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A Semeiotic Interpretation of a Proposition of Race

*Determining the "Perching and Flights" of the Perceptions of Race Series*

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**Abstract**

The fallacy of race as a product of the categorization of the cognitive systems of human beings is well documented (Feagin & Ducey, 2019; Higginbotham, 2013; Hirschfeld, 1938; Miles & Brown, 2003). Recently, the calls to dismantle racism is reaching crescendo catalyzed by the movement ignited by the murder of George Floyd. In fact, a Google search of “dismantling racism” produces 13,600,000 results (June 7, 2020). But what are the criteria, or system of ideas, to determine if racism is, or is not, ‘dismantled’? Are we aware and in agreement as to “what” racism is individually, let alone collectively? And when we know, will we then know “how” to dismantle it individually and collectively?

Toward establishing and developing a mechanism for addressing questions of this nature, the semeiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998) and an explanation for the thinking process argued by John Dewey (1991), this developing hypothesis for this work is to provide guidance for answering these questions by first establishing a method aimed at discovering the reasoning criteria that determine meaning of ‘racism’ for each of us. These logicians, and others including Burke and Stets (2009) and Ryan and Deci (2017), for example, make it clear that the reasoning process, including how one perceives, interprets, and reasons, sheds some light on the

influencing criteria of these phenomena. So, what happens cognitively as a person makes meaning of entities, phenomenon, and events through the reasoning process including subprocesses of perceiving and interpreting associations to race.

### **Introduction**

Recently, the calls and social movement to dismantle racism has been at the forefront of American society. Meanwhile proclaimed race related acts and social tensions continually rage. In fact, a Google search of “dismantling racism” produces 13,600,000 results (June 7, 2020). But what are the criteria, or system of ideas, to determine if racism is, or is not, ‘dismantled’? Are we aware and in agreement as to “what” racism is individually, let alone collectively? And when we know, will we then know “how” to dismantle it individually and collectively? One could go on-and-on. Along those lines, a developing hypothesis for dismantling racism may look something like this: what are the cognitive criteria that determine a proposition to be associated to race for each of us?

Burke and Stets (2009) and Ryan and Deci (2017) make it clear that the cognitive process, including how one perceives, interprets, and reasons, reveal influencing criteria for the person. Whether a person is or is not oppressed by their respective association to ‘race’ incorporates their respective cognitive process. Additionally, these associations reveal how they perceive and interpret matters associated to race (DiAngelo, 2018). So, what happens cognitively as a person perceives and interprets some proposition or term associated to what they associate to race? What does this cognitive process ‘look like’ as that person perceives and interprets these associations?

Dewey (1991), Losier and Koestner (1999), and Peirce (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998) explain at least three criteria through which folks perceive and interpret subjects. And the fact that race is a human fabrication associated to our habit to categorize information is well documented (Feagin & Ducey, 2019; Higginbotham, 2013; Hirschfeld, 1938; Miles & Brown, 2003). They include that these categorizations are a product of human beings’ nature and certain imperfect

reasonings based primarily from perceiving a person's skin color (Burke & Stets, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Winfield, 2007).

Mindsets and uses of terms associated to 'race' is based from the sociohistorical, biological criteria, and the social conditioning from social constructs and norms conveying that one 'race' of folks is superior to others (Kendi, 2019; Renn, 2012; Mills, 1997). How a person has experienced associated forms of race throughout life, or lived experiences, plays into the calculus for perceiving and interpreting a current presentation and their reaction to it. That reaction also is a function of the individual's motivations and self-interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ryan and Deci (2017) have researched and written extensively about social associations, individuals' self-determination, and subsequent behaviors thereof. Moreover, the influence of social phenomena, particularly those phenomena associated to race, play an important part upon individuals' motivations related to the role of self-determination and their reasoning processes. Coming to identify stimuli and impediments to an individual's motivations and capacities to reason about 'this-or-that' lends toward insight into what influences folks' reasoning process (Dewey, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2004).

Lawler (2014) contends that folks' processes of understanding social and economic representations affects their reasoning in both the cognitive (rational reasoning) and affective (emotional reasoning) domains. Given the interplay of these reasoning domains, folks processes for meaning-making and decision-making hold promise toward revealing windows into how folks come to react to and perceive attention getting propositions (Alexis & Laurene, 2019; Anderson & McCune, 2013; Baron, Dunham, Banaji, & Carey, 2014; DiAngelo, 2018).

Smith and Osborn (2004) add dimension to these phenomena by adding that these reasoning domains are fluid and "(attempt) to explore/understand/make sense of the subjective meaning of events/experiences/states of the individual" (p.229) as they react to the phenomena of their environments. The term "fluid" should not be lost in that it describes the nature by which the reasoning process operate.

They are continuous like the reasoning operations are in the always occurring experiences of individuals; the beliefs adopted from those experiences; and the reflected conceptions and conclusions withheld of the things being experienced.

The purpose of this work is to wrestle with the questions presented earlier through developing a novel qualitative research method that I am calling *Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis*. The work will develop the set of tenets toward accomplishing these aims. The propositions developed may then serve as a provision of information toward dismantling the fallacy and phenomena associated to race. The existing knowledge that will be the foundational content of the developing tents will be the works and philosophy of 19th century logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998). His work provides a pragmatic basis to decipher reasoning processes that are associated to race.

### **The Three Signs of Interpretative Engagement**

Race is a representation of an adopted social construction (Miles & Brown, 2003). Skitka and Morgan (2014) explain that individuals' attitudes are important elements in the development of beliefs, such as some form of race or not. Moreover, attitudes play into a determination for the positive or negative feeling of an individual. And these feelings along with an individual's beliefs are products of their experiences with phenomena and entities including "people, places, things, events, and ideas" (Skitka & Morgan, 2014, p.96). Attitudes and beliefs play a part in the degree to which a person instinctively reacts to experienced phenomena and entities. Race is arguably a phenomenon, whether believed or not by a presenter or a receiver. And depending on the receiving person's lived experiences, moral convictions, and attitude when the subject of race is presented, the receiver responds accordingly (Crossman, 2016; Porter, 2013). For Peirce, lived experience, moral convictions, interpretation of 'race', etc., would be represented by what he refers to as a sign of a proposition (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998).

