

EMPIRICAL MEANING AND INCOMPLETE PERSONHOOD

CHAPTER ONE -- INTRODUCTION

Objective

In this thesis, I am interested in pragmatist conceptions of meaning, especially those of Willard V. O. Quine, Charles S. Peirce, and Wilfrid Sellars. I intend to cover a broad range of philosophical matters with the purpose of discovering how we might define the problem of that "shorthand" concept for the range of human experience, "meaning". In doing so, I will be concentrating on the general areas of *meaning in perception* and *signification* (i.e., formulation of expressions of meaning) *by purposeful agents*. Since this could become an unmanageable task -- and some might argue that it is an impossible one -- I will narrowly construe the scope by concerning myself only with that which can be conformed to logical forms. Hence, I will be concerned with that which can be conveyed in speech, i.e., propositionally.

Typically, conceptions of propositional meaning rely on notions of either extensionality or intensionality. To begin with, the former notion is distinguished from the latter by its involving existing instances. Thus, while extensional meaning would be construed under the rubric of reference, intensional meaning would be construed under the rubric of significance, or meaningfulness, where no referent is involved. The former kind of construal of meaning, thus, would define "meaning" in terms of an existent and the relation between that existent and a linguistic object, for example, a sentence. On the other hand, an intensional construal of meaning would define "meaning" in terms of a conceptual or mentalistic entity and the relation between that entity and a linguistic object, for example, a sentence.

As explanatory accounts of meaning, both approaches result in the problem of having to explain the objectivity of linguistic and/or perceptual experience. That is, there would seem to be something (i.e., meaning) involved in such experience that is real independent of particular minds, yet, it has proven extraordinarily difficult to provide a satisfactory explanation of that purported fact. The problem arises from assuming that the notion of meaning involves the representation of something *and* from attempting to explain both what the representation itself is and how it is a representation of something. An attempt to explain how a representation is a representation of something must explain representability in general (i.e., how it purports to represent anything at all) and in particular (i.e., how it represents some specific thing).

The first part of that problem-origin, with respect to taking the notion of meaning as representational, seems to be fundamental and unproblematic itself. The problem arises, rather, in explaining representational purport and representational success. Although the specific nature of the problem changes according to how one approaches inquiry regarding objectivity in representations, the general problem is the same with respect to both approaches. The general problem is that of objectivity, that, for example, of there being such a thing as a meaning which is the purport of a representation, or, again, of there being such a thing as a referent to which one does or does not successfully refer. The general problem arises, so I will argue, from already being caught within a web of objects and not being able to free oneself from it.

Meaning itself consists in finding completeness in experience: there is no such thing as half of an object of experience since objects appear as wholes or not at all.¹ Whatever is experienced is itself a whole,

¹ Throughout the rest of this thesis, my reference to objects in general should be interpreted very generally. That might be taken as a way of avoiding the issue of objectivity. I do, nevertheless, believe that there is a fact of the matter with regard to objects experienced, though determination of the end of inquiry may involve a radical reconstrual of the notion of a fact. I simply reject the notion, and will not even argue against it here, that the problem of meaning is directly related to the issue of what there is. Rather, I will be interested in the problem of meaning for us. To the extent that there are still obstacles to reaching the end of inquiry, to that extent our conception of the problem of meaning must be formulated in such a way that it is distinct from the conception of meaning at the end of inquiry. One of those obstacles is the fact that we do not know currently what exactly the form of experience is. Using the term "objects" in a very general sense is but an admission of that fact. In a sense, the facing side of a '69 Mustang is a phenomenological whole; and I don't even mean in the sense that we know it is a car and can fill in the details on the basis of background knowledge. Another way of looking at my phenomenological starting point is in terms of the psychological distinction between figure and ground. There is a sense in which, while some figure is the object of experience, the ground is not. At the same time, the figure could be the ground for some irregularity on the surface of the figure. Further, the ground itself could become the figure relative to a more encompassing ground. When I use the term "object", it will be in the sense that something is the figure between a more encompassing ground/potential-figure and a less encompassing "sub-figure"/potential-figure.

even if we consider it a merely phenomenal whole. If our entire experience is of and only of objects, i.e., wholes, it is only natural that we might find a general problem of objectivity when making an inquiry into meaning; for are these objects real or can they be explained by other, real objects and how can we doubt that there is some objective situation?² The naturalness of reaching the conclusion that there is some objective situation to be explained is not itself a reason to formulate meaning in terms of such objectivity. Nor is the phenomenal completeness of objects of experience (i.e., that objects appear as *complete* objects) reason to think that we could not give an analysis of certain kinds of representations which would itself consist in something other than that completeness. Rather, one might expect an account of meaning to include, for instance, the notion of being *directed toward* such complete wholes.

The objectivity in representations which is part of intensional and extensional approaches is difficult to account for. Hence, one might wonder whether objectivity in representations is really an essential part of meaning or whether only the phenomenal reality of phenomenal wholes is essential to meaning. That is, does an account of meaning need to explain the reality of objects used to account for meaning? Or is that simply an unproductive detour we take because we do not see the real heart of the issue? The more central issue might be whether we think objects of experience are real because such objects as we experience are generated and because we, by nature, reach out toward objects which are generated by our perceptual equipment. If objectivity in representations cannot be justified, that impossibility alone would be a reason to look for approaches that do not require objective entities. Some other approach is required to justify the commitment to there being objects independent of particular minds. If our perceptual equipment really does somehow generate objects, for example, by some Kantian synthesis and unity of apperception, such occurrences would account for the completeness of representations.

² The reader should not be led to think that I believe the notions of objectivity and reality, which are very important to such projects as, for example, Frege's, should always be so casually exchanged. I think that a great deal of analysis can and should be done with respect to those concepts such that they would be treated as distinct. However, my generalizing approach is justified, I think, in view of the fact that such proper treatment would not analyze away the problems I am pointing to. No more would such analysis make the conflicts with which I will deal later any more resolvable. In the absence of such tangential analysis, objectivity and reality might be treated as interchangeable in the contexts in which I will do so without harm.

