



SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES No. 49

May 1952

PROFESSOR G. PATRICK MEREDITH

REVIEWS SEMANTOGRAPHY

A reprint from the November 1950 issue of the British Educational Journal THE NEW ERA IN SCHOOL AND HOME. (London, Editor Dr. Peggy Volkov) with notes by the author of Semantography

PREFACE

One and a half year have passed since this review appeared, and at last I find the time to write it down as an item of my Semantography Series. I am doing this reluctantly.

Enlightened librarians are collecting all my writings in this series, and I have put this review on the list and not delivered it. I am doing it reluctantly, because so much has happened in these one and half years, so many hopes which I built on this review have been dashed, that re-writing it, means re-living it, and this means only sad and exasperating memories. However I believe that my experiences have a significance which transcend Semantography. They show the attitude of educators towards a new educational idea.

When this review appeared, and as it was favourable, my hopes mounted. My hopes consist^{ed} in the belief that now, the educators of the world will take an interest in it and take it out of my hands. For 8 years it has tortured my mind, and I wanted and still want to hand it over, to get rid of it, to find at last the peace of mind. I am now in my 55th year, and I think I have a right to retire at last. Instead, I find myself fighting a losing battle against the apathy of whom? - the "men in the street", the milkmen, the garbage men? - No, the apathy of the educators. This is an incredible story, and what I have lived through I would not have believed when someone would have prophesied it to me. I am grateful to Dr. Volkov, whose energy and interest made this review possible. I am also grateful to Professor Meredith for all the trouble he took, and yet, and yet, I can't help feeling that Dr. Volkov and Prof. Meredith could have done a little more, as I shall soon show. This review is preceded by testimonials by James Hemming a young and brilliant British educationalist who wrote that Semantography "should be developed as rapidly and as widely as possible", (but he himself did nothing whatsoever in this respect), and a testimonial by Prof. Carleton Washburne who said^{top} that "it should..." (see Semantography Series No. 6). Washburne himself, speaking in 1949 over the Australian National Network said about the educators of the world: "We take easily to technical innovations, but we resist any change, we even pride ourselves with the antiquity of our educational innovations." Needless to say, that Washburne himself provided an example of his own saying.

These notes will be full of bitterness. One of the reasons may be, that I am typing them in the evening hours, after a hard days work trying to make ends meet, and

trying to continue my work and my correspondence on Semantography. The other reason is, that all my overtures and approaches to educators of many countries have failed ignominiously. I have crouched on all fours, I have showered flattery, courtesy, humbleness, thanks, gratitude and even appreciative tangible things on them. It was of no avail. Re-writing this review means bringing up all the bitter memories from my subconscious, and as I do not want to repress them again, I am trying to "abreact" them by writing this outcry. Moreover, I have ~~aduty~~ duty with regard to this review. Experiences with subsequent reviews have shown to me, that reviewers do not want to listen to explanations and pleas of the authors of the works they review. Although this review and subsequent reviews are flattering to my work, I have arrived at a point at which I do not want any review any more. Reviewers do not want to take the time to grasp my work. They simply do not believe that Semantography is Leibnitz's "Algebra of Thought". They take it as a picture-writing, a sign-writing and laud it from this angle - to my exasperation.

Meredith wrote that my work should deserve an "unconditional eulogy", which is a tremendously flattering remark. But he said, he cannot refrain from making a few "faint damns". Now, I maintain that he would not have made those "faint damns" if he would have followed my plea and if he would have asked some questions. Every time I had the opportu-

nity to explain a "faint damn" to a reviewer, he invariably says: "Sorry, I did not think of that. I am wrong." Now, Professor Meredith is thousands of miles away, and he has done what many educators have done, ignoring my letters, my brochures, etc. So, the least I can do, is to register my explanations to the few "faint damns. In order to show that Meredith would not have uttered them, had he asked me about them, and in order to show that he and subsequent reviewer failed to listen to my plea, I shall herebelow reprint my letter to him. I have written the same thing to other professors, in all cases with negative result (with the exception of Professor Reiser of the University of Pittsburgh)

Professor Pat Meredith
University of Leeds

Sydney 20th August
1950

Dear Professor Meredith

I am writing to you in the hope that you have kindly consented to review my work on Semantography, and because I cannot assume that you should or would read the whole work. This letter will save you time.