The *sign* not only represents ‘people, places, things, events and ideas’, each of the phenomena and entities also represent terms as *propositions*. A proposition may also represent a phrase that is intended to convey a single idea or concept (Belgrave & Allison, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2004; Seidman, 2013; Houser & colleagues, 1998). When one is presented with a proposition “Ronald is a racist,” for example, is a sign that represents an idea or product of some previously adopted belief. Someone states a proposition and as we know it can state a fact or not. If the person receiving and interpreting the proposition accepts it as a fact, in other words believes it out-of-hand. That proposition becomes what Peirce would classify as an interpretant which symbolizes a common representation of meaning for both a receiver and the presenter.

The existence and dynamic nature of the sign is part of a triadic relationship represents what the Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) reports as Logics of Relations. The triadic relationship representing the thirty-thousand-foot view of the relational process of reasoning are: 1) an *idea*, 2) the *facts* considered, and 3) the *habit*. The dynamic nature of triadic relationships (triads), moreover, are contain signs that also interact fluidly. Transitioning to a more specific triadic relationship representing the conceptual functions of the individual, the signs are an *object*, (the relationship’s ‘subject’), an *interpretant* (or representation of the object), and a *representamen* (or representation of the object). Now, until an interpretant, or some form of conclusion between a presenter and a receiver, is achieved, a *representamen* remains a sign (Houser & colleagues, 1998). At this point, the subject proposition for this work will be, “Ronald is a racist.” And the work will now transition to another triad that represents the logical relationship that deals with comparing the interrelationships among the signs.

### **The Representamen or Icon (of Comparison), the Object or Index (of Performance), and the Interpretant or Symbol (of Thought)**

As an introduction to the detail of triads, one first should know that there are multiple triads depending on its specialized purpose. The Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) discusses a further breakdown of “classes of sign” in its text The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings

– Volume 2 (1893-1913). Please consider the following scenario that shall be referred back to for the balance of this work. One peaceful spring afternoon on a deck, someone (i.e. a presenter) comes to another person (i.e. a receiver) and exclaims, “Ronald is a racist.” In addition to representing the proposition, the object is also “Ronald is a racist.”

For the receiver, the Firstness state occurs up to the millisecond just prior to being interrupted. Up and through this point, there are an infinite number of *logical possibilities* available to the receiver to ponder throughout their reasoning process. To be clearer, at a given point prior to gaining awareness of, or engaging cognitively with, what “Ronald is a racist” could possibly come to mean for the receiver through their determining belief in the proposition or not. And upon achieving either of the determinations, the receiver and the presenter accomplish the identifier of the *intentional interpretant* (presenter) and the *effectual interpretant* (receiver), respectively.

Communicated propositions, such as those received by interpretants, acquire another triad where each sign represents a different type of information. These signs are identified as an icon, an index, and a symbol, respectively. An *icon* is a sign that does not convey information by itself, rather it can only represent an object. Icons only provide a feeling of likenesses for an individual. In the case of the scenario containing this work’s proposition, the instant of the interruption may have immediately conjured up the feeling of being startled and reacting with “what the hell?!” This response represents that immediate feeling of being startled when interrupted unexpectedly. The Peirce Edition Project (1998) exemplified the information conveyance of an index as analogous to “the hand of a clock” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.273).

The icon representing the portion of the reasoning process through the point of reaction. And simultaneously experiencing a representation of the feeling during the Firstness portion of the reasoning process, and transitioning into Secondness while reacting with the object, “what the hell.” And while the Thirdness, or portion of the reasoning process of “Ronald is a racist” that is represented as a symbol

during Thirdness. And a symbol is a sign that simply represents a proposition as the completing stage of the reasoning process given consideration of the icon and index in representing an interpretation the initiating object, “Ronald is a racist” in this case. Now simultaneously, as this triad is processing alongside it a separately forming a triad for that ‘newly’ developing triad “what the hell” as a separate propositional sign.

A sign does not become a representamen until this symbol or Thirdness nature is achieved. To achieve this point of understanding, the Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) makes clear the substantive verb “is” communicates that the sign “Ronald” is equivalent to the sign “racist.” The logical representation being “A is B” (Moore & Parker, 2001). Dewey (1991) advises that ‘thinking’ is conjured whenever a break-in-thought is presented. So, how does one know that “A” is equivalent to “B”?

Depending on what meaning the effectual interpretant assigns to each of these signs, they simultaneously process what has currently been interpreted of “Ronald is a racist”, and, verifying the meaning of each of the signs including ‘Ronald’, ‘racist’, and the substantive verb ‘is’. Now, as Peirce argued, in order for the subject proposition to have a communicable message it must contain both a subject (i.e. its icon; Ronald) and a predicate (i.e. its index; racist) (Houser & colleagues, 1998). The triad contains the subject sign of the proposition wherein a representation of the conveyed object, “Ronald is a racist,” through its predicate (index) and its subject (icon). In a fashion like putting together a puzzle, there is an exercise to put together the meanings of each sign in the proposition. “Ronald” is a subject icon that represents the index “racist.” The substantive verb “is” claims that the “Ronald” is equivalent to “racist” or “A=B” (Moore & Parker, 2001). And the remaining “a” simply indicate a singularity that Ronald is just one racist. But it is clear that this proposition could be false. Perhaps the EI does not believe that “Ronald” is “racist.” Then what?

Moving back into the reasoning process aimed for direction into gaining knowledge of individuals' meaning-making process. A starting point for such an exercise is a portion of the reasoning process, in general, that includes the production of actual facts associated to the proposition. The nature of this process fall within the triad of comparison, performance, and thought. The collection of facts are objects of performance. From another perspective, however, Dewey (1991) advises that presented objects are not represented as "fact" without being a belief among the *intentional interpretant* and the EI. For example, is "Ronald is a racist" a fact for both the intentional interpretant (II) and the EI? Another contributor to this meaning-making process is *instinct* as discussed by many authors (Dewey, 1991; Gordonius, 2010; Lakoff, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Houser & colleagues, 1998). The Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998), firstly, represents the connection by explaining that instinct is a link between the soul and cognition (p.31). Additionally, as a representation of Peirce's manuscripts, they reflect that the natures' of instinct and cognition are actually similar. That said, there will be a provision of functions and natures of these similarities and differences, and while integrating instinct into the states-of-mind conversation.