My approach in the present project is to look to the pragmatists to provide an account of those representations important to beings capable of knowing things. The pragmatists look to practice, that is, to the actions and conceptions involved in living our lives, in interpreting what experience consists of. As it will turn out, an analysis of phenomenal wholes is made possible only after having a notion of meaning in which that notion is construed in terms of the action of conceptualizing.

The pragmatists themselves have not achieved consensus on the matters with which I am concerned, though, as we will see shortly. In working toward an acceptable resolution of the conflicting points of view taken in response to various meaning-related problems, a number of issues will be discussed which seem only tangentially related at first. Since the representations of sapient (as opposed to merely sentient) beings are my focus, an argument for the intentionality of representations will be discussed in the context of how intentionality is involved in knowledge. Completeness will also be discussed, not only in the context of momentary phenomenal wholes, but also with respect to the sets of beliefs possessed by beings capable of knowing things. Finally, inquiry will be discussed, as the directedness toward a complete set of those beliefs of beings capable of knowing things. The result will be a conception of meaning that has as much to do with the generation of phenomenal wholes as it does with the representation of facts.

Three Pragmatists

Even without speculating on non-propositional meaning, which would be very different from the action-oriented notions of meaning I will be discussing, the scope of my project is still far too vast. For that reason, I will focus on the work of Quine, Peirce, and Sellars. I have selected those three pragmatists because a systematic, scientific spirit imbues their work. Nonetheless, despite that characteristic, which does not necessarily distinguish them from others, even from those who are not pragmatists (e.g., Pierre Duhem), there are other reasons.

I believe that an account of meaning can meet standards of rigor without, at the same time, detaching

itself from concerns of practice. One finds that same commitment in the thought of the three pragmatists mentioned. Also, the more important of their works have been reactions to positivism. The emergent concern -- of holding a line between practical interests, on one hand, and a positivist brand of rigor with respect to the analysis of experience, on the other hand -- is manifest in the writings of Quine, Peirce, and Sellars. Taken alone, each concern would provide little assistance in carrying out this project. Positivism neglects things, which are important in everyday concerns, yet, of which we have no direct experience. At the same time, a concern with purely practical concerns would result in a lack of overall systematicity, elegance, and meaningfulness. In fact, as I suggest below, holding that line between positivism and practical interests is part of what makes them "pragmatists", despite the fact that the appellation, in Quine's and Sellars' day, probably referred to earlier generations of practical-minded philosophers (i.e., C. I. Lewis' and Dewey's generations). Nonetheless, today, the epithet is used more or less accurately to refer to Sellars and to Quine. Finally, I have chosen them from those philosophers who share the above characteristics simply because they appealed to me.

The question, "Why these three?", raises the question of what pragmatism is. The pragmatist tradition has important ties to traditions that are prior both historically and intellectually. I believe that to say what makes a person a pragmatist and to gauge the importance of what alleged pragmatists have said, it is important to understand who came before and what those predecessors said. As Sellars wrote, paraphrasing Kant, "Philosophy without the history of philosophy, if not empty or blind, is at least dumb" (1967, 1).

The significance of being able to compare the thought of the pragmatists with that thought which preceded them is especially great with respect to Quine. He is an anomaly within the pragmatist tradition, with respect to the limited role which human purposes, beliefs, and purposeful action have in the world dreamt of in his philosophy. Partly for that reason, Quine's conception of meaning will be the starting point for my inquiry. Also, because Quine's pragmatism is anomalous, it is most important to establish the ties that bind the pragmatists together. In doing so, it makes it easier to see why those intentional elements mentioned are left out of Quine's pragmatic philosophy and why their absence makes a difference.

Phenomenology and Empiricism

My approach to this preliminary problem is to focus on empiricists and phenomenologists. To a certain extent, the work of pragmatists could be described as attempts to clear paths, each somehow different from those blazed by other pragmatists, between (and across, sometimes) the two roads of phenomenology and empiricist epistemology. Both of those groups might be considered phenomenalistic, in that they share the view that the objects of experience are given in impressions which are somehow made present to our consciousness. Thus, to a certain extent, they both subscribe to the view that the source of our knowledge is perception. However, I will be concerned with them as phenomenologists who are either empiricist or phenomenological, with respect to the fact that the former generally are eliminativists and the latter are conservative when the issue of the existence of mental entities is raised. With regard to that issue, the two groups have much to do with what pragmatism is and what the development of a pragmatist conception of meaning has to work from.

As will be described briefly below, Quine responded to the very different ideas of the two camps of the Gestalt theorists and the logical empiricists. For that reason and because the phenomenologists are best represented by the former and the empiricists are, perhaps, best represented by the latter, they will be the ground I work from.

Gestalt phenomenology

The gestalt theorists owe their intellectual debts to many, but to Kant and Brentano especially. Both Kant and Brentano were concerned with the object-directedness of cognitive activities. Kant was concerned with the prior conditions for experience, i.e., with what makes it possible for there to be objects of experience. His philosophy presupposes that there is some reality of things, which he called noumena. Those things which we perceive, which he called phenomena, differ from the noumena because we do not directly apprehend them intellectually as they are. Rather, our intellectual apprehension of what there is, is a product of forms of thought dependent on *both* the actuality of our

faculty of sensibility's producing representations which are somehow "of" the noumena sensed, but unknown in any direct sense *and* the conceptualization of the sensible qualities registered. As long as our intellectual apprehension requires our registering sensible qualities of objects, we will not be able to apprehend supersensible things as they are.

