

PEIRCE'S THEORY OF MEANING:
AN EXPOSITION AND CRITICISM

by

George G. Godas

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: George H. Hodges

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Joseph L. Cowan
Joseph L. Cowan

16 May 67
Date

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is an explication and criticism of Charles Peirce's theory of meaning. The context of this explication emanates from Peirce's opinions as set forth in his correspondence with Lady Victoria Welby. My criticism is both in support and against certain aspects of his theory. I am defending Peirce's views in so far as I think that his first two grades of meaning stand on firm ground. With respect to his third grade of meaning, I reject that aspect of it which I think is prescriptive in tone. On the whole, both my explication and criticism unfold phenomenologically.

INTRODUCTION

If the aim of this paper were completely to exhaust Peirce's theory of meaning in terms of presentation, explication and criticism, then I should do well to cling to Frege's principle, "Never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition"¹ with as tenacious a grasp as Frege himself did. However, my attempt being somewhat more modest, I shall openly defy Frege's useful principle, and approach Peirce's theory precisely from the point of view of the meaning of a word. There are several reasons for this procedure, and this introduction will be partially constituted by an attempted justification of this adopted plan.

The main purpose of this paper is an explication and criticism of Peirce's theory of meaning. However, it is not exhaustive since I limit my approach by selecting a particular aspect of it. This aspect revolves about a linguistic point of view. The word "explication" is neither intended to mean explanation nor is it intended to mean presentation. It is to be taken more in a Carnapian sense; that is, as an elucidation (not devoid of interpretation) by refinement. Obviously, this implies a subjective element for which I am quick to apologize, but without which the aim of this paper could hardly materialize. My influence comes in because I have restricted myself to a certain discussion of words, the

substance of which can be found primarily in the correspondence between Peirce and Lady Welby. In this sense, by subjectivity I mean no more than selectivity.

It is precisely because of my approach through words that explanation in terms of interpretation must be permitted. Peirce himself would have been antagonistic towards approaching his theory via the meaning of a word qua word. His main concern was with propositions (or, in linguistic terminology, sentences) in terms of belief, doubt, action and meaning. However, to involve myself with propositions would be an undertaking which would place me on extra-linguistic terrain too quickly; and this would go beyond the scope of this paper for reasons which I now hope to present.

First of all, if I were to attempt an understanding of Peirce's theory of meaning by way of propositions, I would inevitably find myself in the realm of logic. This would entail an understanding of intricate symbolism (for the coining of which, Peirce cannot be accused of parsimony), relations, the nature of arguments and inference.

In the second place, I would have to consider his theory of belief. This is ample material for a paper in itself. And here, I would be involved in degrees of belief in terms of action, methods for investigating doubt, and the relation between the two. In terms of scientific tangibles, I would have to consider techniques for the quantitative estimation of belief.²

There are other considerations to be entertained for not dealing with his theory of meaning through an analysis of the meaning of propositions, but I think that it has been sufficiently pointed out that such an approach would involve me in matters which would be too ambitious.

On the positive side, Peirce often speaks about meaning in terms of words. As a matter of fact, the very substance of this paper is based on his discussion of the meaning of words. When he speaks about the three grades of clearness, the context of his discussion is woven out of the meaning of a word.

Let it be understood that when I speak about the meaning of a word, unless I specify otherwise, this should be taken in a sentential context. Furthermore, the sentences themselves should not be viewed in isolation, but should be taken as members of groups or classes. For Peirce, meaning always comes in bundles; that is, words are interrelated with other words, and sentences always come in families.

Although Peirce refers to words as having meaning, this is done with the implicit contention that they are constitutive parts of sentences. Or, if they stand on their own, he explicitly describes the context in which this is possible. And, he does not adhere to the "fallacy of reduction."³ That is, he does not maintain that the sum of the meaning of the words is equal to the meaning of the sentence. Thus, the analysis of a sentence, although a fruitful enterprise, would not exhaust the meaning of that sentence.

If the phrase "elucidation by refinement" implies a subjective element, the justification rests on the complexity of the material, and on the divergent (and sometimes almost contradictory) views inherent in Peirce's philosophy. Peirce, as Wittgenstein, changed his philosophical perspective considerably through the years. And, what increases the difficulty is that unlike Wittgenstein, Peirce's interests ranged from Swahili to wine-tasting. His broad interests seldom allotted the time to develop a philosophical point to the utmost. Although his wide range of interests does not detract from his genius, it does make it difficult to pin-point any particular aspect of his philosophy.

It is with these considerations in mind that I shall now attempt to explicate and criticize his theory of meaning as it unfolds through his notion of the meaning of a word.

PEIRCE'S GENERAL OUTLOOK ON LANGUAGE

In the penultimate issue of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, an article by Schlagel appeared, which states the following about language:

Not as a repository of fixed, immutable, common sense truths, but as an instrument that can be creatively used to express new facts and insights is the proper conception of language.⁴

The above statement comes very close in capturing the flavor of Peirce's general outlook on language. In a passage which accentuates the importance of phenomenology as a basis for authenticity, Peirce, in a remarkably similar fashion states:

As before, it is not the usage of language which we seek to learn but what must be the description of fact in order that the division of the elements of phenomena into the categories of quality, fact and law may not only be true, but also have the utmost possible value, being governed by those same characteristics which really dominate the phenomenal world.⁵

The last part of the statement implies a need for authenticity to phenomena as a faithful ground for sound philosophizing, but the first part emphasizes not the established usage of language, but a language capable of properly dealing with facts and laws.

What he means is that a new situation might demand a new word, or a different arrangement of an established phrase, in order to describe it. In this sense, one day I may use the word "clear" to describe the sky; but if on another day the clearness is much more intense (noticeable), then I might use the word "clearer," or "clearest" to describe it. Peirce does not wish to discard ordinary language; for everyday purposes it is an adequate means of communication and description; and any philosophy which skimps over it rests on shaky ground. But when it comes to serious (in terms of creative description) philosophizing, the available words might not be enough for the task. For Peirce, the attempt to philosophize is the attempt to take every word, phrase and expression of thought, and to ask the meaning of these.

The Activity of the Philosopher

If it is genuine, this attempt detaches itself from common sense and looks back upon it. The man of common sense is in common sense; the philosopher steps back and reflects upon it. The difference between the two is a difference of awareness. The man of common sense communicates without asking himself what he is doing. The philosopher looks at various activities and inquires about meaning. In this activity (philosophical) he even modifies the language. The philosopher does not stop here. He also examines various other activities. The physicist, for example, works by taking many things for granted. That is

his job! The philosopher examines the physicist's activity and inquires about the meaning, presuppositions and nature of it. Thus to be satisfied with any activity in the sense of not probing into the meaning involved, means not to be a philosopher. The unreflective man of common sense is like a character in a novel; the philosopher is like a man who reads a novel. Thus Peirce would agree with Whitehead and Russell in that the philosopher probes into what is taken for granted by the ordinary man. Not to do this means to commit intellectual suicide.

It would be time-consuming and sheer redundancy to exemplify this contention by pointing to Peirce's writings. One need only glance at his papers to realize that he did not hesitate to alter or coin a new word whenever the ordinary one was inadequate. Peirce's temperament, well demonstrated by his acute analysis and his adherence to the theory of evolution, was encrusted in a theory of meaning which pointed to the future. Such a man could not be satisfied with an analysis which already presupposed the boundaries of meaning. Although he would have been sympathetic towards ordinary language analysis (and very much so, as we shall soon point out), he would not have been satisfied to stop there. To do this would have meant, for Peirce, to commit "The Fallacy of the Perfect Dictionary."⁶

There is an important sense in which an ordinary word is meaningful for Peirce. However, before embarking upon this consideration, it is perhaps illuminative to consider certain aspects of Wittgenstein's and Husserl's philosophies.

A LEBENSWELT AND A LEBENSFORM

There is a sense in which one can say that both Wittgenstein's and Husserl's attempts, although having contributed in different ways to an understanding of the function of philosophy, originally stemmed from the same ground. This ground is constituted by a dissatisfaction with the "problems" set up by traditional philosophers. No doubt, the demon par excellence responsible for some of the most perplexing predicaments was Descartes. Thus, from this ground, we can view both the Philosophical Investigations and Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology as attempts to free philosophy from apparent problems. But, although both men were concerned with the same problems, their proposed solutions employed different channels. Wittgenstein emphasized the return of language from its metaphysical to its ordinary uses (Lebensform), while Husserl placed the accent on the life-world (Lebenswelt).

First, let us say a few words about this notion of the Lebenswelt. Although Husserl deals with language (and ironically enough, first he contemplates the notion of an ideal language, and then, in his late works, language is viewed more in terms of its actual use in the world⁷), our main concern here will be with the idea of a life-world, since this has important implications with respect to Peirce.

This Lebenswelt of which Husserl speaks is the world of our everyday lives. Husserl sees "this life-world as the universal field, or horizon, in which we ourselves, our acts, and intentions, and all their manifold ranges of objects have their being."⁸ This horizon is not a theoretical construction; it is the world into which we are born, "in which we learn our mother-tongue and the ways of our culture, in which we may become responsible for our chosen projects, and in which we face death."⁹ The method of approaching this Lebenswelt will remain undurchsichtig to the objective sciences. The reason for its remaining opaque to the objective sciences is that it is taken for granted by these sciences. In this way, a physicist lives in this life-world, while at the same time he pursues his subject matter. The life-world is not an object of study for the scientist; he is in it while he operates as a scientist. For the phenomenologists on the other hand, this life-world becomes an object of study; it becomes a field of study which comprises the totality of human activities in terms of goals, aspirations, projects, etc. And, as distinguishing itself from some other philosophical perspectives,¹⁰ to understand this life-world is also to grasp that "es el mundo de la ciencia el que esta incluido en el mundo de la vida."¹¹ That is to say, the activity of the scientist is part of this life-world, and not vice versa. To find ourselves in this life-world is to find ourselves in the vast richness of our everyday world. Here, we are not Cartesian points, reduced

to frustration because of the incapability to communicate, but rather, we are part of that situation in which we find ourselves as beings-in-the-world, as existing beings, whose possibilities are infinite. As subjective idealists or solipsists we may be spectators, but in the life-world we are participants, we act. We are not the coordinates of a point; on the contrary, we are the very core of the frame of reference, and through our intentions generate all projects. This is the fabric out of which Husserl attempted to weave a ground for philosophy, a ground which would consciously authenticate man's existence and generate meaning.

