INTRODUCTION

What does the idea of 'community' stand for? Consider, we say, the religious community, the community of nations, the ethnic community, and community initiatives. Rhetoric employing the 'community' or a notion similar to it has pervaded philosophical discussions, including communitarianism, communism, and feminist philosophy. On the one hand, 'community' retains its classic connotations of general will, collective interest, and commonwealth. 'Community', in the context of this thesis, however, refers to a different conception of interpersonal relations. Its use and meaning is informed by a philosophical tradition that focuses on problem situations, action, and belief, and turns to intersubjective criticism and consensus for evaluating knowledge claims. It values openness and mutual respect, and recognizes fallibility as an inescapable condition of human inquiry. It is a modernist position, having its roots in mid-19th century American philosophy; a position that maintains we can transcend our fallibility through procedure and experiment. This tradition has become known as "pragmatism," a term first coined by Charles S. Peirce.

I intend to focus on the development of the notion of 'community' in pragmatic epistemology, and look closely at the role it plays in this philosophical system. Specifically, I am concerned with: (1) how a concise articulation of the role of 'community' might contribute to our understanding of pragmatic epistemology, and (2) the strengths of this 'community' model of epistemology for resolving perennial philosophical problems—in particular, the problem of solipsism. My study of the role of the 'community' in pragmatic epistemology is limited to two philosophers: Charles S. Peirce and Wilfrid Sellars. I have chosen these two philosophers because they are

exemplars of a classic pragmatist and a contemporary descendent of pragmatism respectively. In juxtaposing these two thinkers, I am able to take some steps toward a comprehensive picture of how 'community' has figured in pragmatism.

Applying the discussion to the problem of solipsism is instructive for orienting this project. Solipsism arises as a major problem for all theories of knowledge according to which the source of all knowledge—including knowledge of reality—is in the mind of the knowing agent, understood to be an isolated, autonomous individual. Addressing this problem and pragmatism's solution will be revealing, because it provides access to subtle epistemological issues within pragmatism.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In Chapter 1, I articulate the problem of solipsism and examine the importance and history of the problem in light of the philosophies of Descartes and Hume. In Chapter 2, I consider the role of the community in the philosophy of Charles S. Peirce. In Chapter 3, I consider the role of the community in the philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars. In Chapter 4, I examine whether pragmatism, in its turn to 'community', provides a reasonable resolution to the problem of solipsism.

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM OF SOLIPSISM

Is it the case that we are confined to the isolated, first-person perspective when we make claims about thoughts, experiences, and emotions? Can there be any meaning to claims about thoughts, experiences, and emotions of others? Solipsism maintains that when we make claims about knowledge and reality, these claims are necessarily restricted to the individual. When I consider 'existence', for example, 'existence' means for me *my* existence. Likewise, 'mental states' means for me *my* mental states. In essence, everything I experience is necessarily understood by me to be a part of *my* consciousness. It is not, however, merely the view that "My mental states are the only mental states" or "I am the only mind that exists" that defines a solipsistic position. These may be the case in such circumstances as a nuclear holocaust in which a single individual remains. Rather, it is the stronger position that there can be *no* meaning attached to the notion of thoughts, experiences, and emotions of others.

Solipsism is a skeptical doctrine that comes as a consequence of the various forms of isolation we find ourselves standing in to other people and external things. For instance, in Nagel's variant of solipsism, 'empathetic solipsism', we are isolated from other people in virtue of the fact that we can never adequately understand their unique, personal experience. In 'semantic solipsism' (or the 'private language argument'), meanings or referents of words are mental entities uniquely accessible to the language user. These variants of solipsism maintain that experiences and words have their meaning only in that which is personal. Solipsism is an egocentric position, maintaining that knowledge claims are limited to the first-person perspective. It is characterized by

an inability to make knowledge claims and judgments that extend beyond the isolated, first-person perspective to share knowledge with others.

The importance of the problem of solipsism to philosophers is that it presents a highly restricted picture of the character of knowledge and reality, one that few people find in line with common sense. Namely, does it make sense to think of 'reality' as *my* reality, where I can make no claim about the reality of other minds or objects? Can I make no legitimate claims about reality other than a list of my own perceptions and generalizations derived from those perceptions?

The implications of this problem—that knowledge is restricted to the individual—have compelled philosophers since the time of Descartes to reconsider the character of knowledge in order to resolve this problem. John Locke, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein have all wrestled with it. For example, the 'argument from analogy' has been produced to provide an account of knowledge that could include the minds of others. Briefly, the argument runs:

> (P1) I am certain only of the content and existence of my own mind.
> (P2) Knowledge of other minds, then, must be indirect.
> (P3) I observe others behaving as I do in similar situations.
> Conc. I can infer that the mental states I experience are also in the others I am observing.[1]

However, this argument is fallacious because it makes use of an illegitimate inference: one cannot infer from the fact that others behave similarly in particular situations as I do

[1] Descartes appears to suggest an argument similar to this in his second Meditation in *Meditations on First Philosophy* in *Rene Descartes: Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*, ed. Roger Ariew, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000. He writes,

> [W]ere I perchance to look out my window and observe men crossing the square, I would ordinarily say I see men themselves just as I say I see the wax. But what do I see aside from hats and clothes, which could conceal automata? Yet I judge them to be men. Thus what I thought I had seen with my eyes, I actually grasped solely with the faculty of judgment, which is in my mind (113).

The judgment that it is men outside rather than automata is an inference. Using his faculty of judgment, Descartes has inferred that these objects that resemble 'men' outside his window have minds because they act in particular ways that suggest that they share mental activities similar to his own.

that they have mental states the same as I. The mind of another, for example, need not be in a body as mine now appears to be, nor can I have any certainty about such claims.

It is important to note that solipsism is arises out of particular assumptions about the character of personal experiences and how we access them. First, it assumes that what I know most certainly are my personal thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Second, it assumes that there is no necessary connection between the mind and the body. Finally, it assumes that experience is private, rather than public. If all these assumptions are correct, then we are indeed left in the state described by the solipsist: We are unable to obtain knowledge beyond that which is unique to our persons and unable to share knowledge with others. The assumptions we have considered come out of a Cartesian framework, and we must turn to Descartes to assess the influence of the epistemological model he develops in *Meditations on First Philosophy*. In addition, I believe it will be illuminating to consider Hume's *A Treatise of Human Understanding* to provide a broad picture of the history of the problem of solipsism.

The problem of solipsism has been a persistent problem in traditional modern epistemologies. I argue, next, that the epistemological frameworks we have inherited from Descartes and Hume have not provided us a means for transcending this problem. Descartes appealed to God in order to move beyond the isolated self and Hume appealed to human nature as compelling us to act in a manner that transcends the self to share knowledge; however, neither of these proposals have given us a satisfactory resolution to the problem of solipsism.

When Descartes introduced his "methodological doubt," he set the stage for the subsequent development of solipsism. Reaching truth, he found, entails critical

evaluation of opinions, assumptions, and beliefs. Specifically, it requires testing of whether these beliefs live up to certainty—those beliefs which are not completely certain and indubitable may not be used as premises that can establish genuine knowledge—at least not until the conceivable grounds for doubt have been removed. To this end, Descartes requested that we look not to the individual case for truth or falsity, but to the underlying principles that support such claims of truth and falsity. Employing this method, he found that he could doubt (at least provisionally) sensory objects, composite things, the existence and goodness of God, memories, and whether he is, in fact, awake. However, he also found that there is one thing that he could not doubt—his own existence. This realization has become what is known as the *cogito*. In the vernacular of popularized philosophy, Descartes' *cogito* is commonly formulated as "I think, therefore I am;" however, he finds more careful words for its expression in the *Meditations*:

> Thus, after everything has been most carefully weighed, it must finally be established that this pronouncement 'I am, I exist' is necessarily true every time I utter it or conceive of it in my mind.[2]

Our purpose is not a critical examination of Descartes' *cogito* argument, but I think important features are revealed in the second formulation of the *cogito* that mitigate problems commonly associated with the first.[3] What is important for us is what the *cogito* reveals. The self that is revealed in the *cogito* is a solitary self. It is an isolated mind, not extended in space nor necessarily tied to the body. It is assured of its existence

[2] Descartes, *Meditations*, 108.

[3] There is good evidence to believe that Descartes recognized the problems with the first formulation for the *cogito* he presents in Part Four of the *Discourse on Method*. The "I think, therefore I am" formulation of the *cogito* comes when he is attempting to outline his project in the *Meditations*, the *Discourse* predating the *Meditations* by four years. As we can see in this formulation, he infers from the fact that he is a thinking thing to the fact he must exist. However, a more refined principle is needed to achieve the desired result. Namely, he must precisely indicate that it is in the very considering of one's own existence that doubt cannot arise. To doubt in these instances is to reaffirm one's own existence. In this way, he changes the character of the *cogito* from something resembling an inference in the *Discourse* to a self-evident intuition, or revelation, in the *Meditations*. This, in turn, reduces the *cogito* to a single point, rather than a movement across ideas, enabling him to evade criticisms of fallacious inference.

only *as* a conscious mind. The self, then, is an inherently solipsistic notion. 'Existence', for Descartes, can only mean *his* existence—nothing more can be stated with any meaning.

Descartes attempted to evade the problem of solipsism by appealing to the existence and benevolence of God. He uses the ontological argument for God's existence to demonstrate that his existence plus the necessary conditions of that existence entail the existence of a perfect being, namely God. God, being perfect, can be no deceiver, and since man was *born* with a propensity to think of extended things outside himself as real, it follows that these things must exist.

> [S]ince God is not a deceiver, it is patently obvious that he does not send me these ideas [of corporeal bodies] either immediately by himself, or even through the meditation of some creature that contains the objective reality of these ideas not formally but only eminently. For since God has given me no faculty whatsoever for making this determination, but instead has given me a great inclination to believe that these ideas issue from corporeal things, I fail to see how God could be understood not to be a deceiver, if these ideas were to issue from a source other than corporeal things. And consequently corporeal things exist.[4]

Descartes concluded that he had preserved the public world and sidestepped the problem of solipsism—God serving as the bridge that spans the chasm of the private and the public. God played a crucial role in Descartes' philosophy. If it is the case that God can serve this role, then Descartes has given a reasonable resolution to the problem of solipsism. However, few contemporary philosophers would endorse the use of God in philosophical argumentation. God is now often regarded a loaded, abstract, and hopelessly anachronistic notion, one that cannot do the work needed in rigorous argumentation.[5] The problems associated with taking as axiomatic the omniscient,

---

[4] Descartes, *Meditations*, 136.

[5] William James develops a picture of competing philosophical temperaments in *Pragmatism*, noting that the present trend is an increased sympathy for "facts in all their crude variety," a trend that is irreligious

omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and perfect qualities of God, for instance, has been well documented in the history of philosophy.[6] Those who reject the use of God in philosophical argumentation, however, feel the pressure of the looming problem of solipsism as poignantly as Descartes does.

In Book 1 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume attacks the Cartesian model of knowledge. The central claim in his argument may be articulated in the following conditional: If knowledge is to be understood as certainty, then we can have no knowledge of the world. He argues against the Cartesian certainty criterion of knowledge, and provides a psychological account of the mind. The solipsistic consequence of Hume's argument can be seen in this psychological account of the mind. It is grounded in two main principles: (1) the principle that impressions precede ideas and (2) the principle of association.[7]

The principle of impressions preceding ideas serves as a foundation from which he intends to build his account of psychology. He first divides perceptions into two classes—ideas and impressions. Then, he presents a replication thesis, where ideas are

---

and skeptical of using God as conceptual device in argumentation (William James, *Pragmatism*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1981, 9). As an example of a more kindly picture of God in philosophy, the justification James presents in *Pragmatism* for belief in God is found in the belief's functionality in addressing and accommodating parts of our experience. This sympathetic picture is not, however, widely shared among philosophers.

[6] Ascribing these qualities to God has given rise to well-known problems—among them the problems of evil, free will, and purpose to creation.

[7] Hume's psychological account of the mind from which I will be working follows roughly this scheme:

- Perceptions
  - A. Ideas
    - 1. From imagination
      - a. From fancy
      - b. From understanding
        - (1) Relations of ideas
        - (2) Matters of fact
    - 2. From memory
  - B. Impressions
    - 1. External (of sensation)
    - 2. Internal (of reflection)

replications of simple impressions, though this need not be read as exact replication. Rather, his claim is better understood as a causal or original source claim; no idea arises that does not have its original source in impressions. He writes, "All our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent."[8] Hume advances the phenomenological thesis that what ideas we have and can have are those that find their source in our experience. This principle removes such concepts as innate ideas and abstract ideas, including an idea of God. In addition, he advances a thesis about the character of ideas; namely, ideas differ from simple impressions only in "force and liveliness." He writes, "Any impressions either of the mind or body is constantly followed by an idea, which resembles it, and is only different in the degrees of force and liveliness."[9] For example, my idea of the desk before me differs not in substance from the present impression I am currently having of it, but in its liveliness in my mind.[10] For our purposes, the implications of this model carry an underlying solipsistic consequence. It is found here: it is only in the personal experience that the first instances of ideas can be found. What ideas I have can only come in through *my* experience.

Next, Hume asserts that there are two mental faculties that are responsible for producing ideas—memory and imagination. Here, I only focus on imagination. The imagination is a mental faculty for breaking up and combining ideas. It is directed by three laws of association—resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect.[11] He

[8] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978, 4.
[9] Ibid., 5.
[10] An interesting consequence of this model is that ideas in our mind become primarily physical. They do not differ from impressions in substance, but only in the force they exude in my mind.
[11] Hume, 11.

characterizes the mind's action in associating ideas produced from simple impressions as a "gentle force" guiding the process of unifying ideas.[12] This gentle force compels the mind to associate ideas under these three laws. For example, under the law of resemblance, I associate a sketch of someone with the person himself. Again, we are confronted with a solipsistic consequence of the model he provides. What associations are made between ideas are those that my mind alone directs. It is not a public affair that unifies ideas in this manner; it is the guiding force of *my* mind that brings ideas together.

I will not go into the implications of this model. Its consequence of ultimately rejecting claims of certainty for causality, personal identity, and induction are well known. What is important for us is what Hume's psychology reveals: (1) it is only in personal experience that we have our first instances of impressions and their corresponding ideas, and (2) it is in the individual's mind that ideas are associated with one another, guided by particular psychological laws. It is clear, I think, that a solipsistic picture emerges. What is 'known' (i.e., recognized as particular relations between ideas in the imagination) comes out of the individual's experience alone.

Like Descartes, Hume is not arguing for solipsism. By working under a particular assumption about minds Hume feels he is able to evade a solipsistic consequence to his psychology. Implicit within the model he presents is the assumption that this "gentle force" for associating ideas is shared by human minds. In assuming that all human minds work in this way he attempts to bridge the gap between private 'goings on' in the individual's mind with the public 'goings on' of other minds. However, this is not sufficient to get out of solipsism since no two minds can know the impressions of each other or the regularities of their occurrence.

[12] Ibid., 10.

In addition, Hume presents a model of human nature that proposes a natural tendency for us to act and believe in a world that contains other minds and physical objects. He begins by asserting that when we are presented with repeated experiences, we develop habits in our modes of association.

> Experience is a principle, which instructs me in the several conjunctions of objects for the past. Habit is another principle, which determines me to expect the same for the future; and both of them conspiring to operate upon the imagination, make me form certain ideas in a more intense and lively manner, than others, which are not attended with the same advantages.[13]

For instance, to use an example from Hume, one has repeated experiences of seeing the sun rise each morning. These repeated experiences are brought together through the laws of resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect in his mind, such that he develop an ease in associating these ideas together, yielding what Hume regards as a habit. These habits of mind are at the root of our beliefs and they inspire a sense of certainty in the particular associations we make that extends beyond mere probability. The strength, or vivacity, of these mental habits compels us to anticipate that future experiences will be similar to those we have experienced in the past, that there is an external world, that there is a 'self', that causality is a real phenomenon, and that there are other minds. Thus, we think that the sun will rise tomorrow.