In contrast to Kant, however, Brentano was concerned with the objects perceived and the laws given in appearances, rather than with the gap between things in themselves and things perceived (Ash, 1994, 28). Brentano, consequently, was interested in those facts of, and laws contained in, perception independent of the construction of perceptual judgments as a process. The Gestalt theorists followed Brentano in his not merely phenomenalist, but phenomenological, approach. That is, while they were interested in phenomena, they were concerned not with the atomic elements of perception, but with perceptual wholes. The Gestaltists developed a psychological theory based on an empirical, but not empiricist, theory of knowledge. That is, unlike empiricists such as David Hume, their phenomenalist approach did not involve a concern with simple sensations, but rather with complex wholes. Hence, their methods were empirical, in having to do with experience, but not empiricist, because they did not take experience as matter from which the elements of experience could be analyzed out or somehow derived. Rather, they took the perceived wholes, as they were, complex and unanalyzable, and to be that which is given in experience.

Logical empiricism

In contrast, the logical empiricists, as empiricists, were interested in phenomena but only insofar as phenomena are ultimate sources of knowledge. They were not interested in psychologistic explanations of knowledge formation nor with metaphysical claims about imperceptible or underivable entities. Thus, they were empiricists (in the reductivist sense) in that they intended to analyze that ultimate source of knowledge, experience, into its elements to discover what these empirical "premisses" actually are and how they combine. In taking this approach, they were developing a theory of knowledge for science according to which knowledge could be derived from the elements of experience, rather than basing knowledge on non-verifiable metaphysical claims regarding things in themselves or on the notion of a unification of experience by a self. Hence, they were phenomenistic,

but not phenomenological. The logical empiricists were logical in that they were concerned with the logical structure of science and its constructions, both theories and statements.

The logical empiricists wanted to construct an empiricist theory of knowledge and explain the construction of scientific theories using such a theory. Of course, scientific constructions consist of elements which do not seem to be derived from experience. That is, some sentences which are required to make theories complete involve terms which are independent of experience (e.g., *force* in physical theory) or, in the case of logical truths, involve no experiential terms. Mathematical theories contain numerous sentences that are logically, rather than contingently, true. In fact, it would be odd to have sentences in a mathematical theory whose truth are contingent on experiences. Considering the close connection of science and mathematics, it would not be so odd that scientific theories might contain (or even require) necessarily true sentences, as well. For example, sentences expressing a commitment to classes could be held true in a different sense than sentences related to perceptible entities, where the entities of the latter are formulated in terms of classes. Of course, if there are such kinds of statements, then those sentences could be used to support empirical statements of a scientific theory. Moreover, the projects of the logical empiricists (e.g., of Carnap), required a division among truths, those which are necessary truths, on one hand, and those which are contingent truths, on the other. They required it so that scientific theories could be described as having the logical structure of theories, in the sense of their consisting of explanations and generalizations, rather than that of ordinary language lists of observations.

As is well known among philosophers, Quine challenged the logical empiricists for maintaining a division between analytic and synthetic statements (1960). He was unable to find a justification for the claim that there were any sentences that could be held true under every contingency. He even went so far as to suggest that the law of the excluded middle might be revised when applied within certain contexts (e.g., quantum theory) (1960, 43).

To the extent that it concerns my overall project, the basis for that argumentative line will be discussed in greater detail below. However, the general purpose of the next section is to point out where the pragmatists fit into the schools of thought and issues with which I was concerned in this section. The idiosyncratic methods of Quine's, Sellars', and Peirce's ways of doing so, then, will be my next subject.

Pragmatism as the Mediation of Phenomenology and Empiricism³

Quine's pragmatism

Quine carved a path between phenomenology and empiricism by rejecting the distinction between linguistic and empirical meaning. Quine's main point was that we should discard the notion that there is something in virtue of which certain statements which cannot conflict with experience are true.⁴ Such statements, called analytic statements, were contrasted with other statements, called empirical (or synthetic) statements, whose truth is confirmed or disconfirmed on the basis of experience. Presumably, statements which can be confirmed or disconfirmed make sense for that reason alone: they have some component that can be compared to things in experience such that they can be judged true or false on the basis of that comparison. Presumably, meaning is that item in virtue of which statements either involve concepts and their relations (in the case of analytic statements) or some referential connection to existential instances (in the case of synthetic statements).

Analytic statements allegedly cannot conflict with experience because they stand for (in some sense of "stand for") concepts and not for instances that are existents. I will be referring to that property or capacity to express relationships between concepts and to stand for concepts, rather than existential instances, as "intension". Presumably (and what is missing, Quine complained, is an adequate explanation to this effect), if analytic statements have meaning, it is because of some logical form of the relation of the concepts. The property of statements which are true in virtue of that conceptual content

³ While the picture of pragmatism as mediating phenomenological and empiricist strategies is more relevant to my purposes, it would be misleading not to mention another characteristic of pragmatism, which plays a more explicit role than that discussed in this section: the rejection of *a priori* inquiry. It is taken axiomatically by pragmatists that philosophical inquiry must begin in the middle of things. For example, Peirce writes, "Philosophy. . . does not busy itself with gathering facts, but merely with learning what can be learned from that experience which presses in upon every one of us daily and hourly. It does not gather new facts, because it does not need them, and also because new general facts cannot be firmly established without the assumption of a metaphysical doctrine; and this, in turn, requires the cooperation of every department of philosophy" (CP 5.120). Thus, were we to try to give *a priori* principles, we would be stuck with a circle of inquiry in which we relied on other philosophical principles to establish the *a priori* principles. Rather, pragmatists begin with what we know and prescribe the strategy of trying to improve on that knowledge as we go on.

⁴ Quine gave a concise and perspicuous argument for his nominalist response in two essays, "On What There Is" and "Two Dogmas of Empiricism". The famous second paper, "Two Dogmas" was partially a vehicle for rejecting analyticity, which is Quine's means of rejecting a large class of universals (e.g., meanings and attributes), which he took to be mentalistic entities. Since Quine's book, *From a Logical Point of View*, presents a concise presentation of the basis of this part of his philosophy, I give much attention to that book in this section. Later, I will also draw on *Word and Object* and *Ontological Relativity, and Other Essays*.

and their syntactic form is called "analyticity".

