklore includes Aesop's fables. But in parts of Asia, he suspects, a cheetah and a snail might be better comprehended.

Dreyfuss is currently busy rounding up financial backing for the project. Several publishers who have gone over the plans expect that worldwide sales of the dictionary will be so great over a period



1. **Identification of need** **2.** Information gathering **3.** Development design strategy **4.** Design development
5. Evaluation **6.** Redesign/refinement **7.** Implementation **8.** Performance evaluation **9.** Design revision

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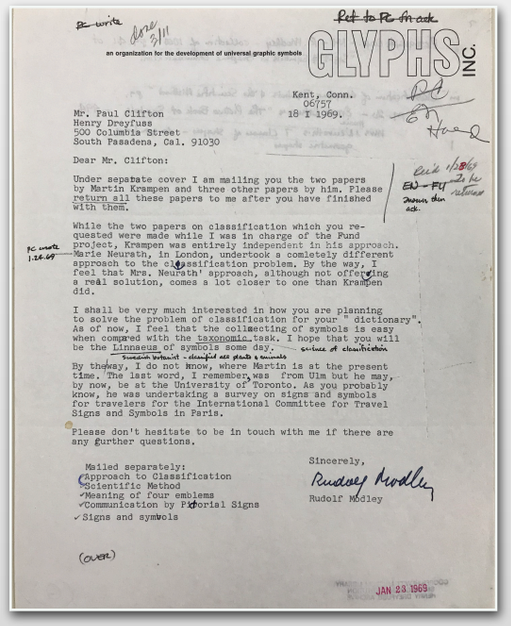


an organization for the development of universal graphic symbols

GLYPHS INC.

Kent, Conn.
06757
18 I 1969.

Mr. Paul Clifton
Henry Dreyfuss
500 Columbia Street
South Pasadena, Cal. 91030

Dear Mr. Clifton:

Under separate cover I am mailing you the two papers by Martin Krampen and three other papers by him. Please return all these papers to me after you have finished with them.

While the two papers on classification which you requested were made while I was in charge of the Fund project, Krampen was entirely independent in his approach. Marie Neurath, in London, undertook a completely different approach to the classification problem. By the way, I feel that Mrs. Neurath' approach, although not offering a real solution, comes a lot closer to one than Krampen did.

I shall be very much interested in how you are planning to solve the problem of classification for your "dictionary". As of now, I feel that the collecting of symbols is easy when compared with the taxonomic task. I hope that you will be the Linnaeus of symbols some day.

By the way, I do not know, where Martin is at the present time. The last word, I remember, was from Ulm but he may, by now, be at the University of Toronto. As you probably know, he was undertaking a survey on signs and symbols for travelers for the International Committee for Travel Signs and Symbols in Paris.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with me if there are any further questions.

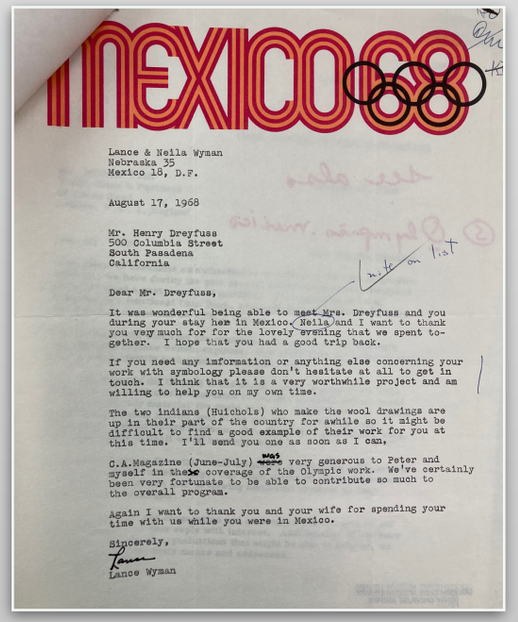
Sincerely,

Rudolf Modley

Mailed separately:
✓Approach to Classification
✓Scientific Method
✓Meaning of four emblems
✓Communication by Pictorial Signs
✓Signs and symbols

(over)

JAN 23 1969



MEXICO 68

Lance & Neila Wyman
Nebraska 35
Mexico 18, D.F.

August 17, 1968

Mr. Henry Dreyfuss
500 Columbia Street
South Pasadena
California

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

It was wonderful being able to meet Mrs. Dreyfuss and you during your stay here in Mexico. Neila and I want to thank you very much for for the lovely evening that we spent together. I hope that you had a good trip back.

If you need any imformation or anything else concerning your work with symbology please don't hesitate at all to get in touch. I think that it is a very worthwhile project and am willing to help you on my own time.

The two indians (Huichols) who make the wool drawings are up in their part of the country for awhile so it might be difficult to find a good example of their work for you at this time. I'll send you one as soon as I can,

C.A.Magazine (June-July) was very generous to Peter and myself in their coverage of the Olympic work. We've certainly been very fortunate to be able to contribute so much to the overall program.

Again I want to thank you and your wife for spending your time with us while you were in Mexico.

Sincerely,

Lance Wyman

Information gathering

Dreyfuss had been collecting symbols for many years and was in contact with the best symbol consultants of the day: Marie Neurath (Isotype), Charles Bliss (Semantography) Peter Kneebone (Icograda), Martin Krampen, Masaru Katsumi, Faber Birren and Kandinski (colour) and Rudolf Modley and Margaret Mead (Glyphs Inc.) amongst many others) to consult on classification systems, use of colour, shape, form and disciplines.

Rudolf Modley features extensively in archival material during the late 1960s. Dreyfuss contracted him to complete international symbol fact-finding trips to seek support from veteran symbol experts. Letters going back as far as 1965 demonstrate that Dreyfuss is writing to international designers and symbol consultants including Saul Bass, Paul Rand, Lance Wyman, Massimo Vignelli, Michael Woolf and many more famous designers of the time.

Correspondence

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A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



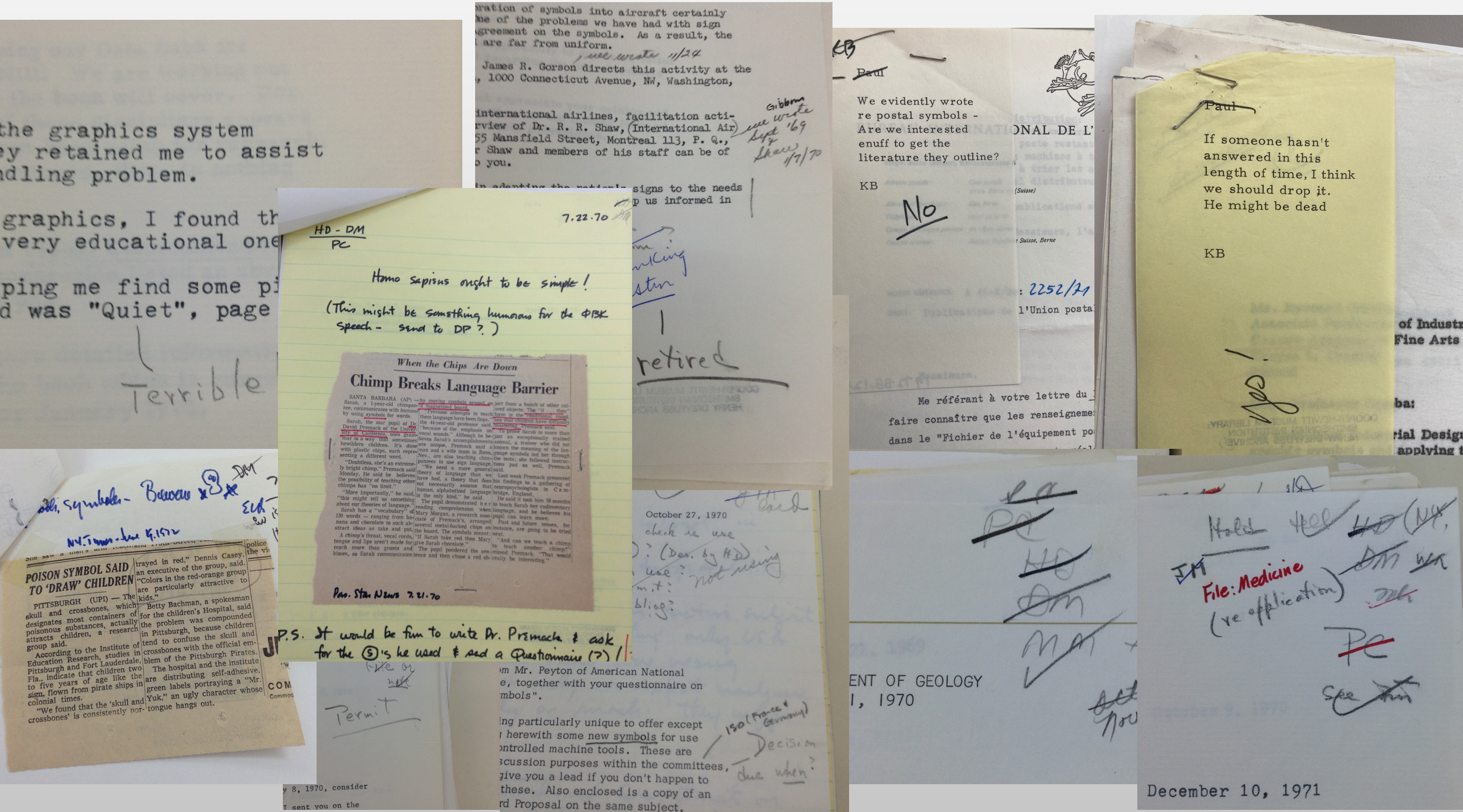
1. Identification of need 2. **Information gathering** 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development 5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

2

Correspondence

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum,
Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



1. Identification of need 2. **Information gathering** 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development
5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

2

Symbol questionnaire sent out to collect symbols and symbol related information

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



HENRY DREYFUSS 500 COLUMBIA STREET · SOUTH PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91030 · TELEPHONE (213) 799-7151

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 standardization 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 express the meaning of an object or action and 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.

Caution

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

Keep Dry

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

Poison

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

Telephone

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.

Machine stop

WHAT KINDS 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 organization. However, some marks, such as the "red cross", have gone beyond merely identifying an organization and are considered as generic symbols.

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

WHERE TO LOOK

Symbols can be found practically anywhere in daily life. They are often encountered in local businesses, 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 standardization organizations, professional and trade associations, schools, universities and research institutions, consumer and governmental agencies, unions, and philanthropic organizations.

PUSH and PULL - Sometimes the simplest phrases are the hardest to symbolize! 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 symbol, 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 facsimilie.

If illustrations are available only in black and white, but color is significant to their meaning please add appropriate notations. (If illustrations are in color, tell us whether color 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 standardized? How widely used? By which Disciplines? How were they derived? Tested? Is meaning affected by shape, texture or movement?

2

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.

#26

Symbol #26
Meaning: "NO SMOKING"
Application: on signs in French railroad station.
Color: red "X" is essential.
Source: Int'l. Union of Railways
14, rue Jean Rey
75 Paris XVe, 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 & Machinery; Fishery; Forestry; Livestock; Safety.

ANTHROPOLOGY
incl. Archeology; Cultural & Physical.

ARCHITECTURE
incl. Building Construction (materials, equipment); Commercial & Public; Drafting; Landscape; Planning; Residential.

ARTS
incl. Art Galleries & Museums; Drawing; History; Painting; Print Making; Sculpture.

ASTRONOMY
incl. Astronomical Geography; Celestrial Navigation; Chronology; Descriptive Astronomy & Astrophysics; Observatories; Theoretical.

BIOLOGY
incl. Embryology; Marine Biology; Microbiology (Microscopes); Organic Evolution.

BOTANY
incl. Plant Pathology.

BUSINESS
incl. Advertising; Machines for Printing, Publishing & Bookbinding; Management; Marketing; Office Equipment; Procedures & Techniques.

CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY
incl. Ceramics & Masonry; Cleaning & Dyeing; Food Technology; Fuels; Metallurgy; Paints, Varnishes, Adhesives & Plastics; Perfumery & Cosmetology.

CHEMISTRY
incl. Analytic; Crystallography & Mineralogy; Inorganic; Laboratory Apparatus & Equipment; Organic.

3

Dreyfuss database numbered many thousands of symbols, but he needed to make sure that his collection was as comprehensive as possible. To do this he sent out this questionnaire asking everyone from his extensive database along with new contacts to send their symbols.