Temperamentally, Wittgenstein is close to Husserl, but methodologically he differs extensively. For Wittgenstein, philosophical problems arise when "language goes on holiday."¹² What he means by this is that when we leave the ground of the authentic forms of life (Lebensform), we are liable to find ourselves in difficulties. Wittgenstein pointed out that in our hunt for superhuman essences we tend to forget the only world in which we find ourselves at home, and at the same time, we raise false problems. Thus, the task of the philosopher is to clear the superstructures and allow language to be as it is. That is to say, the philosopher should nurse a question as a physician might nurse a patient, and by so doing, bring back language from its metaphysical realm to the ordinary world. He says:

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is.¹³

It therefore seems that Wittgenstein's phenomenology (if I may be allowed to use such a word here) advocates as the primary task of philosophy (in a positive manner) the observation of the actual language. In other words, the function of philosophy is descriptive rather than prescriptive in character.

The view that philosophy is primarily descriptive in character is not alien to Peirce. Peirce places a heavy accent on the philosophical manipulation of language, but he also emphasises that language is not to be abstracted from human activities. That is to say, besides having numerous other characteristics, language is a means of describing facts, activities, situations, relations and whatever else pertains to the world of human beings. In this sense, words are tools, and they do not have one distinguishing characteristic in common. They are simultaneously similar and different. And here, the correlation with Wittgenstein's forms of life is easily noticed. That is to say, language is part of the peculiarities of human beings as human beings. In this sense, Peirce is very much at home with both Austin and Wittgenstein.

The Problem

At this point I wish to probe further into the relation among these three men. I wish to comment on two particular points. First, I wish to examine their point of departure. In the second place, I wish to briefly explicate what these men were doing.

Peirce, Husserl and Wittgenstein have something in common. This common element is nothing other than their point of departure. This point of departure is phenomenological in character, and it must be grasped in the light of the Cartesian philosophy. And here, two aspects come into focus. The first is negative. These men, as already mentioned, reacted against the predicament into which Descartes had contrived himself. Essentially, Descartes placed himself in many dualisms. The most vicious of these was that of mind and matter. This particular dualism gave rise to many problems. The chief among these was the problem of the existence of other minds. Since man is essentially a thinking substance, all of the pains, feelings, thoughts, etc., must be accessible only to himself. In linguistic terminology this means that each of us has his own private language. If this is the case, how do I know that another mind such as my own exists? Of course, I see another body, but my senses are fallible, and even if I could be certain that I saw a body before me, how do I know that it has a mind?

Setting up the problem in this manner made it necessary to devise arguments which would prove the existence of other minds.

Essentially, these arguments were (and are) analogical in character, and the final step was (is) inferential.

To this way of viewing the matter, Peirce, Wittgenstein, and Husserl, reacted most bitterly. However, in all fairness to Descartes, before I go into this matter, I must mention another point.

Descartes' Goal

Descartes' goal was certainty. He wanted to find a solid epistemological basis, from which he could investigate every noetic field without the least scruple. In his own words,

Archimedes, that he might transport the entire globe from the place it occupied to another, demanded only a point that was firm and immovable; so also, I shall be entitled to entertain the highest expectations, if I am fortunate enough to discover only one thing that is certain and indubitable.¹⁴

The Point of Departure

To do this, Descartes had to momentarily suspend belief in every truth he had previously accepted from the Medieval tradition. He had to do this because it was possible that each of these truths might be false. Descartes was given a must and he asked himself if this was really the case. If we consider only the goal, then he differs radically from Peirce, Wittgenstein and Husserl. But if we consider the starting point, then all four men converge.

Let me first point out two statements made by Wittgenstein.

The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe. Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off.¹⁵

The preconceived idea of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.)¹⁶

Similarities and Differences

In the first of the above quotes, Wittgenstein is saying that instead of accepting something as a requirement imposed by previous philosophers, we should investigate and see if this is the case. To do this, we must remove the glasses which view the world through preconceived categories, and look at it in its authentic forms. The question is not one of how things ought to be, but of how they actually are. To see language as it is means first and foremost, to remove our speculative glasses.

In terms of the second quote, it is as though our epistemological and metaphysical considerations had twisted us to the point of viewing things from a certain angle. From this angle we see everything as an aberration. To see things as they are, we must un-twist ourselves.

That is, to see things as they are we must suspend our pre-conceived conceptual scheme and approach things naked. This is the way to begin authentically. For Wittgenstein, most of our misconceptions (problems) arise because of linguistic entanglements. To untangle means to bring words back into the forms of life. That is, we should look and see what is the case, rather than speculate about it.

Descartes also found himself in a twisted frame of reference. He was placed in an X' Y' system and he wanted to untangle himself from it. He did this by going back to the X Y system; and he was able to accomplish this in terms of a suspension of a previously acquired conceptual scheme; he did it by invoking a universal doubt. In their starting point, both Wittgenstein and Descartes are somewhat similar; in their aspirations they differ vastly.

Husserl's starting point is basically similar to that of Wittgenstein and Descartes. In the case of Husserl, the epoché is essentially a suspension similar to that of Descartes. It is a necessary movement to get at the things themselves. Again, it is the removal of a pre-conceived conceptual scheme which filters and twists all that we confront. By suspending our previous conceptions, we are capable of approaching things as they are. But if the point of departure is the same, what follows, for both Husserl and Wittgenstein is radically different than what emanated from Descartes.

The Given

In the case of Husserl, the epoché makes the world appear and declare itself through the intentionality. Consciousness in this sense, is always consciousness of. The "of" is inseparable from each act of consciousness. For Husserl, the Cartesian certitude becomes valuable (authentic) only when embedded in a content; and this value is conferred upon it just because this content is known with as much certainty as the cogito itself. We can therefore see that according to Husserl there is no need to infer the existence of other minds; it is a given. I am born in a public world and my consciousness is meaningless apart from other people and objects. The starting point begins in the same manner, but it ends by dissolving the problem of other minds as a pseudo problem.

Wittgenstein's move in terms of the point of departure is very similar. According to Wittgenstein, the problem is solved, "not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known."¹⁷ In the situation as given, we never question the existence of other minds. This is a given. Wittgenstein is shattering this problem not by solving it, but by making us realize that it is not a problem. He says:

What we are destroying is nothing but houses
of cards and we are clearing up the ground
of language on which they stand.¹⁸

These "houses of cards" are false problems. We do begin in a public world. "An intention is imbedded in its situation, in human customs

and institutions. "¹⁹ If we speculate instead of first looking we get into puzzles. And,

The paradox disappears only if we make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose; to convey thought. "²⁰

To someone who might ask Wittgenstein, "But what is truth?", he might reply: "Remove your glasses, open your eyes and look." And the first thing that we will realize upon looking is that our question is misleading. It is misleading because it already implies an essence to be hunted intellectually. And this is simply not the case. It is not so because what we must realize, first and foremost, "What has to be accepted, the given, is--so one could say--forms of life."²¹ What are these forms of life? What do they have in common? Many things, but they also manifest important differences, and the first thing to realize is that we must view them in their context. I have hardly touched Wittgenstein, but then I only intended to bring out certain points which have a bearing on Peirce. And it is to Peirce that I must now turn.

Since language is not perfect, the world (mainly as it discloses itself through human situations and activities--science, art) is primary. In short, fact takes precedence over word and relation over sentence. This does not mean that ordinary language is devoid of order as it stands;

it does have an inherent order as it is. But before we confuse things, let us look at Peirce through Husserlian eyes.

A PEIRCEAN LEBENSWELT

It is for two main reasons that upon reading Peirce's remarks a Lebenswelt suggests itself. In the first place, his entire perspective is saturated with antagonism towards the Cartesian predicament. Not only did Peirce react strongly against the Cartesian dualism, but he was also vehemently opposed to the very method adopted by Descartes. He thus rejected any epistemological approach which required a universal doubt, and simultaneously refrained from precipitating into the "ghost in the machine" predicament. However, he implicitly made a move which is similar to Descartes' "doubt." This will soon become apparent.

In the second place, Peirce had good reasons for refusing to adhere to a dualistic doctrine. And, it is these very reasons which pave the way for a Lebenswelt.

To the contention that man is a thing, occupying a mathematical point of space, Peirce reacted most bitterly. As a matter of fact, he replied in the following manner:

There is a miserable material and barbarian notion according to which a man cannot be in two places at once; as though he were a thing!²²

A thing would give rise to artificial doubt, but a man generates "living doubt."²³ We cannot abstract ourselves into an artificial realm

as though we were in a world of phantasmagoria, because our only existence is embedded in a concrete world. This is the only world we know. Continuity, which is Peirce's paradigm case of Thirdness, forbids inauthentic epistemological or metaphysical maneuvers. The main point of his argument is that "all things so swim in continua."²⁴ These continua overlap and constitute in all senses, our everyday world.