Gordonius (2010) represents instinct as "unknown faculties implanted in the constitutions of animals by their Creator, by which, independent of instruction, observation, or experience, and without a knowledge of the end of view" (p.18). The phrase "gut feeling" comes to my mind. As recorded from the Oxford Languages Dictionary (2020), cognition represents "the mental process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. A result of this [being]; a perception, sensation, notion, or intuition" (lexico.com). Toward revealing the complementary process of instinct within the meaning-making process, we return to a presentation of the natures of individual states-of-mind.

The nature of a Thirdness state-of-mind, as a portion of a reasoning process, is identified as an adoption of a nature of laws or habits. As this progression of reasoning occurs, understandings of prior experiences, current state of mind, basic psychological needs, personal beliefs, and personal interests are

consciously, and unconsciously, recalled and play into the process of making sense of the proposition dynamically (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Houser and Kloesel (1992) and the Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) identify the state of Thirdness as the portion of reasoning from which individuals' acquire habits and social laws toward determining belief or disbelief in a proposition.

**Feeling (Firstness), reaction (Secondness), and thought (Thirdness).**

As introduced earlier, the Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) advises that an individual's state of mind plays a part in the reasoning process. Diemer and Li (2011), works of both Ryan and Deci (2017) and Skitka, Liu Yang, Chen, Liu, and Xu (2012), argue that how one processes social interactions and folks of color, for example, depend on "feelings (emotions or affective reasoning), moral convictions (consideration of beliefs and values or cognitive reasoning) in the context of disenfranchising phenomena or pervasive contexts" (Crayton, 2019, p.55). More precisely, feelings, moral convictions, and pervasive social contexts exemplify an objective perspective of the associated versions of triads as a tri-coexistent or continuum (Houser & colleagues, 1998).

For Houser and Kloesel (1992), feeling does not specifically employ the association of the term affective (emotional) with cognitive (rational) impressions upon one's state of mind. However the respected conception of the term *affective*, associated to feeling, is absolutely included in his consideration of the reasoning process. In-fact, his consistent consideration of instinct in the last twenty years of his life makes this clear (Houser & colleagues, 1998). The "state of *Feeling*" includes the explanation that the experienced *affect* is best described "whenever we are awake, something is present to the mind, and what is present, without reference to any compulsion or reason, is feeling" (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.5)." An instance that comes to mind our subject proposition at the point just prior to the EI being interrupted by the II.

Upon engaging an experience of daydreaming, the 'feeling' or state of mind is one within which the daydreaming individual is not directly conscious of the 'ongoings' in the waking world, This state

could be similar to that which the EI was ‘in’ at that point of interruption. A ‘state-of-being-elsewhere’ similar to experiencing a state of imagination uncontrolled by ‘conscious’ reasoning yet produced (or controlled) through unconscious stimuli. And what of another state of the scenario when the EI is simply engaged in a conversation and is interrupted by someone exclaiming that “Ronald is a racist”? In either case, the EI is traversing at the point of reaction as a bridge from Firstness; into Secondness, while engaging Thirdness simultaneously.

Now, at the instant where a discussant is interrupted and awareness of “Ronald is a racist” is initiated, an instinctive resistance as reaction is produced by the EI (Houser & colleagues, 1998). The meaning-making process during this phase transforms into the sign of thought as its triad’s Thirdness portion of the EI’s state-of-mind (Houser & colleagues, 1998). There are two points at which thought deals with the states-of-mind representing the continuum of the reasoning process. To complete the interpretant representing the conclusion of the reasoning process as a general completion of a triad, the two-points of explanation are its *point of initiation* and its *point of completion*.

The point of initiation represents the portion of the reasoning continuum where development of meaning-making of the proposition “Ronald is a racist” and its predicate. The point of initiation also represents the point of completion of the sign of thought and the interpretation of the object as the predicate. But what constitutes the completion of thought within the reasoning process?

The Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) provides a description of the reasoning portion of the state of mind referred to as *Thinking*. Dewey (1991) actually explains the states of mind in terms of a tri-coexisting blend of reasoning, thinking, and learning as a simultaneously function of the process. And that this blend is wired unconsciously to act as a state of thinking described as “a process by which a phenomenon is found to be governed by a rule, or, has a general knowable way of behaving” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.5). And Dewey (1991) substantiates the learning and rule governing natures of thinking. He would elaborate that these natures include capacities of settling difficulties

between the subject and the predicate toward reconciling the meaning of the EI throughout the process. Toward developing an approach for zeroing-in on the elements of meaning, we shall continue with Dewey (1991).

### **Engaging Dewey's *thought cycle*.**

Dewey (1991) provides a framework that may be utilized to evaluate individual thought. The concepts of 'thinking/thought' and 'reasoning/cognition' are critically considered in Peirce and Dewey's works. There is an interesting dissimilitude between the men that will be presented in producing the balance of this work. Specifically around their works including reason and instinct. The developing framework in this work will be based on what Dewey (1991) refers to as a complete "thought cycle" (p.77).

Dewey's (1991) *thought cycle* consists of "five logically distinct steps" (p.72). A first variance in Dewey (1991) and Houser & Kloesel's (1992) works are their word usages. For example, where Houser and Kloesel (1992) and the Peirce Edition Project (Houser & colleagues, 1998) uses the terms *thinking* or *thought*, Dewey (1991) uses the term *reflection*. The terms used may be different, but the conceptions conveyed are compatible as representatives of a communication. Another difference is Peirce's version of the philosophy of pragmatism, known as pragmaticism. The differences in pragmatic philosophies are for another work. But the differences revealed in their semiotics contain relevant conceptions that must be spoken to. For the record Peirce's manuscripts reveal that he referred to his version as *semeiotics*, his system of signs.

Peirce's semeiotic represents thinking as a process through a *tri-coexistence of signs*. Signs and states-of-mind in the reasoning process for Peirce are fluid, dynamic, and simultaneously (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998). Conversely, Dewey's (1991) work conveys thinking systems that are conceptualized as non-fluid, but logically sound. In an attempt to minimize confusion going forward, I will not use the term 'reflection' throughout the balance of this work for both authors.