1. Identification of need **2. Information gathering** 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development 5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

2

Publications by Dreyfuss, Clifton and Purcell circa 1970
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

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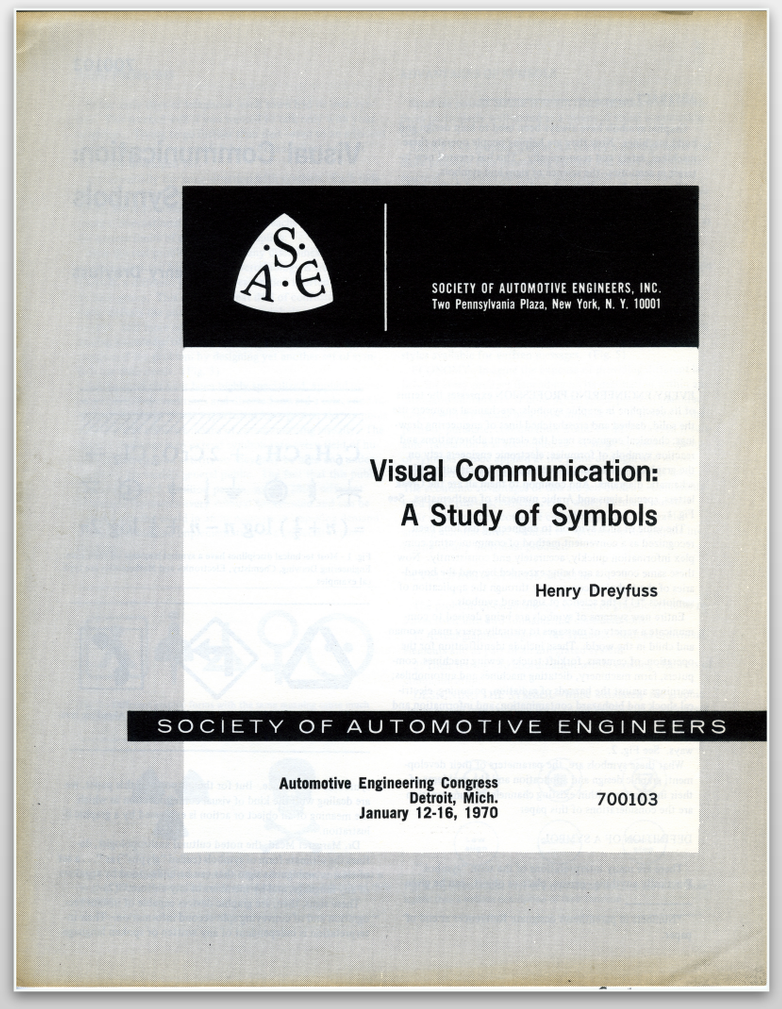

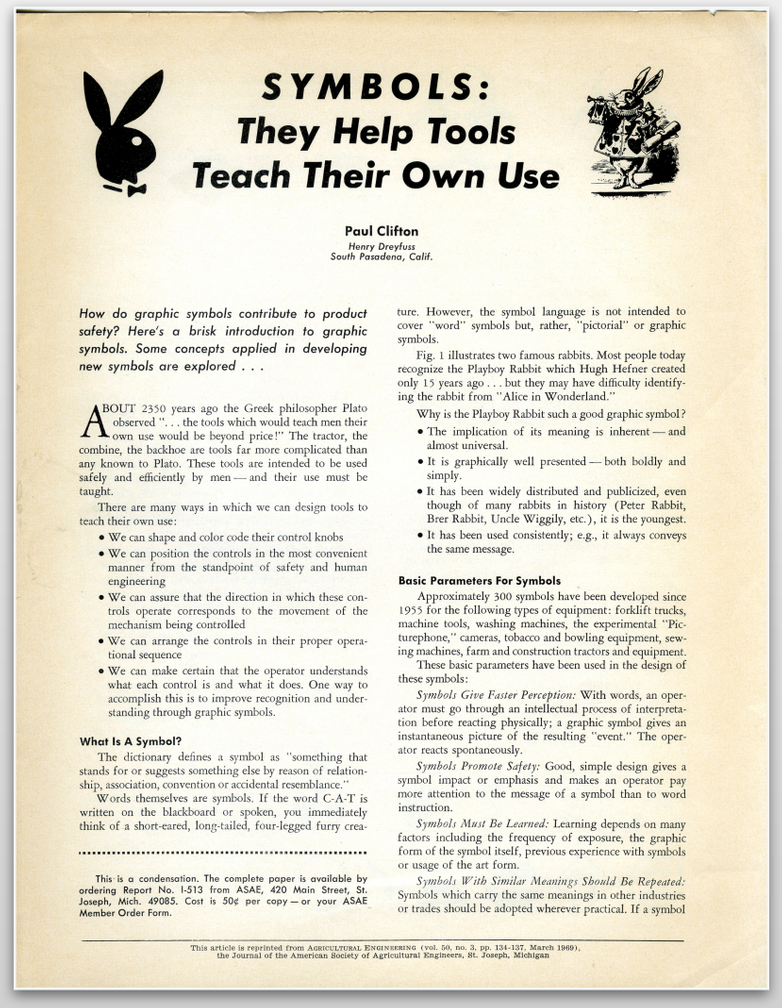

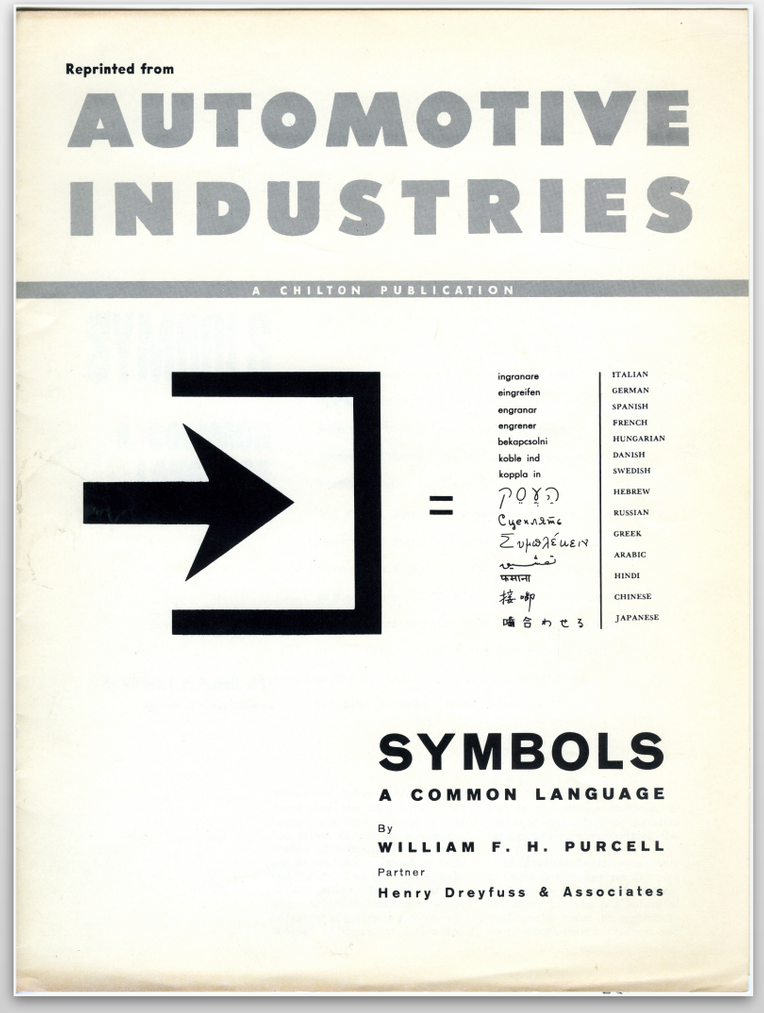

Dreyfuss, Clifton and their associates were also actively writing about symbols as can be seen from these 1970 publications.

1. Identification of need **2. Information gathering** **3.** Development design strategy **4.** Design development
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Pages from the *Symbol Sourcebook* showing consultants who provided help and expertise in the process
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

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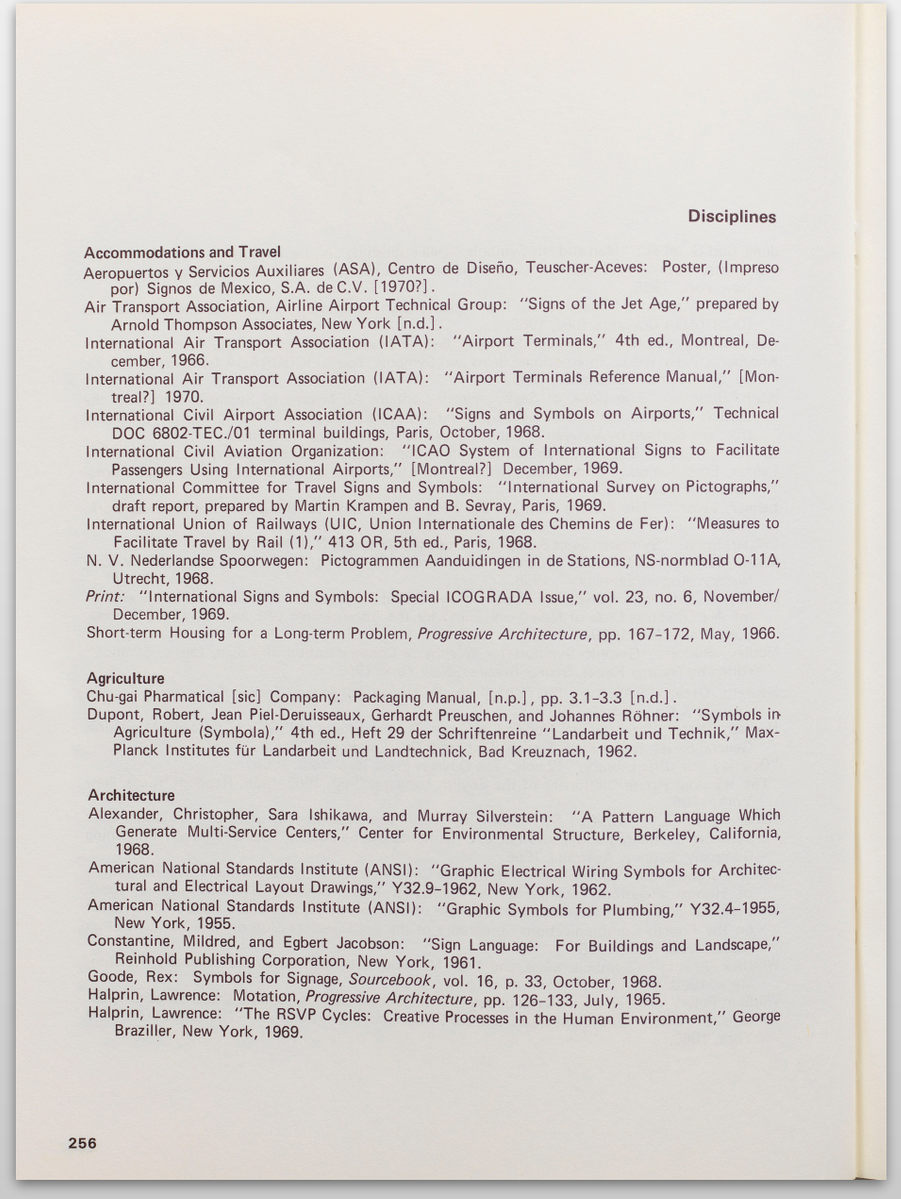


Accommodations and Travel

Aeropuertos y Servicios Auxiliares (ASA), Centro de Diseño, Teuscher-Aceves: Poster, (Impreso por) Signos de Mexico, S.A. de C.V. [1970?].

Air Transport Association, Airline Airport Technical Group: "Signs of the Jet Age," prepared by Arnold Thompson Associates, New York [n.d.].

International Air Transport Association (IATA): "Airport Terminals," 4th ed., Montreal, December, 1966.

International Air Transport Association (IATA): "Airport Terminals Reference Manual," [Montreal?] 1970.

International Civil Airport Association (ICAA): "Signs and Symbols on Airports," Technical DOC 6802-TEC./01 terminal buildings, Paris, October, 1968.

International Civil Aviation Organization: "ICAO System of International Signs to Facilitate Passengers Using International Airports," [Montreal?] December, 1969.

International Committee for Travel Signs and Symbols: "International Survey on Pictographs," draft report, prepared by Martin Krampen and B. Sevray, Paris, 1969.

International Union of Railways (UIC, Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer): "Measures to Facilitate Travel by Rail (1)," 413 OR, 5th ed., Paris, 1968.

N. V. Nederlandse Spoorwegen: Pictogrammen Aanduidingen in de Stations, NS-normblad O-11A, Utrecht, 1968.

Print: "International Signs and Symbols: Special ICOGRADA Issue," vol. 23, no. 6, November/December, 1969.

Short-term Housing for a Long-term Problem, *Progressive Architecture*, pp. 167–172, May, 1966.

Agriculture

Chu-gai Pharmatical [sic] Company: Packaging Manual, [n.p.], pp. 3.1–3.3 [n.d.].

Dupont, Robert, Jean Piel-Deruisseaux, Gerhardt Preuschen, and Johannes Röhner: "Symbols in Agriculture (Symbola)," 4th ed., Heft 29 der Schriftenreine "Landarbeit und Technik," Max-Planck Institutes für Landarbeit und Landtechnick, Bad Kreuznach, 1962.

Architecture

Alexander, Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein: "A Pattern Language Which Generate Multi-Service Centers," Center for Environmental Structure, Berkeley, California, 1968.

American National Standards Institute (ANSI): "Graphic Electrical Wiring Symbols for Architectural and Electrical Layout Drawings," Y32.9–1962, New York, 1962.

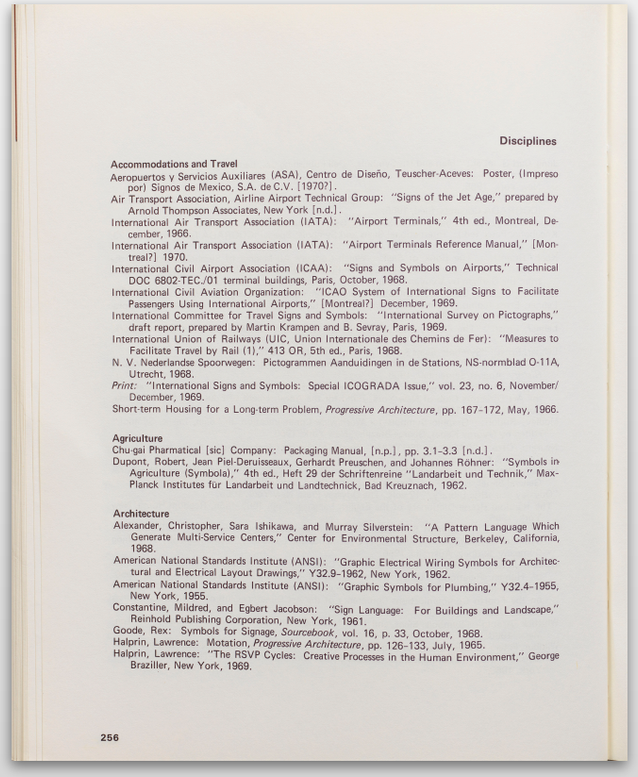
American National Standards Institute (ANSI): "Graphic Symbols for Plumbing," Y32.4–1955, New York, 1955.

