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Agency and Normativity: A Study in the Philosophy of Peirce and Dewey

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List of Abbreviations:

EP1: #
The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, vol. 1.

EP2: #
The Essential Peirce: Selected Writings, vol. 2.

CP #. #
The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, voll. 1-6.

NEM #: #
The New Elements of Mathematics by Charles S. Peirce, voll. 1-4.

W #: #
Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, voll. 1-8.

R #
Manuscripts in the Houghton Library of Harvard University, as Catalogued by Richard Robin. In *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*.

EW #: #
The Early Works of John Dewey, 1882-1898, voll. 1-5.

MW #: #
The Middle Work of John Dewey, 1899-1924, voll. 1-15.

LW #: #
The Later Works of John Dewey, 1925-1953, voll. 1-17.

Introduction

The central role played by normativity in pragmatism has become in the past years a center of renewed interest from different sides. Not only the pragmatist scholarship has recently produced new studies in ethics (LaFollette 2000; Pappas 2008; de Waal and Skowronki 2012; Frega 2012), but also thinkers trained in the analytic tradition came to endorse some of the pragmatist views on normativity in relation to the pragmatics and semantics of language. In particular, Robert B. Brandom defends a form of "inferentialism" according to which, roughly put, the meaning of a proposition is given by the normative function that that proposition plays within an inference (e.g. 2000; see Thibaud 1997; Pape 2009). The aim of my dissertation is to go back to the tenets of two central figures of the so-called classic American pragmatism, namely, Charles S. Peirce and John Dewey, in order to point out in which ways the problem of normativity emerges in the womb of human agency and experience. As a consequence, my perspective is broader than contemporary inferentialism in semantics, since it includes topics such as the nature of the human actor, the problem of ethical normativity, the constitution of the objects of experience, the nature of truth, and some others. The choice to circumscribe my analysis to Peirce and Dewey is due to both scholarly and theoretical reasons: first, not much work has been done to identify the specific problems related to normativity on which both Peirce and Dewey focus (see however Colapietro 2004b; Pihlstrom 2004); second, I believe that Peirce and Dewey are the two authors within the tradition of classic pragmatism who better developed, in the light of a strong pragmatic epistemology, the problem of the different figures that normativity assumes in human experience. As a consequence, authors such as William James, Josiah Royce, George H. Mead and Clarence I. Lewis are only mentioned when needed, but never studied directly. It is the reader's onus to find out at the end of this dissertation whether the choice of the author's is flawed or not.

As Vincent M. Colapietro insightfully observes, "Dewey saw his own work in logic as an extension of Peirce's efforts in this field" (2004b: 107). I would subscribe one further remark in Colapietro's article, in which we read that "for Dewey, no less than for Peirce … it is more appropriate to speak of a semiotic turn rather than the linguistic turn, a turn toward signs in all of their variety and not just toward that form of symbolization so prominent in our lives" that is "language" narrowly taken (2004b: 112). Thus, a broad semeiotic approach constitutes the common ground for both Peirce and Dewey. Working on the assumption that this approach is correct, I will show its many implications in developing Peirce's and Dewey's theory of human agency, experience and normativity. My aim is not to develop a point-to-point comparison between the two authors' tenets, rather to show that they addressed the same questions and worked with a pragmatically semeiotic approach.

I proceed as follows. Chapter 1 aims to provide a theory of the human individual understood as an agent on the basis of Peirce's reflections on the notions of "individual," "self-consciousness" and "developmental teleology." In particular, my analysis moves from an appraisal of how Peirce scholarship has struggled with a confused account of the notion of individuality in the so-called "philosophies of process," including not only Peirce's philosophy but also Dewey's. By arguing against those interpretations that take Peirce to be a nihilist about the human individual, I try to offer a different reading in which Peirce's alleged "intellectual embarrassment" about the concept of individuality is actually the mark of a complex and sound account of that notion. The chapter is divided in three parts, in which I develop the three ideas that represent the three aspects of Peirce's understanding of the individual human agent. These three ideas are: (1) "individual" = the continuity of each, unique series of spatio-temporal instantiations of bundles of habits; (2) "individual" = the human being as able of self-consciousness and psychological self-ascriptions; (3) "individual" = the human being as called to a unique mission in the ongoing process of creation.

The section on Peirce's theory of individual objects aims to show that the only possible way to make sense of Peirce's theory of individuals is in the light of his three universal categories, 1stness, 2ndness and 3rdness, understood in their semeiotic, phaneroscopic and metaphysical meanings. In particular, I try to underscore that different notions used by Peirce (such as "actual fact," "permanent fact," "subject," "existence quasi-existence," "influx" relation) are meant to describe from different viewpoints the reality of an individual as a modal

organism, in which actuality (2ndness, "will-be"), possibility (1stness, "might-be") and non-deterministic necessity (3rdness, "would-be") are all constitutive and irreducible elements. The question that remains open in this section is the following: if it is true that a series of instantiations is unified by the general laws that govern it, and if it is true that an entity is a bundle of habits, what is that provides a bundle of habits with its unity? The answer can be found, I believe, in Peirce's theory of final causality, which is reintroduced by him in every field of knowledge. I focus on Peirce's theory of final causality in the third section of this chapter, with particular attention to its realization in the life of the human being.

The second section dwells upon Peirce's account of self-consciousness on the basis of first-person, indexical self-referential statements (or all statements that can be transformed into first-person statements). In so doing, I sketch Peirce's semeiotic classification of the types on indices, with particular attention to the personal pronoun "I." I try to show how the conditions of use of "I" are fulfilled not only by some weak experiences, usually mentioned by Peirce scholarship in order to account for Peirce's tenets (e.g. the experiences of linguistic testimonies and error), but also by two stronger cases of "perception," i.e. the consciousness of the present and the sense of effort in agency (which I name conjointly the "present&effort-perception"). Thus, I also reconstruct Peirce's account of perception as the basic epistemic unity of experience. The conclusion is that the present&effort-perception represents the informational index (almost pure index, "reagent") on the basis of which the possibility of self-referential statements with monstrative indices (e.g. "I") emerges. For reasons that will be clear in the chapter, the presence of something like the present&effort-perception guarantees that our belief in a "private self" or "I" has an existent object and not only a hypothetical object in a Logical Universe. I conclude the section with some remarks on Peirce's partial rejection of Kant's "*I* think" and on a interpretative issue present in Peirce scholarship on the nature of corporate personalities, i.e., higher-order persons such as nations, corporations, churches, etc. On this second point, I argue against those interpretations that take Peirce's defense of the reality of higher-order personalities to imply the belief in the reality of higher-order self-consciousnesses.

The third section focuses on Peirce's tenet that human individuality is further grounded in the strong teleological nature of the human being. The human being is called to realize a unique mission or function in the ongoing process of creation. Such a "mission" is the final cause that unifies, as a vocation to be realized, all the habits and concrete actions of an agent. The human being, who is "rational instinct" in her deepest reality, ought to realize her rational function in the universe. How so? Moreover, Peirce adds that the human teleology is always "in evolution." How should we understand this claim? In order to answer these questions, I focus on an early manuscript (R1116), in which Peirce introduces two important notions, i.e. "Incarnation" and "Carnification." These notions show that a final cause (or a "plan" or "function") can be realized in a "matter" in a multiplicity of degrees: while "Incarnation" means any one of the manifold partial realizations of the final cause in a matter, "Carnification" stands for its full and flawless realization. I believe that Peirce's later metaphysical claims on "destined habits" develop the germinal and inchoate ideas present in "Incarnation" and "Carnification." In the reminder of this third section, I explain that according to Peirce the partial realization of the final cause should be understand as a "vague" realization. In order to do this, I sketch some of Peirce's distinctions between different forms of indeterminacy (ambiguity VS. generality) and different forms of vagueness (subjective vagueness and objective vagueness). My conclusive thesis is that the final cause is "developmental" insofar as its vague realization asks for a determination. The way in which the human being determines the vague final cause is through an adequate "semeiosis" of the signs of her experience. The first-person viewpoint identifies in particular those signs with propositions, beliefs, interests, desires, and ultimate ideals. How should the individual interpret those signs and produce actions, beliefs and further propositions? In particular, what habits of action are good and what evil? As it is clear, the problem of the determination of the vagueness of the human being's rational end opens to the problem of normativity.

Chapter 2's task is to analyze critically Peirce's doctrine of the "Normative Sciences," which include logic, ethics and aesthetics. The chapter is divided in three parts. First, I try to reconstruct what Peirce has truly said about the normative sciences, given the fact that Peirce's classification of the normative sciences has had a troubled story, both from the point of view of their genesis and the point of view of their interpretation by the scholarship. From a general standpoint, Peirce defines the normative sciences as the study of the normative

"forms," or "normative facts," of human, self-controlled behavior. This comprises principles of logical inference in reasoning, norms of behavior in a broader sense and affective dispositions. After unpacking the evaluative categories of each one of the normative sciences (truth and veracity for logic, or semeiotic; adequateness and effectiveness of a mean for an end – assuming that the end is good – for ethics; the admirable in itself beyond any reasons for aesthetics), I clarify that for Peirce only the aesthetic ideal constitutes the ultimate justification of the dimension of ethical and logical values. The aesthetic values, which Peirce identifies with the "development of concrete reasonableness," is therefore the teleological ground of any value. A further point is what type of perspective Peirce's semeiotic brings to the problem of the metaphysical status of normative facts. In particular, the idea of "final logical interpretant" (= habit) allows for an understanding of normative facts as human virtues. This does not prevent Peirce from stressing the importance of "norms" understood as linguistic formulations of a good purpose. The metaphysical status of the normative facts is further developed in the third section of the chapter, in which I inquiry into the nature of Peirce's metaethical "realism" in relation to the so-called contemporary moral realism.