I would like you to do what Bertrand Russell and others did (Note: the people I met personally, not through letters). I asked him and I ask you now to give me any statement to be "translated" into Semantography. Convince yourself of the simple working of the semantics and logic of Semantography. And if you are convinced, please stress this part of my work. You would thus help this new idea tremendously, and would help to overcome the main difficulty.

The main difficulty is the usual reaction of people: "Ah, a new kind of Esperanto!" I wince, and try to explain that this is the "opposite" of an international language. No learning of strange words. Then they say: "Ah, a sign language!" I wince again and say: "Look here, we chemists are not concerned that H₂O means water in all languages. We are concerned about the semantics of our symbol writing, the meaning of H₂O (2 parts of Hydrogen and 1 part of Oxygen). And more important is the logic of chemical symbols, the conclusions and deductions we can make with them."

In a similar way do the symbols of Semantography work. Once you have been trained in them you will recognize in any speech or writing, the vague, ambiguous and fallacious words, and the logical conclusions, which may be relatively true or false. In my opinion, Semantography will bring about the Doom of the Demagogues!

When I say this, I usually meet a complete blank. The whole thing seems too unbelievable and too good to be true. Russell grasped it immediately, and I feel sure that you will agree with him. So, please write and give me your questions. It will save you much time.

Usually there is no time left to discuss another aspect of my work, an anthropological discovery which I made after my study of the writing of the Chinese, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the cavemen. This discovery (when proved) will make Semantography pale into insignificance. It is contained in 46 pages, beginning with page 617.

Yours Sincerely

PS. I enclose an article and a "filmstrip"
which will be tried in Pacific territories.

C.K. Bliss

But Meredith did not heed my letter. He did not ask me any questions. He sat down and wrote the review. So, I feel that I have to add my remarks. Some of them may seem like angry interjections. If they convey this impression to you dear reader, please realize that I too am a human being, prone to all frailties of a human. Moreover, people who know me agree that I am filled with a superabundance of energy, that I can love and be happy with all intensity, but this means too that I can be filled with tormenting rage and with desperation. Meredith calls me a "creative thinker" and we take it for granted that creative thinkers must in their life-time go through torments of desperation, that they must die in bitterness and bankruptcy. Now that I am going through all these phases - but I am still alive - I don't think that creative thinkers should be treated like this by humanity. I consider Semantography an accomplished fact. And I am now going on to make another and greater effort, namely to prove to the world that their best children, the creative thinkers are driven into death and desperation by the very men, who are entrusted by humanity to take kindly to creative ideas and their creative thinkers. What has happened to me should not happen to a dog. This is a challenge. I challenge the "prejudice of scholars", just as in the nineteenth century, the prejudice of judges have been challenged, with the result that in all civilized countries lay juries have been installed. This I consider my purpose: the fight for lay juries to judge the

deed of a man, who has been condemned by the scholarly world to a life of bitterness and frustration. Mark you, I shall not refer to the men, be they members of a university or not, who through their life time have been ridiculed and criticised. I shall take the example of Semantography, something which has been highly praised, yet - well, the Germans have a word for it: "totschweigen". This does not mean "dead silence" nor does it mean "deadening silence." It means "silence into death" a man and his work. And this is done not by the men in the street, but by the men in the chairs, the chairs of the schools and universities.

The story of this review begins with my efforts to try to interest an educational international body to take an interest in my work, to give me an opportunity, however so small, to expound it to the members, and I myself was and still am a member of that society. This request of mine was consistently refused, and the refusers did so having no more knowledge of my work than that conveyed in my leaflet Semantography Series No.1.

