

'Final Interpretant' (pub. 16.08.13-18:01). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-letters-william-james-13>.

---

**Term:** Final Interpretant

**Quote:** ...suppose I awake in the morning before my wife, and that afterwards she wakes up and inquires, "What sort of a day is it?" *This* is a sign, whose Object, as expressed, is the weather at that time, but whose Dynamical Object is the *impression which I have presumably derived from peeping between the window-curtains*. Whose Interpretant, as expressed, is the quality of the weather, but whose Dynamical Interpretant, is *my answering her question*. But beyond that, there is a third Interpretant. The *Immediate Interpretant* is what the Question expresses, all that it immediately expresses, which I have imperfectly restated above. The *Dynamical Interpretant* is the actual effect that it has upon me, its interpreter. But the Significance of it, the *Ultimate*, or *Final Interpretant* is her *purpose* in asking it, what effect its answer will have as to her plans for the ensuing day. I reply, let us suppose: "It is a stormy day." Here is another sign. Its *Immediate Object* is the notion of the present weather so far as this is common to her mind and mine - not the *character* of it, but the *identity* of it. The *Dynamical Object* is the *identity* of the actual or Real meteorological conditions at the moment. The Immediate Interpretant is the schema in her imagination, i.e. the vague Image or what there is in common to the different Images of a stormy day. The *Dynamical Interpretant* is the disappointment or whatever actual effect it at once has upon her. The *Final Interpretant* is the sum of the *Lessons* of the reply, Moral, Scientific, etc. Now it is easy to see that my attempt to draw this three-way, "trivialis" distinction, relates to a real and important three-way distinction, and yet that it is quite hazy and needs a vast deal of study before it is rendered perfect.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1897-1909). *Letters to William James*. L [R] 224.

**References:** CP 8.314

**Date of** 1909

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-letters-william-james-13>