"I" Who?: A New Look at Peirce's Theory of Indexical Self-Reference

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I.

The aim of this article is to address the problem of what is usually called "self-consciousness" by studying Charles S. Peirce's semeiotic treatment of self-referential statements. Peirce believes that an adequate study of the mind requires "to reduce all mental action," including "self-consciousness," "to the formula of valid reasoning" (W 2:214, EP 1:30, 5:267, 1868) and its semeiotic nature. While Peirce makes frequent use of the notion of "consciousness," he is at the same time distant from the understanding of the "conscious mind" that Descartes invented and made canonical (e.g., W 1:491, 1866), and which from the modern epoch stretches out to the contemporary discussion on, as David Chalmers put it, the "hard problem" of the mind.[1] In what follows, I argue that Peirce puts forth a powerful theory of self-consciousness based on his semeiotic understanding of self-reference and indexicality.[2] To the question, "How can we elucidate the phenomenon of self-consciousness?", we should answer, with Peirce, "What we call self-consciousness corresponds to the practice of narratives and descriptions ultimately based on indexical self-referential statements, which are in turn rooted in very specific dimensions of human experience." It is also important to underscore from the outset that the problem of indexical self-reference cannot be separated from Peirce's concept of experience, which is one of the most interesting insights of Peirce's philosophy and classical American pragmatism. In particular, it will be essential to see what are the experiential-perceptual conditions under which indexical self-referential statements can work as such.[3]

Peirce scholarship has usually seen the problem of self-reference as a chapter of the major metaphysical problem of individuation and has consequently dwelt with it in the light of this latter. It has been long claimed that Peirce's

theory of human individuality is somehow troublesome. In a famous comment, Richard J. Bernstein ("Action, Conduct" 90) writes that "the nature of human individuality always seemed to be a source of intellectual embarrassment for Peirce." Although partially insightful, I take this statement to be highly problematical in two ways. First, what does "human individuality" mean? Second, once we have made clear what that phrase means, is there any conclusive evidence in Peirce's thought for such interpretation? Let us leave the two questions open for now. There are three standard interpretations of Peirce's philosophy that take Peirce to put forth a nihilistic doctrine of human individuality. One of these is provided by Bernstein ("Action, Conduct" 90–91), according to whom Peirce's metaphysics cannot account for the originality and spontaneity, stemming from an "individual I," that characterizes human agency. Similarly, Paul Weiss (134) maintains that for Peirce there are no real "individuals" and that what we call individuals are actually only the parts of bigger wholes. Finally, John F. Boler (142–44, 160) concludes from a compared study of Duns Scotus's and Peirce's metaphysical systems that Peirce cannot produce a genuine notion of "individuality" because he weds himself to a sort of Scotistic metaphysics but rejects at the same time Scotus's notion of "contraction." These three nihilistic interpretations rely on a series of famous passages in which Peirce prima facie seems to claim that (1) self-consciousness is not an original and intuitive power, or that (2) the existence of the human individual is not real apart from the social organism, or finally that (3) the metaphysical status of the individual self is nothing more than that of an error and ignorance bearer (e.g., CP 1.673; W 2:200–04, EP 1:18–21, 1868; W 2:241–42, EP 1:55, 1868).

A great deal of work has been done in order to show that Peirce does not hold such a nihilistic view. In particular, Vincent M. Colapietro's 1989 study is commonly considered the first groundbreaking work on this topic.[4] Further studies on Peirce's notions of individuality and selfhood (Colapietro, "Toward a Pragmatic"; Delaney, "Peirce's Critique"; Delaney, "Peirce's Account"; Delaney, *Science, Knowledge* 130–56; DiLeo; Kemp-Pritchard; Harrison; Holmes; Riley; Maddalena 111–22; Michael; Muoio; Pape; Sorrell, "Peirce and a Pragmatic Reconception"; Sorrell, *Representative Practices* 33–75; Stephens; Thibaud; Menary; Uslucan; Magada-Ward; Robinson) have shown that the nihilistic interpretation of the self is a misunderstanding of Peirce's thought.[5] The common conclusion of these works can be summed up in the following statements: (i) Peirce's alleged negative claims about the "self" intend to undermine a Cartesian, intuitionist conception of self-consciousness, and to replace it with a full-fledged inferential account of the operations of

the mind; (ii) the same claims underscore the developmental origin of the individual self-consciousness, which relies mainly (although not exclusively) upon social and linguistic dynamics; and finally (iii) the apparently ambiguous place of individuality in Peirce's metaphysics is due to his conception of individuality as a limit-case within continuity and as ultimately indivisible from continuity.

Although all these studies provide essential insights into Peirce's doctrine, I believe that they all rely on an *ambiguous* use of the notion of individuality. My overall interpretation is that Peirce's doctrine of the human individuality, or individual selfhood, is a complex one and has to be understood in a threefold way, so that every reference to only one of these three ways is a form of reduction of Peirce's perspective:

(1) "Individuality" is the law-like continuity of a unique series of instantiations that constitutes the reality of every human being.
(2) "Individuality" means the constant possibility in the mental life of adult human beings to refer to their empirical "I" through acts of self-reference and self-ascription of mental states.
(3) "Individuality" also refers to the unique mission to which a human being is called in the ongoing process of creation.

In this article, I focus on the second point, that is, the problem of self-reference, to which only an unsystematic attention has been given so far.[6] Can Peirce really be included in the list of philosophers who maintained what Peter Strawson called the "no-ownership" or "no-subject" doctrine of the self? (95 ff.). As I will show, a nihilistic interpretation of Peirce's view on human individuality is untenable also from the perspective of self-reference. I take this to be an important endeavor since it has also been claimed recently that Peirce holds a nihilistic understanding of the individual self. In particular, Cornelis de Waal writes that according to Peirce, the individual human being is "wholly defined in terms of imperfections" (de Waal 154; see also Browning). As I will show, although de Waal's interpretation relies on the genuine anti-individualistic tendency of Peirce's theory of inquiry and metaphysics, a nihilist interpretation of Peirce's doctrine of the self is partial and in the end misleading.