His model of human nature consists in the competing mental activities of reason and nature, where reason compels us to believe that we can have no certainty about the world and nature compels us to act as if there is this kind of certainty. For Hume, reason can only inspire a state of despair, but nature instills in us a sense of substantive interaction with the world. Human nature, he finds, is so strong that it prevails over reason. What motivates us to act, then, is nature, not reason. Summarizing this

[13] Ibid., 265.

conclusion, he writes, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."[14]

Does this model of human nature provide an adequate resolution to the problem of solipsism? I argue that we are not left with a satisfactory resolution. First, Hume's assumption that all human minds share these psychological laws and associate ideas in a (relatively) consistent manner is illegitimate. Given his principle of impressions preceding ideas, the principle upon which he builds his psychology, he is incapable of inferring that other minds work in this manner. This principle only enables him to provide an account for the source of his ideas, as that which comes out of his personal experience. In essence, he is able to produce an account of his own inner mental activities, but inferring that other minds must work in the same way is fallacious. Second, appealing to human nature as compelling us to act and believe that other minds exist leaves us with an inadequate resolution to the problem of solipsism. We may indeed feel compelled to believe in other minds and act accordingly, but by his own definition of belief as mental habit, we are incapable of obtaining certainty about other minds and the world beyond, which is at the heart of the problem of solipsism. I can say that I feel strongly compelled to believe that other minds exist given my previous experiences, but I cannot infer from this that they must, in fact, exist. We are still left with a solipsistic picture of knowledge. Something more is needed to overcome the problem of solipsism, and pragmatic epistemology advances theses that may enable us to resolve this problem.

[14] Ibid., 415.

CHAPTER 2: PEIRCE AND THE 'SCIENTIFIC' COMMUNITY

> *The real, then, is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY, without definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge.*
>
> - Charles Pierce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities"[15]

The revolutionary spirit and consequences of Peirce's turn to community cannot be overstated. It is a radical turn, one that maintains that it is within the social domain that the individual *qua* inquirer is fundamentally located, and through social interaction human fallibility can be transcended and knowledge secured. The implications of the turn to community are profound, culminating in a devastating critique of the methodological individualism advanced by modern philosophers since Descartes. As I will show, the community is a central component of Peirce's thinking. It informs a vast portion of his philosophical commitments including: his criticisms of Descartes and interest in Medieval scholasticism; his understanding of scientific experimentation, phenomenology, and metaphysics; and his conception of habits, inquiry, and meaning. Peirce's turn to the community culminates in four prominent theories that, at their foundation, are social: (1) Meaning, (2) Knowledge, (3) Reality, and (4) Truth.

In this chapter, I analyze the role of the community in Peirce's pragmatism. I have divided the chapter into two sections. In Section I, I extract and formulate Peirce's theory of community. This will entail examining the following: (1) the point of entry for the community into his pragmatism in light of his criticisms of Descartes and interest in Medieval scholasticism, (2) his account of the scientific 'community', and (3) the relation between his theory of thought, semiotics, and phenomenology. In Section II, I look

[15] Charles S. Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" [SCFI] (1868) in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 311.

carefully at Peirce's social theory of truth. I have chosen his social theory of truth because it will, I believe, allow us to see the breadth of the role of the community in Peirce's pragmatism. This discussion will provide us with a concise picture of the community in Peirce's pragmatism, and place us in a position to examine whether his theory of community enables him to evade solipsism.

I. PEIRCE'S THEORY OF COMMUNITY

The notion of community is central to so many parts of Peirce's pragmatism that pulling out and analyzing its framework is no easy task. Where is the origin of his notion of community? What are its basic constituent parts? What is it grounded upon? My goal is to provide a concise picture of Peirce's 'community' so that we may see how he employs this notion to the many different parts of his pragmatism.

CRITICISM OF DESCARTES AND INTEREST IN MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICISM

I believe the best point of departure is to examine some of Peirce's early work. This will provide us with an account of the point of entry of the community into Peirce's pragmatism. In this subsection, I focus on "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868) and "The Fixation of Belief" (1877). In these works, Peirce lays out his criticism of Descartes' methodological individualism. The most extended critique of Descartes comes in SCFI. In this essay, he outlines four criticisms of Descartes, and, in light of these criticisms, analyzes the implications of four human incapacities. He argues against the following themes in Descartes' philosophy: (1) hypothetical doubt, (2) individualistic certainty, (3) Cartesian inference, and (4) justification of inference. The two criticisms most instructive for determining Peirce's theory of community are (2) and (3).

Descartes finds that the ultimate test of certainty is found in the individual conscience. In the revelation of the *cogito*, Descartes observes that it must be certain that he exists because in doubting everything, there is one thing that he is unable to doubt, and that is, that he doubts; and when he reflects that he doubts, he can no longer doubt that he exists. Descartes' formulation of certainty can be put in the following way, "Whatever *I* am clearly and distinctly convinced of, is true."

Peirce finds that placing authority for truth in the hands of the individual (1) cannot hold its ground and (2) is dangerous. In "The Fixation Belief," Peirce argues that the social impulse is against fixing belief in the individual alone.

> The man who adopts [a belief] will find that other men think differently from him, and it will be apt to occur to him, in some saner moment, that their opinions are quite as good as his own, and this will shake his confidence in his belief.[16]

There is a natural impulse to evaluate our beliefs against others'. We naturally place value in another's thoughts and opinions, and regard them as being subject to public evaluation. This propensity for public evaluation is a crucial feature of human nature, "aris[ing] from an impulse too strong in man to be suppressed, without danger of destroying the human species."[17] In essence, we are by our nature such an organism that we necessarily influence one another's beliefs. Placing authority for truth in the hands of the individual cannot hold its ground because we interact and influence one another in such a way that the individual is pulled out into the social domain. The problem becomes not how we are to fix belief in the individual inquirer, but rather in the community of inquirers.

---

[16] Charles S. Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief" [FB] (1877) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 378.
[17] Peirce, *CP* 5.378 (1877).

Placing authority for truth in the hands of the individual is also dangerous. What is regarded as certain, in Descartes' philosophy, is what is agreeable to the individual's reason. However, "to make single individuals absolute judges of truth is most pernicious"[18] because the individual does not have the resources available to ensure that he is reasoning properly. There can be no disciplined and careful examination of the ideas that present themselves to the individual as indubitable or certain because there is nothing outside the individual's criterion of certainty against which these judgments can be evaluated.

Peirce finds that Descartes' individualistic focus is endemic to modern metaphysical philosophy. In FB, he characterizes modern metaphysicians as generally looking to what is "agreeable to reason," where this "does not mean that which agrees with experience, but that which we find ourselves inclined to believe."[19] The focus of modern metaphysical philosophy has been restricted to what is "more agreeable" to the individual's reason. What follows is that the inquiry of metaphysicians is something similar to the development of taste, where the individual considers what propositions align best with his own reasoning, and adopts those that fulfill that criterion. Modern metaphysicians since the time of Descartes have not been able to come to consensus about the constituents of reality precisely because they have no criterion to evaluate it independently of their own personal criterion of agreeableness to reasoning.

In SCFI, Peirce proposes a change in perspective from the individualistic focus of modern metaphysicians to a community focus.

[18] Peirce, *CP* 5.265 (1868).
[19] Peirce, *CP* 5.382 (1877).

> We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy; we can only seek it, therefore, for the *community* of philosophers.[20]

For Peirce, certainty, or the ultimate philosophy, is not the aim of philosophy. Rather, security for beliefs is philosophy's goal. This goal cannot be attained through individual inquiry; only in the intersubjective context of a community of inquirers can security be ensured. Peirce is concerned with finding a forum for evaluation that (1) aligns with the social impulse and (2) is independent of personal agreeableness, such that we can begin to examine beliefs, hypotheses, and theories under criteria that are not subject to the whims of the individual.

What comes with turning to a community of inquirers is a multiplicity of opinions, arguments, and hypotheses. Here, we find Peirce's criticism of Cartesian inference. Inference is not merely Descartes' "single thread of inference,"[21] something like a single chain of certain ideas that are related by logical induction and deduction.[22] Rather, it is something resembling "a cable whose fibres may be ever so slender, provided they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected."[23] Leaving inference to a single form of argumentation renders it only as strong as its weakest link. Inference is secured in a plurality of arguments, rehearsed, reused, and under constant evaluation, like a cable weaving different arguments together to form a rope. The arguments for knowledge and its constituents are numerous, and they should be used to evaluate one another to proceed in inquiry in a critical manner. Peirce is interested in a return to the methods of argumentation of Medieval scholastics. Where Descartes replaced the

[20] Peirce, *CP* 5.265 (1868).
[21] Peirce, *CP* 5.264 (1868).
[22] It is not immediately clear that Descartes is employing logical induction in the manner Peirce seems to suggest. There is a robust sense in which Descartes is using logical deduction, and it is true that he speaks of logical induction; however, the sense in which he means induction on occasions appears to be relevantly different from what we generally speak of as logical induction.
[23] Peirce, *CP* 5.265 (1868).

multiform argumentation of Medieval scholastics with a single thread of inference, placing a strong focus on the legitimacy of a single form of argument, Peirce returns to the multitude and variety of Medieval scholastic arguments. The methods of argumentation of Medieval scholastics include appeal to authority (i.e., the Bible), use of inductive as well as deductive forms of argumentation, repetitive use of the same form of argument, etc. Careful evaluation under a plurality of arguments and forms of arguments will enable philosophy to proceed responsibly towards knowledge.

The community that Peirce endorses is the scientific community. The scientific community, like the Medieval scholastics, looks to a plurality of arguments and forms of arguments, and uses them to evaluate critically one another to form a 'rope' of inference; however, the character of this community does not have the constricting presence of the Church, to whom the scholastics appealed. Rather, the character of the scientific community is much more dynamic. Science, for Peirce, is a self-correcting enterprise that uses empirical methods. It is this form of inquiry coupled with the no-holds-barred attitude cultivated in its practioners that presents the best framework for securing knowledge.

THE SCIENTIFIC 'COMMUNITY'

Peirce's conception of the scientific community finds its most exhaustive formulation in "The Scientific Attitude" (1896). The scientific community plays crucial role in Peirce's pragmatism, forming the ideal set of conscientious inquiring agents. In this paper, Peirce examines the temperaments of three classes of men—those who look to feelings (artists), those who look to practicality (businessmen), and those who look to

reason (scientists and philosophers).[24] In this third class of men Peirce finds the scientists, a group of individuals possessed by a passion to learn. Scientists, he finds, are driven by an "impulse to penetrate into the reason of things," not motivated by what they can know, but for the love of learning itself.[25] This impulse to inquire into truth for truth's sake separates the scientist from the philosopher.[26] It is the scientist that is willing to compare his ideas with experimental results in order to correct those ideas and evaluate them against the findings of other experimenters.

The scientific attitude can be concisely summarized in Peirce's own rational imperative: "Do not block the way of inquiry."[27] Conservatism in all its guises is contrary to the scientific method.[28] The scientific man allows free range for his imagination, inquiring into every facet of our experience and the natural world, dreaming of explanations and laws. At the core of the scientifically minded inquirer is the impulse and drive to inquire into the world in a no-holds-barred manner, willing to evaluate and correct ideas in the face of experimental results unconfined by dogmatism and agenda. He finds that there is "no positive sin against logic in *trying* any theory which may come

[24] Charles S. Peirce, "The Scientific Attitude" [SA] (1896) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 43.
[25] Peirce, *CP* 1.44 (1896).
[26] Generally, the philosopher, in contrast to the scientist, has an axe to grind, a position to advance. He writes that the philosopher "is a man with a system which he thinks embodies all that is best worth knowing" (Peirce, *CP* 1.44 (1896)). The philosopher is often restricted by his own agenda, whereas the scientist typically burns to learn about everything for the sake of learning. Like his characterization of metaphysical philosophers we considered above, Peirce sees philosophers as generally looking to what is most agreeable to their own reasoning, and adopting those beliefs that fulfill that criterion. This is not to say, however, that Peirce regards all philosophers as bad investigators and all scientists as good. Rather, Peirce finds that the best form of inquiry would be that form which deters investigation for the sake of promoting personal agendas and embraces a more open form of inquiry that values inquiry for the sake of inquiry.
[27] Charles S. Peirce, "The First Rule of Reason" [FRR] (1899) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 135.
[28] To be conservative is to restrict potential inquiry, even if that inquiry should prove to be useless for further investigation. Even conservatism about morals leads away from the scientific attitude, in that, it "leads to conservatism about manners and finally conservatism about opinions of the speculative kind" (Peirce, *CP* 1.50 (1896)).

into our heads, so long as it is adopted in such a sense as to permit the investigation to go on unimpeded and undiscouraged."[29] The model he proposes for positing hypotheses is one of radically imaginative propositions. He observes that "the best hypothesis…is the one which can be most readily refuted if it is false."[30] He proposes that scientific inquiry should formulate and entertain without discrimination even those hypotheses that are evidently false, provided that they do not impede inquiry.[31]

Science, for Peirce, is a "living inquiry,"[32] not merely the sum total of experimental results and theories. He observes that "a definition of science in general which shall express a really intelligent conception of it as a living historic entity must regard it as the occupation of that peculiar class of men, the scientific men."[33] Science is an activity of a group of individuals who share the desire to investigate into our experience and the natural world in a no-holds-barred manner. It is a living community

[29] Peirce, *CP* 1.136 (1899).
[30] Charles S. Peirce, "The Uncertainty of Scientific Results" [USR] (1896) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 120.
[31] Sir Karl Popper's 'falsificationism' strongly resembles Peirce's characterization of hypotheses in scientific inquiry, whose philosophy Popper recognized as a profound influence on his own. Popper held that scientific theory and human knowledge is irreducibly conjectural and hypothetical, and is generated by a creative imagination. He argued that, logically, no theory or hypothesis can be decisively confirmed; however, a single counter-instance can decisively show that a theory or hypothesis is false. This asymmetry between verifying a theory and falsifying a theory inspired him to take falsifiability as his criterion of demarcation for what is scientific and non-scientific; meaning, that a theory is scientific if and only if it is falsifiable. Like Peirce's characterization of the scientific attitude as being a no-holds-barred form of inquiry, marked by positing imaginative hypotheses, Popper adopts a picture of scientific inquiry predicated on positing radically imaginative hypotheses that can be falsified. In addition, Popper argues that science progresses by falsifying theories, such that when a theory has been falsified, some measure progress in science has been attained. In fact, insofar as we are incapable of verifying a theory or hypothesis, the collection of falsified theories is the measure of scientific advancement. Peirce takes a more humble approach to the contribution of falsified theories and hypotheses, noting that "if a hypothesis can quickly and easily be cleared away so as to go toward leaving the field free for the main struggle, this is an immense advantage" (Peirce, *CP* 1.120 (1896)). The falsification of hypotheses, for Peirce, enables inquiry to proceed in a more direct and clear manner. Despite this difference they both see falsification as making a strong contribution to scientific advancement.
[32] Charles S. Peirce, "The Paucity of Scientific Knowledge" [PSK] (1896) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 116.
[33] Charles S. Peirce, "Observation" [O] (1896) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 99.

activity; one that is evolutionary in character, correcting itself in light of new arguments and experimental results. In "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878), Peirce notes the dynamic community activity of scientific inquiry.

> One man may investigate the velocity of light by studying the transits of Venus and the aberration of the stars; another by oppositions of Mars and the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites; a third by the method of Fizeau; a fourth by that of Foucault; a fifth by the motions of the curves of Lissajoux; a sixth, a seventh, an eighth, and a ninth, may follow the different methods of comparing the measures of statical and dynamical electricity.[34]

Science consists of a community of practitioners, each of whom perfect their own methods and share them with other members of the community for evaluation. Scientific inquiry looks to a plurality of arguments and methods for evaluation. It recognizes that truth and reality do not depend on what any single individual may think.