Dewey (1991) sets up five logically distinct steps to structure the process of thinking. At a thirty-thousand-foot level, this structure spans from a presentation of a proposition or phenomenon through the establishment of belief or disbelief of that proposition. Does a effectual interpretant of the proposition “Ronald is a racist” believe he is or not? Dewey’s (1991) presentation and explanation of those steps is referred to as the *thought cycle*. The cycle will be lain out shortly. By breaking down the ‘thought cycle’, an objective structure becomes available to develop a method from which to detect elements of the thought process in a manageable and effective manner.

For Dewey (1991), ‘thinking’ initiates with a “difficulty.” Peirce would call it a ‘reaction’, that is felt by the effectual interpretant of the proposition, “Ronald is a racist” (Houser & colleauges, 1998). ” Additionally, he would say that Dewey’s concept of difficulty is congruent in that his sign (icon/Feeling) and object (index/Brute Reaction) coincide in the reasoning process. *Difficulty* represents an interruption in thought whereby one’s belief comes into question because sense has not been made of the interrupting proposition or phenomena yet. This state of understanding remains until respective interpretations allow for agreement or an opportunity for discussion toward a mutual understanding between the II and the EI for the proposition.

A ‘meeting-of-the-minds’ between the intentional and effectual interpretant represents what is referred to as the *commens* or “common mind” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.478). And the commens’ sign is referred to as the *communicational interpretant*. Now, Dewey’s five steps of the ‘thought cycle’ are:

1. A felt difficulty.
2. Its location and definition.
3. Suggestion of possible solution.
4. Development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion.

5. Further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is the conclusion of belief or disbelief. (Dewey, 1991, p.72)

Dewey (1991) suggests that his first and second steps could be understood as “fused” (p.72). When steps #1 and step #2 are dissected, they *can* fuse when compared to characteristics of Peirce’s (1998) triadic relationship including feeling; reaction; and thought. This occur because the nature components of triadic relationships are fluid, and a proposition must have an interpretant that represents a *predicate* (reaction and subject) and a *subject* (feeling) to be a complete communication.

As far as further comparison to the ‘thought cycle’, Dewey step #1 coincides with the Peirce Edition Project’s explanation for *Firstness* or *feeling*, quite nicely. Additionally, step #2 coincides with the Peirce Edition Project’s representation of *Secondness* and *reaction*. Step #2 represents *suggestion*, which corresponds with a *reaction*, physically or mentally, to a *difficulty* or interruption in one’s state of mind or train of thought (Dewey, 1991; Houser & colleaugues, 1998). This fusion occurs if the effectual interpretant solves the difficulty of step #1, while also providing the ability to “define the *character* of the difficulty,” (Dewey, 1991, p.72) by simply observing the context through which the object (subject) is presented.

Resuming the associations, steps #3, 4, and 5 of Dewey’s (1991) thought cycle are all congruent with the Peirce Edition Project’s (1998) explanation of *Thirdness*, *thought* or the interpretant. The *interpretant* being a representation of the developing *object/subject* (i.e. the proposition “Ronald is a racist”) presented by the intentional interpretant, and, as a representation of the *predicate* or *feeling* representing the reaction by the effectual interpretant (the Peirce Edition Project, 1998). Given that there are these congruencies between Dewey’s (1991) ‘steps’ and the Peirce Edition Project’s ‘signs’, the developing guidance for objective analysis and protocol tenets of the Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis is represented by a commens of the following combined thought cycle:

1. State of Firstness (Sign/Representamen/Icon)

2. State of Secondness (Object/Index)
3. State of Thirdness (Interpretant/Symbol)
  - a. Suggestion of possible solution.
  - b. Development of possible solution.
  - c. Further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is the conclusion of belief or disbelief. (Dewey, 1991, p.72; Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.273)

Revisiting the purpose of this exercise of ‘steps’ and ‘signs’, these revised steps are being submitted as a revised guidance for tracking the thought cycle of folks. And for later as a guide for evaluating protocol responses to the eight tenets of the novel Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis. This guidance, moreover, provides a framework by which one may objectively investigate individual reasoning processes for what terms like racism *mean*. That said, the next steps are to develop the cognitive criteria of the reasoning process, this work will now move to investigate further, including how one perceives, interprets, and reasons, part of the thought cycle and reasoning processes (Burke & Stets, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017). So, toward testing this developing hypothesis, the balance of this work is to develop meaning for the proposition, “Ronald is a racist.” Using this proposition, the developed hypothesis, to this point, shall act as the ground for determining a communicational interpretant for what “‘meaning’ means.” And the developed hypothesis will evolve, and presented, into a theory for future testing, through determining tenets as a framework for future research and testing from the effectual interpretant of the subject proposition.

To briefly reset, the combined thought cycle resides in a dynamically continual reasoning continuum. At one pole is the proposition “Ronald is a racist.” At the opposite pole is the communicational interpretant. The content between the two represents a reasoning process. But before moving on toward providing direction for addressing our subject proposition, and, developing the tenets

of *Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis* there is a bit more to look into toward determining what “‘meaning’ means.”

### **Gaining an Understanding of the Meaning of ‘Meaning’**

Each and every sign represents something to an intentional and effectual interpretants, singularly, and also of their commons collectively as the communicational interpretants. These representations consist of ‘meaning’ to each, as individuals and collectively, as potential interpretants of the proposition at-hand. Said another way, this meaning-making portion of the reasoning process consists of folks coming to understand the proposition for themselves, and then concluding in agreement or not. And from there each individual acts given their moral habits and attitudes (Skitka, Liu Yang, Chen, Liu, & Xu, 2012; Skitka & Morgan, 2014). The meaning-making process of reasoning consists of the engagement of lived experiences; instincts; perceptions; and their functions. All named components do not necessarily have to include all these elements as ways toward making meaning (Dewey, 1991; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

### **Perceptions and judgments.**

From this point forward, the content for what “‘meaning’ means” for the effectual interpretant will be analyzed more closely as a concluding portion of the reasoning process). Again for Peirce, signs have a purpose of communicating in conjunction with other signs of its triad (the Peirce Edition Project, 1998). Concerning the representation of ‘meaning’ “denote(s) the intended interpretant of a symbol” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.208). Peirce is acknowledging a distinction in the meaning of the propositional symbol “Ronald is a racist” at the point of interruption by the II, and the reaction by the EI. And that the “Intended Interpretant” or the proposer of the intended meaning of “Ronald is a racist.” is not “agreed” upon, no longer a symbol of argumentation, or representation of a common conclusion is now reality. At this point also, each interpretant is no longer a simple sign, but rather representamen of

this particular commens representing the commonality of meaning referred to as the communicational interpretant.