Peirce's often-quoted definition of the human being as a "sign developing according to the laws of inference" is already found in his 1868 "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (W 2:240; EP 1:53) and expresses a belief that will be maintained until his late writings. However, an analysis of his manuscripts shows that Peirce developed these ideas even before the

publication of that essay, as the 1965 Harvard Lectures and 1966 Lowell Lectures clearly prove. In particular, in Lowell Lecture XI, Peirce, at the end of his series of lectures on the "Logic of Science," explicitly asks the question: "What is man?," and articulates the same answer that he will include in "Some Consequences." The problem of self-reference is a part of the anthropological question and the anthropological question is first and foremost, in Peirce's terms, a logical question about the nature and classification of thinking.[7] The fact that Peirce in his early writings defines logic as the science of the conditions of the relation of symbols to their objects and that he concludes his 1966 lectures on the logic of science with a thorough meditation on the symbolic nature of the human being should make us realize that Peirce stands on a somewhat unconventional ground in addressing the problem of the nature of the human mind. In other words, Peirce's method of inquiry in philosophy of mind mainly coincides with his semeiotic logic right from his first steps. Therefore Peirce, while trying to give a "thoroughly unpsychological view of logic" (W 1:164), was at the same time settling a study of the mental life of the human being (and of self-consciousness, interpreted as self-reference, as a case of it) in semeiotic terms. This reading is confirmed by Peirce's further inquiries, as it is witnessed, for instance, by his 1893 "Immortality in the Light of Synechism," in which we read that the human being's "spiritual consciousness" has the same nature of those "eternal verities" embodied in the rest of the universe as a whole (EP 2:3). "Verity" is first and foremost a logical notion, and is outside the epistemic boundaries of what is usually considered to be the adequate subject matter of philosophy of mind. On the contrary, Peirce thinks that the subject matter of logic overlaps with the subject matter of philosophy of mind, if we believe that human thinking is not reducible to its material instantiations and supports, that is, to its replicas, or to merely physical and biological semeiotic processes. For these reasons, I believe that an analysis of the logic of indexical self-referential statements, as the one provided in this article, is the best way to develop a philosophy of self-consciousness in a Peircean mood.

Peirce's theory of indexical reference can have a fundamental role in answering the problems arising from a Cartesian approach to self-reference. In particular, the presence of an indexical component in self-reference could very likely account for the directness of self-reference without resulting into a form of intuitionist introspectivism (Peirce's theory of indexical reference does not entail intuitionism). At the same time, indexicality avoids the widespread assumption that a full-fledged descriptive knowledge is the only way in which the term "I" can refer to the individual self. The question is therefore

whether self-referential statements are descriptive all the way through or if, on the contrary, indexicality plays some role in them. I will argue that in Peirce's view, self-referential statements include an irreducible and non-descriptive indexical component.

I proceed as follows. After providing a sketch of Peirce's theory of the first-person pronoun "I" understood as a "rhematic indexical legisign," I defend the claim that Peirce maintains that "I" has a real, non-fictional referent and that this referent coincides with a specific type of perception related to our consciousness of the present and our sense of effort in agency (the present&effort-perception).

II.

Although self-referential statements resort to different terms (i.e., the personal pronoun "I," the possessive adjective "my," or the possessive pronoun "mine"), I focus throughout this article on the use of the first-person pronoun "I," and I take it as an example of what goes on also in the other cases. My claim is that an analysis of Peirce's account of the meaning and the use of "I" is the best way to approach the study of self-reference in a Peircean mood. This approach coincides with Peirce's externalist methodology in the study of mental phenomena (see Delaney, "Peirce's Account"; Delaney, *Science, Knowledge*; Short, "Hypostatic Abstraction" for a slightly critical account of this; also Stephens), according to which an adequate inquiry into our mental states and powers requires an inferential approach from public, "external facts" (W 2:214; EP 1:30).[8] The linguistic production of self-referential statements is such a public and external phenomenon. However, let me make clear that, according to Peirce, the phenomenon of self-consciousness is *not* reducible to linguistic performances, although the linguistic practice of self-reference represents a big part of it; on the contrary, Peirce develops a broad semeiotic approach to the mental life, for which the signs implied in the phenomenon of self-consciousness also include non-linguistic signs, such as qualities of feelings and perceptions. As should be clear at the end of this article, the phenomenon of self-consciousness also entails experiential non-linguistic components. However, the importance of the focus on self-referential statements (exemplified in this article) results from Peirce's cautiousness to adopt a naïve introspective method of inquiry in philosophy of mind and his consequent preference for an externalist approach.

According to Peirce's taxonomy, "I" falls under the class of "rhematic indexical legisigns."[9] As some scholars have shown (see, in particular, Agler;

also Boersema; Goudge; Pietarinen; Hilpinen; Maddalena, "Esperienza e soggettività" 41–56; Lizska; Pape; Short, *Peirce's Theory of Signs*; Thibaud; Weber), a rhematic indexical legisign (1) is a non-descriptive sign (e.g., EP 2:342, 1905), (2) incorporates but does not reduce to the background or collateral factors necessary to the fixation of the reference (e.g., EP 2:494, 1909), and (3) is directly referential. Moreover, (4) personal pronouns are indexical artificial types or legisigns and are therefore governed by social and linguistic conventions (e.g., EP 2:274, 297, 1903). In addition, (5) the singular object to which a rhematic indexical legisign refers does not need to be a real object but can also be a mere logical object, that is, it can have a merely "logical" existence (e.g., R 280:36–37) or membership to a Logical Universe whatsoever. From the first four points, it follows that "I" does not need to be a descriptive term in order to enable self-referential statements. But, we could still wonder, is the referent of "I" real merely in a "Universe of Discourse"? Indeed, point (5) entails that the referent of a rhematic indexical legisign can be a logically real object and nothing more. In addition to this, Peirce admits as real also the world of fictional objects, such as the heroes of literature, whose existence and features depend upon the deliberate creative activity of their authors (see, e.g., EP 2:209; 5:152, 1903; see Forster 100–01) and are logically localized in the Universe of artistic creation (and not in the Universe of non-fictional objects). In what follows, I argue that Peirce attributes to the referent of "I" (what is eventually identified as the "private self") a stronger, not merely logical or fictional reality. In particular, I want to show that Peirce acknowledges a *specific* type of perception that constitutes the fundamental collateral experience, and therefore the fundamental condition, for the indexical functioning of "I" as a truly referring term. This specific type of perception is what I call the present&effort-perception.[10] It follows that it is this specific, complex perception that constitutes, in Peirce's terms, the experiential ground on which self-reference can develop as pointing at a non-fictional reality. In this sense, the phaneroscopic givenness and unavoidableness of the present&effort-percept is crucial for the development of the private self and its characterization as a real, non-fictional object.

Let me introduce my overall understanding of the present&effort-perception. It seems to me that according to Peirce, the perceptual condition of self-reference has at least two forms. The first is what Peirce in his 1905 "Issues of Pragmaticism" calls the "conative externality of the Present." In this light, a fundamental aspect of Peirce's doctrine of the "I" is his phenomenology of time as an essential phenomenon for the constitution of personal experience. I will simply call this perception, following Peirce, the "insistence of

the present." Although the structures of human "inwardness" have not been overlooked by Peirce scholarship,[11] they have not been connected explicitly to the flow of time. However, in Peirce's view, the insistence of the present is not the only perceptual basis for self-reference. The second experience is the perception of an initiative and causal efficacy in agency. Peirce identifies it with that part of the free will that is the "sense of effort."[12] I will call this second perception simply "sense of effort in agency." Such position is understandable if we remind that Peirce puts forward a broad notion of "perception," which is not limited to sense-organ perceptions and proprioceptive experience, and which relies on a broad phaneroscopic approach rather than assuming the viewpoint of the special sciences.[13] Self-reference hits an existent target (what is hence called the "individual self") in virtue of a composite act of perception based on the insistence of the present and the sense of effort in agency. The "individual self" has its birth *contextually* to the growth of the logical possibility of self-referential statements and finds its original, non-fictional ground in the present&effort-perception. Against any type of Cartesian intuitionist, immediatist, and innatist approach to the self, Peirce renews Fichte's insight that the "self" poses itself by thinking, on the basis a more original unity (in this case, the phenomenon of the insistence of the present and the sense of effort), the distinction between an "Ego" and a "Non-Ego."[14] Let me put my thesis in the following way by using the terminology of Peirce's theory of perception (see below): there is a composite "percept," the present&effort-percept, which is at the origin of our perception of ourselves and which constitutes the existent referent of our indexical self-referential statements. All the narratives and descriptions of ourselves, in which we find the self-mediation of the person in the light of a growing reasonable ideal,[15] are ultimately rooted in this indexical self-reference. In what follows, I simply articulate this idea in greater detail.

