

HELPING ELIZABETH S. HELFMAN WITH HER BOOK  
"SIGNS AND SYMBOLS AROUND THE WORLD"

See also S.S.275, the reprint of my symbols in Helfman's Book as the cover story of the American educational magazine "Scholastic Newstime".

When Mrs. Helfman approached me with the request to allow her to show my semantography in her forthcoming book I was determined not to go again through the same agonies which have convulsed me in previous years when designers of newspapers and magazines, ordered by the editor to copy my symbols for the article, did not copy my symbols exactly. They had to assert their "genius" and their "originality" and they had to (damn it) show to themselves, to me and to the world that their "interpretation" of my symbols is the better one. I cringed in rage when I saw the result. It was no use telling them beforehand not to distort my symbols because they are designed to fit together by the keys of a typewriter. Usually, I asked to be shown the final drawings before they go to press. But usually this was impossible owing to pressure of the date line in producing the newspaper or magazine. I had to see the distorted result in print afterwards. This made me decide to alter my copyright and to allow the showing of my symbols only if they are reproduced by the photographic process from my own drawings (See S.S. 242).

When Mrs. Helfman approached me I was then determined to draw the symbols myself. But much discussion and correspondence was necessary to show Mrs. Helfman how the correct drawings ought to be, and why her initial drawing must be altered for this or that reason. Usually any other person engaged in my symbols has a desire to "improve" on my design. But these persons don't know the immense work I had put in in the final design of the symbol. Usually, I had thought on that "improvement" before, but I found that there are dangers of misinterpretation because of this or that meaning. Consequently, when an "improver" comes around, I have to convince him why his "improved symbol" would be misinterpreted in a different context, etc. etc. etc. For this reason my correspondence will be interesting and helpful for those who in later years will make new editions of new publications of my work. There are also other things mentioned in these letters, about other "symbol seekers" who have done nothing but befuddling themselves and the world, as for instance that woman Margaret Mead with her Glyphs.

And what happened? I persevered with my letters to the designer employed by the publisher that only my drawings be reproduced, and also that I must SEE FIRST the printed and set-up pages BEFORE the book is printed. I got indeed the pages of the chapter, but unfortunately I did not get the foregoing pages which contain the idea of semantography and which contain also 2 symbols.

In these foregoing pages on my symbols of the sun and of the tree are shown. Now these symbols are repeated a number of times in the next pages and the designer had ample opportunity to simply copy my symbols of the sun, (a perfect circle)  and the outline of a tree . But as said before, I did not get these foregoing 2 pages for correction. The designer must have realised much later that he has to put in these two symbols, and he lost no time to draw freehand a kind of potato to mean the sun  and a kind of crazy arrow to mean a tree . Fortunately, the designer of the educational magazine "Scholastic Newstime" realised the mistake made by the book designer and drew a perfect circle for sun, and a perfect outline of a tree, when he designed the "cover story". But as my symbols appeared also on the cover of the magazine, he himself messed up my symbols. As he had to compress the chapter of Helfman's book on semantography in two full pages of the magazine, he did a beautiful job of reducing photographically my symbols and using smaller type for the text, and a wonderful addition, he used different colours as background for some symbols. These different colourshades came out not well in the reproduction of S.S.275. But he left out Helfman's comparison of my modern symbols with some ancient symbols (which were not necessary for a cover story on semantography anyway.)



and he also left out a complete sentence from the book, which sentence he put however, in colour on the magazine cover together with other symbols shown in Helfman's book. This sentence was drawn by myself and appeared in the book as follows:

1. 0 ↑ 人 → | x x ↑  
after sunrise men approaches forest

and which that blasted designer in total ignorance of my sentence construction (in which every symbol of every word must be separated by a blank square of space) wrote as follows (and I copy exactly from the cover of the magazine):

1. 0 ↑ 人 → | x x ↑

And now the correspondence which follows herebelow, without however reprinting paragraphs (and complete letters) which do not deal with the theme of this issue "Helping Elizabeth S. Helfman with her book" and which were only personal in order to establish a personal relationship as friends between Helfman and myself. Again I beg the reader to understand my long-winded letters. In my whole adult life when I had to dictate thousands of letters I found that whenever I am very brief, I am misunderstood by some fool at the other end, and who then messed up my intention and did something I never asked him to do. Henceforth I wrote rather long letters repeating sometimes what I want, instead of writing short letters and being misunderstood. And so, here we go:

Dear Mr. Bliss,

July 31, 1966

I am writing a book for children (aged 8-12) about graphic signs and symbols and I have become interested in your semantography. I would like to use some of your signs in my book. Though it is too early to say exactly which signs I can use, I thought it best to write for your general approval before proceeding further. I would be glad to send for your approval, later on, the section of my book which covers semantography. My point of view is favourable to it.

In general, the groups of signs which interest me are these: basic signs (open, closed, water, rain, etc.), place, time of day, things around us, feelings, signs for packages, various uses of arrows, a line of verse in Semantography ("moon goes up over waves of water"). I would not be able to use very many of these but would like some from several categories. I will say something about the advantages of such a system. Your co-operation will be much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth S. Helfman

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 16 August 66

Your letter arrived a few days ago (due to my new address which please note), and it made me very happy indeed. I am 69 already, and though feeling young, I have resolved myself to the fate that my work will gain acceptance long after I am dead. Your letter therefore, and your kind interest is just wonderful, and I say to you "God Bless You, dear Mrs. Helfman!" I shall co-operate with you in every respect.

Unfortunately during the following month I would be terribly busy with my little business, but nevertheless, should you tell me that you have to meet the deadline of your publisher, and your manuscript has to be finished by a date in September, I shall find the time for you. If however, I can postpone it till say October, it will be very good for me.

With the same airmail but second class I am sending you the following issues of my Semantography Series:

No. 280 Universal Pictorial Blissymbols for the international traveller.

This is my latest publication for those who have to be initiated to my work. I consider it best in so far as it gives a short introduction to my symbols and how they can be combined to hundreds of different meanings. The way the symbols are drawn in this folder is the way they should be drawn in your book. I give you permission to use my copyright provided the symbols are not altered in any way. This refers not only to the drawing of different symbols, different from my own, but also to the proportion how the thickness and the length of each line has to be drawn. From the folder you will learn that the line elements can be put on a typewriter, and hence all symbols are designed to fit the typewriter. Should you engage the services of a draughtsman then I would have to give him instructions and would send him forms on graph paper how to draw the symbols. In this folder you will find those simple symbols you have mentioned in your letter.

No. 23 A Filmstrip for the first lesson to children or primitive natives.

The symbols are badly drawn and badly reproduced in this mimeographed sheet, but the tourist folder mentioned before, shows them all in the right proportion.

No. 17 The title page for a Children's Primer in colour.

I have written a manuscript for a small book for teenagers and grown-ups, and this may give you some inspiration, because it introduced the reader into the field



of linguistics, semantics and semantography. Unfortunately, my financial sources are very strained. I have mortgaged my home and am up to my ears in debt to pay for my books and other publications. For this reason I am prepared to send you this manuscript by ordinary surface mail only.

No. 1 My first leaflet, and also the title page of my 3 books first edition which you may have found in the Public Library of New York, or the Queensborough Library of Jamaica N.Y. A facsimile print of this page with the Tower of Babel may perhaps be interesting for your young readers.

No. 275 My new library promotion folder and dustjacket for the second enlarged edition of the 3 volumes now printed in one handy volume. The 3 which you have seen in the New York library are unwieldy and clumsily grasped. They are now reproduced in this new volume. Should you have \$9.00<sup>00</sup> spare, the library price for the book which retails for \$12.00, I should be happy if you would order it from ACME CODE COMPANY INC. 102 First Street, Hackensack New Jersey 07601. Let me know that you want to order it, and I shall send you a short letter for my wholesaler explaining that you are writing a book, and that I ask my wholesaler to grant you the library price.

As you can see from the Library Promotion Folder, the whole text is geared to the aspect of my semantics and logic, the graphics being only mentioned in passing. It would be a good idea if you would show in your book how children can quickly learn to find out which words could hurt other children, or their parents, and which could not hurt. This is very simply demonstrated, and I am ready to write the appropriate text, once you tell me how many words I can use (100 or 500 words, etc.). I have some other manuscripts which show how young children can be introduced, but some I would have to mimeograph afresh, some I would have to cut in stencils, they being only written as a rough draft. But I shall gladly do it, once I know in what way your demonstration of my work will be written up. You have kindly suggested that you would submit me the text, and I shall do my best to make it really good. As to the poetry line "moon goes up over waves of water" I have a much better line on page 607 which shows the same symbol line expressed in 3 different versions in English, French and German. Once you buy the second edition you will find it there on the new page 739. Otherwise I will send you the page 607 from the first edition.

My Promotion Folder to Foundations I am now sending out promotion folders to American Foundations. Should your work be supported and subsidized by a Foundation, they might (so I hope) be ready to help my book along. In that case, would you kindly help me and my work by giving them my folder to read, and making them willing to support it. This is just a thought, but your kind help could come in handy. All I want is to sell my book because I have another already ready for the printer. In my age, I am working against time, wanting to finish all my work before I die.

So dear Mrs. Helfman, be assured of all my help. Send me the draft of your chapter, and let me tell you what I think about it. I have another small children manuscript, explaining to children the need for pictorial symbols on the motor roads. This is a most topical subject, and parents would be interested to see that their children are introduced to these symbols for road safety. Nothing more than my best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss.

August 23, 1966

Dear Mr. Bliss,

I was delighted to hear from you, and I am anticipating the materials you are sending. I am now on vacation (though working) on an island off the coast and so am writing my mail man to forward the material here if it arrives before I get home.

My book is due at the publisher's (Lothrop Lee and Shepard) at the end of October. All signs and symbols will be rendered by a designer at the publisher's, and I am told she is good at this. While this is being done there may be additional time to work in a few more details or to make minor changes.

I am, as I said, much interested in your Semantography and will get in as much as I can about it. I am sure you will understand, however, that this is not entirely up to me. The editor will have his say, too! He has so far been very co-operative. But the book deals also with signs of primitive man. Egyptian hieroglyphics, Indian pictographs, religious signs and symbols, trade marks, road signs, etc. etc. I have found so much fascinating material that I just hope the editor will not want to shorten the whole thing. I hope not.

I am not supported by a Foundation but I hope that my book may help your work.

The designer will be glad to have your instructions. I will send you name and address when I have them.

I would like to order your book for \$9.00. I will order it after receiving your letter for the wholesaler. We will be back in Brooklyn by Sept. 9.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth S. Helfman



P.S. My book was to be for ages 8-12 but it now seems more like 10-14 or older. Perhaps later I could do something for a younger age. You might be interested in my book (written with my husband) called STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS, string fingers from all over the world, some from Torres Strait, New Guinea, Australia. instructions with some history, for ages 8-12.

End of letter

30th August, 1966

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Many thanks for your kind letter of August 23. I hope you had a fine working holiday, and I hope too that you have received in the meantime the papers I sent you with my letter of August 16. Seeing from your letter that you have to give the completed book to your publisher at the end of October, it is out of the question to send you any papers by surface mail, therefore, and hang the expenses, I am sending you by airmail second class a number of papers which may help you in writing the chapter about my work. Again I repeat my desire to see the text and to make suggestions especially with regard to the semantics. However, I declare herewith expressively that you are free to write whatever you want, even the harshest criticism.

The other matter which is on my mind is the drawing of the symbols and here is a suggestion which will please you and your publisher. Tell me which symbols you want to display and I shall send them to you for your publisher's approval and use. In my second envelope I have enclosed a few drawings and the typeset words to be put underneath, and finally a photographic print showing the reduced drawings. If you give me the list of the symbols I shall send you all drawings for your publisher to reduce to proper size as he wants them to be shown in the book. Now herebelow is a list of papers which I am sending to you for your study and final shaping of this chapter.

Statutory declaration of my secretary Miss Maureen Bates, proving that young children can read and write my symbols within the first lesson. In a few days she will put on stencils three lessons and as soon as the duplicated copies are ready I shall forward them to you by airmail.

Semantography Series No. 55,56, draft of the first chapters of a book for juvenile and adults. Please note that explanations of my symbols start on page 29.

Semantography Series No. 45, Semantography for young minds. A lecture on the semantics of my symbols which you might find interesting.

Semantography Series No. 46, A letter to a boy scout leader showing also an example of the semantics of my symbols.

Semantography Series No. 253 A draft of a small booklet of not more than eight pages introducing children to the necessity of having pictorial and road warning signs. Unfortunately this is only a rough draft and a bad copy at that with no drawings at all but it might give you an idea, because you are dealing in your book with road safety symbols.

Page 607 of the first edition (page 739 of the second edition) which shows how a few of my symbols can be translated in different ways into a poem in English, French and German. This example is better than the one you mentioned "Moon goes up over waves of water".

Lastly for cementing our new friendship a memorial card which I have written in memory of my late wife. I have dedicated it to you and your husband, and I express my great interest to see the book "Strings on your Fingers" which you both wrote. Alas, at the present moment I am unable to obtain it but I will look forward to reading it in the very near future, and I shall enquire at the libraries here as it may be there. If it is not available, could you send me say 10 promotion papers which I would distribute to the most important Sydney libraries urging the acquisition of your book.

I shall now use the available space on the other side of this letter to make some suggestions which may be of interest to you.

Thank you for telling me about the content of the book. When you show Indian pictographs. I hope you will quote also a few lines from Longfellow's poem, "The Song of Hiawatha" (see page 232 my second edition). When you show and write about Egyptian hieroglyphics, please do not make the mistake which all people make, except the Egyptologists. Ask everyone, and everyone will tell you that Hieroglyphics are a picture writing. The truth is that they are not a picture writing and never were. They are a fully fledged alphabetical writing. The oldest parchment, dating back to 5,000 B.C. show the Hieroglyphics as an alphabetical writing where every picture stands for one alphabetical letter only. Look up page 771 of my book where I show the pictures which make up the name of Cleopatra. See that the second picture is the picture of a Lion which is pronounced Labo in old Egyptian and stands for the letter 'L' only. See the picture of an Eagle appearing twice as <sup>the</sup> sixth and the ninth picture because the Eagle represents the letter 'A' only and the word CleopAtra appears twice. Read on page 772 of my book the confirmation by the scholars that Egyptian Hieroglyphics are only an alphabetical writing. Only in a few instances



is a picture used as a pun, as for instance two arms to mean arms (weapons) in English. Or to distinguish between the meaning of two words which are written in the same way as for instance in English a board of wood and a board of directors. Maybe at a later date I will tell you about the unhappiness and heartbreak I went through because of this misinterpretation committed by Margaret Mead.