Peirce identifies the fundamental hypothesis of science as:

> There are Real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them; those Reals affect our sense according to regular laws, and, though our sensations are as different as are our relations to the objects, yet, by taking advantage of the laws of perception, we can ascertain by reasoning how things really and truly are; and any man, if he have sufficient experience and he reason enough about it, will be led to the one True conclusion.[35]

Science maintains that reality is independent of the opinions and beliefs of any individual. Responsible investigations of reality can only be based on a method that evaluates opinions and beliefs in an intersubjective setting. Investigation of our experience and the natural world requires substantive interaction with other investigators and close examination of the various arguments individuals produce. One of the crucial strengths of science is that it "trust[s] rather to the multitude and variety of its arguments

[34] Charles S. Peirce, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" [HIC] (1878) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 407.
[35] Peirce, *CP* 5.384 (1877).

than to the conclusiveness of any one" [36] and subjects these arguments to careful scrutiny in a public forum.

What makes science the preferable source for fixing belief, or pursuing knowledge, is its capacity to "move steadily together toward a destined centre."[37] Its strength lies in the fact that the scientific method of investigation carries its inquirers to the same conclusion, though they may set out with different, possibly even antagonistic, arguments and methods. Science progresses by positing various arguments and methodologies and evaluating them in the public forum. It proceeds in sensible steps, conscientious of human fallibility and checking results and methods against the body of results and experimental methods in the community of scientific investigators. In essence, the strength of the scientific method is its capacity to match opinions with fact, where other methods for fixing belief are in regards to this feature disadvantageous.[38]

He concludes by suggesting that philosophy ought to embrace this method, "philosophy ought to imitate the successful sciences in its methods."[39] Philosophy should take on the no-holds-barred line of questioning characteristic of scientists, removing itself from the agendas of its traditional practitioners and turning away from methodological individualism. Only then can philosophy become progressive and approach its goal of attaining truth. Like science, philosophy must recognize human limitations and test theories and hypotheses by conducting experiments with beliefs in experience and evaluate the results of these experiments in a public forum. By turning to

[36] Peirce, *CP* 5.265 (1868).
[37] Peirce, *CP* 5.407 (1878).
[38] The other methods for fixing belief Peirce notes in FB are tenacity, authority, and 'a priori'. The method of tenacity is the method of fixing belief under individualistic determinations. The method of authority is the method of fixing belief through papal or governmental institutional determinations. And, the method of 'a priori' is the method of fixing belief by looking at what is agreeable to 'reason', rather than agreeable to experience.
[39] Peirce, *CP* 5.265 (1868).

the community of inquirers philosophy can assess the results of inquiry in a manner that transcends the preferences, or tastes, of any individual. Like the Medieval scholastics, philosophers can secure knowledge by forming a "cable" of various arguments through rehearsing, reusing, and evaluating arguments in a community context. Philosophy should embrace the natural social impulse, rather than rejecting this crucial feature of humanity, and in adopting a scientific methodology it can secure knowledge that would otherwise be threatened by the preferences of the individual or other social authority.

THOUGHT, SEMIOTICS, AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Peirce's theory of consciousness and the corresponding processes for resolving doubt consists in a theory of signs. In "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" (1868) and SCFI, Peirce provides an outline for the relation between thought and signs. Every thought, for Peirce, is a sign.

> If we seek the light of external facts, the only cases of thought which we can find are of thought in signs…All thought, therefore, must necessarily be in signs.[40]

Any conception we are to have of an external reality must be presented to and understood by the mind in terms of pictures, sounds, or words. The sight of a house or blueness, for instance, are pictures impressed upon the mind, which takes it as a sign of the object perceived. Likewise, bitterness and music present themselves as signs in the mind in terms of taste and sound respectively. A sign can be understood as being (almost) a representative of the thing experienced. Peirce defines his use of sign as:

> A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect of capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign

[40] Charles S. Peirce, "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" [QCC] (1868) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 251.

> which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*.[41]

Our concern is the concept of a thought-sign and how these thought-signs relate to one another to form the fluid mental process of thought.

The association, in a non-Humean sense, of thought-signs consists in this: "a judgment occasions another judgment, of which it is the sign."[42] Associations made between thought-signs are in reality associations of judgments, making the process of thought a process of judging. Thought is a process of inference, relating thought-signs by producing judgments that move beyond the particular thought-sign to another thought-sign. For example, when presented with an experience, and this experience is similar to one we have had previously, we infer that the latter is 'similar' to the former. All mental processes are inferences: "every sort of modification of consciousness—Attention, Sensation, and Understanding—is an inference."[43]

Consciousness, as the fluid mental process of thought, is a sign resulting from inference. It follows that the mind is a sign developing according to the set framework, what we make take loosely to be laws, of inferences. All signs have the characteristic of consistency, which amounts to having the characteristic of being unified. These laws of inference unify thought, in that, they set the rules for proper inference that produce a consistent framework within which one may conduct thinking. Without such a consistent

---

[41] Charles S. Peirce, "Division of Signs" [DS] (1897) in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, v. II, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 228.

[42] Peirce, *CP* 5.307 (1868).

[43] Peirce, *CP* 5.298 (1868). Here, we can begin to see Peirce's criticism of foundationalism. All thought is irreducibly triadic, in that it entails states of doubt and habits of action mediated by signs. These signs are thoroughly immersed in a continuing process of interpretation. There is no foundation upon which thought is to be built; rather, thought is the continuing process of interpreting signs through judgments. He writes that "cognition arises by a continuous process" of what he characterizes as "inference" (Peirce, *CP* 5.267 (1868)). The triadic relation of thought undermines traditional foundationalistic epistemologies by showing that there is no hierarchical structure in which every proposition is either "basic" or derives its justification from basic propositions, but rather it is a continuing process of the mental action of inference.

structure there cannot be a reasonable account of conceptual thinking. Thoughts would remain scattered and unrelated. Structured relations among thoughts, guided by rules for inference, produce the kind of consistency required for conceptual thinking. A necessary condition for thought is a set structure of rules for inference, where this framework serves as a medium for the unification and consistency of thought.

When we think of ourselves we regard ourselves as 'men'. 'Man', as a thought, is a sign. Because the thought 'man' is a sign and the mind is a sign developing according to the laws of inference, man is himself a sign. As a sign, the identity of man is wrapped in the consistency of what he does and thinks. The reality of 'man' consists in the unification of thought-signs in an ongoing progression of judging, or inference, where thought just *is* the ongoing progression of thought addressing future thoughts identical with it. The existence of thought depends on what thoughts are to come, such that it is always in a state of potential existence.

The individual alone cannot produce the kinds of continuity required for 'thought'. The individual requires a medium for thought to be unified. Peirce finds the significance of this medium to be so great that the individual is incapable of existing as a 'man' independent of it. The medium that is required to unify thoughts is the medium of a framework of rules for inference. This structure of rules and standards is an achievement of the 'community'. Language, judgments, and corrections, all of which exhibit a dependence upon a structure of rules for inference, are special cases of activities of the community. Language plays a crucial role in Peirce's conception of community. In language, Peirce finds the medium through which one obtains consistency of what he does and thinks, thereby guaranteeing his identity as a man. Acquiring language is

necessary for having the capacity to *interpret* the signs impressed upon the mind. Without language and the corresponding framework of rules for inference it provides there can be no interpretation of thought-signs. 'Man' can only 'think' by means of words and signs, and coherence in thinking is secured only by possessing language. Language, Peirce observes, is the sum total of man: "Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought."[44]

Under these considerations Peirce concludes that the man separated from the community cannot exist as a 'man'.

> The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation.[45]

The isolated man on a deserted island, for instance, would not be exposed to language. As we have seen, coherence in thinking is contingent upon acquiring the framework of rules for inference that come with linguistic ability. Clearly, the isolated man would not be able to 'think' in any robust sense, and would only exhibit basic instinctual reactions to features present in his environment. He would not be able to formulate predictions or judgments, nor would he be able to construct habits of action. His natural social impulse would be stymied and he would be unable to interpret and evaluate the present impressions in his mind. In short, he would not be 'man'. He would be lacking the crucial social dimension that defines 'man'. Likewise, the man who rejects the structure of rules for inference provided by the community would no longer be properly regarded as 'man'. Dismissing this framework separates the individual man from the public

[44] Peirce, *CP* 5.314 (1868).
[45] Peirce, *CP* 5.317 (1868).

forum, and by not sharing in this framework for evaluation he would remain in a state of potential error and ignorance.

The community, as a mediating framework of rules for inference, is at the core of 'thought'. Separation from the community denotes an incapacity to think. The community is also at the heart of Peirce's phenomenology. In "A Detailed Classification of the Sciences" (1902) Peirce defines philosophy as an observational science: "[philosophy] contends itself with observations such as come within the range of every man's normal experience."[46] In "Phenomenology" (1905), he defines phenomenology as "the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not."[47] At the center of philosophy, then, is phenomenology. His studies of phenomenology reveal three categories of phenomena: "positive qualitative possibility," "actual fact," and "law that will govern facts in the future."[48] These three categories of phenomena correspond with what he calls Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness respectively.

Firstness, for Peirce, is the immediate sensation, what he equates with being a quality.[49] This is difficult to grasp because one cannot give an example of a first. In essence, it is the prereflective sensation. Since one cannot provide a first, one can merely point to where a first might be and subsequently recognize that you have had the first sensation. Perhaps an example of where a firstness might be found would be the joyful

---

[46] Charles S. Peirce, "A Detailed Classification of the Sciences" [DCS] (1902) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 241.
[47] Charles S. Peirce, "Phenomenology" [P] (1905) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 284.
[48] Charles S. Peirce, "Nominalism" [N] (1903) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 23.
[49] Charles S. Peirce, "The Categories in Detail" [CD] (1907) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 310.

experience of hearing beautiful music without reflecting on its beauty or your joy. To reflect on the music or first sensation is to already be in the realm of secondness. Firstness is atemporal, being the immediate preflective sensation.

Secondness is the reflection on first sensation, and in it comes the recognition of a first sensation. This is the category of the actually existing fact, where the fact is an object to a subject. To put it in terms of Peirce's semiotics, secondness is the 'interpretation' of firstness as a sign in the mind. It is the category of our brute reactions to events like a slamming door in an otherwise silent room, meeting the high school bully, running fingernails down a chalkboard, etc. Seconds form a category of discrete, distinguishable points of sensation in time. Our observations and reactions to events are all seconds. Seconds encompass "real" constituents of reality, facts about the world. It is the class of unique existents in space and time.[50]

Leaving our experience of reality to these two categories, however, would be insufficient. Reality is more than just prereflective sensations or the discrete events of our brute reactions. Reality is also a matter of the relation between events. Peirce defines thirdness in "Thirdness" (1875) as "the medium or connecting bond between the absolute first and last. The beginning is first, the end second, the middle third."[51]

---

[50] It must be noted that Peirce's conception of the "real" is not the commonsensical understanding we generally have of the real. He distinguishes, following Medieval scholastics like Duns Scotus, between 'real' and 'existence'. For Peirce, something can be real and not be an existing material thing. The "real" for Peirce are *more* than seconds. Seconds are "real," being things existing in space and time, but not all "reals" are seconds. Thus, we can see why he would ascribe a metaphysical status to the 'community' as a "real" phenomenon.

[51] Charles S. Peirce, "Thirdness" [T] (1875) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 337.
He also defines thirdness in "Nominalism" as "the mode of being which *consists* in the fact that future facts of Secondness will take on a determinate general character" (Peirce, *CP* 1.26 (1903)). Additionally, he defines thirdness in "The Logic of Mathematics: An Attempt to Develop My Categories From Within" [LM] (1896) as the "category of elements of phenomena consist[ing] of what we call laws when we contemplate them from the outside only, but which when we see both sides of the shield we call thoughts. Thoughts are neither qualities nor facts" (Peirce, *CP* 1.420 (1896)).

Thirdness may be roughly characterized as the category of habit, continuity, or relatedness. The capacities for habit, continuity, and relatedness require language, a point that will be taken up later in this section. Placing thirdness in the context of firstness and secondness: the music in its unreflective immediacy is its firstness, its notes in space and time is its secondness, and the structure of the melody relating to its notes is its thirdness. Observations made in science, for instance, are seconds and the laws that bring these data together are thirds. Thirdness serves a relational function between firstness and secondness and between seconds. Our experience consists in a *triadic* relation between firsts, seconds, and thirds.

Peirce insists that any relation between two entities (be they persons, objects, or ideas) always requires a third element. This third element is the structure of meanings, truths, assumptions, laws, and expectations in which relations occur. The community is at the heart of this third element. The community is the framework within which meanings, truths, laws, and associations are formulated and evaluated. The community governs the relations between entities, i.e., persons, ideas, and objects. Thirdness, as we have seen, is the mediating structure that determines the relation between firsts and seconds and between seconds. The structure of thirdness is grounded in the framework of community, where the community framework of rules for inference informs how thirdness relates entities.[52] By governing the relations between firsts and seconds and seconds, the community framework mediates our experience. In essence, the structure of

[52] It must be highlighted for the sake of clarity that just as not all "reals" are seconds, not all thirdness is thought. For instance, as we have seen, thirdness also include such things as natural laws. The tendency in nature to acquire order Peirce identifies as thirdness. In this way, thirdness is not just set framework of rules for inference imposed upon our experience, but also includes those tendencies that naturally occur in relations among persons, ideas, and objects.

rules for inference formulated by the community determines how we understand our experience of the world.

The community plays a crucial role in the phenomenological category of thirdness. The notion of the individual finds its expression in secondness. It is *my* brute reactions to events that constitute secondness. Facts in the world are part of the brute reactions of the individual; however, importantly, the mediating framework in which brute reactions are understood to be of 'such and such' character is determined by the community. The framework that governs relations between firsts and seconds and seconds is a public structure, a structure that is shared by sensing agents. Seconds, and their corresponding reactions and facts, are informed and molded by this mediating framework of community. To be 'man' is to be a participant in the community framework, and reactions made by the individual are exhibitings of community-endorsed reactions.

This has been a rough sketch of how the community figures in Peirce's conception of thought, semiotics, and phenomenology. Peirce relies heavily on his characterization of the triadic relation involved in thought and sensation. In thought, the community is the mediating agent that provides the structure within which the fluid movement of thought takes place. 'Thought' also comes into his notion of thirdness. Peirce writes, thirdness is the "category of elements of phenomena consist[ing] of what we call…thought."[53] He recognizes that thought, mediated by the community, relates entities and gives rise to our experience of the world. The subject-object dyad as a model of phenomenology is an inadequate model. Rather, it requires a third element, thirdness,

[53] Peirce, *CP* 1.26 (1903).

where we have found Peirce's notion of community. Our experience in the world is composed of immediate sensations and brute reactions mediated by a public structure of rules for inference within which relations are made. The subject/object distinction typically drawn in modern epistemology has been collapsed to show that our being-in-the-world relies fundamentally on a mediating framework that transcends both the subject and object. This mediating structure culminates in the framework of community.

COMMUNITY

The notion of community finds its origin in Peirce's criticism of Cartesian epistemology and interest in Medieval scholasticism. He argues against Descartes' methodological individualism finding that it cannot sustain itself and leads to a dangerous state of affairs. The social impulse, which is fundamental to human beings, is neglected in this formulation of knowledge, and leaving truth in the hands of the individual renders the individual incapable of evaluating his determinations against a transcending set of criteria to ensure that he has reasoned properly. Philosophy should instead turn to a plurality of arguments and methods, rehearsing them, reusing them, and evaluating them in a public forum to ensure that results are not subject to the whims of any individual. Philosophy should follow the model of Medieval scholastics in determining knowledge. However, it is not to the authority of the Church that philosophy should turn. Rather, it is to the scientific community, as that community of conscientious inquirers who are interested in the search for truth for truth's sake and who investigate the world in a no-holds-barred manner. The scientific attitude promotes responsible investigation by looking to a collection of arguments and methods and using them to evaluate and correct one another. It is an attitude of looking to our experience and testing ideas to determine

their meaning and usefulness. Philosophy should adopt this method of inquiry and look to a community to confirm results and methods. By doing so philosophy will attain the progressive character of the sciences.