One of the clearest examples of Peirce's account of time is found in the 1905 "Issues of Pragmaticism." After providing a metaphysical account of the past and the future in modal terms, Peirce details a phaneroscopic and metaphysical theory of the present, according to which the present is the "conative externality" (something that presses and pushes) of the "Nascent State of the Actual" (EP 2:359, 5:462). This experience is the "living present" or the "Living Death" (EP 2:358) of what is actual. It coincides with the continuously perceived point in experience in which from the inevitable transformation of the present moment into a past event a new present emerges, in which "we are born anew" (EP 2:358, CP 5.459). In this context, Peirce observes:

> What is the bearing of the Present instant upon conduct? Introspection is wholly a matter of inference. One is immediately conscious of his Feelings, no doubt; but not that they are feelings of an ego. The self is only inferred. (EP 2:359, CP 5.462)

As we know, while the belief in the individual self, or the ego, is inferred (and therefore takes time and a whole set of conditions), the immediate "feeling" of the instantaneous coming to being of a new actuality (= present) is not. I believe that Peirce's seemingly random association of "introspection" and "Present" in this passage suggests that we have to look at the consciousness of the present in order to have a better grasp of Peirce's understanding of self-reference.

Let me now turn to the second crucial instance of perception, the sense of effort in agency. Whereas the insistence of the present has a more passive connotation, the sense of effort in agency is more of the type of an active experience.[16] When I speak of the sense of effort in agency, I mean that specific percept that arises from the human individual's initiative, in which the immediate experience of one's causal efficacy on something can be considered more crucial than the other experiential factors involved. It is the essentially dyadic experience that Peirce describes as "the sense of an opposing resistance then and there," which is "entirely different from purpose, which is the idea of a possible general" (R 283:76; see also R 614:3; EP 2:383, 1906).[17] This experience occurs at least in a twofold way. The first instance of the sense of effort in agency resides in the dialogic nature of semeiosis. In Peirce's words, "the person is not absolutely an individual," since "his thoughts are what he is saying to himself" or "what (he) is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time" (EP 2:338, 1905). In this case, thought has the nature of a "conversation" (EP 2:402, 1907) between an old, critical self and a new, emergent self, where the former tries to determine and persuade the latter to give its assent to something. This idea which prima facie seems to contradict the thesis that there is something like an *individual* self, simply points out the *dialogical* nature of the self, whose *entire* reality has an inferential and semeiotic structure. What is important to acknowledge here is that it is this dialogical structure that makes possible the sense of effort in agency, at least in one of its most basic forms. In this case, part of the self performs paradoxically (but interestingly) the function of that opposing "non-Ego" (EP 2:154, 1903; EP 2:195, 1903; EP 2:268, 1903) against which the sense of effort is born. The second instance of the sense of effort in agency is more closely related to the bodily nature of the self. As an organism, the self can initiate a new movement and produce changes through a muscular

effort in itself (the "central body") and in the surrounding environment (EP 2:412–13, 1907).[18] Also, in this second case, the experience is an internal reaction against an X, which is identified in its function of being a "non-Ego." I quote at length a passage in which Peirce spells out what the sense of effort in agency is:

> It may be said that there is no such phenomenon in the universe as brute force, or freedom of will, and nothing accidental. I do not assent to either opinion; but granting that both are correct, it still remains true that considering a single action by itself, apart from all others and, therefore, apart from the governing uniformity, it is in itself brute, whether it show brute *force* or not. I shall presently point out a sense in which it does display force. That it is possible for a phenomenon in some sense to present force to our notice without emphasizing any element of law, is familiar to everybody. We often regard our own exertions of will in that way. . . . It is not pretended that what is here termed is the whole phenomenon, but only an element of the phenomenon—so much as belongs to a particular place and time. That when more is taken into account, the observer finds himself in the real of law in every case, I fully admit. (CP 1.428)

For Peirce, these two phenomena exemplify the most fundamental moments in which the human "force" or brute will is immediately perceived in initiating a new action (see CP 5.520).[19]

But, we might ask, why should Peirce need to appeal to the present&effort-perception in order to ground the possibility of self-reference? In particular, hasn't Peirce made clear in his 1868 "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" that at least the experience of ignorance and error is sufficient to give the start to the development of self-reference?[20] In order to answer these questions, I will focus now on Peirce's 1868 treatment of the development and nature of self-consciousness. If my reading is correct, the conclusion is that the phenomena considered in 1868 are not *conclusive* in order to grant that the referent of self-referential statements is a real, non-fictional object. If we are seeking for a Peircean conclusive argument for the reality of the individual self, we have to look somewhere else.

Let me consider the two phenomena at stake in "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties." The first phenomenon is the experience of ignorance and error. This case is crucial for the appearance of "self-consciousness," namely, for the semeiotic process that leads to the development of the power of self-reference. Peirce's idea is that from a number of instances of error 1, 2, 3, . . . , *n*, the child abductively infers the existence of a private self, at first abstractly

grasped as "X responsible for ignorance and error." In this case, the external facts from which the belief in the private self is inferred by a child are, on the one side, the agreement between people's linguistic testimony about a certain state of affairs and the perception of that state of affairs, and, on the other side, the previous ignorance or different belief about the same state of affairs. "Abduction" is here an instance of creative formulation of a hypothesis of explanation, which is then deductively explicated and inductively confirmed through further experiences (e.g., W 2:218–19; EP 1:34–35, 1868). To my knowledge, Peirce does not mention explicitly what are the further experiences that corroborate the belief in the private self. However, it follows from what he says that these experiences are *at least* further experiences of ignorance and error. The repeated contrast between the public "evidence of fact," conveyed in linguistic testimony about a certain state of affairs, and one's beliefs about the same state of affairs, keeps pointing at the reality of something like a "private" self and strengthens the probability of this conclusion. However, why cannot it be simply an abstract object, product of the human mind's tendency to seek for an explanation at all costs? As a matter of fact, the mere *logical* existence of the private self in a highly probable explanatory hypothesis would still ground the possibility of the indexical use of the "I" in self-referential statements.

