

**AN OUTLINE OF SEMATOLOGY;
OR, AN ESSAY TOWARDS
ESTABLISHING A NEW THEORY
OF GRAMMAR, LOGIC AND
RHETORIC**

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An Outline of Sematology; Or, an Essay Towards Establishing a New Theory of Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric by Benjamin Humphrey Smart

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BENJAMIN HUMPHREY SMART

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AN
OUTLINE
OF
SEMATOLOGY;
OR
AN ESSAY
TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A
NEW THEORY
OF
GRAMMAR, LOGIC, AND RHETORIC.

"PERHAPS if words were distinctly weighed and duly considered, they would afford us another sort of Logic and Critic, than what we have been hitherto acquainted with."—LOCKE.

LONDON:
JOHN RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1831.

474.

G. WOODFALL, ABERGEE COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.



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I PUT not my name to these pages, nor shall I, beyond this notice, speak in the first person singular, but assume the pomp and circumstance of the editorial "we". Why I choose for the present to remain unknown, I leave the reader to settle as his fancy pleases. He is at liberty to think that, being of no note or reputation, and fearing for my book the fate of George Primrose's Paradoxes, I do not place my name in the title page, because it would inevitably make that fate more certain. Or, if he chooses, he may imagine a better motive. He may suppose me to be the celebrated author of ******, with half the alphabet in capitals at the end of my name; and that I prefer an *incognito*, lest he, my "courteous reader", should relax the rigour of examination, and receive as true, on the authority of a name, a theory that may be false.

AN

OUTLINE OF SEMATOLOGY.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the last chapter of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, there is a threefold division of knowledge into φυσικὴ, πρακτικὴ, and σημειωτικὴ. If we might call the whole body of instruction which acquaints us with τὰ φυσικὰ by the name *Physiology*, and that which teaches τὰ πρακτικὰ by the name *Practicology*,—all instruction for the use of τὰ σήματα, or the signs of our knowledge, might be called SEMATOLOGY*.

* Physiology, far more comprehensive than the sense to which Physiology is fixed, would in this case signify the doctrine of the nature of all things whatever which exist independently of the mind's conception of them, and of the human will; which things include all whose nature we grow acquainted with by experience, and can know in no other way, and therefore include the mind, and God; since of the mind as well as of sensible things we know the nature only by experience, and since, abstracted from Revelation, we know the existence of a God only by experiencing His providence. Practicology, the next division, is the doctrine of human actions determined by the will to a preconceived end, namely, something beneficial to individuals, or to communities, or the welfare of the

The signs which the mind makes use of in order to obtain and to communicate knowledge, are chiefly words; and the proper and skilful use of words is, in different ways, the object of, 1. GRAMMAR, of 2. LOGIC, and of 3. RHETORIC. Our outline of Sematology will therefore be comprised in three chapters, corresponding with these three divisions.

species at large. As to Sematology, the third division, it is the *doctrine of signs*, showing how the mind operates by their means in obtaining the knowledge comprehended in the other divisions. It includes Metaphysics, when Metaphysics are properly limited to things τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, i. e. things *beyond* natural things—things which exist not independently of the mind's conception of them; e. g. a line in the abstract, or the notion of man generally: for these are merely signs which the mind invents and uses to carry on a train of reasoning independently of actual existences; e. g. independently of lines in concrete, or of men individually and particularly. But as to the class of signs which the former of these instances has in view, and which are peculiar to Mathematics, there will be no necessity, in this treatise, to make much allusion to them: it is to the signs indicated by the other example that reference will chiefly be made: for these are the great instruments of human reason, and we believe they have never yet had their suitable doctrine.

CHAPTER I.

ON GRAMMAR.

—Γενεαὶ ΜΕΡΟΠΩΝ ἀνθρώπων. HOMER.

1. To ascertain the true principles of Grammar, the method often pursued will be adopted here; namely, to imagine the progress of speech upward as from its first invention. As to the question, whether speech was or was not, in the first instance, revealed to man, we shall not meddle with it: we do not propose to inquire how the first man came to speak*,

* Beattie and Cowper, poets if not philosophers, are among those who insist that speech must have been revealed. The former thus turns to ridicule the well known passage in the Satires of Horace, *Cum prorepserunt*, &c. Lib. I. Sat. 3. v. 99:—

“ When men out of the earth of old
A dumb and beastly vermin crawled,
For scorns, first, and holes of shelter,
They, tooth and nail, and helter skelter,