I. A. Richards and his School
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I. A. Richards

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Ivor Armstrong Richards (26 February 1893 – 7 September 1979) was an influential English literary critic and rhetorician. He was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge[1] where his love of English was nurtured by the scholar 'Cabby' Spence. His books, especially *The Meaning of Meaning*, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, *Practical Criticism*, and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, proved to be founding influences for the New Criticism. The concept of 'practical criticism' led in time to the practices of close reading, what is often thought of as the beginning of modern literary criticism. Richards is regularly considered one of the founders of the contemporary study of literature in English.

Biographical sketch

Beginnings

Richards began his career without formal training in literature at all; he studied philosophy ("moral sciences") at Cambridge University. This may have led to one of Richards' assertions for the shape of literary study in the 20th century — that literary study cannot and should not be undertaken as a specialization in itself, but instead studied alongside a cognate field (philosophy, psychology, rhetoric, etc.).

Richards' earliest teaching appointments were in the equivalent of what might be called "adjunct faculty" positions; Magdalene College at Cambridge would not pay a salary to Richards to teach the new and untested field of English literature. Instead, Richards collected tuition directly from the students as they entered the classroom each week. In 1926 he married Dorothy Pilley Richards, whom he had met on a climbing holiday in Wales.

Contributions

Richards' life and influence can be divided into periods, which correspond roughly to his intellectual interests. In many of these achievements, Richards found a collaborator in C. K. Ogden.

Collaboration with Ogden

An assessment of Richards' work and biography requires mention of C. K. Ogden, Richards' collaborator on three of the most important projects of Richards' life and work.

In *Foundations of Aesthetics* (co-authored by Richards, Ogden & James Woods), Richards maps out the principles of aesthetic reception which lay at the root of his literary theory (the principle of "harmony" or balance of competing psychological impulses). Additionally, the structure of the work (surveying multiple, competing definitions of the term "aesthetic") prefigures his work on multiple definition in *Coleridge on Imagination*, in *Basic Rules of Reason* and in *Mencius on the Mind*. 
In *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*, Richards and Ogden work out the triadic theory of semiotics which, in its dependence on psychological theories, prefigures the importance of Richards independently authored literary criticism. Additionally, many current semioticians (including Eco) salute this work as a vast improvement on the dyadic semiotics of Saussure. Finally, in works like *The General Basic English Dictionary* and *Times of India Guide to Basic English*, Richards and Ogden developed their most internationally influential project—the Basic English program for the development of an international language based with an 850-word vocabulary. Richards' own travels, especially to China, made him an effective advocate for this international program. At Harvard, he took the next step, integrating new media (television, especially) into his international pedagogy.

**Aesthetics and literary criticism**

**Works**


**Theory**

Richards is often labeled as the father of the New Criticism, largely because of the influence of his first two books of critical theory, *The Principles of Literary Criticism* and of *Practical Criticism*. *Principles* was a major critical breakthrough, offering thirty-five insightful chapters regarding various topics relevant to literary criticism, including: form, value, rhythm, coenesthesia, literary infectiousness, allusiveness, divergent readings, and belief. His next book, *Practical Criticism*, was just as influential as an empirical study of inferior literary response. Richards removed authorial and contextual information from thirteen poems, including one by Longfellow and four by decidedly marginal poets. Then he assigned their interpretation to undergraduates at Cambridge University in order to ascertain the most likely impediments to an adequate response. This approach had a startling impact at the time in demonstrating the depth and variety of misreadings to be expected of otherwise intelligent college students as well as the population at large.

In using this method, Richards did not advance a new hermeneutic. Instead, he was doing something unprecedented in the field of literary studies: he was interrogating the interpretive process itself by analyzing the self-reported interpretive work of students. To that end, his work necessitated a closer interpretation of the literary text in and of itself and provided what seems a historical opening to the work done in English Education and Composition [Flower
& Hayes] as they engage empirical studies. Connected with this effort were his seminal theories of metaphor, value, tone, stock response, incipient action, pseudo-statement, and ambiguity, the latter as expounded by William Empson, his former graduate student.

**Influence**

Richards served as mentor and teacher to other prominent critics, most notably William Empson and F. R. Leavis. Other critics primarily influenced by his writings also included Cleanth Brooks and Allen Tate. Later critics who refined their formalist approach to New Criticism by actively rejecting his psychological emphasis included, besides Brooks and Tate, John Crowe Ransom, W. K. Wimsatt, R. P. Blackmur, and Murray Krieger. R. S. Crane of the Chicago school was also both indebted to Richards' theory and critical of its psychological assumptions. They all admitted the value of his seminal ideas but sought to salvage what they considered his most useful assumptions from the theoretical excesses they felt he brought to bear in his criticism. Like his student Empson, Richards proved a difficult model for the New Critics, but his model of close reading provided the basis for their interpretive methodology.

**Rhetoric, semiotics and prose interpretation**

**Works**

  
  1st: 1923 (Preface Date: Jan. 1923)
  2nd: 1927 (Preface Date: June 1926)
  3rd: 1930 (Preface Date: Jan. 1930)
  4th: 1936 (Preface Date: May 1936)
  5th: 1938 (Preface Date: June 1938)
  8th: 1946 (Preface Date: May 1946)
  NY: 1989 (with a preface by Umberto Eco)


• *Times of India Guide to Basic English* (Bombay: The Times of India Press), 1938; Odgen, C.K. & Richards, I.A.

**Further reading**


**References**


**External links**


• I.A. Richards page from the Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory (http://litguide.press.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/view.cgi?eid=289&query=richards) (subscription required)

• I.A. Richards capsule biography (http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/gallery/rhetoric/figures/richards.html)

• The I.A. Richards Web Resource (http://mysite.freeserve.com/jbcpub/richards/iar.html)


• Biography compiled by John Constable (http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/jbcpub/richards/iarchron.html)


• Barbara Leonard Reynolds I.A. Richards relationship with his American mentor, author and educator Sterling A. Leonard.
The Meaning of Meaning


Although the original text was published in 1923 it has been used as a textbook in many fields including linguistics, philosophy, language, cognitive science and most recently semantics. The book has been in print continuously since 1923. The most recent edition is the critical edition prepared by W. Terrence Gordon as volume 3 of the 5-volume set C. K. Ogden & Linguistics (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1995). For full publication history, including serialized publication in The Cambridge Magazine prior to the first edition of the book, consult W. Terrence Gordon, C. K. Ogden: a bio-bibliographical study (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990) or contact the author.

Richards sets forth a contextual theory of Signs: that Words and Things are connected “through their occurrence together with things, their linkage with them in a ‘context’ that Symbols come to play that important part in our life [even] the source of all our power over the external world” (47). In this context system, Richards develops a tri-part semiotics—symbol, thought and referent with three relations between them (thought to symbol=correct, thought-referent=adequate, symbol-reference=true) (11). Symbols are “those signs which men use to communicate one with another and as instruments of thought, occupy a peculiar place” (23). “All discursive symbolization involves […] weaving together of contexts into higher contexts” (220). So for a word to be understood "requires that it form a context with further experiences" (210).[1]


References

Triangle of reference

The triangle of reference (also known as the triangle of meaning[1] and the semantic triangle) is a model of how linguistic symbols are related to the objects they represent. The triangle was published in The Meaning of Meaning (1923) by Ogden and Richards.[2] While sometimes known as the "Ogden/Richards triangle" the idea dates back until at least 1810, by Bernard Bolzano, in his Beiträge zu einer begründeteren Darstellung der Mathematik.

The relations between the triangular corners may be phrased more precisely in causal terms as follows:

1. The matter evokes the writer's thought.
2. The writer refers the matter to the symbol.
3. The symbol evokes the reader's thought.
4. The reader refers the symbol back to the matter.

The communicative stand

Such a triangle represents ONE person, whereas communication takes place between TWO (objects, not necessarily persons). So imagine another triangle and consider that for the two to understand each other, the content that the "triangles" represent must fit or be aligned. Clearly, this calls for synchronisation and an interface as well as scale among other things. Notice also, that we perceive the world mostly through our eyes and in alternative phases of seeing and not seeing with change in the environment as the most important information to look for. Our eyes are lenses and we see a surface (2D) in ONE direction (focusing) if we are stationary and the object is not moving either. This is why you may position yourself in one corner of the triangle and by replicating (mirroring) it, you will be able to see the whole picture, your cognitive epistemological and the ontological existential or physical model of life, the universe, existence, etc. combined.

Direction of fit

John Searle used the notion of "direction of fit" to create a taxonomy of illocutionary acts. [3] [4]

Word-to-World Fit

Writer's THOUGHT retrieves SYMBOL suited to REFERENT, Word suited to World.

World-to-Word Fit

Reader's THOUGHT retrieves REFERENT suited to SYMBOL, World suited to Word.

Actually the arrows indicate that there is something exchanged between the two parties and it is a feedback cycle. Especially, if you imagine that the world is represented in both persons' mind and used for reality check. If you look
at the triangle above again, then remember that reality check is not what is indicated there between the sign and the referent and marked as 'true', because a term or a sign is allocated 'arbitrarily'. What you check for is the observance of the law of identity which requires you and your partner to sort out that you are talking about the same thing. So the chunk of reality and the term are replaceable/interchangeable within limits and your concepts in the mind as presented in some appropriate way are all related and mean the same thing. Usually the check does not stop there, your ideas must also be tested for feasibility and doability to make sure that they are "real" and not "phantasy". Reality check comes from consolidating your experience with other people's experience to avoid solipsism and/or by putting your ideas (projection) in practice (production) and see the reaction. Notice, however how vague the verbs used and how the concept of a fit itself is left unexplained in details.

