

The following chapters are taken from the first draft of a book length study originally titled *A Grammar of Attention: A Treatise on the Problem of Meaning*. The introduction outlines the purpose, method, and organization of the manuscript, while the other two chapters discuss at length the implications for cognitive science and linguistics for treating attention as the most fundamental organizing principle. Other chapters not presented here explore the implications of treating attention in semiotics and rhetoric, two other disciplines concerned with the problem of meaning.

This manuscript is currently now undergoing extensive revision under the new title *Elements of Attention: A New Approach to Meaning Construction in the Human Sciences*. The new title better reflects my present thinking about the *alerting, orienting, selecting, sustaining, controlling, and sharing* of attention. Rather than being a “grammar,” they are the six elements, which together constitute a finite set of general points from which the details of the subject follow. The six elements of attention do not comprise so much an accepted theory of meaning but rather they comprise a systematically organized set of working principles about human attention designed to guide thinking in productive ways about the problem of meaning as grappled with by cognitive scientists, linguists, semioticians, and rhetoricians. I believe I have hit upon a discovery procedure (i.e. heuristic) for thinking about the problem of meaning.

The chapters offered to you on this website along with Giorgio Marchetti’s thoughtful and thought provoking commentary are intended to provide a means by which we come to understand what kind of theories of meaning we need, as I am one who believes that the problem of meaning is still dimly understood, despite the two millennia of investigation. I also believe that those who see attention at the center of this problem are heading in the right direction, even if we have only gone a few steps down the path.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Giorgio Marchetti for giving me this opportunity to my project with you, and want to thank Nicholas White for his painstaking editorial assistance in preparing the final text.

I eagerly welcome your comments, criticisms, and queries.

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