The Situation

The situation in which we find ourselves is not one of doubt. We begin with belief. In this very realm, to exist means to react upon other things. No arguments are needed here; we find ourselves in this situation. Peirce, most emphatically maintains:

When I communicate my thought and my sentiments to a friend with whom I am in full sympathy, so that my feelings pass into him and I am conscious of what he feels, do I not live in his brain as well as my own--most literally? True, my animal life is not there but my soul, my feeling thought attention are.²⁵

Verily, it is a mistake to think of the mind as something that resides in the brain. Peirce's notion of altersense is nothing more than an awareness that

To be conscious of exerting force and to be conscious (of) having force used upon me are one and the same consciousness.²⁶

It is not difficult to see that the spectator is no longer on one side of the footlights and the world on the other. Man has an

"outreaching identity"²⁷ which transcends the restrictions imposed upon him by any Euclidean geometrical perspective. And, in this life-world, "purpose is an essential attribute of mind."²⁸

Criteria of Recognition

It is not difficult to infer from this that any derivatives of the Cartesian (and for that matter, Humian) predicament, such as Ayer's or Russell's sense datum statements are immediately made aufgehoben. For, the possession of subjective states depends on the existence of a third-person language. That is, the becoming of a self is meaningless apart from the presence of another and without his mediation. What this boils down to is the fact that man discovers his true self "only in relation to others."²⁹ Thus, from an historical point of view, we can see Peirce subscribing to Hegel's general contention that the becoming of a self is essentially related to the encounter with other selves. In contemporary terminology, this means that the conditions (criteria of recognition) necessary for discriminating myself are similar to those for the recognition of others. Most emphatically, Peirce maintains:

The recognition of one person of another's personality takes place by means to some extent identical with the means by which he is conscious of his own personality.³⁰

This is not a logical proof. It is to be taken more in terms of an ostensive appeal. Peirce is asking us to look and consider if this is not

the case. And he says, which do you prefer; one of those "ghost-like hypotheses," or a "flesh-and-blood hypothesis"?

Openness

In terms of experience, this amounts to a submission to disclosure, to a yielding to a power which cannot be resisted. When experience speaks, we must listen, because of the very situation in which we find ourselves.

The maxim that we ought to be 'guided' by experience amounts to this, that what we have got to yield to at last we shall economically do well to be submissive to from the first.³¹

Ephemeral Boundaries

From some of these considerations it follows that solipsism is ruled out as illegitimate. It also follows that mind is more or less connected with all matter and generally acts in a regular way. Thus, all mind partakes of the nature of matter. Therefore, it would be erroneous to conceive the physical and psychical aspects of man as utterly distinct. That is, we cannot make borders and sharp distinctions, for to do this implies abstraction, and the man in the life-world is not an abstract entity. Peirce says:

We naturally make all our distinctions too absolute. We are accustomed to speak of an external universe and an inner world of thought. But they are mere vicinities with no real boundary between them. . . There is an intermediate

world, our own neighborhood, household, and persons, which belongs to us, which we sometimes feel inclined to class with the outer world and sometimes with the inner world.³²

It follows that language is not some abstract cognitive phenomenon, having its roots in pure thought, but a lived speech which is fertilized in existence. It is more correct to say for Peirce, that "language resides in the tongue"³³ rather than in the brain. The thought and its expression are one. As opposed to some of the neo-Hegelian views of his day, Peirce says:

In my opinion it is much more true that the thoughts of a living writer are in any printed copy of his book than they are in his brain.³⁴

We can now begin to see that a word, as much as a man, has an out-reaching identity. It is not an isolated entity, derived from private contemplation, but a public reality. In Husserlian terminology, consciousness is always consciousness of. Emphasizing the category of Secondness (brute force; action-reaction), Peirce says:

But to make up the sensation, along with this feeling there is a consciousness of being irresistibly compelled to see it when I look at it.³⁵

A PEIRCEAN LEBENSFORM

Very generally, on this level, Peirce's view amounts to saying that in order for language to be meaningful, it cannot be divorced from our existence as we live it. Although man may have private thoughts, the situation begins as something public. And since meaning in terms of thoughts is public (for thoughts are identical with the expression, and the expression is public--that is, a listener is essential for meaning to arise), words and communication are of the essence of this Lebenswelt. That is to say, the life-world gives communication authenticity. Thus the situation and the expression are closely associated.

The Meaning of a Word

On this level meaning is devoid of sophisticated inferential procedures. It is born here. When we hear a new slang word, we hardly ever ask for its definition. No one would give us one in the first place. And we seldom even get a simple example of its use. We only hear it, and "in ironically twisted harmonious sentences whose meaning is turned inside out and tied in a hard knot."³⁶ Yet nevertheless, we know what the word means. We even know its meaning better than any abstract definition could inform us. These meanings we get from inference, true, but they are beyond the jurisdiction of any criticism.

An Example

As a side point, Peirce thought that the English language especially, is extremely well suited for accurate description and penetrating analysis. As contrasted to the emotional wealth of German and the finesse of French, Peirce maintained of English,

In all that concerns logic and reasoning, it has a spirit of accuracy which is due to the fact that the language spoken in State Street and other market places preserves to an extraordinary degree the sharp distinctions of the scholastic lore of the middle ages. . . 37

THE FIRST GRADE OF MEANING

In terms of meaning, there is a primary and a secondary sense of a word about which Wittgenstein speaks. The primary sense is the meaning found in the given language game.³⁸ Thus, when we are raised in a certain environment, we come to learn the meaning of a word as it is used in that particular language game. Any other addendum can only come about after we have familiarized ourselves with the primary sense of a word. Peirce speaks of this in connection with his three grades of clearness. More specifically, in terms of language, he speaks of three grades of meaning. With respect to the first grade, the meaning of a word "consists in such familiarity with it as will enable one to apply it correctly."³⁹ That is to say, we can understand the meaning of a word only if we can associate certain experiences with it. In other words, if we can use it in an ordinary context, we understand its meaning. Roughly, this corresponds to Wittgenstein's primary sense of a word. I must emphasize however, that for Peirce it is not language alone, with its common association of similarity,⁴⁰ but the language taken in connection with a person's experiential associations which determines meaning on this level. Thus we are never to speak of meaning without, at least with respect to object words, considering the denotative power of a word.

"Grade"

At this point I wish to raise a fundamental question. What does Peirce mean by "grade"? And, as a corollary, what are the implications of looking at meaning in terms of grades? The question poses some difficulties, since nowhere does Peirce explicitly discuss what he means by a "grade" of meaning. But, from the discussion thus far, and from what will ensue, we can attempt to clarify this point. First of all, I wish to point out that these grades do not correspond to the pragmatics, semantics and syntax of the "corrected" languages of some of the logical positivists. This is obvious merely by considering Peirce's unforeseen consequences. They (being the third grade of meaning) do not correspond to the syntax of a language. Peirce held very high hopes for an ideal language, but not in connection with these three grades of meaning. What then is a "grade" of meaning? Well, I think that we can say three things about them. First, they are levels of communication. By this I mean that they can be distinguished in a language. To me, it seems perfectly natural to see these three levels of meaning operating in a language. But I must point out that if they can be distinguished, this does not mean that they can be separated. There is a hierarchy, yes, but there is also continuity. The first grade is the most basic, and is the foundation. It is the given of communication. The others depend on it, but not logically. In other words, if we remove the first grade, it is conceivable that we could communicate in terms of

the remaining two. This point will be touched upon later. We cannot now discuss fully the meaning of "grades" for we have not yet explicated these.

With respect to the corollary of the question raised, some interesting points can be noticed. As a first, meaning is something public. When we are born, we are born into a public world. When I say that a man is born into a public world I mean that he learns, to borrow one of Wittgenstein's phrases, a certain language game. He does not decide what the nature of meaning is; he learns meanings in certain contexts. Linguistically, these meanings are the distinctions, uses and experiences of many previous generations. In terms of words, a man learns the usage which is common to all the members of that particular community. He can thus communicate, precisely because meaning is something public. That is, for any member of the community to understand another, both must have access to a common ground of meaning. This common ground is the language as it is used in the community.

This is no hypothesis; it is a given. And Peirce emphasized three grades of meaning because he saw three grades of meaning operating in the language.

A Visitor from Pluto

When we are flung out of the womb, we are strangers to the world and the world is a stranger to us. Perhaps an example might be

instrumental in clarifying this point. Consider a man coming here from the planet Pluto. Imagine, also, that our sun appears to him as the stars (other than our sun) appear to us. Upon landing he might enigmatically point to our sun. We would then point out to him that that is the sun. Furthermore, going from object to word, if someone points to the sun and says, "That is what I call 'the sun,'" the sun in this case is not the object of that sign. What he is declaring in this case is not about the word "sun." Now Peirce recognizes the importance of this distinction.⁴¹ But what I wish to stress is that in either case, he, the stranger, does not bring his own meaning from Pluto. If he wishes to communicate intelligently, he must learn the meaning of words. And he can only do this by having access to the already established community of meanings to be found in the given language. This is a given.

Meanings, Resemblances and Differences

This first grade of meaning needs further elucidation. In the example just cited, the first instance is a directly ostensive manner of getting meaning across, while the second, although still denotative in character, is only indirectly so, and is primarily linguistic. But in both cases, familiarity either in terms of objects or words is needed. Thus, it is only after this familiarity is achieved that it makes sense to speak about a secondary sense of a word. And, it is by collateral experience that we become acquainted with the fuller meaning of a word.

From this it follows that if someone looked at a picture with a name underneath it, if he knew who the person there represented was, then he would understand quite a bit about the picture. But if on the other hand, someone had no acquaintance with the person there represented (assuming it was a portrait), then all that the picture would convey to him would be "Someone called 'x' looked like this." It is clear that meaning for Peirce is something that grows, and at any one time is dependent on the "legend"⁴² one has attached to a word.