Constantine, Mildred, and Egbert Jacobson: "Sign Language: For Buildings and Landscape," Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York, 1961.

Goode, Rex: Symbols for Signage, *Sourcebook*, vol. 16, p. 33, October, 1968.

Halprin, Lawrence: Motation, *Progressive Architecture*, pp. 126–133, July, 1965.

Halprin, Lawrence: "The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment," George Braziller, New York, 1969.



Accommodations and Travel

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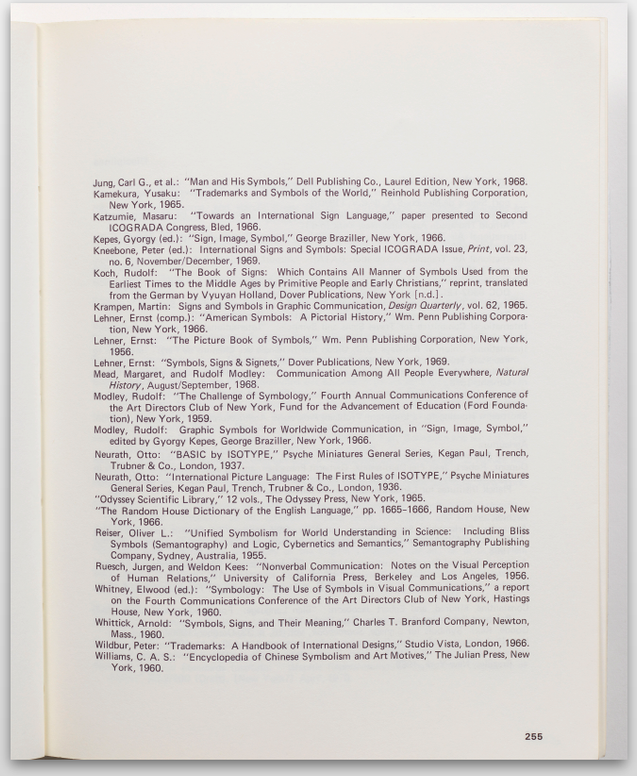

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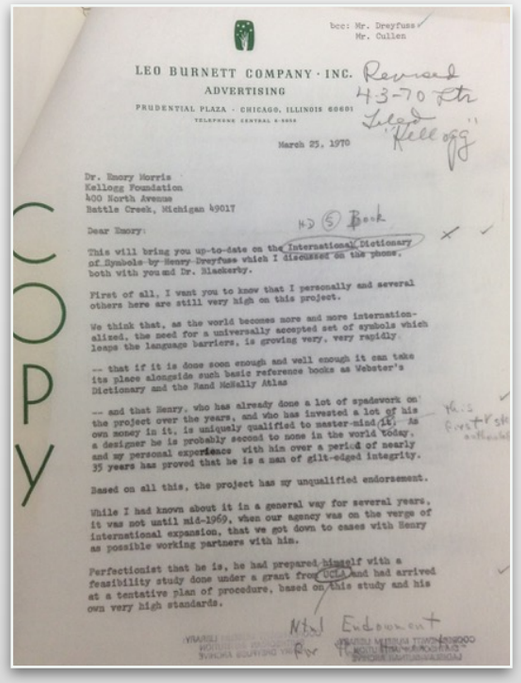
Whitney, Elwood (ed.): "Symbology: The Use of Symbols in Visual Communications," a report on the Fourth Communications Conference of the Art Directors Club of New York, Hastings House, New York, 1960.
Whittick, Arnold: "Symbols, Signs, and Their Meaning," Charles T. Branford Company, Newton, Mass., 1960.
Wildbur, Peter: "Trademarks: A Handbook of International Designs," Studio Vista, London, 1966.
Williams, C. A. S.: "Encyclopedia of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives," The Julian Press, New York, 1960.

Dreyfuss also consulted hundreds of subject experts as can be seen in the back of the *Symbol Sourcebook* listing standards organisations and consultants discipline by discipline.

Correspondence Leo Burnett and Henry Dreyfuss 1970
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive



bcc: Mr. Dreyfuss
Mr. Cullen

LEO BURNETT COMPANY · INC. Revised 43-70 Ltr
ADVERTISING
PRUDENTIAL PLAZA · CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601
TELEPHONE CENTRAL 6-5959

March 25, 1970

Dr. Emory Morris
Kellogg Foundation
400 North Avenue
Battle Creek, Michigan 49017

Dear Emory:

This will bring you up-to-date on the International Dictionary of Symbols by Henry Dreyfuss which I discussed on the phone, both with you and Dr. Blakerby.

First of all, I want you to know that I personally and several others here are still very high on this project.

We think that, as the world becomes more and more internationalized, the need for a universally accepted set of symbols which leaps the language barriers, is growing very, very rapidly.

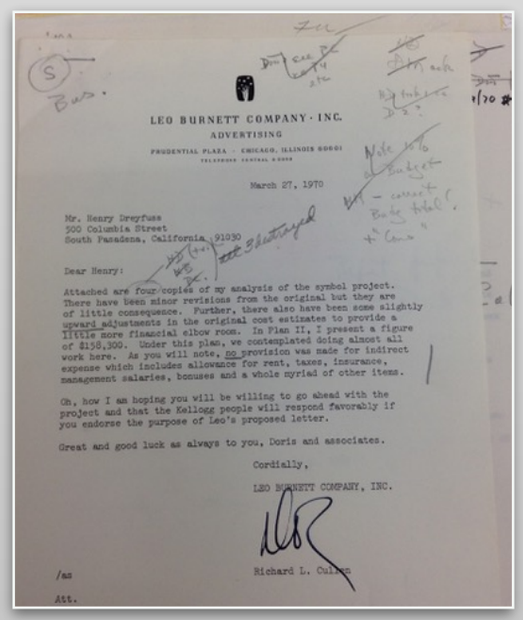
-- that if it is done soon enough and well enough it can take its place alongside such basic reference books as Webster's Dictionary and the Rand McNally Atlas

-- and that Henry, who has already done a lot of spadework on the project over the years, and who has invested a lot of his own money in it, is uniquely qualified to master-mind it. As a designer he is probably second to none in the world today, and my personal experience with him over a period of nearly 35 years has proved that he is a man of gilt-edged integrity.

Based on all this, the project has my unqualified endorsement.

While I had known about it in a general way for several years, it was not until mid-1969, when our agency was on the verge of international expansion, that we got down to cases with Henry as possible working partners with him.

Perfectionist that he is, he had prepared himself with a feasibility study done under a grant from UCLA and had arrived at a tentative plan of procedure, based on this study and his own very high standards.



LEO BURNETT COMPANY · INC.
ADVERTISING
PRUDENTIAL PLAZA · CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601

March 27, 1970

Mr. Henry Dreyfuss
500 Columbia Street
South Pasadena, California 91030

Dear Henry:

Attached are four copies of my analysis of the symbol project. There have been minor revisions from the original but they are of little consequence. Further, there also have been some slightly upward adjustments in the original cost estimates to provide a little more financial elbow room. In Plan II, I present a figure of $158,300. Under this plan, we contemplated doing almost all work here. As you will note, no provision was made for indirect expense which includes allowance for rent, taxes, insurance, management salaries, bonuses and a whole myriad of other items.

Oh, how I am hoping you will be willing to go ahead with the project and that the Kellogg people will respond favorably if you endorse the purpose of Leo's proposed letter.

Great and good luck as always to you, Doris and associates.

Cordially,

LEO BURNETT COMPANY, INC.

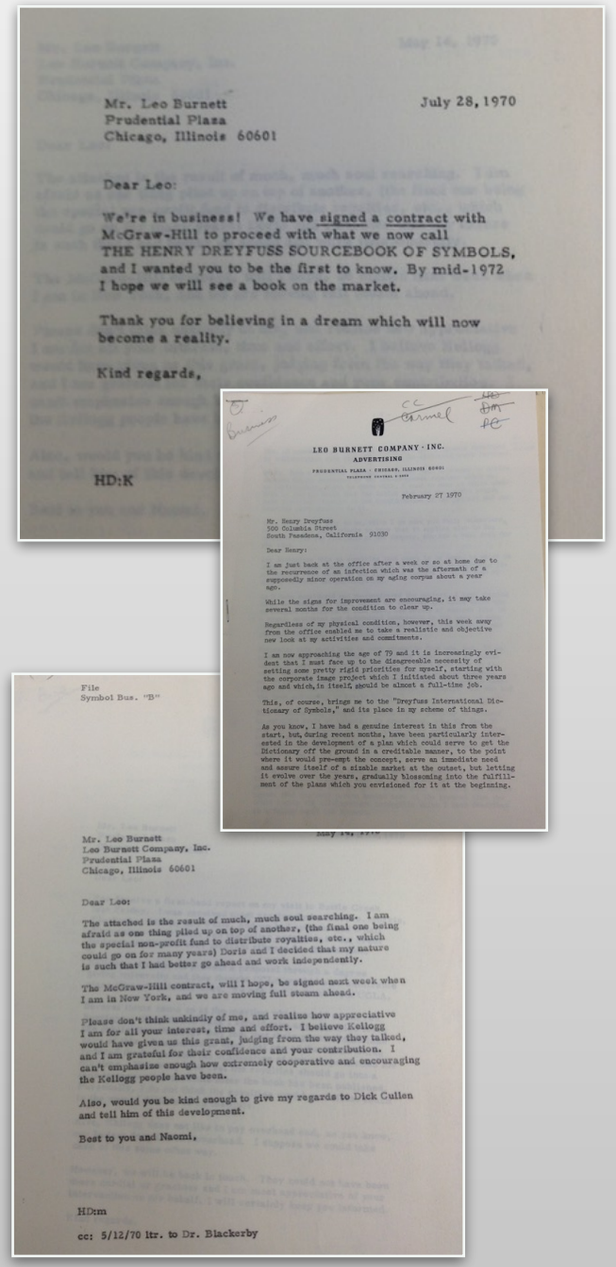
Richard L. Cullen

/as
Att.

Development of the design strategy

In 1969 a feasibility study was conducted by Dick Cullen, Leo Burnett Company Inc's project administrator to investigate the logistics and financial implications of producing the 'Symbol Compendium' (as it was known in 1969) in their Chicago headquarters. Leo Burnett, an old friend of Dreyfuss was keen to be a partner in the project. Burnett personally recommended Dreyfuss' project to the Kellogg Foundation for possible funding and they looked very favourably on it.

The archive holds extensive correspondence exchanged between Dreyfuss and Burnett's offices from June 1969 to 1970 along with the detailed feasibility study.



Development of the design strategy

Sadly due to ill health, Burnett had to pull out of the project (he died in June 1971). Project manager Paul Clifton, (a key player) was also unwilling to move to Chicago. There is a poignant letter from Burnett to Dreyfuss on 25 March 1970 when Burnett (then aged 79) decided that the project should be completed in Dreyfuss' Pasadena office, with Dreyfuss as it's "guiding spirit". Burnett also considered that the influence of an advertising agency might give the project "undesirable commercial overtones" which would jar with the Kellogg Foundation's humanitarian values.

So the project was completed in Pasadena. Dreyfuss decided to discontinue with the Kellogg Foundation (he had other irons in the fire, including Alvin Eurich, Chairman of the Academy for Educational Development). In early 1970 the design of the 'Symbol Compendium' was almost in place. McGraw-Hill were in line to publish the book and the contract was signed in late July 1970 with a tight production schedule. Dreyfuss then set about recruiting staff to work on the book.

top George Ball and Pam Holiday in Dreyfuss' Pasadena studio
below Paul Clifton, Pam Holiday and two unknown graphic artists
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive





Development of the design strategy – the team

Project manager Paul Clifton had been working with Dreyfuss since at least 1967. The core team of Henry Dreyfuss, Doris Marks and Paul Clifton worked so well because Clifton was able to interpret what Dreyfuss (who never stopped working) was thinking – Clifton was the practical facilitator of the project and Dreyfuss needed him to realise his vision. Marks was the perfect person to manage the project due to her meticulous business and administrative skills, along with attention to detail – something all three shared.

The wider team consisted of Pam Holaday (who drew the majority of the symbols in the *Symbol Sourcebook*), Kathryn Bray (senior secretary) and Jeanette McFarland (secretary). Later they were joined by George Ball to work on the editorial side of the book and two more graphic artists to help achieve McGraw-Hill's tight publishing deadline. This is verified through correspondence between McGraw-Hill and Dreyfuss, but according to Pam Holaday, this pressure was not evident in the day-to-day running of the studio.