This meaning-making portion of the entire reasoning process, as introduced earlier, is not hierarchical in nature. Rather signs are distinguished by the representation and function that it has in its triad. are continuously interacting portions, of the simultaneously, or coexistent, phenomenon that is the reasoning/meaning-making process (Dewey, 1991; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Houser & colleagues, 1998). The ‘thought cycle’ will be detailed, further, in order to establish the core cognitive nature and theoretical tenets for Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis (SPA). The two primary areas being the natures of *perceptual judgments* and *propositions*. Let us start with the latter, propositions.

***Associated kinds and components of propositions as explanatory representations.***

“Ronald is a racist” is one of two kinds of proposition. It is either an *ampliative* proposition or an *explicative* proposition (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.278). An *ampliative proposition*, from an *intentional interpretant*, is taken at face value by a receiver. Now there are two kinds of conclusion that the *effectual interpretant* (EI) could make upon concluding the reasoning process. First, the EI could accept or agree that “Ronald is a racist.” And the EI could have a conclusion that is not definitive, or the EI needs more information prior to ending that particular reasoning process. Or, the proposition may be doubted by the effectual interpretant, making it an *explicative proposition*. Said another way, the effectual interpretant does not believe that ‘Ronald is a racist’. At this point, the EI could either conclude disbelief or leave any further consideration of the proposition. Or the EI may continue to study the proposition out of individual motivations and interests.

In essence, the subject proposition, if ampliative, is represented by the statement of logic “A is A” by the intentional interpretant if accepted by the effectual interpretant (Moore & Parker, 2001). However, at least on the surface, the object proposition actually represents the statement of logic “A is B” which is logically inconsistent (Moore & Parker, 2001). That is if and only if the general elements of “A” and of

“B” are consistent, then the statement of logic “A is B” may be representing identical general elements but identified incorrectly. For example, the II may be representing a set of general elements and is identifying the set as “A,” or “racist.” And the EI identifies identical general elements as “A,” but they represent the identical set of general elements as “racism” or “B”? Given that scenario is possible, an analysis of folks’ representations is not sufficient when determining a communicative interpretant. But rather the general elements that consist of the proposition is required at minimum.

The “A is B,” as well as “A is A,” statements are products of reaction and are representations, respectively, of Peirce has identified evidence of *perceptual judgments* (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.223). And the possibility of a proposition being perceptually judged among the transitions of folks’ states-of-mind from feeling through reaction of “A is A” when it could actually be “A is B” is wholly existent and occurs quite often (Anderson & McCune, 2013; Gelatt, 2008; Mondal, 2016; Yanow & Ybema, 2009). As manuscripts of Peirce reveal, “reaction is existence and *the perceptual judgment is the cognitive product of a reaction*” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.210, italics added). *Existence* represents the state of Feeling when an object/index brings awareness of itself to an icon.

A next step for analyzing perceptual judgments would involve determining the nature of the reaction, at the point when the effectual interpretant (EI) becomes aware of the proposition. The matter of perceptual judgment will be developed further shortly in relation to its positioning within the reasoning process. At this point on the reasoning process continuum, the EI is transitioning from the state-of-mind of “feeling” into and through “reaction,” and then through the “thought” portion of the continuum; the most simple states of conception as a triadic relationship (the Peirce Edition Project, 1998). Dewey (1991) would agree given his explaining the thinking process “by which a phenomenon is found to be governed by a rule” (p.5). The point at which reaction to a proposition initiates the reasoning process including perceptions for the EI. Simultaneously upon reaction being initiated by the EI, the general elements or characteristics, that make-up the EI’s perceptual judgments are prompted. The general elements translating to learned and adopted mannerisms or activities from the EI’s lived experiences, that

associate to what is believed about “Ronald” (i.e. the subject), and what is believed about “racism” (i.e. the predicate) (Houser & colleagues, 1998).

And so the analysis turns to the nature of the *subject* of the proposition. As determined earlier, “Ronald” is the predicate of the proposition “Ronald is a racist.” In this case, the predicate references a single entity, Ronald, and that single entity designates the proposition to have a *singular predicate*. And the other type of predicate is called a *general predicate*. Straightforwardly, the general predicate represents any number of entities, each of which whose general elements must coincide with the general elements of the subject (racist) in order for the EI to accept the conclusion of the proposition.

The work has brought us to a breakdown of the logical exercises of an *argument* (Moore & Parker, 2001; Houser & colleagues, 1998). The Peirce Edition Project offers that “the professed purpose of an argument is to determine an acceptance of its conclusion, and it quite accords with general usage to call the conclusion of an argument its meaning” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.218). So, on one hand, the statement implies that the effectual interpretant agrees with the proposition and believes that Ronald is ‘whatever a racist is’ for the EI. On the other hand, if the EI does not believe that Ronald is a racist, then the EI has concluded with a meaning that is not in agreement with the II. At this point, there is no action embarked upon by the EI to advance a proposition that Ronald is a racist (Houser & colleagues, 1998). The next section provides a structure toward completing a meaning analysis of a proposition. And it will also provide the tenets for the budding theory of Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis.

### **Is Ronald a Racist?: An Introduction to Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis**

The tenets of Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis are the foundation from which the theory is planted. As Peirce periodically reminds the reader, like all theories however, collective, and individual thinking over time will evolve or revolutionize *Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis* (SPA); as explained through his laws of the law of nature (Houser & Kloesel, 1998). This phenomenon is expected and invited. SPA is conceived as a qualitative research tool. The tenets will be provided as guidance for the

content and bases for interview protocols. In other words, the tenets serve as statements of purpose to provide guidance for protocols – and *not* as protocol criteria themselves.

