of small sedentary communities," and "The beginnings of town life." In considering the later part of the record attributable to the Mogollon people, Martin looks beyond the usual cultural residue of archeology to seek inferences of a more sociological nature.

The booklet is handsomely illustrated. Martin has used well-selected pictures taken in the field, photographs of specimens, and drawings that show the function of what otherwise would be only curiosities.

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Tools for Machine Literature Searching. Semantic code dictionary, equipment, procedures. J. W. Perry and Allen Kent, Eds. Interscience, New York, 1958. xviii + 972 pp. Illus. $27.50.

In the words of its authors, "This book presents the . . . status of a research program initiated over ten years ago with the purpose of formulating methods to apply existing—or anticipated—developments in electronics to providing ready access to information stored in extensive collections of documents." Although bound in a single volume, *Tools for Machine Literature Searching* is not one but two books. The first 600 pages are textual in nature. They are in effect a compilation of reports on the activities of personnel at the Western Reserve University Center for Documentation and Communication Research in the field of information storage and retrieval.

Among these discussions is an extremely lucid and interesting chapter by John L. Melton, entitled "The semantic code." The purpose of this chapter is to explain the purpose and workings of semantic codes as a form of standardized language which can be used for the definite and consistent identification of concepts that is necessary in information storage and retrieval systems which utilize machines with limited logical capabilities. The chapter is followed by three tables of "semantic factors," which are the building blocks upon which semantic coding is based. In Melton's chapter and the tables that follow it, the reader is given a very fine (perhaps the best extant) explanation of the rationale that led to the development of the semantic code. The reader can also grasp quite easily from Melton's contribution the detailed workings of semantic codes and semantic factors. The chapter does not settle the very basic question of whether a universal machine language is really possible, or desirable if possible; but it does at least show the reader what one example of such a language looks like and how it works.

This being the case, one is led to wonder about the purpose of the second half (or section) of the book, which is a semantic code dictionary occupying 364 pages. Can it be that the authors assume that everyone who buys the book will want to make use of the semantic code dictionary? This would seem very unlikely at the present stage of mechanical storage and retrieval of information. Presumably most readers of the book will use it as a source of background information on machine codes and coding. The Melton chapter would seem to serve this background function nobly.

In view of this, the inclusion of the entire semantic code dictionary seems a rather unfair "tie-in" sale. It makes the book needlessly bulky and expensive. The authors themselves seem to argue against the inclusion of the semantic code dictionary in the present volume: "For those readers who plan to make extensive use of the code dictionary . . . it is suggested that arrangements be made with the Center for Documentation and Communication Research . . . to use the latest edition of the . . . dictionary. *It should be kept in mind that the code dictionary is being continually expanded by inclusion of new terms*" (italics mine). In view of this, it seems unfortunate that the authors did not see fit to issue the code dictionary as a separate publication in a readily expansible (perhaps loose-leaf) form.

Another source of bulk and annoyance is the fact that, although "this book was not written for the novice in the documentation field," chapter after chapter is given to relatively elementary considerations, and much of the material in these chapters is reprinted from common documentation periodicals which any advanced worker in the field is bound to read regularly. Is this publishing and republishing of essentially the same thing not glutting the literature with sources of the information that the authors seek to codify? The authors have contributed many profound and important writings to the literature of documentation, but the repetition of these writings before the same audience will not increase their usefulness. It will merely frustrate this audience by forcing it to wade through more and more literature in the vain hope that something new has been added.

There are, happily, parts of the present book that have not been published before, to my knowledge. These come mainly from the pens of John L. Melton and Jessica Melton, who, in my opinion, "carry" the book. In addition to the very fine chapter by John Melton on semantic codes, there is a well-written, informative chapter by Jessica Melton, entitled, "Procedures for preparation of abstracts for encoding." This chapter takes the reader quickly and clearly through the basic problems and procedures involved in the process of converting the conventional prose of the scientific and technical abstract into the specialized language of the machine. The author wisely limits herself to abstracts in a single field, metallurgy. By doing so, she is able to present her exposition in the form of a case study—an excellent means of conveying relatively complex ideas. It would perhaps have been better from the viewpoint of the reader if the chapter by John Melton which lays the groundwork of codes and coding had preceded rather than followed the chapter by Jessica Melton, which constitutes a specific example. But, in any event, both chapters are well worth reading.

Similarly, there are a number of new and worth-while chapters dealing with other phases of machine processing of information. Notable among these is one entitled, "Automatic encoding for machine searching," in which procedures by which machines are made to recognize conventional words and convert them into machine language are outlined. This discussion is extended (again by the Meltons) in a chapter dealing with, first, the conversion by machine of foreign words into machine words and, second, the reconstitution of these machine words into English words. In view of the expanding interest in the use of foreign-language information, this chapter is very timely and useful.

From the foregoing sampling, it should be clear that there is a good deal of worth-while material in *Tools for Machine Literature Searching*. Much of this material is perhaps the most definitive in its field to date. It is unfortunate that the impact of this material is dulled somewhat by its surroundings.

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Voice across the Sea. Arthur C. Clarke. Harper, New York, 1958. xiii + 208 pp. Illus. $3.75.

The problem of communicating by electricity has been relatively well solved in the past hundred years. How this was done is a fascinating story to those who are acquainted with the technical details, but it is a difficult one to narrate because of the rather specialized problems involved. Arthur C. Clarke, however, has not only told the story accurately, as those familiar with it can testify, but has made it intelligible and interesting, as those unacquainted with it will discover.

This is not to say that *Voice Across the Sea* is a scholarly monograph in the history of technology. The author himself points out that his purpose is to en-