Lastly, please accept my thanks for your willingness to acquire my book. In the second envelope you will find a copy of my letter to Acme Code Co. requesting that they grant you the library discount of 25% bringing the cost down to \$9. I am sure it will be helpful to you. I shall write to Mr. Modley thanking him that he drew your attention to my work. I hope also that my above suggestions do not offend you in anyway for I am not trying to tell you how to do your job; I am sure you are highly capable of this, but I felt they may be helpful, or at least interesting.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

September 11, 1966

Dear Mr. Bliss,

The first set of materials which you sent me arrived while I was still out of town and has proved very useful. Many thanks. I will be interested in seeing the items which are now on their way. I will reimburse you for postage spent on these, by sending you international reply coupons. This is my policy with regard to all materials sent from overseas by air mail.

In my next letter I will send you a copy of the catalogue announcement of the book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. By regular mail I am going to send you a copy of the book itself. It seems as if it might be of particular interest in Australia. A friend of mine who lived there and in New Zealand said that considerable study of string figures had been done there, though perhaps all this is in the past.

I am especially interested in what you have to say about Egyptian Hieroglyphics not being a picture writing. The sources I used did say that most of it was picture writing, in the earlier periods, though some figures stood for sounds. I will now look into this further, as of course I want to be accurate. Can you suggest any particular book or a specific Egyptologist, which could steer me in the right direction? The New York Public Library of course has an amazingly complete collection of books on all subjects. (Including SEMANTOGRAPHY).

You will hear from me in greater detail before long.

Sincerely Yours,

Elizabeth S. Helfman.

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 17 September, 1966

Just received your kind letter, and hasten to answer, because of your kind suggestion to send international postal coupons. Don't please. First, they are a nuisance to anyone who gets them, making it necessary to go to the post office, etc. And secondly, they are a robbery committed by the International Postal Union. Just buy one coupon at your post office. You must pay 15 cents for it. Then turn around and say "give me the stamps you ordinarily give in exchange of a postal coupon". And what do you get? Only an 8c postage stamp. You, and I would lose nearly 50%. If you want to reimburse me for my postal expenses, please send me U.S. stamps of 11c value. This is enough for an aerogram, and I use these stamps to request a reply from people in America.

Kindly excuse that I did not right away express my willingness to acquire your book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. The fact is that I am up to my ears in debts and a mortgage on my home, simply because I had to pay for the printing of my second edition. But I am prepared to do more for your book, once I receive it. I am going to send it to the librarians I know, in succession, urging every one of them to order the book. If, as you say, it is of particular interest in Australia, the librarians may order it, and first, I will be able to read it. Please send it by surface mail only.

As to the hieroglyphics being an alphabetical writing only (with a few exceptions) I should say that any book on the history of writing should say this. I have written about it in my book, and if you still intend to acquire it you will find it in the chapter "The History of Writing" beginning on page 758. On page 771 I show the name of Cleopatra in hieroglyphics, and on the next page I quote from "A History of the Art of Writing" by William A. Mason (MacMillan, New York 1920) where he says that we cannot find any document in which hieroglyphics is used as a purely pictorial writing. The priests of old confused any laymen by evolving different pictures for the same letter. There are perhaps 20 different pictures for the letter H, etc. I cannot quote exact figures, but I have written it somewhere and have not the time to find it.

I found it, just on the next page of my book Page 773 par. 3. There are 30 different pictures for the letter H, as quoted from Mason's book. Hieroglyphics means a sacred <sup>carving</sup> and the priests of old (as the priests of new) are all most concerned to make as much hocuspocus to confuse and confound the laymen.



This too they succeeded even 7000 years later, making modern people believe that it's picture writing. It isn't. No "greater" woman fell into the trap than Margaret Mead, who invented a new word for modern symbols "glyph" not realising that glyphein means to carve, and graphein means to write. We say autograph not autoglyph, monograph not monoglyph, etc. Why did she do it? This is a sorry story, which I may tell you some time. The fact is that she has known of my work for 16 years, but refused me an interview when she was in Sydney in 1950 and again in 1964. Now she came out with the new word "glyph" which refers only to the carvings of the Egyptians and the Majas, but not in the way of modern symbols which can be read in all languages. Needless to say that Margaret Mead hasn't evolved a single symbol of her own. I am sorry, I have been carried away. An old wound has broken open.

I am with best wishes to you and your husband.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

September 18, 1966

Your second batch of material has just arrived. Our inefficient post office forwarded it to my vacation address and then it was sent back here, which caused some delay. I am ordering your book, with pleasure.

The materials are all of great interest and I will soon go over them in detail. When I can, I will send you the list of symbols I expect to use. Of course, I cannot be sure as yet how much space the editor will allow me for this.

I was much moved by your memorial card with your lady-of-the-universe, your late wife. Many thanks for your interest.

Enclosed you will find international reply coupons to cover postage for the materials you sent (not the letters). Also a copy of the announcement for STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. The book itself will follow more slowly.

I have been doing further reading about Egyptian writing and think I have straightened out the problem of their phonetics. I will also consult your book on the pages you mentioned. Actually, I do not think I was so very far wrong, since I had consulted reliable sources, such as Gelb's A STUDY OF WRITING.

My husband sends greetings, and I too, across the world.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth S. Helfman.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

September 19, 1966

Unfortunately I had already mailed the international reply coupons before receiving your letter telling me not to. I had no idea they were so unsatisfactory! What shall I do now? If you want to send them back to me, I will send you stamps as you suggest.

I know about Margaret Mead and her glyphs. Since this term has been adopted by the United Nations, in their stress on signs for international use, I am using it in my final chapter, with a note on the original meaning of the word. The term is also used by the International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier. Though it is a new and perhaps not altogether accurate use of the word, I am afraid it is here to stay. So it goes!

I have ordered your book. STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS will be on its way soon.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth S. Helfman

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 27 September, 1966

Received today your 2 letters and the postal coupons, and am writing to you immediately. I shall use the coupons and thank you for them. I also thank you for your willingness to buy my book. And also for the page from your and your husband's book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. How well I know these string plays which I have played as a child and little boy. I think that there should be a market for your book here, with the many kindergartens run by the education department. I shall investigate the situation as soon as I find time, and shall be happy to help your book along.

The reason for my quick answer is your information that you are going to mention the word glyph in your book to mean a symbol which can be understood in all languages. Your reason is that the United Nations and the Committee for Breaking, etc. have adopted the term. You say that the term is here to stay. Yes, it will stay only as another example as to what some academics will do to make an old idea look new. It will come into disrepute rather sooner or later. I know how M.M. came upon the term, and I have a large file of correspondence with the United Nations (I have even a friend there) and I have an even larger correspondence with that Committee for Breaking, etc.

The fact is that the United Nations has issued a circular, only to get rid of M.M. The U.N. has consistently refused to take any interest, nor take any steps in this matter. In a rather comical way they have even made fun of the term glyph imposed upon them. What is a glyph? they ask, and answer: a glyph is a sign and symbol. So why the new term? Why not use the familiar term symbol?



As to the Committee for Breaking, etc. this is a moribund venture conducted by a man who hasn't invented any symbol, and who knows that soon the whole committee is to be disbanded and he dismissed. Moreover in all the correspondence, not once is the term of glyph mentioned.

So, dear Mrs. Helfman, please realise that I am writing to you only to help you avoiding embarrassment later on, embarrassment which will surely come, Glyphein means to carve, and a glyph is a carving, never a writing, never a printing, never a painting, or the like.

As to the Egyptian Hieroglyphics consult other books apart from Gelb. Consult Mason and others. Remember how the hieroglyphics were deciphered. And if you find contradictory statements in different books remember that a man, a hater of books, once said: a book is what one writer copies from another. A few years ago Lincoln Barnett of LIFE wrote a series of articles about language in LIFE. He is no linguist, and hence he mentioned in the beginning and the end all the professors whom he has consulted. And yet, some of what he writes is so patently false that I got a fit. I am a research chemist and I can bring you hundreds of contradictory statements of professors about the most modern theory on nuclear physics and chemistry. Their ignorance is overwhelming.

If you want to be fair, then mention that various scholars differ about the interpretation of the various writings of men, etc. etc. Remember Socrates, remember Du Bois-Raymond who said "Ignoramus, ignorabimus."

I shall not bother you anymore but am awaiting the final decision of your editor as to which symbols of mine he wants to have displayed. Then I shall help you with the exact drawings, etc.

I am with my best wishes to you and your husband,

Yours sincerely

C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

October 3, 1966

Thank you for your letter. I have been ill with flu and have not as yet been able to send the copy of STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. It will leave here soon. I find that no figures in the book are from Australia itself, but a number are from the islands in Torres Strait. So I think it might be of interest in that area. But this is not for kindergartens! It was difficult to write up the instructions, and it requires either a good reader aged 8 up, or an adult to help. We found adults themselves fascinated by this. I hope you will like the photo of an eskimo woman.

I hope soon to have some first draft copy about Semantography to send you, to check for accuracy. I hope you understand that all I can do is to explain the general purpose and plan of the figures and give some examples which I will choose on the basis of their interest for the children. The emphasis will be on communication across language barriers.

Thanks for your comments on glyphs, etc. I know the whole situation is quite confused. The U.N. did issue a bulletin about glyphs in connection with the International Co-operation Year, but have not been active in this since. Now there is a new organisation called Glyphs, Inc. which is planning a big exhibit. For information, write to Mrs. Emily Otis Barnes, Exec. Sec. GLYPHS INC., 16 East 73rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, but don't mention my name as I have no connection with this. I will stay out of all this as much as possible, as most of it has no place in my book.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth S. Helfman

P.S. I have your book - splendid. Acme sent it at once.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

Oct. 17, 1966

Enclosed is a copy of the section on semantography for my book. I will be glad to have your comments. It will not be possible for me to change the material radically. I would, however, like to know of any errors of fact or interpretation. Please forgive my rough sketches of the symbols. In the book they will of course be printed as you wish. I am not sure I can use all of this but I hope so.

You will note that I used the line of verse which I had chosen originally. This seemed better for my purposes than the other. I have to decide what will be of most interest to children.

I found Mason very helpful, with excellent illustrations. (On Egyptian writing).

I am interested in your investigations about the meaning of Life, but not as material for a book for children. I have found that it is not possible for me to adapt other people's ideas for my books, except as research material fits in with ideas I already have. Sorry!

STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS left here on October 6.

I enclose some stamps to help cover your expense for postage.

Best wishes. I hope that I may have this MSS back soon and that you will like it. I am sure it omits things you consider important. This cannot be helped.

Sincerely yours, Elizabeth S. Helfman



Oct. 25, 66

in the forthcoming book by Mrs. Elizabeth Helfman and related to the red circled lines made in the original manuscript, and also to the corrections typed in and underlined in red.

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

In the following lines I shall discuss the few corrections which I have underlined in red, and also some paragraphs of yours which <sup>you</sup> may leave standing as they are, or alter, if my remarks convince you that an alteration might improve the text.

Page 1.

I hope that you will in a footnote or elsewhere give my address, so that interested people and children may be able to get in touch with me. This is indeed my main interest, the hope of finding disciples who can go on with the work when I myself am gone.

I have substituted "a meaningful writing" for your "writing for meaning", though your interpretation seems to me the better one, because it indicates directly that my writing contains a semantics of its own. Now writing these lines I would say let your words stay. I altered them on the first impulse, because a "meaningful writing" is what I say in all my writing. Now, a "writing for meaning" seems to me much better. So, please let it stand, and thank you so much for your better interpretation.

Page 2.

You write in the first line "though it would be difficult to translate complicated ideas precisely". This is true. Equally true is that it is even more difficult to translate complicated ideas precisely in ordinary language. Think of the thousands of books and articles where the different writers have tried to express precisely complicated ideas like capitalism and communism. I have not shirked this task because these two words are today the most inflammable words of all dictionaries. But I have approached the problem as the chemist I am. A chemist can express a complicated chemical compound by using a chemical semantography, and showing in a structure how the various atoms of Hydrogen, Oxygen, Carbon, etc. etc. are combined.

Now look up my large chapter on the meaning of DEMOCRACY on p.609 and see how on page 610 I explain what girls and boys learn in the high school, namely how to express complicated ideas in chemistry, and then turn to the next two pages, and see how I explain the building up of a complex chemical formula for a complex house with bedrooms, bathrooms, dining rooms etc. And then look into the many following pages and see how I show the various components of a democracy in my symbols.

Ending this explanation, I leave it to you to leave your remark as it is (I don't mind) or to add a few more words in line with the explanation above.

It is true that my symbols are to be written as the words in an English sentence. But in other languages illogical word order is the "order" as in French where we say Je t'aime meaning "I you love" instead of J'aime toi "I love you!" "I love you" is the logical, the natural word order. English is an analytical language, whereas other languages are "agglutinative" (as the term goes) where other words and endings are glued on to one word. My hope is that Semantography will be the forerunner to the real international world language and this is not Esperanto or Ido, or any other artificial language, but ENGLISH already spoken by hundreds of millions of people as their mother tongue, and eagerly learned in all the high schools of all the countries including Russia and China. All that is needed is that the English language teachers should come together and agree on a gradual simplification and logical formation of words in spelling and grammar.

Ending these remarks, I would say you can let your lines stay - unless you want to forestall someone who would say that the words in French and other languages are sometimes differently added up.

