

LEXICON GRAMMATICORUM

A Bio-Bibliographical Companion to the History of Linguistics
Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged

General Editor:

Harro Stammerjohann



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Morris, Charles, b. May 23, 1901, Denver, CO, USA; d. Jan. 15, 1979, Gainesville, FL, USA; semiotician.

Morris was a student of George Herbert Mead at the University of Chicago and later editor of the widely known collection of Mead's lectures, *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934). M. helped to create "the Viennese connection" to American philosophy in the 1930s, hoping to clarify pragmatism by making use of the foundationalist, verification model of truth promised by the logical empiricism of Rudolph Carnap and others. He is most noted today for his 1938 monograph, which was the first volume of the grand project for an *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*. In this work M. proposed his threefold divisions of a sign as consisting of 'sign vehicle', 'designatum', and 'interpreter', and of semiotics as consisting of syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. This latter distinction became normalized in linguistics. These divisions were based on a dyadic, positivist reading of C. → Peirce's triadic semeiotic, an unacknowledged reduction of Peirce's critique of dyadic views of signs and of foundationalism.

Pragmatics, a basic field of linguistics today, originally had its roots in Morris's idea of a division of signs concerned with "the relations of signs to their interpreters" or users. Practically, this distinction seemed to legitimate the place of social context for language study, which was a crucial feature of both J. Dewey and L. → Wittgenstein's philosophies at that time, as well as the work of E. → Sapir, B. → Malinowski, and others. Yet Morris's behaviorism unsemiotically assumed that "users" of signs are not also themselves signs. Similarly, he assumed the logical empiricist "myth of the given" in viewing objects of signs—designata or denotata—as not themselves signs, but as "things" to be denoted by semantic reference.

M.'s chief publications also include the elaboration of his work in semiotics in 1946 and 1964. For other works, see the bibliography. For a comparison of M. and Peirce, see chapter 4 of Rochberg-Halton (1986).

Ed. (1934): G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self & Society* [...], Chicago, IL. (1938): *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* Chicago, IL. (1942): *Paths of Life: Preface to a World Religion*, New York. (1946): *Signs, Lang., and Behavior*, New York. (1948): *The Open Self*, New York. (1964): *Signification and Significance* [...], Cambridge, MA. (1956): *Varieties of Human Value*, Chicago, IL. (1970): *The Pragmatic Movement in Am. Philosophy*, New York.

ROCHBERG-HALTON, E. (1986): *Meaning and Modernity: Social Theory in the Pragmatic Attitude*, Chicago, IL, etc. *Eugene Halton*