More technically, by collateral experience Peirce means previous acquaintance with what the word denotes. For example, in order to understand genre painting we would have to be familiar with certain customs prior to an encounter with a painting of this type. Collateral experience is a prerequisite if we are to grasp anything new which the artist has attempted to get through. It is the same with a word. We must be familiar with the usual denotation (or, for non-object words, their function in the sentence) if we are to grasp any new element which it might possess by virtue of its being used in a slightly different context.

As opposed to mathematics which deals with specifically constructed schemata, philosophy (corollarial reasoning)⁴³ reasons with words. But we must understand that in ordinary language no one phrase has a perfectly determined sense. What I mean is that depending on the circumstances, a word or phrase might have different meanings. It is

not a question of one phrase having one meaning. The meaning depends on the circumstances in which the word is used. This does not mean that it is not orderly as it stands, but that it needs refinement for certain purposes. Moreover, the meaning of words in everyday language, as Tarski⁴⁴ has well pointed out, depends not only on their external form, but also on the circumstances in which they are uttered. And, sometimes this dependence stretches to include even subjective psychological factors. Naturally, Tarski is not too sympathetic towards ordinary language,⁴⁵ especially when the logicians are accused of elucidating ordinary language for the achievement of paradoxes or nonsense. At any rate, it is difficult to place Peirce in this perspective. But before getting at the meat of his theory, I must attempt to do so.

Very clearly, Peirce states:

If philosophy is ever to become a sound science, its students must submit themselves to the same ethics of terminology that students of chemistry and taxonomic biology observe.⁴⁶

Although this implies that philosophy should strive, if not for an ideal, at least for an adequate language, certain considerations allow room for doubt with respect to what Peirce meant. First of all, the phrase "the same ethics" should not imply the incessant coining of new terms, but rather, meaning in terms of a common ground. That is, at the beginning of an argument we should specify the meaning of the terms we are using, or else we might find ourselves in a frustrating verbal

dispute. In the second place, this common ground, although perhaps more concretely meaningful if established in ordinary language, is nevertheless permitted to rest on a more abstract level, provided the level is explicitly stated. Peirce understands that

The meaning of words ordinarily depends upon our tendencies to weld together qualities and our aptitudes to see resemblances, or, to use the received phrase, upon associations by similarity.⁴⁷

Continuity

Here, there is no reference made either to ordinary language or to a possible ideal language. The whole point is that no matter whether we find ourselves in ordinary language, or on any level removed from it, if we can discern resemblances and associate qualities on a common ground, then we can communicate. But more than that, if we can do this sort of thing, we can authentically speak about meaning. Of course, this implies that a Lebensform does not end abruptly at any one point, but is continuous. And, upon approaching very abstract levels, we should be cautious. As we shall shortly see, the pragmaticist maxim is the principle of caution par excellence. In these terms then, pragmatism is a method which places us on our guard and helps to end perpetual verbal debates. Peirce, as will soon become evident, is here advancing a theory of meaning embedded in a gradual contextualism.

If this is the case, the accent in terms of meaning falls nevertheless, on ordinary usage. Peirce accepts Renouvier's⁴⁸ discussion of classes of words in terms of a dual separation. But there are certain reservations, for Peirce is very much concerned with overlapping; and, being that he is rather skeptical (and with good reason) about a classification of language in this manner, he subscribes to elasticity when classifying. That is, if I am going to classify language, I cannot do it in terms of an "either/or." Words and meaning evade restrictions of this type. However, in terms of this apparent distinction, he has this to say about the class which contains members of ordinary usage:

The other class consists of the words of the vernacular, representing the vague ideas of common sense, which it is a part of the business of philosophy to discover the definitions of.⁴⁹

Description

First of all, attention must be focused on the phrase "to discover." This implies that philosophy should not prescribe, but rather describe the language of the Lebenswelt. And, if the word "vague" implies that ordinary language needs clarification, or, as Buchler sees it, that Peirce wanted to clarify the common usage of language,⁵⁰ this is somewhat misleading. Granted, there is some truth in what Buchler says, but we should not understand this to mean modification. Rather, the meaning is already in ordinary language, and it is part of the function

of philosophy to make it explicit. The meaning of a word is clear implicitly in the language. And pragmatism is the method which will render meaning explicit when the need arises. The point is that meaning is generated when we are capable of associating a word with familiar experiences, when we can see resemblances and differences in terms of a common ground. In a well established common ground, the meaning is the associations (in terms of use) which are linked with the word, while with respect to a new word, it (the new word) "has to bring the hearer to share the experience of the speaker by showing what he is talking about."⁵¹

Recapitulating, part of the business of philosophy is to discover, to make explicit the meaning of words in an ordinary context. And here, Peirce's phenomenological vein becomes apparent in terms of pointing out what is the case. It is also part of the function of philosophy to modify, or coin a new phrase when the situation demands it. Granted, this appears to be a deviation from the phenomenological method, but if viewed from a wider context, we can still recognize Peirce's theory of meaning as revolving about description rather than prescription. That is, if a situation arises which demands an authentic description, then to use an accepted phrase merely because it is the only one at one's disposal would not do justice to the situation. If my grandfather described ice to me in a certain way, I have no objection; but if I go to Lapp country, in northern Norway, and live with the Lapps for a period

of time, the situation will not be the same. The description given by my grandfather might not be adequate. While I am here in Tucson, I see the ice in terms of my grandfather's description, but while I am in Lapp country, my life might even depend on a more detailed description. The point is that depending on the situation, the language might differ. For, phenomenology means primarily, a faithfulness to disclosure. Or, more poetically, "it is pristine disclosure or unprejudiced description."⁵² I cannot use the language of one situation to describe another situation, no matter how similar this other situation might be. Thus to be faithful to phenomena an adequate phrase (spontaneous or reflected) ought to be used so as to let phenomena be as they are. Of course here, I have indicated language's function as a "net" which captures the given, but the situation is much more complicated than this, as I will presently point out.

Analyzing a Sentence

Suppose that in a Peircean fashion I were to examine the following sentence: "Ravel wrote a left-hand piano concerto for Paul Wittgenstein." It is inadvisable to attempt to grasp the meaning of this sentence just by attending to a pure analysis of it. Granted, much could be understood about the structure of the sentence by analyzing it qua sentence, but meaning evades an isolated analysis. In terms of structure, we might view it as a class or set of ten elements. Furthermore, we might

break the class of these elements (words) down into three sub-classes. Thus we might have a subset of object-words, or what Peirce calls "denotatives" or "designatives." These are essentially ostensive in character. That is, they stand for an object. An example from the above sentence would be the word "piano." Another subset might be comprised of dispositional words. The word "vanity," for example, could be viewed as such. We might also have process-words, such as "writing." Thus writing would not be a disposition, but an activity. Or, we might have logical words, or words of relation, such as "for." Peirce calls these "copulants." Now, someone might, as the early Russell, attempt to place all of these words on the same level. Thus we might come out with a class of ten elements, which on Platonic ground would all be on an ontological par. What do all of these words have in common? This is the misleading question. In this sense, "left-handedness" would stand, ontologically speaking, on the same level as "forness." But here, as Ryle points out,⁵³ we might run into precarious terrain. As a matter of fact, we do run into problems. The "a" which connects (makes rhythmical) "wrote" with "left-hand," if viewed as an "aness," will require another "a" to explain it. We might find ourselves multiplying or invoking these mysterious "nesses" to infinity. The problem stems from asking the wrong question. We should rather, look before we leap into these misleading interrogations. There is no need to mention the perennial problem of universals, which has

plagued (and still plagues) philosophers since the first gadfly began to irritate people. The point is, that upon approaching the sentence this way, although certain technical difficulties might be elucidated, the question of meaning would still remain on the interrogative level.

In terms of meaning, the sentence immediately gives rise to overlapping classes of interrogative sentences. Who was Ravel? Who was Paul Wittgenstein? Why a left-hand piano concerto? More formally, I wish to inquire not about the status of the word "Ravel" in the sentence structure, but about the meaning of the word "Ravel." That is, I wish to grasp the meaning of that sentence by grasping the meaning of the subject, the object, and the relation between the two. Here it is that the notion of familiarity and the ability to discern resemblances and differences, is of paramount importance. Equally important is the notion of growth in terms of meaning.

First of all, a person who did not know who Ravel was, who Wittgenstein was, and what a piano concerto is, could not grasp the meaning of that sentence. If he knew who Ravel was, he would get a certain meaning out of it. If he knew who Ravel was, and what a piano concerto is, he would get still more meaning out of it. Now Peirce wants to maintain that in an objective sense, meaning is never completely exhausted. Let us see why.

Let us bear in mind at this point, that a word means something to us if we know what it denotes; and understanding this, we can use the

word to communicate. I would also like to point out that "denote" here means much more than an object standing in a relation to an object word; that is, that an object word standing for an object is only part of what Peirce means. As I have shown, meaning on this level cannot be divorced from activity, experience, familiarity, similarities and differences, etc. However, this is the lowest grade of meaning for Peirce.

THE SECOND GRADE OF MEANING

Words grow in meaning. How they come to be is not our concern. I think that this sort of an explanation would entail different hypotheses, and this would go beyond my main concern, which is essentially descriptive in character. Once certain words are given, they develop by interacting with other words and by describing and communicating new situations. When a new word comes into being it interacts with other words. Its influence spreads, and its meaning grows by use and in experience. Such words as "force," "law," and "electricity" have richer meanings for us than they had for "our barbarous ancestors."⁵⁴ And, it is with this realization that we can grasp another level of meaning. But we must understand that as for Wittgenstein, this secondary level depends on the first. Of course, this is much more emphasized by Peirce than by Wittgenstein. And, if Wittgenstein was primarily concerned with description without the exclusion of intention, Peirce placed the accent on intention without evading description. However, there are certain considerations which legitimately permit this point of view to be reversed. That is, depending on what they are analyzing, they either describe a model situation or a particular one, or they examine the notion of "intention" as it pertains to the question of meaning. Either way, it all depends on the point they wish to establish.