The refusal of my work was a bitter blow to me, even more so because I asked only for a chance to bring it to the knowledge of the members. Then I got the favourable testimonials of Carleton Washburne and James Hemming, two prominent men of that society. Now I thought, the battle has been won. The refusers can't refuse me any more. They must bow to the favourable words of Washburne and Hemming. So I applied again for a short informative communication to the members - and was again refused. I thought then, that a favourable review in a prominent educational journal will bring the change about. After nearly a year of effort, Meredith's review came out - and month after month passed, and no word came from the society, no mention of the review in their bulletin, although a member has been honoured. I thought then that they have overlooked it, that the review did not come to their notice, although the journal is their chief medium of expression.

So I wrote to the refusers, and asked them whether they have read the review of my work, written by Professor Meredith. Yes, they have, they answered, but they see no reason to alter their first decision. And so, nearly three years after I approached that educational society, the members still don't know that one of them has written a work on a new educational idea. If you dear reader, condemn the bitter words used in this review of a review, please try to think how you would feel after such a treatment.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE REVIEW OF SEMANTOGRAPHY BY PROF. MEREDITH WITH NOTES BY C.K. BLISS

The review contains about 2000 words and begins on page 220, of THE NEW ERA IN SCHOOL AND HOME, London November, 1950. It begins with a "footnote reference" written, I believe, by the editor of the journal Dr. Peggy Volkov.

SEMANTOGRAPHY by C.K. Bliss, B.Sc. Unpublished, 4 Volumes. 1. Synopsis, 2. Book I, The Idea of Semantography, 3. Book II, The System of Semantography, 4. Book III, The Semantics of Semantography.

Note by C.K. Bliss: The very first word of Professor Meredith, the word "Unpublished" has caused the downfall of a number of efforts. So, what does Professor Meredith mean by "Unpublished", a matter of semantics indeed. Judging from the word itself, "published" should mean "made public", and "unpublished" should mean "not made public." Now, Prof. Meredith had before him a letter written by the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, one of the greatest libraries in the British Empire. Principal Librarian John Metcalfe, B.A., F.L.A., wrote:

"Mr. Bliss has now published an extensive work..." and "... I believe his book should be available in the larger public and university reference libraries throughout the world. I have therefore no hesitation in recommending its purchase by these libraries. Having regard to... present costs of production I do not consider the price of app. £A 5 to be excessive."

(words underlined by me)

So, according to Metcalfe, I have "published" a work. He speaks of its purchase and he even approves of the price. But according to Meredith, I have "not published" it. What makes this so exasperating for me, is that Meredith had Metcalfe's letter before him in two different versions, that is, versions according to the mode of printing. The first "version" is a photo-offset print of the letter as a facsimile, which forms Semantography Series No.5. And the second "version" is in type-set contained in Semantography Series No.6. Apparently, he hasn't read both. Otherwise he would have seen that an important expert on books considers my work published, and that he has even approved the price for which it is made available to the public. Indeed Metcalfe bought it outright and a number of librarians have done the same.

Why then does Meredith think that my work is "Unpublished"? Because it is not typeset. It is duplicated by the wax-stencil process. Many scientific "publications" are produced in the same way. In the United States, even typewritten pages when offered to the public are considered as publications. The peculiar copyright law of the U.S.A. demands that a work must be produced in the U.S.A. I had then no ^{other} recourse then to ask my friend to type it down, and to offer it in this form to the public and then to register its "publication" with the Copyright Office in Washington.

But Meredith thinks perhaps that "Unpublished" means that no publisher has published it, that is, risked his money on it. If the criterion is therefore a publisher's name at the end of the first page, I wish to say that a great many scientific and educational books printed in typeset and having a respectable publisher's name on the first page, are in fact printed at the full expense of the author. I became aware of this exasperating fact when publishers suggested to me that I pay in full the printing expenses. There was nothing else to do than to form my own publishing company, just as there is a Basic English Publishing Company. Now there is a Semantography Publishing Company which issues my mimeographed books and orders are coming in addressed to that publishing company. The question I ask now is: Are my books now "published" in the sense Meredith means it?