Second, I bring my attention to the influence that Peirce's growing confidence in the normative sciences had on his more mature pragmatism. However, the influence does not go only in one direction. As a matter of fact, I claim that Peirce's more mature reflection on the nature of semeiotic and meaning led him to see the need for a normative perspective within pragmatism itself. In particular, I deal with the consequences that the normative sciences have on the evolution of Peirce's pragmatic maxim. As it is know, the pragmatic maxim, formulated by Peirce in 1978 "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" for the first time, is mainly a principle of semantic clarification, according to which the meaning a believed proposition is ultimately given by the habits of action that that proposition would bring about in the believer. By studying the development of the maxim both from a historical and theoretical viewpoint, it becomes clear that the maxim shows an internal tension between two irreducible functions. The first function, the pragmatic-explicating, is simply aimed to determine what is the pragmatic level of the meaning of any proposition whatsoever. The second function, the pragmatic-normative, is not only meant to clarifying, but also to point at the direction in which the interpretation of the signs ought to be pursued, and, as a consequence, which propositions ought to be believed and for what purposes a proposition ought to be applied.

Third, I go back to the problem of the metaphysical status of the normative facts, trying to establish a comparison between Peirce and some contemporary moral realists. In particular, I argue against four main theses of these contemporary moral realists, according to which, in order to avoid some form of moral constructivism (both relativistic and non-relativistic), it is necessary to claim that (i) moral language and knowledge are descriptive in nature; (ii) the task of moral knowledge is to provide an adequate account of what is genuinely good from a moral viewpoint; (iii) the reality of moral facts and properties is independent from any type of human function or disposition; (iv) at least some of our moral propositions are true. In the light of Peirce's understanding of a normative fact, I show that the claim that Peirce is a non-relativistic moral constructivist is misplaced, if the assumption of this claim is that a normative fact is only something that is existent "out there" in the world, independently from the human mind. On the contrary, a normative fact is for Peirce the result of a practical self-comprehension by the human agent as a able of self-controlled agency.

Chapter 3 concludes the section of the dissertation devoted specifically to Peirce with a reflection on Peirce's understanding of deliberation and his alleged "moral sentimentalism." In some passages (in particular the lecture "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life"), Peirce asserts that in "vitally important matters" sentiment should have a greater weight than reason in guiding human decision. This claim has led some interpreters to say that Peirce is a non-cognitivist in ethics. On the contrary, I show how Peirce's statements can be given a more convincing reading by in the broader framework of his philosophy, which includes both the normative sciences and what he called "critical-common sensism." It is highly improbable that Peirce is advocating for a non-cognitivist position in ethics in so far as his normative sciences also include a theory of deliberation, whose centrality would be at odds with an alleged non-cognitivist position. In particular, the incompatibility between a strong theory of deliberation and non-cognitivism in ethics is even less likely given the fact that Peirce puts forth (somehow in an anti-Aristotelian way), that deliberation is mainly about ends and ideals, not about means (in so doing, he also avoids the possibility of being confused with a humean of some sort). For Peirce, therefore, deliberations is at

work first and foremost in figuring out what ideals are truly good for the human beings, not what particular action ought to be performed in a particular context (this is why he also claims that the most important mental act in a particular situation is not deliberation, but perception). This set of considerations help us to put Peirce's allegedly non-cognitivist claims in a clearer light. Furthermore, Peirce articulates a semeiotic theory of sentiments for which sentiments (but also emotions, affections, passions, which are not distinguished by Peirce) is a specific type of interpretant and has therefore cognitive nature, as much as any other interpretant. From all these considerations, it follows that when Peirce underscores the "wisdom" of sentiment in vitally important matters, he is actually claiming that sentimental has a higher epistemic authority than rational deliberation in order to grasp *certain* normative facts. In this sense, we understand what is Peirce's thesis and what is the correct question we should ask about that thesis: if moral sentiment has a greater epistemic authority than rational deliberation in certain dimensions of life, what are Peirce's reasons to justify such a claim? In order to tackle this issues, I deal briefly with Peirce's doctrine of human "instincts" and their evolution, including that particular instinct that is the moral sentiment. Two points are interesting about this: first, Peirce sees a continuity between the way in which instinct apprehends certain actions as good (and other as evil) and the forms in which this instinct has been and is articulated by human traditions over time; second, Peirce also points out a normative discontinuity between the development of certain moral instincts and the free and critical endorsement of those instincts as reliable guides in moral issues. In order to clarify these two points, I develop an analysis of Peirce "critical common sensism" and a related justification of the superior epistemic value of sentiment over reason in vitally important matters.

The second part of the dissertation deals in a specific way with two problems of agency and normativity in the philosophy of John Dewey. Chapter 4 focuses on Dewey's theory of experience, on which virtually all Dewey scholars have written. However, in this chapter, I try to show that all the objections to Dewey's alleged subjectivist idealism and reductionist naturalism partially fade away when we study Dewey's theory of experience in semeiotic terms. In particular, by relying on Dewey's study of the notion of "appearance" and his naturalistic theory of perception, I develop the idea of indexical existence. I believe that this notion can put in a new light fundamental tenets of Dewey's philosophy such as the processes of constitution of the objects of experience, the struggle between constructivism and realism, the alleged incompatibility among different ontologies, and finally the notion of truth, on which I focus in one section by drawing from both Peirce and Dewey. My intention is to show that Dewey's metaphysical question is mainly a normative question and how this question admits different answers. We could formulate the question in the following way: "how ought we think about indexical existences?". In this sense, the common sense objects and the experimental sciences objects are not in contradiction among themselves; rather, they are different but equally legitimate articulations of the semeiotic potentialities of experience, in so far as the same types of indexical existences enter different systems of interactions with the human beings. Furthermore, in relation to the problem of truth, I show not only that Peirce's and Dewey's stances are not so distant as it scholars used to think, but also that their verificationism cannot be equated to the doctrines of the logical positivists. Peirce's and Dewey's doctrine of truth cannot even be interpreted as implying a "plastic" conception of truth, as it was maybe in the case of F. C. S. Schiller and William James. Although different in some details, Peirce's and Dewey's theory of truth does not state that true propositions are only those propositions that are experientially verified (now or in an indefinitely distant future), but that true propositions are those propositions that would be indefinitely verified (or non-falsified) on the basis of experience if all the necessary epistemic conditions occurred.

In Chapter 5, which is the last chapter of the dissertation, I provide a critical reconstruction of Dewey's theory of practical, moral judgment and his ethical contextualism. In fact, according to Dewey, practical judgment is the *locus* in which moral normativity emerges as such. This point is even more important if we think that Dewey's proposal represents the most articulated example of an account of practical deliberation in the pragmatist tradition. Somehow differently from Peirce, for Dewey the primary *locus* of exercise of deliberation is more the context of particular situations rather than the ultimate ideals (however, I am talking here of a nuanced difference in stress, without claiming that the two tendencies are mutually exclusive; as a matter of fact, both of them are present in Peirce and Dewey). After providing an overview of Dewey's theory of the habits of action, I focus on the logical structure of moral deliberation in its various discursive components (experience of the

problem, articulation of the problem, hypothesis of solution, final judgment/concrete act, passage from "is" to "ought"), including its virtues (rigor, epistemic productivity and creativity). Moreover, I dwell upon the non-discursive factors in deliberation, in particular what Dewey calls "qualitative thought," understood as a semeiotic activity that is not alternative but complementary to the merely proposition and discursive dimensions of deliberation.

It has also been usually claimed that the fact that Dewey speaks of practical deliberation as "construction of good" implies some for of anti-realism about values, or even some sort of moral subjectivism and relativism. On the contrary, I claim that not only Dewey's account of deliberation as partially constructive of its object does not entail moral subjectivism or relativism (being on the contrary the crux of practical knowledge), but also that Dewey maintains that there is a dynamic in experience that "happens" to the subject and subverts any pretension of being lawless moral legislator. In other words, I believe that is not possible to put Dewey in the tradition of moral philosophers who, starting from the Modern age, tries to provide a normative theory of ethics without appealing to a human teleology. On the contrary, Dewey's writings on ethics and mainly on logic and aesthetic show that Dewey is committed to a teleological conception of human experience, although cutting short with any that disagrees with the transactional paradigm. This teleological dimension of human experience is described by Dewey as "having *an* experience," understood as a determinate situation in which the subject experiences an aesthetic teleology common to all the elements of that situation (it is for this reason that all the elements of the situation are unified in *an* experience). This teleology also includes the experience of the moral value, in which the subjects experience and acknowledge (more than reasoning by appealing to abstract principles) those tendencies that are then codified in different conceptions of the human nature. In this sense, the aesthetic experience of the good precedes and guides the constructive work of practical judgment (tentatively, without aestheticism or undifferentiated abandonment to the different particular experiences).