The Delta Factor

According to Walker Percy, the anthropological theories of the modern age "no longer work and the theories of the new age are not yet known". Percy therefore sees his task as coming up with a new theory of man, which he chooses to center on language, man's attribute that separates him from the animals. Percy regrets that no existing research really deals with the question of how language really works, of how human beings use and understand the symbols of linguistics. Percy puts this question into a sort of no-man's land, what he calls a "terra incognita", between linguistics and psychology.

The Delta Factor, first published in January 1975, is Percy's theory of language on the one hand and his theory of man in a nutshell on the other, eventually to be expanded in The Message in the Bottle (1975). It adapts itself to the story of Helen Keller's learning to say and sign the word 'water' while Annie Sullivan poured water over her hands and repeatedly made the signs for water into her hand. A behaviorist reading of this scene might draw a causal relationship such that in response to Sullivan's stimuli in her hand Keller made a connection in her brain between the sign and the substance. This is too simplistic a reading, insists Percy. Keller was receiving from both the sign for water and the water itself, which make up a triangle together with Keller such that each corner leads to the other two corners. Percy argues that this linguistic triangle is "absolutely irreducible" and serves as the building block for all of human intelligence. The moment when this Delta Δ entered the mind of man, he became man.

Furthermore, the corners of the triangle depart and evolve from their behaviorist perspectives. Helen Keller becomes something other than just an organism in her environment because she is coupling two unrelated things—water the word and water the liquid—together. Likewise, water the liquid is made something more than water in itself because Keller has coupled it with the arbitrary sound 'water', and water the word becomes more than just the sound or sign for it. In this way, "the Delta phenomenon yielded a new world and maybe a new way of getting at it. It was not the world of organisms and environments but just as real and twice as human" – man is made whole by the Delta Δ where the popular notions of religion and science had split him in two.

Looking at the story and example to illustrate thinking cognition, one may see and interpret the set in terms of semantic primitives that are the building blocks of thinking in the pre-language period of individual and collective development. In terms of semantic primitives, everything may be reduced to the concepts of object, relation and property that are the elements of an upper or foundation ontology. Here water (an object) is related (through the mental operation abstraction represented by a verb) to the word water (another object, but as the result of the operation a property of the original object, now an object of abstraction or concept in the mind in whatever physical variation). This triplicity, trichonomy or triangle is present in many other wording and model of the world, sometimes making one dazzled as they were paradoxes, because it is difficult to think in threes, even in algebra. (By the way, how do you multiply three numbers?)
New Criticism

New Criticism was a movement in literary theory that dominated American literary criticism in the middle decades of the 20th century. It emphasized close reading, particularly of poetry, to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object.

History

New Criticism developed in the 1920s–30s and peaked in the 1940s–50s. The movement is named after John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book The New Criticism. New Critics focused on the text of a work of literature and tried to exclude the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts, and moralistic bias from their analysis. Their aesthetic concerns were initially outlined in essays like Ransom's "Criticism, Inc." and Allen Tate's "Miss Emily and the Bibliographers."

New Critics often performed a "close reading" of the text and believed the structure and meaning of the text were intimately connected and should not be analyzed separately. Before the New Criticism became dominant, English professors in America focused their writings and teaching on historical and/or linguistic scholarship surrounding literature rather than analyzing the literary text itself. Also, at that time, this kind of close reading (or explication de texte) was considered the work of non-academic "critics" (or book reviewers) and not the work of serious scholars. But the New Criticism changed this. Though their interest in textual study initially met with heavy resistance from the establishment, the practice eventually gained a foothold and soon became one of the central methods of literary scholarship in American universities until it fell out of favor in the 1970s as post-structuralism, deconstructionist theory, and a whole plethora of competing theoretical models vied for more attention in literary studies.

The New Criticism was never a formal collective, but it initially developed from the teaching methods advocated by John Crowe Ransom who taught at Vanderbilt. Some of his students (all Southerners) like Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren would go on to develop the aesthetics that came to be known as the New Criticism. Nevertheless, in his essay, "The New Criticism," Cleanth Brooks notes that "The New Critic, like the Snark, is a very elusive beast," meaning that there was no clearly defined "New Critical" school or critical stance. Also, although there are a number of classic New Critical writings that outline inter-related ideas, there is no New Critical manifesto.

In 1946, William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published a classic and controversial New Critical essay entitled "The Intentional Fallacy", in which they argued strongly against the relevance of an author's intention, or "intended meaning" in the analysis of a literary work. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the words on the page were all
that mattered; importation of meanings from outside the text was considered irrelevant, and potentially distracting.

In another essay, "The Affective Fallacy," which served as a kind of sister essay to "The Intentional Fallacy" Wimsatt and Beardsley also discounted the reader's personal/emotional reaction to a literary work as a valid means of analyzing a text. This fallacy would later be repudiated by theorists from the reader-response school of literary theory. Ironically, one of the leading theorists from this school, Stanley Fish, was himself trained by New Critics. Fish criticizes Wimsatt and Beardsley in his essay "Literature in the Reader" (1970).[2]

The popularity of the New Criticism persisted through the Cold War years in both American high schools and colleges, in part, because it offered a relatively straightforward (and politically uncontroversial) approach to teaching students how to read and understand poetry and fiction. To this end, Brooks and Warren published Understanding Poetry and Understanding Fiction which both became standard pedagogical textbooks in American high schools and colleges during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

Studying a passage of prose or poetry in New Critical style required careful, exacting scrutiny of the passage itself. Formal elements such as rhyme, meter, setting, characterization, and plot were used to identify the theme of the text. In addition to the theme, the New Critics also looked for paradox, ambiguity, irony, and tension to help establish the single best and most unified interpretation of the text. Such an approach has been criticized as constituting a conservative attempt to isolate the text and to shield it from external, political concerns such as those of race, class, and gender.

Although the New Criticism is no longer a dominant theoretical model in American universities, some of its methods (like close reading) are still fundamental tools of literary criticism, underpinning a number of subsequent theoretic approaches to literature including poststructuralism, deconstruction theory, and reader-response theory.

**Criticism**

One of the most common grievances against the New Criticism, iterated in numerous ways, is an objection to the idea of the text as autonomous; detractors react against a perceived anti-historicism, accusing the New Critics of divorcing literature from its place in history. New Criticism is frequently seen as "uninterested in the human meaning, the social function and effect of literature."[3][4]

Indicative of the reader-response school of theory, Terence Hawkes writes that the fundamental close reading technique is based on the assumption that "the subject and the object of study—the reader and the text—are stable and independent forms, rather than products of the unconscious process of signification," an assumption which he identifies as the "ideology of liberal humanism," which is attributed to the New Critics who are "accused of attempting to disguise the interests at work in their critical processes."[4] For Hawkes, ideally, a critic ought to be considered to "[create] the finished work by his reading of it, and [not to] remain simply an inert consumer of a 'ready-made' product."[4]

In response to critics like Hawkes, Cleanth Brooks, in his essay "The New Criticism" (1979), tried to argue that the New Criticism was not diametrically opposed to the general principles of reader-response theory and that the two could complement one another. For instance, he stated, "If some of the New Critics have preferred to stress the writing rather than the writer, so have they given less stress to the reader—to the reader's response to the work. Yet no one in his right mind could forget the reader. He is essential for 'realizing' any poem or novel... Reader response is certainly worth studying." However, Brooks tempers his praise for the reader-response theory by noting its limitations, pointing out that, "to put meaning and valuation of a literary work at the mercy of any and every individual [reader] would reduce the study of literature to reader psychology and to the history of taste."[5]

Another objection to the New Criticism is that it is thought to aim at making criticism scientific, or at least "bringing literary study to a condition rivaling that of science."[43] However, René Wellek points out the erroneous nature of this criticism by noting that a number of the New Critics outlined their theoretical aesthetics in stark contrast to the "objectivity" of the sciences (though it should be noted that Ransom, in his essay "Criticism, Inc." did advocate that...
"criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic").[3][6]

Wellek actually attempts to refute much of the recent criticism aimed at the New Critics in his essay "The New Criticism: Pro and Contra" (1978).

**Important texts**
- Ransom's essays "Criticism, Inc" and "The Ontological Critic."
- Tate's essay "Miss Emily and the Bibliographer."
- Wimsatt and Beardsley's essays "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy."
- Warren's essay "Pure and Impure Poetry."

**References**

**Secondary literature**
Close reading
describes, in literary criticism, the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text. Such a reading places great emphasis on the particular over the general, paying close attention to individual words, syntax, and the order in which sentences and ideas unfold as they are read.

The technique as practiced today was pioneered (at least in English) by I.A. Richards and his student William Empson, later developed further by the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century. It is now a fundamental method of modern criticism. Close reading is sometimes called explication de texte, which is the name for the similar tradition of textual interpretation in French literary study, a technique whose chief proponent was Gustave Lanson.

Background
Literary close reading and commentaries have extensive precedent in the exegesis of religious texts. For example, Pazand, a genre of middle Persian literature, refers to the Zend (literally: 'commentary'/translation) texts that offer explanation and close reading of the Avesta, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. The scriptural commentaries of the Talmud offer a commonly cited early predecessor to close reading. In Islamic studies, the close reading of the Quran has flourished and produced an immense corpus. But the closest religious analogy to contemporary literary close reading, and the principal historical connection with its birth, is the rise of the higher criticism, and the evolution of textual criticism of the Bible in Germany in the late eighteenth century.