The conditional status thought exhibits upon a mediating structure of rules for inference finds its source in the social impulse of human nature. Peirce's conception of thought reveals that a mediating structure of rules for inference is at work within which ideas are brought together and doubt is resolved into states of belief. He finds that between two thoughts there must be some framework of rules that (1) sets the kind of associations that bind them together and (2) sets the context in which they can be evaluated. Because man consists in the consistency of what he thinks and does, it is the medium of this structure of rules for inference that binds his thoughts together thereby producing a consistent framework of conceptual thinking. At the heart of this mediating structure is the community. Thought, as the guiding force for producing habits of action, is, then, determined by the community framework of rules for inference.

Thought also figures in Peirce's account of thirdness, which is the framework in which relations are made. Our experience of the world, which includes firsts and seconds, is mediated by thirdness. Thought is at work in thirdness by providing a structure within which we understand our experience, and serves as the mechanism through which we relate firsts and seconds and seconds. The supporting structure of thirdness is the community, which determines how thought relates firsts and seconds.

At its most fundamental level, then, our being-in-the-world, which includes thought, sensation, and action, is determined by a community framework. We are fundamentally *in* the community. The community directs the relations made between

ideas and sensations, and is at work in what constitutes proper reasoning. Descartes' methodological individualism fails because it does not recognize this crucial aspect of our reasoning. Individualism is dangerous because it attempts to go beyond the community framework to determine truth, relying instead on reasoning that is not subject to scrutiny in the public forum. By realizing that we are fundamentally within a community framework, and adopting the attitude and methodologies of science, we can transcend the errors inevitably found in human reasoning. Thus, the social impulse *is* the natural impulse. It is to recognize that we, as experiencing beings, are fundamentally bound together through the medium of community such that we can and do influence one another in ways that form the framework of our experience in the world.

II. PEIRCE'S SOCIAL THEORY OF TRUTH

In this section, I look closely at Peirce's social theory of truth. We have seen how the notion of community resides at the fundamental level of our experience in the world. My intention here is to analyze Peirce's conception of truth and how it is informed by his notion of community. The discussion that follows will show that there is an intimate connection between Peirce's conception of truth and convergence of social opinion.

To get a picture of Peirce's conception of truth we can begin by analyzing his doubt/belief theory of inquiry in FB.[54]

> With the doubt, therefore, the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt it ends. Hence the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion. We may fancy that this is not enough for us, and that we seek, not merely an opinion, but

[54] I will confine my analysis to Peirce's early writings insofar as they present the clearest picture of his conception of truth. It must be noted however that his views on truth change somewhat over his career. For instance, in "Truth, Falsity and Error" [TFE] (1901), he defines truth as "that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit toward which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of the confession of its inaccuracy and one-sidedness, and this confession is an essential ingredient of truth" (Peirce, *CP* 5.565 (1901)).

> a true opinion. But put this fancy to the test, and it proves groundless; for as soon as a firm belief is reached we are entirely satisfied, whether the belief be true or false.[55]

In this theory of inquiry, Peirce observes that we need only to look to what "satisfies" the irritation of doubt. It is evident that he recognizes the psychological fact that believing something and believing it is true are the same mental acts. However, it does not follow from this that what we believe is true *is* the true itself. Truth, for Peirce, is not identified with belief. Which, if any, beliefs are true is independent of our own set of beliefs.

Of the four methods for fixing belief, only one takes into consideration a right and wrong way of fixing beliefs—the scientific method. The scientific method is used by a group of inquirers who seek not only to believe something, but to have their beliefs coincide with fact. The group of inquirers who use this method recognize that belief must be determined on grounds other than the act of believing or merely the satisfaction incurred from believing in order to have their beliefs coincide with fact. The fundamental hypothesis of science is: "There are Real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them."[56] Science asserts that truth about real things is independent about what we think about them, and it turns to a method for evaluating propositions that transcends any individual's preferences or determinations.

By arguing that philosophy should adopt the scientific method, it is clear that Peirce embraces a conception of an independent reality and a model of intersubjective evaluation. The 'scientific' community, understood broadly as a community embracing the scientific attitude, is the proper authority for determining truth and reality. In HIC, we find the core of Peirce's theory of truth,

---

[55] Peirce, *CP* 5.375 (1877).
[56] Peirce, *CP* 5.384 (1877).

> The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real.[57]

We can see that Peirce finds an intimate tie between truth, reality, and community consensus. I believe the key to unlocking Peirce's social theory of truth is found in his conception of reality.

Peirce presents a new understanding of reality. The earliest formulation of his conception of reality comes in "Fraser's Edition of *The Works of George Berkeley*" (1871). Reality, as we have seen, is something independent of beliefs.

> This thing out of the mind, which directly influences sensation, and through sensation thought, because it *is* out of the mind, is independent of how we think it, and is, in short, the real.[58]

He notes that human thought has its limitations,

> All human thought and opinion contains an arbitrary, accidental element, dependent on the limitations in circumstances, power, and bent of the individual; an element of error, in short.[59]

Here, he revisits his thesis of fallibility in inquiry. However, despite this inherent element of error in inquiry,

> there is…to every question a true answer, a final conclusion, to which the opinion of every man is constantly gravitating.[60]

Because as inquiry is marked with error, the individual may not be at the end of this gravitational pull to the single opinion, but, in the long run, there is a definite opinion

---

[57] Peirce, *CP* 5.407 (1878).
[58] Charles S. Peirce, "Fraser's Edition of *The Works of George Berkeley*" [FE] (1871) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. VIII, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 12. The character of reality as an "influence" also appears in HIC: "Reality, like every other quality, consists in the peculiar sensible effects which things partaking of it produce. The only real effect which real things have is to cause belief, for all the sensations which they excite emerge into consciousness in the form of beliefs" (Peirce, *CP* 5.406 (1878)). The real is that which causes belief through its "sensible effects."
[59] Peirce, *CP* 8.12 (1871).
[60] Peirce, *CP* 8.12 (1871).

toward which man is moving. The arbitrary will of the individual can postpone reaching this definite opinion, but it cannot change the character of this opinion.

> This final opinion, then, is independent, not indeed of thought in general, but of all that is arbitrary and individual in thought; is quite independent of how you, or I, or any number of men think.[61]

Finally, he concludes by observing that this final opinion discovers reality.

> Everything, therefore, which will be thought to exist in the final opinion is real, and nothing else.[62]

It will be beneficial to lay out the features of Peirce's conception of reality in light of the discussion in FE. They include:

(1) Reality is independent of beliefs, where the real causes beliefs.
(2) All human thought and opinion contains some possibility of error.
(3) All human thought is gravitating to some definite, or final, opinion.
(4) The final opinion is independent of the whims of the individual or group of individuals.
(5) The objects represented in the final opinion are the real.

The crucial claim is Claim Three. There must be some gravitation to a single, definite opinion about reality.[63] Within his conception of "gravitation" is the notion of consensus. It is the capacity for individuals to agree about reality, to come to a single opinion about what reality is. In essence, it is a crystallization of thought into a single opinion. Insofar as we are gravitating toward some definite opinion about reality, reality must be what the community thought construes it to be. Consensus is our one reliable way of interpreting reality. Since we have no access to the real apart from our conception of it, the real must be what the final opinion thinks it to be. Definite opinions, for Peirce, are those concepts about which there is no further revision needed. Put another way, it is a conception that

[61] Peirce, *CP* 8.12 (1871).
[62] Peirce, *CP* 8.12 (1871).
[63] Interestingly, like Descartes, Peirce maintains that there is one truth about the nature and constituents of reality. Perhaps put more accurately, Peirce holds that *if* there is such a thing as truth, it would be of such a character that it is a single, definite opinion that accurately represents reality.

is not improvable, where the community will continue to reaffirm it. Reality *is* that concept that needs no further revision or improvement because the community of inquirers has come to a single opinion about its unimprovable character.[64]

It is important to note that Claim Two reveals that there still may be an element of error in the final opinion. No human thought is without a possibility of error. The entire project of determining reality may be fraught with error, including the initial point of departure of the inquiry. If the arbiter of truth is science and the final opinion of the 'scientific' community *is* the real, there is still the possibility that the scientific conception of reality is in error. Here, we find Peirce's commitment to a continuing process of inquiry. The final opinion is not a fact to be realized at some point in the future, but rather it is the projected aim of inquiry. In "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic" (1868), he observes that these considerations "makes all reality something which is constituted indefinitely future."[65] To claim, then, that Peirce is committed to the idea that the final opinion will be realized is a mistake. Rather, inquiry is such that can only be an ongoing, continual process of reevaluation, revision, and correction.

The key to understanding Peirce's social theory of truth lays in his conception of reality. Given the discussion that has brought us to this point, a true belief, i.e., a belief that represents a real object, is equivalent with the final opinion of the community. Peirce's theory of truth is the concept of the real. As H. S. Thayer understands Peirce's

[64] A strong reading of this would suggest that reality *is* what the final opinion represents it to be. A more moderate reading suggests that in the long run we will have converged on or have discovered reality. I take Peirce to intend the more moderate suggestion. The strong reading has the connotation that the final opinion of the community creates reality, where reality is a matter of the arbitrary decisions or conventions of the scientific community. This is incorrect. Insofar as reality is independent of us, and we can only access reality through our conception of it, it must be that reality is something that we have discovered rather than created. It is, in essence, the confirmed beliefs of the scientific community.

[65] Charles S. Peirce, "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities" [GVLL] (1868) in *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 331.

theory of truth, "Truth is accordingly *conceived* as a characteristic of the belief we would possess if it were affected by nothing but the real and if the real were the only object represented in these beliefs."[66] This kind of belief would be the final belief of the community. Peirce's conception of truth is, then, intimately tied to his conception of reality. Returning to his definition of truth in HIC,

> The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed upon by all who investigate is what we mean by truth, and the object represented by this opinion is the real.[67]

Truth and the real are regarded as coexistent. Truth is the ultimately agreed upon opinion of the community directed by the gravitation of thought toward a final opinion.

We can now unpack the quotation that introduces this chapter.

> The real, then, is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY, without definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge.[68]

For Peirce, we have no way of understanding reality except through our interpretation of it. The only way we access reality is through its "sensible effects." Reality by itself is, pragmatically, a meaningless notion. It is only through interpreting the sensible effects of reality that reality obtains any meaning. The real, as we have seen, is that concept about which no further revision is needed in the course of inquiry, a concept that is continually reaffirmed. Judging that a concept needs no further revision is not dependent upon an individual or merely a group of individuals; rather, it is the ultimate conclusion that every inquirer will agree upon. Thus, reality is independent of what you or I think it to be, and it *is* what is finally agreed upon by all of those who are moving towards this final conclusion. At the core of the notion of reality, then, is the notion of community. In the

[66] H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, New York, NY: The Bobb's-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968, 124.
[67] Peirce, *CP* 5.407 (1878).
[68] Peirce, *CP* 5.311 (1868).

long run we will have converged on or discovered reality by coming to a single opinion about its character. It is the confirmed beliefs of the community. This community, however, is "without definite limits." It is in an ongoing, continual process of evaluating, revising, and correcting. It is an endless investigation, where the final opinion serves as an ideal toward which inquiry is gravitating.

The community that Peirce envisions is a community of interpreters, inquirers, and confirmers directed by the able methodologies of scientific inquiry. Truth and the real, as coexistent affairs, consist in the final opinion of this community. Truth would be that which is affected by nothing but the real and if the real were the only object represented in these beliefs. This pure understanding of truth and the real just *is* the final conclusion. Because the community is in the continual process of inquiry, truth and the real are also in a continual process of becoming.

CHAPTER 3: SELLARS AND THE COMMUNITY OF 'PERSONS'

> Thus the conceptual framework of persons is the framework in which we think of one another as sharing the community intentions which provide the ambience of principles and standards…within which we live our own lives.
>
> - Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man"[69]

The influence of Peirce's turn to the community has been profound in contemporary philosophy, though it is seldom recognized that it is he who produced the notion of 'community' in its current guise. We tend to forget the radical nature of Peirce's notion of community, where Peirce highlighted the *metaphysical* significance of the idea of community. As we have seen, his philosophy serves as the foundation for the movement away from the philosophy of subjectivity and consciousness that has dominated modern philosophy to the idea of substantive *inter*subjective discourse. In this chapter, I intend to examine the role of the community in Sellars' philosophy, and by doing so perhaps we can see how Peirce's 'community' adumbrates Sellars' conception of community.

Like Peirce, Sellars fervently argues against the epistemological tradition he inherited from Descartes. Throughout his career, Sellars critically examines components of the Cartesian framework, rejecting those that he finds problematic, e.g., the 'given' and sensation as a 'concept', and sometimes even defending portions of the framework that philosophers have dismissed too readily, e.g., 'direct knowing'. By arguing against the 'given' it is clear that Sellars rejects foundationalistic epistemologies, and by arguing for the indispensable role of 'direct knowing' he rejects a full-fledged coherentism. In essence, Sellars chooses a path between what he regards as two epistemological extremes—foundationalism and coherentism. The aim of this chapter is to determine the

[69] Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" [PSIM] in *Science, Perception, and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, 40.

role of the community in the middle path Sellars takes. The community plays a crucial role in Sellars' epistemology, his rejection of The Myth of the Given, phenomenology, philosophy of language and meaning, and conception of 'persons'. I have structured this chapter similarly to the previous one on Peirce to make clear the similarities in their accounts. In Section I, I formulate Sellars' theory of community. This will entail examining: (1) his theories of language and meaning and (2) his 'verbal behaviorism' theory of private episodes. In Section II, I look carefully at the irreducible core of 'persons' to analyze critically the crucial role of the community in the manifest image of man-in-the-world. This discussion will provide us with a concise picture of the role of the community in Sellars' philosophy, and enable us to examine whether his turn to community evades the problem of solipsism.

I. SELLARS' THEORY OF COMMUNITY

My goal in this section is to provide a concise formulation of Sellars' theory of community so that we may see how he employs this notion in his conception of the core of what constitutes a 'person'.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE AND MEANING

There are a number of features of Sellars' theory of language that need elucidation. First, we need to clarify how Sellars grounds linguistic rules on the notion of 'pattern-governed' behavior. It will also be important to articulate Sellars' conception of linguistic rules of criticism. From this we can see how he turns to a functionalist account of language and meaning. Finally, we will be in a position to see how this functionalist account of language relates to his account of conceptual thinking and sensation.

Sellars observes that the key to the concept of a linguistic rule is its complex relation to 'pattern-governed' linguistic behavior. He defines 'pattern-governed' behavior most clearly in "Meaning As Functional Classification":

> [Pattern-governed behavior] is the concept of behavior which exhibits a pattern, not because it is brought about by the intention that it exhibit this pattern, but because the propensity to emit behavior of the pattern has been selectively reinforced, and the propensity to emit behavior which does not conform to this pattern selectively extinguished.[70]

He finds that pattern-governed behavior can arise by 'natural' selection along an evolutionary time-scale; for instance, in the complex behavior of a colony of ants or a hive of bees. However, more crucially, "it can also arise by purposive selection on the part of trainers."[71] Pattern-governed behavior can be developed in individual "trainees" by selective reinforcement on the part of "trainers."[72]

The thought 'This is red' as a pattern-governed response to red objects is not itself an action, but an event. It is still, however, covered by a rule, a rule that is "involved in the explanation of its occurrence."[73] The rule that covers this response is an 'ought-to-be'. This 'ought-to-be' corresponds with the selective reinforcement of the trainer on the trainee that the trainee ought to have such a response when presented with a red object in normal light, etc. The trainer assists the trainee in acquiring his linguistic ability by selectively reinforcing particular statements which the trainee in turn associates with particular mental states.[74] The trainer reasoning may look similar to this:

---

[70] Wilfrid Sellars, "Meaning As Functional Classification"[MFC] in *Synthese* 27, 1974, 423.
[71] Ibid., 423.
[72] It is important to bear in mind that a piece, or particular, of pattern-governed behavior is not in and of itself action, though actions can consist in sequences of pattern-governed behavior. Rather, these pieces of pattern-governed behavior are events. For instance, feeling happy for someone who has received good news is not itself an action. Judging the correctness or incorrectness of a piece of pattern-governed behavior is then directed toward these pieces as events.
[73] Ibid., 423.
[74] It must be noted that, in certain circumstances, associations can take place that something is 'red' with a green object in abnormal light.