A conspicuous part of this final chapter is also devoted to highlight how Dewey's ethical fallibilism does not entail ultimately a radical skepticism about moral principles. Dewey's doubts about the stability of moral principles can be traced back to the following three problems: (1) moral principles are known through specific experiences (see again the aesthetic teleology of experience); as a consequence, since new experiences are always possible, nothing excludes that the moral principles we acknowledge now can undergo serious changes; (2) when the principles (but the same can be said of ends and ideals) are maximally general, they do not determine a difference in human agency (pragmatic principle of semantics), or, in other words, they do not have the power of being "means" for action; as a consequence, they require a determination for become actually operable; the importance of this principle consists in having this or that determinate form; therefore, these moral principles are certainly subject to modifications; (3) a further, broader point is about the genuine use of general moral principles in moral deliberation. According to Dewey, deliberation appeals more often and effectively to exemplar cases of good morality rather than general principles. Just like the works of art in the aesthetic experience and the methodological norms in the scientific inquiry are the "forms" that result over time from the experience of generations of human beings, moral experience appeals to exemplars patterns of behavior, established as such by the common and individual experience. In this sense, I also focus on the notion of "formativity," understood as the property of exemplar cases of morality that contribute to reconstruct the individual's experience and make possible in her life the experience of certain teleologies. In conclusion, I dwell upon the topic of fallibilism and evolution of moral principles, showing that according to Dewey fallibilism does not mean necessary falsification. Moreover, I also point out that the exigency of ethical fallibilism is defended by Dewey is the necessary consequence of the constant possibility of an improvement and extension of the moral principles rather than the kernel of a moral skepticism.

What you have in your hands is the product of about three years of research conducted between Università degli Studi di Macerata and Pennsylvania State University. Most importantly, it is for me the personal attempt to make sense of the exciting intellectual, cultural and human experience shared with some people over the past three years. I want to thank all the Ph.D. students and faculty members of Università degli Studi di Macerata, in particular prof. Luigi Alici, who always supported me with patience and wisdom. I also want to thank prof. Giovanni Maddalena (Università del Molise), who introduced me to the study of the great classic pragmatists and still gives me compelling reasons to think that pragmatism has much to say in today's world. Let me also thank

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Chapter 1
"Incarnation" and "Carnification." A Peircean Theory of the Individual Human Agent

In a famous comment, Richard J. Bernstein has written that "the nature of human individuality always seemed to be a source of intellectual embarrassment for Peirce" (Bernstein 1965: 90). In this chapter, I aim to show that there is no conclusive evidence in Peirce's thought for such a claim. Although a great deal of work has been done in this field by Peirce scholarship (see in particular Colapietro 1989, commonly considered the groundwork on this subject), I believe that further study should be devoted to this topic. As I will show in my chapter, it seems to me that the existent scholarship still suffers from a *confusion among three different meanings of the notion of "individuality"* once it is applied to the human being. I believe that Peirce's complex approach to the problem of human individuality covers all the three meanings of "individuality" that I will show in the next pages. I use the phrase "individual human agent" (sometimes, also "individual human being") to avoid the ambiguities carried by expression such as "self," "I," "subject," and "person". Therefore, I will use these different notions only in relation to specific aspects of the "individual human agent," trying to follow the rigor of Peirce's thought.[1] The chapter has the following structure. In the first part (§§ 1., 1.1., 1.2, 1.3.) I reconstruct Peirce's understanding of the metaphysical status of individual objects. In the second part (§§ 2., 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., 2.4.) I focus on the problem of the reality of the empirical self and the logical nature of self-consciousness. In the third part (§§ 3., 3.1., 3.2., 3.3., 3.4., 3.5.), I introduce the topic of final causation in relation to human beings and show that teleology provides with a further and somehow architectonic notion of individuality.

0. Introduction

My overall interpretation is that human individuality 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 her or his empirical self through acts of *self-reference* and *psychological self-ascription* (synthetically, "self-consciousness")

(3) "Individuality" also refers to the *unique mission* to which a human being is called in the process of creation.

I take these three meanings to be displayed, although in an overlapping way, by three 1903 texts. It is worth quoting these three passages at length, since they constitute the textual background of everything I will say in this chapter and in part in Chapter 2 and 3.

> These circumstances [all the different experiences of acquaintance with the same individual object] have led me semi-instinctively to suppose that one person preserving an identity through the continuity of space, time, character, memory, etc., has been one singular connected with all these phenomena; and though I have not made any formal induction to test this theory, yet my impression is that I am in possession of an abundance of facts that would support such an induction quite irresistibly. In a similar way I have no doubt that the phenomena which may have presented themselves to you, together with many more that persons whom I know well must recollect, all unite to support the hypothesis that there is one singular Theodor Roosevelt quite unmistakable for a phantom or for any other man them himself. In each of my own perception, if my memory does not deceive me, there was a decided double consciousness or direct consciousness of reaction, and I have abundance of reason to think it was so with your perception and with those of all his acquaintances whom I know or have heard of. The notion that all those reacting singulars were in the relation of personal identity to one another, and that their separate singularities consist in a connection to one

1 The linguistic rigor of Peirce's thought does not coincide always with the linguistic rigor of Peirce's writings.

> singular, the collection of them all, this notion is an element of Thirdness abductively connected with them. We may express the matter by saying that all these singular percepts were aspects or parts of one collective singular which may include non-perceptual parts for aught we are now prepared to say" (EP2: 222, 1903)

> The creation of the universe, which did not take place during a certain busy week, in the year 4004 B.C., but is going on today and never will be done, is this very development of Reason. … Under this conception, the ideal of conduct will be to execute our little function in the operation of the creation by giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the slang is, it is "up to us" to do so." (EP2: 255, 1903)

> … the essence of Reason is such that its being never can have completely perfected. It always must be in a state of incipiency, of growth. It is like the character of a man which consists in the ideas that he will conceive and in the efforts that he will make, and which only develops as the occasions actually arise. Yet in all his life long no son of Adam has ever fully manifested what there was in him. (EP2: 255, 1903)

There is at least one more fundamental quotation in Peirce about the way in which the "*vir* is begotten" through a repeated exercise of the self-control upon itself (CP 5.402 n.3). This quotation is closely related to point (3), although not reducible to it. Although crucial, I will not deal with it in this chapter, since a consistent part of Chapter 2 and 3 is devoted to an analysis of Peirce's theory of normativity and deliberation. At the same time, point (3) clearly refers to the dimension of human moral life and even religious eschatology. I will deal with the problem the final causality in its metaphysical and semeiotic aspects in the last part of this chapter, leaving on the other hand a more extensive consideration of the problem of ethics and normativity (Peirce's theory of the "Normative Sciences") in Chapter 2.

As I have already mentioned, Colapietro 1989 represents not only a fundamental scholarly work in Peirce's conception of the "self," but it is also the background of many articles and papers that have been written on this topic.[2] In this chapter, I further the work of this scholarship by defending the thesis that Peirce did have a *positive* and *articulated* conception of the human being as an *individual*. I take this to be an important endeavor, since also recently has been claimed that Peirce holds a nihilistic understanding of the individual self. I mention two remarkable cases. First, Cornelis de Waal writes that according to Peirce the individual human being is "wholly defined in terms of [his or her] imperfections" (2006: 154). Second, Thomas L. Short claims that for Peirce the "self" is "no more than a harmony of parts, like a well-tuned lyre" (1997: 307). As I will show, the interpretative theses exemplified in these two quotations are either wrong or partial.[3]

There are three classical interpretations of Peirce's pragmatism that take Peirce to deny the individuality/existence of the human "self." One of these is the already quoted Bernstein 1965, according to which Peirce's metaphysics cannot account for the originality and spontaneity of agency that characterizes the human agent (including in this the human reasoner). For similar reasons, a second interpretation, Weiss 1965, maintains that in Peirce's terms there are no real "individuals" and that what we call individuals are actually only the parts of bigger wholes. Finally, Boler 1963 concluded from a compared study of Duns Scotus's and Peirce's metaphysics that since Peirce wedded himself to a sort of Scotistic metaphysics but rejected at the same time the notion of "contraction," he could never produce a genuine notion of "individuality." The three nihilistic interpretation I have mentioned rely on a series of passages in which Peirce *prima facie* either denies (1) an original capacity of self-consciousness, or (2) the existence of the individual human being as existent apart from the social organism, or finally (3) limits the metaphysical status of the individual self to error and ignorance bearer (e.g. CP 3.93; 1.637; 5.317; 5.235). At the same time, however, not only Colapietro 1989, but also some other scholars (Delaney 1973; Delaney 1979; Delaney 1993; DiLeo 1991; Harrison 1964; Holmes 1964; Riley 1974; Maddalena 2006; Michael 1976; Muoio 1984; Pape 1980; Sorrell 2001; Sorrell 2004; Stephens 1980; Thibaud 1987)[4] have shown that the nihilistic interpretation of the self is a misunderstanding of Peirce's thought. The common conclusion of these works can be summed up in the three tenets: (i) Peirce's alleged negative claims about the

2 E.g. Short 1997 and Lane 2009 explicitly acknowledge this.

3 Short's interpretation is more correct than de Waal's, even though it still presents a certain risk of ambiguity and partiality. For instance, how does this "harmony of parts" relate to the three different meanings of "individuality" above mentioned?