The product of the tenets is meant as a tool for determining the structure, the components (e.g. general elements; predicates; and subjects) of perceptual judgments, and bases for predicting how a person gains meaning for propositions. Paraphrasing the Peirce Edition Project, as an expression of his proof of Pragmatism, Peirce aimed to logically represent how “theoretical judgments” are produced as a basis for deconstructing “intellectual contents” and to appeal to “imperative practical conditions” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, pp. xxxiv-xxxv). To emphasize, protocol questions for researchers are left to them to craft from the eight tenets. Below is a combined thought cycle, introduced earlier, that lays out the reasoning process from thirty-thousand feet, while also laying out the high-level guidance for the protocols and tenets, as follows:

### **The Peirce Dewey Cycle of Thought**

1. State of Firstness (Sign/Representamen/Icon/Feeling)
2. State of Secondness (Object/Index/Reaction)
3. State of Thirdness (Interpretant/Symbol/Thought)
  - a. Suggestion of possible solution.
  - b. Development of possible solution.
  - c. Further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is the conclusion of belief or disbelief. (Dewey, 1991, p.72; the Peirce Edition Project, 1998, p.273)

Given the information provided thus far including the Peirce Dewey Cycle of Thought, it is an opportune time to initiate the SPA Tenets. Tenet One represents the fact that “nothing is in the intellect that was first not in the senses” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p. xxxiv). Each expression of “Feeling”

indicates a separate triad and signs for analysis. The new sign represents a likeness of an object reacted upon by an interpretant. A protocol question should move to gain this content for consideration, while also structuring those questions to produce this knowledge. Tenet Two conveys the importance of gaining a feeling for the nature of an individual's state of mind, as exhibited through inquiry in relation to a sign representing a proposition. Does the sign represent an object of a triad (i.e. a proposition); or an interpretation (i.e. an interpretant) of the proposition as a conclusion, or meaning?

Although continuous in nature and function, the reasoning process consists of an area of bounds convergence for the state of Firstness through the state of Secondness; the state of Secondness through the state of Thirdness; and the state of Thirdness through the state of Firstness simultaneously and cyclically. Perceptual judgments are identifiers of this area of bounds convergence between states of mind. As introduced earlier, general elements also occur simultaneously as they consist of and interact among triad signs, perceptual judgments, and perceptions. These activities are not only products of conscience awareness and self-control; like from lived experience, some belief, or habit. Rather they are more products of the unconscious mind and the 'automatic' interpretative reactions to other signs (Vedantam, 2010). At this point of zeroing in on completing the layout of the reasoning process, the reader is asked to now consider the natures of perceptual judgments and, through its root, *perception*.

The Peirce Edition Project explains that perceptions are products of an interpretants' perceptual judgments (Houser & colleagues, 1998). This is significant firstly given their roles among the states-of-mind through the bounds convergence of Feeling and Reaction, as presented a short time ago. This brings us to Tenet Three. Tenet Three expresses that "Every concept and every thought beyond immediate perception is a sign" (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p. xxxv). This tenet aims to gain an understanding to what degree that the EI (i.e. responder) believes the proposition "Ronald is a racist." Additionally, the perceptual judgments are produced throughout the balance of their reasoning process through the conclusion and determination of meaning for the respective proposition. They also are involved

throughout the determination of an interpretant along with its associated triad (i.e. representamen; object; and interpretant).

The power exhibited by perceptions are like enzymes that catalyze the reasoning process “at every step” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.207). These occurrences exhibit that “all reasoning...turns upon the perception of *generality* and continuity at every step” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.207). In other words, perception presents a number of possibilities continuously throughout the reasoning process. But what about perceptual judgments? Is a judgment not a decision by definition and therefore not general?

Tenet 4 represents that analysis of reasoning should include determinations that the characteristics of perceptual judgments present. To be clear, during the analysis of interviews there will be multiple propositions offered. A communicating proposition and perceptual judgments consist of a predicate. And as a proposition or perceptual judgment consists of a predicate, a “judgment must involve generality in its predicate” as well (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.208). And as explained earlier, in order for a proposition be a complete communication, it must contain both a subject (icon) and a predicate (index).

Peirce, throughout his manuscripts associated with his *On Phenomenology* notes, provided a representation for his position concerning perceptual judgments (Houser & colleagues, 1998). He explained, on one hand, that perceptual judgments, as a form of judgment, present as a proposition. And additionally that they are “what a character of (an object of perception) directly presents to the mind” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.155). And on the other hand, he recorded that a judgment, of any conception, cannot resemble an object of perception. An example of this phenomenon of reasoning and logic is the acceptance, or not, of the EI’s meaning of the subject proposition, Ronald is a racist.

Further analysis of the EI’s meaning making process will be revealed in the next tenet of the novel Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis (SPA). Moreover, the tenet includes that perceptions and perceptual judgments reveal more of how an individual deduces meaning of propositions. Peirce’s

*Manuscript 315* contains the content from which the next tenet is drawn from what he called his *cotary propositions* (Houser & colleagues, 1998). Tenet 5 stipulates that “perceptual judgments contain general elements, so that universal propositions are deducible from them in a manner in which the logic of relations shows that particular propositions usually, not to say invariably, allow universal propositions to be necessarily inferred from them” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, 1998, p.227). Toward providing substance from which to develop relevant protocols for this tenet, we will venture into breaking down what this author labels *elementary steps of inference* and *natures of reasoning*.

There are three *elementary steps of inference* that persist throughout the reasoning process (Houser & colleagues, 1998, 1998, p.213). Some products from these steps contribute to the interpretations of the meanings, beliefs, and habits as contributors to the reasoning itself. The first kind of step consists of shading each singular propositions into one composite proposition. These meanings, beliefs, and habits that consist of prior experiences as general elements and predicates of associated propositions produced that in-turn from them.