Apparently what you want to say is that "Semantography is not meant to take the place of any real language, whereas the Esperantists hope that a time will come when all languages will disappear and only Esperanto will be spoken."

Semantography can never take the place of a real language simply because it cannot be spoken.

Page 3

It may well be that my remarks are prompted by the fact that writers speak of a symbol writing as a symbol language. La langue means the tongue and hence, we speak of a mother tongue. A symbol writing cannot be described as a symbol language. Maybe, you look through your lines and make this consistently clear. This is why I have changed the word language into writing in the first line.

I have added "and a few more" to be correct. For instance, you show my symbols for TIME on page 7. But time is not a real THING (material) and hence cannot be pictured. Then there is my symbol for God, Creator, Creation and



Nature, taken from the Greeks of old, the equal-sided triangle which Greek philosophers considered valid proof that our universe is not the product of chaos, but shows in its geometrical configurations (materialised in beautiful crystals, hence my symbol  $\square$  for a material THING) that divine order and harmony exists in the universe, if only we want to see it.

This aside remark is only to explain why I ask you to add the words "and a few more." See also my explanations to my time symbols.

Page 4

I am happy to see that you found - independently - the same explanation for my action symbol by saying that it "suggests pushing up, a sort of growing action." If you allow me here to cite from p. 259 of my book where I explain my symbol thus:

"We can somehow depict ACTION by the result it produces. One of the primeval ACTIONS on our earth was the thrusting up of mountains. We can depict the outline of a newly born mountain, a volcano, the shape of which is a perfect come. A part of its outline will form our symbol for  $\wedge$  ACTION."

These considerations made me insert the words "like the throwing up of a volcano cone" in your sentence. But you can re-write it as you think fit.

Please add the words "and feet" to legs, because this is what the symbol means. Look up my symbols for a department store and see on page 391 (last line) and page 392 (first line) how I express socks, and stockings, and trousers and shoes, etc. by putting my little pointer either at the legs or the feet of my symbol.

The x mark is actually the multiplication mark and means much or many. Much for meanings which cannot be counted and weighed like happiness, and many for things which can be counted like trees. A double xx means very much, very many;

I wonder whether you might prefer instead of your words "feelings looking up" to express my symbol for happiness my words "heartlifting feeling" and instead of your words for "feeling going down" my words "downhearted feeling" because my words use the word heart in connection with the movement of up or down.

By adding a multiplication mark to my symbol for happiness I give also the appropriate word for a greater happiness namely delight, jubilation, and with 2 multiplication marks xx bliss, rapture. As for one x for the meaning of sadness I cite the appropriate words grief, distress, and for 2 xx desperation, desolation. And you are doing in this particular case the very same thing, by adding the word despair. Would it not be consistent to use the above underlined words for x happiness and xx happiness and x sadness in the same way as you used the word despair? This is only a suggestion.

You are coming up suddenly with the symbol for No! without showing the symbol for Yes! and without explaining the meaning of the minus sign to indicate a negative statement, whereas yes! uses the plus sign to indicate a positive statement. I would suggest, either to explain both symbols or to drop the No! symbol.

Now, here I fitted in the words explaining that the x sign is actually the mathematical multiplication mark to indicate a multiple happiness or sadness (and in your later paragraph) a multiple arrangement of trees. I would say that it would be better to explain the x sign as meaning the mathematical multiple a few lines higher up with the explanation of the happiness and sadness multiples. But you may have it stay where it is now with my few words fitted in. All children know of the multiplication mark, and you have indeed mentioned it on p.3.

But here is something which you should alter, and this is the word more. It is true that two multiplication marks are more than one, and hence it may mean more happiness and more trees. But more and most are so important meanings (especially in quarrelling) that I had to design special symbols which you will find on page 246, where you will see the multiplication mark lifted up above an imaginary line. When a partner in marriage asserts "I love you more than you are loving me", the other party may say that this is a lie. No line in actual space can be drawn from which to measure more being more than much, and besides love cannot be measured and counted. So please leave the word more out.

I never use 3 multiplication marks. Hence 1 x to a tree means a group of trees, or a grove, whereas 2 x means a forest, as shown in p. 120 (line before the last line). It is true that the Chinese use almost the <sup>same</sup> symbol for tree, but not the multiplication mark. They draw 3 trees to mean a forest.

As mentioned on page 2 of these remarks the meaning of TIME cannot be pictured. How then do I explain my symbols. I say this:

"My symbols for past ) and present )( and future ( are to indicate parabolic mirrors which we place in our line of writing. Then, as we write from left to right this mirror ) reflects what we have just written in the past, whereas this mirror ( focuses our way ahead what we are going to write in the future, that is within the next seconds of our writing on these lines."

And why the double mirrors )( for the meaning of present? The present I say



is a fleeting moment between past and future. See my explanations on page 317. I leave it to you to explain my symbols or not.

It is true that I picture the moon as two half circles in my book. But later considerations have made me alter this symbol, indicating a half moon not a quarter moon for easier writing and typing. But the quarter moon looks more romantic, especially for the line in poetry which follows. So you can leave it as it stands.

Page 8

The last symbol line needs re-drawing; as shown in page 232 last line. If you draw the top and the bottom writing line, then water on the top line means cloud whereas water on the bottom line means water on earth. But if you add the earth line (without writing or indicating the bottom or top line) then we are in trouble. The symbol for water and sky may mean cloud, and it may stand as you have written it. But the symbol for earth and water means a quagmire, because this is when water and earth are mixed. Look at my symbols for quagmire, swamp and mud on p.233. Then look at p.244 where I show the symbol for lake and ocean by adding the multiplication mark. Pool is a little lake (see the following page 245). Hence I would recommend to leave out the symbol for pool, or only the words pool lake, and let the words water on earth stand, or show my symbol with the x and xx for lake and ocean.

Page 9

In order to follow easily the build-up of symbols and meanings I have suggested with red numbers the succession of symbols shown for man, woman, roof, married couple, husband, wife, birth, parents, father, mother.

I have found some sweet words for the explanation of my symbols for father and mother, and you will find them at the end of the chapter on family symbols. p.415. I should be very happy if you would cite me with these words:

"Wherever we are, as long as our father and mother lives, we know that there is somewhere a roof to which we can gladly return, and often when we are worried, we hurry back like terrified chicks. The symbol may indicate the roof, but the outline looks much more like the outstretched arms of father and mother, always ready to receive us and embrace us."

Page 11

The two symbols of the arrows pointing in opposite direction mean that both are getting away from each other. But this is unimportant.

The End.

SYMBOLS IN MRS. HELFMAN'S CHAPTER

- Page 1 tree, sun  
3 flower, tree, bird, earth, sky, world  
4 action symbol, legs, legs with action symbol, eye, to see, bird sees flower and tree  
5 door, entrance, exit, start, departure, approach, travel  
6 feeling, happiness, much happiness, much much happiness, sadness, much sadness, despair, tree grove forest.  
7 past, present, future, before, behind, above, below sky line, earth line sun, moon day, night, sunrise, sunset  
8 dawn, dusk (before and after sunrise and sunset) sun + eye = light, sun shines, star, water, cloud, water on earth  
9 rain, steam, stream, snow, life, individual, sun, man lives, father and mother live, flower lives.  
man, woman, roof, married couple, husband, wife, birth, parents, father, mother  
After sunrise the man approaches (show action indicator), the forest, moon goes up over waves of water  
turn, jump, swing, go around (circulate), mix  
getting close, meeting, separating, getting away from, agreement, collection, gathering  
open, closed, water, rain happiness, roof, man, sun, life (UNO words)

To the Editor-Publisher  
of the forthcoming book  
by Mrs. Elizabeth Helfman  
NEW YORK. U.S.A.

Sydney 25 Oct 66

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you for having consented to a chapter on my symbols in the forthcoming book by Mrs. Helfman. I sincerely hope that you may, at a later date, consider a joint venture of Mrs. Helfman and myself, presenting to children - and parents, showing how my pictorial symbols contain a simple semantics and logic which could help avoiding the many accusations and many quarrels, and oceans of tears now shed in millions of homes, and between children themselves.

It may seem incredible and even absurd that a pictorial writing could do this. But let us consider the following statements at present spoken with many variations in many languages of many countries "You are an ass, a pig, a swine!"



And when the child starts to cry, it hears "Your tears are crocodile's tears!" No school, no teacher and no textbook teaches children and adults how to deal with such accusations. All we learn in school is how to spell and pronounce these words.

But once children in the kindergarten start to draw my pictorial symbols for an ass, a pig, a swine, a crocodile, it becomes obvious, even before the child learns the rudiments of algebra, that 2 cannot be 4, that a 2 legger cannot be a 4 legger, and that hence these accusations are laughable, just as it learns to laugh about the statement  $1 + 2 = 4$ .

But this is only the beginning of the story. People may laugh about my idea of a picture writing, but they themselves do not realise that most of our talk, specially the talk within the community and the nation, is in fact a picture language. Honest and upright people who want to better the conditions in a community are called sharks, hyenas, octopuses and wolves, and the cartoonists draw the appropriate pictures. Then there is the picture talk "we are in the same boat," "we must elect a strong man at the helm, as otherwise our ship of state will founder." But what do we mean by "strong man"? In my symbols it means a man of physical strength. But the man who shout for the strong man have a different strength in mind, one who will abolish all liberties, and may chop the heads off his opponents. This paragraph, of course, is only an aside remark, for adults only.

Coming back to children, let us consider the following statement made usually by a boy (sometimes even a girl) intend to hurt another child: "My father is more intelligent than your father!" With many a sensitive child there is only one answer to this: starting to cry. But these sensitive children wouldn't cry anymore, had they learned to draw my symbols for the mind, the outline of the upper skull:  $\cap$  and the rule which goes with it: mind activities like intelligence cannot be counted like shoes or money. Well, enough of this and thanks for following me so far.

And now to the real reason of this letter. I am happy to help you in reducing your production costs, by having the symbols, which Mrs. Helfman has selected, drawn here, and sent to you for inclusion. As the book will contain many pictures and drawings, I suppose that it will be printed by the photo-offset process. In order to help you with this process let me tell you how I do the pictures here: (not reprinted)

This size is most appropriate for reproduction, as it is not too big and not too small. I have preferred to add the words underneath before the reproduction but your layout man may add the printed words to the final prints of the symbols on art paper which I shall send you by airmail. In other words: I shall send you the symbols printed on art paper, but without the words underneath, as Mrs. Helfman may choose her own words to describe them. As soon as I have your agreement I shall go ahead with my draughtsman.

I shall be grateful if you would give in a footnote, as the first mention of my name, also my address SEMANTOGRAPHY - BLISSYMBOLICS PUBLICATIONS, 2 Vicar Street, Coogee, Sydney, Australia. And in another (or the same) footnote the remarks that the symbols are copyrighted by C.K. Bliss 1942 - 1965.

In the past, draughtsmen and designers of journals and papers have driven me crazy with their mutilations and deviations of my symbols, not realising that they must be drawn in the proper dimensions and proportion. I give my copyright freely under the condition that the symbols are presented as I designed them, and for this reason I offer to have them drawn here and then send them to you.

Allow me, once again, to thank you for all your favourable consideration of my work.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Sydney 25 Oct 66

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

This is to acknowledge your first letter of Oct. 3, and now your letter of October 17 together with the text of your chapter on my symbols.

Let me state that I am delighted about the way you present my work, and also about the extent you want to use my symbols. I hope that you know that your editor will allow the chapter to be as big as you intend it to be. For this reason, and in order to alleviate his fears about too much space, I have suggested that he uses my symbols in a small size, and I am prepared to send him every symbol you have selected, so that it can be pasted into the layout of the pages for final reproduction by photo-offset, the only method economical enough to deal with the many pictures of your book.

As you can see from the text of the chapter which I return herewith, I have only a few words altered, and even some of them I have, after having second thoughts, decided to accept your version, as for instance "A writing for meaning", instead of my usual "a meaningful writing". Your version is the better one, indicating immediately the inherent semantics, and with your permission I shall in



future use your version always mention that it is your suggestion giving your full name and the title and publisher of your forthcoming book.

I have also at the right margin written some numbers in red and encircled them in red. This I did only to offer you my suggestions, not so for altering your script, but to make you more acquainted with my work. I understand that you have not mentioned my semantics and logic, perhaps because of your editor. Few people will believe that pictorial symbols contain a simple symbolic logic and semantics. When I started my letter to your editor about the size of the symbols and the way I want to draw them for him, my hands and my mind were deviated to what is uppermost in my mind: my logic and semantics, and I just could not resist to say in the first page what my symbols can do to children - and adults. If you think that he is not the man to respond to this, please send my letter back to me, or give him only the second page to read where I deal with the symbols and their size, etc. etc.

As soon as you tell me exactly which symbols your editor will use, I shall immediately give my draughtsman the order to draw them, and then have them copied and then reduced photographically and printed on art paper as shown on the second page of my letter to him.

Thank you for the stamps. I have done nothing else but writing the letter to you, the moment I received your manuscript, and now I am off to the post office to post it registered, hoping that it will be in your hands undamaged (I have made another copy just in case) in a few days.

Again my deepfelt thanks and my hope that we may join in another publication venture one day. I am with regards to you and your husband,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

October 31, 1966

Dear Mr. Bliss,

Thank you very much for your useful and illuminating comments on my manuscript. I am glad you were pleased.

As I think you surmised, it was not possible for me to go into the semantics and logic of your work because this would not have fitted into the scheme of the book.

I have made corrections and additions according to your suggestions. I could not quote your paragraph on the family, etc. because, again, this did not fit in with the tone of the book. I did, however, put in some sentences in my own words, with similar meaning.

At the bottom of this page I will sketch what I did with "cloud", "water on earth", etc. Should I keep the line all the way across?

I will glad to submit your letter to my editor, but of course I do not know what his reaction will be. More stamps enclosed: these, with the others, cover postage for the MSS.