A Concise Statement

With phenomenological implications, in a clear passage, Peirce says:

The meaning of a word is more fully the sum total of all the conditional predictions which the person who uses it intends to make himself responsible for or intends to deny. That conscious or quasi-conscious intention in using the word is the second grade of meaning.⁵⁵

The above quote is extremely important for an understanding of Peirce's theory of meaning. Peirce gives no direct explication of it. I wish to consider it from three points of view. First, I would like to inquire about the meaning of the phrase "conditional predictions." Secondly, I wish to discuss the import of "intention." Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, what is the status of this second grade of meaning?

One of Peirce's most important contributions was his formulation of a method for determining the meaning of concepts. The importance of this method (pragmaticism) lies in the fact that it can not only eliminate endless verbal disputes, but that it can also delineate meaning in terms of a common, tangible ground. The notion of "conditional predictions" is at the core of pragmaticism. To understand this, let me first sketch briefly his theory of belief, and then look at the two most important formulations of pragmaticism.

Belief, Doubt and Action

A belief is delineated by three main characteristics. It is something of which we are conscious; it soothes the irritation elicited by doubt; and it involves the establishment of a rule of action in our nature. Essentially, a belief is that upon which we are prepared to act. To believe in something means to be disposed in terms of adopting it for a rule of action. In short, we can reduce a belief to a maxim of conduct. For Peirce, nothing could be more evident than this.⁵⁶ Let me then say provisionally that a belief is more or less an expectation in terms of action.

Suppose then, that we act on a particular belief. If our action gives us some satisfaction which was more or less in accordance with our expectation, then that belief is true. On the other hand, if no satisfaction was achieved, then that belief was false. Precisely at this point, doubt is most evident. This is not a universal doubt, of the kind for which Peirce criticized Descartes. It is not a feigned doubt, used for epistemological purposes. It is genuine doubt.

Doubt then, results from action on a belief failing to give satisfaction. That is, it results because what we expected turns out otherwise. Quite a number of possibilities are evident here. The question is not one of either complete belief or complete doubt. We have degrees of both belief and doubt. When the degree of doubt is negligible, action results. On the other hand, when the degree of doubt outweighs that of

belief, we tend not to act. In between complete doubt and complete belief, an action must be modified accordingly. Perhaps the most difficult point is where the belief almost balances the doubt. And, what happens when the degree of doubt balances the degree of belief? Are we reduced to a state of inaction as in the case of Buridan's ass? I think not. Supposed that our belief that it will rain at a certain time is balanced by an equal degree of doubt about the rain. Should we carry our umbrella? Well, what are the consequences of carrying the umbrella in both cases? If it rains and we carry it, then we save our one-hundred-dollar jacket designed especially for us by Oleg Cassini. If we carry our umbrella and it does not rain, then we go through a minor discomfort of carrying something superfluous with us. I'll take the umbrella.

The Essence of Belief

As I have already mentioned, the essence of belief is the establishment of a rule of action, or what Peirce calls a "habit." How do we distinguish among these various beliefs? Obviously, these are distinguished according to the various modes of action to which they give rise. If they do not differ in this respect, then as far as pragmatism is concerned, they are equal. We should not make the mistake of thinking that the distinction between two ideas is nothing but the distinction between two words. But then, how do we determine the meaning of

something? Generally, we look and see what habit (rule of action, disposition) it produces. What a thing means is simply the habit it involves. Now the identification of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act. This hypothetical action is not only based on the circumstances which are likely to occur, but also on any that might possibly occur. In other words, the essence of the rule of action depends on when and how it is responsible for our action.

In terms of the "when," any stimulus to action is ultimately derived from perception. With respect to the "how," the end of action is the production of some sensible result. This is how Peirce is capable of bringing all distinctions of thought, down to a level of what is tangible. Thus all distinctions in thought have their roots in what is experientially palpable.

Dispositionals

Suppose we take an example. What do we mean by calling something "poisonous"? Obviously, what we mean is that it will cause severe impairment to our health (if not death) if we swallow or inhale it. Thus the whole conception of this quality that a substance has (that it is poisonous) lies in conceived effects. Let me point out that this question of disposition is rather important. And here I ought to mention that it should not be confused with causes. What I mean is that when we ask the reason for a substance behaving in such and such a manner, we

could be asking for two entirely different things. When someone asks me how it is possible for that sheet of gold to be so thin, he could be asking me two entirely different things. First of all, he could be asking me why it is like that. To this I would reply that ten minutes ago I took a small piece of gold and then beat it with a hammer unmercifully, until I obtained this thin sheet. Here the question and the answer pertain to the cause. In other words, how did the gold, which usually comes in lumps, get that way? On the other hand, he could be asking me how it is possible for gold to be beaten into thin sheets. Here, he is not asking me about the cause, but about the property of the gold itself. To this question I give an answer in terms of a disposition. I answer that the gold is malleable. Malleability is a certain property or disposition of the gold. This means that if I were to perform such and such a maneuver on the gold, it would have such and such an effect. This is the essence of Peirce's point. And, in somewhat dogmatic terminology Peirce states it thus:

There is absolutely no difference between a hard thing and a soft thing so long as they are not brought to the test.⁵⁷

A Pragmaticist Prescription

There is something wrong with the above formulation. Usually, a very strong objection is raised. If I mention that X is poisonous, does it mean that for someone to understand my assertion, I have to drink it?

Russell, in his Analysis of Mind has very vehemently opposed pragmatism on these grounds. In other words, do I have to act in order for my statement to make sense? Here I must answer that it all depends on what we are talking about. In the above example, if I may answer for Peirce, surely this is not the case. The important point is that I have a certain disposition towards a particular property of a substance. My disposition towards the substance depends on the dispositional character of that substance. That there are only two naturally liquid elements in existence means that if (among other things) I go to the periodic table, I would find such and such properties as belonging to these two elements. But if someone tells me that arsenic is poisonous, do I have to drink it in order to find out? Of course, I could perform certain tests to determine this, but the point here is the formation of an attitude, a rule of action on my part. All that Peirce is saying is that if you were to take some of it, then these results would ensue. And this means that my disposition towards arsenic is one of oral evasion when I encounter it. All that we mean by calling something poisonous is that if we were to take it into our body, then such and such effects (sensible ones) would occur. But before continuing, permit me to examine what is perhaps, Peirce's most famous statement of pragmatism. In 1878, Peirce gave a rule for attaining clearness. He formulated it thus:

Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the

object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object. ⁵⁸

A Renewal

In terms of this formulation, I could ask if the arsenic is really poisonous. That is, it seems that there is no discernible actual fact which makes it so. But is its being poisonous nevertheless, a real fact? It seems that thus far I can only say that it is just how I choose to arrange my thoughts, that determines what something is. In other words, that arsenic is poisonous seems just an arbitrary usage of speech. Peirce was aware of this difficulty, and some twenty years later he reformulated pragmatism in the following manner:

The entire intellectual purport of any symbol consists in the total of all general modes of rational conduct which, conditionally upon all the possible different circumstances and desires would ensue upon the acceptance of the symbol. ⁵⁹

In the first formulation, the case seems to be rather arbitrary and very subjective. In other words, it seemed that the meaning of "poisonous" rested on what I meant by it. Thus the reality of any property appeared ephemeral. Now however, Peirce is maintaining that the real (without discounting the word as applied in many circumstances) is that which is as it is in spite of how it is thought to be at any time. In other words, the real is independent of terminological differences. So that when we say that something is "soft," the real crux of the matter

lies not in our theoretical formulation, but in the fact, in the way a substance behaves. This may sound like much metaphysical hogwash. Metaphysical it is, but not hogwash. It is descriptive metaphysics, and there are two sides to it.

Conception and Responsibility

First, there is a side which involves responsibility; and secondly, there is a side which transcends responsibility. With respect to the first side then, we come to meaning in terms of intention. I can only be responsible in so far as I can conceive the meaning of a certain word or concept. This does not mean that I must envision or clearly delineate in my mind the consequences. It means that even though an effect or consequence may be directly out of my control, if I accept the consequences of being responsible in a certain context, then I am responsible, even though it might be in an indirect way. Consider, as an example, the president of a company telling one of the managers to do something. The president, at the time that the action was to be performed, goes to a cocktail party. The manager forgets to do it. Is the president responsible? Of course he is. The manager may be excoriated, but nevertheless, we can speak of the responsibility of the president also in this case. In other words beyond what I intend responsibility is lifted. It is with respect to controlled conduct that pragmatism would trace (or better still, chart) the intellectual purport of

symbols. In other words, when I act on the belief in a certain proposition, I act in so far as I understand a certain meaning in terms of effects. For this I am responsible. The accent is difficult to place. Are we going to place it on the action or on the habit or disposition to act? Well, it all depends on what word or concept we are talking about. Let me illustrate by two examples. First, from the point of view of another. Suppose that someone says to me, "I am courageous." I then ask him what he means, and he tells me. He does not have to act to tell me what he means. He tells me that under such and such circumstances, he would behave in such and such a manner. In this sense, what he means by "courageous" is that he has a certain disposition to act in such and such a way. He does not have to act in order for me to understand. All that I wish to stress here is the importance of disposition in terms of meaning. It is not so much a question of "watch me" in order to get my meaning; it can be so. But usually, it is a question of "If I were to be in such and such a situation, then I would behave in such and such a manner."