Examples
A truly attentive close reading of a two-hundred-word poem might be thousands of words long without exhausting the possibilities for observation and insight. To take an even more extreme example, Jacques Derrida's essay Ulysses Gramophone, which J. Hillis Miller describes as a "hyperbolic, extravagant... explosion" of the technique of close reading, devotes more than eighty pages to an interpretation of the word "yes" in James Joyce's modernist novel Ulysses.

External links
- Instructions for Conducting a Close Reading [2]
- Introduction to Practical Criticism [3]

References
Semiotics

Semiotics, also called semiotic studies or (in the Saussurean tradition) semiology, is the study of signs and sign processes (semiosis), indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication. Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. Semiotics is often divided into three branches:

- **Semantics**: Relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their *denotata*, or meaning
- **Syntactics**: Relations among signs in formal structures
- **Pragmatics**: Relation between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them

Semiotics is frequently seen as having important anthropological dimensions; for example, Umberto Eco proposes that every cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication. However, some semioticians focus on the logical dimensions of the science. They examine areas belonging also to the natural sciences — such as how organisms make predictions about, and adapt to, their semiotic niche in the world (see semiosis). In general, semiotic theories take *signs* or sign systems as their object of study: the communication of information in living organisms is covered in biosemiotics or zoosemiosis.

Syntactics is the branch of semiotics that deals with the formal properties of signs and symbols. More precisely, syntactics deals with the "rules that govern how words are combined to form phrases and sentences." Charles Morris adds that semantics deals with the relation of signs to their designata and the objects which they may or do denote; and, pragmatics deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs.

**Terminology**

The term, which was spelled semeiotics, derives from the Greek σημειωτικός, (sēmeiōtikos), "observant of signs" (from σήμειον - sēmeion, "a sign, a mark") and it was first used in English by Henry Stubbes in a very precise sense to denote the branch of medical science relating to the interpretation of signs. John Locke used the terms semeiotike and semeiotics in Book 4, Chapter 21 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Here he explains how science can be divided into three parts:

> All that can fall within the compass of human understanding, being either, first, the nature of things, as they are in themselves, their relations, and their manner of operation: or, secondly, that which man himself ought to do, as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any end, especially happiness: or, thirdly, the ways and means whereby the knowledge of both the one and the other of these is attained and communicated; I think science may be divided properly into these three sorts.

—Locke, 1823/1963, p. 174

Locke then elaborates on the nature of this third category, naming it Σημειωτική (Semeiotike) and explaining it as "the doctrine of signs" in the following terms:

Nor is there anything to be relied upon in Physick, but an exact knowledge of medicinal physiology (founded on observation, not principles), semiotics, method of curing, and tried (not excogitated, not commanding) medicines.
In the nineteenth century, Charles Sanders Peirce defined what he termed "semiotic" (which he sometimes spelled as "semeiotic") as the "quasi-necessary, or formal doctrine of signs", which abstracts "what must be the characters of all signs used by...an intelligence capable of learning by experience", and which is philosophical logic pursued in terms of signs and sign processes. Charles Morris followed Peirce in using the term "semiotic" and in extending the discipline beyond human communication to animal learning and use of signals.

Ferdinand de Saussure, however, founded his semiotics, which he called semiology, in the social sciences:

It is... possible to conceive of a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it semiology (from the Greek semeion, 'sign'). It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge.

—Cited in Chandler's "Semiotics For Beginners", Introduction.

Formulations

Semioticians classify signs or sign systems in relation to the way they are transmitted (see modality). This process of carrying meaning depends on the use of codes that may be the individual sounds or letters that humans use to form words, the body movements they make to show attitude or emotion, or even something as general as the clothes they wear. To coin a word to refer to a thing (see lexical words), the community must agree on a simple meaning (a denotative meaning) within their language. But that word can transmit that meaning only within the language's grammatical structures and codes (see syntax and semantics). Codes also represent the values of the culture, and are able to add new shades of connotation to every aspect of life.

To explain the relationship between semiotics and communication studies, communication is defined as the process of transferring data from a source to a receiver. Hence, communication theorists construct models based on codes, media, and contexts to explain the biology, psychology, and mechanics involved. Both disciplines also recognize that the technical process cannot be separated from the fact that the receiver must decode the data, i.e., be able to distinguish the data as salient and make meaning out of it. This implies that there is a necessary overlap between semiotics and communication. Indeed, many of the concepts are shared, although in each field the emphasis is different. In Messages and Meanings: An Introduction to Semiotics, Marcel Danesi (1994) suggested that semioticians' priorities were to study signification first and communication second. A more extreme view is offered by Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1987; trans. 1990: 16), who, as a musicologist, considered the theoretical study of communication irrelevant to his application of semiotics.

Semiotics differs from linguistics in that it generalizes the definition of a sign to encompass signs in any medium or sensory modality. Thus it broadens the range of sign systems and sign relations, and extends the definition of language in what amounts to its widest analogical or metaphorical sense. Peirce's definition of the term "semiotic" as the study of necessary features of signs also has the effect of distinguishing the discipline from linguistics as the study of contingent features that the world's languages happen to have acquired in the course of human evolution.
Perhaps more difficult is the distinction between semiotics and the philosophy of language. In a sense, the difference lies between separate traditions rather than subjects. Different authors have called themselves "philosopher of language" or "semiotician". This difference does not match the separation between analytic and continental philosophy. On a closer look, there may be found some differences regarding subjects. Philosophy of language pays more attention to natural languages or to languages in general, while semiotics is deeply concerned about non-linguistic signification. Philosophy of language also bears a stronger connection to linguistics, while semiotics is closer to some of the humanities (including literary theory) and to cultural anthropology.

Semiosis or semeiosis is the process that forms meaning from any organism's apprehension of the world through signs. Scholars who have talked about semiosis in their sub-theories of semiotics include C. S. Peirce, John Deely, and Umberto Eco.

**History**

The importance of signs and signification has been recognized throughout much of the history of philosophy, and in psychology as well. Plato and Aristotle both explored the relationship between signs and the world, and Augustine considered the nature of the sign within a conventional system. These theories have had a lasting effect in Western philosophy, especially through Scholastic philosophy. More recently, Umberto Eco, in his *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, has argued that semiotic theories are implicit in the work of most, perhaps all, major thinkers.

Early theorists in this area include Charles W. Morris.[11] Max Black attributes the work of Bertrand Russell as being seminal.[12]

**Some important semioticians**

- Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), a noted logician who founded philosophical pragmatism, defined semiosis as an irreducibly triadic process wherein something, as an object, logically determines or influences something as a sign to determine or influence something as an interpretation or interpretant, itself a sign, thus leading to further interpretants.[13] Semiosis is logically structured to perpetuate itself. The object can be quality, fact, rule, or even fictional (Hamlet), and can be (1) immediate to the sign, the object as represented in the sign, or (2) dynamic, the object as it really is, on which the immediate object is founded. The interpretant can be (1) immediate to the sign, all that the sign immediately expresses, such as a word's usual meaning; or (2) dynamic, such as a state of agitation; or (3) final or normal, the ultimate ramifications of the sign about its object, to which inquiry taken far enough would be destined and with which any actual interpretant can at most coincide.[14] His semiotics[15] covered not only artificial, linguistic, and symbolic signs, but also semblances such as kindred sensible qualities, and indices such as reactions. He came circa 1903[16] to classify any sign by three interdependent trichotomies, intersecting to form ten (rather than 27) classes of sign.[17] Signs also enter into various kinds of meaningful combinations; Peirce covered both semantic and syntactical issues in his speculative grammar. He regarded formal semiotic as logic per se and part of philosophy; as also encompassing study of arguments (hypothesetical, deductive, and inductive) and inquiry's methods including pragmatism; and as allied to but distinct from logic's pure mathematics. For a summary of Peirce's contributions to semiotics, see Liszka (1996) or Atkin (2006).

- Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), the "father" of modern linguistics, proposed a dualistic notion of signs, relating the signifier as the form of the word or phrase uttered, to the signified as the mental concept. It is important to note that, according to Saussure, the sign is completely arbitrary, i.e. there was no necessary connection between the sign and its meaning. This sets him apart from previous philosophers such as Plato or the Scholastics, who thought that there must be some connection between a signifier and the object it signifies. In his Course in General Linguistics, Saussure himself credits the American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894) with insisting on the arbitrary nature of the sign. Saussure's insistence on the arbitrariness of the sign has also influenced later philosophers and theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Jean
Baudrillard. Ferdinand de Saussure coined the term semiologie while teaching his landmark "Course on General Linguistics" at the University of Geneva from 1906–11. Saussure posited that no word is inherently meaningful. Rather a word is only a "signifier," i.e. the representation of something, and it must be combined in the brain with the "signified," or the thing itself, in order to form a meaning-imbued "sign." Saussure believed that dismantling signs was a real science, for in doing so we come to an empirical understanding of how humans synthesize physical stimuli into words and other abstract concepts.

- Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944) studied the sign processes in animals. He borrowed the German word for 'environment', Umwelt, to describe the individual's subjective world, and he invented the concept of functional circle (Funktionskreis) as a general model of sign processes. In his Theory of Meaning (Bedeutungslehre, 1940), he described the semiotic approach to biology, thus establishing the field that is now called biosemiotics.