You will hear from us about the symbols. Greetings meanwhile

Elizabeth Helfman

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 5 November 1966

Received your kind letter of Oct. 31 and the stamps and thank you very much. But please do not send me any stamps anymore. Now that I have seen the extent to which you want to go to present my work to the world, I feel so grateful that money can never give such reward as your kind and active interest. I wish I shall be able to interest the education department in your book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. I shall do everything I can to make it known.

Yes, the way you draw the skyline and the groundline across the whole page is the right one, and in this way you can give the names to the symbols as intended.

After I sent off the letter to you, containing also the letter to your editor, I felt some pangs about my suggestion that we should write a common venture about the semantics of my symbols. It would be more appropriate to say that you should do this alone. But let us first have the first book, and if it turns out a success, as I hope it will, we may think of more work along this line.

I shall hold myself now in readiness to draw and photograph the symbols which the editor selects from your selection, and shall do them with utmost speed.

Nothing more for today than my greetings to you and your husband and again my deep-felt thanks.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

November 3, 1966

Dear Mr. Bliss,

I have added a final paragraph(s) to the Semantography chapter but will not use it unless you approve. I am not sure you will like the idea of children making their own sign writing. So far it goes like this:

"You too, can invent a system of written signs. Start with some of the Semantography signs if you wish. Then make signs of things that are important to you. Try them on your friends. Unlike a secret code, your signwriting should be as easy to understand as possible. Its purpose is to get ideas across, not to hide them. Making understandable signs may prove to be more difficult than you think.



"Yours will not be an international language. It may be many years before any system of written signs is accepted for use throughout the world."

I will not use this if you object. I forgot to mention your request to have your address included somewhere. Most editors do not like footnotes in Children's books. However, perhaps we can get your address into the section on acknowledgements. In any case, you could be reached through the publisher.

Greetings!

Elizabeth Helfman

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 29 November, 1966

Kindly excuse me answering your letter only today. I was very busy preparing a manuscript for a publisher, but now at last I can attend to your kind letters. Before me is your letter of No. 3 asking permission to include a paragraph telling children to try their own symbols. I agree to this, and I have slipped in a note into the envelope with which I sent you my Claire memorial booklet. I am glad you appreciate my story of her. She was a wonderful woman. Without her, my life would be empty indeed, or worse.

I agree that children should try inventing symbols. This will show them how difficult it really is. How many times had I to change some of my symbols, because they conflicted with other meanings of which I didn't think at the time. Furthermore, if you tell them NOT to try inventing their own symbols, they will do it, and be it for tasting the forbidden fruit. In the grown-up world, this has led already to a Babel of Symbols. I have before me a letter from the director of a travel association, and he says that our main task is to stop the proliferation of symbols. Everyone thinks it's easy, and everyone comes forth with his own version. The most contradictory signs have been invented, and the trouble is that no organisation wants to listen to reason. The British railways, the French railways, the International Air Travel Associations, they all go inventing and posting their symbols, and may the devil take the hindmost. But all of them have not been able to invent any more signs than about 30 to 60 for meanings which can be easily pictured. They are at their wits end with meanings like INFORMATION, RESERVATION, CANCELLATION, COMPLAINTS, NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR VALUABLES LEFT IN THE HOTEL ROOM, ETC. ETC. I won't see the day when they all will agree to use my symbols for the whole world. Nevermind. I have done it, and that's enough for me, and besides I count on people like you to make my work known.

I received then your handwritten letter of November 14, and hope that your ear troubles are over. Your little story about Elizabeth and the ladybugs is utterly sweet. And the publisher's story about your book RIVERS AND WATERSHEDS IN AMERICA'S FUTURE must be great indeed. Have you indulged in going down rapids in a canoe. I have travelled many a time on logs bound together and floated down the mountain rivers to the distant sawmill. It was wonderful, and quite alarming at times. Of course there was a native steersman in front and rear. I believe that hiking by foot or canoe is the most wonderful pastime I know, and I am still hiking every Sunday in the mountains. Recently I wanted to give to a young couple about to be married 3 books containing the following themes. 1. Go into God's own Nature. 2. Don't ruin your lives through alcohol, and 3. Don't be a sucker to the tobacco companies. I went to all larger bookstores and couldn't get anything even near it.

And this brings me to the book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS which I received a few days ago. It is very good indeed, and my congratulations to you and your husband. It's strange, I didn't know that string plays can be done alone. We used to do them with always two players taking over. Some are very familiar to me. Only we had other names for them. The soldier's bed we called the scissors, because when you waggle the thumbs and forefingers a kind of shearing motion recalls the motion of scissors. The book is excellently written and drawn, and I was enthralled, so much that I went with my copy, for which I thank you very much, to the main bookstores of Sydney. None had it in store, and speaking with the responsible people, they would be quite willing to put a copy on display and see how it goes. This has prompted me to write a letter to your publisher which I include and beg you to send it off to them. I shall be happy if my endeavours are successful. This is the least I can do for you.

I have noted with great respect your's and your husband's scholastic and writing achievements, and I feel that all this must have given your lives great pleasure, and an elevation on a higher level on consciousness and conscience. That you have addressed yourself to the young tells all, because only the young can be moulded into better human beings. I am afraid I am not finding the best words, but you know that whatever I say, no matter how clumsy I say it, it comes from my heart.

From the blurb (what a word) I have noticed that you have been associated with Banks Street College. Since October 7, when TIME magazine came out with a story (on page 52) I kept the page and intended to write to Mr. John Niemayer. He should be interested in my work, not because of international symbols and all that, but from a different viewpoint. How to teach the tens of thousands



of Puerto Rican children in New York the English language. As it happened I received one week later a letter from Dr. Evans, who is a pioneer of new teaching methods, and has even a firm for new instructional devices. He wrote about his experiences in learning and teaching Spanish with the use of my symbols. I have made copies of his letter, and I enclose one.

Now, I have written many, many letters to educational institutions, and more than often, or rather usually I haven't even received a reply. It was all love's labour lost, and this means for me, mailing fee, and writing and papers, etc. Do you think that Niemayer could be interested? If you know him, you may send him the Evans letter. If he is interested, he may write to me. Thanks a lot.

Yes, I understand that I would have to wait a long time until your publisher will think about how to print my symbols. Nevertheless, I am hopeful. I have deliberately refrained in this letter to ask you something, in order NOT to ask for a reply from you. So, please forward my letter to your publisher, and the Evans letter to Niemayer (if you know him personally, otherwise not) and don't write to me for the time being. I feel I have taken your time too much.

It is a great pleasure to correspond with you, and I thank you for your kind interest in my work. By the way, how old is your Robert, and what are his special interests. Maybe I can send him something from Australia which will interest him. Good Heavens, what have I done? I have asked you to write to me AGAIN! Well, if Robert is interested in something particularly Australia. let him write to me.

I am against sending costly Xmas cards, so please take now my best wishes for your, your husband and Robert for a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. Oh no. I have done it again. Don't answer. I take your Xmas wishes as if they are already here. And they are.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

February 2, 1967

Dear Mr. Bliss,

I am glad to be able to tell you that all the Semantography material in my book has been retained, except the chart comparing it with various languages. I am therefore sending you a list of wanted symbols. Your assistance in providing these will be much appreciated by the publisher. The book will appear in the fall. I hope you will like it. My editor is writing you in answer to your letter to him.

How nice that you liked my ladybug story, book notices and all. I have always loved wild places, but in my youth I was not so strong and did not do much rough climbing or boating. Now, however, we spend our summers on a little island in Maine (10 miles off the coast) where the wild woods and rocky headlands are still unspoiled. We love it, being there gives us strength to face the rest of the year in the city.

I sent your announcement (on teaching - EVKO.) with a letter to President Niemeyer of Bank Street, College, just about a week ago.

My son Robert is all grown up and not much interest in what his parents are doing.

I am enclosing a photo of me at a place called Winsor Jambo in Massachusetts.

As I indicated at the bottom of the list, the signs can be sent directly to the editor.

Happy New Year - and best of everything to you and Semantography.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Helfman.  
Sydney 7. 2. 67

Dear Mrs. Halfman,

Your letter of February 2, received this morning was a wonderful surprise, and a happy difference from the personal troubles in which I find myself through no fault of my own. I am so downcast that I almost lost the will to go on living. Needless to say that the many disappointments about the acceptance of my work is one cause of the trouble. Indeed I was very pessimistic whether or not your editor will accept your chapter 9 with my symbols.

That he did is a source of great joy for me, and it helps me to overcome my downheartedness. Naturally I am going ahead full steam to let you have the symbols as quickly as I possibly can make them.

Thanks a thousand times for your picture standing near a brook. Now I know how you look, and I know too that I took the very same picture many a time of my Claire standing in the very same position of loving nature. You look so much like Claire, and I am feeling consoled to find that other people share the same things which I shared with Claire. Thanks again, and in my next letter I shall write more about your sweet picture.

Unfortunately, I haven't made a copy of your chapter. In my letter of October 25 I suggested about a few symbols which without any previous study might look not convincing to children. For instance, the meaning of pool, means little water, and little is expressed by the opposite symbol  $\downarrow$  and the multiplication mark  $\times$ , therefore little  $\downarrow \times$ . But I cannot remember that you ever explained my opposite meaning symbol. And I see from my October letter that I recommended to you to leave the word pool out. Another sentence which I can't remember



having seen in your first manuscript is: After sunrise the man approaches the forest. It is of course easy to put the symbol for after and then the symbol for sunrise to mean after sunrise.  But my word order is actually sunrise, after  in much the same way as I say in symbols time 8.30 not 8.30 time. Still I think we can write after sunrise by putting the symbols together as the words go.

These are actually the main objections. Otherwise all is perfectly clear I am going to send to your editor and designer the symbols in the same size as your sample pasted on top of the list, taken from my tourist folder. I shall however not try to photograph the words too (as I did in the folder) because I think that the words underneath the symbols should be of the same type as all other explanatory words under all other symbols in the whole book are. I shall send therefore all symbols as listed, and your designer, typographer and printer will put the words nicely and symmetrically under the symbols in the type preferred throughout the book. Indeed, I am going to send to him one batch of symbols within the next 2 days, namely the symbols I have got already, and he can experiment with them, and tell you and me if there are any problems. For instance, it is imperative that the sequence of symbols in complete sentences should be harmonious, that is one symbol following the other in the appropriate distance. But when this is done, the English words underneath would sometimes not come exactly under the symbols because the English words may be longer than the symbols above. If this should happen, I would sacrifice my harmonious distance of symbols, and let you and the designer better place each symbol exactly above each word in the sentence. It all depends on the size of the type your designer will use.

As you can see I am thinking when typing this letter, and what appears to me at first imperative, does not seem so anymore when I go on typing and think of the difficulties of harmonizing symbols and words underneath.

As said before, I have not your text, and it may well be that you have done some alterations following my letter of October. If it is easy for you to send me a copy of your final text as submitted to the editor, it would help me greatly. I am sure you have one copy in your file, and a photocopy of the few pages would not cost too much, and would help me. But if I can't get the copy, I shall do my best to give you the symbols you want.

I close this letter now, and shall write again in a few days reflecting also on your kind description of vacation. Thanks also for sending my EVCO letter to President Niemeyer. Best regards to you, your husband and son,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Sydney 8-2-67

To the Designer

of the new book SIGNS AND SYMBOLS AROUND THE WORLD by Elizabeth Helfman  
New York. U.S.A.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Firstly let me thank you beforehand for all your diligence and draughtsmanship and all your artistic endeavour and achievement you will use for Elizabeth Helfman's book. Chapter 9 will be devoted to my work Semantography, and you will see to it that all the symbols explained in this chapter will be properly displayed, and the explanatory words underneath properly placed. As for me, I am now in my 70th year, and I feel I cannot make it much longer. Now I have something to live for - the day when I shall hold a copy of Mrs. Helfman's book in my hands. This will be the first book containing some of my symbols, and - most important - to be read by children. They will grow up familiar with my work and some of them may indeed be active in introducing it into practical use. I cannot say in words what this hope means for me.

When I started out nearly 25 years ago to work on this idea, I was considered a crank, and I myself believed that I shall go down the grave a crank. But now the tourist explosion has made all people, working in the travel industry, in bus, railway, shipping and aircraft industry, in the hotel and motel industry etc., realise that only pictorial symbols which can be read in all languages are the only answer to the difficulties which tourists face in countries of foreign languages. However, these men still believe that it is possible to design pictures which tell tourists at a glance, what is meant. This is possible with the arrow symbol, but it is almost impossible with other meanings. For your information I include in this letter 2 of my publications:

- Semantography Series No. 280 International pictorial Blissymbols for the International traveller, a small folder and
- Semantography Series No. 303 To all Officers, an appeal dealing with the difficulties of pictorial symbol design.

And this brings me to you the designer. In previous years whenever a newspaper or a magazine brought a story about my work almost all my pleas to the draughtsman in the newspaper offices fell on deaf ears. They were driven by the deadline for the issue, and by their own ambition as a designer. Consequently



when the issue appeared in print I was crestfallen to see how differently my symbols had been drawn by them. It is inherent in the creative drive of any artist to inject his own version, and to alter the version before. But what they didn't realise was that the exact outline of my symbols was not invented by myself to satisfy a creative artistic urge. I am an engineer and my foremost aim was to design symbols which can be typed on a typewriter of normal design. This necessity is imperative should a modern symbol writing be accepted. It must be typable on an ordinary typewriter specially adapted to carry the basic symbol lines. This necessity at once demolished any creative artistic design, and forced me to draw my lines for the typewriter. I then decided that in future publications I shall do the drawings, and hand them over to the designer for placement. And I ask you kindly to understand these circumstances, and to accept my drawings.

I hold all copyrights on my symbols, and I grant freely the use of my copyright provided the symbols are drawn according to my book, in which I explain in all details why they must be drawn to fit a typewriter. I beg you therefore to follow Mrs. Helfman, and my own instructions, and now I am coming to the points to be observed.