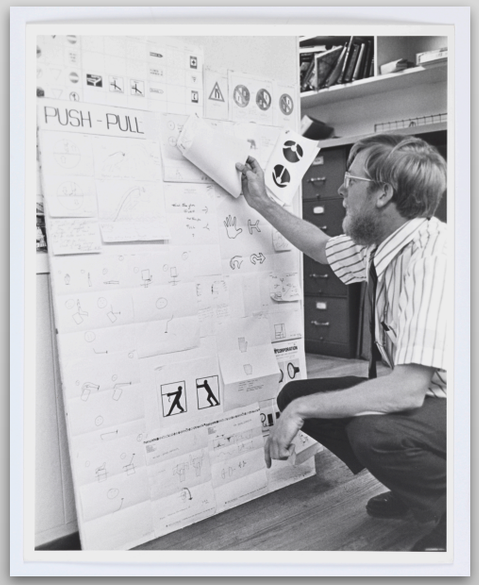
top l to r Doris Marks, Henry Dreyfuss and Paul Clifton, Katherine Bray, Jeanette McFarland and Paul Clifton *below l to r* George Ball, George Ball and Jeannette McFarland, Jeannette McFarland and Paul Clifton Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***













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Pam Holaday drawing symbols
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

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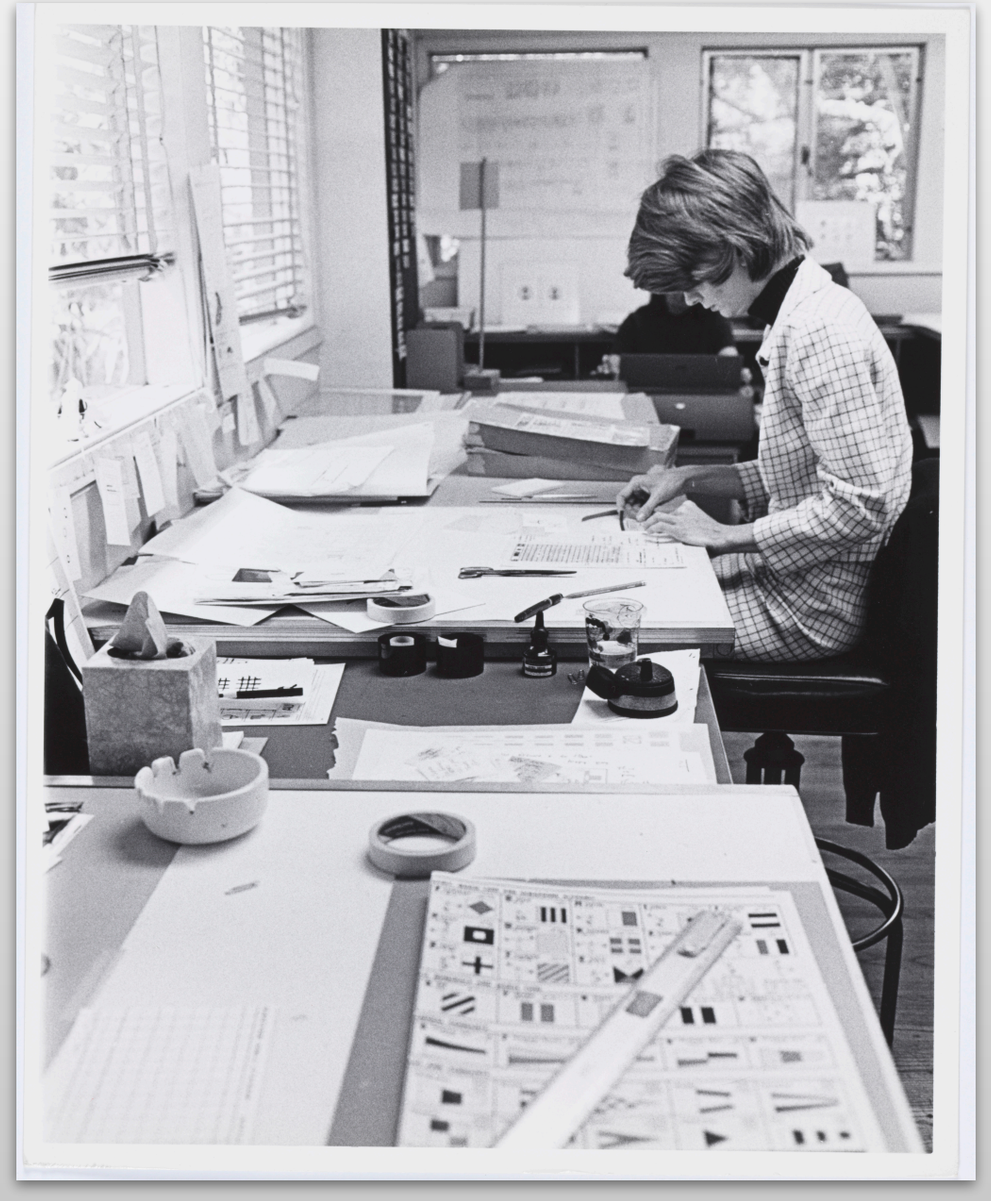

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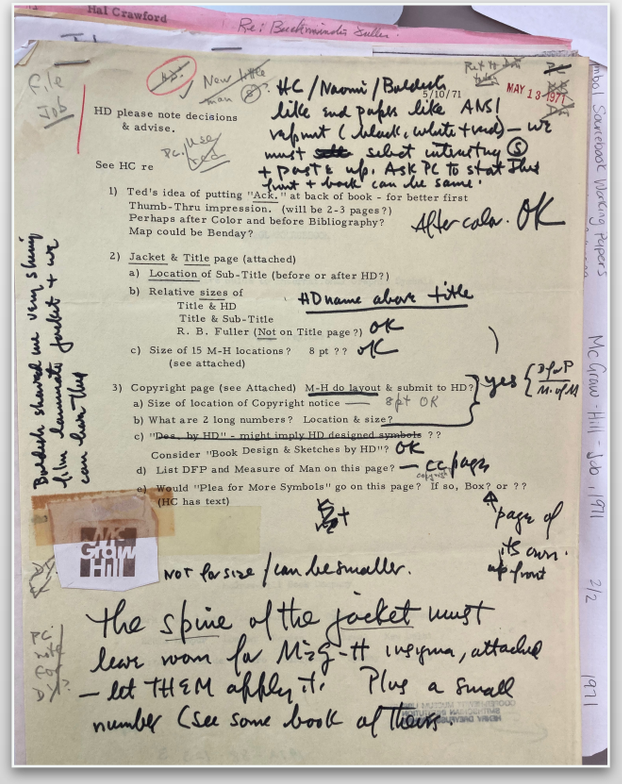
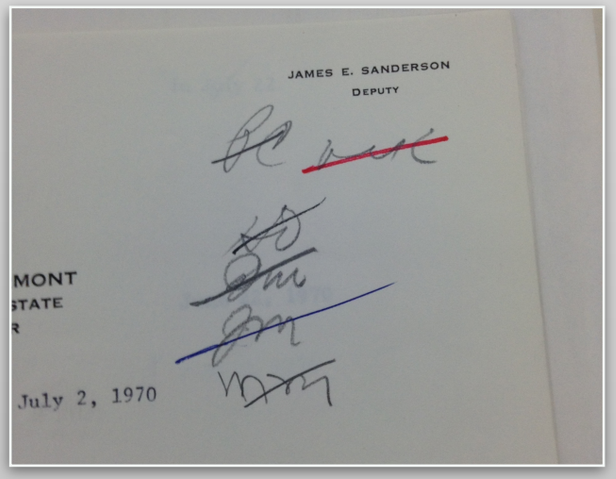




Development of the design strategy

The design strategy for the book was almost in place by early 1970. There were still far too many pages, but the 26 separate disciplines were almost defined (some others didn't make the short list). The team entered into the time-consuming exercise of collecting more symbols and understanding how they were used within each discipline. The depth of enquiry and detail was phenomenal and the files show the lengths the team went to get the information they needed by post, airmail, telephone and the occasional telegram.

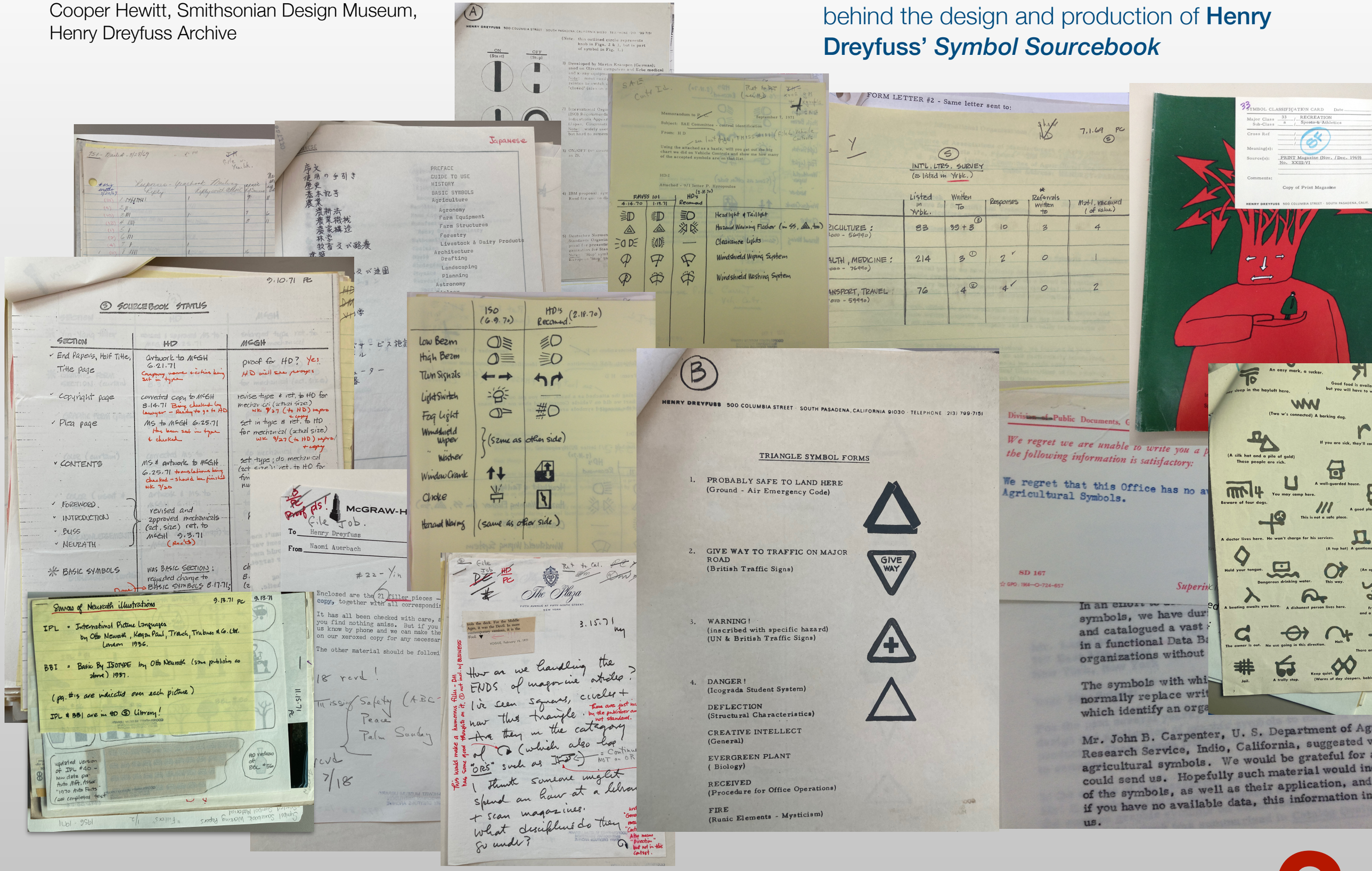
The annotation is fascinating to read, and Pam Holaday told me that Dreyfuss, Marks and Clifton all had their own coloured pencils for annotating, initialising, and reviewing correspondence. Dreyfuss used red, Marks green and Clifton blue.

Thin yellow paper was used for memos recording telephone conversations and some of these reveal information lost to the history books telling what really went on behind the scenes.

Development of system

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



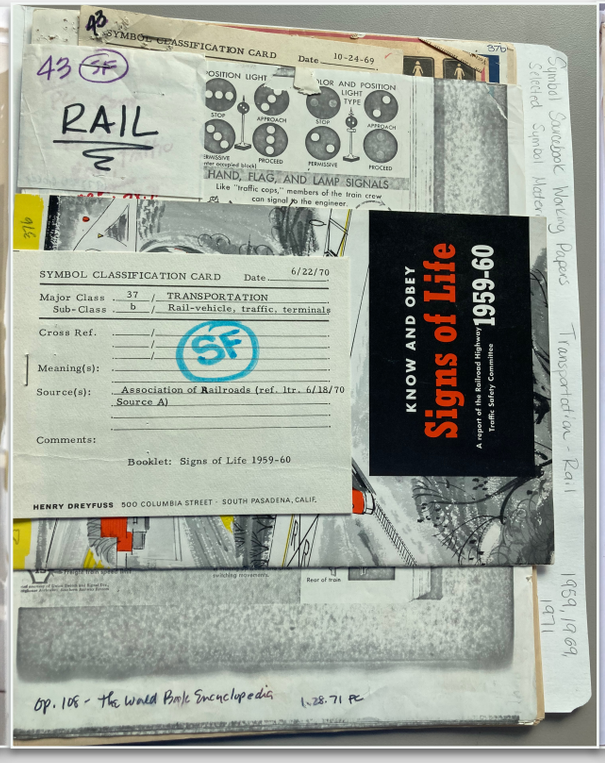
1. Contact with client 2. Information gathering 3. **Development design strategy** 4. Design development 5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

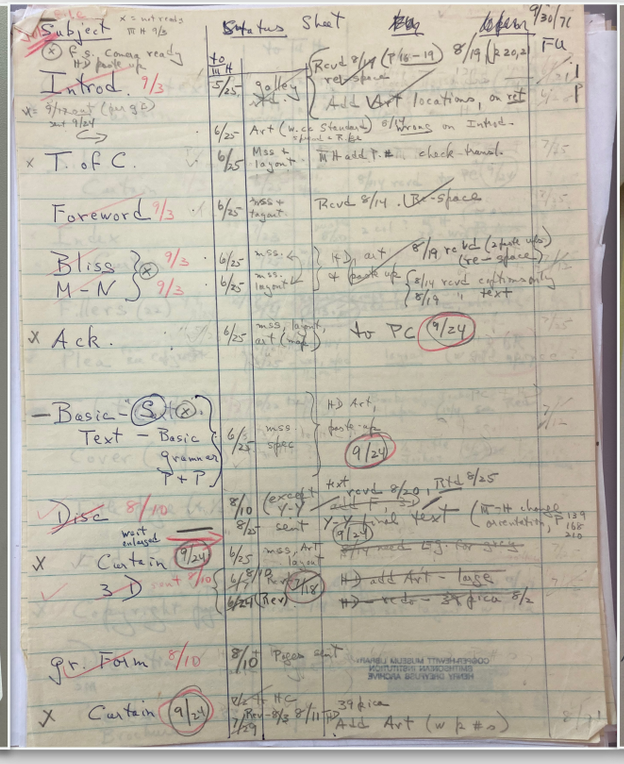
3

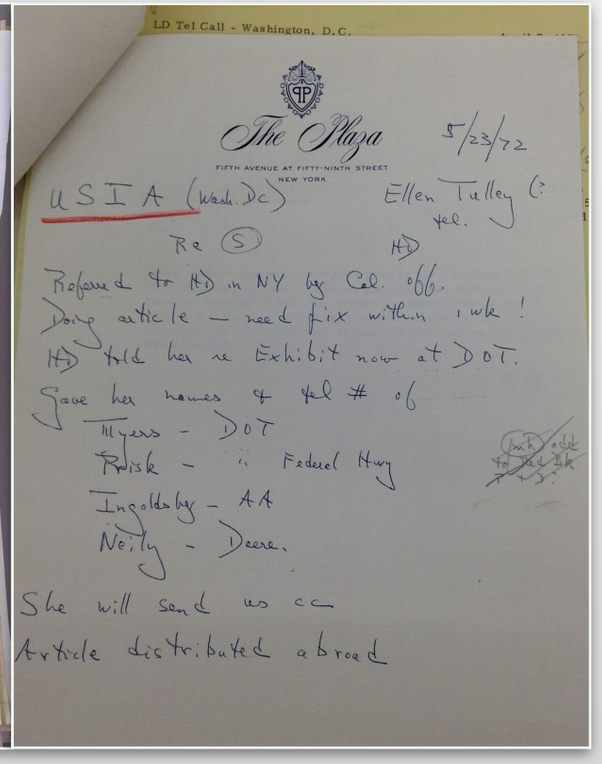
Classification cards and listings
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum,
Henry Dreyfuss Archive

