Peirce’s account of meaning, Legg continues, may be distinguished into an explication of the meaning a concept has for us, which consists of the expectations that hypotheses containing that concept would lead us to form; and the meaning it has simpliciter, which consists of the development the concept undergoes over time and across the community of inquiry, and which often goes beyond our expectations. Both dimensions of meaning are shown to depend on Peirce’s concept of continuity. Interesting parallels are drawn between Peirce’s discussion of thirdness and firstness and Wittgenstein’s discussion of rule-following. The latter has been mistakenly interpreted by Kripke as a radical new form of skepticism. Peirce’s communitarian explication of meaning, truth, and reality is distinguished from Kripke’s “skeptical” solution to the rule-following problem, and from various ‘neo-pragmatists.’

Because of the three categories, Peirce’s realism sways against the tide of analytic philosophy, where a commitment to a univocal concept of being, most notably by Quine, has been most influential. The latter approach, Legg argues, encourages a tendency to reification to solve philosophical problems. In contrast, Peirce’s three categories enable a triadic, processual analysis of signification, which, unlike the more usual dyadic framework of word and object, builds the interpretation (and development) of signs into the representation itself, and thereby into realism.

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