> Pattern-governed behavior of such and such a kind *ought to be* exhibited by trainees, hence we, the trainers, *ought to do* this and that, as likely to bring it about that it *is* exhibited.[75]

Trainees respond to 'ought-to-be's' because trainers obey corresponding 'ought-to-do's'.[76] In saying that trainers obey 'ought-to-do's' it is clear that they are subject to a transcending framework within which they conduct their behavioral "training" of individuals. This transcending structure is the framework of rules under which behavioral responses are evaluated, and, as we will see, it corresponds with Sellars' conception of community.

It is important to highlight the difference between 'ought-to-be's' and 'ought-to-do's' for the trainee and trainer respectively. 'Ought-to-be's' are those claims that something should do something. They amount to rules of action. For instance, my watch ought to beep at the turn of the hour. Likewise, a trainee ought to utter "This is red" when presented with a red object. Crucially, 'ought-to-be's' do not require that one understand the rules to which they are conforming, much like my watch need not understand why it should beep at those times. When a trainee utters "It is red" he does not have to have an understanding of what 'red' is in relation to other things. Sellars argues in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" that we must abandon "the idea that learning to use the word 'red' involves antecedent episodes of *awareness of redness*,"[77] insofar as 'awareness' corresponds with an understanding of what 'redness' is to mean.

'Ought-to-do's', on the other hand, have a distinct character from 'ought-to-be's', where 'ought-to-do's' are not merely 'conformings' of a sort to set 'ought-to-be' rules;

---

[75] Ibid., 423.
[76] Ibid., 423.
[77] Wilfrid Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" [EPM] in *Science, Perception and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, 162.

rather, they correspond with rules that direct criticism of association and usage. 'Ought-to-do's' are those claims that there should be some criticism for something that is done. They amount to rules of criticism. For instance, if you affirm that Flipper is a dolphin, then you should not deny that Flipper is a mammal; and if you deny it, then you are a legitimate target for criticism. The trainer employs rules of criticism to appropriate proper responses in the trainee. The trainer *does* understand the rules guiding 'ought-to-do's' and, by virtue of knowing them, he is in a position to criticize the responses by the trainee. The trainer/trainee relation looks similar to this: Under the guidance of trainers, themselves under the guidance of rules of action, language-learners can come to conform to the rules of criticism, though they need not understand the rules to which they are conforming. These 'ought-to-do's' and their corresponding rules of criticism form the rules for inference, and culminate in the framework of proper reasoning.

With this in the background we can see Sellars' account of meaning as a "functional classification."

> To say what a person says, or, more generally, to say what a kind of utterance says, is to give a functional classification of the utterance. This functional classification involves a special (illustrating) use of the expressions classified, or of synonyms—where allowance must be made for degrees of synonymy or likeness of meaning—of these expressions with which the addressee is familiar.[78]

In MFC, he distinguishes between three types of pattern-governed linguistic behavior, which mark three different roles that utterings (or inscribings) serve in language: (1) language entry transitions, (2) intra-linguistic moves, and (3) language departure transitions. Language entry transitions amount to linguistic responses to stimuli; for instance, the statement "This is red" when presented with a red object. Intra-linguistic

[78] Wilfrid Sellars, "The Structure of Knowledge" [SK] in *Action, Knowledge and Reality*, ed. Hector-Neri Castaneda, Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975, 320.

moves are those valid inferences between, say, a word representing a particular object to another object, that occur in patterns of logical reasoning. For instance, with Flipper I can say "Flipper is a dolphin" and logically 'move' to the statement "Flipper is a mammal." And, language departure transitions are those linguistic utterances that are then followed by non-linguistic conduct; for instance, saying "I will now draw on the chalkboard" followed by the action of drawing on the chalkboard.[79]

'Meaning' consists in the variety of functions linguistic items serve in these transitions in the context of a broader language framework. In contrast to traditional empiricist epistemologies, it is not merely a relation between a word and a non-verbal entity. For instance, it would be incorrect to say that 'red' or 'dolphin' were simply token linguistic entities associated with a red thing or mammal of a certain character swimming in the sea, though 'red', for instance, could not mean the quality *red* unless it were associated with red things. Meaning understood in this manner would suggest that 'red' is just a shorthand for the associative connections with red things. Rather, 'meaning' or 'means' is a linguistic device for conveying information. The information it conveys is the broad scope of mentionings and usages the term, say 'red', has in the English language. The meaning of a term is determined by the *role* it plays in the pattern-governed, or (more colloquially put) organized, behavior of the framework of language used by speaking organisms.

> The rubric '". . ." means ---' is a linguistic device for conveying the information that a *mentioned* word, in this case 'rot', plays the same role in a certain linguistic economy, in this case the linguistic economy of German-speaking peoples, as does the word 'red', which is not *mentioned* but *used*—used in a

[79] Hereafter, I will characterize language entry transitions, intra-linguistic moves, and language departure transitions as event-linguistic response types, linguistic episode-linguistic episode types, and linguistic episode-action types respectively.

> unique way; *exhibited*, so to speak—and which occurs 'on the right-hand side' of the semantical statement.[80]

In this way, the right side of the statement

. . . means ---

is properly understood as mentioning or exhibiting a linguistic item.

This account of meaning comes out clearly in the context of translation. In this context we can see how meaning is a functional classification for linguistic items in a language framework. Sellars illustrates this conception of meaning by introducing two new notational devices: asterix-quotes and dot-quotes. Axterix-quotes represent names referring to expressions as shapes. Dot-quotes represent the functional role of lexical items.[81] The difference between asterix-quotes and dot-quotes can be roughly summarized as a structural—functional difference. It is important to note the scope of each of these notational devices: asterix-quotes are limited to common namings in a particular language, and dot-quotes refer common namings that occur in *any* language in which terms serve the same role. For example,

(1) (In Mandarin Chinese) 'hong se'[82] means *red*

can be reformulated using Sellars' notation as

(1*) (In Mandarin Chinese) *hong se*s are .red.s

In his theory of meaning, the meaning of the observational linguistic term 'hong se' is the role that it plays in Mandarin, which includes the broad scope of mentionings and exhibitings of 'hong se'. This includes, but is not limited to, indexing items that are red.

---

[80] Sellars, EPM, 163.

[81] For the sake of clarity, scare-quotes, as I intend them, represent names referring to expressions as expressions of a particular language.

[82] 'Hong se' here should be in the form of Mandarin Chinese characters; however, being as I do not have the appropriate software for including this formulation of 'red' in its form in Mandarin, I ask the reader to forgive me and recognize that 'hong se' should be in characters.

In this way, 'red', 'rouge', 'rot', and 'hong se' are determined by looking to the role they play in English, French, German, and Mandarin respectively. In translation, those terms that serve the *same* roles or functions in the languages are said to mean the same thing.[83]

Determining the meaning of a linguistic item requires that we look to the role the item plays in the context of the broader framework of language, what amounts to a 'holism' thesis. With this understanding of Sellars' theory of meaning, it is clear he finds that a proper analysis of meaning shows that we do not have to follow the traditional empiricist (for instance, Hume) in saying that basic words and concepts get their meaning solely from experience. Rather, basic words and concepts get their meaning in the broader contextual whole of the language. Instances of meaning, then, are not found in isolated experiences independent of other concepts or linguistic entities, they are found in the dynamic activity of language which places basic words and concepts in the midst of other linguistic entities and produces rules for proper usage. Sellars writes,

> [O]bservational knowledge of any particular fact, e.g., that this is green, presupposes that one knows the general facts of the form *X is a reliable symptom of Y*. And to admit this requires an abandonment of the traditional empiricist idea that observational knowledge 'stands on its own feet'.[84]

And later,

[83] An analogy Sellars frequently returns to for illustrating what he means by 'role' in his functional account of meaning is the game of chess. It is clear, for instance, what the role of the pawn is in the game of chess. The role that pawns play is determined by the rules that govern pawn movement, how it interacts with other pieces, its relative placement on the board, etc. Given the discussion above about linguistic rules and the crucial role of rules of criticism for developing legitimate lines of inference in the language-learner, it is clear that what role the pawn plays is determined under prescriptive criteria. This is to say that determining the role of the pawn is to determine the rules that govern what constitutes a correct or incorrect movement. Breaking from the analogy, determining the role of a lexical item is to determine the rules that govern what constitutes a correct or incorrect usage of the item in the context of verbal (or inscribed) language. In this way, the role that 'hong se' plays in Mandarin is determined by rules for usage. Sellars sees language as a rule-governed activity, where the roles lexical items play is determined by rules that determine appropriate usage. He is by no means the only person to advance this position. Wittgenstein and his follows also picked up on the notion that language is a 'rule-governed activity'.

[84] Sellars, EPM, 168.

> The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.[85]

It is clear why equating meaning with a relation between word and object alone is inadequate. For instance, understanding 'red' as indexing a red object is misleading because it suggests that the basic meaning of the concept 'red' comes only in the association with a red object. Instead, Sellars expands the scope of what constitutes meaning and, crucially, places it in the context of a broader framework of language. Meaning includes not only the associations between event-linguistic response types but also linguistic episode-linguistic episode types and linguistic episode-action types.

Sellars provides the following example to illustrate the role of association between linguistic episode-linguistic episode types:

'*Und*' means *and*

and

'*Rot*' means *red* [86]

'Und' and 'rot' tell us two different things, though the sense in which we mean 'means' is the same. 'Und' is a logical connective between two linguistic episodes, and thus is an association between linguistic episode-linguistic episode types. The observation word 'rot' can be taken here to be a connective between a word and a perceived object, and thus is an association between event-linguistic response types. It must be emphasized that 'means' here is the same. 'Und' *means* a connective device between two linguistic episodes in the same sense that 'rot' (in this case) *means* an association between an event and linguistic response. Traditional empiricism has restricted its understanding of

[85] Ibid., 169.
[86] Ibid., 163.

meaning to associations of event-linguistic response types and neglected the crucial role of associations between linguistic episode-linguistic episode types.

THE 'VERBAL BEHAVIORISM' THEORY OF PRIVATE EPISODES

With these three types of pattern-governed linguistic behavior in hand (language-entry transitions, intra-linguistic moves, and language departure transitions), it is clear that the trainee not only learns language entry transitions, but also intra-linguistic moves and language departure transitions. Sellars observes that

> the trainee acquires not only the repertoire of pattern-governed linguistic behavior which is language about non-linguistic items, but also that extended repertoire which is language about linguistic as well as non-linguistic items. He is able to classify items in linguistic kinds, and to engage in theoretical and practical reasoning about his linguistic behavior.[87]

In learning 'ought-to-do's', trainees acquire the ability to classify linguistic and non-linguistic items. Initially, we learn habits of response to our environment through training, much like the habit of response a dog exhibits when presented with a finger-snap. Learning, then, comes in the causal order of stimulus-response. However, learning does not consist in merely behaving in accordance with a rule. In "Some Reflections on Language Games," Sellars writes, "Now it is obvious that acquiring the concept of red cannot be equated with coming to *obey* a semantical rule,"[88] for this implies that we already have a conception of when this rule applies, and thus what 'red' is. Rather, acquiring a concept of red requires that we have the capacity to *criticize* usages of 'red' in the context of the broader structure of language. Importantly, *understanding* the language requires that one is capable of developing criticism *on their own*. This capacity for criticism requires that one have an understanding of the multiplicity of uses of 'red'

[87] Sellars, MFC, 425.
[88] Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games" [LG] in *Science, Perception and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, 333.

(or 'rouge', 'rot', etc.) in the language framework and the rules that guide correct usage, and that they are able to construct criticism under determinations they themselves make. It is the trainer, then, who is in this 'knowing' position by having the capacity to criticize the usage of 'red' by the trainee.

The trainee, guided by the trainer, learns not only the associations between event-linguistic response types, but also the associations between linguistic episode-linguistic episode and linguistic episode-action types. In fact, the trainee wrestles with all three of these at once, each one supporting and building upon the others. In learning the correct associations between (what can be roughly characterized as) word-object, word-word, and word-action types, the trainee learns how to classify and reason about linguistic items as well as non-linguistic items, i.e., perceived physical objects, actions, etc. In essence, the trainee learns how to *think* through his training. His thinking is guided by and trained in the rules that govern appropriate associations, what eventuate in mentionings and exhibitings, between word-object, word-word, and word-action types. When the trainee is capable of criticizing the usage of a linguistic item in these contexts, he is said to 'know' the language, and thus becomes himself a trainer.

Sellars advances a "soft" 'psychological nominalism'. He writes,

> as I am using the term, the primary connotation of 'psychological nominalism' is the denial that there is any awareness of logical space prior to, or independent of, the acquisition of language.[89]

The "logical space" to which he is referring is our understanding of the world determined by the categorical structure that we use to carve up the world conceptually. This 'categorical structure' is determined by the acquisition of language. How we *think* about the world comes through our training in language, which provides rules under which

[89] Sellars, EPM, 162.

correct associations and usages are evaluated. His position finds its clearest expression as, "*all* awareness of *sorts*, *resemblances*, *facts*, etc., in short, all awareness even of particulars—is a linguistic affair."[90] The proper account of the distinctive intentionality of thought, then, is drawn in terms of the forms and functions of linguistic items.

This positive thesis, which correlates with Sellars' "soft" 'psychological nominalism', is modeled under what he calls 'verbal behaviorism' (VB).

> According to VB, thinking 'that-*p*,' where this means 'having the thought occur to one that-*p*,' has as its *primary* sense *saying* '*p*'; and a *secondary* sense in which it stands for a short term proximate propensity to say '*p*'.[91]

The VB theory he is advancing amounts to the claim that the semantical characterizations, including rules for association, usage, etc., of overt verbal episodes carries over the applicability of those semantical characterizations to postulated inner episodes, or occurrent thoughts. The epistemological status of thoughts is fundamentally tied to language. In other words, 'thoughts' possess semantical properties that are essentially identical with the overt utterances that ordinarily express these properties. Sellars illustrates this theory in EPM by developing the story of our Rylean ancestors and the genius Jones. Our Rylean ancestors have a discourse rich in semantical rules for proper associations, mentionings, and exhibitings; however, they do not have the resources to speak of inner episodes. Namely, they do not have the resources to speak in *theoretical* terms. The genius Jones produces a *theory* that overt verbal episodes begin with certain inner episodes, which culminate in verbal episodes themselves.

> [I]n the attempt to account for the fact that his fellow men behave intelligently not only when their conduct is threaded on a string of overt verbal episodes—that is to say, as *we* would put it, when they 'think out loud'—but also when no detectable verbal output is present, Jones develops a *theory* according to which overt utterances are but the culmination of a process which begins with certain

[90] Ibid., 160.
[91] Sellars, MFC, 418-419.