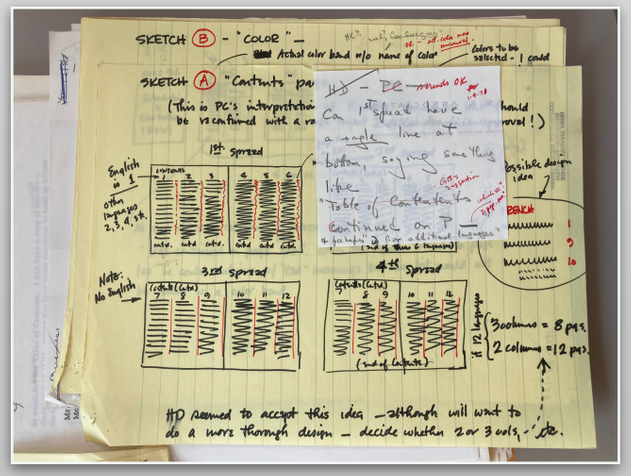
A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***











Development of the design strategy

The design of the strategy involved a meticulous operation which perfectly combined Marks administrative skills, Dreyfuss' agile mind, and Clifton's excellent organisational skills, leaving no stone unturned to get the most accurate information on every discipline.

1. Identification of need 2. Information gathering 3. **Development design strategy** 4. Design development
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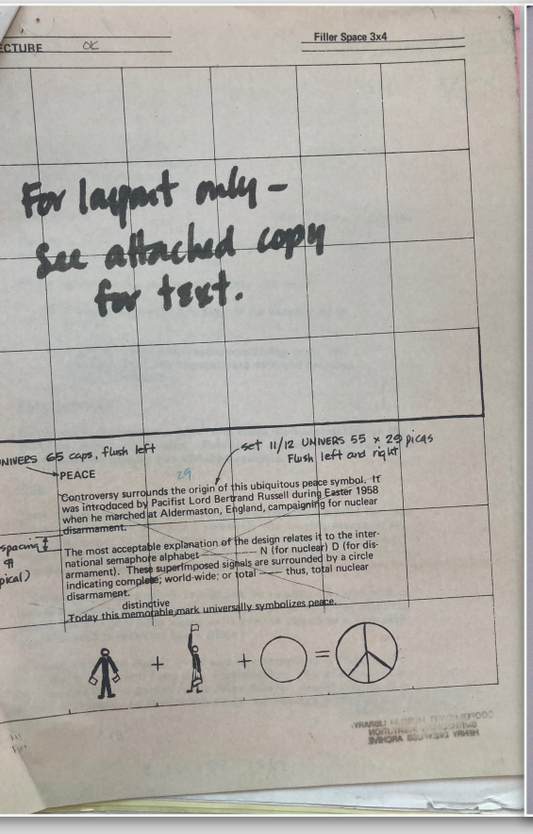
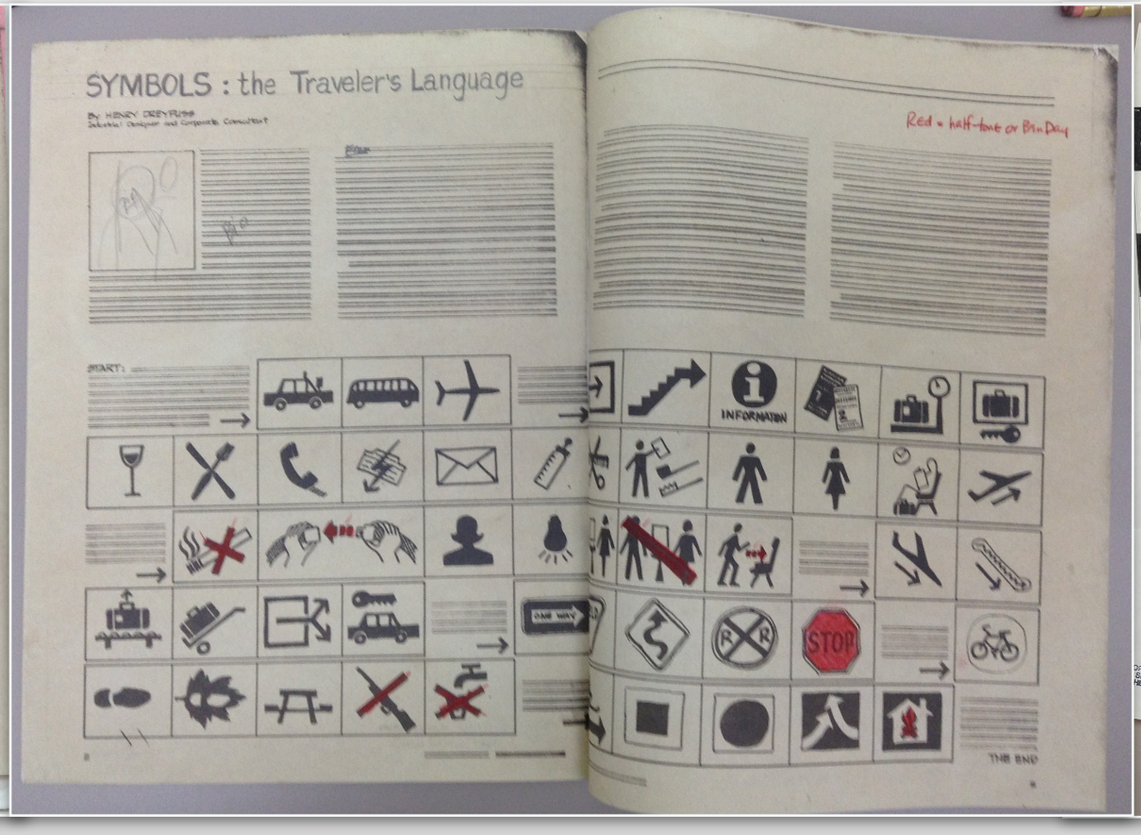
3

Early design visuals

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum,
Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***







Design development and prototype production

The design developed into a prototype and then a teaser book during 1971. At this point the book was known as 'The International Dictionary of Symbols', but In promotional material from Spring 1972 the book was known as the *Symbol Sourcebook* – Dreyfuss considered that it would not be complete enough to use the terms 'dictionary' or 'international'.

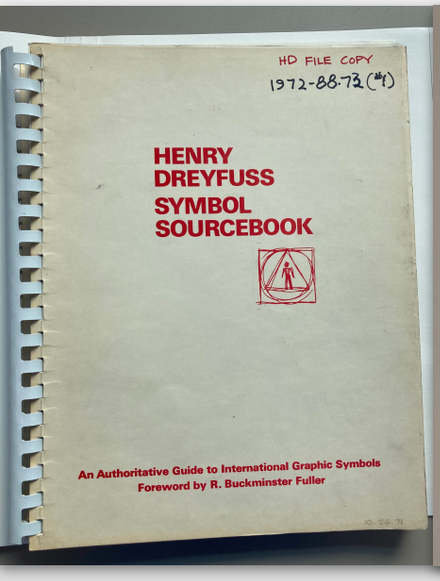
1. Identification of need **2.** Information gathering **3.** Development design strategy **4.** **Design development**
5. Evaluation **6.** Redesign/refinement **7.** Implementation **8.** Performance evaluation **9.** Design revision

4

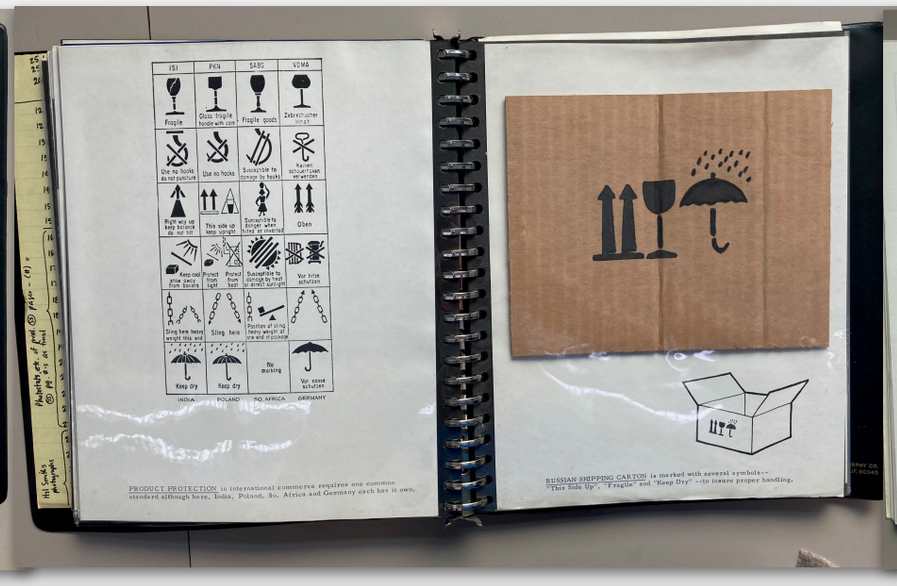
Teaser book

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

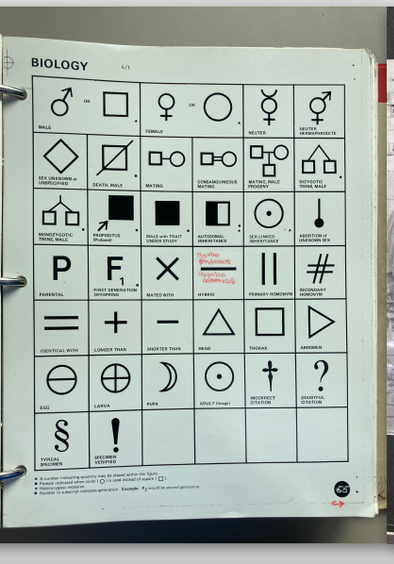
A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***

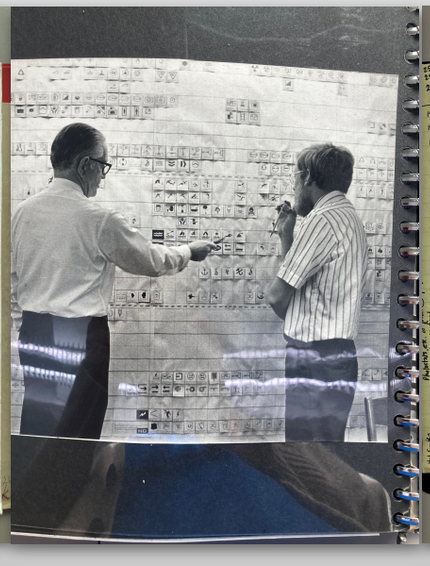


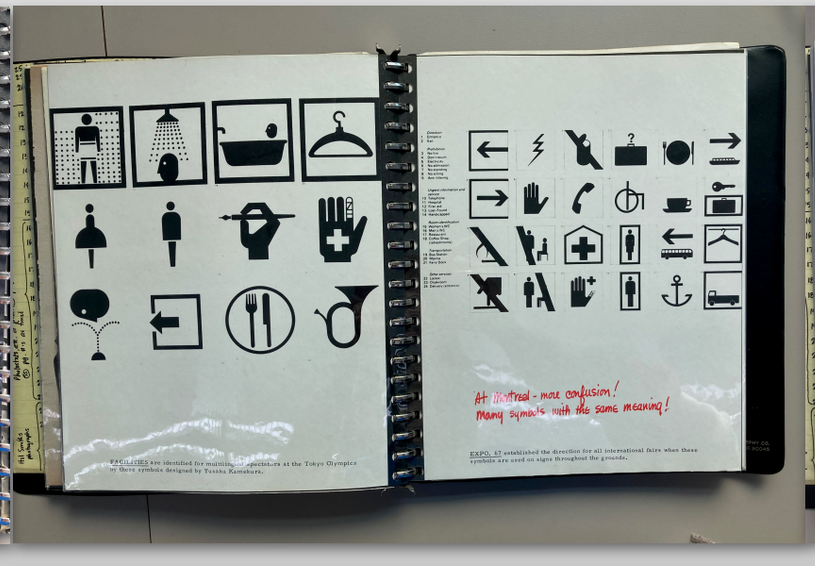




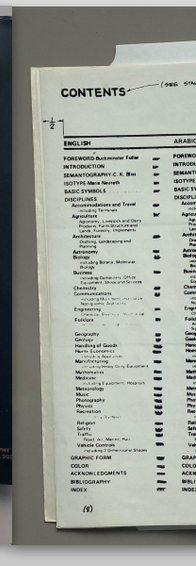










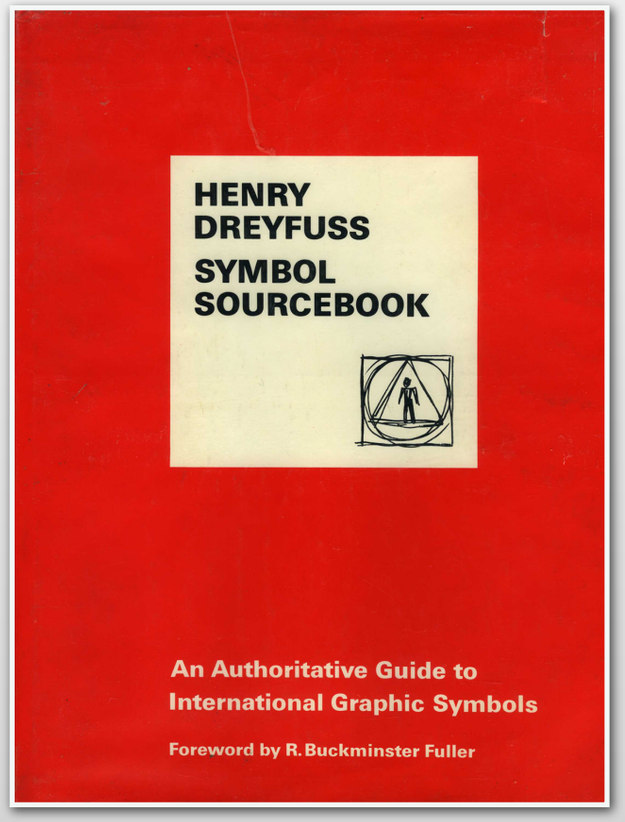


1. Identification of need 2. Information gathering 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development
5. **Evaluation** 6. **Redesign/refinement** 7. Implementation 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

5/6

Symbol Sourcebook
publicity material
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***







Implementation

The *Symbol Sourcebook* first edition was published on 11 January 1972. It was received with great acclaim and a second edition was planned for July that year.