The reason why I dwell so much in anger about this one word "Unpublished" is that a number of educators told me to get my work first "published" and then come to them. Indeed, this first word in Meredith's review has frustrated a lot of hopes I have had with regard to my work and to Meredith's review about it.

The next 2 words of Meredith: "4 Volumes" are even more exasperating to me. There are no 4 volumes. There are only 3 volumes, and the first volume consists of ca. 130 pages. Twothird of this First Volume is a Synopsis of all 3 Volumes. This Synopsis I have bound separately for those people who want to read the Synopsis only. By some chance Meredith got the Synopsis, the Book I (which contains the Synopsis), Book II and III. Anyone who starts to thumb through the Synopsis and then goes through Book I, must see immediately that this is only a repetition. But Meredith did not see it, and hence "4 Volumes".

I mention this here, because it carries an even more exasperating memory: my fight with UNESCO. Dr. Volkov gave them the Synopsis, and this word is printed in red on the front page, followed by those words, again in red: "Containing three chapters as Introduction and Summary to the three books on Semantography. In short, everyone who read these few words must realize that there are 3 books. But the Unesco people did not see it. They wrote that they had my "work" before them, that they looked into it. Yet, 10 of the 80 pages of the Synopsis contain nothing else than short summaries of more than 130 chapters. In all those futile letters from Unesco Paris, there was no hint, that the writers realized that they had not my 3 books before them. They did not even thumb through the pages of the Synopsis. Such is the way a work on a new idea is judged.

Now, after the title of the review, there follows a short introduction by the editor and I think these few sentences are a classical example how good a summary and introduction can be. Dr. Volkov wrote:

"We already use symbols to express some ideas universally - the pointing arrow to express direction, scientific symbols to explain what happens, say, in an electric circuit, and so forth. Semantography extends the method to include all ideas. The system breaks down the meanings exchanged in human communication into unit ideas, each represented by a symbol which is as self-explanatory and simple as possible. By using these symbols alone or in combination it is possible to convey ideas, information, directions, etc., by direct symbolic presentation. This outflanks the linguistic and grammatical obstacles to written inter-communication. Moreover, because Semantography deals all the time with fundamental meanings it induces its user to think clearly. Once one is dealing with fundamental meanings in language, the pleasant, deluding joy of high-sounding verbiage are not longer available as an alternative to honest thought."

I was delighted when I read this introduction. It is clear and to the point, and it must induce in the reader a desire to see the symbols of which Dr. Volkov speaks so interestingly. As Meredith did not bring any symbol in his review, I was convinced that the words mentioned above must bring about a deluge of enquiries. THE NEW ERA must, according to the number of copies, come to the knowledge of at least 10,000 teachers in different parts of the world. Considering the fact, that one copy is usually found on the table in the teachers room, reading room or library, I venture to say that more than 20,000 teachers must have seen the review and read at least these first words, marked with an asteric. How many enquiries did come in? You will not believe it: None. NONE. Not a single one from a teacher. And consequently, there was no desire to show the symbols of Semantography in THE NEW ERA nor in any other educational journal. Unbelievable, but true.

Here is the full text of Professor Meredith's Review:

SEMANTOGRAPHY by C. K. BLISS

"Book reviews may be rated on a 5-point scale: A, Unconditional eulogy; B, Praising with faint dams; C, Neutral; D, Damning with faint praise; E, Unconditional damnation. If Mr. Bliss could have completely achieved his entirely praiseworthy aims, his books would have deserved an A. As I cannot in honesty refrain from a few faint damns the award must be a B.