> inner episodes…[*H*]*is model for these episodes* which initiate the events which culminate in overt verbal behavior *is that of overt verbal behavior itself. In other words, using the language of the model, the theory is to the effect that overt verbal behavior is the culmination of a process which begins with 'inner speech'.*[92]

Thoughts, or inner episodes, are fundamentally bound to overt verbal behavior, such that the epistemological status of thoughts amounts to postulating the 'inner speech' going on in the individual's private episodes. Sellars provides a useful analogy for the epistemological status of thoughts *qua* overt verbal behavior, "[T]hese episodes [thoughts], are 'in' language-using animals as molecular impacts are 'in' gases, not as 'ghosts' are in 'machines'."[93] Postulating 'thoughts', then, amounts to postulating 'inner speeches'. The postulations of 'thoughts' are to be understood by a functional analogy, much like the molecular impacts in gases. The concept of a 'thought' (or private episode) is then a role player in the same way that linguistic items are role players.[94]

Private episodes are logically connected to the public space of trainee conditioning. They are grounded in the intersubjective framework of rule-governed language and the conditioning that corresponds with the acquisition of language. In essence, how we understand the world, including the private understandings of our experience, is fundamentally part of the intersubjective, public domain of language.

---

[92] Sellars, EPM, 186.
[93] Ibid., 187.
[94] It is important to note at this point that the ontological status of thoughts in Jones' proto-behavioristic theory is left open. His characterization of thoughts as role players analogously subject to the semantical categories of overt speech also finds its expression in PSIM,

> [O]ur concept of 'what thoughts are' might, like our concept of what a castling is in chess, be abstract in the sense that it does not concern itself with the *intrinsic* character of thoughts, *save as items which can occur in patterns of relationships which are analogous to the way in which sentences are related to one another and* to the contexts in which they are used (Sellars, PSIM, 34).

Because thoughts are postulational entities that are *functionally* analogous to the way sentences are related to one another in language, their ontological status is not yet determined. This will be important because, as we will see, Sellars is attempting to fuse two rival images of man-in-the-world into a single "stereoscopic" vision. If he can shift the *categorical* conception of 'thought', such that there remains no ontological tension between how these two images accommodate thought, then the fusing of the manifest and scientific images may be smoother.

> This ability to directly know that one is having a sense impression of a certain kind, however, presupposes the inter-subjective logical space of sense impressions as an explanation of such perceptual phenomena…This fact about the logic of sense impressions also finds its expression in the fact that the training of people to respond conceptually to states of themselves which are not publicly observable requires that the trainer and trainee alike (though they may be identical) share *both* the intersubjective framework of public objects and the intersubjective theory of private episodes, autobiographical sentences of which (in the present tense) are to acquire the additional role of *Konstatierungen* by becoming symptoms (through conditioning) of inner episodes and recognized as such.[95]

The claim "That item is red" is a propositional claim about visual experience. In essence, it is a 'thinking that something is the case'. As we have seen, thinking *qua* propositional occurrences is regarded as something analogous to 'inner speech'. When presented with a red object or pink ice cube, the propositional aspect of this visual experience is something that is akin to 'inner speech' that something is the case; namely, "This is red" or "This is a pink ice cube." 'Thinking' that the pink ice cube is a 'pink ice cube', then, amounts to the postulation of an inner verbal expression of "This is a pink ice cube."

The understanding one has of private sense impressions is trained in the individual perceiver by trainers who evaluate claims that correspond with private sense impressions under rules guiding criticism. 'Immediate experience' must be prior in the order of *knowing* to the immediate experience *qua* immediate experience.

> *For we now recognize that instead of coming to have a concept of something because we have noticed that sort of thing, to have the ability to notice a sort of thing is already to have the concept of that sort of thing, and cannot account for it*.[96]

Once trained, the perceiver will recognize stimuli in a manner that is consistent with the context in which he has been trained. When presented with a red item, the perceiver will respond in his private awareness with "That item is red" under the rules guiding proper

[95] Sellars, "Phenomenalism"[P] in *Science, Perception and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, 91.
[96] Sellars, EPM, 176.

usage in language. Provided the perceiver has been trained such that he understands the rules of language, he will also be able to determine in his private awareness that "That item is not 'blue', 'green', 'clever', 'sad', 'sophomoric', etc." Sellars has a nice way of summing up this understanding of private episodes in "Scientific Realism and Irenic Instrumentalism."

> To put the matter in Aristotelian terminology, visual impressions are prior in the order of being to concepts pertaining to physical color, whereas the latter are prior in the order of knowing to concepts pertaining to visual impressions.[97]

In sum, it is through being conditioned to make particular associations between event-linguistic response, linguistic episode-linguistic episode, and linguistic episode-action types, that we come to learn language. However, it is not just that truly learning the language means behaving in accordance with the rules, rather it is having the capacity to *criticize* usages against these rules that learning language is found. In acquiring this capacity to criticize usage under language-governing rules we develop the ability to carve up the world conceptually. In essence, in learning language we learn how to think about the world. How we think, including our experiences of sensations *as something*, is determined under conditioning guided by rules for criticism in language.

COMMUNITY

We are in the position to see where Sellars' conception of the community comes into his theories of language, meaning, and 'verbal behaviorism' of private episodes. First, his model of the trainer/trainee relationship illustrates the community at work. The trainer *trains* the trainee by selectively reinforcing behavior in line with the rules that govern proper associations and usages in language. The trainee learns through operant

[97] Wilfrid Sellars and Charles Taylor, "Scientific Realism and Irenic Instrumentalism" in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 1967, 357.

conditioning the appropriate associations between event-linguistic response, linguistic episode-linguistic episode, and linguistic episode-action types in the context of the broader framework of rules governing language. When the trainee can *criticize* improper usages and associations made in language, he understands the 'ought-to-do's' of language, and by virtue of this, he understands the language. Understanding language means recognizing the many roles that words play in the language, which amounts to understanding *red* as .red., and being able to criticize usages that display improper associations or mentionings under the language-governing rules. For instance, he would be able to not only criticize the claim "Flipper is a dolphin but not a mammal," but also "The box is clever" and "I will now draw on the chalkboard" followed by drinking from a glass. It is in an intersubjective context of training that we come to understand language and proper use of language.

> Only subsequently does the language learner become a full-fledged member of the linguistic community who thinks thoughts (theoretically and practically) not only about non-linguistic items but about *linguistic* items, i.e., from the point of view of our simple *VB* model, about first-level thoughts. He has then developed from being the object of training and criticism by others to the stage at which he can train and criticize other language users, and even himself. Indeed, he has now reached the level at which he can formulate new and sophisticated standards in terms of which to reshape his language and develop new modes of thought.[98]

This leads us to a deeper element in Sellars' conception of community. His "soft" 'psychological nominalism' reveals the depth of the community, which claims that it is only through acquiring language that we learn to carve the world up according to conceptual categories. It is through acquiring language that we learn to think.

> [I]t should be noted that Jones's theory, as I have sketched it, is perfectly compatible with the idea that the ability to have thoughts is acquired in the process of acquiring overt speech and that only after overt speech is well established, can 'inner speech' occur without its overt culmination.[99]

[98] Sellars, SK, 321.
[99] Sellars, EPM, 188.

Language is a rule-governed activity, producing prescriptive criteria for the roles lexical items play in language. Determining the role a lexical item plays is to determine the rules that govern what constitutes a correct or incorrect usage of the item in the context of verbal (or inscribed) language. Through training the trainee learns these rules for proper usage and associations, and in turn, learns the categories of conceptual thinking and how to carve the world up according to these categories. The trainee learns the conceptual category of, say 'red', and how to carve the world up into 'red' and 'non-red' items. Likewise, the trainee learns the conceptual category of logical connectives, for instance 'and', and how to carve the world up according to these connectives such that "Flipper is a dolphin *and* a mammal." The trainee also learns the conceptual connections between words and actions, such that the statement "I will now draw on the chalkboard" is followed by drawing on the chalkboard.

Language is a crucial part of the framework of community. It is the structure of rules that govern proper associations, mentionings, and exhibitings. This structure of rules is transferred to language-learning individuals through the intersubjective process of operant conditioning. Because trainers and trainees conform to 'ought-to-do's' and 'ought-to-be's' respectively and employ rules of criticism to produce proper exhibitings on the part of the trainee, this structure of rules transcends the individual. Language is a phenomenon that enjoys a status independent the individual. In essence, it is a group phenomenon, a public possession, membership to which is contingent upon rehearsing and conforming to the prescriptive rules governing correct and incorrect associations, mentionings, and exhibitings. This public framework provides the structure in which thought can take place. 'Thinking' is fundamentally guided by the framework of

community.[100] It sets the rules guiding proper inference, association, usage, and action. To use more fine-tuned examples, the community, in its manifestation in language, determines what distinctions, responses, and judgments are legitimate. In this way, the range of activities in thinking which are characteristic of persons is informed by the rules governing proper usage, association, and mentionings, and conditioned in individuals by the group.

II. THE IRREDUCIBLE CORE OF 'PERSONS'

The discussion up this point has found that Sellars' conception of community is intimately tied to language. The community is the framework in which the rules governing proper associations, mentionings, and exhibitings are transferred to the language-learner through a model of operant conditioning. The group is a transcending, mediating structure between the individual and the outside world, providing the context in which thought can take place. However, there is a crucial component to Sellars' theory of community that has yet to be articulated. This component corresponds with the particular vision he advances for what constitutes a 'person'. It is the notion that a 'person' is an *intentional agent*. The aim of this section is to articulate the role that 'intentional agency' plays in Sellars' conception of the community and how it relates to the irreducible core of 'persons'.

[100] It is important to note that Sellars does think that individuals can condition themselves to make associations between event-linguistic response, linguistic episode-linguistic episode, and linguistic episode-action types under rules they themselves formulate. Clearly, it is the case that we do so. To say that individuals can condition themselves to make associations between event-linguistic response, linguistic episode-linguistic episode, and linguistic episode-action types is not to say, however, that we can teach ourselves to think. This capacity can only come in the acquisition of language, which is a public framework. It is only after we have acquired language, or rule-governed associations, usages, etc., and the corresponding conceptual framework to which it gives rise, we can condition ourselves to make personal associations in this manner.

Sellars provides a suggestive account of the irreducible core of the 'persons' in PSIM. I believe that key components of this 'irreducible core' are found in this essay and will focus on elucidating the theses that the essay advances. Obtaining a clear picture of Sellars' account of 'persons' will require developing his conception of the manifest/scientific image divide; providing extended exegesis for the manifest image of man-in-the-world. I will then consider the role that 'intentional agency' plays in the manifest image as a group phenomenon, which will direct us toward the irreducible core of 'persons'. Finally, it will be important to show the crucial role that 'intentional agency' plays in the manifest image, such that it remains without quantification in the scientific image. As we will see, Sellars seems to ascribe to 'intentional agency' the status of a 'given'.

In PSIM, Sellars presents two images of man-in-the-world, the manifest image and the scientific image (hereafter MI and SI), each of whom purport to provide a complete picture of man-in-the-world.[101] These two images, as 'idealizations', serve as pictures for man in his relation to the natural world. These pictures are unique, in that, they are singular representations that are produced by their respective conceptual frameworks. The subject of these images, man-in-the-world, refers by correlating the various facets of a given conceptual framework into a conceptual whole. Both of these images are equally public and structured. Sellars' objective in the essay is to bring these two images into a single, "synoptic" vision.

The MI is that image of man as something in a unique relation to the world. It is the context in which man first became aware of himself. The particular vision Sellars has

[101] 'Images', for Sellars, is a product of a conceptual framework. In one sense, it is a way of bracketing objects in such a way that allows for philosophical reflection, and, in another, it is something that is 'imagined'.

of 'man' is not merely 'rational agency'; it is a robust vision of 'man' that includes particular rights and duties to others with whom one identifies as sharing membership in a group. Sellars sees the development of the MI as a refinement of the original image through empirical and categorical refinements.[102] The empirical refinements exhibited by the MI consisted in a systematizing of empirical observations into generalizations, what he calls "something like the canons of inductive inference defined by John Stuart Mill, supplemented by canons of statistical inference."[103] The categorical refinements exhibited by the MI consisted in the gradual depersonalization of the world through the development of conceptual categories under which we 'cut up' the world. When man ceased to conceive of all natural entities/processes as displaying deliberate intent, the MI of man-in-the-world thereby came into being. In essence, the MI culminates in an empirically refined framework in which the basic ontological categories are *persons* and *things*, where, in the category of 'persons' or 'intentional agents', only *homo sapiens* are included.[104]

---

[102] To clarify how the MI can into being, it is important to point out that Sellars recognizes the MI as a refinement of the 'original' image. The original image of man-in-the-world consisted in the framework in which all objects perceived by man were equally 'persons'. This is to say that trees, ants, streams, and weather patterns were all ways of being a 'person', in that, they shared the full range of personal activity that a 'person' enjoys. In this way, all of these natural entities and processes warranted the respect given to all other 'persons', and these objects acted with 'intention', or deliberate intent, in the same way that *homo sapiens* 'persons' did. By writing "*homo sapiens* 'persons'" I intend only to highlight the kinds of categorical developments that Sellars has in mind. It is clear from his discussion in PSIM that he does not feel that the MI stipulates that only *homo sapiens*, or, using his Aristotelian terminology, featherless bipeds, can qualify for 'personhood'. Rather, Sellars notes that other beings displaying the required community interactions can equally qualify as 'persons', writing, "[T]o recognize a featherless biped or dolphin or Martian as a person is to think of oneself and it as belonging to a community" (Sellars, PSIM, 39).

[103] Sellars, PSIM, 7.

[104] It is important to note that with this categorical refinement of 'persons' comes a paradox; namely, the 'paradox of man's first encounter with himself'. Sellars articulates this paradox in the following manner:

> [T]he idea that anything which can properly be called conceptual thinking can occur only within a framework of conceptual thinking in terms of which it can criticized, supported, refuted, in short, evaluated…[A] diversified conceptual framework is a whole which, however sketchy, is prior to its parts, and cannot be construed as a coming together of parts which are already conceptual in character. The conclusion is difficult to avoid that the transition from the pre-conceptual patterns of behavior to conceptual thinking was

To the extent that the MI is the context in which the basic principles of induction are formulated and used in a systematic way, what amount to empirical refinements, it is a proto-scientific image. The SI has developed out of the MI as a further refinement of man-in-the-world. In a very important way, the SI is supported by the MI, in that, it is *methodologically* dependent upon the MI. The categories of theoretical science are logically dependent on some of the categories of the MI; e.g., 'object', 'causation', 'time', 'kinds', etc. Explanation within the SI depends on some of these categories. However, in depending on some of these categories it does not then demonstrate the categories and principles of the MI. The SI presents itself as the whole truth about man-in-the-world, and thus becomes a rival image. Scientific discourse is not "so to speak a peninsular offshoot from the mainland of ordinary discourse,"[105] but rather there is

> a sense in which the scientific picture of the world *replaces* the common sense picture; a sense in which the scientific account of 'what there is' *supercedes* the descriptive ontology of everyday life.[106]

The SI is a genetic outgrowth of the MI to which it presents itself as a rival, threatening to undermine the very foundation from which it grew.

An interesting line can be drawn here between Sellars and Peirce. Namely, Sellars sees science as an activity conducted by a community of inquirers. Like its manifest counterpart, the SI is an image that is developed in a social context.

> [E]mpirical knowledge, likes its sophisticated extension science, is rational, not because it has a foundation, but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put any claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once.[107]

> holistic one, a jump to a level of awareness which is irreducibly new, a jump which was the coming into being of man (Sellars, PSIM, 6).

The paradox is that to be 'man', one must have a first instance of recognizing oneself as a 'man' distinct from other entities, but this requires that a conceptual framework is already in place, and thus, paradoxically, one is already 'man'.

[105] Sellars, EPM, 174.

[106] Ibid., 172.

[107] Sellars, EPM, 170.

Science, for Sellars, is the systematic, rational revision of the language and concepts with which we describe and explain the world.[108] Like Peirce, a community of scientific inquirers conducts the self-correcting activity of revision. Experimental results and hypotheses are evaluated within the context of a plurality of arguments, methods, and findings, such that it gives direction to the enterprise.