Since the mid 1960s the project had gone through several name changes:

1968 The Symbol Project
1970 Symbol Compendium
1971 International Dictionary of Symbols
1971 *Symbol Sourcebook*

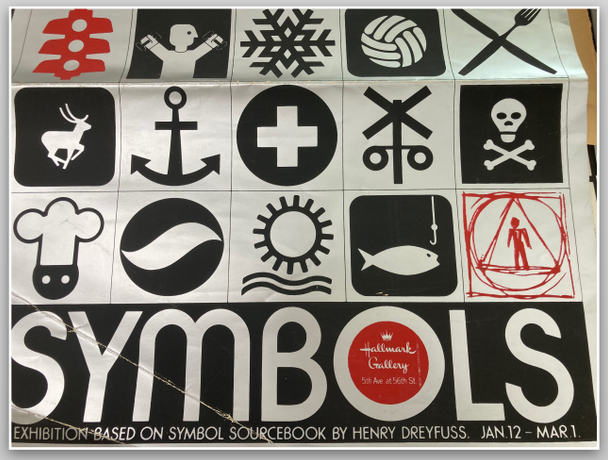
‘Symbols’ exhibition, Hallmark Gallery, New York January – March 1972
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss’** ***Symbol Sourcebook***









Implementation

The Hallmark Gallery in New York held a symbol exhibition from January to March 1972. It was based around the *Symbol Sourcebook* and contained over 3,500 symbols. New Yorkers loved it.

Nieman Marcus symbol merchandise and promotional material

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***









1. Identification of need 2. Information gathering 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development 5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. **Implementation** 8. Performance evaluation 9. Design revision

7

MCCall's magazine which includes 'Betsy McCall Learns Symbol Talk' a symbol quiz for children
September 1972
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive





Implementation

McGraw-Hill's publicity machine went into overdrive and Dreyfuss' schedule for promotion during the first part of 1972 was frantic. Articles appeared in national (and international) newspapers and a whole host of trade, women's, teen's and children's magazines featured symbol stories.

Critical acclaim

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***

Symbols From SoPas

Book With Few Words Created by Dreyfuss

By CARTER BARBER
Staff Writer

A collection of more than 8,000 wordless symbols which "speak" effectively to modern man has been put together in South Pasadena by a resident known around the world for his often ineffable industrial designs — Henry Dreyfuss.

The assemblage of drawings is in book form, amounting to an authoritative guide to international graphic symbols. Formal title is the "Henry Dreyfuss Symbol Sourcebook."

"That's to explain it's not a dictionary, which would imply completeness," Dreyfuss says in his ranch-style office-studio on the grounds of his rambling estate at 500 Columbia Road. The 8,000 symbols are culled from some 30,000 amassed over recent years, with the aid of organizations and individuals around the globe.



—Staff photo by Ed Norgard

NO WORDS NEEDED—Henry Dreyfuss, internationally known South Pasadena industrial designer, illustrates a paradox. While the telephone exists for verbal communication, the symbol for it needs no label to be understood.

Variety of the symbols boggles the mind. They range from music to road signs and religion. They're arranged in 26 "disciplines" or common groupings.

One is hobo symbolism, for example. "Kind woman, tell pitiful story" is the message of one scrawly sign which is reproduced. "Officer of law lives here" is another. The symbols lack words. The word comes through, anyway. Symbol for "Judge lives here" is a hangman's noose.

Symbolism for the dance is one of the categories, labeled "Communications."

Sex symbols? There are many, each short of a literal sketch of the visage of a Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth or Ali McGraw. They are drawn mostly from the biological disciplines. There also is a symbol for incest.

Many of the symbols are as old as man — involving astrology, astronomy, medicine and the ocean. Others are as up to date as signs depicting "sensitivity" (in re office equipment) and recycling of used materials (in re ecology).

Smog has a symbol. It is one of those devised by Dreyfuss himself, along with several Caltech experts including Dr. Arie Haagen-Smit. "We developed this one over a lunch table," recalls Dreyfuss.

Most of the symbols, however, have come from outsiders who have known of Dreyfuss as the designer of familiar objects ranging from telephones to tractors to ocean liners.

One set of symbols which has stumped everyone to date pertains to wordless depiction of "push" and "pull." Several designs are shown in the book, but none is official, much less definitive. Graphics to convey those basic instructions still are a challenge, and Dreyfuss actively solicits suggestions.

Any ideas, cum drawings, can be submitted to his "Data Bank" at P.O. Box 70, South Pasadena.

It took Dreyfuss and a staff three years to put together the sourcebook. Young people helped with the reproductions, which had to be as precise as what the symbol was conceived to convey. Staff of the South Pasadena Public Library also is praised as being "almost part of our own group, helping with unlimited patience."

The designer's wife, Doris Marks, helped in "untold" fashion, as befits a non-telling volume. She was ultimate arbitor at times when language had to be used — as in numerous asides in the book.

The asides treat of such matters as how the dollar sign got started and the origins of singing "rounds." Other passages of unabashed language instead of symbol occur in the foreward by R. Buckminster Fuller.

Dreyfuss himself abandons non-verbal communication and resorts to pen and voice to deliver some philosophy regarding symbols. "They are not a language in themselves but an adjunct or support to language," he says.

The designer, equating usefulness of symbols with accepted notation in various disciplines, points out that "a Beethoven symphony sounds the same in Japanese as it does in the original . . . a column of digits adds up identically in Polish and Spanish . . ."

"Hopefully, with this sourcebook as a start, standard symbols will some day be



File Mr. Dreyfuss Dear Henry — It really is a piece of publicity accomplished without any blurbs running into books, but just on the basis of a tightly printed request that we are friend to the Gutenberg. Phil Hall 1/26/72

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM LIBRARY: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION HENRY DREYFUSS ARCHIVE 1972-88-123.3

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1972 L 39

A Man Who Really Believes in Signs

By McCANDLISH PHILLIPS

When language fails, symbols work. As wordless messengers they cut across barriers of nationality and race, speaking to minds that tongues cannot reach.

Symbols are heralds of permission, sentinels of safety, officers of inhibition. They advise, warn, command, assist, restrict, direct, identify, grant leave, forbid.

More symbols than have perhaps been seen before in one place at one time are crowded together now in an underground chamber on Fifth Avenue at 56th Street.

They are drawn from a collection soon to be seen in a book, the "Symbol Sourcebook," an international dictionary of symbols. Most of the symbols known to exist in the world are on exhibition through March 1 in the Hallmark Gallery, in a dazzling array.

Nearly 3,500 of them are set tightly in ranks, permissive cheek by prohibitory jowl, so that the visitor's eye is drawn from one to the next in what becomes a blur of contradictory ukases.

'Alarming' Spread

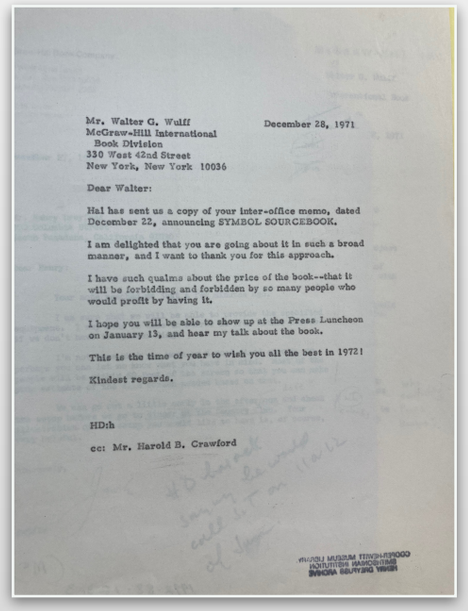
The collection is the work of Henry Dreyfuss, the noted industrial designer, whose imprint is on millions of telephones, radios, alarm clocks, tractors and vacuum cleaners.

"Symbols have taken a great upsurge in the last few years," he said by telephone from his home in Pasadena, Calif., "because we have become a world of strangers. I can get on a plane in Moscow and fly to Pisa, Italy, and I don't speak a word of Italian. I can get off the plane and get on a train to Florence and I don't speak a word of Italian. I can get off the train and get on a bus to Milan and I don't speak a word of Italian. I can get off the bus and get on a boat to Venice and I don't speak a word of Italian. I can get off the boat and get on a bus to Rome and I don't speak a word of Italian. I can get off the bus

Critical acclaim

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum,
Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***



Mr. Walter G. Wulff December 28, 1971
McGraw-Hill International
Book Division
330 West 42nd Street
New York, New York 10036

Dear Walter:

Hal has sent us a copy of your inter-office memo, dated December 22, announcing SYMBOL SOURCEBOOK.

I am delighted that you are going about it in such a broad manner, and I want to thank you for this approach.

I have such qualms about the price of the book--that it will be forbidding and forbidden by so many people who would profit by having it.

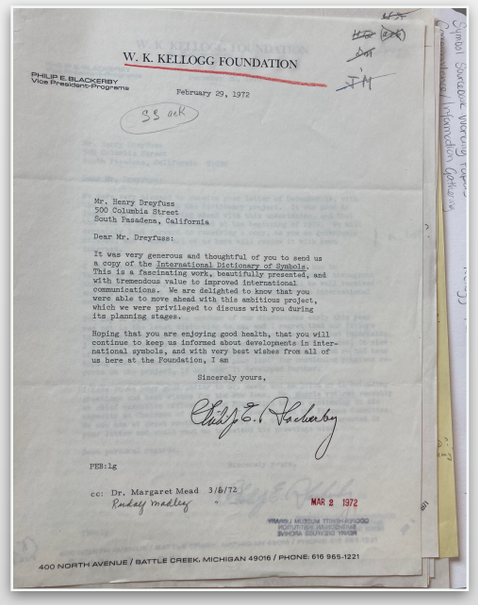
I hope you will be able to show up at the Press Luncheon on January 13, and hear my talk about the book.

This is the time of year to wish you all the best in 1972!

Kindest regards.

HD:h

cc: Mr. Harold B. Crawford



W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

PHILIP E. BLACKERBY
Vice President-Programs

February 29, 1972

Mr. Henry Dreyfuss
500 Columbia Street
South Pasadena, California

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss:

It was very generous and thoughtful of you to send us a copy of the International Dictionary of Symbols. This is a fascinating work, beautifully presented, and with tremendous value to improved international communications. We are delighted to know that you were able to move ahead with this ambitious project, which we were privileged to discuss with you during its planning stages.

Hoping that you are enjoying good health, that you will continue to keep us informed about developments in international symbols, and with very best wishes from all of us here at the Foundation, I am

Sincerely yours,

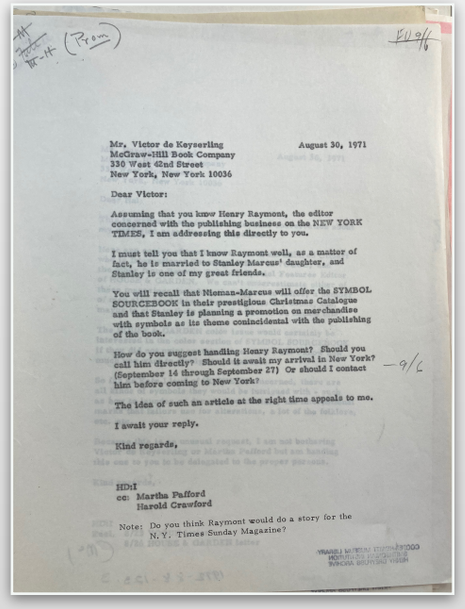
Philip E. Blackerby

PEB:lg

cc: Dr. Margaret Mead 3/6/72
Rudsey Madley

MAR 2 1972

400 NORTH AVENUE / BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN 49016 / PHONE: 616 965-1221



Mr. Victor de Keyserling August 30, 1971
McGraw-Hill Book Company
330 West 42nd Street
New York, New York 10036

Dear Victor:

Assuming that you know Henry Raymont, the editor concerned with the publishing business on the NEW YORK TIMES, I am addressing this directly to you.