4 Less fundamental are Uslucan 2012 and Magada-Ward 2003.

"self" are actually a defense of a conception of self-consciousness (in general, introspection) as inferential and non-intuitive; (ii) the same claims underscore the developmental origin of the individual self-consciousness, which relies mainly upon social and linguistic dynamics; (iii) finally, 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 in Peirce's theory, I believe that they all work more or less on the background of an *ambiguity* about three different uses of the notion of *individuality* in Peirce's texts. In what follows, I present Peirce's three different meanings of the notion of "individuality" in relation to the problem of human individuality.

1. 1stness, 2ndness, and 3rdness, and the Metaphysics of Individual Objects

First of all, it is necessary to approach the chore of Peirce's philosophy, i.e., his theory of the "Universal Categories." The story of the development of the three "universal categories" in Peirce's thought is a long and articulate one. Some scholars (see in particular De Tienne 1989; 1993, Liszka 1996, Short 1994, Hausman 1993; 2008; Parker 1994) have attempted a reconstruction of it from both a historical and theoretical standpoint. An adequate account of Peirce's categories should include a discussion of Peirce's early list of "conceptions" in his 1868 "New List of Categories" in relation to the mature developments of his semeiotic. Peirce's reconsideration of the intermediate categories developed in the "New List" begins as early as 1885, although it was not until 1992 that he acknowledged that this reworking process was a new stage of his inquiry.[5] The result of this new inquiry was the acknowledgement of three categories, named by Peirce respectively Firstness, Secondess and Thirdness. Although my analysis of Peirce's metaphysical theory of individual objects draws abundantly on the three categories, it is not possible here to repeat a comprehensive overview of their origin and structure. I will limit myself to some necessary remarks in order to introduce the problem I want to address in this first part of the chapter, namely, the problem of the metaphysical status of individual objects. As a consequence, I will neither reconstruct Peirce's arguments in favor of his categories, nor provide any further argument in relation to them. The aim of this section is only to introduce to Peirce's approach to categories and to identify the problem of individual objects.

Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness are "the most universal categories of elements of all experience," "natural" and even "poetical" (CP 1.417). Talking about the categories requires making clear what type of question we are addressing. First, we can ask a methodological question about the way in which the categories are discovered: how are the categories found? Second, the question can be about the relationship between the status of the categories in phaneroscopy and their status in metaphysics: how do we move from a mere phaneroscopic understanding of the categories to further commitments about their metaphysical status? Third, the approach to the categories can be bluntly a-methodological and focus straightforwardly on what the use of the categories adds to topics of different nature. This first part of the chapter fits in the third approach, as long as I will show in what sense the categories, metaphysically interpreted, are the elements that constitute a Peircean individual object. The first two questions are still object of discussion and are somehow more fundamental than the third one. However, Peirce stresses the fact that a recognition of the categories cannot proceed *a priori* but requires instead prolonged attention to common experience and intersubjective confirmation and correction.[6] The method for finding the categories is phaneroscopic, namely, observational. As Peirce suggests, "Go out under the blue dome of heaven and look at what is present … [as with an] artist's eye" (CP 5.44) is *the* method of phaneroscopy. Peirce refers broadly to the world of experience when he identifies the object of phaneroscopy with the phaneron in general. For Peirce, the phaneron is "the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind" (CP 1.284, 1905). Hence, my analysis of individual objects in relation to the three categories is an instance of the experimental or experiential approach the inquirer should keep toward the

5 See Short (1994: 60).

6 See Short (1994: 65-66). On the contrary, Apel 1981 and Murphy 1961 lament that Peirce does not justify the fact that it is the logic of relations (or algebra of relations) that part of mathematics that provides to phaneroscopy its formal principles.

categories. In order to be justified, the categories must prove experientially fundamental and heuristically fruitful in every domain of experience. In a often-quoted passage, Peirce claims that "the elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action; and whatever cannot show its passport at both those two gates is to be arrested as unauthorized by reason" (CP 5.212). Therefore, I will also make reference to perception as the epistemic fundamental unity in which the categories take shape at first.

As I have already mentioned, Peirce's mature universal categories are "Firstness," "Secondness," and "Thirdness." They can be regarded from different perspectives, insofar as they are supposed to constitute the most fundamental components of *every* phaneron. In themselves, the three categories can be understood as the mere rendition of three formal relations, based on the principles of the algebra of relations developed in mathematics. 1stness corresponds to the monadic relation (*P*x), 2ndness to the dyadic relation (*Q*xy) and 3rdness to the triadic relation (*R*xyz). However, the categories can be regarded from a more material perspective, and in particular (1) from the point of view of experience, as their genetical matrix; (2) from the point of view of semeiosis, as their fundamental dynamic structure; and (3) from the point of metaphysics, as the science of their articulation in metaphysical modalities. The three different perspectives are obviously interconnected.

The first category we find is Firstness (1stness). In its phanoroscopic nature, 1stness is what the phaneron is independently from anything else (CP 8.328). It is a "quality," a "feeling," a quidditas, or a suchness (CP 1.148; 1.424; see also EP2: 268, 1903). It has to be prescinded from the concrete occurrence of the phaneron, which is always happening in a point in time and space (CP 8.329; 1.304; 1.422). It also requires prescision from all the generalities implied in the perception of the phaneron (CP 1.357). Retrospectively, the monadic quality can be referred to as the experience of an isolated object ("this ball") or to something more complex ("the three-weeks long trip to Mongolia as characterized by a unitary monadic aspect"; see CP 1.311, 1.304, 1.531, 1.418). This fact does not change the phaneroscopic character of the quality as an irreducible, indecomposable monadic dimension of the phaneron. In its metaphysical nature, 1stness is for Peirce mere possibility. By using the logical structures of subjunctive and counterfactual conditionals, Peirce defines metaphysical possibility as "may-be" or "might-be" (CP 1.304). It is what may happen or might happen if certain conditions C occurred. Broadly taken, it can be predicamental of an existent instantiation (a particular happening may occur if C) or of a general disposition (a general disposition may develop if C). In this sense, Peirce describes it as "the embryo of being" (EP2: 268-269, 1903). In relation to perception, the "quality" is what remains of the percept of the perceptual judgment once it has been prescinded by its actual occurrence. From the semeiotic standpoint, it corresponds to the signs that have "iconicity" as their prevailing aspect, which are in particular rhematic iconic qualisigns (the purest example of iconicity), rhematic iconic sinsigns and rhematic iconic legisign.[7]

The second category is Secondness (2ndness). In its phanoroscopic nature, 2ndness is what the phaneron is in relation to a quidditas, but only insofar as that quidditas is given in a reactive dumb experience. Peirce's descriptions talk about "struggle" (CP 1.322), "experience of effort prescinded from the idea of a purpose" (CP 8.330), "experience of resistance" (CP 8.330), "opposition" (CP 1.436), "attraction and repulsion" (CP 1.487; 6.343), "compulsion" (CP 7.674), double-sidedness (CP 1.324). This is the formal account of the experience of the conscious life as being "double consciousness" or a "consciousness of reaction" (CP 1.324). It has to be prescinded by any experience of growth or regularity in order to be obtained as a pure category. It requires the implicit reference to the quidditas of the phaneron, but it prescinds from reference to anything else. In relation to perception, it is the percept as an actual event insofar as it is prescinded from the generality of perceptual judgment. In its metaphysical nature, 2ndness is described by Peirce as actuality. It is actual action or reaction (EP2: 268, 1903). By drawing from Scotus, Peirce refers to this metaphysical principle as "haecceity" (e.g. CP 1.458), a unique occurrence in a point of time and space. He also refers to it as "individuality," "fact," "existence" (EP2: 270-271, 1903; CP1.432; 1.456; 1.457; 3.613), and sometimes "materiality" (CP 1.419; 1.436). By using the logical structures of subjunctive and counterfactuals, Peirce claims that metaphysical 2ndness is expressible as a "will-be." It is what will happen if C occurs. As such, it is the actualization or the instantiation of a mere possibility but does not require conceptually referring to a general disposition. From the semeiotic standpoint, it corresponds to the sign that has indexicality as its main character, in particular rhematic indexical

7 Liszka (1996: 48-50).

sinsigns, dicentic indexical sinsigns, rhematic indexical legisigns, and dicentic indexical legisigns.[8]