The second phenomenon considered by Peirce is that the multifold of mental activity can be reduced to some sort of unity. In this case, perception refers first to different external facts and second to the subjective, mental powers that the human being can infer from those external facts. At a higher inferential level, the human being can also infer a further unitary mental power from the multifold "objects" of consciousness manifested in experience and their corresponding subjective modalities. In this case, abduction functions as a process of reduction of a multifold to a higher-order conceptual unity (e.g., W 2:217, EP 1:33). As in the first case, also in this case, the validity of the conceptual reduction requires inductive evidence, which is partially provided by the fact that this abductive operation of unification is always possible to the human being (at least, in normal conditions of mental development). In this sense, by questioning the arguments in favor of an "intuitive self-consciousness," Peirce makes clear that it is because the individual self can be inferred from "every other fact" that the belief in its existence is close to certainty, and not because we have an intuitive power of self-knowledge (W 2:203–04, EP 1:20–21, 1868).[21] This constant inferential possibility counts as an inductive validation of the hypothesis in the existence of a private self. Furthermore, it is possible to say that the two types

of evidence that support the two cases of abduction work conjointly, so that the first abductive conclusion to the existence of a private self is supported by and supports in turn the second one. However, it still remains true that insofar as only these two phenomena are considered, we can take the referent of indexical self-ascriptions to be a merely logically real object represented in a highly probable hypothesis.

The two cases just highlighted constitute a collateral experience sufficiently strong to fix the self as a *logically* real object and to make of it the referent of the first-person pronoun "I." However, insofar as the two phenomena are the only background for the belief in the private self, it is still possible that the private self is *only* a logically real object, whose existence is limited to a specific Universe of Discourse (i.e., the explanatory context in which we seek for an explanation of the experiences of ignorance and error and the ubiquity of reflection in the mature mental life of human beings). In other words, these two phenomena justify the conclusion that the referent of the term "I" is an existent object in the real, non-fictional world only in a weak sense. In an important essay, Thomas L. Short shows that the individuation of the self in the mental development of the child occurs as a hypostatic abstraction. Short addresses the question whether the object represented in the hypostatic abstraction, that is, the "self," is real or not. For Short, the Peircean "self" is "no more than a harmony of parts" ("Hypostatic Abstraction" 307). He adds that "one cannot dismiss such as self as unreal, since every entity of any degree of complexity whatsoever is itself real only insofar as its parts are organized by and subordinated to some law" (307). In addition, Short explains that for Peirce "the self is not a single, simple, stable entity, but is constantly in the process of being formed" (305). Short has the merit to avoid a nihilistic interpretation of Peirce's theory of the self and to show its experiential and developmental nature. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Short's interpretation does not grasp a core feature of Peirce's account of self-reference. In fact, although Short refers to "self-consciousness" as a necessary condition for self-controlled behavior and growth, he seems to deny that self-consciousness displays an irreducible element of singularity. On the contrary, in the very act of ascribing to oneself the more or less integrated harmony of one's character, the human being is referring to a point of singularity. For Peirce, the indexical component in self-referential statements is precisely what accounts for this phenomenon. I believe that the present&effort-perception provides the perceptual ground on the basis of which self-reference refers to an existent object in the real, non-fictional world. If my interpretation is correct, the two cases treated in 1868 are not

the *only* ways in which genuine self-referential statements develop. In order to understand how "I" refers to a real, non-fictional object, the two 1868 theses must be read together with a third set of phenomena, that is, the consciousness of the present and the sense of effort in agency. If it is the conjunction of these three phenomena that constitutes the complete collateral experience on which the existent referent of indexical self-ascriptions is fixed, it is only the present&effort-perception that plays the crucial role of a genuine indexical experience. The belief in one's private self is introduced not only as the explanatory hypothesis of the experience of ignorance, or as the unitary condition of possibility of the ubiquity of reflection, but also as the natural interpretation of a recurrent perceptual experience.

III.

Before tackling the analysis of the present&effort-perception, we should consider some elements of Peirce's theory of perception and phaneroscopy.[22] Let me start with perception. According to Peirce, perception is in a sense the epistemically fundamental operation, since all the concepts are acquired through it. Peirce acknowledges in perception three different factors, which are irreducible to each other even though they can only perform their function in connection, that is, the "percept," the "percipuum" (sometimes also called "perceptual fact," see CP 2.146) and the "perceptual judgment." The percipuum is in turn a particular instance of perceptual judgment, being the immediate interpretative judgment of the percept (CP 7.643, 1903). According to Peirce's analysis, the percept is the moment of immediate determination of the human consciousness, in which something is already affecting the capacity of feeling but is not yet a content of cognition (e.g., EP 2:4). Hence, "a percept contains only two kinds of elements, those of firstness and those of secondness" (CP 7.630). The percept is a "quality of feeling," or a "quale-consciousness" (1stness) actualized as a modification of the human consciousness and hence acting as a compulsion (2ndness). Thus, "the percept is a single event happening *hic et nunc*. It cannot be generalized without losing its essential character. For it is an actual passage at arms between the non-ego and the ego" (CP 2.146). On the other hand, the perceptual judgment (including in this sketch also the percipuum) represents the emergence of the element of generality implied in cognition (3rdness) right from its beginning. All the elements implied in perception follow a non-controlled dynamic:[23] although perception can be educated over time and is susceptible of criticism within certain limits, it is not controlled *while it occurs*. Furthermore, the

perceptual judgment has the formal structure of an abductive inference in which a general predicate synthesizes a manifold matter and has therefore a variable hypothetical logical force.[24] The fundamental point to stress here is that although the perceptual judgment is an abductive inference, its logical force is particularly strong or "nearly approximating to necessary inference" (CP 4.541, 1906) as far as the attribution of "existence" is concerned. Indeed, "existence" is for Peirce the first conception that performs the unifying function operating in perception. In a striking 1906 passage, Peirce links together the perceptual judgment and the abduction to the existence of an object. He writes:

> [H]ow then is the Perceptual Judgment to be explained? In reply, I note that a percept cannot be dismissed at will, even from memory. . . . Moreover, the evidence is overwhelming that the perceiver is aware if this compulsion upon him. . . . Now existence means precisely the exercise of compulsion. Consequently, whatever feature of the percept is brought into relief by some association and this attains a logical position like that of the observational premiss of an explaining Abduction, the attribution of Existence to it in the Perceptual Judgment is virtually and in an extended sense, a logical Abductive Inference nearly approximating to necessary inference. (CP 4.541, 1906)[25]

Let me note two things about this passage. First, the "percept" does not have a cognitive status. We can have access to the percept as an isolated element and talk about it only through an act of prescision. Technically speaking, the percept coincides with an instance of brute experience and not with knowledge (see CP 6.336, 1906).[26] Second, the concept of existence is attributed to the "percept" through an abductive inference that has an almost necessary logical force. This constitutes the first moment of the percipuum, in which, although a perceptual judgment has not been fully developed yet, the percept has already entered the realm of cognition through an almost necessary abductive inference that states that *there is* something. Now, in considering the experiential conditions of self-referential operations, is there anything that resembles a perception of a self?