The crucial difference between the MI and SI comes in what they count as their basic constituents. The MI/SI divide can be understood as the difference between

> what correlational techniques can tell us about perceptible and introspectible events and that which postulates imperceptible objects and events for the purpose of explaining correlations among perceptibles.[109]

The basic constituents of the MI include perceptibles and the basic constituents of the SI include imperceptibles. The development of 'postulational techniques' characteristic of science amounts to the development of new explanatory theories that postulate the existence of unobservable entities that play roles in the explanation of observable phenomena. The SI develops through postulating theoretical entities to explain the objects and events of the MI, and provides us with accounts of the behavior of manifest phenomena in terms of empirical regularities. The MI can only give us rough approximations of probability in confining its focus to observable phenomena. However, turning to correlations between observable phenomena in the MI and the constructions of their theoretical counterparts in the SI, more adequate explanations can be formulated for the behavior exhibited in manifest phenomena. Given that more adequate explanations can be formulated by appealing to theoretical entities and the rules governing them, it

[108] Willem deVries and Timm Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000, xxxix.
[109] Sellars, PSIM, 19.

must be that it is the theoretical entities that are real and not the observable phenomena. Thus, the postulations of the SI end up with a privileged status over observed phenomena in the MI, making it the preferable image of man-in-the-world.

Here, we can see Sellars' realism. His realism is based on two principles: (1) adequacy in explanation and (2) reductionism. By being more conducive for *explaining* the phenomena in the manifest world, the theoretical entities in science are rightfully regarded as the real entities in the world. The principle at work in making explanatory efficacy an indicator of genuine reference finds its clearest expression in P:

> [T]o have good reason for holding a theory is *ipso facto* to have good reason for holding that the entities postulated by the theory exist.[110]

Ontology is determined by science. The 'naturalist' air of this proposition comes out clearly in EPM,

> [I]n the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that is, and what is not that it is not.[111]

Importantly, the SI is not yet a complete image. At present, it consists in a plurality of images that correspond with the various sciences. For instance, the physicist, biochemist, behavioral psychologist, etc. all provide different images of man-in-the-world. In addition, the autonomous sciences are not complete. Physics, for example, has reconstructed the basic constituents of reality, moving toward more basic and more basic features of reality. This *reductive* quality is important to Sellars' realism. In the course of moving toward these more basic features, given Sellars' naturalistic ontological commitment, the ontology of the world is likewise evolving. Thus, he can state that "Tables are made of atoms, and there are no tables" and "Atoms are made of protons,

[110] Sellars, P, 91.
[111] Sellars, EPM, 173.

neutrons, and electrons, and there are no atoms" without contradiction. The important thing to bear in mind is that Sellars sees science primarily as a reductionistic activity of investigation, in that, it is ever trying to find the most basic constituents of reality and the rules that govern their relation.

The primary activity of the SI is to provide a *descriptive* account of the world. It attempts to explain observable phenomena by constructing theoretical counterparts, providing us a description of what happens in the observable world.[112] The SI is the image best suited for providing an adequate account of man-in-the-world precisely because it can provide more adequate explanations of manifest phenomena. Insofar as it is a rival image to the MI, it very well may turn out that the "[*manifest*] *image itself might have to be rejected, in the last analysis, as false*."[113] The 'world', then, is determined by science. Science is the ultimate arbiter of the constituents of reality. It determines 'what is that is' and 'what is not that it is not'. Thus, determining whether tables or atoms or electrons are 'real' constituents of the world is properly arbitrated by science.

Sellars' aim is to bring these two images into a single synoptic vision. In saying that the appropriate picture of man-in-the-world requires "synoptical" vision, it is clear that he feels we must keep at least part of the MI, though it has proven itself ultimately to be an inadequate image. He observes that to the extent that the MI is rejected, 'man' loses a significant portion of what it is to be 'man'.

---

[112] An interesting consequence of Sellars' characterization of science as an activity concerned with *describing* the world is that in the 'final' scientific theory we are left with a purely descriptive account of reality. This is to say that the 'final' theory will *not* be an *explanation* of phenomena, because its service as an explanatory account comes only with residual phenomena that seem to remain in the manifest image. In essence, there will be nothing left to explain, and the 'final' theory will be a pure of expression of 'what is that is' and 'what is not that it is not' in the world. My thanks to Dr. Pitt for this point.

[113] Sellars, PSIM, 14.

> To the extent that the manifest image does not survive the synoptic view, to that extent man himself would not survive.[114]

There must be a crucial feature of the MI that warrants keeping it in the face of the (potentially) complete image of man-in-the-world provided by science. This crucial feature of the MI is 'persons'. The concept of 'person' forms the central core of the MI. He describes the MI as "*the framework of persons*,"[115] the history of which has been an ongoing struggle of man to "grasp himself as a person in the world."[116] The history of the MI consists in wrestling with how to understand the range of activities characteristic of 'persons' and the relation of these activities to the world. 'Persons', he finds, are beings who reflectively conceive themselves both as conceptual thinkers and doers.

It is important to note that language is a manifest phenomenon. Language played a crucial role in the refinement of the MI out of the original image, serving as the catalyst for conceptual thinking. As noted above, language is a phenomenon that transcends the individual. It is a public possession, and by learning language we develop the capacity to think. Given the tie between language and the MI, the MI exhibits a public character.

> The manifest image must, therefore, be construed as containing a conception of itself as a group phenomenon, the group mediating between the individual and the intelligible order.[117]

Learning language consists in learning the 'ought-to-be's' and 'ought-to-do's' of language and membership in a linguistic community entails rehearsing the rules it provides. The public framework of this rule-governed activity sets the standards against which associations, mentionings, and exhibitings of linguistic behavior are evaluated. In short, it sets the standards for proper reasoning, where proper reasoning amounts to

[114] Ibid., 18.
[115] Ibid., 11.
[116] Ibid., 15.
[117] Ibid., 17.

rehearsing the 'oughts' dictated by the language community. The capacity to rehearse and conform to the rules governing language requires that one sees themselves as an "*agent*-subject of ought-to-do's."[118] It is to see oneself as something that is subject to a transcending framework, as an entity in relation to something else. Knowing language requires seeing oneself as *subject* to the 'oughts' of language.

But what do these 'oughts' amount to? Sellars articulates this point as follows:

> [T]he essentially social character of conceptual thinking comes clearly to mind when we recognize that there is no thinking apart from common standards of correctness and relevance, which relate what *I do* think to what *anyone ought to* think.[119]

These "common standards of correctness and relevance" form the 'oughts' of the language community. They amount to the *intentions* of the community, which Sellars identifies, in their most general forms, as the claims for what is "'correct' or 'incorrect', 'right' or 'wrong', 'done' or 'not done'."[120] It is this structure of rules that determine correctness, relevance of thinking and action that constitutes the crucial feature of the framework of 'persons'. Namely, it is the *normative* character of the kind of claims formulated within the framework of 'persons' that forms its irreducible core. To return to the quotation that introduced this chapter,

> [T]he conceptual framework is the framework in which we think of one another as sharing the community intentions which provide the ambience of principles and standards…within which we live our own lives.

It is this framework of community 'intentions' and seeing oneself as subject to these determinations that sets the encompassing structure within which we understand

---

[118] Wilfrid Sellars, "Language as Thought and as Communication" [LTC] in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History*, Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, Inc., 1974, 101.
[119] Ibid., 17.
[120] Ibid., 39.

ourselves as conceptual thinkers and doers in the manifest world; in essence, it is the framework in which we live our lives.

In a generic sense, 'intentions' in the MI are contents of claims of the form

'In circumstances C one shall do action A now',

which find their expression in private inner episodes, i.e., thoughts, of members as

'I am in C, I shall to do action A now'.

Given the transcending framework of language-speakers, it is the community that determines what constitutes this 'shall'. In maintaining membership in the linguistic community, he submits himself to its rules. Being a member of a community of language speakers entails 'rehearsing' the community-formulated and endorsed 'intentions'.

> [Membership in a community] requires that one think that thoughts of the form, 'We (one) shall do (or abstain from doing) actions of kind A in circumstances of kind C'. To think thoughts of this kind is not to *classify* or *explain*, but to *rehearse an intention*.[121]

Membership in the group requires that one conforms to and acts under the standards of correctness and relevance determined by the community. Importantly, there is a sense of immediacy to this formulation, in that, the statement includes "now" (or, to convey the expressive quality of the claim, "*now*!"). This is relevant because it expresses the strength of the 'intention' in the statement, and it connects to actions and reactions in-the-world and it breaks the circle of deliberation. 'Intention' is an immediately pressing kind of content for a claim. In a sense, it is to demand conformity in that present moment of deliberation. There is also a sense of personal choice in this formulation. 'I shall,' as opposed to 'I will' or 'I must', connotes the personal decision to think or act in a particular manner. This amounts to choosing to engage and reify membership in the

[121] Ibid., 40.

community of language-speakers. Given these aspects of 'intention', it is clear that to say a 'person' *intends* something is to say that they 'shall' do something now, by personal choice, under the guidance of rules conforming to the standards and intentions of the community. Insofar as the 'shall' is placed in this context, it must be that the 'shall' is not restricted to the individual, but obtains the character that *anybody* should do the act X *now* in circumstance Y, which relates "what *I do* think to what *anyone ought to* think." This, in turn, reflects the normative character of claims in the public domain of 'intentions'.

Here, we find the crucial correlate of 'intentions' that is exhibited in the framework of 'persons'—the *moral* domain to which members of a community are subject. To be a 'person' is to see oneself as "bound up in a network of rights and duties."[122] It is to recognize that one has particular rights that other members cannot infringe upon. It is also to recognize that these members, in turn, hold moral constraints against that individual. Observing these constraints consists in sharing membership in the community. A crucial aspect of the community is that it is a *moral* phenomenon. The community, in determining the standards of right/wrong and correct/incorrect, thereby places limits on the proper relations among its members. The 'oughts' of the 'community' formalize and dictate the kind of relations to which members should submit themselves to maintain membership

The question becomes: Can the SI construct theoretical counterparts that capture the crucial normative dimension of manifest 'persons'? In SK, Sellars considers the reducibility of the core of 'persons'.

[122] Ibid., 39.

> In the manifest image, our concept of a person is not the concept of something of which the behavior can be assimilated to the triggering off of causal properties in the interaction of material things. Persons acquire second natures—in the literal sense, dispositions. But their *first* nature is not that of a system of causal properties—dispositions in the metaphorical sense—but rather that of a system of capacities pertaining to the various modes of thinking.[123]

This "system of capacities" gives rise to the kind of intentionality exhibited in claims made by 'persons'. These capacities enable 'persons' to formulate *prescriptive* claims, thereby determining the 'oughts' against which the actions of its members are evaluated. In short, these capacities correspond to the ability to construct *normative* claims about proper reasoning and action. In saying that 'persons' cannot be reduced to a system of causal properties, it is clear that no material account of 'person'-exhibiting thought or action would be adequate. This is to say that a material description of 'persons' does not provide or account for the normative force of statements. The core of 'persons' consists in the "irreducibility of the 'ought' to the 'is'."[124] In essence, it is the irreducibility of providing a *normative* account of action to providing a *descriptive* account of action.

The SI can provide a model for how this normative dimension came into being in the MI. Sellars has suggested that a model of operant conditioning between the 'trainer' and 'trainee' within which the character of normative claims is constructed and communicated would serve this purpose. However, in providing an account of *how* this manifest phenomenon came into being does it then capture what 'normativity' *is*? This returns us to the 'reductionistic' activity of science. Sellars argues that 'normativity' is of a character that makes it irreducible. 'Normativity' cannot be captured in postulating the causal properties of interactions between material things. 'Normativity' is such that it remains outside the descriptive capabilities of science. It is something more than what is

[123] Sellars, SK, 239.
[124] Sellars, PSIM, 39.

captured in empirical regularities described in science. 'Intention', and its correlate 'normativity', then, are distinctly manifest phenomena. 'Intention' is a phenomenon that is beyond the descriptive capabilities of present scientific explanation. It is, to return to Sellars' formulation of it, the "irreducibility of the 'ought' to the 'is'." The SI can tells us *why* we act in particular ways and by what means proper action *is* communicated between members, but it cannot tell us *how* to live. The MI must be preserved because this feature of manifest 'persons' is a crucial feature for what it is to be a 'person' and cannot be properly explained using the postulational techniques of the SI. Because science is an activity conducted by 'persons', the MI must be preserved so that the image of *man*-in-the-world provided by science refers in any meaningful way.

Here, we are left with something of a puzzle. Namely, Sellars appears to ascribe to 'intention' the status of a 'given', though 'given' is not used here in an epistemic sense. 'Intention' is irreducible and primary; a non-inferential aspect of what constitutes a 'person'. The puzzle is as follows. This normative dimension characteristic of the claims made by manifest 'persons' has ties to the content of reasoning developed in language-learners by something akin to operant conditioning. This normative dimension is a manifest phenomenon, developed in the course of constructing language and, ultimately, exhibited in the case of language use. However, science is the "measure of all things, of what is, and what is not that is not." Science, then, is the ultimate arbiter of what is real, serving as the proper authority for explaining the constituents of the world. Still, the explanations in science are purely *descriptive*, and though the postulations of science (theoretically) have the capacity to *describe* the basic features of reality, they cannot properly capture this normative aspect of 'persons'. By being a property of

'persons', not the world, 'intentionality' obtains the status of a 'given'. 'Intention', and its correlate 'normativity', serve as the basic, irreducible core of 'persons', such that they remain a 'given' from the perspective of the SI.

In fusing the MI and SI, the MI is preserved because it alone has the resources to address the crucial core of what constitutes a 'person'. Sellars recognizes that the explanatory power of the SI far exceeds that of the MI; however, the SI, in its present state, cannot adequately capture the moral dimension of manifest 'persons'. 'Man' as a 'person' must be incorporated in the SI to obtain a comprehensive picture of man-in-the-world. As we observed above, science is the ultimate arbiter of ontology, and, given Sellars' account of 'thought' as *functionally* analogous to overt speech, there are no ontological tensions in bringing accommodating 'thought' in the SI. Nevertheless, there is an ontological tension in attempting to bring 'intention' into the SI. The metaphysical status of 'intention', as a 'given', requires that in joining the MI and SI, the SI must incorporate this crucial feature of 'persons' although it cannot quantify over it using its postulational techniques:

> to complete the scientific image we need to enrich *not* with more ways of saying what is the case, but with the language of community and individual intentions, so that by construing the actions we intend to do and the circumstances in which we intend to do them in scientific terms, 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.[125]

[125] Ibid., 40.

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY AND THE PROBLEM OF SOLIPSISM

The aim of this chapter is to consider whether pragmatism, in its turn to community, is able to evade the problem of solipsism. In light of the discussion in preceding chapters, I look at the kinds of responses Pierce and Sellars are capable of formulating to see if they have the resources for avoiding a solipsistic consequence to their pragmatic epistemologies. The kinds of responses they can formulate strongly resemble one another. I believe it will be best if I treat their responses together and explain where appropriate the differences in their approaches. The chapter is separated into what I regard as two principal moves required for an account of knowledge that is not susceptible to solipsism. First, I show that it is through the acquisition of language that conceptual thinking finds its origin. This will enable us to see that the problem of other minds no longer obtains. Second, I show how language and 'thinking' can be fundamentally about the world. This enables us to see that the problem of knowing the external world also no longer remains.

MOVE 1: Language and Conceptual Thinking

How we think finds its origin in acquiring language. Both Peirce and Sellars adopt a model of conceptual thinking in line with 'psychological nominalism'. This model proposes that by learning language, we learn the categories of conceptual thinking and how to carve up the world according to these categories. All conceptual thinking, then, is by words.[126] Language sets the rules for inference that govern proper associations between words, or more generally signs, presented to the mind. In this way, language is the medium through which we obtain the capacity for conceptual thinking

[126] Using Peirce's terminology, we can also say that all thinking is by 'signs'. For him, 'signs' are the broader category within which 'words' are a special subset.

and the kind of consistency exhibited in thought. By learning language we acquire the rules for inference that enable us to interpret and conceptualize our experience of the world.