This is a peculiar review to undertake because SEMANTOGRAPHY has not yet been published, and my impression is that Mr. Bliss is seeking to enlist support in what may be a difficult publishing venture. The faint dams I have to utter may be taken as hints on desirable modifications which would I believe facilitate the venture. As Mr. Bliss has provided nearly half a million words, typed and duplicated by his own hands, he may not thank me for suggesting still more work, but I feel compelled to recommend some drastic pruning if SEMANTOGRAPHY is to meet the success it deserves. Last year I wrote a book of 300,000 words myself and decided it was unreadable. This year I cut it down to 50,000 words. So I am only preaching what I know is practicable. In our busy radio-saturated world only salacious novels and medical texts can be gargantuan and get away with it."

To this I have to say, that I have NEVER suggested to any of the publishers I have approached that these 3 books should be typeset printed. I can prove that in all my letters to publishers I have suggested a short book only, even a "booklet". These 3 mimeographed volumes have been written to show that Semantography is a practical proposition, and that the symbols can do the job for science, industry, commerce, communication. I had to write large chapters on each subject. If I had shown a few symbols for each application, people might say, that I have selected some simple meanings. If I had written a short manuscript, people might say that I have superficially covered the subject. My 3 books are a publication in themselves, not a manuscript for a publisher.

"But before specifying the cuts let me indicate what SEMANTOGRAPHY is all about. The cover describes it as "100 Symbol Elements to overcome Babel in reading, writing and thought," and my first faint damn is that this is claiming to be a panacea and the world is mightily suspicious of panaceas. Language is an integral part of man's mental and social life. The war for the rationalization of mankind is not going to be won by an advance, however spectacular, on the linguistic front alone. Moreover, that advance itself cannot take place in isolation since the successful introduction of a world-language can be accomplished only through a sequence of political, commercial and educational activities. The work of a creative thinker like Mr. C.K.Bliss lays the foundation for these activities but the first task is to persuade the builders that the foundation is sound. That means persuading irrational people to be rational. We are all irrational over large areas of our lives and such rationalism as most of us achieve is through the logic of brute fact rather than persuasive argument. The logic of a language will be no more acceptable than the logic of a chemical theory unless supported by experimental evidence. Mr. Bliss is a trained chemist and will doubtless appreciate this point. Semantography gives the impression, like Stephen Leacock's elephant, of setting out across the desert in all directions at once. If he could persuade the Colonial Office to carry out a limited experiment with a number of illiterate peoples to show that Semantography works, the report on this experiment would carry more weight than all his brilliant arguments. It would also, if I am not mistaken, reveal certain remediable defects in the system itself."

To this I have to say, that I never thought of Semantography as a panacea. The symbols of mathematics $1 + 2 = 3$ and the symbols of chemistry H_2O have "overcome Babel in reading, writing and thought", and Semantography can do something similar. It is true that we are irrational, but the "builders", our leaders and educators should be rational. They should investigate a new idea, they should make the necessary experiments. Alas, all my approaches to educators, to colonial administrators, all my pleas for a few experiments have failed.

"Although Semantography may be called an international language it is not in the tradition of Volapuk, Inter-glossa, Esperanto, and the like, though it has important principles in common with Inter-glossa, to which I shall revert presently. Its direct ancestor is the REAL CHARACTER of Bishop Wilkins (born 1614), one of the founders of the Royal Society. "An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language" is still obtainable in libraries and should be consulted by those who appreciate the importance of studying the history of linguistic innovations. The references to Wilkins in Lancelot Hogben's DANGEROUS THOUGHTS and

Frederick Bodmer's LOOM OF LANGUAGE should also be consulted. Wilkins, like Bliss found part of his inspiration in Chinese ideography. Unlike Bliss and unlike the Chinese, he assigned phonetic value to his ideographic elements. This embodies an important principle which it would be out of place to discuss here. Suffice it to say that the Chinese whatever their oral dialect (which varies widely) can, if literate, all communicate through the same graphic system. This is likewise the essence of Semantography. It is not a speaking language. Unlike Chinese, in which there is a large ingredient of historical conventionality in the semantic functions of its ideographical elements, Semantography follows an explicit set of rules which are as rational as Mr. Bliss could make them. In this he follows Wilkins."