Actions however, do speak louder than words. The meaning of "courageous" I can get from a description, but whether I believe it or not will depend on whether he acts in such a manner. The confirmation of my belief takes place in terms of some future state of things. However, until the test comes, if I have no good reason for not believing him, I believe him. Thus my opinion of him does not change unless

something points to the contrary. A John Smith might have caused me to doubt about his disposition when he ran from the front lines, but Audie Murphy confirmed my belief in his courage. In terms of belief then, both disposition and action must be taken into account.

In terms of some properties of substances, a dispositional interpretation is quite adequate. Thus if I call arsenic "poisonous" I do not have to go and swallow some of it. All that I mean when I say that it is "poisonous" is that if I were to take it, then I would probably die. And what else do we mean by calling arsenic "poisonous" if not that when it is exposed to an agency of a certain kind, a certain kind of sensible result would ensue? This is what Peirce will say about an object which possesses a certain character.

As I have already mentioned, there is also a second side to this notion of consequences. These are those consequences which transcend responsibility. Consider the example of the president and the manager again. The situation is the same, except that this time, a monomaniac comes in and stabs the manager to death before he (the manager) has a chance to execute his orders. Is the president responsible for this? Obviously not. This was not a question of human frailty on the part of the manager, but a question of an accident, or unexpected phenomenon. This sort of occurrence would come under the heading of "unforeseen consequences." When Peirce is saying that the real is independent (as opposed to his first formulation) of what any one of us thinks, he is

saying that we can know only in so far as we can conceive. Beyond this, there are what Peirce calls "unforeseen consequences." I would like to stress, at this point, that from a phenomenological perspective, these consequences are not just a postulation demanded by a metaphysical position. However, this point will be dealt with near the end of this essay. I must now turn to the other two questions previously raised, namely the question of intention, and the status of the second grade of meaning.

Intention

The second grade of meaning depends on an understanding of the first. If we call this common ground of communication, based on a common use of language, the "first grade of meaning," then the second grade will pertain to any intentional deviation from the first. The ordinary meaning of a word, besides being anchored in an ordinary denotation, also has a possibility. It has a material potentiality,⁶⁰ or power, which becomes more manifest in the second level of meaning. Pictorially, the relation between these two grades of meaning is like the relation between an umbra and its penumbra. It is difficult, if not impossible to see where the umbra begins to be a penumbra, or vice versa. But the penumbra does depend on the umbra. Likewise, it is difficult to point to a region where our intentions begin to transcend the first grade of meaning. And, in order to deviate by our intentions, there must be

something there to deviate from. This is not to say that through our intentions we necessarily deviate from the given meaning of a word, but rather, that if we deviate, we can only deviate from something of which we already understand its meaning. Therefore, the second grade of meaning does depend on the first.

The potentiality of the first level becomes actualized more and more as the word interacts with other words. If we can speak of the Firstness of a word, it will deal with the established usage in terms of denotation. There is an important reason for placing such a heavy accent on the first level of meaning. If we can visualize Firstness as suggesting the basic quest of empiricism, we must also understand that this suggests the subordination of inference to disclosure.⁶¹ And by Firstness here, I mean no more than the taking into account of phenomena as they appear. That is to say, the giving of phenomena their due prior to classification and judgment. It is thus very important that we get an understanding of how a word is being used in the ordinary context of language before we can attempt to magnify its meaning. I have shown how this is the case for Peirce to some extent, but if we are to grasp the basic points of his theory we must attempt other perspectives; and here we encounter some difficulties.

If every meaning contains part of the potentiality of whatever it is the meaning, the converse of this is also true. Thus Thirdness (we shall discuss this shortly), which embodies part of the potentiality of

another, constitutes a partial analysis of the meaning of that other.⁶²

All I want to stress here is that if I know the meaning of a word on the first level, this does not exhaust it.

Now a way of getting meaning across on a first level could be in an ostensive manner. Or, we could describe situations in which the word is used. This is the paradigm case of ordinary language analysis. Now Peirce would go along with this, but with some reservations. A word, from a different perspective, is the expression of a habit. Now a paradigm example, at most, communicates one facet of the habit or concept which the word expresses. Thus the word is not well communicated until the learner can feel his way through the various criteria of usage denoted by the word.⁶³ And this comes about by collateral experience, by being acquainted with the "legend" behind the word.

Peirce as an Example

We might elucidate this by using Peirce himself as an example. The word "pragmatism" as such, stands for almost as many different meanings as there are people using the word. In this sense we might say about "pragmatism" what Sartre has said about "existentialism;" namely, that because of its diversified implications, according as to who uses it, it has become meaningless. With respect to "pragmatism," consider that it means to utter, and even here there are so many different shades, the phrase "pure pragmatism." A pure pragmatist sees

meaning in terms of what some "object" such as an electron, does when subjected to observation.⁶⁴ Thus for someone like C. I. Lewis, the quantum equation represents some kind of summary of statements about sense impressions.

On the other hand, a practical pragmatist phrases meaning in terms of what men can do with an electron. Here it is use for human ends that is emphasized. Therefore, someone like Dewey would view the quantum equation as a tool. He would accentuate the usefulness of the equation for meeting certain demands of life. In this sense, for Dewey, pragmatism is a summary of statements "about useful operations for achieving human ends."⁶⁵

Consider another example from the class of meanings attributed to the word "pragmatism." William James accentuates the particularity of the experience by the use of "pragmatism."⁶⁶ That is, James wants to stress the fact that the experience must be particular rather than active. It is no wonder then, that we hear Peirce, slightly irritated by the whole business, saying,

So then, the writer, finding his bantling 'pragmatism' so promoted, feels that it is time to kiss his child good-by and relinquish it to its higher destiny; while to serve the precise purpose of expressing the original definition, he gets to announce the birth of the word 'pragmaticism,' which is ugly enough to be safe from kidnapers.⁶⁷

The point to be made here is that the word "pragmatism" became associated with various meanings. I may call the class of these various meanings the sum total of the established denotative power of the word. Peirce accepted these meanings, but at the same time, he thought of them as an effluvium in which his own meaning had drowned. Thus, to get his meaning across, he coined the word "pragmaticism." In this way, he was capable of establishing his own meaning. Consequently, if Peirce had to explain this meaning to another person, his own explanation would represent the second grade of meaning of the word, while the meaning which that person already understood by collateral experience (the many senses of the word "pragmatism") would constitute the first grade of meaning of the word.

An Analogy (The Ethics of Grammar)

To shed some more light on this point, and in order to grasp the notion of growth with respect to meaning, allow me to examine an important analogy made by Peirce. According to some sensationalists, man is a series of feelings. Does a word have feelings? Feelings depend on our bodies. And, if we restrict feelings to animal feelings, then of course, a word has no feelings. But it does have something which corresponds to feelings. Every feeling seems to be cognitive. A feeling is a sensation, and a sensation can be represented by a word. Now, "the word has a word."⁶⁸ That is, the word has itself. Therefore,

if man is an animal feeling, the word is a written feeling. But we might object in that a man's feelings are perceptions; he is affected by objects in the external world. He sees, hears, smells, etc. A word cannot do this sort of thing. But Peirce would maintain the analogy even here. He would say that perception is the possibility of acquiring information. It is the possibility of meaning more. In this respect, a word also may learn. Consider how much more the word "geometry" means today than it did in the days of the Egyptians.

But does not man make the word and assign it meaning? Peirce would agree with this, but since man thinks only in terms of words or other external symbols, words might turn about and say, "You mean nothing which we have not taught you and then only so far as you address some word as the interpretant of your thought."⁶⁹ It would therefore appear that words and men educate each other reciprocally. That is, each increment of a man's information is at the same time the increment of a word's information, and vice versa. Thus even here there appears to be no difference.

A strong objection to this analogy would be that man has a moral nature. A word does not seem to have one. Morals relate to what we ought to do, and it would seem bizarre to speak of the "oughtness" of a word. But if we envision morality as conformity to a law of fitness of things, then we have something extremely analogous in the good grammar of a word. Peirce says:

Good grammar is that excellence of a word by which it comes to have a good conscience, to be satisfactory not merely with reference being had to the actual state of things which it denotes, not merely to the consequences of the act, but to it in its own internal determination. Beauty and truth belong to the mind and the word alike. The third excellence is morality on the one hand, Grammar on the other. 70

Peirce pushes this analogy to the point of identifying a symbol with man. In the context of his discussion, a practical proof for man's immortality is offered. For my purposes however, it is sufficient to stop with the above quote.

The whole point in examining Peirce's analogy between man and word has been to show the importance which Peirce attaches to the growth of a word. And, since evolution is a vital part of Peirce's theory, I should perhaps say a few words about words that die out and words that are invented or modified for specific purposes, before continuing with this discussion.

To best grasp how words die and are born or modified, we should view the process from an evolutionary point of view. Just as a particular species, or a particular individual within a species, perishes because he cannot adjust to the demands of the environment, so a word is modified or vanishes because a new field of meaning might transcend it. A worn out word or phrase turns into a cliché, and a cliché soon vanishes into nothingness. Some words seem to persist more than

others. Some even appear to be immortal. Thus the word "man," although perpetually shifting in denotative power, nevertheless, appears to be stroked with the brush of immortality. This is true with respect to its denotation as well as its connotation. And, it appears as pure trivia, but obviously, as long as men "rule" the earth, the word "man" will persist. However, even this is not definitive because we could imagine a point in the future where the word "man" might have become a cliché. Here we could envision the word "ghoti" as taking the place of the word "man."

Looking at the other side of the coin, it is not too difficult to see how new words might be born or modified. If an old word becomes worn out in terms of meaning, a new one will replace it. Or if a new situation arises, whereby it demands a new word to denote or explain its peculiarity (or capture it descriptively), then a new word can be coined for the purpose. Also there are many cases in between where adaptability in terms of elasticity occurs.