The next kind of step consists in an individual’s process of inference recognizes the function of comparison that plays in this process. In-fact, *comparison* is an iconic sign of Firstness of the triadic relationship; *performance* as the indexical sign of Secondness; and *thought* as the symbolic sign of Thirdness. This step recognizes the function of comparison as a step of inference whereby the individual *omits* some portion(s) of a proposition(s), “without introducing error,” so as to match, as closely as possible, propositions and general elements from experience. And the last kind of step “consists in *inserting* something into a proposition,” as opposed to omitting portions of propositions as in the step just prior.

### **The Roles of Argumentation in the Reasoning Process**

Sustaining the triad in Logics of Relations, Pierce recognizes *abduction, deduction, and induction* as *divisions of argumentation*, and that these ‘divisions’ also occur as simultaneous and a cyclical

continua (Houser & Kloesel, 1992; Houser & colleagues, 1998). And now Tenet 6 represents the reasoning process, specifically by analyzing the nature of inference in terms of Abduction (*comparison* as forms of Firstness), Deduction (*performance* as forms of Secondness), and Induction (*thought* as a form of Thirdness).

The Peirce Edition Project represents “Abduction [as] the process of forming an explanatory hypothesis” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.216). The nature of abduction associates to the “comparison” of one sign with another as a function of the process of inference. An object (e.g. a proposition) is represented by its abductive version, its sign/representamen, and is described by Peirce as representing a state of mind wherein “we divine the secrets of nature” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.224). Two signs are engaged in a dance of comparison initiated as a product of a reaction at the fringes of the abductive faculty of inference, and into the deduction stage. As presented earlier, these signs are the representations of general elements and perceptual judgments of the subject proposition, “Ronald is a racist.” This work will pick back up with a continuance of detailing the roles and natures of deduction and induction shortly.

Continuing with the abductive faculty, we pick-up with what is identified as a characteristic. The characteristic of abduction to which the reader is asked to make note of is identified as “that which [is] in its highest perfection (and called) perception” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, 1998, p.224). This is a reference to the iterations of abduction as a process of forming an exploratory hypothesis. Importantly, these iterations are mere general notions, recalled consciously and unconsciously as an association to the presented proposition.

The iterations of the inference process are represented by: *abduction and induction* (e.g. representamen as communicative interpretants); *general elements* (predicates of propositions; indicative in nature); *perceptual judgments* (the tenets of all reasoning; “the cognitive product of a reaction” Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.210); and *perceptions*. Tenet 7 includes addressing these identified iterations

relevant to the subject proposition. And Tenet 8 advises that one identifies evidence for the manner by which folks' tendencies of argumentation are exhibited. Now, if one seeks to identify a demarcation of continual phenomena, in this case demarcation between abduction and deduction, perceptions are those phenomena. Lakoff (1999) provides another layer of meaning to the iteration of perceptions, in terms of a simultaneous relationship between perception and conception.

Lakoff (1999) explains that *thought*, namely what is identified by as the abductive and deductive reasoning portions of what he refers to as the *conceptual system*. This portion of thinking has at least twelve simultaneously occurring functions. These functions are typically unconscious occurrences, therefore most probably functions that are occurring unawares to the perceiver as a kind of habit (Houser & colleagues, 1998; Vedantam, 2010). The twelve acknowledged functions of "perception" presented by Lakoff (1999) are:

#### Twelve Functions of Perception

- 1) Accessing memories relevant to what is being said.
- 2) Comprehending a stream of sound as being language, diving it into distinctive phonetic features and segments, identifying phonemes, and grouping them into morphemes.
- 3) Assigning a structure to the sentence in accord with the vast number of grammatical constructions in your native language.
- 4) Picking out words and giving them meanings appropriate to context.
- 5) Making semantic and pragmatic sense of sentences as a whole.
- 6) Framing what is said in terms relevant to the discussion.
- 7) Performing inferences relevant to what is being discussed.
- 8) Constructing mental images where relevant and inspecting them.
- 9) Filling in gaps in the discourse.
- 10) Noticing and interpreting your interlocutor's body language.
- 11) Anticipating where the conversation is going.
- 12) Planning what to say in response. (pp.10-11)

So, a bridge, if you will, 'connecting' the abductive and deductive portions of the reasoning process consists of least these twelve functions of perception. Visually these functions are represented as

a general element or perceptual judgment. Their positioning would be somewhere in the phenomenal area between abduction and deduction. Taking what the Peirce Edition Project conveyed referencing the pseudo-demarcation represented by perception, let us now pick-back-up with the other side of the bridge from abduction, *deduction*.

The deduction portion of argumentation function is, informally speaking, the identification and questioning part of argumentation. An aim for it is what Peirce calls an “interpretative mood” toward coming to believe the hypothesis of interest, or not. The deduction portion as an object is part of a general class of possible arguments that are exactly analogous to what the meaning of a proposition is. And that deduction represents an interpretant for a side of an argument whereby the tenets being “argued” for are true and will have true conclusions in the majority of cases (Houser & colleagues, 1998). This is a basis for belief and disbelief. Now, the method by which deduction occurs and may be processing arguments in one’s mind is one of two types, *necessary* and *probable*.

The types of deduction identify two methods by which folks process an argument. The first method is by *necessary deduction* (Houser & colleagues, 1998). A method of necessary deduction represents that the person *deduces the truth of* a proposition. In other words, the primary focus of their deduction are drawing upon experiences and existing knowledge that would substantiate the process. How they deduce the truth of a proposition is outside of how frequently the tenet is analogous with the meaning represented by the interpretant of the proposition. That is the primary focus of this other method of deduction, *probable deduction*; to consider how often their experiences and knowledge represent truth for the ‘deducer’ in their argumentation. And then there is a subcategory of the probable deduction called the *statistical deduction*. Statistical deduction is a verified form of probable deduction wherein the absolute certainty of the frequency of truth. The deduction is not merely the frequency that seems to be the case as in a probable deduction. And as these deductions are taking place, they are evolving into the last phase of argumentation, *induction*.

Induction is a method for ‘testing’ a deduction cognitively. The nature of induction brings to mind how Einstein was said to engage ‘thought experiments’ to abduce, deduce, and test gained knowledges that are filtered through his imaginative powers. The ‘testing’ of one’s thought experiments, or general propositions, is challenged. The product of these challenges represents that if this general proposition consistently yields truth “or an approximation to the truth in regard to every question” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.298). And the determination from these challenges in-turn yields a conclusion, belief, or disbelief, to the proposition and its triad of signs. But before moving on, like deduction, induction has three subcategories to consider.