- Valentin Voloshinov (1895–1936) was a Soviet/Russian linguist, whose work has been influential in the field of literary theory and Marxist theory of ideology. Written in the late 1920s in the USSR, Voloshinov's Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (tr.: Marksizm i Filosofiya Yazyka) developed a counter-Saussurean linguistics, which situated language use in social process rather than in an entirely decontextualized Saussurean langue.

- Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) developed a formalist approach to Saussure's structuralist theories. His best known work is Prolegomena to a Theory of Language, which was expanded in Résumé of the Theory of Language, a formal development of glossematics, his scientific calculus of language.

- Charles W. Morris (1901–1979). In his 1938 Foundations of the Theory of Signs, he defined semiotics as grouping the triad syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Syntax studies the interrelation of the signs, without regard to meaning. Semantics studies the relation between the signs and the objects to which they apply. Pragmatics studies the relation between the sign system and its human (or animal) user. Unlike his mentor George Herbert Mead, Morris was a behaviorist and sympathetic to the Vienna Circle positivism of his colleague Rudolf Carnap. Morris was accused by John Dewey[18] of misreading Peirce.

- Thure von Uexküll (1908–2004), the "father" of modern psychosomatic medicine, developed a diagnostic method based on semiotic and biosemiotic analyses.

- Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a French literary theorist and semiotician. He would often critique pieces of cultural material to expose how bourgeois society used them to impose its values upon others. For instance, the portrayal of wine drinking in French society as a robust and healthy habit would be a bourgeois ideal perception contradicted by certain realities (i.e. that wine can be unhealthy and inebriating). He found semiotics useful in conducting these critiques. Barthes explained that these bourgeois cultural myths were second-order signs, or connotations. A picture of a full, dark bottle is a sign, a signifier relating to a signified: a fermented, alcoholic beverage – wine. However, the bourgeois take this signified and apply their own emphasis to it, making 'wine' a new signifier, this time relating to a new signified: the idea of healthy, robust, relaxing wine. Motivations for such manipulations vary from a desire to sell products to a simple desire to maintain the status quo. These insights brought Barthes very much in line with similar Marxist theory.
• Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–1992) developed a structural version of semiotics named generative semiotics, trying to shift the focus of discipline from signs to systems of signification. His theories develop the ideas of Saussure, Hjelmslev, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

• Thomas A. Sebeok (1920–2001), a student of Charles W. Morris, was a prolific and wide-ranging American semiotician. Though he insisted that animals are not capable of language, he expanded the purview of semiotics to include non-human signaling and communication systems, thus raising some of the issues addressed by philosophy of mind and coining the term zoosemiotics. Sebeok insisted that all communication was made possible by the relationship between an organism and the environment it lives in. He also posed the equation between semiosis (the activity of interpreting signs) and life — the view that has further developed by Copenhagen-Tartu biosemiotic school.

• Juri Lotman (1922–1993) was the founding member of the Tartu-Estonia (or Tartu-Moscow) Semiotic School. He developed a semiotic approach to the study of culture and established a communication model for the study of text semiotics. He also introduced the concept of the semiosphere. Among his Moscow colleagues were Vladimir Toporov, Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov, and Boris Uspensky.

• Umberto Eco (1932–present) made a wider audience aware of semiotics by various publications, most notably A Theory of Semiotics and his novel, The Name of the Rose, which includes applied semiotic operations. His most important contributions to the field bear on interpretation, encyclopedia, and model reader. He has also criticized in several works (A theory of semiotics, La struttura assente, Le signe, La production de signes) the "iconism" or "iconic signs" (taken from Peirce's most famous triadic relation, based on indexes, icons, and symbols), to which he purposes four modes of sign production: recognition, ostension, replica, and invention.

• Eliseo Verón (1935–present) developed his "Social Discourse Theory" inspired in the Peircian conception of "Semiosis".

• The Mu Group (Groupe µ) (founded 1967) developed a structural version of rhetorics, and the visual semiotics.

**Current applications**

Applications of semiotics include:

• It represents a methodology for the analysis of texts regardless of modality. For these purposes, "text" is any message preserved in a form whose existence is independent of both sender and receiver;

• It can improve ergonomic design in situations where it is important to ensure that human beings can interact more effectively with their environments, whether it be on a large scale, as in architecture, or on a small scale, such as the configuration of instrumentation for human use.

In some countries, its role is limited to literary criticism and an appreciation of audio and visual media, but this narrow focus can inhibit a more general study of the social and political forces shaping how different media are used and their dynamic status within modern culture. Issues of technological determinism in the choice of media and the design of communication strategies assume new importance in this age of mass media. The use of semiotic methods to reveal different levels of meaning and, sometimes, hidden motivations has led some like Yale's Harold Bloom to demonise elements of the subject as Marxist, nihilist, etc. (e.g. critical discourse analysis in Postmodernism and deconstruction in Post-structuralism).

Publication of research is both in dedicated journals such as Sign Systems Studies, established by Juri Lotman and published by Tartu University Press; Semiotica, founded by Thomas A. Sebeok and published by Mouton de
Semiotics has sprouted a number of subfields, including but not limited to the following:

- **Biosemiotics** is the study of semiotic processes at all levels of biology, or a semiotic study of living systems.
- **Semiotic anthropology**
- **Cognitive semiotics** is the study of meaning-making by employing and integrating methods and theories developed in the cognitive sciences. This involves conceptual and textual analysis as well as experimental investigations. Cognitive semiotics was initially developed at the Center for Semiotics at Aarhus University (Denmark), with an important connection with the Center of Functionally Integrated Neuroscience (CFIN) at Aarhus Hospital. Amongst the prominent cognitive semioticians are Per Aage Brandt, Svend Østergaard, Peer Bundgård, Frederik Stjernfelt, Mikkel Wallentin, Kristian Tylén, Riccardo Fusaroli and Jordan Zlatev.
- **Computational semiotics** attempts to engineer the process of semiosis, say in the study of and design for Human-Computer Interaction or to mimic aspects of human cognition through artificial intelligence and knowledge representation.
- **Cultural and literary semiotics** examines the literary world, the visual media, the mass media, and advertising in the work of writers such as Roland Barthes, Marcel Danesi, and Juri Lotman.
- **Design Semiotics** or Product Semiotics is the study of the use of signs in the design of physical products. Introduced by Rune Monø while teaching Industrial Design at the Institute of Design, Umeå University, Sweden.
- **Film Semiotics** is the study of the various codes and signs of film and how they are understood. See the works of Christian Metz.
- **Law and Semiotics**. One of the more accomplished publications in this field is the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law.
- **Music semiology** "There are strong arguments that music inhabits a semiological realm which, on both ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels, has developmental priority over verbal language." (Middleton 1990, p. 172) See Nattiez (1976, 1987, 1989), Stefani (1973, 1986), Baroni (1983), and Semiotica (66: 1–3 (1987)).
- **Gregorian chant semiology** is a current avenue of palaeographical research in Gregorian chant which is revising the Solesmes school of interpretation.
- **Organisational semiotics** is the study of semiotic processes in organizations. It has strong ties to Computational semiotics and Human-Computer Interaction.
- **Social semiotics** expands the interpretable semiotic landscape to include all cultural codes, such as in slang, fashion, and advertising. See the work of Roland Barthes, Michael Halliday, Bob Hodge, and Christian Metz.
- **Structuralism and post-structuralism** in the work of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Louis Hjelmslev, Roman Jakobson, Jacques Lacan, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, etc.
- **Theatre Semiotics** extends or adapts semiotics onstage. Key theoreticians include Keir Elam.
- **Urban semiotics**.
- **Visual semiotics** – a subdomain of semiotics that analyses visual signs. See also visual rhetoric.[19]
- **Semiotics of Photography**.[20]
Pictorial semiotics

Pictorial Semiotics is intimately connected to art history and theory. It has gone beyond them both in at least one fundamental way, however. While art history has limited its visual analysis to a small number of pictures which qualify as "works of art," pictorial semiotics has focused on the properties of pictures more generally. This break from traditional art history and theory—as well as from other major streams of semiotic analysis—leaves open a wide variety of possibilities for pictorial semiotics. Some influences have been drawn from phenomenological analysis, cognitive psychology, and structuralist and cognitivist linguistics, and visual anthropology/sociology.

Semiotics of food

Food has been one traditional topic of choice in relating semiotic theory because it is extremely accessible and easily relatable to the average individual’s life. Semiotics is the study of sign processes when conducted individually or in groups and how these sign processes give insight as to how meaning is enabled and also understood.

Food is said to be semiotic because it transforms meaning with preparation. Food that is eaten by a wild animal raw from a carcass is obviously different in meaning when compared to a food that is prepared by humans in a kitchen to represent a cultural dish.

Food can also be said to be symbolic of certain social codes. "If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries".

Food is a semiotic regardless of how it is prepared. Whether food is prepared with precision in a fine dining restaurant, picked from a dumpster, plucked, devoured, or even consumed by a wild animal, meaning can always be extracted from the way a certain food has been prepared and the context in which it is served.

Semiotics and globalization

Present research found that, as airline industry brandings grow and become more international, their logos become more symbolic and less iconic. The iconicity and symbolism of a sign depends on the cultural convention and are on that ground in relation with each other. If the cultural convention has greater influence on the sign, the signs get more symbolic value.

Main institutions

A world organisation of semioticians – the International Association for Semiotic Studies, with its journal Semiotica – was established in 1969. The larger research centers together with extensive teaching program include the Semiotics Departments of Tartu University, Aarhus University, and Bologna University.