THE THIRD GRADE OF MEANING

With respect to Peirce's notion of unforeseen consequences, prima facie it appears that they are superfluous. All that he seems to be saying is that the unforeseen is the unforeseen. And, after all, when I act, so what if there are unforeseen consequences? I cannot control or be responsible for them precisely because they are unforeseen.

Let me look at this notion more closely. If we are to act in a specific situation, then generally speaking, any relevant predicament which can be conceived, envisioned or imagined is not an unforeseen consequence. Thus a mother might warn her son, who is about to go on a camping trip, to be careful about certain dangers. He might be bitten by a rattlesnake; he might fall from a cliff; he might get lost, etc. She can conceive of all these possibilities. But, perhaps when he steps out of the door, a brick falls on his head and he is hospitalized for a few weeks. This is an unforeseen consequence. We cannot draw a sharp line between what is unforeseen and what is not. The mother could have very well envisioned the possibility of the brick as well, but this conception is rather remote from the demand of the particular action. The conceivable consequences of a camping trip are different than those of doing something else. A specific action, in its context, has certain possibilities which tend to bear specifically on it. Granted,

the possibility of the child being knifed to death by the scoutmaster in a moment of insanity, could be envisioned, but normally this is very remote with respect to a camping trip. The mother does not even think about this. Thus in the sense of pertaining to a specific hypothetical action, to say that the possibility of conceiving a remote predicament is there, is not to say that this is not an unforeseen consequence. Even though it is conceivable, it is nevertheless unforeseen[?] because it does not relate to the demands of the immediate and particular action. The more remote the possibility, the stronger the sense of "unforeseen" becomes. And if I sit here and attempt to envision all possible consequences, I may never act. As a matter of fact, if I do this I never will act. That is, if I sit here and attempt to envision possibilities which are very remote from what the particular context of my action requires, then I might sit here and contemplate forever, because there are an indefinite number of them. I can see myself sitting on top of a mountain, and I can picture a goat sneezing on top of another mountain. With the sneeze, a certain odor is emanated, which quickly diffuses in the air and by molecular motion (supported by the kinetic theory of gases) is carried to where I sit. While inhaling these vapors, I turn my head in disgust, stand up, and simultaneously, my foot steps on a loose rock, thereby causing me to lose my balance and precipitate into the abyss. Or a beautiful woman from Pluto flies down, seduces me and then knives me to death. Although this latter possibility might be pleasant in some

respects, it is highly improbable. As a matter of fact, both of these possibilities are so improbable that they are unforeseen. The point is, that as far as the particular predicament goes, these might as well not exist. It would then appear that these consequences add nothing to his previous two grades of meaning. However, upon closer inspection, this is not the case. What is their role and importance then?

"Unforeseen Consequences"

Bearing the growth of a word in mind, we are now ready to proceed with this explication and criticism. Besides the first two grades of meaning, there is a third, which Peirce formulates thus:

But besides the consequences to which a person who accepts the word knowingly commits himself to, there is a vast ocean of unforeseen consequences which the acceptance of the word is destined to bring about, not merely consequences of knowing but perhaps revolutions of society.⁷¹

It is clear from this passage that knowing the ordinary usage of a word is not enough for meaning. It is also clear that to envision consequences for which one embraces responsibility when using the word does not exhaust meaning. The fullness of meaning can only be realized by considering the notion of "unforeseen consequences."

Dissociation, Supposition and Distinction

If we consider pragmatism as a method, it prescribes that we attempt to trace out consequences in our imagination.⁷² In terms of a

goal-directed activity, we should chart our ideas so as to obtain the best results with a maximum of efficiency. Now this tracing out takes several forms. First, it could refer to a perceptible object; secondly, it could only be something imaginable; and lastly, it could be something unimaginable, yet nevertheless capable of being supposed. In mathematics this goes on all the time. As a concrete example of this, consider the word "fast." We cannot imagine this word qua word, but only an instance of it. That is, it must be taken in context, for it could mean many things such as "speed," "loose" (with respect to a woman), "abstinence," etc.

Perhaps a Peircean example might be more illustrative. Of two ideas, one may be present to consciousness at the exclusion of the other. Thus I can imagine "orange" without "green." I can also imagine sound without melody, but in this case I cannot see how one could imagine melody without sound. This is what Peirce means by "dissociation." Secondly, although it may be impossible to separate two conceptions in the imagination, we can suppose one without the other. Peirce insists that we can suppose uncolored space, although we cannot dissociate color from space. Peirce calls this phenomenon "prescission." Finally, although one element could not be supposed without the other, we can still distinguish between them. This is a mutual parasitism. Thus we can neither imagine nor suppose a taller without a shorter, yet we can distinguish one from the other. And this, Peirce

calls "distinction."⁷³ But there are many words which, given even all their instances, still evade us in terms of Peirce's notion of "unforeseen consequences." Let me first establish a basic point and then explicate this aspect a little more.

First, I must emphasize that for Peirce, the question is not so much one of conceivability, but of credibility.⁷⁴ Secondly, credibility is not to be viewed in terms of an immediate, tangible situation, in all cases. In many cases it is to be looked at as an elastic perspective saturated with living doubt. In this sense, Peirce rejects a "Pooh-pooh"⁷⁵ argument; that is, he rejects an argument which consists in denying that an event will occur just because it has never occurred yet. It is thus best to view pragmatism in terms of credibility, and not without underestimating its elastic character. This elasticity transcends the realm of logic because it is not the kind of elasticity prescribed by a logical system. It finds its sustenance in the logic of life, not in that of a theoretical system. The law of contradiction does not enter here with the same force that it enters in logic. I can act on two "contradictory" beliefs. Thus, I can carry an umbrella on the supposition or belief that it will rain, and simultaneously carry my swimming trunks on the belief that it will shine. The example of the umbrella, as previously stated is an example of this.

From this it follows that our concepts should never be static and closed. They should be open as much as possible so as to be prepared

for the unforeseen. In my opinion, it is just as foolish and stupid to die for a static idea as it is to remain aloof because it does not affect one personally. Monomania is just as vicious as no mania at all. For it is precisely from those that shrug their shoulders that a maniac gets his support. They are parasitic upon each other. Thus, with this elasticity surrounding our words, a new meaning would permit a maximum of acceptance with a minimum of dissonance.

"Would-be's" and "May-be's"

This notion of openness and growth is of paramount importance. For in the end, the nursing of the correct disposition in a human being will perhaps be the most important part of his education. To understand this more technically, I should perhaps examine what Peirce means by a "would-be." For it is precisely this notion which is responsible for some of the most consequential considerations.

Intellectual concepts essentially carry some implication concerning the general behavior either of some conscious being or of some inanimate object, and so convey more, not merely than any feeling, but more, too, than any existential fact, namely, the "would-acts," "would-do's" of habitual behavior; and no agglomeration of actual happenings can ever completely fill up the meaning of a "would-be."⁷⁶

Qualities appear to be mere "may-be's." That is to say, in terms of knowledge, they are mere possibilities. Perception is the possibility of acquiring information. Knowledge of even the most primitive sort

demands the capacity to classify and the ability to infer. A percept as such does not belong to the realm of knowledge proper; it is a potential function of epistemology. Now a "would-be" is a different thing. The proposition "Diamond is hard" is not a mere "may-be." When one says that it is hard, one means that it is very likely that it will not be scratched⁷⁷ by say, wood. Thus a "would-be" already has some experience behind it, whereas a "may-be" is of the nature of a pure possibility, which depends for its actualization on our conceptual scheme. Thus if a "would-be" is now real, the character of future realizations is to that extent, destined to manifest itself.

From this it follows that the concept of an object should be translated not in a conjunction of sense predicates ("may-be's"), but into a conjunction of conditional propositions. This conjunction relates the specified conditions of perception to the occurrences of sense properties. And these conditionals are general laws, and therefore of the nature of habits, as already mentioned.

Now some critics interpret Peirce as implying that unless we can conceive the consequences, the word is meaningless. In one sense there is nothing wrong with this interpretation; but in another, we could reject it immediately by pointing to the word "the." Furthermore, some of these critics maintain that for Peirce, the totality of these conceived consequences is the total meaning of the word.⁷⁸ It is not difficult to detect a certain naivete in such an interpretation. If Peirce

wanted to maintain that the meaning of a word is the entire general intended interpretant⁷⁹ (which is another way of saying that the whole meaning rests on the consequences which can be conceived), he would not have taken the pains to explicitly emphasize the notion of "unforeseen consequences."

First of all, Buchler is correct when he maintains that Peirce wanted to make precise the criterion of meaning implicit in ordinary language.⁸⁰ It is true that besides basing his theory of meaning on ordinary usage, Peirce also wanted to clarify it for other purposes; but it is not true (correct) to say that clarifying the meaning of ordinary discourse would exhaust all meaning. For Peirce, ordinary language at times seems to be no more than a stepping stone, and a reminder that most men live in the world of common sense. At times, one wonders if it even meant this to him! Occasionally, he is explicitly antagonistic when it comes to ordinary language. The Peirce who can say "We do not care what meaning the usages of language may attach to a word,"⁸¹ cannot even be considered as attempting to exhaust all meaning in terms of ordinary language.

The point to be made here is that the Peircean notion of a final interpretant is not very palatable to Buchler. Now Alston views the final logical interpretant as a "highly significant development of pragmatism."⁸² As a matter of fact, Alston goes on to show that this notion is an essential ingredient of Peirce's theory of signs, and

consequently, of meaning. And it is precisely this notion of a "would-be" which generates a final interpretant.