Quine had a motive in attacking analyticity important enough to warrant mention here. The distinction between analytic and empirical statements to which Quine objected involves two points that Quine denied and countered. One is the notion that statements have certain "meaning" properties or involve certain such kinds of entities. If individual statements make sense only in virtue of intensional properties or entities, then if one rejects those properties or entities, individual statements no longer make sense.⁵ That point is connected to a second: that the distinction between analytic and empirical statements only makes sense if one agrees that it makes sense to treat statements individually. His counterclaim was that empirical statements face "the tribunal of sense experience" only as a network (which view is commonly referred to as "semantic holism") (1960, 41). Although it makes intuitive sense that statements should be considered units, at least partly because it makes intuitive sense that they have meaning, Quine believed that the meanings of statements in the service of science should not be considered individually.

Quine also believed that beyond those points, there were other reasons, scientific ones, to treat whole language schemes, rather than sentences, as individuals. One of those reasons is that there are often elements of language one would like to eliminate from theories for the sake of simplicity or convenience. For example, Carnap's account of experience involved, according to Quine, "assignment of sense qualities to [spatio-temporal] point-instants" in statements of the form "Quality q is at $x;y;z;t$ ", where the means to eliminate the connective "is at" were not given in Carnap's account (1961, 40). Quine was of the opinion that it is generally better to eliminate what seems unnecessary or overly complicated, such as the connective "is at". Such elimination can be hampered or even blocked if one thinks that the truth of certain statements is independent of that of the statements of a theory as a

⁵ As a result, one must rely on notions other than intensional properties and intensional entities. One such notion is that of "truth". In fact, Quine's semantic holism hinges on a peculiar theory of individuation of language relying on a theory of truth. However, Quine's point only makes sense if one is interested in truth. What Quine was objecting to were accounts of "meaning" which themselves depended on interpreting meaning in terms of "truth". It is possible that if "truth" were more intelligible, the "verificationist" account of meaning given by the logical positivists, which Quine was attacking in attacking analyticity, might have been more intelligible. Regardless, it might be argued that it has not been made clear that the ordinary notion of meaning relies on a notion of truth at all. If it is not clear that it does, little of Quine's essay need be interpreted as having anything to do with "meaning" in the ordinary sense.

whole. If we believe that our statements about the external world do not face sense experience individually, but rather corporately, we can modify our logical grammars to eliminate certain elements that are unwanted. Hence, if one denies that there are intensional properties or other intensional entities relative to individual statements, one gains greater ease in eliminating that which seems overly complicated (e.g., the "is at" connective).

Not only did Quine reject the logical empiricist project of uncovering a structure of science derived from the analysis of individual sentences' connections to experience, but he also argued that epistemology is but "a chapter of psychology" (1969, 82). To a certain limited extent, by taking that stance, he was throwing himself in with Brentano's crowd. In both cases, in Brentano's and the Gestalt theorists' and also in Quine's, the name for the practice of discovering the content of our perceptual judgments is "psychology", though psychology may consist of more than this in Quine's view.

As suggested above, part of what had defined the Gestalt theorists had been their antipathy toward sensory atomism,⁶ which was part and parcel of the project of those empiricists who preceded the logical empiricists. Quine was sympathetic toward the logical empiricists at the same time that he was critical of that approach of their attempt to replace sensory atomism with analysis of the structure of theories which relied on analyticity. While Quine recognized that the Gestaltists' attacks had been quite injurious to the atomistic approach (1974, 3), he was not willing to give up the ship. Taking a strategic tip from a logical empiricist, Otto Neurath, he proposed that the ship of empiricist epistemology be rebuilt while at sail (1969, 84). That is, Quine argued thusly: since there is no absolute starting point for an inquiry into the means and mechanisms of knowledge formation and since the only non-absolute starting points are those within scientific theory, we must use what theory we have in developing an account of how the theory we have could have come about (1974, 2-4).⁷ Thus, development of the

⁶ Sensory atomism is the commitment to the notion that the objects of experience can be reduced to atomic elements. The strategy has been manifested in different forms. A weaker version would take line drawings of triangles as reducible to three lines of a certain character. A stronger version would take colors as reducible to optical properties and physiology.

⁷ I am not concerned at this point with the claims that Quine made. I will, eventually, be concerned with some of them. I am presently concerned only with constructing an accurate representation of Quine's strategic claims. Thus, for the moment I am not concerned with the question, for example, of whether there are any non-absolute starting points outside of the scientific framework.

theory of knowledge involves answering the question "how it is that man [can construct science] from the limited impingements that are available to his sensory surfaces" (1974, 3), where the conditions of knowledge (i.e., sensory input) and their explanation are given *within* the scientific theoretical framework. Quine called this process of inquiry "naturalized epistemology" (1969). It was "naturalized" because it appealed not to first philosophy, but to ongoing practices of knowledge formation.

Returning to the claim made much earlier, that Quine is an anomaly among the pragmatists, we can consider the extent to which Quine rejects "folk knowledge" and the conceptions of our world manifest in our daily lives as compared to the extent to which the pragmatists Sellars and Peirce each do so. Quine was interested in formulating a notion of the meaning of linguistic entities in empiricist terms. The terms he found and used to formulate a notion of meaning were those of the general response of individual members of a linguistic community to utterances made in conjunction with some particular observational stimulus. In using that approach, he was taking one step away from the picture of the world as we know it, i.e., that intuitive picture on which we base our ordinary claims that words and sentences have meanings. However, since observations, though they are very much related to human experience, are somewhat mysterious upon reflection (prior to analysis), another step was required to make his approach practicable. That step took Quine beyond the bounds of ordinary intuitions.