I regret to say that Prof. Meredith has not pointed out the crucial difference between my system and Wilkins's Real Character, namely, Wilkins's symbols are wholly arbitrary, whereas my symbols are pictorial. None of Wilkin's symbols suggest the real thing in its outline, whereas most of my symbols are almost self-explanatory, as far as they refer to real material things and their actions. In Book I, p.46 I have shown the list of Wilkins's important symbols. Compared with them, the obvious outline of my pictorial symbols are so much different, that the two systems are not comparable at all. Indeed, Leibnitz, a contemporary of Wilkins, rejected Wilkins's system on account of its arbitrariness, and demanded that the symbols must be pictorial. Bearing this in mind, the counter-arguments of Meredith listed in the following paragraph appear to have no value, and indeed children who have been taught the pictorial symbols of Semantography have found no difficulty to grasp them, nor to write whole sentences in Semantography. I cherish the memory of one particular instance. Dr. Volkov received from me a letter in Semantography, addressed to her 2 children, twin girls aged 12. To be sure, I wrote the "translation" in English under each symbol, and attached another letter, explaining how I arrived at these pictorial characters. Dr. Volkov obliterated the English translation, and gave the text in Semantography, together with the second letter to her children. Not only were they able to read my letter, but they wrote a letter in return, in which they made practically no mistakes. This single instance (followed by others) disproves wholly Meredith's doubts and misgivings, as expressed in the following paragraph.

"I have been trying hard to think how Semantography could be handled or modified to enable Mr. Bliss to have his cake and eat it. Wilkins, Hogben and Bliss all have this in common: they all demand semantic sophistication in the users of their language. One has to be acquainted with an analytical framework to enable one to reduce one's verbal expressions to their semantic elements before they can be expressed in Real Character, Interglossa or Semantography. I was talking Interglossa to Hogben within two hours of having his manuscript in my hands, because his system fitted in with my own analytical habits of thought. I find Bliss using an analysis somewhat different, but not too remote. Hogben is a biologist, Bliss a chemist. I started as a physicist and became a psychologist. These personal allusions are not irrelevant, for languages are used by persons, all having somewhat different backgrounds. Would an economist, a paleographer, a sociologist, a meteorologist feel as readily at home in the system? More pertinently would a barber, an hotel keeper, a postman or a farmer? The point is that if the system can be used only by those having the rationality which is the very aim of the system to propagate there is a vicious circle."

To this I have to say that English, or French, or German or any other language of literate people are used by children, by economists, paleographers, sociologists, meteorologists, as well as by barbers, hotel keepers, postmen or farmers, yet, they all find that they can express their ideas and thoughts, be they children or adults, although English and French and other languages are quite difficult. I regret that Meredith did not take the trouble to study the many chapters which I have written specially for expression of thoughts in the sciences, or in the field of barbers (p.336), of hotel keepers (p.335), of postmen (p.121), of farmers (p.327) and even of illiterate farmers (p.108). These are long chapters, and each one could be the basis of a short book on that particular aspect. I have tried to show that Semantography can be applied to all directions of human activities. Meredith confronted with this voluminous display said in a foregoing paragraph, that "Semantography gives the impression, like Stephen Leacock's elephant, of setting out across the desert in all directions at once." Meredith may not have read my chapters on the use of metaphors, otherwise he would not use such a metaphor which is obviously a fairy tale. There is no elephant, which can set out in all directions at once. Similarly, Meredith said that he has tried hard to think how Mr. Bliss "can have his cake and eat it." Such an expression is possible in English, or French or Interglossa or Esperanto, but in Semantography it can only be written if there is real pastry cake involved. The pictorial presentation of Semantography makes such talk impossible.