The third category we find is Thirdness (3rdness), or continuum.[9] In its phaneroscopic nature, 3rdness is the experience of growth and habit-taking (EP1: 277), learning (CP 7.536), generalization (MS942: 14), continuity of time (CP 7.466), space (CP 6.82), and regularity in general.[10] In relation to perception, it corresponds to the generality of perception, namely, the lawful element implicit in the perceptual judgment, which is a necessary inferential moment of perception (see "cotary propositions," EP2: 238, 1903). In its metaphysical nature, 3rdness is defined by Peirce as non-deterministic necessity. It is general rule, law, habit, growth and life, thought, and general disposition (CP 1.23-1.27; 5.121; EP2: 314, 1904; EP2: 271, 1903; EP2: 439, 1908; EP2: 450), "original or acquired" (CP 5.538). It is a real operative power in nature (EP2: 181; 183, 1903). Peirce commitment to the reality of general laws brought him to develop a form of extreme Scholastic realism (CP 5.470) and a synechistic metaphysics. Metaphysical 3rdness is also sometimes referred to as a "permanent fact," "general fact," and "individuality" (CP 1.419; 1.434). It is the "rudimentary form" in which continua manifest themselves. (CP 6.172). As such, it is a regularity of possible actualizations that strictly speaking exceed all multitudes (EP2: 269, 1993). It is a power or function of "mediation" between what is 1st and what is 2nd in phaneroscopy, metaphysics and semeiotic (e.g. CP1.515). By using the logical structures of subjunctive and counterfactual conditionals, Peirce renders it as a "would-be" (e.g. CP 2.666). A general disposition is what would happen if certain conditions C occurred. It covers both existential "real" events independent from our knowledge and the dynamic of our thinking. The reality of a general disposition consists in the activity of regulating or governing the actual occurrences of an *X*, in which mere possibilities become spatio-temporally existent. It can be a specific general disposition (such as, the hardness of the wood, the stubbornness of a friend, the validity of a logical principle, the permanence on an "ideal" of life), or the extremely broad general dispositions of time and space, understood as the laws of any event. In fact, time and space, as general dispositions, are the continua that constitute the forms of all possible instantiations. As such, they must apply to (they require) specific bundles of habits in order to determine phenomena that follow their structuring power (CP 1.132). As such, space and time are two different but connected forms of extension. Time describes the general would-be concerning the order of two or more instantiations (CP 1.439; see also EP1: 278), while space is the general would be of the relation of reaction between two existents or more existents (CP 3.613).[11] Hence, the spatio-temporal extended reality of an existent object does not consist only in its past, present, and future actual instantiations (EP2: 434-435, 1908), but also in the general dispositions which have regulated them and would determine different instantiations if C occurred (CP 1.432). In its semeiotic nature, 3rdness is the capacity of the phaneron of being represented by a general sign or symbol (CP 8.268). The phaneron can be translated into a symbol, namely, into a representamen governed by general rules (legisign). As such, it overlaps with previous iconic and indexical instances of sign. In its specificity, it also includes rhematic symbolic legisigns, dicentic symbolic legisigns, and argumentative symbolic legisigns.[12]

It is also important to stress the fact that the three different material perspective on the categories (phaneroscopic, metaphysical and semeiotic) are intertwined (e.g. EP2: 427-428).[13] First, the categories of the different metaphysical modalities include the phaneroscopic categories (since also the phaneron is a reality) and the semeiotic category (since not only the signs are part of reality, but they are at a certain level the dynamical

8 Liszka (1996: 49-51).

9 On Peirce's notion of continuum in mathematics and metaphysics see in particular Maddalena (2009: 193-223), Moore 2007, Potter and Shields 1977, Putnam 1995, Sfendoni-Mentzou 1997 and Zalamea (manuscript).

10 Short (1994: 85) talks of an "experience of nonlogical necessity" exemplified in the experience of causal regularity (both active and passive). Such experiences, instead of being syntheses of atomic impressions and ideas, like in the British empiricism, are "law-governed continua."

11 It is worth mentioning that "time" has a "dyad requirement" insofar as all the existent events have specific directionality. Peirce speaks of "evolution" and "involution" as the dynamic moments present in every event (CP 1.493; 1.495). It is the directionality of "evolution" and "involution" that determines a stage of the event to be temporally anterior to the following ones.

12 Lizska (1996: 51-51).

13 The connectedness of the three approaches to 1stness, 2ndness and 3rdness is exemplified by passages such as the following: "So, then, there are these three modes of being: first, the being of a feeling, in itself, unattached to any subject, which is merely an atmospheric possibility, a possibility floating *in vacuo*, not rational yet but capable of rationalization; secondly, there is the being that consists in arbitrary brute action upon other things, not only irrational but anti-rational, since to rationalize it would be to destroy its being; and thirdly, there is living intelligence from which all reality and all power are derived; which is rational necessity and necessitation" (CP 6.342; see also 1.535).

structure of interaction among the different metaphysical modalities). Second, the semeiotic categories include the phaneroscopic categories (since the signs are the dynamic of interaction among the modalities of reality and therefore also of the phaneron) and the metaphysical categories (since they stay for the dynamic of interaction among the modalities of reality). Third, the phaneroscopic categories include the categories of semeiosis (since the apprehension of a sign-agency is experiential and phaneroscopic) and the categories of metaphysics (since the distinction among the different metaphysical modalities rely upon the differences found in experience and therefore in the phaneron).

As it is clear, the problem of the reality and status of individual objects mainly concern the categories in their metaphysical import. Peirce makes clear that metaphysically speaking the categories describe not different entities, but the different metaphysical principles of all entities. An ambiguity in Peirce's approach to the problem of the metaphysical status of individual objects relies in his characterization of the synonymic notions of "substance," "thing," and "object"[14] (and the connected notions of "existence," "individuality," and "fact") sometimes as 2ndness and sometimes as 3rdness. As we have seen, this alleged inconsistency in Peirce's texts has led many commentators to produce partial and not fully adequate reconstructions of the notion of individuality and fact in relation to the entities of our common experience. The further consequence of this misconception has been interpreting Peirce as if he denied the reality of something like metaphysical individuality. On one side, Peirce claims that "the existence of things consists in their regular behaviour" (EP1: 278; see also EP2: 357, 1905). Similarly, he observes that a "substance," "in the old sense of thing, not in the modern chemical sense" represents a "bundle of habits" (EP1: 279). A "thing" does not consist in anything else than "in the truth of a general conditional proposition," that is, "if a substance of a certain kind should be exposed to an agency of a certain kind, a certain kind of sensible result would ensue" (EP2: 357, 1905). According to these passages, Peirce seems to assume a notion of "object" which is reduced to a cluster of general dispositions, 3rdness. However, in other passages, Peirce refers to objects as "single existent objects" individualized in particular sections of time and space (CP 6.335). In this case, haecceity or individuation, 2ndness, is included in his characterization of an object. The same ambiguity is displayed in Peirce's treatment of the notion of "individuality" in *Baldwin's Dictionary*. In the entry "individual," Peirce approaches his analysis by providing two definitions. According to the first definition, "individual" is a definite cluster of general properties, so that for every property, either *x* has P or has not P (CP 3.612). However, this definition does not include Leibniz's principle of indiscernibles, insofar as there can be two things, *x* and *y*, exactly similar in all their general properties and still not coincident as a unique individual insofar as they are distinct for their haecceities. The point is therefore that this first definition is insufficient. The second definition appeals not to general properties, but to instances of reaction, insofar as "individual is something that reacts" (CP 3.613). In this case, the principle of indiscernible works since it includes also the haecceitaties. Therefore, although two individual things are exactly alike in all other respects, they will be different for their spatio-temporal different instantiation, "since space is nothing but the intuitional presentation of the conditions of reaction, or of some of them. But there will be no logical hindrance to two things being exactly alike in all other respects" (CP 3.613). In the same entry, Peirce explicitly claims for the second definition. However, can we only understand individual objects as reagents or mere 2ndnesses? The ambiguity about Peirce's alleged contradictory account of "substance" (as 3rdness and as 2ndness) is solved insofar as the different claims about the nature of a substance are read in relation to Aristotle's distinction between primary and secondary substance.[15] Peirce hints at this when he claims that a "general" exists only insofar as it inheres in individuals, which are "first substances" having absolute, independent existence (NEM, III: 58). In an explicit text, he writes:

> … single objects exist, and that each of these at each single date exists only in a single place. These, no doubt, are what Aristotle meant by {to kath' hekaston} and by {ai prōtai ousiai} in his earlier works, particularly the *Predicaments*. For {ousia} there plainly means existent, and {to ti einai} is existence. (I cannot satisfy myself that this was his meaning in his later writings; nor do I think it possible that Aristotle was such a dolt as never to modify his metaphysical opinions.) But {to atomon} was, I think, the strict logical individual, determinate in every respect. (CP 6.335)

14 I will use the three notions as synonyms as well.

15 Cf. Aristotle 2a35-2b7.

Peirce clearly connects the dimension of 2ndness and 3rdness in characterizing the reality of an individual thing. "What we call a thing is a cluster of habit of reactions, or, to use a more familiar phrase, is a centre of forces" (CP 4.157; see also EP1: 348, 1892). In what follows, I show not only that Peirce's notion of individuality is not ambiguous, but also that the three categories allows for an understanding of the metaphysical status of an individual object as a law-like series of different instantiations. An individual object is a continuity (3rdness) of spatio-temporal slices (2ndnesses). Stressing unilaterally the meaning of individuality as 2ndness and the meaning of individuality as 3rdness leads to a partial and mistaken account of what an individual object is in its entirety. If any, the contribution of this section consists in the study of certain terminological connections and developments present in Peirce's texts. It will be clear that for Peirce an adequate account of individual objects requires a modal metaphysics. In particular, I will show through textual analysis that an individual object is for Peirce a spatio-temporal continuity of existentially conjoined instantiations or actions.