Quine suggested psychologists and other naturalized epistemologists trace the meaning of our observation sentences to the sensory inputs which, according to Quine, (somehow) constitute our observations (1969, 69-90). Having given a behavioristic conception of meaning, we are no longer tempted to invoke mentalistic entities in an empiricist reconstruction of our world. In that case, we should use that knowledge base of science which tells us that sensory receptors are our basic source of information. As Quine put it: "What to count as observation now can be settled in terms of the stimulation of sensory receptors, let consciousness fall where it may" (1969, 84). Thus, in making the assumption that the construction of our world can somehow be reduced to sense reception, to the exclusion of entities related to our intuitive notions of consciousness or other "higher-level" processing of experience, Quine was taking a step which removed any hope we might have had that the end result of a Quinean epistemology would make sense to us in the terms in which we live our lives.

As far as being a pragmatist strategy, it is not pragmatistic in the sense of leading to a picture which *includes* human purpose and action. In the end, such elements need not be part of a Quinean picture of science, if my reading of Quine is accurate. Quine's strategy is *pragmatic*, rather, in that it leads to a picture, as he claims (1960, 79), whose formulation is a product of human purposes and action, but does not involve those things.⁸ That is, his strategy was devised holding in mind neither the end result of epistemological inquiry nor the purposes relevant to *our conceiving of ourselves* within that world. Rather, his strategy was developed holding in mind both the process of constructing that end result and the purposes relevant to the practice of *constructing* a picture of the world.

Sellars' pragmatism

In contrast, Sellars left a place within his system for the folk picture of the world, which itself gives *us* a place within our world and community. Sellars called that picture the "manifest image" (1963). The manifest image contained all the phenomena with which Brentano and Kant were concerned. However, Sellars took the things of that image with the un-Brentanoesque, but Kantian attitude that

⁸ This will become more clear where I discuss the fact that both Peirce and Sellars treated issues of meaning and perception in terms of the purposes of persons' conceiving themselves within a world, i.e., of living and working within their world. Quine on the hand seems to have been called a pragmatist not because he emphasized human purposes, beliefs, and purposeful action, as Peirce and Sellars did, though Quine did not, but because he was concerned with *pragmatic* concerns such as convenience and theoretical simplicity.

they are *merely* phenomena. His noumena, though, were not characterized specifically as things which we cannot apprehend directly through intellectual representations. Rather, Sellars' noumena were the (nonetheless) imperceptible entities *postulated by science to explain the phenomena of the manifest image* (1963); the latter phrase is the important part, of course. Thus, Sellars used the logical empiricist strategy of drawing a line between that which we experience, but which cannot account for itself, and that which explains what we experience.

The "scientific image" and its things were considered by Sellars to be mutually exclusive of, and not dependent on, the manifest image and its things. Furthermore, much of the latter could be explained or even explained away by the elements and principles of the former. After nearly everything (except persons) contained in the manifest image is finally explained away, then, the scientific image would be the only image of the world necessary to understand and function within that world (1963). Thus, in Sellars' eventually complete and final picture, his "stereoscopic" picture which was to be constituted by an ideal, finished scientific image and the manifest image, much of the latter image -- the phenomenological and social realm of things -- was to be reduced, in empiricist fashion, to theoretical entities and principles on the behavior of those entities.

Although the physical things and most other things (excepting persons and things related to their intentionality, e.g., concepts) of the manifest image were to be explained by the scientific image, Sellars believed there was an "irreducible core of the framework of persons" (1963, 39). That core of the manifest image consisted of the community intentions and private intentions of persons and it could not be explained away by the scientific image. Rather, it would have to be "joined to" the scientific image, when the latter was finally finished, instead of being somehow reconciled to it. (1963, 40). The fact that Sellars' system contained the notion of an "irreducible core" of humanity means that, whereas even consciousness was not necessary to Quine's system, the properties which make humans persons, the having of principles and standards, cannot be left out of the complete picture Sellars envisioned.

Moreover, it is essential to Sellars' project that it be kept in mind that "to the extent that the manifest does not survive [in the complete picture], to that extent, man himself would not survive" (1963, 18). That is, since our place in the world is a consequence of our conceiving of ourselves within this world, if we cannot conceive of a place for ourselves within a scientific picture of the world, we will not be part of such a world. The task, then, is to conceive of a complete picture in which we "*directly* relate the world as conceived by scientific theory to our purposes, and make it *our* world and no longer an alien appendage to the world in which we do our living" (1963, 40). In this way, Sellars' pragmatism makes a place for human purposes and actions both in the formulating of a complete picture of the world and in the acting and making of purposes within the world of that picture.

Peirce's pragmatism

Peirce also left a place for the intentions of persons. In fact, purposes and action are fundamental to his maxim of pragmatism, which expresses his conception of meaning. He expressed that maxim in its most complete form in his 1903 Harvard lectures: the meaning (if any) of a theoretical judgment in the indicative mood "lies in its tendency to enforce a corresponding practical maxim expressible as a conditional sentence with its apodosis in the imperative mood" (CP 5.18, 1903). Thus, the meaning of the judgment, "All bodies fall toward the center of the earth when no obstacle impedes their movement", can be given as the maxim: If you were to remove the obstacles between an object and the earth, then it will fall. Inasmuch as the theoretical judgment tends to produce action consonant with the practical maxim, to that extent it has meaning. That tendency and the possible actions enforced constitute the meaning of the theoretical judgment.

That formulation of the maxim of pragmatism illustrates the fact that Peirce believed that the meaning of something "consists in *how* [that something] might cause us to act" (CP 5.135, 1903). With respect to "how" something might cause us to act, Peirce was not concerned with mechanics or logistics. Rather, that "how" can be cashed-out only within some purposive framework or, as he put it, in reference "to a description of the action as having this or that *aim*" (CP 5.135, 1903). If something is to have meaning, the possible actions derived from that something must be understood in terms of conscious purpose, i.e., some end, rather than in terms of uncontrolled behavior. Thus, it is a

purposive framework which informs the implication in the consequence above. In other words, there is no way to distinguish one possible conception from another without understanding the sense in which we can refer to that action (if any) which is practically implied by the end conceived of. For Peirce, this condition of understanding is identical to the condition of there being an interpretation of the purpose involved in the action.