"A more profound point is that "rationality" itself is not a single absolute doctrine on which even the semantically sophisticated are all agreed. This was the

very point on which Wilkin's system broke down. To quote Hogben, 'The truth is that it embodies all the essential defects which Aristotle's system of Nature borrowed from Plato.'

Here again, I feel that Meredith has not realized the important difference between Wilkins's system and Semantography. The latter pictures the real happenings: Man goes, Man thinks, Man drives a car, Man is unhappy, etc.etc. These are all realities and pictured in the picturegraphs of Semantography, they show the real things involved: a man, his legs, his brain (skull), his car, and his mind again, which is the source of his unhappy feelings. To make it even more popular, I have used as an alternative symbol the heart, in order to accomodate the meaning of "downheartedness", which we find similarly expressed in many languages. I am therefore unable to follow Meredith. He criticises Wilkins, but he does not criticise Semantography.

"Now, there are various inferences which might be drawn from this. The most pessimistic is that since the rationality of yesterday is the superstition of to-day it is a futile enterprise to try to rationalize language. I think that the progress of Chemistry, to take a simple example, refutes this pessimism. The symbolic system built up in the 19th century on an erroneous view of the nature of chemical elements proved sufficiently robust to be carried forward into the age of nuclear physics. This is a lesson to us all. But be careful how you apply the lesson. Chemical symbolism worked because it was applied within a circumscribed range of phenomena. The same ideas applied outside that range, e.g. to mental processes, led to such abortions as the Associonist Psychology. The rules of cricket work well on a pitch 22 yards long but if played all over the country-side they would break down. Euclidean geometry works within the framework of Euclid's axioms. In brief, 'rationality' means adherence to a fixed set of rules within a defined region. You may, if you like, take the whole universe as your defined region and may include metaphysical postulates in your rules, but never forget that you are playing a game whose pattern of scoring is a sketchy reflection of the real state of affairs. And never forget that others may play equally 'rational' games in the same field. If you do forget this it were better to take out nationalization papers in a state with an official philosophy compulsory for all citizenz."

It is difficult for me to find in these sentences anything which may pertain to Semantography. I feel, that Meredith did, what many a reviewer has done, putting in his own thoughts on the philosophy of language, or rationality, or whatever it may be. Furthermore, these sentences could serve as an illutration what Semantography can do to such talk. The comparison with a game to be played within certain rules, can be extremely misleading to anyone. There is no such "game" in Semantography, unless you think that calling a spade a spade, a hammer a hammer, a man a man can be considered as a "game." Again, the symbol or rather the picture of a spade can only be used when a real spade is involved. In ordinary language we use the metaphor of "calling a spade a spade" to distort any issue and mislead others. This cannot be done in Semantography.

I regret and I even resent these paragraphs, which have nothing to do with Semantography as such, but are obviously reflections on language and communication of thoughts in general. I believe, that these doubts have done harm to Semantography, because the reader might have taken them as reflections on Semantography, and might have been discouraged to see the symbols for himself. Meredith would have done much better studying my symbols for barbers, hotel keepers, postmen, farmers, children and primitives - all people without sophistication, and without a need for Euclid's axioms or the like.

"I hope that these faint damns will be taken in the friendly spirit in which they are offered. And from these reflections on Semantography I am led to the following remarks:

1. The actual graphical symbolism offered by Mr. Bliss is the most ingenious and promising I have yet seen. The fact that an ordinary typewriter keyboard can be adapted to accomodate all his elements should make the system a winner, from the practical point of view, if it is ever adopted on any appreciable scale.
2. By abandoning any implicit claim to an absolute rationality, and by presenting the system as a linguistic game played according to prescribed rules (which may not seem arbitrary to Mr. Bliss but will certainly seem so to many readers) the long-winded text could be split into two much shorter sections, one on Semantic Theory, the other on Practical Semantographic Rules."