I received only yesterday the letter of Mrs. Helfman informing me of the number of symbols which will be incorporated in her book. I answered immediately that I shall supply them speediest. After a few hours thought, I realised that I don't know in what way you will design the book, and whether you will use photo-offset or typeset, etc. etc. I decided then to send you immediately a sample of the symbols as I intend to prepare them for you, and to wait for your immediate comment. Then, after receiving from you directly or through Mrs. Helfman whatever comments you have to make I shall post to you directly within 24 hours all symbols wanted.

I now draw your attention to this sample paper in which I have drawn 24 of the first symbols from Mrs. Helfman's list. You will see that they are taken from the tourist folder, and that some of the compound symbols as for instance much happiness, and still more happiness are made by pasting together symbols, and in the case of tree I had to paste together 3 parts, because this symbol does not appear in the tourist folder. Should I draw the few symbols not available in the tourist folder anew, have them reduced photographically, etc. etc. it will take too much time. I believe therefore that the way I displayed these symbols will be good enough for you, the more so as Mrs. Helfman advised me that the size of the symbols of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch high is the size wanted. Now here are some points:

1. You would have to cut out each symbol and to paste it in within the space of the page provided (in case you don't make a block, but use photo-offset).
2. I hope that the blue line of the lined paper will not disturb you. If it does, please obliterate it with white paint. The blue lines were guidance for me where to place the lowest point of each symbol, (the ground line) and where to place the action indicator (verb) as in to walk, to see. I beg you to observe these line restrictions.
3. As you can see from these samples and from the tourist folder, the symbols are drawn within a square as for instance earth, sky, world, etc., or within a half square as for instance flower, or a quarter square as for instance eye, sees, and. This quarter square is either placed within the middle of the square as in eye, and and, or on the lower line as in much (a multiplication mark, or even two marks). Compound symbols may extend over an area more than one square as in entrance, exit, feeling + arrow = happiness, or sadness, etc. I beg you therefore to place all symbols which would appear within one line of the book exactly the way as drawn, therefore eye must not appear on the bottom line, but within the middle of the imaginary square.
4. There is a whole sentence "bird sees flower and tree." Normally this is drawn in such a way that between each symbol a full square of space is left. But if we do this, it may not be possible to bring the English word exactly and symmetrically under each symbol. As you can see in my version the word sees comes out a little to the left, the word and a little to the right. So I suggest you place your word sentence in the type you chose, and then place the symbol symmetrically above each word. This is, provided you use large type. But if you use very small type, which would bring the symbols too much together (less than one square apart from each other) then you must spread out the small type to fit the symbol sequence.

You can experiment with those samples, cut them out and even destroy them. You will receive a full set according to the list as soon as I have your O.K. Just ring Mrs. Helfman, and she will write to me, and within 24 hours I shall post the symbols to New York. I am thanking you,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Sydney 8-2-67

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Hoping that you have received my first preliminary letter, I am now sending you the following papers for your designer to read:

1. a sample of 24 symbols from your list
2. a 2 page letter to your designer



3. the tourist folder

4. the paper to all officials showing the difficulties of designing symbols.

All this to make your designer acquainted with the problem, and to implore him NOT to alter my symbols. Please send it off to him directly, or if you have the time travel to him and put the papers right into his hand, to make sure he has received them. Maybe he can answer on the spot. We have only 3 weeks time to the end of February, and any delay could be disastrous. I hope the book will come out in the fall as planned, because Dr. Mead and Mr. Modley have received permission from TIME-LIFE to make an exhibition in their showrooms, and my work will be prominently displayed. It would be wonderful if copies of your book could be available for sale and perusal by the visitors. Moreover, press conferences and articles in prominent papers are planned, and if your book is there in time, it would be included and this would be invaluable aid to your book. Tell this to your editor.

In my long life in business and manufacturing I have seen the most incredible things happen, letters go other ways or get lost. Therefore my plea that you bring my letter to your designer directly, not sending it by mail, and the round-about way via editor, etc. etc. Not a day must be lost. If your designer gives you the O.K. you may even send me a telegram (LT night tariff) telling me to go ahead, and I shall post the complete list within 24 hours.

One thing is very much on my heart and my mind. Knowing that footnotes can be inserted even when the full text has been set, I beg you very much to wrangle a footnote in Chapter 9 referring to my book and the distributor in the U.S.A. To be frank, my book will never be a seller, and I am afraid that my distributor will cancel our arrangement. If he sees the footnote it will greatly help me, because I still have thousands of promotion papers with his name and address. Now it is customary to mention in full a book, and hence your editor won't object to a footnote as follows: SEMANTOGRAPHY-BLISSYMBOLICS by C.K. Bliss

2nd edition 882 pages, distributed by Acme Code Company, 102 First Street, Hackensack N.J. 07601

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

February 10, 1967

Dear Mr. Bliss,

I wanted to get off the copy of my manuscript that deals with Semantography right away, earlier today, so I did not check things with your letter of October in which you made detailed comments on the material. Now I have done so, and see that I have missed up on several points. I am sorry for this, but it is not too late to make change.

I suggest the following changes: on page 10, bottom left corner, change "still more happiness" to "very much happiness". On page 11, top, change "still more sadness" to "very much sadness".

Incidentally, in connection with this section, I preferred (for children) my "feelings looking up" to your "heartlifting feeling." On page 13, omit pool altogether. The words "water on earth" could be placed under "lake" and "ocean". Or, the words "lake" and "ocean" could be omitted, but I think it would be better to leave them, as this explains the use of the X's. If it seemed best, "lake" could be included without "ocean".

I don't know how I missed these points, but I so know I was having trouble in October keeping everything straight, as I had had flu and was much bothered by my ear, which is still only a little better. (Nerve damage takes time.) Do please let me know if you find anything else that should be changed while there is still time.

I wanted to explain to you sometime, too, what I did about glyphs. I am not going to mention the International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier (much to the sorrow of Soichi Kato). Rudolph Modley has told me that ICLB is supposed to turn over its work to his organisation. Glyphs Inc., (It is not clear that he is doing so however.) I am not going to mention Glyphs Inc., either: in fact the only organisations I mention will be the United States of America Standards Institute, the International Organisation for Standardisation, and ICOGRADA. Since the term Glyphs does keep coming up, however, and Rudolph Modley's organisation seems determined to use it, I have a paragraph in my last chapter mentioning it as a term being used recently to mean universally accepted signs and symbols. I explain its exact meaning, and that most signs are not now carved, etc. This is about all I say about it, and I think this should be alright, whether the term sticks or does not. The last chapter has the approval of Rudolph Modley, who has helped with it, and I hope that his organisation and ICOGRADA can create some sense out of the confusion of signs; as you probably know, Glyphs Inc. will have an exhibit here in September. Rudolph Modley seems to think highly of your work. You no doubt saw his use of some of your symbols in his chapter in the book SIGN, IMAGE, SYMBOL.

It was a good idea to send a copy of my manuscript in revised form. Anything



amiss can be straightened out. Wonderful isn't it, how the mail speeds around the world by air! All this, and so much more, in our lifetime, and yet men still make war.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Helfman

Dear Mr. Bliss,

February 10, 1967

I am sending you my revised pages on Semantography, I did make the changes you suggested. The first page that deals with Semantography does not have any symbols, so I did not now include that. I was sure that you said pool could just be "water on earth"--see page 13. But if this should be changed, let me know. I did not explain the sign for little and would rather not. Just X for much or many. On rereading your letter, I see that you had (in Oct.) suggested leaving out pool. This can easily be done, leaving lake and ocean. In that case, lake would be "water on earth" or rather, perhaps "much water on earth". The "after sunrise" sentence is at the bottom of page 15. It can be changed if you wish.

In general, I think I did change the things as you suggested.

I have had a good letter from President Niemeyer of Bank Street College of Education, saying that he thinks Semantography (or maybe it was Blissymbolics) sounds fascinating, and he expects to write you for more information.

Will not write more as I want to get this off. This book has been the most tremendous amount of work!. Please return pages when you are through with them.

I am pleased too that I could include so much on Semantography. My editor was much interested and was going to write to you, too.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Helfman.

P.S. I will re-check your October letter but can't take time now.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

February 12, 1967

Your registered air mail letter to the designer was delivered by hand to my editor (by me) who in turn gave it to the designer. She has just phoned me. The word is to go ahead with the symbols according to your suggestions and the sample you enclosed. She will do everything as you recommend, and I will do my best to check on things as work proceeds. The quarter inch size is right, and the process is photo-offset. I believe this is all you needed to know.

By this time you must have the copy of the MSS which I sent you and I hope this will make your work easier.

The quickest arrangement probably would be to send the symbols directly to the designer, Mrs. Victoria Gomez, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard 419 Park Avenue, South, New York N.Y. 10016 U.S.A.

Whether my book can be ready by September I do not know.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Helfman

Sydney 14-2-1967

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Received an hour ago the mss, and I am mighty glad I have it before me, as I have simply forgotten much of it when you sent it to me in October. Now seeing it as a whole, I am delighted with the text and with all the words you found to describe my work. I am most grateful.

And having seen it, I say LET IT STAY AS IT IS. Don't make any alteration suggested in my foregoing letter. Leave even the word pool, because when indicated with the ground line it is a good symbol. I shall consequently draw a thin sky line and a thin ground line that your designer won't be bothered with drawing them.

Leave also "after sunrise" as it is. I am sorry having bewildered you in my foregoing letter, now that I realise how much work you have put into it. SO PLEASE LEAVE EVERY WORD AND EVERY SYMBOL AS YOU HAVE WRITTEN THEM. My drawings will follow them exactly.

I suggest however, that your designer draws the two lines of symbols on page 15 (man, woman, the family, etc. friendship, men quarrel, die) as they have been drawn in the book which you have with you. It would surely not be good if I would draw them in the exact proportion as my symbols. Only recently have I come across these symbols, and they are drawn in an old fashioned way as if cut into wood. So I suggest you give the book to your designer and let her draw the symbols as they are present there.

Having made an exact copy of all symbols and their sequence, I need not the mss anymore, and am returning it herewith. It was very, very good of you to send it to me so quickly, and it gives me the feeling that all will be alright.

Meanwhile, you have received (registered) a sample batch of symbols and I hope you have been able to contact the designer, and your answer with his O.K. is already on the way to me. I shall send everything within 24 hours.

Received your kind letter about your son, and all your good words. Will answer shortly. Received also an enquiry letter from Mr. Niemeyer, and am delighted with his interest. Will answer soon with copy to you.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss



Dear Mrs. Helfman,

I am surely a pain in your neck and almost a curse forcing you to write to me letters almost every day. The trouble is my old age, of which the Chinese say "second childhood" I forget. I forgot what I wrote to you in October, and having not seen the final text I began to write some changes. For instance, if we draw the skyline and the ground line, the word "pool" is very appropriate. Now I suggested you scrap it, and when I saw the final manuscript 2 days ago I said NO, LET EVERYTHING STAY AS IT IS. DON'T ALTER ANYTHING. LET EVEN THE WORD AND SYMBOL FOR POOL STAND. I hope you haven't in the meantime tried any correction with your editor, etc. etc. Forgive me, but as said before I hadn't a copy of your MSS, because I sent you back the one you sent me in October.

Now, as you wrote about Glyphs, I have a surprise for you. I wrote to you about the treatment I received from Dr. Mead and in 1964. I wrote to you about the emergence of that new term glyph where sign and symbol would be better. I was unhappy all the time because Mr. Modley had to join up with Dr. Mead, as only she with her name could help launching their Glyph organisation. Modley himself was sometimes nice to me and sometimes nasty. When I learned that my name and my work will be totally excluded from the Glyph work, I was very unhappy, and in this mood, I tried to show you what is going on with the new term Glyph to be used for what I have achieved already.

And then Modley sent me a copy of SIGN IMAGE SYMBOL. I read what he said about my work, and was very touched. I saw that he consistently used the word symbol, and only referred to the word "Glyph" as an invention of Dr. Mead. And I read that Mead was not satisfied with the invention of 30 to 60 symbols on which Kato and Icograda, and all the travel organisations are labouring and that the minimum number of "glyphs" be found necessary for such a language. Read what she says on p.113 of SIGN IMAGE SYMBOL. I realised then that she must have completely forgotten what I wrote to her in 1951 and in 1964., and that she had refused me an interview both times. So I sat down and wrote a nice letter to her, and sent her my book as a Xmas gift in order to show her that I have done already research on the lines she suggested, and that I am ready to co-operate with her. Mr. Modley was overjoyed about my letter, and about the offer of co-operation, because he too has realised years ago that my system is, if nothing else, the first proof that such a language system is possible. In short, I have made my peace with Dr. Mead. I realise that Mr. Modley had to use the term glyph in order to please Dr. Mead, and so I followed the words of Zamenhof who said that he doesn't mind if his Esperanto is changed, improved, or abandoned altogether in favour of a better system. What he wants is only that the work for an international language system be continued. And this is too what I want. After all, my life is coming to a close. The next signpost for me is to live long enough to hold a copy of your book in my hands and bless you a thousand times.

As to Kato and Icograda I shall tell you in a later letter. I wish I could forget how these people treated me. You know by now how exhuberant I am to everyone who shows only the faintest interest in my work. But when I see that people like Icograda and Kato consider me only as an intruder into their field, a man wants to take away their livelihood, then I am unhappy.

Two days ago I received a letter from Mr. Niemeyer, following your approach to him. A thousand thanks. And it happened again. In my exhuberance I sat down and wrote a 5 page letter to him, of which I attach a copy for you. Somehow I feel that he will not be annoyed about my outspokenness about conventional language teaching. I shall be unhappy if he is, but then it will save me and him more polite letters which would lead nowhere and to an end. So, I hope, he will show interest, and something may come out of this new approach. Nothing more for today.

Ah yes, my work will be represented at the Glyph exhibition. Dr. Mead has not yet acknowledged my gift. She is busy, but I hope she will be impressed by my work.

Lothrop. Lee & Shepard Co. Inc.,  
419 Park Avenue, South, New York, NEW YORK, 10016  
Dear Mr. Bliss,

Sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

February 15, 1967

Elizabeth Helfman has given me your kind letters and I am very pleased to know that you'll be providing us with drawings of your pictorial symbols for use in Chapter 9 in her book. We do appreciate your co-operative spirit, and will of course be happy to send you a finished copy of the book when it is published.