I believe that the present&effort-perception plays this function in human life. In the two cases discussed in the 1868 article, the percepts involved are always withdrawn from the external, public world and do not refer directly to something like the self. In the first case, the percept is most likely the experience of the clash between an expectancy and someone's linguistic testimony. However, in this case, it is still unclear why such experience should generate a new type of awareness, that is, self-awareness ("I am wrong"), instead

of a mere increase of information ("Someone or something is wrong"). In the second case, the percept is each one of the qualities of feeling actually present in our experience of "facts." Nevertheless, this case only proves that reflection is inferential, while it is still possible that the higher-level process of abduction that gathers our mental faculties into unity is responsible for the creation of a "self" in the same way in which a novelist creates the main character of a novel (that is, the self would simply be "logically" real). As a consequence, the self to which the personal pronoun "I" seems to refer on the basis of those two cases could be the product of a wrong or merely artistic hypothesis, although even at this level, the belief in the private self is supported by some evidence. On the contrary, if something such as the present&effort-perception is really occurring in experience, the percepts of that perception constitute a specific class of signs on the basis of which indexical self-reference can be grounded in a stronger sense. As a consequence, not only the "private" self in its indexical dimension is something real, but it is also non-fictionally real, as distinct from what is the product of an artistic or literary act of creation: roughly put, while a fictional object becomes real as it is constructed by the regularities that the constructing mind puts into it deliberately, the present&effort-perception is unavoidably (= non-fictionally) occurring in experience as having certain phaneroscopic characters. When the present&effort-perception is put in connection with other experiences (first and foremost, the experience of error and ignorance and the ubiquitous possibility of reflection, the two cases discussed in 1868), it is finally fixed as the real, non-fictional object, the "individual self," to which self-referential statements refer.

It follows from this picture that two main aspects characterize the present&effort-perception, namely, "compulsion" and "inwardness." The first character, compulsion, is an immediate experience of effort, resistance, and reaction against an X (which Peirce calls generically "non-Ego"). Peirce's analysis shows that the *concept* of "individuality" is derived contextually with the concept of "relation" and that they are derived in turn from the dyadic, immediate *experience* of relation in its "dumb" force, or pure 2ndness. It is important to stress that at this level of analysis, we cannot say that the existence of two individual reagents is prior and that the dyadic experience of connection is secondary. On the contrary, Peirce's phaneroscopic insight shows that the dyadic and "dumb" experience of compulsion, effort, and reaction is at the origin of the concept of individual reagents and is therefore phaneroscopically prior. We could say that the *concepts* of individuality and relation are contextually derived from a previous dumb *experience* of compulsion, effort, or reaction,

occurring as an undifferentiated whole. This point is even more instructive if we reflect on the fact that the object of the indexical self-reference must have some kind of individuality. Furthermore, Peirce often connects the notion of individuality to the notion of existence (e.g., EP 2:270–71, 1903; CP 1.432; CP 1.456; CP 1.457; CP 3.613). As a consequence, I am inclined to say that it is mainly from the compulsiveness of the present&effort-perception that human beings grow the notion of their existential individuality.

The second characteristic of the present&effort-perception is inwardness. According to Peirce, although a perception brings with itself an almost immediate attribution of existence to the object perceived, the classification of the origin of the percept as "external" or "internal" is the less immediate inferential result of a series of experiential tests (CP 6.333–35). Peirce observes that "we are conscious of hitting and of getting hit, of meeting with a *fact*. But whether the activity is within or without we know only by secondary signs and not by original faculty of recognizing fact" (W 5:246, CP 1.366, 1885). In fact, the experience of compulsion and reaction could simply refer to the mere external contrast between a part of the environment and my body. On the contrary, the present&effort-percept results from the experience of a radical initiative in conduct, not from the reactive contact of the external physical environment with my body. For example, by describing an imaginary "dreamer" moving from sleep to wake, Peirce writes about the pure "sense of Reaction" occurring in experience as 2ndness:

> [I]magine our dreamer suddenly to hear a loud and prolonged steam whistle. At the instant it begins, he is startled. He instinctively tries to get away; his hands go to his ears. It is not so much that it is unpleasing, but it forces itself so upon him. The instinctive resistance is a necessary part of it: the man would not be sensible his will was not borne down, if he had no-assertion to be borne down. It is the same when we exert ourselves against outer resistance; except for that resistance we should not have anything upon which to exercise strength. This sense of acting and of being acted upon, which is our sense of the reality of things,—both of outward things and of ourselves,—may be called the sense of Reaction. . . . It essentially involves two things acting upon one another. (EP 2:4–5, c. 1894; see also the case of "surprise," EP 2:195, CP 5.57–58, 1903)

In this passage, there is no explicit reference to an experience of inward compulsion of reaction. From a general point of view, although the "sense of acting and being acted upon" can include something like an *inner* compulsion, it does not entail it necessarily. The sense of compulsion taken in

its pureness can invariably refer to the resistance performed by the items of the internal world (such as in the case of the present&effort-perception) and by those of the external, physical world (such as in the case of the reaction between my body and the bodies around me). Similarly, in a 1906 passage, Peirce develops the phaneroscopic analysis of the notion of "action," which echoes what he says about the "sense of Reaction." He observes that "Action," as a "surd dyadic relation," entails an agent and a patient and can occur in the form of either an "active effort" or a "passive surprise" (EP 2:382–85, 1906), but does not mention the problem of the external or internal origin of the compulsion. According to Peirce's theory of perception, then, the classification of the percepts as "external" or "internal" pertains to the percipuum and the perceptual judgment and is not present at the level of the mere quality-feeling (see DiLeo, "Peirce's Haecceitism" 96–97). One must subject one's perceptual experience to "various tests in order to ascertain whether it be of internal or of external provenance" (CP 6.333). Peirce proposes three tests. The first test is the test by "physical concomitance." If the object that I infer from my percept (e.g., a tree) is also represented by a recording device (e.g., a camera that reproduces the tree in a picture), then there is an extremely high probability that the origin of the percept is external and consequently a very low probability that the origin is internal. The second test is the test by "experience of other observers," including oneself at different times. In this case, if the object that I infer from my percept is also acknowledged by other observers or by myself at different times, then the reality of the percept is certified in its public nature, although the probabilities that its origin is internal or external are even. The third test is the test by "criticism of all the circumstances of apparition" of the percept, which also takes the form of "making a direct inward effort to suppress the apparition." Let me apply the three tests to the present&effort-perception. If we have to recur to a "direct inward effort" in order to test any percept (third test), it follows that the effort to suppress the percept should also be directed to the present&effort-percept. According to Peirce, the consciousness of the present and the sense of effort in agency have an invincible insistency on us. Philosophically speaking, this fact is even more striking in the case of the sense of effort because the direct effort performed to suppress the apparition of the percept coincides in this case with the percept itself that is the target of the suppressing effort. The reality and insistency of the present&effort-percept is also confirmed by its unavoidability in each and all moments of our lives (second test). At the same time, it is neither possible to other observers to have experiential access to the same present&effort-percept (second test), nor to record it through an

external device (first test). In conclusion, the present&effort-percept should be classified in Peirce's terms as deriving from an internal origin.