1.1. Individuality, A-Facts and B-Facts

An example of alleged ambiguity in Peirce's text in relation to "facts" and "individuals" is found in his presentation of 2ndness. I will show that this alleged ambiguity is actually due to a genuine, positive tension that characterizes the idea of fact once the fact is dwelt phaneroscopically. In other words, Peirce classifies facts and individuals sometimes as 2ndnesses and sometimes as 3rdnesses because the fact itself is subject to different phaneroscopic perspectives. On one side, the aspect of brute reaction can be stressed, while in the other the aspect of generality and perdurance can be dominant. In the fist case, I will talk about A-facts, while in the second case I will use the locution B-facts. Again, A-facts and B-facts must not be understood as different entities, but as different phaneroscopic and metaphysical dimensions of reality, which is a complex interaction of 1stness, 2ndness, and 3rdness. In a passage, Peirce introduces 2ndness referring to an "actual fact." The interesting aspect is that he analyzes the notion of "actual fact" in a twofold way, both as a "perfect individuality" and as a "less pure individuality." Thus, talking about the actual fact, Peirce observes that

> … an occurrence is perfectly individual. It happens here and now. A permanent fact is less purely individual; yet so far as it is actual, its permanence and generality only consist in its being there at every individual instant. (CP 1.419; see Maddalena 2003: 182-184)

In the remainder of the passage, the notions of "actual fact" and "occurrence" are linked to the ones of "action" and "reaction." By combining these notions, it is possible to say in a first approximation that Peirce's "actual fact" in the meaning of "perfect individual" corresponds to an instance of metaphysical 2ndness. A perfect individual or A-fact is therefore each and all the instantiations of an *X* in their respective spatio-temporal points (see CP 3.613 for a treatment of "existence" is close to A-fact). Strictly speaking, an actual fact is the existent slice in the career of an X actualized in a punctual spatio-temporal *locus*, so that a different actualization of *X* in a further spatio-temporal point would result in a different "actual fact."[16] Sometimes Peirce refers to this aspect of reality as a spatio-temporal "state" (CP 1.494; EP2: 378), namely, the spatio-temporal slice of an entity on which it is possible to focus by abstracting from the continuum of the vicissitudes of an entity. An A-fact is an actuality considered "by itself … apart from [the] governing uniformity" present in it, or "without emphasizing any element of law" (CP 1.428). In other words, in order to highlight the phaneroscopic and metaphysical nature of an A-fact it is necessary to prescind from any element of generality. "The exclusions," says Peirce, "leave for the category of fact, first, that which the logicians call the *contingent*, that is, the accidentally actual, and second, whatever involves an unconditional necessity, that is, force without law or reason, *brute* force" (CP 1.427).

At the same time, the notion of actual fact can be understood in a broader way, in which 2ndness is much less pure. "Actual fact" can mean "permanent fact." As such, it describes a series of different instantiations and

16 Ishida (2009: 49-50) talks about "snap-shots" instead of spatio-temporal slices.

occurrences of *X*. This is what I call a B-fact. In this second sense, the actuality of the fact does not consist in an isolated instance of reaction, but in a connection of different instances of reactions, or A-facts (see CP 1.436 for a treatment of "existence" akin to B-fact). Also the B-fact is an instance of "individuality," although of a lower purity. The question is: what is the permanent, identical element that can be actualized in different spatio-temporal points and guarantees for the continuity among them ("*its* being there at every individual instant")? According to the quoted passage, a B-fact includes at least the following elements: (1) the possibility of something to be actualized in and through different A-facts in different spatio-temporal points; (2) the series or chain of different A-facts at different spatio-temporal points; (3) the permanency of something through all the different A-facts. The reference to the ideas of possibility and permanence makes clear that 2ndness in its purity is not sufficient anymore to account for a B-fact. From the previous introduction to Peirce's category, it should be clear that this something is an element of 3rdness, in the metaphysical form of a general disposition. We have already read Peirce's statement according to which a "thing" is a "cluster of habit of reactions" (CP 4.157). The element of possibility and permanence that underlies a B-fact is therefore some general disposition, which allows for different and indefinite instantiations (possibility) and remains the same along each and all of them as their inner general tendency. Thus, a B-fact can be described as a chain or series of subsequent and contiguous A-facts (2ndness) in which the same general disposition (3rdness) is instantiated. At a more fundamental level (or from a broader perspective), the general disposition is represented by the law of space and time. At a more specific level, the generality can be every general disposition that characterizes a substance as such (see next section). Therefore, Peirce writes in relation to the problem of space that "everything whose identity consists in a continuity of reactions will be a single logical individual. Thus any portion of space, so far as it can be regarded as reacting, is for logic a single individual; its spatial extension is no objection" (CP 3.613). Similarly, addressing the problem of the extension in time, he clarifies that a fact, "if it is continued for some time … involves the third category. … A generalized reaction is a law" (CP 7.532). Notice that, from a phaneroscopic viewpoint, it is 2ndness itself (compulsion, brute reaction) that *grows* into an experience which shows a certain regularity (3rdness).[17] It is the fact itself that, emerging in experience as A-fact, then grows in intelligibility and generality into a B-fact, in which the general element of rationality is begotten and at the same time the brute element of reaction is maintained, although at a different level (see also CP 6.326). This is true for Peirce since the 1868 "New List of Categories." In it, what is apprehended at first as an "IT" or "PRESENT in general"[18] (the conception which is closer to the sensuous multifold) grows through experience and inquiry into a more determinate object of experience. In any case, the important point to stress here is that there is some "general way of action" which operates "throughout [every] fraction of a second" (EP2: 123, 1902) and therefore regulates the series of different A-facts. Peirce spells out that the condition of permanence throughout different A-facts is an element of "law." As Peirce observes, the law also imparts to the different instantiations a kind of "unity," so that different A-facts are gathered together into a unitary B-fact. Peirce implies this when he claims that "the third category also has a mode of unity which does not belong to either of the others" (CP 7.532). Hence, the unity of the law consists in the regularity according to which all of its actualizations occur and hence in the general way in which their occurrence can be described (CP 5.538).

One further textual evidence helps us to understand Peirce's complex notion of B-fact. As early as 1859, in a manuscript titled "The Limits of Religious Thought" (MS53), Peirce introduces the notion of "influx" as distinguished from "causality."[19] In this passage we read that every fact:

> … is a relation of dependency. The motion of a ball though the air, for example, is a complex event composed of an indefinite number of elementary events each of which is the relation of the ball at any moment to itself at the previous moment. Every dependency has one of three necessary modes. The first is community. This is where there is no dependency and therefore no event at all, as two balls at the same instant of time. The second necessary mode is causality, which is the mode of dependence everything at each moment has upon things at the last moment. The third necessary mode is influx which is the mode of dependence substance to form, character to acts, things to qualities. (W1: 38)

17 Colapietro (2003: 110) describes this phenomenon as the fact that "experience is perpetually transforming and transcending itself."

18 Peirce also calls this stage in the development of semeiosis "substance," see EP1: 1-2, 1968.

19 See De Tienne (1989: 389). My analysis is more metaphysical than De Tienne's.

Although this passage can be interpreted in different ways, given its early date,[20] I would read it as foreshadowing the later doctrine of the relationship between "law" and instantiations I have highlighted in the notion of B-fact. In particular, the notion of "causality" describes here the productive relation that each spatio-temporal slice, A-fact, bears with the immediately following one. A causal process is here the inner constitution of a "permanent fact" insofar as causality is understood as the chain or series of subsequent and contiguous instantiations of *X* in which the stress is on the element of 2ndness rather than on the element of 3rdness. As Peirce will claim later, a B-fact must have among its conditions an existential connection among contiguous spatio-temporal "states" in order to be a unitary fact or "event" (CP 1.439). Temporal and spatial continuity is the fact of commonality that makes different A-facts only the different spatio-temporal slices of an *X* instead of the different events of different objects. However, the important idea contained in this passage is "influx." What we read is that there is a parallelism between "substance," "character," and "thing," on one side, and "form," "act," and "quality" on the other side. Although it is not clear from the context what "form" means here, we can guess on the basis of other early texts[21] that "form" stays for an actual property of *X*. The ambiguity of the series of analogies is therefore solved: while substance, character, and things are examples of generalities, form, acts, and qualities are examples of actualities. The influx-relation turns out to be a relation of dependency that actualities have with their generalities. There is some set of generalities that govern and gathers into unity (this is the "influx" here at stake) every event and instantiation of X.