Not surprisingly, Peirce took a phenomenological approach to experience. For Peirce, phenomenology was a "science" which seems to correspond to Sellars' manifest image in being partially constituted of those perceptual judgments that are manifest within the ordinary world in which we live. Speaking of this science as one might describe a person practicing it, Peirce wrote that phenomenology "simply opens its eyes and describes what it sees; not what it sees in the real as distinguished from figment. . . but simply describing the object, as a phenomenon, and stating what it finds in all phenomena alike" (CP 5.37, 1903). Hence, the purpose of Peirce's phenomenology is roughly equivalent to that of a Brentanoesque psychology (though "roughly" only, as we will see).

Peirce's phenomenology is "not based, as to its principles, upon any other *positive science*" (CP 5.39, 1903). For Peirce, phenomenology does not make conclusions using the premises formulated in other sciences which also produce generalizations about what is, or, in the case of normative sciences, what ought to be (CP 5.39, 1903). For that reason, Peirce's phenomenology is very much unlike Quine's phenomenalism in not being reducible to, for example, neurophysiological entities. Hence, inasmuch as Peirce wanted to recognize phenomenology, and even establish it as an inquiry preliminary to those of the normative sciences (CP 5.37, 1903), Peirce meant to indicate that phenomena were not reducible to elements as the empiricists advocated. That is, nothing of the world manifest in our lives can be simply explained away since those things, taken phenomenologically, are, though phenomenal things, real as conceived.

Neither could there be atomic elements of perceptual judgment which, once combined with others, make up a molecular perceptual whole. Rather, perceptual judgments are wholes which are to be seen as a sub-class of the class of judgments. A judgment, in general, is "an act of formation of a mental

proposition combined with an adoption of it or an act of assent to it" (CP 5.115, 1903). Here again, we see Peirce's commitment to connecting intention with action, though it is also connected with the context of propositions. Elsewhere, Peirce is recorded as having said, in the same Harvard lectures, that "no use can be made of [a term] until it is introduced into a proposition" (Turrissi, 234). Today, we might reword Peirce's definition of judgments in general to the effect that judgments are acts of constructing (Sellarsian) Mentalese sentences and giving them assertoric force.

But Peirce is more specific: "[b]y a perceptual judgment, I mean a judgment asserted in propositional form [regarding] what a character of a percept directly present to the mind is" (CP 5.54, 1903). A perceptual judgment, then, would consist of the formation of a Mentalese sentence combined with the fact that we cannot reject its content, at least not in the moment of the conceptual episode's occurrence, or resist its immediacy to our consciousness. That immediacy, Peirce might have said, is the reason why we would not want to say that phenomenology is concerned with distinguishing between what is real and what is figment.

While phenomenology is not based on some other positive science, it is and must be, according to Peirce, based on pure mathematics (CP 5.40, 1903). Briefly put, Peirce expected to be able "to formulate with mathematical precision, definiteness, and simplicity, the general facts of experience which logic has to take into account" (CP 3.618, 1911). Peirce's interest in grounding phenomenology in logic and mathematics had the effect of inspiring him to attempt to determine the logical form(s) of phenomena.

Peirce's motive for developing logic and the actual project itself had significant differences relative to the logical tradition in which the logical empiricists were trained (i.e., Frege's). Nonetheless, Peirce was making a move that bore a family resemblance to the strategies of the logical empiricists in reducing phenomena to what he believed were their indecomposable elements (CP 4.3, 1898). Moreover, inasmuch as he believed that "all our knowledge rests upon perceptual knowledge" (CP 5.142, 1903), Peirce was an empiricist.

As I have shown, Peirce's inquiry into the logical structure of experience had both phenomenological and empiricist characteristics. It was a move toward recognition of the wholes inherent in perceptual

judgments. At the same time, it was a move toward a logic of experience, toward "formulat[ing] with mathematical precision, definiteness, and simplicity, the general facts of experience" (CP 3.618, 1911). Although that logic seems to have been developed for reasons different from those for which Fregean logic was developed (i.e., to formulate the facts of experience, rather than to establish the foundations of arithmetic), it also consisted of many of the important characteristics of that logic of the logical empiricists (e.g., the context principle, truth-functionality, and quantification). It is in considering Peirce's interest with respect to both "essences" (e.g., qualities of possible experience) and "existence" (e.g., instantiation) that this hybrid phenomenological/empiricist character is most clear, since both qualities and existents seemed to be important in Peirce's analysis of experience. The concern with both properties as qualities of things and things as things, as well as with perceptual judgments will become important considerations in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis.

The Problem

The problem area

The varieties of pragmatism I have been discussing offer several strategies for formulating a conception of meaning. There are two features relevant to indicating where a sound approach lies in the alternatively converging and diverging streams of thought of the three pragmatists. Two features, as observed much earlier (with respect to their toeing the line between positivism and practical concerns), are common to the pragmatists. The first has to do with the similarity of treatment of meaning and perception. The second, similar feature, has to do with treating meaning in terms of practice.

As will be made clear in later chapters of this thesis, Quine, Sellars, and Peirce all approach conceptions of linguistic meaning as corresponding somehow to perceptual judgments. Thus, as was mentioned above, Quine proposed an analysis of the meaning of those sentences we first learn in terms of a stimulus-response model which takes a linguistic response to be a response to the conjunction in time of observational stimuli and linguistic expressions. It can be seen, however, that Peirce and Sellars also related meaning to the notion of perceptual judgments. They did so, not by taking the meaning of

expressions as reducible to observational elements, but in terms of propositionality. Hence, for both Peirce and Sellars, perceptual judgments, as well as sentences, have a propositional content. With respect to this issue, Sellars spoke of "conceptual representations" and their content, in reference to both perception and linguistic use (1967). However, I would be going too far afield if I were to say much more on this.