We will also be glad to list the distributor of Acme Code Company in the bibliography.

Thank you again,  
Sincerely,  
James Giblin  
Editor.



Mrs. Victoria Gomez,  
Designer,  
Lothrop Lee and Shepard  
Dear Mrs. Gomez,

Sydney 21-2-1967

This is to thank you for agreeing to my symbol sample as sent to you through Mrs. Helfman. Consequently, I went ahead and am sending you with this letter all symbols in the order as they appear in Mrs. Helfman's manuscript. I have pasted them on strips so to be convenient for you to cut them up and paste them into the right places for the photo-offset process. I have endeavoured to give you the best possible drawings for your reproduction. Consequently, I did not use the symbols from the printed tourist folder, but had photographic copies made from the original negatives on glossy photographic paper. Only for the many multiplication marks needed did I use prints and they are recognisable by the lightly yellowish paper. This should not be detrimental for the photographic process.

I worked in production for nearly 50 years, and have seen the most incredible things happen, often if someone who knows what to do gives some work to another employee who then may make a blunder. Allow me therefore to attach herewith careful directions for almost every symbol, so that anyone whom you entrust with part of the work would know exactly what to do. In the printing business printing errors are impossible to correct in the printed book. Still, everyone would recognise a misspelled word. But errors in the symbols would create confusion. They are deadly.

If I had more time I would have re-drawn some of the symbols (not found in the tourist folder) 10 times larger in size, then reduce them photographically and send you the positives. But this was impossible, and this forced me to paste together some symbols, sometimes with 4 little bits of paper. Still, they should come out alright. But if one bit gets loose and falls off, then it would amount to a printing mistake. Therefore I beg you to check carefully all symbols with Mrs. Helfman's mss.

Allow me to send you some greetings in pictures from our wonderful city in the South Pacific with the most wonderful climate, eternal spring. More and more Americans come to settle here in this New America. We need 30 millions of them.

As your name is Spanish, allow me to attach herewith a letter by Dr. Evans showing how my symbols can be used to teach Spanish. I am with thanks.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

C.K. Bliss, Sydney

21-2-1967

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

concerning the proper insertion and pasting in of the symbols into the printed text of Mrs. Helfman's book SIGNS AND SYMBOLS AROUND THE WORLD.

followed by Special Instructions as to every strip supplied with this letter

1. The symbols are pasted on glossy photographic paper, using transparent rubber cement, and numbered on strips, the words: mss page 7 and 8 meaning manuscript pages No. 7 and 8. These page numbers refer to the original manuscript of Mrs. Helfman which is before me.

2. Some symbols and symbol compounds had to be made by pasting up to 4 bits of tiny papers together. It may be possible that the rubber cement did not get a firm grip on the glossy paper in some instances. Hence one or another bit may fall off in handling. This must be avoided at all cost. Please handle every strip with utmost care, and check the symbol or symbol compound with the drawing in Mrs. Helfman's manuscript. As these drawings are made by hand, and do not perfectly conform with the actual drawings, should you be in doubt about the correctness of a symbol (of which a bit had to be pasted on again) please consult my book SEMANTOGRAPHY which is in Mrs. Helfman's possession, or, she herself may inspect the finished pasted-in symbols. She would then easily discern any missing part. I believe, however, that no part should come off in careful handling. I have written all this in case it does happen.

3. It is imperative that all symbols showing in one line of the page are placed in such a position that they are exactly based on the so-called "ground line" (as specifically shown in the pages 12 and 13. In order to show how the symbols be placed I have drawn that groundline in a thin pencil line which can easily be erased. You see that most symbols sit on the ground line, but some symbols are drawn on the upper line, the "skyline". Some other symbols like eye (p.9) or +(page 9) are drawn between both lines. As this presentation follows the arrangement of the symbol typewriter I beg to follow this instruction for pasting in the symbols according to the lines. See on p.13 that the symbol for water is usually placed between the ground and the sky line. On the sky line it means cloud. On the ground line it means pool, lake, ocean. Indiscriminate pasting would destroy this presentation.

4. In order to place symbols (which belongs somehow to each other) in the same line, the designer is free to use his artistic feeling to place them in equal distances



within the line in order to achieve the most pleasing effect.

For instance the arrangement of the symbols in page 9 of the mss would be best in 3 lines (though the mss shows 4 lines). These 3 lines are

1. line    legs and feet    to walk, to go    eye    to see
2. "                    bird sees flower and tree
3. "                    door entrance    exit

On page 11 there is the symbol for "still more sadness" which actually should be shown together with the last symbols of the foregoing page No. 10 as follows.

1. line                    start            departure            approach            arrival  
                           feeling    happiness    much happiness    still more happiness  
                           sadness    much sadness            still more sadness

But these instructions are general. I leave it to the designer to find the most pleasing arrangement as to the spaces between the symbols. Perhaps the way I placed them in my book could be of some help.

Ultimate consideration must be given to the text. If the text is written in such a way that one symbol should be shown alone then this has to be followed. If on p.9 legs and feet symbols should be in one line, and eye to see in another, please do so.

5. The explanatory words underneath each symbol should be placed symmetrically under each word. In the attached strip not all the explanatory words are typed in, only the first. It may then be necessary to add more words underneath, as I have done this in my book.

6. If I leave the designer all freedom as to the placement of the symbols in one and more lines on the final pages, a strict relationship between the symbols which make up a complete sentence has to be observed. As this again relates to the symbol typewriter, the rule is that between each symbol or compound symbol and the next symbol should be an empty space of a full square as this square is shown herewith:

But if this is done with every sentence, there might be some difficulty with regard to the explanatory words underneath the symbols. If the types are chosen very large, a very displeasing effect would be obtained as shown herebelow:

S   U   N                    S   H   I   N   E   S

In such a case, it would be better to choose a smaller type in order to bring the symbol sentence and the word sentence in relation to each other as shown herebelow:


  
 sun            shines

Under no circumstances should the spaces between symbols in a sentence be less than a full square.

However, if proper spacing of symbols and printed words cannot be achieved for one reason or another, I agree that the words be printed properly, and the spaces between the symbols be larger than a full square, BUT NEVER SMALLER.

7. It was unavoidable that little smudges accrued with the rubber cement. I have removed most, but I would advise you to use white paint and cover those smudges which might otherwise appear in the final negative.

#### SPECIAL INFORMATION

concerning every strip numbered by the page number of the original manuscript  
Mss page 7 and 8: See that all symbols(except sky) stand on the ground line indicated by a thin pencil line which should be erased for final photographing. The action sign appears within the printed line of the text.

Mss page 9: Here you can see the difficulty of accomodating pleasing symbols and the words underneath. The words legs and feet and to walk, to go are so long that when the symbols are placed above the words in the exact middle of the word cluster the symbols are far apart. Whereas with the symbols and words eye and to see the symbols appear not far apart. I leave it to you to make the best arrangement of words and symbols, as it depends on the size of the type you use.

The sentence bird sees flower and tree shows a pleasing arrangement where the space between each word symbol is about one square, and the size of my typewriter type fits nicely underneath each symbol.

Door, entrance and exit should be placed apart in the line within the actual page. But here again I leave it to you for the most pleasing effect.

Mss page 10: The ultimate placement of the symbols are discussed on page 1 of these informations. All happiness symbols belong together, and all sadness symbols. Please note that the multiplication marks on the happiness symbols are sharp black photos whereas the following are prints.

Mss page 11: The symbol for still more sadness should actually be in the same line with the foregoing (on page 10) symbols for sadness and much sadness unless the text demands that it be placed in a line of its own. I have not with me the original mss and cannot say for sure how the text runs.

Should you find that the multiplication marks need a bit blackening with



black ink (because they are not photographed but printed) please blacken them for best effect.

Mss page 12: Please realise that the vertical line in before and after extends from the ground line to the sky line. The horizontal line in above and below are exactly in the middle between both the ground and the sky line, with the dot on either the sky line or the ground line. These ground and sky lines are indicated in print with my typewriter, whereas you would have to place here your printed words. But please note that in the original mss these lines are indicated by a thin line, whereas I ask you to make them dotted lines <sup>as</sup> I did. The necessity for this will be apparent in page 13. I haven't got the proper equipment for making exact dotted lines, but I'm sure you have. The dotted lines which I made are done with a pencil and are easily erasable, as they extend over and into the symbols for sun and moon. You must therefore erase these pencil dots, and make your permanent dots in order to show the readers that the symbols must be placed within (usually invisible) sky and ground lines. I can imagine that children would have to use exercise books with fine ruling lines in order to keep their drawings within the prescribed size. I have made the space between the words skyline and ground line and the symbols for sun and moon a bit too long. One inch would be sufficient, but again you do best for the most pleasing effect.

The symbols for sunrise and sunset are pleasingly separated, but I made a mistake of placing the symbols for dawn and dusk too near to each other, so that the space between both is even less than one square. You must place them far apart, also to accomodate the words underneath dawn and dusk in the mss.

The next symbol sun is placed too near to dusk. Actually, as you can see from the mss Mrs. Helfman places the symbols and explanatory words for dawn and dusk in one separate line (and this is as it should be), and then in the next line are the symbols sun, eye, light and followed by the short 2 word sentence sun shines. Unfortunately I have placed the two symbols too far apart. Only a square space should separate them, but if your type demands further spacing place them a bit further apart.

Mss page 13: Here the necessity to use dotted lines for sky and ground line appears obvious. Read again what I wrote in paragraph 3 of the first page of these informations. I must apologise for the badly dotted line done with a pencil and very clumsily too, and for the dirtiness of the whole strip caused by the rubber cement accumulating dirt, the eraser, etc. etc. etc. Please note that the first two symbols for star and water appear between the sky and ground line. You must use black ink for repairs and white paint for covering the dirty spots.

Mss page 14: The roof line which connects the symbol for man and woman in the symbol compounds for married couple and parents should actually extend until it reaches the man and woman symbol (as this is shown in the symbols for husband and wife). I was unable to paste the three symbols man+roof+woman so near to each other that the lines meet. I thought I am going then over with a fine nib and black ink. But now looking at the mess of dried rubber cement, I am afraid to do it, fearing that a blotch will be the result. So please connect these lines as shown in the book page 412, and indicated in my symbols for husband and wife.

In the following strip of the same page 14 there are 3 short sentences namely man lives (where I made the spacing between both symbols a bit too far), then father and mother live. (good spacing) and flower lives also good spacing. However, as said in page 2 of these informations should you use large type for the words underneath the symbols, and should it not be pleasing to use a smaller type to fit the symbol spacing then use your larger type and space the symbols more apart so that each symbol appears symmetrically over each word.

Mss page 15: ATTENTION! THE FIRST TWO LINES OF SYMBOLS BEGINNING WITH MAN WOMAN THE FAMILY ETC. ARE NOT MY SYMBOLS BUT FROM AN OLD BOOK. I have sent Mrs. Helfman photographs of these symbols from an old book, and I ask you to draw them as shown there, looking like old woodcuts. Under no circumstances should these symbols be drawn in exactly the same size as my symbols, as this would only create confusion. Mrs. Helfman shows these old symbols in order to demonstrate that others before me have used symbols which show some similarity with my symbols, and I agree to this demonstration, but you must draw these old symbols as shown in the old book, preferably larger than my symbols as mine are designed for a typewriter.

The only symbols in this mss page 15 which are mine are shown in my strip forming the sentence after sunrise the man approaches the forest. Here my typewriter type was too large and hence I was forced to place the symbols over the words (disregarding the article the) and hence the spaces between the symbols are larger than one square. This is alright, as I said before. Only no smaller spaces should be used between symbols in a sentence.

Mss page 16: In the sentence moon goes up over waves of water. Here again my typewriter forced me to space the symbols for moon and goes up further than one square, whereas all other symbols are nicely spaced.



The following five symbols from turn to mix should be shown in one single line. I forgot to mention that whereas in my book and in the mss the symbol for moon is shown as a crescent, in my tourist folder and other publications, I have abandoned this presentation because the symbol as shown for moon is much simpler for a typewriter to type.

The last symbols on the same page shown in the second strip and showing variations of arrows must be drawn correctly as to the groundline. This is indicated by the lower pencil line, whereas the symbols appear in the middle line (between ground and skyline). Only the symbol for agreement shows one arrow on the ground line, and the other on the middle line. This all is due to the limitations of the typewriter for typing the symbols. The two last symbols for collection and gathering extend far out of ground and skyline. I drew them in 1948, having no other possible version in mind. Now I don't like them, because they interfere with the typing of the semantography typewriter. But as Mrs. Helfman has chosen them to show what can be done with arrows, let the symbols stand as they are. Please put the other words underneath (I believe the original mass contains more words than just collection and gathering).

Dear Mrs. Gomez,

Now at last I am at the end, and perhaps you too at the end of your patience with me going on repeating and repeating the same information again and again. I assure you I wouldn't do it were I in New York and would tell you all you need to know. But then perhaps I would be a constant bother to you, so perhaps it is better that I am thousands of miles away. And Mrs. Helfman will look through the galleyproofs anyway. So a thousand thanks for your kind help.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

February 19, 1967

I am so glad we understand each other about the glyphs and all. My book, which was to be quite a simple thing when I first thought of it, certainly ran into complications! But that always happens, and is part of the fun.

The xerox sheets you sent me are from THE BOOK OF SIGNS, by Rudolph Koch, are published originally in Germany and now reprinted in this country in stiff paperback by Dover Publications. Since it seems that you do not have this, please allow me to send you a copy. I will have it sent directly from Dover. I used this book extensively in writing my book. You will be charmed by it. As you pointed out, not only are the signs interesting, but they are artistically done in woodcuts. My husband, who is an artist, thinks it is a very fine book. The designer is using this book in connection with mine. I will return your sheets next time I write you a regular air mail letter.

I was interested in your letter to Mr. Niemeyer and was intrigued by your running a boarding house for young people. A good way to stay young yourself!