I must tell you that I know Raymont well, as a matter of fact, he is married to Stanley Marcus' daughter, and Stanley is one of my great friends.

You will recall that Neiman-Marcus will offer the SYMBOL SOURCEBOOK in their prestigious Christmas Catalogue and that Stanley is planning a promotion on merchandise with symbols as its theme coincidental with the publishing of the book.

How do you suggest handling Henry Raymont? Should you call him directly? Should it await my arrival in New York? (September 14 through September 27) Or should I contact him before coming to New York?

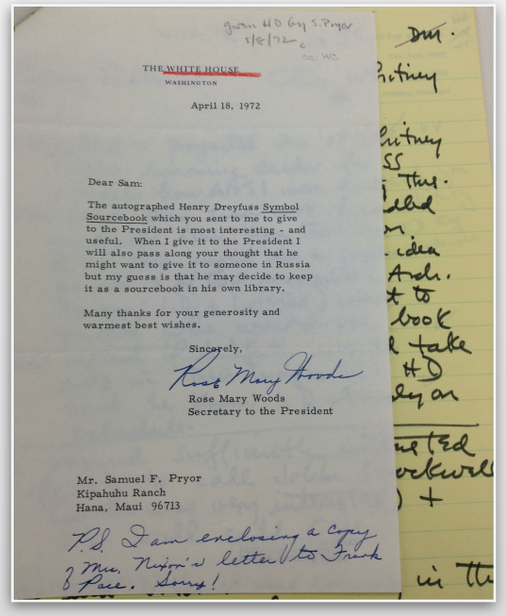
The idea of such an article at the right time appeals to me.

I await your reply.

Kind regards,

HD:I
cc: Martha Pafford
Harold Crawford

Note: Do you think Raymont would do a story for the N.Y. Times Sunday Magazine?



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1972

Dear Sam:

The autographed Henry Dreyfuss Symbol Sourcebook which you sent to me to give to the President is most interesting - and useful. When I give it to the President I will also pass along your thought that he might want to give it to someone in Russia but my guess is that he may decide to keep it as a sourcebook in his own library.

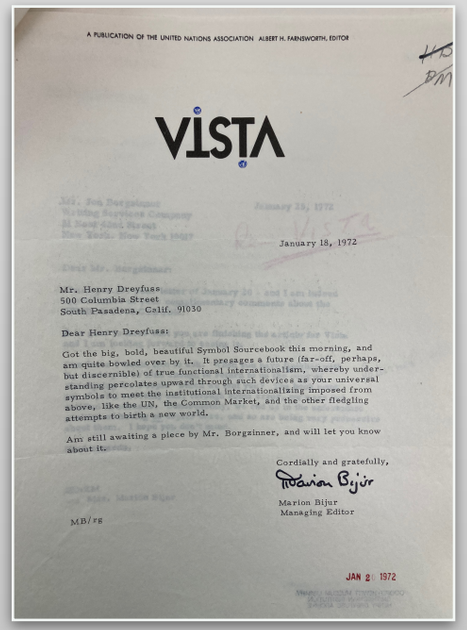
Many thanks for your generosity and warmest best wishes.

Sincerely,

Rose Mary Woods
Secretary to the President

Mr. Samuel F. Pryor
Kipahuhu Ranch
Hana, Maui 96713

P.S. I am enclosing a copy of Mrs. Nixon's letter to Frank Price. Sorry!



A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION ALBERT H. FAINSWORTH, EDITOR

VISTA

January 18, 1972

Mr. Henry Dreyfuss
500 Columbia Street
South Pasadena, Calif. 91030

Dear Henry Dreyfuss:

Got the big, bold, beautiful Symbol Sourcebook this morning, and am quite bowled over by it. It presages a future (far-off, perhaps, but discernible) of true functional internationalism, whereby understanding percolates upward through such devices as your universal symbols to meet the institutional internationalizing imposed from above, like the UN, the Common Market, and the other fledgling attempts to birth a new world.

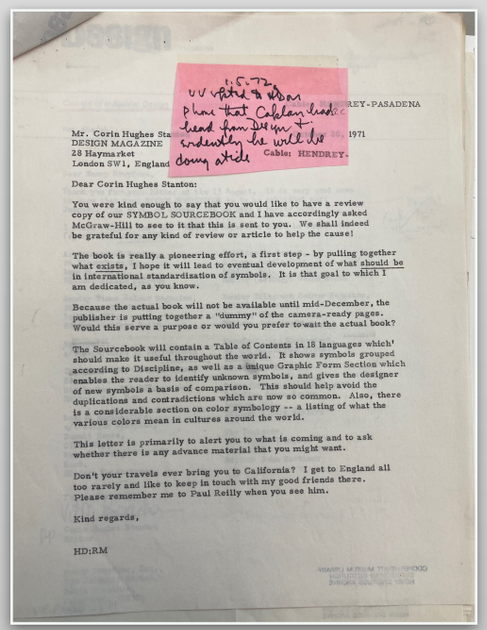
Am still awaiting a piece by Mr. Borgzinner, and will let you know about it.

Cordially and gratefully,

Marion Bijur
Managing Editor

MB/rs

JAN 2 1972



Mr. Corin Hughes Stanton
DESIGN MAGAZINE
28 Haymarket
London SW1, England

1971

Cable: HENDREY-

Dear Corin Hughes Stanton:

You were kind enough to say that you would like to have a review copy of our SYMBOL SOURCEBOOK and I have accordingly asked McGraw-Hill to see to it that this is sent to you. We shall indeed be grateful for any kind of review or article to help the cause!

The book is really a pioneering effort, a first step - by pulling together what exists, I hope it will lead to eventual development of what should be in international standardization of symbols. It is that goal to which I am dedicated, as you know.

Because the actual book will not be available until mid-December, the publisher is putting together a "dummy" of the camera-ready pages. Would this serve a purpose or would you prefer to wait the actual book?

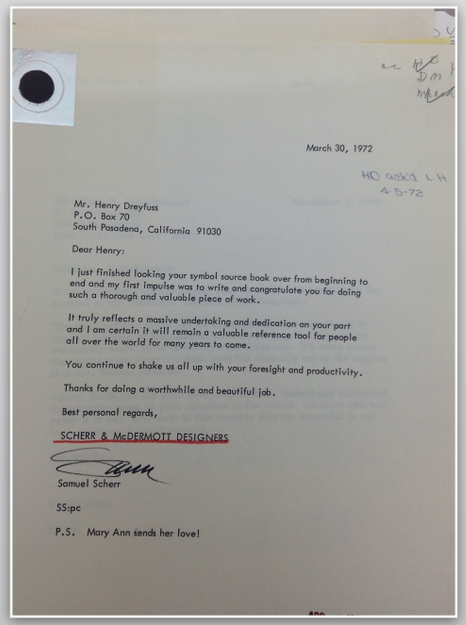
The Sourcebook will contain a Table of Contents in 18 languages which should make it useful throughout the world. It shows symbols grouped according to Discipline, as well as a unique Graphic Form Section which enables the reader to identify unknown symbols, and gives the designer of new symbols a basis of comparison. This should help avoid the duplications and contradictions which are now so common. Also, there is a considerable section on color symbology -- a listing of what the various colors mean in cultures around the world.

This letter is primarily to alert you to what is coming and to ask whether there is any advance material that you might want.

Don't your travels ever bring you to California? I get to England all too rarely and like to keep in touch with my good friends there. Please remember me to Paul Reilly when you see him.

Kind regards,

HD:RM



March 30, 1972

Mr. Henry Dreyfuss
P.O. Box 70
South Pasadena, California 91030

Dear Henry:

I just finished looking your symbol source book over from beginning to end and my first impulse was to write and congratulate you for doing such a thorough and valuable piece of work.

It truly reflects a massive undertaking and dedication on your part and I am certain it will remain a valuable reference tool for people all over the world for many years to come.

You continue to shake us all up with your foresight and productivity.

Thanks for doing a worthwhile and beautiful job.

Best personal regards,

SCHERR & McDERMOTT DESIGNERS

Samuel Scherr

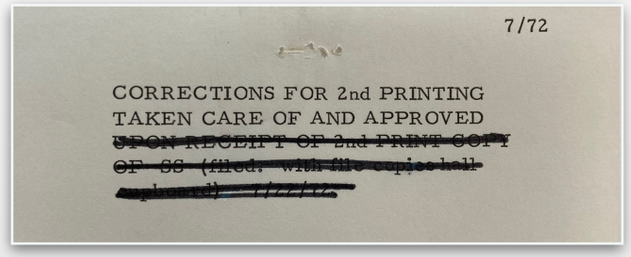
SS:pc

P.S. Mary Ann sends her love!

1. Identification of need 2. Information gathering 3. Development design strategy 4. Design development
5. Evaluation 6. Redesign/refinement 7. Implementation 8. **Performance evaluation** 9. Design revision

Pam Holaday reading letter she wrote in 1972, Pasadena, March 2022 Sue Perks
Pam Holaday's letter from the archive 1972
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive

A passion for symbols: tracing the inspirations behind the design and production of **Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook***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CORRECTIONS FOR 2nd PRINTING
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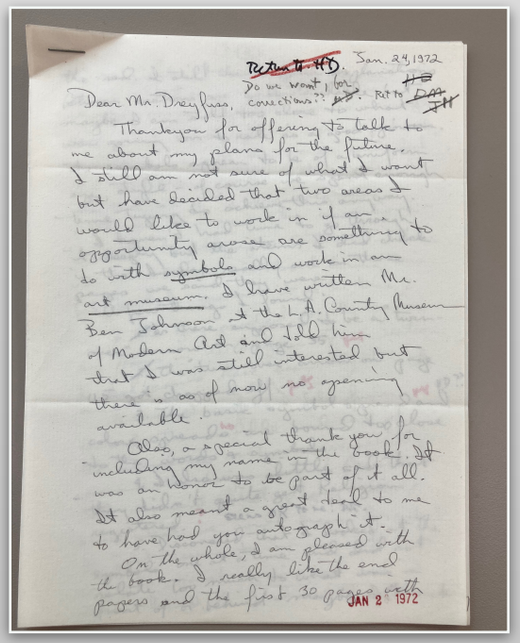
Design revision

The second edition went to print with a minimum of corrections and was published in July 1972. A third edition was planned. Dreyfuss set off on a rigorous schedule of promotions around USA in Spring 1972. He kept a 'corrections' file which he hoped 'would not get too fat'. He asked Pam Holaday to cast a critical eye over the first edition (she finished work with Dreyfuss when the book went to print in late 1971).


Jan. 24, 1972

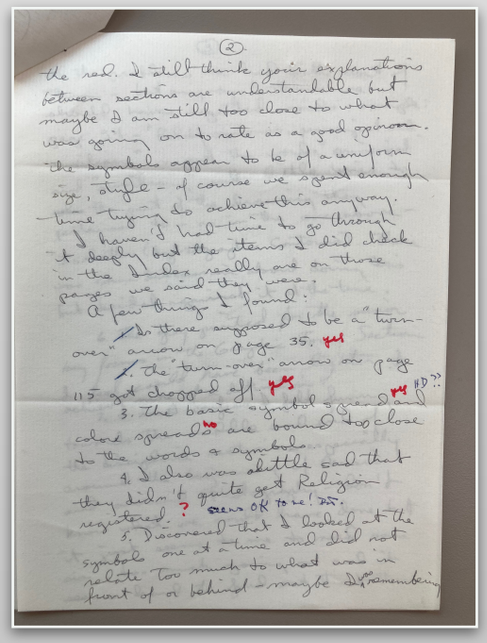
Dear Mr. Dreyfuss,

Thankyou for offering to talk to me about my plans for the future. I still am not sure of what I want but have decided that two areas I would like to work in if an opportunity arose are something to do with symbols and work in an art museum. I have written Mr. Ben Johnson at the L.A. County Museum of Modern Art and told him that I was still interested but there is as of now no opening available.

Also, a special thank you for including my name in the book. It was an honor to be part of it all. It also meant a great deal to me to have had you autograph it.

On the whole, I am pleased with the book. I really like the end papers and the first 30 pages with

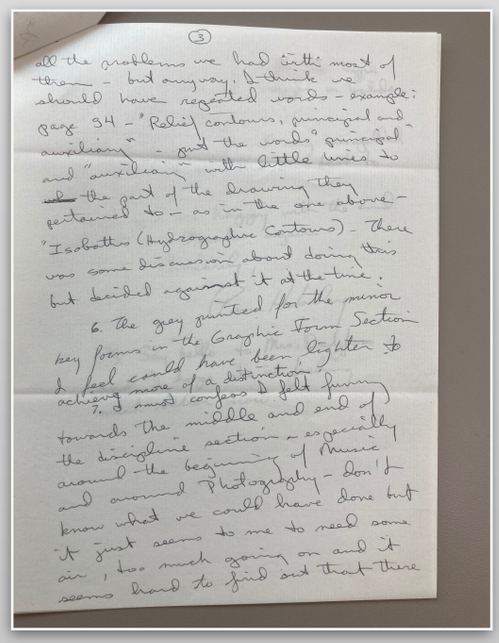
JAN 2 1972


the red. I still think your explanations between sections are understandable but maybe I am still too close to what was going on to rate as a good opinion. The symbols appear to be of a uniform size, style - of course we spent enough time trying to achieve this anyway.

I haven't had time to go through it deeply but the items I did check in the Index really are on those pages we said they were.