1.2. What is the "Subject" of a B-Fact? The Logical Subject and the Individual Thing

It is important to underscore that the account of B-facts that we have articulated so far does not entail, *sic et simpliciter*, that the B-fact coincides with an individual object (or individual substance). In fact, it is possible to limit the definition of a B-fact to an isolated, specific law and its instantiations. In this respect, Peirce notices that what "happens" "is something that can only happen by having a subject with an independent mode of being not dependent upon this nor upon any determination whatsoever" (CP 1.440). Therefore, the only formal requirement of a "permanent fact" is that there is *something* that constitutes the condition of possibility and the general factor of permanence throughout different spatio-temporal actual slices of existence. For instance, a colored surface is the general condition and the factor of permanence making possible the perception as a continuum of different, actual manifestations of the color in some of its different gradations. At the same time, however, the fact that that same surface is actually resisting the gravitation force over and over again in contiguous spatio-temporal points is not due to the color of the surface. This means that even though the first case meets all the conditions for being a B-fact, it does not meet the conditions for being an individual object, since the lawful element present in that B-fact cannot account for the example of instantiation described in the second case that is supposed to be an event of the same individual object. Peirce writes:

> … while it is not necessary that the subjects should be … of the nature of subjects – that is, that they should be substantial things – since it may be a mere wave, or an optical focus, or something else of like nature which is the subject of change, yet it is necessary that these subject should be in some measure permanent, that is, should be capable of accidental determinations … . (CP 1.493; see also 1.111)

20 Whether Peirce was a "nominalist" or a "realist" about generals before 1868 is an ongoing debate. Neglecting the small interpretative differences, we can say that Fisch 1967 and Michael 1988 believe that Peirce was a nominalist before 1868 (in addition, Michael claims that Peirce's shift from nominalism to realism in 1868 was only "nominal," since he kept claiming that generality is only in language and thought, without changing his ontology up to 1883). On the contrary, Roberts 1970 and Lane 2004 claim that Peirce was a realist about generals also before 1868. Roberts maintains that Peirce's "nominalist" passages do not characterize his philosophy as nominalistic, although they display a secondary nominalistic "aspect" in Peirce's thought. Lane stresses that fact that Peirce's early anti-realism about generals should be interpreted *only* as a rejection of generals as existent things (anti-Platonism). Somewhere in between the two opposite interpretations, see Mayorga 2007, according to whom Peirce before 1868 was a "scholastic nominalist" but not a modern nominalist. I follow Lane's interpretation.

21 See for instance "Upon Logical Comprehension and Extension," in which Peirce refers to the "concrete forms" of a substance as the actual predicates of that substance, W2: 79.

The necessary condition for being a "subject," or a B-fact, is to be some kind of generality capable of being actualized in and through different determinations. Strictly speaking, the sound I am hearing right now is a spatio-temporal extended B-fact insofar not only it is instantiated now in my perceptive act but it also allows for the continuous variation of tonalities I am experiencing. The "subject" of this phenomenon is the phenomenon itself insofar it is constituted by some spatio-temporal and specific 3rdnesses and is instantiated in this individual way in my experience. "Every fact has a subject, which is the grammatical subject of the sentence that asserts the existence of the fact" (CP 1.436). It is not *directly* necessary to appeal to an "individual substance" or "thing" to account for the phenomenon. From these considerations important consequences follow: (1) the "subject" which makes a B-fact metaphysically possible and epistemically describable is a 3rdness, although it can be different from what we usually refer to as a "thing," "substance," or "object," that is, a fundamental and permanent bundle of habits. The habits that constitute an object are not permanent only as long as the a particular chain of instantiations, or B-fact, is actually occurring (like in the case of the sound I was hearing), but exceed every particular B-fact and comprehend all the B-facts which constitute the existence of an *X*. (2) Among the realities that play the role of "subject" in a B-fact, there can be also the 3rdnesses that constitute the substance. (3) If it is true that an object as a general is a bundle of basic habits, these habits must manifest themselves in each and all of its spatio-temporal instantiations. As a consequence, although a B-fact can be immediately reconstructed without appealing to a "substance," it is also true that through experience and inquiry we are led to find an ultimate set of habits which makes ultimately possible all those clusters of continuous reactions with which we are acquainted and that we experienced as "this" or "that" unity.

1.3. Events and Individual Objects

In some writings, Peirce articulates the relationship between A-facts and B-facts by introducing two interesting notions, "event" and "existential quasi-existence." While to my knowledge these ideas do not have a systematic development in Peirce's thought, I believe that a reconsideration of their use in the context of our problem is highly instructive. As he observes, event is "the root of logical individuality" and corresponds in this way to that of "continuity of reactions" (CP 7.532). First, a real event is something that has "dates" and "takes place" in "real time" (CP 1.492). However, an event does not occupy a single and punctual spatio-temporal section but extends as a chain of different occurrences. Peirce adds more details to this characterization of an event as a spatio-temporally extended existence (CP 1.492; see also 1.493). In order to explain the notion of "real event," Peirce remarks the following points: (1) it is "an existential junction of incompossible facts," or the junction of "contradictory" facts ("that both should be true of precisely the same subject is absurd"); (2) that contradictory facts are true of a "subject existentially identical is not absurd, since they are mere accidents of an individual thing, which, as such, has no essence"; (3) the compossibility of contradictory facts has the nature of a "junction" and not of a "combination." The previous reference to time and the three remarks about the "junctional" compossibility of contradictory facts can be summarized in saying that Peirce is simply describing the phenomenon of becoming. "Time," repeats he, is the "universal form of change" (CP 6.132). As such, it is, together with space, the broadest continuum regulating events and phenomena. Time makes possible the conjunction of contradictory facts and states, namely, A-facts. All the actual properties or concrete "qualities" which determine an individual object in a precise spatio-temporal slice are unique and therefore in contradiction with different instantiations of the same object. An individual object, abstractly considered *only* as a punctual instantiation, is always determined in all its concrete properties (2ndness). However, the total reality of the same object exceeds and comprehends each and all of its instantiations because it includes also a multifold dimension of generality (3rdness). Peirce states that "the instantaneous Philip who can be drunk and sober at once has a potential being which does not quite amount to existence" (CP 1.494). The potentiality to which Peirce refers in this statement refers to the modality of being rooted in 3rdness, in the sense that a habit is a possibility of different and indefinite instantiations. Hence, every real object has always a certain amount of indeterminacy. In this light, Peirce claims that no real object is "absolutely individual" if individual means complete determination

or absence of potentiality (CP 3.93; 5.311; 5.349; 5.503; see also EP1: 348, 1892). As on the logical side there is no "logical atom" (every concept can always be further analyzed, MS345), on the metaphysical side "you do not get down to anything completely determinate till you specify an indivisible instant in time, which is an ideal limit not attained in thought or in re" (EP1: 106-107, 1877). These statements do not contradict Peirce's commitment to the reality of individual objects insofar as they only deny that individual objects can be logically conceived in their uniqueness or metaphysically reduced to a 2ndness with no 3rdness. The thesis that every individual object, even in its concrete actualization, implies a constitutive indeterminacy is the reason for which according to Peirce PNC and PEM apply to reality as 2ndness but not as 3rdness, respectively in its dimension of vagueness and generality.[22] However, the interesting point is that in order to have something like an event there has to be a "junction" among different instantiations. It is sometimes defined as the junction of two or more states (CP 1.495).

This point is further illustrated by Peirce's notion of "existential quasi-existence." This concept results from "that approach to existence where contraries can be united in one subject" (CP 1.494). Peirce explains that the "law of time" has three requirements:

> The monadic clause in the law of time is that whatever fact or dyadic dyad exists, exists during a time, and this time. The event is the existential junction of *states* (that is, to what in existence corresponds to a *statement* about a given subject in representation) whose combination in one subject would violate the logical law of contradiction. The event, therefore, considered as a junction, is not a subject and does not inhere in a subject. What is, then? Its mode of being is existential quasi-existence … . (CP 1.494)

It is clear that existential quasi-existence is a hybrid metaphysical notion. It is not mere possibility, 1stness, since possibility is defined as the suchness of the phaneron that remains once it has been prescinded from its actual existence. It is not an A-fact, since this is existence in its purest meaning, 2ndness. At the same time, it is not a general disposition, 3rdness, since strictly speaking a general disposition does not exist as such but governs any existential instantiations that may result from it. The mode of being of "existential quasi-existence" is therefore a combination of the three categories: the element of 1stness is the possible reality of those suchnesses which become eventually actualized; the element of 2ndness is the moment of brute reaction characterizing the instantiations and coincides in this passage with the different incompossible states; the element of 3rdness is the set of general dispositions underlying the phenomenon in virtue of which different instantiations are possible and their occurrence can happen as a lawful chain and not as a juxtaposition of metaphysical atoms. However, this modality of being seems to display a certain predominance of the element of 2ndness, both in its insistence on the idea of "state" and "existential junction of states." The element of 3rdness is overshadowed as the possibility of this junction, but the focus of Peirce's definition is on the existential character of it. It is the notion of existential quasi-existence that Peirce echoes when he writes that "it is impossible to count but cluster of acts, i.e., events and things (including persons); for nothing but reaction-acts are individual and discrete" (CP 4.159). It is also what Peirce is suggesting in apparently ambiguous expressions such as: "time is that diversity of existence whereby that which is existentially a subject is enabled to receive contrary determinations in existence" (CP 1.494). As we have already seen, Peirce writes as early as 1859 that there is a causal relation of dependency among the elements constituting an event. Peirce is repeating the same thesis, making sure that this causal relationship is an almost brute relation of contiguity and absence of intervals.