IV.

Let me conclude by summing up the elements involved in the present&effort-perception and indexical self-reference from a logical, phaneroscopic, and metaphysical standpoint, in which we find the richness of Peirce's approach. From a logical viewpoint, the quality-feeling ("percept") of present&effort, as an actual determination of human consciousness, is a pure, genuine index, while the perceptual judgment that *emerges* from it brings with itself an element of generality that turns the pure index into a degenerate index (e.g., CP 8.266).[27] The unifying function of the perceptual judgment is an instance of the synthesizing role of "conception" introduced by Peirce as early as 1867 in his "On a New List of Categories." As in any other cognition, also in the case of perceptual judgment, the cognitive unification is imposed on a percept (the "manifold" of the impression) only because the percept teleologically calls for a certain type of unification.[28] The possibility of self-reference through the personal pronoun "I" emerges therefore from the conjunction of the present&effort perception and the ability to master patterns of use of a natural language. According to my interpretation, the present&effort-percept is a "rhematic indexical sinsign" that grows into a "dicentic indexical sinsign" and eventually grounds the possibility of self-reference by the use of the "rhematic indexical legisign" "I."[29] In other words, the present&effort-percept is the "*Informational* index" on the ground of which the "*Monstrative* index" "I" grows up and stands (see EP 2:172, 1903) as referring to a real, non-fictional singular object.[30] From a phaneroscopic viewpoint, the present&effort-percept is a brute experience of compulsion, effort, and contrast, and is therefore an instance of pure 2ndness. In it, the mere possibility of consciousness (1stness) has become actual. The perceptual judgment grows out of the percept as a synthesis of general traits (3rdness) and is characterized by a corresponding sense of specialization in one's mental habits (e.g., EP 1:327–29, CP 6.145, 1892). From the logical and phaneroscopic standpoint, we see that the attribution of the concept "existence" to the present&effort-percept corresponds to the first moment in the development of the perceptual judgment and plays the role of an almost necessary logical quantification on that pure index or percept, so that its undifferentiated quality is already seen in the light of a promise of intelligibility. Finally, from a metaphysical viewpoint, the percept corresponds to an

instantiation (actuality) of a mere possibility of instantiation (possibility or might-be), which grows into the general tendency and disposition (generality or would-be) of a perceptual judgment and eventually of a habit, which is in this case, the habitual capacity of saying "I."[31]

NOTES

I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer, Ursula L. Roessiger, David W. Agler, Giovanni Maddalena, and Vincent M. Colapietro for their valuable comments on previous drafts of this article.

1. Cf. Chalmers (200). While in the present article I will be mainly concerned with Peirce's theory of indexial self-referential statements, I will also relate Peirce's theory to contemporary debates and positions in the philosophy of mind in order to show how such debates are sometimes victim of a Cartesian prejudice and could benefit from a Peircean philosophical framework. Of course, a full-fledged refoundation of contemporary Cartesianism goes beyond the limited scope of the present article. For a convincing critical account of the Cartesian roots of contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, see Rorty (17–70).

2. In this article, "self-reference" is not the logical property of a statement that refers to itself (e.g., "this proposition is true"). Rather, I take "indexical self-reference" to be the description of the semeiotic structure of human self-consciousness. Peirce's attempt to deal with self-consciousness in logical, or semeiotic terms, antedates the work of Hector-Neri Castañeda, who boldly stated in 1966 that his logical treatment of self-consciousness was "almost brand new" (51).

3. Galen Strawson has recently stressed the (already Peircean) tenet that a study of the self should be based on the notion of "experience." This is what he calls the "thin" or "live" conception of the subject of experience, according to which "no subject of experience exists unless experience exists for it to be the subject of" (208). This is the "synergy self," "something that is essentially experientially live, something that exists only in the act or activity of experience" (209). This picture of the self must be preferred to an idea of the self as a structure opposed to or different from the course of experience itself. Though interesting for its experiential approach, G. Strawson's contribution seems in the end to put forth an associationist, Humean conception of the self (212–14), which I believe Peirce would have strongly criticized as nominalistic. For a brief and clear sketch of Peirce's rejection of Hume, see Roth.

4. Short ("Hypostatic Abstraction" 308) and Lane (18) explicitly acknowledge this.

5. I would like to spend a few words here on the most important recent essay on Peirce's understanding of the self, namely De Tienne, "Peirce on the Symbolical Person." De Tienne's essay has several merits. First, it stresses that according to Peirce, the semeiotic approach (not the psychological, nor the neurophysiological, etc.) is the correct method in philosophy of mind. Second, De Tienne correctly stresses the developmental origin of the "person." Third, he shows that Peirce, since his early writings, rejects Kant's idea of the transcendental unity of apperception as the ground for accounting for the "consistency" of representations. (See also Gartenberg.) However, it seems to me that De Tienne overlooks the problem of the origin of self-consciousness, as if talking of the symbolic nature of "personality" could solve the problem of self-consciousness: that the human being is an

evolving sign and that his mental life ought to be studied semeiotically do not provide for an explanation of how that particular inference which is self-consciousness comes into being. That De Tienne overlooks this problem is proved by the fact that he focuses on "personality," including higher-order personalities, without addressing the problem whether for Peirce higher-order personalities have something like self-consciousness (I would answer negatively; however, I cannot address this point here). In addition to this, De Tienne, in addressing the problem of self-conscious personality, puts the cart before the horse. He writes:

> The general indetermination of a person refers to the very quality of its internal manifold. Let's remember again the "New List of Categories" of 1867, in which Peirce described the manifold of substance in terms of "it," in terms of "present in general," and we shall have a beginning idea of the generality that characterizes every person as a representational agent. A person experiences itself at any moment as a present in general, that, as a general (this symbolical) representation of that connexity which is internal to its own manifold of more or less defined possibilities. ("Peirce on the Symbolical Person" 105–06)

Now, as De Tienne knows perfectly, the confused unification of the phenomenon at the mere level of the "IT" excludes any reflexive reference to a self; on the contrary, De Tienne uses here phrases such as "a person experiences *itself* at any moment as a present in general" (emphasis added). Now, either we experience "a present in general" without any reference to us at the level of the "IT" (that could be eventually referred to us), or we attribute to us what was before experienced as a mere present in general, in which case we are attributing a description to ourselves. In the first case, the simple unification of experience is wrongly conceived as implying self-consciousness, while in the second case self-consciousness is only assumed, without explaining what its genesis is. It is for this reason, I believe, that new attention should be devoted to Peirce's treatment of self-consciousness.