The Peirce Edition Project presents the three kinds of induction referred to as the *pooh-pooh argument*; *verification of a general prediction*; and *an argument from a random sample* (Houser & colleagues, 1998). The pooh-pooh argument represents conclusions that proclaim that ‘a proposition will not occur because it never has. Invariably, because it has never occurred, it must ultimately be corrected if wrong, and ultimately will be deemed the truth’. Another type of induction is referred to as verification of a general prediction. This kind of induction consists of “finding or making” the conditions by which it is anticipated that a conclusion will be verified as often as it is verified experimentally. And a final kind of induction is identified as an argument from a random sample. This kind considers ‘the argument’ verified if it produces true conclusions as often as any other, and the ratio of verifiability “holds in the long run” (Houser & colleagues, 1998, p.298). In other words, as long as a conclusion is true as often as others it is considered to be experimentally verified.

### **Conclusion: The Tenets and Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis**

So, is Ronald a racist? What happens cognitively as the effectual interpretant (EI), for example, perceives and interprets this ‘race’ associated proposition? Given the tenets and content establishing the novel theory of Semeiotic Phenomenological Analysis (SPA), what does this process ‘look like’? The

eight tenets of SPA lay out direction through which a ground for the interpretants (i.e. answers) are established. Interpretants primed for the testing to which the induction process applies.

Tenet One aims to have the user of SPA gain knowledge of the nature of one's cognitive processes. The subprocesses include the reasoning and inference processes. Analysis of these processes are represented by Peirce's system of signs, semeiotics, based on his philosophy of pragmatism. The Peirce Edition Project, drawing from Peirce's original manuscripts, advises that knowledge is initially gained as a product of the senses (Houser & colleagues, 1998). A general lesson is that a contributor to a person gaining meaning for the proposition "Ronald is a racist" is a product of what that person is perceiving as they are reacting to its presentation. Therefore one needs to move to determine, as best as possible, what the EI is perceiving from the point at which they reacted to the interruption of the II.

Tenet Two represents a need to establish an understanding of the EI's state-of-mind in association to the proposition, "Ronald is a racist." Tenet Two also aims to bring to the fore which signs, along with the natures and functions of those signs, are. More precisely, it must be determined that the proposition contains both a subject (i.e. an icon or sign/representamen) and a predicate (i.e. an index or object) or the proposition is not a complete communication for interpretation. "Ronald is a racist" does qualify as a communicable proposition. This proposition also establishes a need to determine the meanings of the object, or the term Ronald; the sign/representamen, or the term racist, and the proposition as a symbol representing what the object is conveying. To be clear, the symbol is representing that "Ronald is a racist."

The meanings for each must now be determined for both the intentional interpretant and the effectual interpretant. If the effectual interpretant (EI) believes the proposition collectively meaning that their understandings of the subject and the predicate coincide with the intentional interpretant (II), then an agreement or communicational interpretant is established. If the EI and the II do not have common understandings of the association between the subject and predicate, then the EI does not believe the

proposition. There is no agreement or communicational interpretant between the EI and the II, and each proceeds according to their interests associated to the proposition.

Tenet Three represents the importance of identifying the perceptual judgment(s) associated with the proposition. As defined earlier, a perceptual judgment is “the cognitive product of a reaction” which indicates the simultaneous engagement of that person’s reaction (the Peirce Edition Project, 1998). And to explain that perceptions are products of an interpretant’s perceptual judgments of a proposition. Moreover, this tenet alerts that the presence of perception indicates a transitioning of the interpretant’s state-of-mind from Feeling into Reaction.

Tenet Four represents that analysis of reasoning should include determinations for what the perceptual judgments represent. And an advisory that the proposition and perceptual judgments indicate in relation to the predicate. It is important to note that the predicate has many potential meanings as an icon or sign in the state of Firstness. For example, Ronald as the predicate of the proposition “Ronald is a racist,” could come to mean a potentially infinite number of general elements and perceptual judgments contributing to an interpretant’s conclusion.

Tenet Five stipulates that an analysis of a perceptual judgment alerts one that a general element(s) accompany it. General elements in association with perceptual judgments in-turn indicate that they are deductively associated to a presented proposition. It is the general elements of each interpretant that represents a meaning for the predicate of ‘racism’. The subject of “Ronald”, and the proposition “Ronald is a racist,” occurring within the reasoning process, produces their respective conclusions of belief or disbelief in the proposition. And it is the comparison of the meanings of the subject and predicate between the interpretants that produces an agreement or disagreement. An agreement that “Ronald is a racist,” or not.

Tenet Six incorporates the need to be aware, and gain knowledge, of the triad disclosing the subcategories of the respective interpretants’ *process of argumentation*. Moore and Parker (2001) provide

a clear definition for an argument that is in concordance with setting a base understanding for Peirce's explanation for argumentation. They explain that "in an argument, premises are designed to provide support for a conclusion" (p.10). Peirce argues that the process of argumentation provides a perspective of the reasoning process that represents the nature of inference that occurs within. The process of argumentation represents capacities of comparison, performance, and thought that function as inference. And Tenet Seven and Tenet Eight respectively require the identification of the iterations of inference that bring the interpretant to completion of the reasoning process, producing a conclusion aimed toward a communicative interpretant for this particular triad, or not, concerning the proposition.

The inference portion of the reasoning process, including each simultaneous interplay of signs associated to relevant propositions, plays into the conclusions of the reasoning process of the involved interpretants. The inference process continues to consider associated general elements and perceptual judgments as part of the overall reasoning process until a decision of belief or disbelief is settled upon. Effectively, a "conclusion" is arrived upon given specifically for a proposition; ready to respond to the II toward a communicative interpretant or not, concerning the statement "Ronald is a racist." In-turn, the belief or disbelief determined by the EI, for example, carries over now as a part of their experience and knowledge gained through the reasoning process of the proposition, "Ronald is a racist, or "Ronald is not a racist." Either proposition continues the cycle based on the action taken by the EI as the object of many "new" triads.

So, is *Ronald* a racist?

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