All for now. The book will be on its way unless I hear that you already have one, but I'm sure you haven't. Another book of some interest is Ernst Lehner's PICTURE BOOK OF SYMBOLS, all sorts of things, for designers, illustrators, etc. But the Koch is more artistic.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Helfman.

Mr. James Giblin,  
Editor,  
Lothrop Lee & Shepard Co. Inc.,  
Dear Mr. Giblin,

Sydney 21.2.1967

Many thanks for your kind letter of February 15, and for your good words. I cannot say how much I appreciate your interest and positive action with regard to my symbols. For 25 years I have fought a losing battle, believing that I shall go down the grave a crank. Now, airlines, shipping lines, hotels and motels associations, etc. etc. are interested in my work. And now I hope to live a little longer (I am now in my 70th year) to hold a copy of your book in my hands. I order herewith 30 copies for a start, and shall do all I can to foster its sale in Sydney and Australia through a wholesaler. If you will publish a promotion leaflet, send me a hundred and more so that I can add it to my letters. In September (or later) there will be an exhibition on symbols in the TIME-LIFE exhibition rooms in New York. My work will be displayed and I hope the book will be ready <sup>then</sup> too. Usually, such dates are set tentatively and it may be later than September.

Please hand over the included envelope with all symbols and instructions to Mrs. Gomez with my thanks for her kind help. I suppose Mrs. Helfman will have an opportunity to examine and correct if necessary the galley proofs.

Allow me to enclose some picture greetings from Sydney. However, these pictures show mostly the city. The real wonder, apart from its scenery, and its eternal spring climate is only found in the suburbs. This real wonder can be illustrated by the following figures. London with 7 million people has 21,000 streets.



Sydney with 2 million has 15,000 streets. Why? Because 80% of all people in Sydney live in one family houses with running water, bath, front and back garden, even the slums have these amenities. In contrast Vienna (where I hail from) has only tenement houses with one toilet for 3 families in thousands of buildings, and the worst of them all Paris has about 40% of all houses without running water. Yes, Sydney is wonderful, and we want millions of Americans to come and stay here,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss  
Sydney 21-2167

Dear Mrs. Gomez,

This is to thank you for agreeing with my symbol sample as sent to you through Mrs. Helfman. Consequently I did not print the symbols from the printed tourist folder, but had photographic copies made from the original negatives on glossy photographic paper. Only for the multiplication marks needed did I use prints and they are recognisable by the lightly yellowish paper. This should not be detrimental for the photographic process.

I worked in production for nearly 50 years, and have seen the most incredible things happen, often if someone who knows what to do gives some work to another employee who then may make a blunder. Allow me therefore to attach herewith careful directions for almost every symbol, so that anyone whom you entrust with part of the work would know exactly what to do. In the printing business printing errors are impossible to correct in the printed book. Still, everyone would recognise a misspelled word. But errors in the symbols would create confusion. They are deadly.

If I had more time I would have re-drawn some of the symbols (not found in the tourist folder) 10 times larger in size, then reduce them photographically and send you the positives. But this was impossible and this forced me to paste together some symbols, sometimes with 4 little bits of paper. Still, they should come out alright. But if one bit gets loose and falls off, then it would amount to a printing mistake. Therefore, I beg you to check carefully all symbols with Mrs. Helfman's mss.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 24-2-67

I hope that Mrs. Gomez has received my symbols, and that everything is going ahead. I beg you to keep a close watch on her work, perhaps before even its given to the photographer. You will then spot any mistake in the drawings of my symbols. A typing mistake in the words can be spotted by anyone, and cannot create confusion.

This spate of letters will then come to an end, and I am sure it was quite a strain for you receiving from me letter after letter. Perhaps not. Your letters to me are just wonderful, giving me the feeling that "somebody cares". So let me send you some copies of letters I received and wrote recently. But before let me send you 2 photographs of myself and Claire, returning your kindness of your photo.

When I showed your picture to my brother he said at first "It's Claire." "No," I said, "It's Mrs. Helfman". He was amazed at the similarity. I have looked through the loose photos I have (I don't want to tear any out of my precious albums) and am sending one photo showing Claire and myself sitting in front of a hut (not shown) in the Swiss Alps, and looking at the Piz Palu glacier in the Engadin. I have chosen this photo because Claire wears about the same hairdo as you in your picture which makes the resemblance striking. The other picture is taken on a triangulation peak in the Austrian Alps. The time for both tours in between the years 1932 to 1937. I don't remember the exact year, but these were the best years of our life before in 1938 the Nazi holocaust swept over Austria. Thank you so much for your picture. It tells me more about you than a thousand words, and it tells me also that my work is in good hands with you, and maybe, we may make together a new book of which I have a very good idea. If we can bring out this book millions of parents in the U.S.A. will take it up with enthusiasm. The title: HOME ETHICS A new school subject for the kindergarten and the primary school. The sorry fact is that all the time of a child in school is taken up with subjects which, valuable they may be, don't teach a child of honesty, of behaviour towards older people, of how to deal with problems which arise in the home and in the family, etc. etc. I have worked out many problem exercises which can be solved like mathematical exercises, the main basic rule being the same as in mathematics, namely, you can't tell or use a lie to work out these problems, just as in mathematics you cannot say that  $1+2=4$ . Naturally, the meaning of words, the recognition of words which can hurt, the ways to make such words harmless will also be taught with my symbols, etc. etc. However, all this is a dream only. Let's see first your new book come out, and let me stay alive for a little while longer.



I really want to send something to your son, if only I would know how old he is and what he likes best. Australia is such a fascinating continent with features not found anywhere else, that I am sure I can send him something to interest him, if only I would know what does interest him, so please tell me.

I want also to send him something <sup>out</sup> of gratitude that you have posted to me THE BOOK OF SIGNS. I have never heard of it. I have also never seen Lehner's PICTURE BOOK OF SYMBOLS. But I know that some people have deliberately left out my work in their own papers when they wrote scholarly papers, based on Lehner's book. I know that they know of my work. Perhaps one day I will tell you how I have been made to suffer, in spite of my polite and pleading attitude - or perhaps because of it.

Only since the death of Claire did I sometimes lose my politeness, and become rebellious. Sometimes too in order to shock people. I had misgivings about your reactions to my letter to Mr. Niemeyer. I still have misgivings about his reactions. I don't think that you have heard from many people the argument that our language teachers are to be blamed for much of the deadweight and illogic children are given in school. Anyway this is how I feel it.

You mention my managing a boardinghouse as a way to stay young. Yes, it is. And to prove to you the atmosphere of friendly youthfulness which pervades my house I am sending you "breakfast tables" where my tenants write down beforehand the time each day when they want to have it. But they write other things too and there is a great deal of fun with all.

I enclose my second letter to Niemeyer which accompany the papers I sent him. You have all of them within my book, except the story of Miss Bates how her 7 year old brother discovered quickly my own illogic in a symbol. I am enclosing her statutory declaration, made before a judge on oath, because I have found out before that a lot of teachers simply don't believe me what I say about my symbols and refuse to try them out.

I enclose also copy of my letter to Mr. Milne, sales manager, of William Morrow and Co. You mentioned to me a retail price of \$2.75 for your STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. I wonder how this price will affect sales. You must know that living conditions are much better in Australia than in the States. The basic wage for an unskilled worker is about \$33 per week, and he can live on this easily. It's higher in the States, and hence a price of \$2.75 may perhaps be a bit too high for Australia. But I shall do my best to induce the sales lady at the counter to promote your book. If I am successful, I shall approach a "jobber".

Day-in day-out I write letters and letters to people who might be interested in my work. Should I not drop dead suddenly, but be on a sickbed, I think I shall go on dictating letters to my last breath. I don't think anyone has been so tenacious and industrious in promoting a lost cause as I am with my work. All my approaches to prominent people will eventually go into the Semantography Series in order to prove-if nothing else- that we need a new approach by the high and mighty to the pioneers of new ideas. At present, and in former years they have lived out their lives as cranks only to be elevated to pioneers and benefactors of mankind after their death. In some places in Asia they rever people who speak in tongues and are obviously mad. Such an attitude would be quite beneficial in our society when it comes to deal with and judge people who are obviously mad with their new and absurd talk. I am one of them.

And so I enclose copies of a letter for you and for your editor Mr. Giblin to the producers of the TV show THE 21ST CENTURY. No doubt, it may take half a year or more until they would think of taping a show on my symbols and on/ your book. But support for my letter should come forth from Mr. Giblin, and or the ad man and PR man of Lothrop, Lee and Shepard. A plug for your book on such a TV show would be worth thousands of dollars in advertising money. So please think in what way you and/or Mr. Giblin can help. Were I in New York I would go and see the producers. Maybe, you have the time to do this.

I am sorry to see that every letter I write to you contains some exhortation to do something, at least answer my letter. So, please you are relieved of this. I expect no letter from you until Mrs. Gomez has completed well her job. Meanwhile I am with my best regards for you, your husband and your son.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 3, 1967

I received your Blissymbolics package and I want to thank you very much. I will certainly follow your directions most closely.

I find your symbolic language very interesting and am looking forward to seeing the book in print.

Sincerely yours,  
(Mrs.) Victoria Gomez  
March 9, 1967

Dear Mr. Bliss,

Thank you very much for sending us your symbols for reproduction,  
And thank you too for the colourful picture greetings from Sydney: it looks



like a delightful city.

Sincerely,  
James Giblin,  
Editor

Dear Mr. Giblin,

Sydney 28.3.67

Thank you very much for your kind acknowledgement of my symbols. I wish your venture every success, and (as I told in my letter February 21) I order 30 copies at wholesale price. I want to put them on sale in Sydney's major bookstores.

You have received from Mrs. Helfman copy of my letter to the CBS for their TV show "21st Century". They have asked for the customary copyright release, and will then examine the matter. If they accept it then it will be a good plug for your book. I shall not fail to keep you informed. Meanwhile I am with my thanks,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mrs. Gomez,

Sydney 28.3.67

This is to thank you for your kind letter and for all you are doing to make Mrs. Helfman's book a designer's success.

Yes, I too long to see the book in print and I will do everything to foster its acceptance.

I am with my best regards and thanks to you and your family,

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

March 16, 1967

Mrs. Gomez has assured me that I will have a chance to check your symbols before they are in first printing. I have not worked with her before but have been told that she is an excellent designer. She has been most co-operative.

I was much pleased with the pictures of you and Claire. Though I imagine I probably resemble her! The BOOK OF SIGNS must be well on its way to you, but it will take time. I was so amused by your breakfast charts, with the comments of the young people! They must be great fun. I used to be a teacher, in elementary schools, and the thing I miss most about it is the children. I think that someday I might do some volunteer work with children, such as reading to children in hospitals. Teaching itself is too strenuous and time-consuming for me now: it would leave me no time to write.

Your letters to Mr. Niemeyer interested me. How much <sup>he</sup> will be interested I do not know but he is a very busy man and it may be some time before you hear from him. Bank St. College at any rate is interested in new ideas of many kinds. About the price of STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS - I should think the Australian price might be different, in terms of dollars, since the value is not the same, but I do not know.

It would be wonderful if THE 21st CENTURY would do a programme on your signs. I sent the copy of your letter to Mr. Giblin but have not talked with him about it as yet. I am sorry I cannot go to see the producers. I have to keep out of the city as much as possible because of the continued sensitivity of my ear to sounds.

This is a sort of choppy letter, just comments on this and that. Mainly I wanted to reassure you that the signs would be handled as carefully as possible in my book. Unfortunately there will not be time to send copies to you for checking.

My son is twenty years old and his great interest is modern jazz. But at present he is far away in the country and it is not practical to send him anything. I thank you, just the same.

Spring was almost here. Snowdrops bloomed in my garden, and masses of bright crocuses. But now it has snowed again. I suppose where you are it must be summer.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Helfman.

Sydney 28.3.67

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

A thousand times for your kind letter, and this is a promise not to bother you again with long letters, requests, etc. etc. I feel I have overstrained your kind attitude towards me, and I promise to let you now dwell in peace, as far as I am concerned. You have your own worries and troubles, and I am sorry that I have added to them.

I shall therefore not write again until I receive your kind gift the book of symbols, and when I can report to you something about trying to sell your STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS in Sydney. I haven't received the book yet.

Niemeyer hasn't answered yet, and your kind advice that he is preoccupied with other matters makes me hope that he hasn't been annoyed by the tone of my letter.

I sincerely hope that your son will soon be back, and then I shall try to send him some record on Australian jazz.

I have been asked by CBS to give them the copyright release, because without it they would not study my material. I did it, and shall inform you if something comes



out of this approach.

Dr. Mead has written a very nice letter, has acknowledged receipt of my book, and has said too (alas) that the Glyph Project will deal with only a few symbols. I take this as another setback, and as <sup>an</sup> often repeated attitude by many people. It seems to be too bothersome to study my book and my work in earnest and to give it the acknowledgement it deserves. But never mind, I hope Dr. Mead will come round, as all other symbol designers are now in <sup>a</sup>quandary and are facing an impass. They can't symbolise abstract meanings with their schematized pictures, and therefore, sooner or later (rather later) they will turn to me. Give me another 100 years, and recognition will come my way.

Meanwhile I must be happy with the few people who are giving full recognition to my endeavours, and you are now the foremost of them. So, thanks a thousand times and forgive me for bothering you so much, and please DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THIS LETTER. All the best for the future

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Sydney 5-5-67

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

In sincerely hope that this letter will find you, your husband and your son in the best of health. I just received your kind gift **THE BOOK OF SIGNS**. It's really very interesting and is a valuable addition to all my books on signs and symbols. Thank you very much.

In return, let me send you by surface mail, just as a token of my gratitude, a mimeographed manuscript for a story of my life as written for children and youngsters. Who knows, maybe you may write this story. I hope this hope will come true.

I hope too that you have already, or will have a final opportunity to check the symbols as drawn for your book. It would be a real pity if your labours, and my labours, and Mrs. Gomez labours would be marred by an accidental mistake. As you know I have ordered 30 copies from your publisher. I am looking forward to see them.

