

The Life and Work of Stuart C Dodd

Stuart C Dodd was born in 1900 in Talas, Turkey, where his father was a medical missionary. He received B.S. and M.A. degrees and, in 1926, a Ph.D. in psychology, all from Princeton. Dodd developed and directed the Social Science Research Section at the University of Beirut from 1927 to 1947. He married Betty Dodd in 1928. They had two sons, Peter and Brian. During World War II, he served as Director of Surveys with the U.S. Army in Sicily. In 1947, Dodd accepted an offer to direct the Washington Public Opinion Laboratory at the University of Washington, a position he held for the next 14 years. He left the laboratory in 1961 to devote more time to his research. He retired from the University in 1971. He passed away during the Christmas holidays of 1975 while on a trip to see his son Brian in California.

In 1951, the Air Force's Human Resources Research Institute (HRRI) awarded the Washington Public Opinion Laboratory a contract, to research the effects of leaflet drops on U.S. communities under the name, "Project Revere". Dodd served as principal researcher for Project Revere which ended in 1958. Dodd's influence on mass communications was significant. He trained a generation of mass communications researchers and his writings suggest a clear and profound ideological purpose that shaped his work.

Dodd's published writings between 1939 and 1974 were extensive and varied, and they demonstrate the degree to which he sought to make social phenomena reducible to and controllable by, mathematical formulae. "It is possible with our present knowledge to begin constructing a quantitative systematic science of sociology," he declared in his 1942 text *Dimensions of Society*. In 1951, he attempted to provide operational definitions, through the use of mathematical equations, for such concepts as "freedom," "equality," and "democracy." In a 1951 article appearing in *Educational Theory*, Dodd sought "to translate the traditional concepts of the Christian religion into the terms of modern social science." Dodd explained how social scientists view good and evil, the soul, sin, prayer, and other such notions. A 1959 article which possessed direct bearing on how he viewed communication, was entitled *An Alphabet of Meanings for the Oncoming Revolution in Man's Thinking*. Recognizing the rapid development that had taken place in communication technology since the turn of the century, and seeing a resultant inefficiency and imprecision in most communicative acts, Dodd proposed the development of a single, international language based on mathematics. Dodd noted that his new ten-letter alphabet, referred to as "TILP," would be a perfect symbolic system, capable of expressing every human meaning, without indefiniteness or waste of energy. Dodd asserted that adoption of this new alphabet of meaning would revolutionize and streamline all thought, reduce conflicts and misunderstanding, and even shorten the extended period of time that students spend in school. Finally, according to Dodd, adoption of this new alphabet of meaning would "revolutionize human speech and thinking and thereby significantly accelerate man's cultural evolving."

Dodd pursued his quest for the understanding of human society beyond the social sciences. This work included his Mass-Time triangle which was a diagram that included the physical, biological and social sciences in one hierarchical model arranged according to the mass of the entities involved. He originally called his cosmic model, the

Epicosm. His basic concept was that ceaseless random interaction of the entities at each level of his model generated everything in the Universe. Later, he changed the name of his model to the Pan-Acts Cosmos in order to better express his basic concept.

"My lifelong quest is for greater unity, pervading and tying together all diversity. Whether divergent counsel in a group's formal discussion where I seek the synthesizing motion; or seeking a life center for emotional satisfactions as I find in Betty; or searching for a simpler yet ever more inclusive formula for all things knowable to man as I developed in the Pan-Acts equation, $a/ct=1$, for God c (If seen as the Creator and Ruler of All in self-creating and over-all ruling cosmos when defined as the Universal set ($U_0=1$) of all things namable) - all these and much more are manifestations of my mostly subconscious quest towards integrating - always trying to systematize from chaos, forever wanting to see things more wholly and as a whole."

Stuart C. Dodd, 1971