An Example

Here, it is very facile to get involved in metaphysical matters. At this point it should be sufficient to say that the conceivable consequences, in terms of constant modification, do not exhaust the meaning of a word. Did Newton exhaust the meaning of "gravity" with the consequences he could envision? Let us reflect on this momentarily. At the time of Newton, the word "gravity" probably meant some kind of attraction in an ordinary conversation. In the ordinary discourse of men it was a nebulous word which had something to do with the attraction of bodies at a distance. This does not mean that to the ordinary man, the word was incoherent. It was perfectly in order as it stood. We might call this the first grade of meaning. For Newton on the other hand, the word meant much more than this. It meant certain consequences of a mathematico-physical nature which he could envision in terms of his theory. These conceivable consequences for which Newton was responsible, went beyond the meaning of the ordinary usage of the word. But, was this all? Obviously not. Consider the unforeseen consequences of "Newton's gravity" which have become manifest today!

In a Peircean fashion, it is interesting to observe how the word "gravity" pollulated. Granting that this interpretation of how Peirce

would view the evolution of this word in terms of meaning is correct, let us view it from two perspectives, and attempt to understand the process. The comparison I propose at this point is no more than descriptive phenomenology.

Newtonians and Einsteinians

In the days of Newton, "gravity" had three grades of meaning. First, it had an ordinary meaning. The man at the local pub used the word, and in the context of his conversation it made perfect common sense. And, even though there might have been an aura of vagueness surrounding the word, this vagueness had a certain order in the context of ordinary language. Men understood each other. In the second place, Newton amplified the meaning by uttering the word with certain intentions, which he was willing to hold himself responsible for. These intentions embodied the common meaning of the word, but they also went beyond that meaning, and in this sense, magnified it. In other words, Newton gave the ordinary meaning a something more. And, it is precisely this something more which makes Newton what he is. But there was also a more which transcended the more which Newton had given the word. This more is what Peirce calls "unforeseen consequences."

Permit me now to examine the word "gravity" from our own contemporary perspective. To the man in the street, "gravity" means attraction in terms of elementary mathematical equations. It is not

unusual to hear conversations at the local tavern which entail notions such as "force," "distance," "proportion," "the square of the distance," "universal constant," etc. In these discussions, "gravity" has a certain meaning. But did it mean the same to Einstein? Does it mean the same to the contemporary physicist? Of course, he does take the ordinary usage into account, and when he goes home to his wife, ordinary usage might be the meaning of "gravity." But in the company of his colleagues, how much more the word means! The notion of the curvature of space has very little relevance in an ordinary conversation. Tensor calculus is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man. Of course, these terms may be used in the context of an ordinary conversation, but they cannot have the same meaning that they do for the physicist. What ordinary man would understand what the physicist means when he says that the earth is standing still? But, even beyond this, there is a third level of meaning which we cannot presently envision, but which, given the progress of science (in this case), will one day appear at the horizon.

If we now compare these two perspectives, we notice in the first place, that the common meaning of Newton's age has become somewhat aufgehoben. It is then not difficult to notice that the second grade of meaning of Newton's age, or what he, himself intended, has become our ordinary meaning. Thirdly, Newton's third grade of meaning, or at least part of his unforeseen consequences, has become our second grade

of meaning, or what the physicist conceives of today. Lastly, we have another grade of meaning, which transcends these; and this is no other than what this word will mean to future generations. We can therefore see that the meaning of a word, as it evolves through the Peircean categories, becomes richer and richer.

I must now amplify the explication by viewing the problem from another angle. Some have held that the difference in meaning between two words or propositions lies in a difference of observable particulars. This view is only partly correct. Pragmaticism identifies meaning with the formation of a habit (way of acting). This habit is valued in terms of having the greatest possible generality or range of application to particulars. Habits are just as real as particulars. And Peirce would view as a mistake the looking upon an idea as a lifeless thing just because it does not have the existence of a hecceity.⁸³ That is, it is erroneous to discard an idea because it cannot be indicated as a this or a that. And although the nominalist is substantially correct in saying that a general idea is of the nature of a word, his addendum in the form of a "mere" is "a complete misunderstanding of what our everyday world consists of."⁸⁴ While the wealth of phenomena lies in their sensuous qualities, "pragmatism does not intend to define these, but eliminates their sential element, and endeavors to define their rational purport."⁸⁵ This rational purport is found in the intention which a person has while using a word. But it is also a rational purport which

finds itself in the field of force of unforeseen consequences, and therefore, is not exhausted with any one's particular intention.

I should hope that this paper will be instrumental in eliminating that view which attaches a label to Peirce's theory of meaning, and then leaves it as such. A definition as such, is no more than a skeleton. We should think of pragmatism more in terms of a living definition. That is, pragmatism is an elastic criterion for explicating meaning. It is very much corrigible. For Peirce, it was primarily a method for settling metaphysical disputes. Pragmatism does not attempt to determine the meaning of logical words such as "if," "and," and "not." And as far as sentences are concerned, it only deals with synthetic ones. Its primary function is the clarification of "hard words and abstract concepts."⁸⁶ In this sense, pragmatism is the enemy par excellence of verbal arguments.

Although pragmatism entails a considerable portion of Peirce's theory of meaning, I cannot identify it with his theory of meaning. There is much more involved in meaning than a method of clarification. First of all, although it applies very well to common discourse, it becomes less pungent when applied to the second grade of meaning. The second grade of meaning is already one step removed from common discourse in terms of specificity of meaning; this makes its ground of argumentation clearer. We seldom hear of arguments between mathematicians. Or, physicists do not argue as much as soccer players. One need only

think about the last finals for the Rimet Cup, between Germany and England. Need more convincing proof be cited? As such, it requires less arbitration. Thus, purely verbal arguments tend to diminish in proportion as we leave the ground of ordinary language responsibly. Finally, the method is obsolete when it comes to unforeseen consequences. Obviously, unless it has a tangible dispute before it, pragmatism is impotent.

CONCLUSION

At this point, I wish to explore further, some of the questions which I raised earlier. First, what does Peirce mean by a grade of meaning? Secondly, what are the implications of such a view? Lastly, is his theory of meaning descriptive?

With respect to the first question, I wish to support his theory by considering two points. First, on the one hand, he is pollulating a theory of meaning which is hierarchical in nature, while on the other, his theory of meaning is presented as a focal point which generates a gravitational field of meaning.

When I say that his theory of meaning is hierarchical in nature I mean that his grades of meaning form a continuum in terms of which the meaning of a word grows as it progresses from the first grade towards the "unforeseen consequences." There is an implicit continuity which pervades these three grades of meaning. Thus the word "grade" should not be taken to imply a strict demarcation from one sphere to the next. It is to be understood primarily as a way of saying that there are important differences among these spheres. The differences have been shown to exist with my example of the growth of the word "gravity." Permit me now to show the similarities in terms of the dependence of these grades, one on the other, as we progress from the first to the last.

The first grade of meaning I have already described. If we view it in terms of a common ground of communication (with all the implications mentioned), then the second grade will pertain to any intentional deviation from the first. Allow me to remind you that there are hybrids here. I am leaving this possibility open, and I am concerning myself only with the noticeable deviation. Now between these two grades of meaning there is an essential continuity, and the second is parasitic on the first. Pictorially, the relation between these two grades of meaning is like the relation between an umbra and its penumbra. First of all, it is difficult if not impossible to see where the umbra begins to be a penumbra. We might call this the "hybrid region." But my point is that the penumbra does depend on the umbra. Similarly, in order for us to deviate by our intentions, there must be something there to deviate from. This is not to say that through our intentions we necessarily deviate from the meaning of a given word. We could coin, intentionally, a new word. (This will be dealt with in terms of my second point.) However, it is to say that if we deviate, we can only deviate from something of which we already understand the meaning. Therefore, the second grade of meaning depends on the first.

But suppose that there is nothing there to deviate from. That is, suppose that I intentionally coin a new word. To this I answer that Peirce's theory of meaning still holds. I am now maintaining that it is perfectly legitimate (in the context of my previous explication) to view

his theory as a focal point with a gravitational field of meaning around it. Wittgenstein, at one point makes the following analogy:

Do not be troubled by the fact that languages (2) and (8) consist only of orders. If you want to say that this shews them to be incomplete, ask yourself whether our language is complete; whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated in it; for these are, so to speak, suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?) Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses.⁸⁷

I think that this analogy describes sufficiently how a new word might be coined.

But now, what about the "unforeseen consequences?" I do not think that this level depends, as the second on the first, on the second. However, this level has a justification. The justification is historical in character. If we examine history, this notion makes sense. Just as water has always boiled at 100 degrees Centigrade in the past, the unforeseen consequences can be seen to be working in the past. But will water boil this way always? This, I think, is a misleading question, for it incites in us the desire to prove that this will always be the case. In other words we want to justify induction. I do not think that it is the sort of thing that can be justified. Here I think that Peirce has gone astray. In terms of the past, this third grade of meaning is still

descriptive in character; but in terms of the future, Peirce sees a consequence. He sees meaning converging towards a point where it will achieve complete ripeness. In the context of his philosophy, he maintains that the final result will be "Truth." This convergence is independent of what any one of our opinions may be now. In short, I think that here we enter into prescriptive terrain. And this is my main criticism of Peirce. It is as though the city which Wittgenstein describes is imperfect now, and will one day achieve a perfect state. To me, this manner of speaking, although very much dear to my heart, is nevertheless misleading. It is misleading because anything could happen in the future.

With respect to the second question, the implications are clear. Leaving out the criticism I have mentioned, it is an extremely lucid and faithful view of meaning. Overlooking my criticism, it is a most sublime view of language.

Lastly, Peirce is a first rate phenomenologist. As such, he will surely stand the test of time.

FOOTNOTES

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