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Notes

[6] Stubbe, H. *The Plus Ultra reduced to a Non Plus ...* (London, England, 1670), page 75: "... nor is there any thing to be relied upon in Physick, but an exact knowledge of medicinal phisiology (founded on observation, not principles), *semeiotics*, method of curing, and tried (not excogitated, not commanding) medicines ...."
[7] A now-obsolete term for the art or profession of curing disease with (herbal) medicines or (chemical) drugs; especially purgatives or cathartics. Also, it specifically refers to the treatment of humans.
[17] He worked on but did not perfect a finer-grained system of ten trichotomies, to be combined into 66 (3^6) classes of sign. That raised for Peirce 59,049 classificatory questions (59,049 = 3^{10}, or 3 to the 10th power). See p. 482 in "Excerpts from Letters to Lady Welby", *Essential Peirce* v. 2.
### External links

#### Further reading

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<td>• Arisbe: The Peirce Gateway (<a href="http://www.cspeirce.com/">http://www.cspeirce.com/</a>)</td>
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<td>• Semiotics for Beginners (<a href="http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem02.html">http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem02.html</a>)</td>
<td>• Semiotics according to Robert Marty (<a href="http://perso.numericable.fr/robert.marty/semiotique/access.htm">http://perso.numericable.fr/robert.marty/semiotique/access.htm</a>), with 76 definitions of the sign by C. S. Peirce</td>
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- **Biosemiotics** (http://www.springer.com/life+sciences/evolutionary+&+developmental+biology/journal/12304), Marcello Barbieri, Editor-in-Chief — from the International Society for Biosemiotic Studies (http://www.biosemiotics.org/).
- **Center for Semiotics** (http://www.hum.au.dk/semiotics/), Aarhus University, Denmark.
- **Cognitive Semiotics** (http://www.cognitivesemiotics.com/), Per Aage Brandt & Todd Oakley, Editors-in-Chief.
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- **International Journal of Signs and Semiotic Systems (IJSSS)** (http://www.irma-international.org/journal/international-journal-signs-semiotic-systems/41024/), Angelo Loula & João Queiroz, Editors.
- **Open Semiotics Resource Center** (http://www.semioticon.com/). Journals, lecture courses, etc.
- **Semiotica** (http://www.degruyter.de/journals/semiotica/), Marcel Danesi, Chief Editor — from the International Association for Semiotic Studies (http://iass-aiss.org/).
- **Semiotiche** (http://www.ananke-edizioni.com/ananke/?s=Semiotiche), Gian Paolo Caprettini, Managing Director; Andrea Valle & Miriam Visalli, Editors. Some articles in English. Home site seems gone from Web, old url (http://www.semiotiche.it/) no longer good, and Wayback Machine cannot retrieve.
Semiotics

• Signs - International Journal of Semiotics (http://vip.iva.dk/signs/), Martin Thellefsen, Torkild Thellefsen, & Bent Sørensen, chief eds.
• The Public Journal of Semiotics (http://semioticsonline.org/), Paul Bouissac, Editor in Chief; Alan Cienki, Associate Editor; René Jorna, Winfried Nöth.
• The Semiotic Review of Books (http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/semiotics/index.html), Gary Genosko, General Editor; Paul Bouissac, Founding Editor.
• Versus: Quaderni di studi semiotici (http://versus.dsc.unibo.it/), founded by Umberto Eco.

Semantics

Semantics (from Greek: sēmantikós)\(^{[1][2]}\) is the study of meaning. It focuses on the relation between signifiers, such as words, phrases, signs, and symbols, and what they stand for, their denotata.

Linguistic semantics is the study of meaning that is used to understand human expression through language. Other forms of semantics include the semantics of programming languages, formal logics, and semiotics.

The word semantics itself denotes a range of ideas, from the popular to the highly technical. It is often used in ordinary language to denote a problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation. This problem of understanding has been the subject of many formal inquiries, over a long period of time, most notably in the field of formal semantics. In linguistics, it is the study of interpretation of signs or symbols as used by agents or communities within particular circumstances and contexts.\(^{[3]}\) Within this view, sounds, facial expressions, body language, and proxemics have semantic (meaningful) content, and each has several branches of study. In written language, such things as paragraph structure and punctuation have semantic content; in other forms of language, there is other semantic content.\(^{[3]}\)

The formal study of semantics intersects with many other fields of inquiry, including lexicology, syntax, pragmatics, etymology and others, although semantics is a well-defined field in its own right, often with synthetic properties.\(^{[4]}\) In philosophy of language, semantics and reference are closely connected. Further related fields include philology, communication, and semiotics. The formal study of semantics is therefore complex.

Semantics is defined as the study of meaning in language. This area of communication theory is concerned with words and the meaning they have to the people communicating. There are two areas of semantics. The logical semantics describes references and implications of the words. An example would be the word cat. The person who is using this word has a reference point that a cat is a small domesticated feline. The person may also have a presupposition that cats are playful and fluffy and cute. The receiver may also know that the cat is a domesticated feline but they may feel cats are lazy and destructive and mean. More specific communication is necessary before real communication is accomplished. Lexical semantics focus on the analysis of the relationship between word meanings. An example would be (Joe touched my shoulder. Vs Joe touched me on the shoulder). The first sentence might mean a light unintentional brush but the second appeared to be an intentional way to get someone attention. Signifier and signified are terms used in semantics to explain the differences in understandings. The signifier are defined as the form the sign takes. The signified is defined as the concept it represents. The two are used together to produce a sign that it is understood. An example would be a tree. The tree as a picture would be the tree signified and the word tree is the signifier. This together allows us to use the word tree and be understood by people. The signifier
and signified must be used together for language. Language is learned and the meanings are also learned by the individual and culture.

The terms Denotative and Connotative are used to better describe the meanings of words. The denotative term describes the definition or the literal meaning of the sign. The connotative meaning is the cultural or social meaning of the sign.

Semantics needs to be clearly distinguished from the negative sense of the term. The use of semantics as a negative thing is in the media and public thought. An example would be someone who argues that is just semantics to imply the point does not need to be discussed or the outcome would not be relevant. Meanings can be used to misconstrue the meanings. The linguistic approach studies the meaning of and words in a systematic and objective way. (David Crystal, How Language Works. Overlook, 2006)--Ahernandez33 (talk) 16:00, 12 November 2012 (UTC)

Semantics contrasts with syntax, the study of the combinatorics of units of a language (without reference to their meaning), and pragmatics, the study of the relationships between the symbols of a language, their meaning, and the users of the language.[5] In international scientific vocabulary semantics is also called semasiology.

**Linguistics**

In linguistics, **semantics** is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of discourse (termed texts). The basic area of study is the meaning of signs, and the study of relations between different linguistic units and compounds: homonymy, synonymy, antonymy, hypernymy, hyponymy, meronymy, metonymy, holonymy, paronyms. A key concern is how meaning attaches to larger chunks of text, possibly as a result of the composition from smaller units of meaning. Traditionally, semantics has included the study of sense and denotative reference, truth conditions, argument structure, thematic roles, discourse analysis, and the linkage of all of these to syntax.

**Montague grammar**

In the late 1960s, Richard Montague proposed a system for defining semantic entries in the lexicon in terms of the lambda calculus. In these terms, the syntactic parse of the sentence John ate every bagel would consist of a subject (John) and a predicate (ate every bagel); Montague showed that the meaning of the sentence as a whole could be decomposed into the meanings of its parts and relatively few rules of combination. The logical predicate thus obtained would be elaborated further, e.g. using truth theory models, which ultimately relate meanings to a set of Tarskian universals, which may lie outside the logic. The notion of such meaning atoms or primitives is basic to the language of thought hypothesis from the 1970s.

Despite its elegance, Montague grammar was limited by the context-dependent variability in word sense, and led to several attempts at incorporating context, such as:

- Situation semantics (1980s): truth-values are incomplete, they get assigned based on context
- Generative lexicon (1990s): categories (types) are incomplete, and get assigned based on context

**Dynamic turn in semantics**

In Chomskyan linguistics there was no mechanism for the learning of semantic relations, and the nativist view considered all semantic notions as inborn. Thus, even novel concepts were proposed to have been dormant in some sense. This view was also thought unable to address many issues such as metaphor or associative meanings, and semantic change, where meanings within a linguistic community change over time, and qualia or subjective experience. Another issue not addressed by the nativist model was how perceptual cues are combined in thought, e.g.
in mental rotation.[6]

This view of semantics, as an innate finite meaning inherent in a lexical unit that can be composed to generate meanings for larger chunks of discourse, is now being fiercely debated in the emerging domain of cognitive linguistics[7] and also in the non-Fodorian camp in philosophy of language.[8] The challenge is motivated by:

- factors internal to language, such as the problem of resolving indexical or anaphora (e.g. this x, him, last week). In these situations context serves as the input, but the interpreted utterance also modifies the context, so it is also the output. Thus, the interpretation is necessarily dynamic and the meaning of sentences is viewed as context change potentials instead of propositions.
- factors external to language, i.e. language is not a set of labels stuck on things, but "a toolbox, the importance of whose elements lie in the way they function rather than their attachments to things."[8] This view reflects the position of the later Wittgenstein and his famous game example, and is related to the positions of Quine, Davidson, and others.

