

This dissertation explores the ontology of meaning focusing on Paul Pietroski's internalist semantics in which meanings are instructions for assembling concepts. It begins by examining the compatibility of Platonist ontologies with biopsychological internalist approaches, analyzing arguments by Paul Postal and counterarguments by Jeffrey Watumull. This thesis critiques non-causal Platonism and proposes a conceptualist alternative, while acknowledging the potential validity of Watumull's causal form of Platonism. Key discussions include Postal's *Knowledge is a Binary Relation Argument* and the *Discrete Infinity Argument* (the infinite use of finite means), with insights from Norbert Hornstein's criticisms along with Watumull's responses that rely on the type/token distinction. We posit that the abstract/concrete distinction along with the type/token distinction are not metaphysical and thus assume a modern interpretation of Aristotle's *hylomorphism* in which there are no substance-independent Forms or structures. Next, we turn to causally oriented theories of meaning/reference and analyze Hilary Putnam's Externalist semantics, focusing on his optimistic *vectorial theory of meaning*. Putnam criticizes the traditional view of meaning, which posits that knowing the meaning of a term is a psychological state and that intensions determine extensions. He argues that these assumptions are flawed and introduces his famous Twin Earth thought experiment to illustrate the collective and expert-determined nature of meaning. This chapter also examines Paul Pietroski's response, which challenges Putnam's views while emphasizing the psychological nature of meaning. Our analysis supports Pietroski's internalist approach but acknowledges the need for a more sophisticated theory of extensionality. Ultimately, we propose that while words may not have extensions, some aspect of a meaning theory must be extensional, and we explore the complexities of concepts in this context. This leads to a discussion of expertise as a continuum from innateness to experience.

Finally, this dissertation explores Paul Pietroski's internalist semantics, emphasizing his view that meanings precede truth and that intensions occur before extensions. Thus, Chapter 3 critically examines variations of Donald Davidson's Bold Conjecture regarding extensionality. Pietroski contends that natural language evolved in primates and thus cannot be accurately modeled using formal tools designed for formal languages. He proposes that meanings are biologically implementable instructions for concept assembly, challenging the notion that sentences in natural languages have truth conditions. Our critique addresses the controversial assumptions in Pietroski's argument, questioning the feasibility of not modeling natural language with formal tools, although we do not attempt to reduce meaning to truth conditional semantics. We argue that while Pietroski's internalist semantics is, from an ontological perspective, the best theory of meaning going it would be better served by a substantive theory of concepts. Finally, we reintroduce Hilary Putnam's *Division of Linguistic Labor*, arguing that his distinction between experts and non-experts undergirds and extends Noam Chomsky's distinction between scientific and commonsense concepts. After all, while children are experts, collective expertise in other perspectives has always contributed to meaning. Thus, we agree with Putnam that his Division of Linguistic Labor should be regarded as a linguistic universal (we introduce the term *syn-mantic universal*), however we suggest revamping it into a *Division of Conceptual Labor*.