6. To be fair, Stephens deals explicitly with the problem of "psychological self-ascriptions." However, Hookway (26) claims: "It is rather surprising that Peirce does not offer an account of our ordinary first-person avowals." Although challenging, Hookway's statement is wrong if it is taken to entail that Peirce did not address the topic of what we call self-referential statements. A striking example of the massive presence of this topic in Peirce's thought is his constant reflection on self-control as one of the essential dimensions of human rationality. On human rationality, deliberation, and self-control, see Colapietro ("Peirce's Guess").

7. This methodological point is particularly clear in Corrington (76): "The semiotic reconfiguration of methods of inference has direct implications for philosophical anthropology. . . . [W]e can almost derive our anthropology from semiotics."

8. For contemporary externalist approaches in philosophy of mind, see, for example, Evans (225–35); Fernandez; Dretske. However, a clarification is needed here. Although I follow Delaney in characterizing Peirce's method in philosophy of mind as "externalist," it is necessary to remember that Peirce does not assume as epistemically prior or intuitive the distinction between the "internal" dimension of selfhood and the "external" world. As Peirce shows as early as 1865 in the first of the Harvard Lectures (W 1:167–68), the classification as "internal" or "external" of what is given is the hypothetical product of an inquiry, so that the distinction between the "internal" and the "external" world is more blurred that we usually believe. I believe that Wilson and Almeder are simply wrong in attributing to Peirce the naïve assumption of the "external" world of physical objects as

immediately given in experience, while I agree with Riley ("Existence") in attributing to Peirce an inferential understanding of "internal" and "external" as class concepts. The same "externalist" method is used in the logical manuscripts collected in W 1, in which a classification of the arguments is pursued with no appeal to "introspection." Therefore, it is in the light of this philosophical caution that we can use the notion of methodological "externalism," which turns out to have here the simple meaning of a caveat in appealing to intuitive introspection as a method in philosophy of mind.

9. Obviously, "I" can also be used as a common noun, or "rhematic symbolic legisign." See, for example, R 668:16–17; R 649:36.

10. Although a clumsy phrase, "present&effort-perception" has the advantage of clarity. Moreover, it avoids the introduction of a neologism to explain Peirce's already idiosyncratic terminology.

11. See, in particular, Colapietro ("Inwardness and Autonomy"); DiLeo ("Peirce's Haecceitism") on this point.

12. The "sense of effort" (2ndness) is only one dimension of the free will because the free will also entails self-control and therefore genuine knowledge (3rdness).

13. Peirce reserves the same treatment to the notion of "experience," as Cheryl Misak has amply shown. See, for example, Misak ("Peircean Account" 43–45); Misak (*Verificationism* 99–108); Misak ("C. S. Peirce on Vital Matters" 152–58).

14. Although Corrington (76), following Colapietro's idea of the "mind-as semeiosis" ("Inwardness and Autonomy" 493), gets Peirce exactly right when he interprets the "self" in semeiotic terms as a "sign-using organism" of a special type, he fails to explain how such self comes into light contextually or together with that form of inferential indexical self-reference that I am presenting here. The fact that all the interpreters of the "Cognitive Series" agree that "self-consciousness" is not intuitive but inferential does not imply, unfortunately, that they have made clear that for Peirce the self to which we inferentially get is not "already there" before the growth of indexical self-reference. On the contrary, the "self" is constituted together with the development of indexical self-reference and the intelligence of its perceptual conditions. This is why in this article I prefer to talk of "self-reference" rather than simply of the "self." Therefore, Corrington, among the others, does not follow through his own insight that "the self is temporal in its self-constitution" (96).

15. Colapietro ("Inwardness and Autonomy"); Corrington; and Robinson all stress the evolutionary dynamic through which the self comes to embody more and more reasonable ideals. Unfortunately, they do not anchor this dynamic in a clear semeiotic account of self-reference.

16. Peirce foreshadows this point when he describes the "first" in human agency: "The first is agent, the second is patient, the third is the action by which the former influences the latter. Between the beginning as first, and the end as last, comes the process which leads from first to last" (W 6:173; EP 1:250, 1887–1888).

17. Sometimes Peirce seems to deny that the sense of effort in agency and the consciousness of the present are compatible. If this were true, my entire reading would be jeopardized. For instance, he writes in 1885 that "volition," which is the "consciousness of duality or dual consciousness," "does not involve the sense of time (i.e., not of a continuum) but it does involve the sense of action and reaction" (*W* 5:225). However, a deeper understanding of this statement shows that what Peirce is claiming is that "volition" is a 2ndness and not a 3rdness. Similarly, the consciousness of the present does not entail a 3rdness insofar as it is the tense manifestation of the mode of actuality, which is 2ndness.

18. Certainly, the acquaintance with that particular body that we end up taking to be "our" body plays an incredibly important function in the development of self-referential capacity. In other words, it constitutes part of the experiential collateral condition for the development of the use of "I" (see how crucial is the "central body" in Peirce's treatment of self-consciousness; W 2:202; EP 1:19–20, 1868). However, the fact that the acquaintance with one's central body is crucial for the human mind does not imply that the referent of self-ascriptions is first and foremost, or essentially, the body.

19. The obvious objection to my reading is that Peirce's remarks about human "force" and "brute will" are usually extremely harsh. For instance, in CP 5.520, Peirce refers to the force of an agent as "sham" if compared to the "power" of agency, which is ultimately identifiable with "reasonableness," "knowledge," and "love." In CP 1.673, Peirce mentions the need to "annihilate" our "blind will" (see also CP 8.81). Although from a general viewpoint, it is probably true that Peirce believes that the reasonable growth (3rdness) of the individual human beings in mutual communion is the *most important point* to make about the human condition, it is also true that overlooking the aspect of indexical self-reference (2ndness) in Peirce's account of the self results in a partial and less convincing interpretation of his theory as a whole. Although not central, Peirce's theory of indexical self-reference is integral to the architecture of his conception of the self.

20. In the manuscript "Questions on Reality" (W 2:162, 1868), Peirce claims that "error" and "ignorance" are what distinguish our empirical ego from the "absolute ego." See also W 2:169, 192.