A concrete example of the latter phenomenon is semantic underspecification – meanings are not complete without some elements of context. To take an example of one word, red, its meaning in a phrase such as red book is similar to many other usages, and can be viewed as compositional.[9] However, the colours implied in phrases such as red wine (very dark), and red hair (coppery), or red soil, or red skin are very different. Indeed, these colours by themselves would not be called red by native speakers. These instances are contrastive, so red wine is so called only in comparison with the other kind of wine (which also is not white for the same reasons). This view goes back to de Saussure:

Each of a set of synonyms like redouter (to dread'), craindre (to fear'), avoir peur (to be afraid') has its particular value only because they stand in contrast with one another. No word has a value that can be identified independently of what else is in its vicinity.[10]

and may go back to earlier Indian views on language, especially the Nyaya view of words as indicators and not carriers of meaning.[11]

An attempt to defend a system based on propositional meaning for semantic underspecification can be found in the generative lexicon model of James Pustejovsky, who extends contextual operations (based on type shifting) into the lexicon. Thus meanings are generated on the fly based on finite context.

Prototype theory

Another set of concepts related to fuzziness in semantics is based on prototypes. The work of Eleanor Rosch in the 1970s led to a view that natural categories are not characterizable in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, but are graded (fuzzy at their boundaries) and inconsistent as to the status of their constituent members. One may compare it with Jung's archetype, though the concept of archetype sticks to static concept. Some post-structuralists are against the fixed or static meaning of the words. Derrida, following Nietzsche, talked about slippages in fixed meanings. Here are some examples from Bangla fuzzy words.[12][13]

Systems of categories are not objectively out there in the world but are rooted in people's experience. These categories evolve as learned concepts of the world – meaning is not an objective truth, but a subjective construct, learned from experience, and language arises out of the "grounding of our conceptual systems in shared embodiment and bodily experience".[14] A corollary of this is that the conceptual categories (i.e. the lexicon) will not be identical for different cultures, or indeed, for every individual in the same culture. This leads to another debate (see the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis or Eskimo words for snow).
Theories in semantics

Model theoretic semantics

Originates from Montague's work (see above). A highly formalized theory of natural language semantics in which expressions are assigned denotations (meanings) such as individuals, truth values, or functions from one of these to another. The truth of a sentence, and more interestingly, its logical relation to other sentences, is then evaluated relative to a model.

Formal (or truth-conditional) semantics

Pioneered by the philosopher Donald Davidson, another formalized theory, which aims to associate each natural language sentence with a meta-language description of the conditions under which it is true, for example: `Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white. The challenge is to arrive at the truth conditions for any sentences from fixed meanings assigned to the individual words and fixed rules for how to combine them. In practice, truth-conditional semantics is similar to model-theoretic semantics; conceptually, however, they differ in that truth-conditional semantics seeks to connect language with statements about the real world (in the form of meta-language statements), rather than with abstract models.

Lexical and conceptual semantics

This theory is an effort to explain properties of argument structure. The assumption behind this theory is that syntactic properties of phrases reflect the meanings of the words that head them. With this theory, linguists can better deal with the fact that subtle differences in word meaning correlate with other differences in the syntactic structure that the word appears in. The way this is gone about is by looking at the internal structure of words. These small parts that make up the internal structure of words are termed semantic primitives.

Lexical semantics

A linguistic theory that investigates word meaning. This theory understands that the meaning of a word is fully reflected by its context. Here, the meaning of a word is constituted by its contextual relations. Therefore, a distinction between degrees of participation as well as modes of participation are made. In order to accomplish this distinction any part of a sentence that bears a meaning and combines with the meanings of other constituents is labeled as a semantic constituent. Semantic constituents that cannot be broken down into more elementary constituents are labeled minimal semantic constituents.

Computational semantics

Computational semantics is focused on the processing of linguistic meaning. In order to do this concrete algorithms and architectures are described. Within this framework the algorithms and architectures are also analyzed in terms of decidability, time/space complexity, data structures they require and communication protocols.

Computer science

In computer science, the term semantics refers to the meaning of languages, as opposed to their form (syntax). According to Euzenat, semantics "provides the rules for interpreting the syntax which do not provide the meaning directly but constrains the possible interpretations of what is declared." In other words, semantics is about interpretation of an expression. Additionally, the term is applied to certain types of data structures specifically designed and used for representing information content.
Programming languages

The semantics of programming languages and other languages is an important issue and area of study in computer science. Like the syntax of a language, its semantics can be defined exactly.

For instance, the following statements use different syntaxes, but cause the same instructions to be executed:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Programming languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x += y</td>
<td>C, C++, C#, Java, Perl, Python, Ruby, PHP, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x := x + y</td>
<td>ALGOL, BCPL, Simula, ALGOL 68, SETL, Pascal, Smalltalk, Modula-2, Ada, Standard ML, OCaml, Eiffel, Object Pascal (Delphi), Oberon, Dylan, VHDL, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD x, y</td>
<td>Assembly languages: Intel 8086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LET X = X + Y</td>
<td>BASIC: early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x = x + y</td>
<td>BASIC: most dialects; Fortran, MATLAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set x = x + y</td>
<td>Caché ObjectScript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD Y TO X</td>
<td>COBOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVING X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(incf x y)</td>
<td>Common Lisp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally these operations would all perform an arithmetical addition of ‘y’ to ‘x’ and store the result in a variable called ‘x’.

Various ways have been developed to describe the semantics of programming languages formally, building on mathematical logic:[20]

- Operational semantics: The meaning of a construct is specified by the computation it induces when it is executed on a machine. In particular, it is of interest how the effect of a computation is produced.
- Denotational semantics: Meanings are modelled by mathematical objects that represent the effect of executing the constructs. Thus only the effect is of interest, not how it is obtained.
- Axiomatic semantics: Specific properties of the effect of executing the constructs are expressed as assertions. Thus there may be aspects of the executions that are ignored.

Semantic models

Terms such as semantic network and semantic data model are used to describe particular types of data models characterized by the use of directed graphs in which the vertices denote concepts or entities in the world, and the arcs denote relationships between them.

The Semantic Web refers to the extension of the World Wide Web via embedding added semantic metadata, using semantic data modelling techniques such as Resource Description Framework (RDF) and Web Ontology Language (OWL).

Psychology

In psychology, semantic memory is memory for meaning – in other words, the aspect of memory that preserves only the gist, the general significance, of remembered experience – while episodic memory is memory for the ephemeral details – the individual features, or the unique particulars of experience. Word meaning is measured by the company they keep, i.e. the relationships among words themselves in a semantic network. The memories may be transferred intergenerationally or isolated in one generation due to a cultural disruption. Different generations may have different experiences at similar points in their own time-lines. This may then create a vertically heterogeneous semantic net for certain words in an otherwise homogeneous culture.[21] In a network created by people analyzing their understanding of the word (such as Wordnet) the links and decomposition structures of the network are few in
number and kind, and include part of, kind of, and similar links. In automated ontologies the links are computed vectors without explicit meaning. Various automated technologies are being developed to compute the meaning of words: latent semantic indexing and support vector machines as well as natural language processing, neural networks and predicate calculus techniques.

Ideaesthesia is a rare psychological phenomenon that in certain individuals associates semantic and sensory representations. Activation of a concept (e.g., that of the letter A) evokes sensory-like experiences (e.g., of red color).

References


[2] The word is derived from the Ancient Greek word σηματικός (semantikos), related to meaning, significant, from ὁ σημαίνω (semaino), to signify, to indicate, which is from ὁ σῆμα (sema), sign, mark, token. The plural is used in analogy with words similar to physics, which was in the neuter plural in Ancient Greek and meant “things relating to nature”.


External links

- semanticsarchive.net (http://www.semanticsarchive.net/)
- Teaching page for A-level semantics (http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/lang/semantics.htm)
- Chomsky, Noam; On Referring, Harvard University, 30 October 2007 (video) (http://blip.tv/file/471951)
- Jackendoff, Ray; Conceptual Semantics, Harvard University, 13 November 2007(video) (http://blip.tv/file/509192)
Charles Kay Ogden

Charles Kay Ogden (1889–1957) was an English linguist, philosopher, and writer. Described as a polymath but also an eccentric and outsider,[1][2][3] he took part in many ventures related to literature, politics, the arts and philosophy, having a broad impact particularly as an editor, translator, and activist on behalf of a reformed version of the English language. He is typically defined as a linguistic psychologist, and is now mostly remembered as the inventor and propagator of Basic English.

Early life

He was born at Rossall School in Fleetwood, Lancashire on 1 June 1889, where his father Charles Burdett Ogden was a housemaster. He was educated at Buxton and Rossall, winning a scholarship to Magdalene College, Cambridge and coming up to read Classics in 1908.[4]

At Cambridge

He visited continental Europe to investigate methods of language teaching in 1912 and 1913.[5] Ogden obtained an M.A. in 1915.