The books **STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS** have not yet arrived.

I haven't heard from Mr. Niemeyer.

This is all, and please do not feel obliged to answer this letter. I am with my best wishes for the health of you, your husband and your son.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Note: that letter to Niemeyer is contained in my S.S. 286 under the title "Meet the President of an American College of Education". He is a really educated educator. He ignored my letter and never answered it.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

June 14, 1967

Your story of yourself, Australian Language Pioneer, has arrived, and I find it a fascinating story. Whether I could develop this into a book for children I cannot say right now. The first thing is to see how the book on signs and symbols goes. Margaret Mead has written a comment for the jacket of the book which reads as follows: "Mrs. Helfman has assembled remarkably interesting and stimulating materials. This is a book that will interest all ages, but one that will perhaps be particularly useful for older people and school children to read together, and as they ponder man's long history in learning to communicate with one another, they can begin to plan for the future, when we will all live in a planetary society where accurate communication is essential for the safety of individuals and the survival of mankind."

The galley proofs have been corrected, with a fight on my part to leave certain things unchanged, and Mrs. Gomez has promised to send me Xerox copies of the chapter on your signs, as soon as she has them pasted up with <sup>the</sup> text, before the page proofs. I do feel that the publisher is doing a careful job. Mr. Giblin, the editor of the book, has meanwhile left Lothrop for another publishing house where he will be editor-in-chief, but he had finished his work on my book.

I am glad you enjoyed **THE BOOK OF SIGNS**. We will be off to Maine for the summer soon. My address there, for most of July and August is Monhegan, Maine 04852.

Many thanks for your story.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Helfman.

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 7-7-67

Only today do I find the time to answer your kind letter. I thank you for all your information about Margaret Mead's introduction, and especially for the reassurances that the chapter on my symbols is going well. I am looking forward to see the book, and I wish you great success with it.

I am glad to see that you have the time and means to spend 2 months on vacation. Hence I write this letter to your address in Monhegan. I wish you



the finest weather possible and also all the solitude and peace of mind to make this vacation memorable, and that you may return refreshed to your work in New York.

I haven't received the 10 copies of your book STRINGS ON YOUR FINGERS. Perhaps they will come. I am waiting.

Niemeyer hasn't written. I don't think he ever will. Never mind.

I remain with my best wishes to you, your husband and son.

Sincerely yours,  
C.K. Bliss

Dear Mr. Bliss,

August 21, 1967

Work on my book about signs and symbols has been going well. I wish you could see the jacket: I think Mrs. Gomez has done a beautiful job. I read galleys and page proofs. Then I found that (understandably) it was not possible for the publishers to send up here the final paste-ups for offset. I could have returned to New York but this was not feasible and anyway I feel the publishers have done a very careful job so far. What I did do was to ask to have sent here photocopies of the pages dealing with Blissymbolics. This was done and I felt the results were very handsome indeed. There was one minor detail I felt unsure of, so I phoned the editor and asked her to get Mrs. Gomez to check it with your instructions. I understand that in some instances minor details differed in your instructions from the original version. A letter to Mrs. Gomez will repeat my request. I really feel I have done everything possible, short of being there. New York is 400 miles away, and unlivable in the summer. Don't think we are just on vacation here! We come to this lovely island to escape but also to work. Will be home Sept. 6, Best wishes,

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Helfman.

Dear Mrs. Helfman,

Sydney 5-9-67

Today is my 70th birthday, and your kind letter was a lovely birthday present telling me of your loving care with your book, and especially for my symbols. Some weeks ago I have written to your publisher and have ordered 30 copies to be sent to me, as I want to see them displayed and sold in Australia. They have acknowledged my order, and I can hardly wait to see the book, and the dustjacket, and to read all your chapters. Somehow I feel that your kind writing about my work will break the ice for me and my work. My gratitude to you knows no bounds and I shall show my gratefulness whether you like it or not. Meanwhile, take my sincerest thanks.

I want to send a copy to Mr. Modley and to Margaret Mead, but then I think that you would send them a copy because Mead has written a foreword as you informed me, and Modley has helped you. Perhaps it would be better too that the book comes from you, the author, and not from me. Soon a year would pass since I wrote my pleading letter to Mead, but nothing, just nothing has been forthcoming in the way of any encouraging help or otherwise. I wish I would know what they do at GLYPHS INC. All I know is that their great hopes for funds and exhibitions, etc. have been dashed so far. Meanwhile, I am happy to see that more and more instruments, machines, automobiles, farm equipment, tape recorders, record players, etc. all are using symbols now instead of words in the native tongue. And so it has come to pass with me what Plato said: To be old is not nice, but to grow old is nice, which means in my case that I am happy to see that the crazy notion and vision I had 25 years ago has now been recognised. Now I hope to see the second stage, namely that all the manufacturers will realise that they are only creating a new Babel, and that therefore a comprehensive system would be necessary. This realisation has already taken place with the international travel organisations, but this is another story, and a fascinating one too, and I shall tell you more about it another time.

Between the dates of my birthday and the anniversary of the death of my good Claire are only 3 weeks. I have therefore taken the opportunity of my 70 years birthday to remember my Claire in a memorial card which I include in this letter. If you think that your good son would like a personal card I shall gladly send him one, but only if you really want it. Otherwise he may read your card.

Yours sincerely,  
C.K. Bliss

And then I received her book "Signs and Symbols Around the World". I was mighty pleased about my effort and was glad that everything came out so beautifully except that dreadful potato instead of a circle of the sun, and that dreadful crooked arrow instead of my fine tree. I have told this story in the beginning of this issue.

But when I looked through the book itself I was appalled about many errors in the presentation of other symbols notably those showing Chinese characters, and those referring to radio diagrams, etc. etc. As Mrs. Helfman told me that there might be a second edition planned because the book sold well, I decided to tell her and the editor to use the new edition for rectifying the most glaring mistakes. This is contained in the following correspondence.



There is no need to reprint the many other letters which I exchanged with Mrs. Helfman. I had a lot of suggestions for improvements to make in her book, but why should I criticise? But when she informed me that a second edition is planned, then I told her that some Chinese characters and electrical symbols must be re-drawn. She then suggested that I write to the editor whose job the second edition will be. Here are excerpts from my letter to him:

However, other symbols (not mine) must be substituted by better ones, and Mrs. Helfman has informed me that she has conveyed my impressions concerning some Chinese characters to you. Now the following paragraphs deal with these characters, and also with some symbols for electrical and electronic means to which I would like to draw your attention.

Now what authority do I have to criticise the presentation of Chinese, electrical and electronic symbols? First, I lived for 6 years in China, and studied extensively the history of Chinese writing and have had lengthy discussions with Chinese scholars. Consequently, I know more about Chinese characters than many millions of Chinese.

Furthermore, I have a University Degree in Engineering, and have spent 18 years in an electronic manufacturing plant. So, I am an expert on these symbols too. I ask you, and Mrs. Helfman for forgiveness when I criticise some of these symbols. I did not do so when the book appeared? Because no correction could have been made then. As you know, I have assisted Mrs. Helfman so much that she thanked me on the first page under "Acknowledgements" for my "enthusiastic assistance". It is with the same enthusiastic assistance that I have examined all Chinese, electrical and electronic symbols, and this long letter is written to assist you enthusiastically.

So, let me tell you that some Chinese symbols may have been drawn by non-Chinese with all good results. Imagine a Chinese who doesn't know anything about the alphabet, and who tries to copy or re-draw some alphabetical letters without knowledge as to their proper proportion and calligraphic considerations. The results would be disastrous, and recognisable even by children who have learnt to draw the alphabetical letters properly.

Now some symbols are well done, some are not good at all, some up-side down. If Mrs. Helfman had taken these symbols from previously published books then the authors of those books have made the initial mistake. In the interest of better sales and in order to squash any criticism by experts on symbols, please give your consideration to the following paragraphs, and if you are still in doubt, approach experts on this. By this I mean do not go to any Chinese, (millions of Chinese Americans don't know anything about this) don't ask a professor of Chinese writing, if this man happens to be a non-Chinese American, or even a Chinese American who never lived in China. Ask the famous writer Lin Yutang who now lives in New York, and who had developed a new "linotype" machine for Chinese characters. He is an expert. And now let me make my remarks page by page:

Page 19. These five symbols have been drawn by a Chinese, but they are very sloppy. Imagine a sloppily written line in English being used in a book to show the English alphabet. Imagine the same line written in beautiful letters. Imagine the difference this would make to the reader. You can let these symbols stay, because they are written by a Chinese, or you may choose to have them replaced by the same symbols beautifully executed by an artist in Chinese characters. I am sure there are some living in New York.

Page 46. The symbols for tree + sun = east are not bad, but not very good either. The following symbols for happy are not good, and the following "Modern" symbols for sun, mountain and rain are impossible, and downright wrong. The symbol for tree is alright, and already discussed in this paragraph. If the "Modern" symbol should represent "Modern" Chinese characters they must be re-drawn. I offer my assistance to examine replacements.

Page 48. This is a letter written by a Chinese (therefore alright) but it has been written with a fountain pen, incapable of making fine bold strokes -or has been written (which is more likely) with a ball point pen - a sacrilege for every one who loves the beauty of Chinese writing.

Page 49. This is a "Japanese" advertisement"but most unfortunately it has been placed somewhat "upside down". It is true the Chinese writing (and most Japanese writing) is written and even printed to run from top to bottom. But this specimen is written horizontally. 4 symbols are taken from the Chinese, and the remaining 2 symbols are phonetic kana symbols. I suggest that you simply turn two words "Japanese advertisement" 90 degrees around so that the words are read when the book is turned sideways, showing the characters on top and the two words "Japanese advertisement" shown underneath. And holding the book in normal position the J in Japanese would then appear the lowest in the vertical column.

The End



Page 50. The Chinese symbols shown are explained as "Ancient" and are alright.

Page 58. These symbols for numerals are dreadfully executed. Have them re-drawn by a calligraphist.

Page 87. This character is beautifully executed, and Mrs. Helfman in explaining it, says that it is a "lovely design". It brings to my mind what I have written in many pages in my book where I quote a number of sinologists, among others, Professor Ernest Fenollosa (see page 738 of my book Semantography) who said "I believe that the Chinese written language has absorbed the poetic substance of nature.... and has, through its very pictorial visibility, has been able to retain its original creative poetry with far more vigour and vividness than any phonetic tongue".

In this my chapter I explain with Chinese symbols why Chinese poems are the world's finest. And out of this consideration I urge you to have these characters which I have criticised before, re-drawn by a poetic Chinese calligraphist. Readers who know about this, may search in vain in those badly drawn characters <sup>for</sup> an explanation why Chinese poems are the world's finest.

I am coming now to the electric and electronic symbols.

Page 127. The symbols in the middle of the page are alright, but the symbols at the bottom for switch, motor (alternating and direct current) must be properly re-drawn.

Page 128. Symbols in the middle of the page for radio and television have been drawn by someone who had no knowledge whatsoever of electronics. It's like a Chinese who tries to draw alphabetical letters. These symbols must be re-drawn. Frontispiece (facing the book title) Nowhere (at least I couldn't find it) is there an explanation what writing this is, and what it means besides, this is like childrens drawing but apparently it is a full fledged letter. Not a good frontispiece I would say.

This frontispiece shows some scrawls without any title. Mrs. Helfman then informed me that it is a drawing by Paul Klee titled "Secret Picture Writing". I was appalled. If Paul Klee had drawn this, then it is sheer nonsense, and I wrote to her (excerpt follows):

As to the painting by Paul Klee, in the front piece my good angel has made me overlook the reference to it in chapter 5. Otherwise I would have made a withering attack on it. Before I explain my attitude I wish to say that the Greeks of old have argued furiously about art 2500 years ago. But there is a difference between their art and what is called art today. As you know Paul Klee is a Swiss man, and I came across his idiotic scrawls more than 35 years ago. Being intensely interested in art, I tried very hard to make head or tail of it, but could not do it - until I found the explanation. Those were the days of Dadaism, dadadadadadada being a senseless blabbering of a syllable and brought up by young artists in Switzerland as a mad attack and revenge at the petite bourgeois (Spiessbuerger in German) to befuddle him and baffle him with mad blabbering and mad drawings and proclaiming all the time that this is a new art. And this new art has spread now over the whole globe. So, in my opinion, Paul Klee's drawing in the frontispiece has no meaning except to baffle and befuddle and if he called it "Secret Script Picture" he has clearly meant it to be a hoax. You can imagine how glad I am that I overlooked the explanation in your book and that I have therefore said nothing about it in my long letter. If you want to understand better my considered opinion please read the few pages 781 and 786 in my book beginning with Mad Madness in Historic times and Mad Madness in our time. And forgive me if I have hurt you. But I know that you are a very remarkable woman and that you will forgive me.

As she made some objections as to my evaluations of Paul Klee, I wrote again (excerpt) "May be I am encountering your and your husband's opposition, because you have chosen this mad picture of Paul Klee as the frontispiece, your husband being a teacher of art. I admit that today Paul Klee is much admired, but simply because (in my opinion) there never was a time in the history of mankind when art was at such low level as it is today. How quickly the new art smearages and complations of junk are changing. Within 20 years our children will look in horror on our generation and what we have "appreciated" as art.

I was a university student when Dadaism came upon the scene, and I was a revolutionary young man avid for anything new and bold. Now listen to what Webster has to say about Dadaism: "The cult of Dada taken as a symbol in vogue (ca.1917-20) in France and Switzerland. It represents extreme negation towards the laws of beauty and social organisation, with opposition to expressionism, but its tenets are intentionally obscure." But how came the word Dada about? The dadaists simply opened a dictionary and hit on the first syllable on top of the page and it was da. What's more, one dadaist bought an urinal in a hardwareshop turned it upside down, left the price mark on and named it "Fountain" and it was accepted at an art exhibition." Enough of this of my talk. There was no second edition of the book so far, when I type these last lines in March 1972.

The End