Language is a public possession. It is a phenomenon that transcends the individual, and is transferred to the individual by interacting with other members of the group. The rules for inference that language provides are not subject to the whims of any single individual; rather, they are the possession of the group. To possess a public language, the structure of rules for inference must have been communicated to the language-user by the group, making the mental process of thought one that is conducted in a manner that is shared by a language community. Insofar as conceptual thought is contingent upon language acquisition, it must be intimately bound to the public domain of the community. The mental process of thought is informed and guided by the public framework of rules for inference formulated by the community.

Given the public character of language, the philosophical assumption that there are genuinely private episodes, i.e., episodes that are located entirely in (and are indigenous to) the mind of the individual independent of any interaction with the public domain, loses its force. Namely, it is subject to the objection that 'thought', understood as a genuinely private episode, is a category mistake. Thoughts are fundamentally tied to the public framework of language, such that without the categories that come with language acquisition, there can be no structure within which to conceptualize one's experience of the world. In essence, how we think about the world is predicated on an intersubjective model of social interaction with the world that communicates the public structure of rules governing associations and inferences in language to the individual.

Descartes' *cogito* revelation in the Meditations, then, does not illustrate a solitary self, the contents of whose mind are known prior and independent of any interaction with a public domain. Insofar as Descartes is able to assert that he is incapable of doubting that he doubts without thereby demonstrating that he now exists, it must be that this mental process is grounded in an intersubjective framework of social and worldly interaction and rules. The solipsistic consequence that lurks behind his characterization of the solitary self proves groundless because Descartes has not successfully shown that the contents of his own mind are of such a character that they are indigenous to and located entirely in himself. In short, Descartes has mistakenly assumed that he can know the contents of his own mind irrespective of the logical dependence they exhibit upon the public framework of language and social interaction. The mental action that enables Descartes to clearly and distinctly perceive that "'I am, I exist' is necessarily true every time I utter it or conceive of it in my mind"[127] is logically dependent on the acquisition of the public structure of language and the corresponding rules for inference which are formulated within it.

Likewise, the private ideas of Hume are not so private. Hume proposes that basic ideas are placed in the mind by corresponding impressions. In Peirce's terminology, we might regard these basic ideas as 'signs' that are impressed upon the mind by external objects. Turning ideas into 'thoughts' is not, however, a mere process of association moved by a natural "gentle force" active in the mind. The mental processes of thought are associations and inferences between ideas, and this capacity comes only with language acquisition. The Humean "gentle force" active in associating ideas lacks one crucial feature; namely, that the kinds of associations and inferences made in the mind

[127] Descartes, *Meditations*, 108.

are informed by a public structure of rules imparted to the individual through learning language. Language, as a special class of rules for inference formulated in the community, sets the framework within which associations and inferences are made. Insofar as language is a public possession and the framework of language substantively informs associations and inferences, the mental process of thought exhibits the community-formulated rules that determine proper inferences. Thus, Hume's psychological agent is fundamentally in the community, such that the kinds of associations and inferences made in thought are not those that the individual's mind alone directs. Rather, these associations are conducted under the guidance of a public structure of rules for inference that are imparted to the individual in learning language.[128]

In sum, it is through acquiring language that we come to conceptualize the world. 'Ideas' and 'thoughts' are logically tied to the public framework of language. Descartes' cogito does not illustrate a solitary self because the kind of mental deliberation he employs to reason that he exists is dependent on the public structure of rules for inference language provides. Likewise, Hume's account of the workings of the mind is not an individualistic notion. The kinds of associations and inferences made in the mind are informed and determined by a public framework of language rules. This discussion culminates in demonstrating that we can talk about other minds precisely because

[128] Sellars provides an additional criticism of Hume's psychological model. For Hume, when presented with an impression, a corresponding idea is placed in the mind which differs from the impression only in its force and vivacity. However, in Sellars' model, the corresponding idea is not merely a virtual representation of the impression; rather, an idea, or thought, is *about* something. When presented with a red object, I have the idea 'This is red', where 'This is red' corresponds with my previous training that affirms the statement 'This is red' in these circumstances and rejects statements that exhibit 'This is blue, yellow, clever, etc.'. An immediate experience, without yet having acquired language, remains an undetermined kind of thing. With the acquisition of language, however, we are able to 'cut up' the world in such a way that the buzzing blur of experience obtains a particular organization according to the rules guiding language. 'Thinking' about the world consists in 'categorizing' a particular experience. Experience is *about* something; namely, its 'aboutness' is that it fits into some category that stands in particular relations to the broad framework of conceptual categories.

'thinking' is an activity that is fundamentally bound to a public structure of rules for inference. This logical tie pulls the individual into the social framework of rules and criticism, such that it is no longer his personal experiences or ideas that he considers. Rather, how he understands these experiences and ideas depends on a community framework that mediates the associations made in thought.

MOVE 2: Language and the World

The next thing to consider is how language gets us to the world. To this problem Peirce and Sellars give somewhat different answers. Peirce proposes that thought, mediated by the community, is a guiding feature of Thirdness that relates Firsts and Seconds. Thought relates our immediate sensations and facts about the world. His account of phenomenology enables him to show that thought is fundamentally *about* the world, thereby giving us access to the world beyond. Sellars proposes that language enables us to 'find our way about' the world. Language enables us to *act* and *do* as intentional agents in the world. His pragmatic understanding of language enables him to show that language can be *about* the world, giving us access to the world beyond.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Peirce's phenomenology includes the categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Firstness is the immediate pre-reflective sensation. Secondness is the reflection on firstness, and serves as the category of actually existing fact. The "real" constituent of reality is the realm of secondness. Thirdness is the relation between firsts and seconds, and seconds to themselves. It is the mediating structure through which we interpret our experience of the world. Thirdness is the medium that connects the world of sensory impressions on the mind made by external

objects and the facts about these experiences. At its core is a structure of rules for inference that determines the kind of relation that stands between firsts and seconds.

Thought is a crucial activity in thirdness. Peirce writes, "[Thirdness] is the category of elements of phenomena consist[ing] of what we call…thought."[129] Thought is the inferential process that mediates between firstness and secondness. When presented with a particular sensation, a firstness, 'thought' is the inferential process that identifies this sensation with a corresponding thought-sign. The judgment made in this identification consists in its secondness. Thought is the process of interpreting our immediate experience as being of 'such and such' character, which relates firsts and seconds.

As we have seen, thought exhibits a logical dependence upon acquiring language. Because of this, the kinds of inferences made in thought are tied to the public domain of the community of language-speakers. The community, then, is at work in thirdness. The community framework is crucial for how we mediate and interpret our experience of the world. It provides the structure of rules for inference, which serves as the context within which we interpret our experiences. The experiences include firsts, the immediate sensations impressed upon the individual's mind by external objects, and seconds, the results of inferences about the relations between firsts and seconds. Thought is tied to the world precisely because it is the mediating activity within which we understand and interpret our experience of the objective world beyond. It is the mediating activity through which we understand ourselves as experiencing beings and the relations that hold between the world beyond and ourselves.

[129] Peirce, *CP* 1.26.

For Sellars, as we have seen, the primary concern of the MI is 'persons' who reflectively conceive themselves as 'intentional' thinkers and doers. The manifest framework is one of 'sophisticated common sense' in which we live our lives as thinkers and doers. How we *live* in the world is a self-correcting kind of activity, where we choose modes of action and beliefs and see how these activities relate to the world, and correct and amend them in light of information gained from experience. Because the common sense framework is the one within which we live our lives, it exhibits a self-correcting character.

As a self-correcting framework, the concern of 'sophisticated common sense' is how we find our way around in the world. In Sellars' terms, it is the context in which one comes to "know one's way around"[130] as a kind of 'knowing how' to act in light of the broad body of our experiences. Getting to "know one's way around" is a matter of *acting* and *doing* in the world. The 'persons' of the common sense framework are individuals who are thinkers and doers in the world, learning *how* to think and *how* to act and adjusting their thinking and conduct in light of experience.

Learning language, and thus learning how to think, enables us to engage with the world in a substantive manner. As we have seen, in learning language we develop the capacity to 'cut up' the world conceptually and make judgments and inferences about our conduct in relation to the publicly shared world of physical objects that surrounds us. The essential feature of languages is that "they enable language-users to find their way around in the world, and satisfy their needs."[131] Language is an instrument that we

[130] Sellars, PSIM, 1.
[131] Sellars, LG, 340.

employ to understand and address the different features of our experience. There is, then, an intimate connection between language and conduct.

An important aspect of man-in-the-world is that 'persons' are fundamentally 'doers' in the world, in that, 'persons' *live* their lives by 'intentionally doing'—acting out personal desires and beliefs, relating with other members of the shared language framework, etc. The connection between language and conduct enables 'persons' to be 'intentional doers' in the world. This connection, Sellars finds, is intrinsic to the structure of language. It finds its expression in pattern-governed language behavior as language departure transitions. These transitions contain as an integral part a sub-language built around action words that are placed in act-enjoining contexts. Learning language departure transitions enable language learners to determine that the statement "I will now draw on the chalkboard" is properly followed by exhibiting the content of that statement in direct discourse.

The crucial feature of language departure transitions is that action words are placed in act-enjoining contexts. This is to say that these words and the exhibitings of utterances using these words are placed in the context of 'oughts' determined by the community. The 'ought' conditions in language exhibit both a *logical* and *causal* tie between language and conduct. The tie is logical because 'ought' finds its meaning in the kinds of relations its stands in to other statements in language. Namely, 'ought' occupies a position in the language framework as a role-player in the same way that other words do.[132] The tie is causal insofar as the 'ought' conditions impress upon the individual a

[132] Sellars articulates this point in LG as:

> '"ought" means a *prescriptive* property of states of affairs of the form x does mean A in circumstances C' is exactly as legitimate as '"red" means a *descriptive*, indeed,

demand of conformity. It demands that members acquire a 'tendency' to act in a manner that is consistent with the conditions of the statement.[133] The 'ought' conditions are motivational features of language that require members to act in ways stipulated in the community-endorsed claims. Given these two features of 'ought' conditions in language, the use of language has the capacity to motivate and direct action.

'Persons' are, in essence, *intentional doers* that use language to talk about and act in the world. The 'ought' conditions determined by the community do not refer in an arbitrary manner. The common sense framework that employs language, as we have seen, is a self-correcting kind of framework. Hence, how we *live* in the world as conceptual thinkers, doers, and talkers is a self-correcting kind of activity. Language, then, is something that is not static. It is a mutable public possession, subject to correction in light of experience. It is the tool by which we learn to find our way around the world as acting agents, as we amend our language and the 'oughts' in language in light of the results of attempting to find our way about the world. In sum, language gets us to the world by providing a framework that enables to act in the world in intentional ways and adjust our conduct in light of the experiences we have in moving around in the publicly shared world of physical objects.

---

observable property of physical objects' and '"necessary" means a *modal* property of states of affairs of the form *x is A* ⊃ *is B*' (Sellars, LG, 350-351).

[133] Sellars articulates this point as:

> Learning the use of normative expressions involves not only learning the intralinguistic moves or 'logical grammar' of the expressions, but also acquiring the tendency to make the transitions from occupying the position 'I ought now to do A' to the doing of A (Sellars, LG, 350).

CONCLUSION

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, the turn to community enables pragmatists to evade a solipsistic consequence to their epistemologies. The turn to community illustrates that thought is logically tied to a public structure of rules for inference. 'Thinking' comes only with acquiring this framework of rules. The assumption that thought is private, rather than public, proves groundless when we recognize that understanding our experience is logically dependent upon the public structure of rules for inference formulated by the community. In this way, our understanding of experiences is intimately tied to a community framework. This tie pulls the individual into the social framework of rules and criticism, such that it is no longer his *personal* thoughts that he considers, but rather that the capacity for thought and how he understands his experience depends on a community that mediates associations. What are known most certainly, then, are not *personal* thoughts and experiences. These features of persons are intimately tied to the public framework of community. The difficulty of talking about other minds proves baseless. We can talk about other minds because 'minds' necessarily share in the public structure of rules for inference.

Likewise, the turn to community illustrates that and how we can get to the world beyond. For Peirce, the community is the mediating framework within which we understand our experiences of the world. It enables us to relate and interpret firsts and seconds, which give us an account of the relation between the sensations impressed upon us by the external world and the facts about this world. For Sellars, the community is the public framework that determines the 'ought' conditions of statements in language, which in turn provides the motivational context for action. This framework enables us to 'find

our way about' the world, providing us with a structure for thought and conduct. Because language enables us to engage in the world in a substantive manner and correct and amend our conduct in light of experience, it places us as agents fundamentally *in* the world. We can talk about the world because we are 'intentional doers' in the world. 'Intentional doing' is not merely basic responses to our environment. Rather, it is an informed and directed mode of action: language informs action by determining what conduct is appropriate in given circumstances, and language directs action by motivating and setting the trajectory of the conduct that is appropriate.

The turn to community proves to be a fruitful philosophical development for addressing the problem of solipsism. Embracing the pragmatic conception of community may, in addition, enable us to respond successfully to other perennial philosophical problems. By following pragmatists in turning to the community, we place ourselves in a position better suited for addressing particular philosophical problems that arise in the course of inquiry; for instance, in law, ethics, language, and the sciences.

REFERENCES

Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy* in *Rene Descartes: Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*, ed. Roger Ariew, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000, p. 97-206.

DeVries, Willem and Timm Triplett. *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000, 288 pp.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978, 743 pp.

James, William. *Pragmatism*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1981, 134 pp.

Peirce, Charles S. *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, v. I, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 393 pp.

--"A Detailed Classification of the Sciences" [DCS] (1902)
--"The Categories in Detail" [CD] (1907)
--"The First Rule of Reason" [FRR] (1899)
--"The Logic of Mathematics: An Attempt to Develop My Categories From Within" [LM] (1896)
--"Nominalism" [N] (1903)
--"Observation" [O] (1896)
--"The Paucity of Scientific Knowledge" [PSK] (1896)
--"Phenomenology" [P] (1905)
--"The Scientific Attitude" [SA] (1896)
--"Thirdness" [T] (1875)
--"The Uncertainty of Scientific Results" [USR] (1896)

Peirce, Charles S. *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, v. II, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 535 pp.

--"Division of Signs" [DS] (1897)

Peirce, Charles S. *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, v. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 462 pp.

--"The Fixation of Belief" [FB] (1877)
--"Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities" [GVLL] (1868)
--"How to Make Our Ideas Clear" [HIC] (1878)
--"Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" [QCC] (1868)
--"Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" [SCFI] (1868)

--"Truth, Falsity and Error" [TFE] (1901)

Peirce, Charles S. *Collected Papers of Charles Saunders Peirce,* v. VIII, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 248 pp.
--"Fraser's Edition of *The Works of George Berkeley*" [FE] (1871)

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" [EPM] in *Science, Perception, and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, p. 127-196.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Language as Thought and as Communication" [LTC] in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History*, Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, Inc., 1974, p. 93-117.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Meaning As Functional Classification" [MFC] in *Synthese* 27, 1974, p. 417-437.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person" [MCP] in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History*, Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, Inc., 1974, p. 214-241.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Phenomenalism" [P] in *Science, Perception, and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, p. 60-105.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" [PSIM] in *Science, Perception, and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, p. 1-40.

Sellars, Wilfrid and Charles Taylor. "Scientific Realism and Irenic Instrumentalism" [SRII] in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 1967, p. 350-370.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Some Reflections on Language Games" [LG] in *Science, Perception, and Reality*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991, p. 321-358.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "The Structure of Knowledge" [SK] in *Action, Knowledge and Reality*, ed. Hector-Neri Castaneda, Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975, p. 295-347.

Thayer, H. S. *Meaning and Action*, New York, NY: The Bobb's-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968, 572 pp.