The Cambridge Magazine

He founded the weekly Cambridge Magazine in 1912 while still an undergraduate, editing it until it ceased publication in 1922. The initial period was troubled. Ogden was studying for Part II of the Classical Tripos when offered the chance to start the magazine by Charles Granville, who ran a small but significant London publishing house, Stephen Swift & Co. Thinking that the editorship would mean giving up first class honours, Ogden consulted Henry Jackson, who advised him not to miss the opportunity. Shortly after, Stephen Swift & Co. went bankrupt.[6]

Ogden continued to edit the magazine during World War I, when its nature changed, because rheumatic fever as a teenager had left him unfit for military service.[7]

Ogden often used the pseudonym Adelyne More (add-a-line more) in his journalism. The magazine included literary contributions by Siegfried Sassoon, John Masefield, Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw, and Arnold Bennett. In 1919 Claude McKay was in London, and Ogden published his poetry in the Magazine.[8]

It evolved into an organ of international comment on politics and the war, supported in the background by a group of Cambridge academics including Edward Dent (who sent Sassoon's work), Theo Bartholomew and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson.[9] A survey of the foreign press filled more than half of each issue, being the Notes from the foreign press supplied by Dorothy Buxton which appeared there from October 1915 onwards until 1920,[10] and its circulation rose to over 20,000. Buxton was in fact then leading a large team translating and collating articles from up to 100 foreign newspapers; for instance Italian articles were supplied in translation in numbers by Dent.[11] This digest of European press coverage was exclusive to the Magazine, and gave it disproportionate influence in political circles. For example, Robert Reid, 1st Earl Loreburn used the Notes from the foreign press to advocate to the Marquess of Lansdowne in 1916 against bellicose claims and attitudes on the British side.[12]
During 1917 the *Magazine* came under heavy criticism, with its neutral use of foreign press extracts being called pacifism, particularly by the pro-war patriotic Fight for Right Movement headed by Francis Younghusband. Dorothy Buxton's husband Charles Roden Buxton was closely associated with the Union of Democratic Control. Sir Frederick Pollock who chaired Fight for Right wrote to *The Morning Post* in February 1917 charging the *Magazine* with pacifist propaganda, and with playing on its connection with the University as if it had official status.[13] Gilbert Murray, a supporter of Fight for Right but also a defender of many conscientious objectors and the freedom of the press, intervened to protest, gaining support from Bennett and Hardy.[14] John George Butcher, Conservative Member of Parliament for the City of York, asked a question in Parliament about government advertising in the *Magazine*, during November 1917.[15] The parliamentary exchange had two Liberal Party politicians, William Pringle and Josiah Wedgwood, pointing out that the *Magazine* was the only way they could read German press comments.

The *Cambridge Magazine* continued in the post-war years, but wound down to quarterly publication before closing down in 1922.

### The Heretics Society

Ogden also co-founded the Heretics Society in Cambridge in 1909, which questioned traditional authorities in general and religious dogmas in particular, in the wake of the paper *Prove All Things*,[16] read by William Chawner, Master of Emmanuel College, a past Vice-Chancellor. The Heretics began as a group of 12 undergraduates interested in Chawner's agnostic approach.[17]

The Society was nonconformist and open to women, and Jane Harrison found an audience there, publishing her inaugural talk for the Society of 7 December 1909 as the essay *Heresy and Humanity* (1911), an argument against individualism. The talk of the following day was from J. M. E. McTaggart, and was also published, as *Dare to Be Wise* (1910). Another early member with anthropological interests was John Layard,[18] Herbert Felix Jolowicz, Frank Plumpton Ramsey and Philip Sargent Florence were among the members.[19] Alix Sargant Florence, sister of Philip, was active both as a Heretic and on the editorial board of the *Cambridge Magazine*.[20]

Ogden was President of the Heretics from 1911, for more than a decade,[21] he invited a variety of prominent speakers and linked the Society to his role as editor. In November 1911 G. K. Chesterton used a well-publicised talk to the Heretics to reply to George Bernard Shaw who had recently talked on *The Future of Religion*. On this occasion Chesterton produced one of his well-known *bon mots*:

> **Questioner:** ... I say it is perfectly true that I have an intuition that I exist.

> **Mr. Chesterton:** Cherish it. [22]

In 1912 T. E. Hulme and Bertrand Russell spoke. Hulme's talk on *Anti-Romanticism and Original Sin* was written up by Ogden for the *Cambridge Magazine*, where in 1916 both Hulme and Russell would write on the war, from their opposite points of view.[23] Rupert Brooke addressed them on contemporary theatre, and an article based on his views of Strindberg appeared in the *Cambridge Magazine* in October 1913.[24] Another talk from 1913 that was published was from Edward Clodd on *Obscurantism in Modern Science*.[25] Ogden was very active at this period in seeing these works into print.[26]

The Heretics continued as a well-known forum, with Virginia Woolf in May 1924 using it to formulate a reply to criticisms from Arnold Bennett arising from her *Jacob's Room* (1922), in a talk *Character in Fiction* that was then published in *The Criterion*.[27][28] This paper contains the assertion, now proverbial, that "on or about December 1910 human character changed." The Heretics met in November 1929, when Ludwig Wittgenstein lectured to it on ethics, at Ogden's invitation, producing in *A Lecture on Ethics* a work accepted as part of the early Wittgenstein canon.[29]
**Author and bookseller**

He authored three books in this period. One was *The Problem of the Continuation School* (1914), with Robert Hall Best of the Best & Lloyd lighting company of Handsworth, and concerned industrial training; he made also a translation of a related work of Georg Kerchensteiner (who had introduced him to Best), appearing as *The Schools and the Nation* (1914). Militarism versus Feminism (1915, anonymous) was with Mary Sargent Florence (mother of Alix); and *Uncontrolled Breeding: Fecundity versus Civilization* (1916), was a tract in favour of birth control, under the Adelyne More pseudonym.[4]

Ogden ran a network of bookshops in Cambridge, selling also art by the Bloomsbury Group. One such bookshop was looted on the day World War I ended.[34]

**Editor**

He built up a position as editor for Kegan Paul, publishers in London. In 1920, he was one of the founders of the psychological journal *Psyche*, and later took over the editorship; *Psyche* was initially the *Psychic Research Quarterly* set up by Walter Whately Smith,[35] but changed its name and editorial policy in 1921. It appeared until 1952, and was a vehicle for some of Ogden's interests.[36]

Also for Kegan Paul he founded and edited what became five separate series of books, comprising hundreds of titles. Two were major series of monographs, "The History of Civilisation" and "The International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method"; the latter series included about 100 volumes after one decade. The "To-day and To-morrow" series was another extensive series running to about 150 volumes, of popular books in essay form with provocative titles; he edited it from its launch in 1924. The first of the series (after an intervention by Fredric Warburg)[37] was *Daedalus; or, Science and the Future* by J. B. S. Haldane, an extended version of a talk to the Heretics Society. Other series were "Science for You" and "Psyche Miniatures".[38]

**Language and philosophy**

Ogden helped with the English translation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In fact the translation itself was the work of F. P. Ramsey; Ogden as a commissioning editor assigned the task of translation to Ramsey, supposedly on earlier experience of Ramsey's insight into another German text, of Ernst Mach. The Latinate title now given to the work in English, with its nod to Baruch Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, is attributed to G. E. Moore, and was adopted by Ogden. In 1973 Georg Henrik von Wright edited Wittgenstein's *Letters to C.K. Ogden with Comments on the English Translation of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, including correspondence with Ramsey.[39]

His most durable work is his monograph (with I. A. Richards) titled *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), which went into many editions. This book, which straddled the boundaries among linguistics, literary analysis, and philosophy, drew attention to the significs of Victoria Lady Welby (whose disciple Ogden was) and the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce. A major step in the "linguistic turn" of 20th century British philosophy, *The Meaning of Meaning* set out principles for understanding the function of language and described the so-called semantic triangle. It included the inimitable phrase "The gostak distims the doshes."

Although neither a trained philosopher nor an academic, Ogden had a material effect on British academic philosophy. *The Meaning of Meaning* enunciated a theory of emotivism.[40] Ogden went on to edit as *Bentham's Theory of Fictions* (1932) a work of Jeremy Bentham, and had already translated in 1911 as *The Philosophy of 'As If'"
a work of Hans Vaihinger, both of which are regarded as precursors of the modern theory of fictionalism. [41]

**Basic English**

The advocacy of Basic English became his primary activity from 1925 until his death. Basic English is an auxiliary international language of 850 words comprising a system that covers everything necessary for day-to-day purposes. To promote Basic English, Ogden in 1927 founded the Orthological Institute, from orthology, the abstract term he proposed for its work (see orthoepeia). Its headquarters were on King’s Parade in Cambridge. From 1928 to 1930 Ogden set out his developing ideas on Basic English and Jeremy Bentham in *Psyche*. [42]

In 1929 the Institute published a recording by James Joyce of a passage from a draft of *Finnegans Wake*. In summer of that year *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun* had been published, an extract from the work as it then stood, and Ogden had been asked to supply an introduction. When Joyce was in London in August, Ogden approached him to do a reading for a recording. [43][44] In 1932 Ogden published a translation of the *Finnegans Wake* passage into Basic English. [45][46]

By 1943 the Institute had moved to Gordon Square in London. [47]

Ogden was also a consultant with the International Auxiliary Language Association, which presented Interlingua in 1951. [48]

**Bibliophile**

Ogden collected a large number of books. His *incunabula*, manuscripts, papers of the Brougham family, and Jeremy Bentham collection were purchased by University College London. The balance of his enormous personal library was purchased after his death by the University of California - Los Angeles. He died on 21 March 1957 in London.

**Notes**

[1] Frank Kermode in the *London Review of Books* (http://www.lrb.co.uk/v02/n05/frank-kermode/educating-the-planet)


[30] de:Georg Kerchensteiner
[34] An eye-witness was I. A. Richards. I came down King’s Parade to see a crash of glass breaking. Ogden, by that time, was owner of three shops in Cambridge: one was a picture gallery, the others were book stores. [...] I took my stand beside Ogden. Twenty or thirty drunken medical students were sacking the shop. Pictures were coming out through the plate glass in very dangerous fashion ... Duncan Grant ...
[38] *C. K. Ogden and Linguistics* vol. 4, p. xiv.
[40] Moral Anti-Realism (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-anti-realism) entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[41] Fictionalism (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fictionalism) entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[46] The text of the recording was some pages of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in the version published in 1928. Sources differ as to whether the recording was made in London or Cambridge; (http://library.buffalo.edu/jamesjoyce/pdf/spielberg238.pdf) at p. 177, while *Modernist Heresies* (PDF) (http://www.ohiostatepress.org/Books/Book.PDFs/Franke Modernist.pdf) at p. 203 says London.