Quine, Sellars, and Peirce, besides approaching linguistic meaning as corresponding to some content of perceptual judgments, also approached conceptions of meaning in terms of practice. To some extent, in this consideration of conceptions of meaning in terms of practice, Sellars and Peirce, as in the case of the first consideration above, fall together into a class which does not include Quine as a member. Since I have said enough on that subject regarding Peirce, I will treat only Sellars and Quine.

Sellars wrote, on the subject of the practice of language, "there is a sense of `imply' in which semantical statements about verbal productions do *imply* information about the causes and effects of these productions" (1963, 179-80). While Sellars was speaking about the intentionality of semantical discussion, his point was that the practical effects of linguistic expressions do figure in determining the role they play (Of course, this is not to say that such effects are all there are to expressions.). That is, a part, though not the greatest part, of the meaning of expressions is their use as a response to experience with some kind of expression, like "Look at how polychromatic that snow is!". But, elsewhere Sellars said more of the relation of expressions and their effects: "[t]he `meaning' of a term lies in its role as an instrument in the organism's transactions with its environment" (1963, 340).⁹ Hence, assuming that the organism's language is sufficiently rich as to refer to actions, the organism could form conceptions *about* possible actions, i.e., could represent possible conduct, as well as simply use expressions in response to experience. Indeed, the organism could, in that case, use the language to command, to ask, to promise, and for other performance-oriented uses with respect to conduct.

⁹ This quotation appears as a clause in a question and, so, requires at least a comment. The first part of the question begins, "When all is said and done, should we not join with the pragmatist in saying that. . .". Since Sellars does not give anything resembling a refutation of the quoted clause, I have taken the question as rhetorical, rather than skeptical, and taken the content assertorically.

Quine, by his own lights, argued that meaning only made sense in terms of practice, which resulted in the rejection of the distinction between linguistic and empirical meaning. Above, I discussed the fact that Quine's concern with practice had to do with the formulating of scientific theories according to human purposes and action, rather than with practice according to human purposes and action within the world envisioned by such theories. However, there is a different facet of meaningful practice with which Quine was also concerned: the practice in which a language is learned. On this, Quine wrote, "[t]he very fact of our having learned [some] language evinces much storing of information, and of information without which we should be in no position to give verdicts on sentences however observational" (1969, 85-6). That is, even sentences having factual components, in turn, rely on learning experiences from which we gained information which is, at times, recalled. Thus, the information contained in linguistic responses to stimuli has its counterpart in the information gained from situations in which we learned the language we use to articulate or understand non-empirical sentences. Quine said little about features of language which order or are, on a regular basis, ordered by, conduct.

These final, general considerations indicate that even though all three pragmatists shared the two primary features relevant to a pragmatist conception of meaning, they shared them differently. Peirce and Sellars seem to have taken similar courses, while Quine diverges, both with respect to *how* meaning is considered in relation to perceptual judgments and with respect to purposes and actions in linguistic practice. While all are pragmatists in the sense of relating the meaning of linguistic expressions to both practice and perceptual experience, they are not all pragmatists in the same way.

In answer to the question whether perceptual judgments must involve non-extensional elements (e.g., Mentalese propositions), Peirce's and Sellars' pragmatist philosophies suggest assent, while Quine would disagree. As to whether the phenomenological structure of perceptual judgments can be considered to be real itself, such that it is not reducible, ultimately, to scientific entities and their behavior (e.g., not reducible into physiological or behavioral terms), Peirce would argue that it can, *contra* Quine and Sellars.¹⁰ In answer to the question whether an account of perceptual judgments in general is to be given ideally within a single framework like Quine's scientific theory or Peirce's logic of experience, Quine and Peirce would assent, while Sellars would dissent. Sellars would dissent because his ultimate account of perceptual judgments must consist of components of two frameworks: his manifest image, with respect to intentionality, and his scientific image, with respect to a neurophysiological, or other scientific, explanation of perception.

The fact that there are these disparities suggest that, if pragmatists treat perceptual judgments and linguistic meaning similarly, then there is no pragmatist consensus on conceptions of meaning. While disparities between phenomenological and empiricist approaches would not be surprising, if pragmatism really is a kind of mediation of those two philosophical strategies, one might expect some kind of general agreement on linguistic and empirical meaning. I do not think failure to find such agreement is a reason to reject the thesis of the last section. Rather, I think it is a product of there not having been a structure for approaching the problem of meaning, despite its importance to pragmatism. Thus, assuming this to be the case and also assuming that such a structure would lead to a more unified pragmatist approach, it would be a worthwhile effort to try to create such an order.

The problem

The problem of this thesis is to determine the precise character and form of the problem of meaning, where "meaning" is construed broadly and in the pragmatist tradition. While this project follows the lead of pragmatists in taking for granted that one must start in the middle, i.e., there is no absolute

¹⁰ Of course, it would be wrong to claim that Sellars believed that the propositional content of perceptual judgments could be reduced to non-propositional elements. Nonetheless, Sellars does seem to lean toward a reductivism of the non-propositional structure of experience by assuming that the conceptual order can rest on the causal order. In contrast, Peirce, analyzes experience not only in terms of propositional content, but in terms of his peculiar phenomenological categories, which cannot be said to rest on constructs of any special science. Peirce's categories will be discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

starting point, to engage the issue philosophically means to accept both the nearly overwhelming difficulties in even formulating the problem meaningfully (let alone proceeding to treat it) and the disputes that rise up over nearly every consideration relevant to the inquiry. As the inquiry and my argument progress, certain salient features (salient at least from my perspective) will be identified and used to chart the problem. Only by the final chapter, however, will the problem have anything like a perspicuous character. It is only then, where I stop, that one might take up the project of defining "meaning".

Unfortunately, each of the salient features to which I draw attention -- intentionality, representation, objectivity, incomplete personhood, and inquiry, among others -- are themselves each worthy of a book-length discussion. In offering a first approximation account of meaning, it is sufficient to show that those topics must be part of any pragmatist conception of meaning. Fortunately, even if I am unable to give them the treatment they deserve, it is possible to show that they are necessarily involved.