21. Peirce provides here an extremely interesting argument against the Cartesian idea of an immediate and privileged access that the human being would have to the knowledge of his mind. That we can refer to our selves moving from "*every other fact*" (EP 2:21) does not imply that we have, in principle, a privileged access to the mind (a special type of immediate knowledge of it, as the Cartesian tradition would say), but only the *empirical truth* that every fact can virtually become the premise for inferring to self-referential statements. This point is very important given the Cartesian legacy that seems to characterize the philosophy of mind in the analytic tradition. For instance, from a general viewpoint, there is a basic conviction that "self-knowledge is importantly different from the knowledge of the world external to one's self" (Gertler), which is to say that we have a privileged access to the knowledge of the mind, so that the knowledge of the "extramental world" and the knowledge of the "mind" are different in principle. In the case of self-knowledge, the knower has a uniquely privileged epistemic access to the object, as it is exemplified by the "acquaintance" we have with ourselves in everything that is in a relation of presentation with us (e.g., Russell). As in the case of Descartes's reduction of the mind to conscious "ideas," some claim that the self *is* its conscious states and that some type of self-reference is always implied in each kind of content of consciousness (e.g., Chisholm; Moran; Fumerton; Recanati). Our privileged access to our minds has also the epistemic consequence that in our grasp of our minds, we reach a level of "certainty" that is precluded to us in any other domain of knowledge. One recent version of this special epistemology of mind is represented by the claim that at least some self-referential statements (i.e., present-tense self-ascriptions of psychological states) are immune to the error of reference through misidentification (Shoemaker; Evans; Prosser; and Recanati). It seems to me that the "Cartesian" approach is so rooted in the majority of the contemporary debates on self-knowledge that also those authors who refuse an intuitionistic account of self-knowledge tend to think that only a direct introspection can grasp something like a stable "ego." Singularly, Elizabeth Anscombe has come to the conclusion that the term "I" is not a referring term because in order to be so, it would

need an unmistakable referent and therefore would presuppose a "Cartesian Ego" immediately known in its essence as a *res cogitans*.

22. The best overview of Peirce's theory of perception is still Bernstein ("Peirce's Theory of Perception"). Also Almeder ("Peirce's Theory of Perception"); Delaney (*Science, Knowledge* 118–29); and Rosenthal ("Peirce's Pragmatic Account") are enlightening analyses. Rosenthal ("Peirce's Theory") focuses on some distinctions within perception, namely "antecept," "ponecept," "antecipuum" and "ponecipuum," which are not discussed in this paper since they do not add essential elements to my analysis of the present&effort-perception.

23. See, for example: "If one *sees* one cannot avoid the percept; and if one *looks* one cannot avoid the perceptual judgment" (CP 7.627).

24. While in this article, I am stressing the indexical component of self-reference, we might still wonder what type of knowledge of ourselves is provided by the mere present&effort-perception, independently from further narratives and descriptions. The answer is explicitly (although succinctly) given by Peirce when he talks of "pure self-consciousness" as an instance of the "most degenerate Thirdness" (EP 2:161, 1902): we know ourselves as a promise of growth and intelligibility, or, as Peirce puts it, "a mere feeling that has the dark instinct of being a germ of thought."

25. This analysis could be furthered through a study of the category "IT (also called "present in general" and "substance") in Peirce's "On a New List of Categories" (W 2:49–59).

26. See Delaney (*Science, Knowledge* 50).

27. What Delaney (*Science, Knowledge* 129) says about the relation between "perception" and "science" can be said about the relation between indexical self-reference, on one side, and the growth of one's self and one's self-knowledge on the other side.

28. Peirce's understanding of semeiosis as teleological cannot be presented here. For a discussion of this point (which however seems sometimes to reduce the teleological nature of semeiosis to the fact that the individual interpreter has always a purpose in interpreting X), see at least Hulswit; Short ("Peirce's Theory of Signs").

29. See Liszka (49–50).

30. The importance of the present&effort-perception for Peirce's theory of self-referential statements is highlighted by its contrast to John Campbell's recent account of how the pronoun "I" refers. Campbell focuses on Anscombe's thesis that "I" is not a referring term. He accepts the non-referring thesis only within certain limits, as an inevitable stage in the developmental process of self-reference. "Usually, we use a term the way we do because it stands for something. In the case of 'I,' the use comes first and we look for a reference afterwards; the use may even drive us to find a new kind of object, such as a soul, to act as reference for the term, rather than having the use grounded in a prior conception of the reference of the term" (Campbell 1). That is, at first the word "I" does not refer at all, and its use is made possible by a corresponding "token-reflexive rule," for which "[a]ny token of 'I' refers to whoever produced it" (Campbell 7). Although not-referring, the term "I," used on the basis of the token-reflexive rule, works as a "regulatory idea for the idea of reference of the first person, in directing us to find the thing—the self—that is dealt with by all our narratives of memory, by all out self-ascriptions of physical and psychological properties and so on" (Campbell 18). I think that this account of the use of "I" is highly questionable for at least two reasons. First, it has the hardly believable implication that a child would start to use the term "I" in a conscious way without referring at all. Second, it works on the unjustified assumption that the referent of a term can be only grasped in a descriptive fashion, as Campbell's appeal to the role of the "narratives" and descriptions

of our lives seems to indicate. In his account, Campbell substitutes the possibility of an indexical self-reference with the view according to which in the early stages of our mental development we follow the linguistic pattern for the conscious use of "I" without referring to any experience. Why does Campbell commit himself to such a claim? The answer has to be found in his analysis of indexical reference and its perceptual conditions. According to the "model of perceptual demonstratives" endorsed by him, a genuine use of demonstrative terms (indices) always involves not only the application of linguistic patterns but also the "perceptual identification of the object" to which the demonstratives refer. The perceptual experience performs the function of "singling out" the object "as figure from ground" (Campbell 11). What is missing in the use of "I" is a similar perceptual experience, so that only the linguistic pattern remains in the early instances of self-referential statements (Campbell 16–18). The reason why "introspection" as "sensory modality" does not work is that there is "no ground" against which the self can emerge as a "figure." In my view, this idea of perception is a reduction of the perceptual experience to some sort of sense-organ perception and represents a strong reduction in comparison to Peirce's perspective, which includes what I have called the present&effort-perception. As shown, Peirce's acknowledgment of the present&effort-perception offers the "ground" (in Campbell's terminology) on which our indexical self-referential statements can find their individual, existent referent right from the dawn of self-consciousness.

31. There are three objections that could be addressed to my interpretation. (1) The first is: "Why," one might say, "does Peirce claim that self-consciousness develops in virtue of the experience of error if the 'feelings' of the present&effort-perception accompany the human being most likely right from the start of his conscious life?" I accept the objection as a further question on which more work is needed. However, let me just point out that Peirce's perspective allows for an account of self-consciousness and private self that avoids both the extreme positions according to which, on the one side, self-consciousness is an original structure of the mental life that does not undergo any development; and, on the other side, self-consciousness and the private self are a fictional or social construction. The immediate "feeling," or the present&effort-percept, is a phenomenon already present in the mental life of babies, but at that stage, it is not interpreted as the minimum referent of indexical self-referential statements until the organism has undergone a certain process of growth and social interaction. The second and third objections are objections of partiality. In fact, a full analysis of Peirce's doctrine of self-reference should also take into account; (2) Peirce's rejection of the Kantian "*I* think;" (3) Peirce's belief that "corporate personalities" or higher-order consciousnesses are real. For reasons of space, I have to cut short with the discussion of points (2) and (3), on which however my reading seems to cast some light. On point (2), see Ishida; De Tienne ("Peirce's Revolution"); Colapietro ("Toward a Pragmatic Conception"); Apel (*Charles S. Peirce*); Apel ("Transcendental Semiotic"); Harrison; Maddalena ("Peirce's Incomplete"). On point (3), see Lane; de Waal.

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