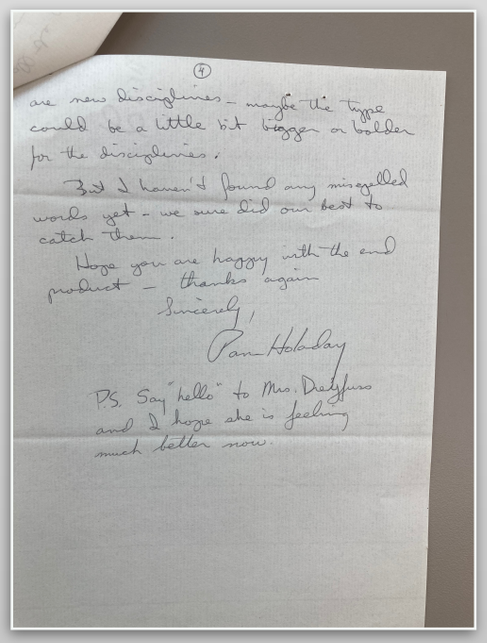
A few things I found:

1. Is there supposed to be a "turn-over" arrow on page 35. yes
2. The "turn-over" arrow on page 115 got chopped off. yes
3. The basic symbol spread and color spreads are bound too close to the words & symbols. no
4. I also was a little sad that they didn't quite get Religion registered. ? seems OK to me! DH.
5. Discovered that I looked at the symbols one at a time and did not relate too much to what was in front of or behind - maybe I remembering


all the problems we had with most of them - but anyway, I think we should have repeated words - example: page 94 - "Relief contours, principal and auxiliary" - put the words "principal" and "auxiliary" with little lines to the part of the drawing they pertained to - as in the one above - "Isobaths (Hydrographic Contours) - There was some discussion about doing this but decided against it at the time.

6. The grey printed for the minor key forms in the Graphic Form Section I feel could have been lighter to achieve more of a distinction.

7. I must confess I felt funny towards the middle and end of the discipline section - especially around the beginning of Music and around Photography - don't know what we could have done but it just seems to me to need some air, too much going on and it seems hard to find out that there


are new disciplines - maybe the type could be a little bit bigger or bolder for the disciplines.

But I haven't found any misspelled words yet - we sure did our best to catch them.

Hope you are happy with the end product - thanks again

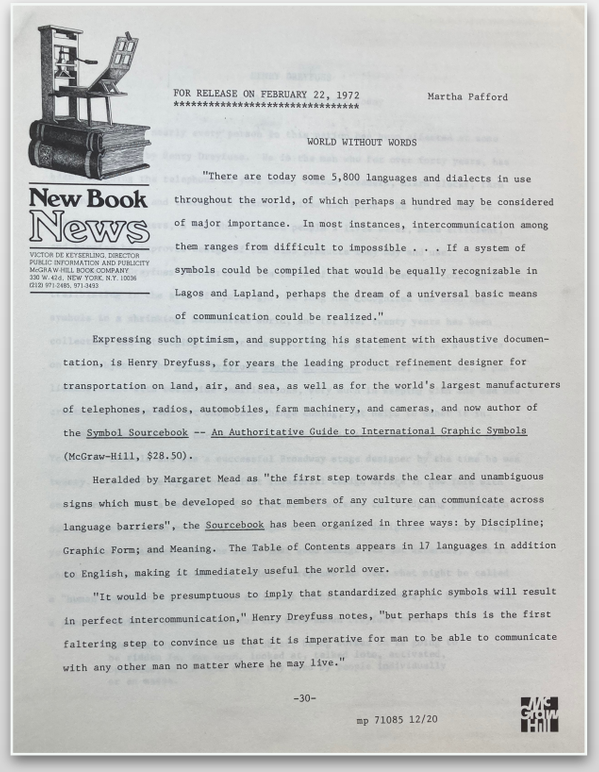
Sincerely,

Pam Holaday

P.S. Say "hello" to Mrs. Dreyfuss and I hope she is feeling much better now.

1. Identification of need **2.** Information gathering **3.** Development design strategy **4.** Design development **5.** Evaluation **6.** Redesign/refinement **7.** Implementation **8.** Performance evaluation **9.** **Design revision**

Plea for symbols, title page, first edition *Symbol Sourcebook* January 1972



New Book News

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FOR RELEASE ON FEBRUARY 22, 1972 Martha Pafford
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WORLD WITHOUT WORDS

"There are today some 5,800 languages and dialects in use throughout the world, of which perhaps a hundred may be considered of major importance. In most instances, intercommunication among them ranges from difficult to impossible . . . If a system of symbols could be compiled that would be equally recognizable in Lagos and Lapland, perhaps the dream of a universal basic means of communication could be realized."

Expressing such optimism, and supporting his statement with exhaustive documentation, is Henry Dreyfuss, for years the leading product refinement designer for transportation on land, air, and sea, as well as for the world's largest manufacturers of telephones, radios, automobiles, farm machinery, and cameras, and now author of the Symbol Sourcebook -- An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols (McGraw-Hill, $28.50).

Heralded by Margaret Mead as "the first step towards the clear and unambiguous signs which must be developed so that members of any culture can communicate across language barriers", the Sourcebook has been organized in three ways: by Discipline; Graphic Form; and Meaning. The Table of Contents appears in 17 languages in addition to English, making it immediately useful the world over.

"It would be presumptuous to imply that standardized graphic symbols will result in perfect intercommunication," Henry Dreyfuss notes, "but perhaps this is the first faltering step to convince us that it is imperative for man to be able to communicate with any other man no matter where he may live."

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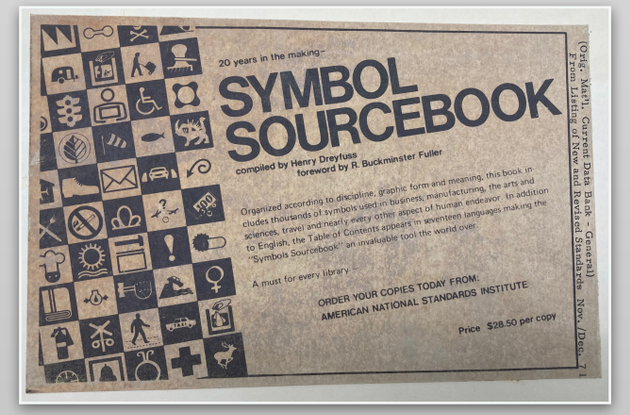
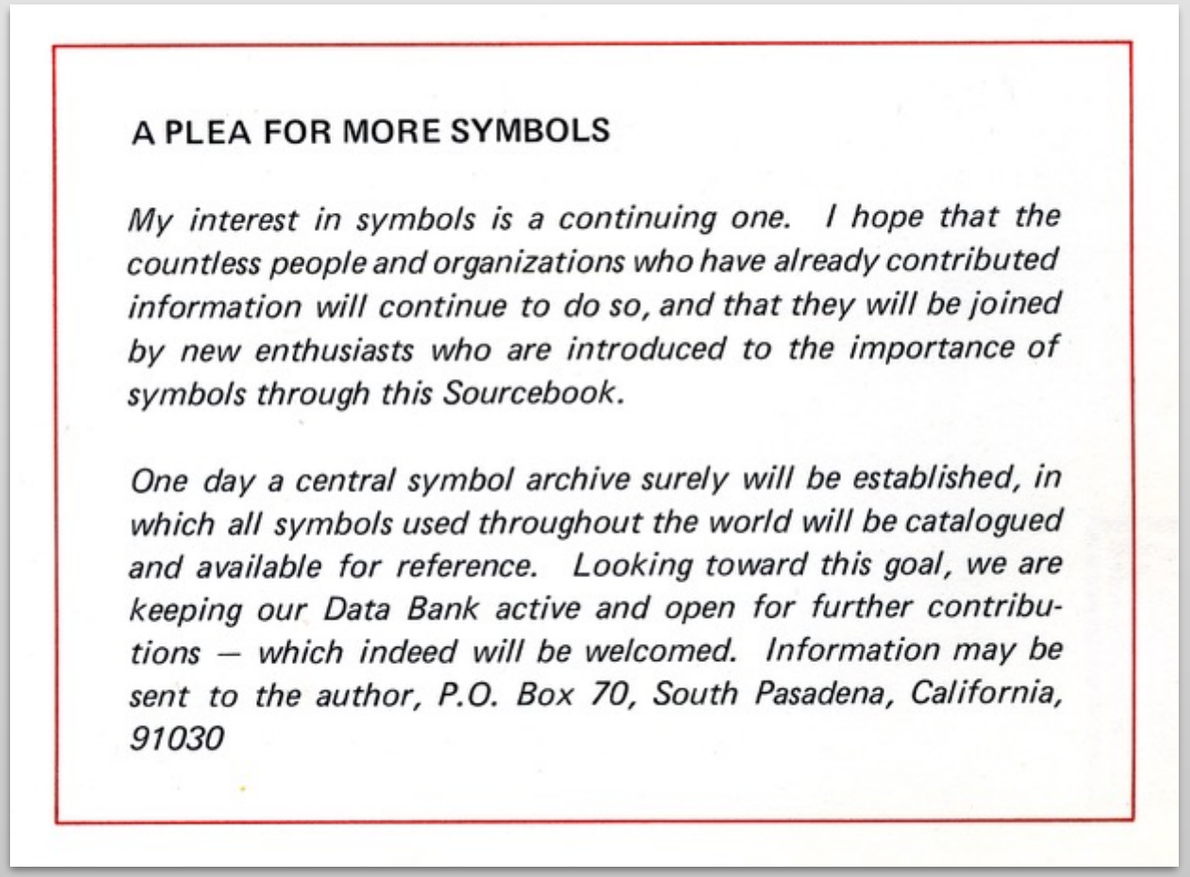


Design revision…

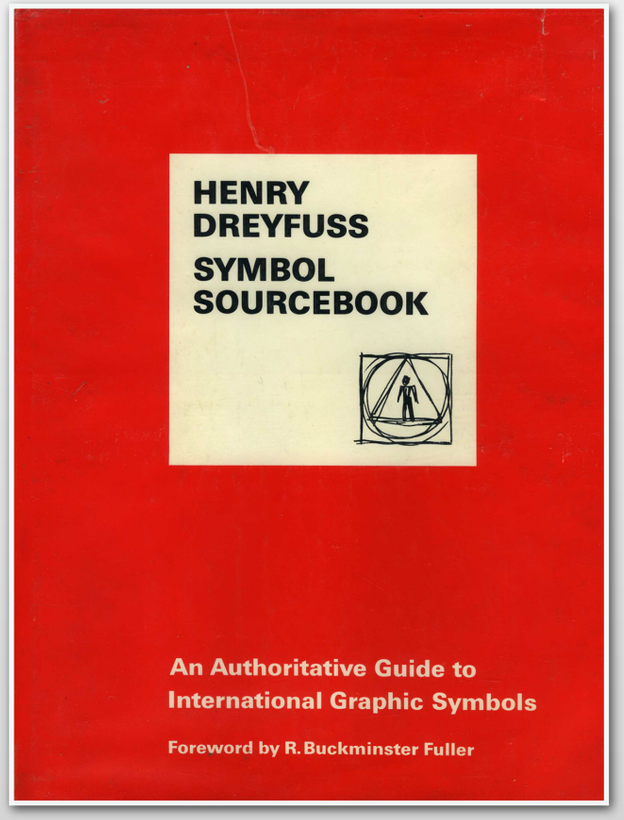
A plea for symbols in the book asked readers to continue to send in their symbols. It was envisaged that the book would be updated and Dreyfuss' idea for a Symbol Data bank be fully realised.



A PLEA FOR MORE SYMBOLS

My interest in symbols is a continuing one. I hope that the countless people and organizations who have already contributed information will continue to do so, and that they will be joined by new enthusiasts who are introduced to the importance of symbols through this Sourcebook.

One day a central symbol archive surely will be established, in which all symbols used throughout the world will be catalogued and available for reference. Looking toward this goal, we are keeping our Data Bank active and open for further contributions — which indeed will be welcomed. Information may be sent to the author, P.O. Box 70, South Pasadena, California, 91030



Design revision…

The job complete, the team was disbanded. Dreyfuss had successfully achieved his aim of producing a book which fulfilled his aims to at least challenge the language barrier and promote symbols as a primary language for communication. The book was a great success, the second edition was published in July 1972 and a paper back edition followed in 1984. It is still in print today. It formed the culmination of a whole life working with symbols.

Hopefully, with this Sourcebook as a start, standard symbols will some day be understood by all, regardless of language or culture. Henry Dreyfuss 1972

The Dreyfuss project cannot provide all the answers to the problem of bringing a sense of system to the design of symbols and their use communicating. No one expects it to. It is, however, a long and necessary step down the path to human understanding through signs without words. Who can tell where that will lead? Excerpt from 'Symbolically Speaking' Robert E Felstein *Bell* magazine

top Henry Dreyfuss and Paul Clifton with the symbol wall
below The Henry Dreyfuss Symbol Sourcebook Archive
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Henry Dreyfuss Archive





Design revision…

Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook* should have continued and run into many new updated editions. The Symbol databank should have become a state of the art living (and maybe even digitised) archive of symbols. But sadly it was not to be. Dreyfuss was 68 years old in good health, but sadly, Marks had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and on 5 October 1972 they were both found dead in their garage.

Organised to the last, Dreyfuss had arranged for his entire archive to be left to The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York. All that was left was for Clifton to write to symbol donors who were still sending in new symbols to inform them of Dreyfuss' death. These sad letters form the final piece of correspondence in many of the client files in the archive.

Thank you for listening!

Symbol ’22: Symbol Sourcebook @ 50

7 & 8 October 2022
Online symposium
symbol-22.org

The Symbol Group
Symbol-group.org

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The Symbol Group 2022

The Symbol Sourcebook@50

7 & 8 October 2022

Online symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of Industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss’ discipline-defining ***Symbol Sourcebook***, revealing the legacy underpinning our current fascination with emojis, icons and symbols.

Symbol-22.org
email: thesymbolgroup@gmail.com

The Symbol Group

The Symbol Group is a new international discussion group for symbol-related matters

Our aim: to promote a deeper appreciation of the symbol in contemporary society, striving for more diversity and international understanding of the power of simple, direct communication.

Our core mission: to generate biennial symposia using symbol anniversaries to promote the understanding of symbols in contemporary practice.

email: thesymbolgroup@gmail.com
website: Symbol-group.org