**References**


**Further reading**

John Percival Postgate

John Percival Postgate (24 October 1853 – 15 July 1926) was an English classicist, professor of Latin at the University of Liverpool from 1909 to 1920.

Born in Birmingham, the son of John Postgate, he was educated at King Edward's School where he became head boy. He won a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge where he read classics, being elected a Fellow in 1878.[1]

He established himself as a creative editor of Latin poetry with published editions of Propertius, Lucan, Tibullus and Phaedrus. His major work was the two-volume Corpus Poetarum Latinorum, a triumph of editorial organisation. While at Cambridge, he edited the Classical Review and the Classical Quarterly while holding the chair of comparative philology at University College, London. In 1909, reconciled that the Cambridge Chair would go to A.E. Housman, as it did in 1911, Postgate opted to become Professor of Latin at Liverpool.

He retired to Cambridge in 1920. On 14 July 1926 he was injured in a cycling accident and died of his injuries the following day.

Family

He was the father of Raymond Postgate (a journalist, historian and novelist), and Margaret Cole (a politician), and was grandfather to the animator and puppeteer Oliver Postgate.

References


External links

• Works written by or about John Percival Postgate at Wikisource

• Works by J. P. Postgate (http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator:(postgate+j+p)) at the Internet Archive
| **Born** | 7 April 1884  
Kraków, Austro-Hungarian Empire (present-day Poland) |
| **Died** | 16 May 1942 (aged 58)  
New Haven, Connecticut, United States |
| **Education** | PhD, Philosophy from Jagiellonian University, Physical Chemistry at University of Leipzig, PhD, Science from London School of Economics |
| **Known for** | Father of Social Anthropology |

**Bronisław Kasper Malinowski** (Polish: [ˌmaliˈɲɔfskʲi]; 1884–1942) was a Polish-born British-naturalized anthropologist, one of the most important 20th-century anthropologists. From 1910, Malinowski studied exchange and economics at the London School of Economics under Seligman and Westermarck, analysing patterns of exchange in aboriginal Australia through ethnographic documents. In 1914 he was given a chance to travel to New Guinea accompanying anthropologist R. R. Marett, but as war broke out and Malinowski was an Austrian subject, and thereby an enemy of the British commonwealth, he was unable to travel back to England. The Australian government nonetheless provided him with permission and funds to undertake ethnographic work within their territories and Malinowski chose to go to the Trobriand Islands, in Melanesia where he stayed for several years, studying the indigenous culture. Upon his return to England after the war he published his main work *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* which established him as one of the most important anthropologists in Europe of that time. He took posts as lecturer and later as a chair in Anthropology at the LSE, attracting large numbers of students and exerting great influence on the development of British Social Anthropology. Among his students in this period were such prominent anthropologists as Raymond Firth, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Hortense Powdermaker, Edmund Leach and Meyer Fortes. From 1933 he visited several American universities and when the second World War broke out he decided to stay there, taking an appointment at Yale. Here he stayed the remainder of his life, also influencing a generation of American anthropologists.

His ethnography of the Trobriand Islands described the complex institution of the Kula ring, and became foundational for subsequent theories of reciprocity and exchange. He was also widely regarded as an eminent fieldworker and his texts regarding the anthropological field methods were foundational to early anthropology, for example coining the term participatory observation. His approach to social theory was a brand of functionalism.
emphasizing how social and cultural institutions serve basic human needs, a perspective opposed to Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism that emphasized the ways in which social institutions function in relation to society as a whole.

Life

Malinowski was born in Kraków, Poland, then part of the Austro-Hungarian province known as the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, to an upper-middle-class family. His father was a professor, and his mother was the daughter of a landowning family. As a child he was frail, often suffering from ill health, yet he excelled academically. In 1908 he received a doctorate in philosophy from Kraków's Jagiellonian University, where he focused on mathematics and the physical sciences. While attending the university he became ill and, while recuperating, decided to be an anthropologist as a result of reading James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. This book turned his interest to ethnology, which he pursued at the University of Leipzig, where he studied under economist Karl Bücher and psychologist Wilhelm Wundt. In 1910 he went to England, studying at the London School of Economics under C. G. Seligman and Edvard Westermarck.

In 1914 he traveled to Papua (in what would later become Papua New Guinea), where he conducted fieldwork at Mailu Island and then, more famously, in the Trobriand Islands. On his most famous trip to the area, he became stranded due to the outbreak of World War I. Malinowski was not allowed to return to Europe from the British-controlled region because, though Polish by ethnicity, his was a subject of Austria-Hungary. Australian authorities gave him the opportunity of conducting research in Melanesia, an opportunity he happily embraced. It was during this period that he conducted his fieldwork on the Kula ring and advanced the practice of participant observation, which remains the hallmark of ethnographic research today.\[7\]\[8\]

In 1920, he published a scientific article on the Kula Ring,\[9\] perhaps the first documentation of generalized exchange. In 1922, he earned a doctorate of science in anthropology and was teaching at the London School of Economics. That year his book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* was published. It was widely regarded as a masterpiece, and Malinowski became one of the best-known anthropologists in the world. For the next two decades, he would establish the London School of Economics as Europe's main center of anthropology. He became a British citizen in 1931.

Malinowski taught intermittently in the United States. When World War II broke out during one of his American visits, he stayed there. He took up a position at Yale University, where he remained until his death. In 1942 he co-founded the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America.

Malinowski died on 16 May 1942, just after his 58th birthday, of a heart attack while preparing to conduct summer fieldwork in Oaxaca, Mexico. He was interred at Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut.\[10\]

Ideas

Malinowski is often considered one of anthropology's most skilled ethnographers, especially because of the highly methodical and well theorized approach to the study of social systems. He is often referred to as the first researcher to bring anthropology "off the verandah" (a phrase that is also the name of a documentary about his work), that is, experiencing the everyday life of his subjects along with them.\[11\]

Malinowski emphasized the importance of detailed participant observation and argued that anthropologists must have daily contact with their informants if they are to adequately record the "imponderabilia of everyday life" that are so important to understanding a different culture.
He stated that the goal of the anthropologist, or ethnographer, is "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (Argonauts of the Western Pacific, Dutton 1961 edition, p. 25.)

However, in reference to the Kula ring, Malinowski also stated, in the same edition, pp. 83–84:

Yet it must be remembered that what appears to us an extensive, complicated, and yet well ordered institution is the outcome of so many doings and pursuits, carried on by savages, who have no laws or aims or charters definitely laid down. They have no knowledge of the total outline of any of their social structure. They know their own motives, know the purpose of individual actions and the rules which apply to them, but how, out of these, the whole collective institution shapes, this is beyond their mental range. Not even the most intelligent native has any clear idea of the Kula as a big, organised social construction, still less of its sociological function and implications....The integration of all the details observed, the achievement of a sociological synthesis of all the various, relevant symptoms, is the task of the Ethnographer...the Ethnographer has to construct the picture of the big institution, very much as the physicist constructs his theory from the experimental data, which always have been within reach of everybody, but needed a consistent interpretation.

In these two passages, Malinowski anticipated the distinction between description and analysis, and between the views of actors and analysts. This distinction continues to inform anthropological method and theory. [12][13]

His study of the Kula ring was also vital to the development of an anthropological theory of reciprocity, and his material from the Trobriands was extensively discussed in Marcel Mauss's seminal essay The Gift.

Malinowski originated the school of social anthropology known as functionalism. In contrast to Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism, Malinowski argued that culture functioned to meet the needs of individuals rather than society as a whole. He reasoned that when the needs of individuals, who comprise society, are met, then the needs of society are met. To Malinowski, the feelings of people and their motives were crucial knowledge to understand the way their society functioned:

Besides the firm outline of tribal constitution and crystallized cultural items which form the skeleton, besides the data of daily life and ordinary behavior, which are, so to speak, its flesh and blood, there is still to be recorded the spirit—the natives' views and opinions and utterances.

—Argonauts, p. 22.

Apart from fieldwork, Malinowski also challenged the claim to universality of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex. He initiated a cross-cultural approach in Sex and Repression in Savage Society (1927) where he demonstrated that specific psychological complexes are not universal.

Malinowski likewise influenced the course of African history, serving as an academic mentor to Jomo Kenyatta, the father and first president of modern-day Kenya. Malinowski also wrote the introduction to Facing Mount Kenya, Kenyatta's ethnographic study of the Gikuyu tribe.

Works


### Universities

- Cornell University
- Harvard University
- Jagiellonian University
- London School of Economics
- University of London
- Yale University

### Further reading


### Notes


External links

- Malinowski (http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/rams/thinkingallowed_20040714.ram); Archive (Real audio stream) of BBC Radio 4 edition of 'Thinking allowed' on Malinowski
- Baloma; the Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands (http://www.sacred-texts.com/pac/baloma/index.htm), at sacred-texts.com
- Papers of Bronislaw Malinowski at LSE Archives (http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/holdings/malinowski_bronislaw.aspx)
- Malinowski's fieldwork photographs, Trobriand Islands, 1915-1918 (http://archives.lse.ac.uk/TreeBrowse.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&field=RefNo&key=MALINOWSKI/3)
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