The problem-description is given in general terms partly because the recursiveness of an inquiry into the meaning of "meaning" makes for tractability difficulties and because, in tackling the subject of meaning, I should avoid as many presuppositions as possible. There is one set of assumptions, however, which cannot be avoided. Those assumptions revolve around the pragmatist notion that each of our conceptual schemes emerges from a community of persons, rather than from individuals.

A fair amount of this thesis focuses on individual capacities. That fact should not distract from this thesis' commitment to the proposition that, while some of the conditions of experience (in particular, the productive imagination) are essentially autobiographical, not all of them are, nor can they all be. In fact, inasmuch as experience involves concepts and inasmuch as concepts are some of the general common properties of communities, the experience of any individual cannot be complete when considered independently of the community. Likewise, the conceptual scheme of the individual can be no more complete apart from that of the community as it evolves toward a final complete picture of the world and of persons in the world. The emphasis on personal practice and on the importance of persons' belonging to a community is a distinctive feature of pragmatism. It is for reasons relating to

the peculiar conditions of experience constitutive of personhood and the necessity of the community for individual inquiry that one of the features mentioned above -- incomplete personhood -- will take a central position in my pragmatist conception of the problem of meaning.

Central to making a first-pass at those issues will be a discussion of the intentionality of purposeful agents as being incomplete persons. The notion of incompleteness will be taken as the being inclined both toward experiential wholes which have conceptual content and toward establishing and unifying beliefs which resolve doubts. In treating such object-directedness, I will be dealing with such topics as the incompleteness of our conceptions, predispositions for reaching-out toward objects not yet conceptualized, and our inclinations to engage in inquiry. This is to extend Kant's Copernican revolution in portraying persons, i.e., intentional actors, not as passively receiving knowledge, but as cooperating in a knowledge enterprise directed toward a final picture of the world and of their place in the world.

I will also address the set of problems mentioned much earlier with regard to objectivity. When certain related problems faced by extensional and intensional interpretations of meaning are taken collectively, they amount to the general problem of objectivity. To see those problems as the central part of the problem of meaning is to neglect the pragmatistic concerns mentioned above. I will argue that the notions of intensionality and extensionality alone cannot provide an explanation for the fact that meaning consists in finding completeness in experience, yet, there are often times that experience seems incomplete (e.g., when lacking an account for some strange occurrence). In trying to deal with those issues, I will try to show how arriving at an account of meaning involves issues other than intensionality and extensionality. One of those other issues is the issue of that and how we conceive of perceptual wholes. By emphasizing the pragmatistic conditions of experience and the active role of persons in finding objects and in continually reaching toward a final complete picture, the problems related to objectivity are found to be peripheral to a conception of meaning which captures the practice(s) of persons' living their lives. The result is a new way of conceiving of the problem of meaning.

The thesis I hold in response to the vaguely stated problem, can be stated in two parts. First, the limits

of a pragmatist notion of meaning encircle a set of activities which are cognitive, thus excluding notions of meaning which are reducible to behavioristic, physiological, physical or other non-cognitive classes of activities. That claim is introduced in the second chapter, but only fully addressed in the third chapter. Second, the problem of meaning is to be given in phenomenological terms, such that, whatever might be the content of any instance of meaning, one might show that that instance has elements of intentionality, extensionality, and intensionality. That second claim is only made cogent upon discussion of two topics: a) the position that there must be something which bridges the gap between non-epistemic and epistemic activities and, thus, shares characteristics of both kinds of activities and b) Peirce's phenomenological analysis of experience. Both topics are discussed in the fourth chapter and then applied in the fifth chapter.

In arguing for bridging the gap between non-epistemic activities and epistemic activities, a capacity is postulated which plays both a cognitive and a causal role in bridging this gap. As a model for that which plays that role, I use the primary concept of a thesis which was constructed collectively by Sellars (1978), Peirce (CP 1.35, 1885), and Kant (1781). All three recognized the need for a capacity that bridges non-epistemic activities and epistemic activities. In Kant's case, for example, the relevant capacity is the productive imagination. It is a capacity of the intellect to produce a cognitive feature of experiential processes that is both non-conceptual and non-propositional, yet cognitive. By reference to the productive imagination, Kant opens a way to analyze conceptual content without actually reducing that content to non-cognitive material. It then becomes possible to offer an analysis of meaning using Peirce's triadic account of representation. The result is a new way of conceiving of the problem of meaning which, nonetheless, includes many of the familiar elements of accounts of meaning.

My project takes Quine's anomalous pragmatic conception of meaning as a starting point. Quine's account of how we gain the linguistic capacity to refer to objects provides a systematic story, which allows for evaluation of the notion that meaning can be analyzed in terms of ostension. Sellars' paper "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", in turn, serves as a critique of the idea that the conceptual content of expressions is reducible to non-inferential observation, where such observation is somehow

non-conceptual.

Next, I turn to Peirce's phenomenological analysis of experience. He provided the elements to be used to conceive of the problem of meaning, such that while the determination of its precise character requires a conception of meaning to involve intentionality, and while intentionality is not itself triadic, the form of any instance of meaning is. Hence, the triadic nature of representation provides the other element of the criterion that a pragmatist definition of "meaning" should account for the character of instances of meaning being intentional representations.

My account of intentional representations brings together the seemingly tangential topics discussed along the way. Since those topics are not given anything like an adequate treatment, my argument merely goes to show how all of these different problematic areas are related and that they should be connected in an adequate pragmatist account of meaning. Thus, while I discuss intentionality, extensionality, intensionality, representation, Kant's productive imagination, and incomplete personhood, my argument is not intended to solve the problems related to them. Rather, I will show that it is reasonable to suppose that there must be a connection between non-epistemic and epistemic activities; that that connection is a cognitive, but non-conceptual capacity; that conceiving of the problem in this way gives a place to those notions, which are connected to meaning; and that, despite the difficulties raised by my approach, the position reached is a fairly secure one.