It would be impossible for Meredith to point out any page in my 3 books where I have made "the implicit claim to absolute rationality". The very contrary is true. I can point out many instances in scores of pages where I have stressed that the "rules" can be altered, can be used differently by the child and differently by the atom physicist, who will bear in mind that although a table may be a mad dance of electrons, it is still a

table for him or for the child, or the barber or postman or farmer, symbolized thus: I refuse to use the metaphor that Semantography is a "linguistic game" to be "played" according to prescribed rules. As said before, such talk can be made in any ordinary language. Its nonsense becomes apparent to the student of Semantography who realizes that Semantography is not a "game." It would be equally exasperating to any linguist to call his treatment of his language a "game." Furthermore, the use of the word "game" indicates something playful, something which you do to idle away time, in short something not serious. I consider such talk as harmful to the idea of Semantography.

3. The Semantographic Rules should be combined with the presentation of the symbolism itself to form a Manual for the learner or rather a series of Manuals. Manual 1 should start with concrete situations of travel, trade and daily living in which the semantic analysis is both simple and relatively non-controversial. Experiments with this among a number of widely different peoples actually suffering from difficulties of linguistic confusion would show whether within defined limits Semantography is a successful remedy for Babel. Later manuals dealing with the translation of more complex expressions involving medicine, psychology, politics, etc. would benefit by the experience gained in the use of the Manual 1."

I don't know whether such well-meant advice for improvement is usually given in a review. It would have been better, if Meredith would have written a private letter to me. The reader must obviously come to the conclusion that here are serious improvements lacking in the original work. What Meredith did not mention is that all those proposed "Manuals" are actually written already and contained in the 3 books. There they are called "chapters", relating to medicine, psychology, politics, etc. etc. etc.

"4. The Semantic Theory should be presented in an independent volume, as a set of clearly stated principles, with such illustrations as have not already been well ventilated by Ogden, Richards, Bodmer, Hayakawa, Korzybski, Stuart Chase, etc. not to mention Charles Peirce, Bertrand Russell, Neurath, Morris and Carnap. For this volume would be destined for the minority already thinking about these problems, for whom reiteration is no recommendation. Hogben made the tactical error of combining both types of exposition in a single Penguin volume with sad results."

Meredith well-meant advice was unnecessary, because Book III carries the title (mentioned by Meredith at the begin of this review "The Semantics of Semantography". In this volume I have shown examples and discussed the work of most of those thinkers which Meredith mentioned above. I am sorry, that he did not find these chapters.

"Mr. Bliss, whilst having assimilated the greater part of semantic thought of recent years, has a slant of his own on many issues. A concise volume of theory would enable him to make his contribution with far greater prospect of sympathetic reception than is likely to be accorded to this half-million word bulldozer, on which nevertheless I have spent many more hours than I could rationally spare in recent weeks, through sheer fascination. Semantography is such an important creative advance in language-design that the strategy of its presentation to the world merits as much care as the author has devoted to the system itself."

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Although this closing paragraph contains some flattering remarks, I can only repeat what I have said in the beginning, namely, that Meredith would not have uttered those "faint damns" had he asked me some questions, as I begged him to do. He has completely overlooked the most important aspect of Semantography, being a new and simple Logic and Algebra of Thought, he has overlooked the crucial difference of Semantography being a pictorial writing, against Wilkins's system; Interglossa being even more remotely connected. He has not read enough of my 3 books, otherwise he would not have ventured those advices, which in the reader must have created an unfavourable impression of my work.

Two years ago, I thought that his review was the cause of the complete disinterest which the readers of THE NEW ERA have displayed with regard to my work. Today, I believe that even if Meredith would have praised my work in every word, even if he would have exhorted every reader and every teacher to foster and support Semantography, the result might have been the same: complete disinterest. Other scholars have praised Semantography, have exhorted even the whole of mankind to take an interest in it, but it had no effect. Even worse, those scholars themselves have done nothing to help me and my work, and this applies also to Meredith. I don't want any reviews any more.