Thus, the reality of an individual object as a "numerical identity" coincides with its particular happenings at each time and the eventual completion as a continuity of its spatio-temporal events, among which no causal break has been produced. Stressing the dimension of 2ndness, this continuity is given the presence of an existential connection between the different A-facts that constitute the successive B-facts and events. Stressing the dimension of 3rdness, this continuity is provided by the operation of habits, which are permanent and make possible all the different instantiations. Peirce writes that

> … existence, though brought about by dyadism, or opposition, as its proper determination, yet when brought about, lies abstractly and in itself considered, within itself. It is numerical identity,

22 See e.g. CP 5.448; MS 530:16, c. 1903. See Lane 1997.

> which is a dyadic relation of a subject to itself of which nothing but an existent individual is capable. It is to be observed that numerical identity is not empty vagueness, as the identity of a quality with itself is, but a positive fact. This is due to the possibility of the individual's assuming different accidents. Throughout all vicissitudes its oppositions to other things remain intact, although they may be accidentally modified; and therein is manifest the positive character of identity. (CP 1.461)

An individual object as a spatio-temporal evolving entity constitutes a law-like (3rdness) series of reactions/actions (2ndness) in the history of the universe that *is* its spatio-temporal existence, or individuality.[23] "Individuality" is not the property of an object which is already given at the beginning of its career and that remains identical through its becoming. On the contrary, individuation *is obtained* through a law-like continuum of instantiations (see CP 1.433; 5.429).[24] Peirce confirms this when he states that if we had to describe an object in its individuality we should describe the "continuity of [its] history" (R283: 145-146, c.1905).[25] In this claim, "continuity" refers to the element of legality in individuals (3rdness), while the notion of "history" stresses more the series of reactions through which individuals extend in space and time (2ndness). The dyadic relation of existence can be rendered, at least in one of its possible articulation,[26] as the relation *R*(x,y), where "x" is the individual object at stake and "y" is the state of the surrounding existent universe at each time reacting with it (CP 6.336; see also EP2:378, 1906). An individual object is therefore a continuous instantiation of general dispositions, in which the element of continuity among the "parts" distinguishes the individual object from a "collection."[27] The metaphysical status of an individual object can be also approached through the concept of "system" (e.g. CP 3.562; 4.5). In fact, if we name "objects" each all the spatio-temporal slices (A-facts) and the events (B-fact) that constitute an existent spatio-temporal extension, the ordered series of these objects would be a system. The individual human being could be defined *at least* as a growing system.[28] Although the habits play a fundamental role in the continuous constitution of an individual object, their permanence in and through the different instantiations of the same object should not be understood monolithically. On the contrary, according to Peirce, there is not only the possibility but also the need for the development of the habits of individual objects.[29] The range of evolution of the habits varies according to the differences among the different objects and substances in a way that only empirical studies can bring to light. In the limits of our task, it is straightforwardly true that Peirce believed that this development in the life of each individual human being assumes a "normative" connotation (see Chapter 2). The thesis that the habits characterizing of individual objects evolve over time seems to contradict the tenet that it is the habit as a general disposition that provides B-facts and events with their character of permanency and continuity. If we state that also the general dispositions

23 On this interpretation, Boler's opposition between a "dynamic process" and an "individual" disappears. See in particular Boler (1963: 141). Also Browning 1964 sees in the doctrine of the processual nature of a "substance" (in which he includes both Peirce and Dewey) the impossibility of its individual permanence.

24 Thibaud 1987 and Short (1994: 80; 87) are close to this interpretation of "individuality." On the contrary, Sorrell (2001: 263-264) introduces a mysterious "reference to individuality" as something different from the organic articulation of metaphysical 1stness, 2ndness, and 3rdness. I also agree formally with Olshewsky (1981: 91), who maintains that the solution to the problem of individuals is "to construe the individual, as well and the general, semiotically." However, Olshewsky interpretation seems to overlook the role of the individual as the matrix of true beliefs ("the individual is not the antecedent of the semiotic process … but the consequent") and uses a dangerously nominalistic vocabulary in describing the semiotic process (individuals "are made intelligible only by the addition of interpretation in the semiotic process").

25 Weber (2008: 352) hints at this point. On the contrary, Aydin (2009: 426 ff.), though appealing to the three universal categories in order to make sense of Peirce's theory of "personal identity" (in the same way Muoio 1984 did before), does not recognize this. Williamson (1994: 282) rejects Peirce's conception of identity as applied to "human identity": "Peirce held that, strictly speaking, even a proper name of an individual yields some indeterminacy, because an individual changes from moment to moment (CP 3.93, 5.448 n.1). Certainly an implicit "sometimes" or "always" could make "Philip was tactful" indeterminate in his sense, but no such qualification is implicit in "Philip lived 46 years." No acceptable view of personal identity sustains Peirce's apparent suggestion that genuinely singular reference has not been achieved until a particular moment of Philip's life has been specified."

26 For a different approach, see the Existential Graphs and the rendition of "existence" on the "sheet of assertions." See on this Robert (1973: 31ff.).

27 See also EP2: 98, 1901; HP2: 737-742.

28 See in particular Hebernick (1970: 94), "the "system concept" consists of a set of objects comprising all that stands to one another in a group of connected relations inclusive of the relation of sequential order." To my knowledge, however, Peirce does not apply explicitly the idea of system to the problem of metaphysical individuality. The present "systemic" account is therefore a tentative Peircean model for characterizing Peirce's metaphysical stance on objectual individuality.

29 I should stress again that the focus of my attention here is not the nature of Peirce's views on cosmological evolution, or cosmogony, but Peirce's understanding of individual objects and how the internal variations in their spatio-temporal extension do not affect their individuality and substantiality but on the contrary contribute to continue them.

vary over time, how can we state that it is this same cluster of general dispositions to guarantee the stability of a substance in and through its vicissitudes? I believe that Peirce is consistent also on this point. As I will show (§§ 3.3., 3.4.), this is possible in the measure in which the continuity among the habits of an individual substance is not given by the permanence of the same habits in their specific configuration, but by a more fundamental teleology.[30] However, for the purpose of this first part, it is not necessary to anticipate further considerations about final causality. For now, I consider accomplished the first task set in the introduction: Peirce *does* have a positive notion objectual individuality, which can be grasped only if all the three categories are kept together in their mutual interplay.

2. Indexicality and Self-Reference

Let me now move to a new problem associated to human individuality, that is, the problem of "self-consciousness." In order to develop my analysis, I rely on Peirce's semeiotic account of self-referential statements and psychological self-ascriptions. To the question, "How do we talk about our own individuality?", we shall answer, with Peirce, "We formulate narratives and descriptions ultimately based on indexical self-referential statements." 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 on the use of the first-person pronoun and I take it as an example of what goes on also in the other cases. Therefore, an analysis of Peirce's account of the meaning and the use of "I" seems to be the best way to approach the study of individual self-consciousness.[31] This approach coincides with Peirce's externalist methodology in the study of mental phenomena (see Delaney 1979; Delaney 1993; Short 1997; also Stephens 1980), according to which an adequate inquiry into our mental states and powers requires an inferential approach from public, "external facts" (W2: 214, EP1: 30). The linguistic production of self-referential statements is such a public and external phenomenon. A good deal of work has been done in the field of Peirce's theory of signs, including the theory of indices.[32] This is in part due to the fact that Peirce has greatly drawn the attention of commentators and philosophers interested in the philosophy of language; in part to the fact that his theories seem to be echoed by new theorists of proper names, pronouns, and indices in general (see Agler 2010; Boersema 2002; Goudge 1965; Pietarinen 2010; Hilpinen 1995; Maddalena 2006: 41-56; Lizska 1996; Pape 1980; Short 2007; Thibaud 1987; Weber 2008). In this section, I simply give a brief account of Peirce's treatment of what he calls "rhematic indexical legisigns," by focusing in particular on the first-person pronoun "I."[33] I believe that once we grasp the semeiotic referential structure of a rhematic indexical legisign, we will be able to acknowledge what the use of "I" tells us about the problem of human individuality. According to Peirce, a personal pronoun, when it is not used as a common name, is a rhematic indexical legisign and refers to a singular or individual object. In short, a rhematic indexical legisign (1) is non-descriptive (e.g. EP2: 342, 1905), (2) incorporates but does not reduce to the background or collateral factors necessary to the fixation of the reference (e.g. EP2: 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. EP2: 274; 297, 1903). In addition, (5) the singular object to which a rhematic indexical legisign refers does not need to be an existent physical object but can also be a mere logical object, it can have a mere "logical" existence (e.g. R280: 36-37). Peirce distinguishes between degenerate indices and genuine or proper indices (CP 8.368). While genuine indices are "reagents," degenerate indices are "designations." Being simply a conventional legisign, the first-person pronoun "I" is a degenerate index insofar as it does not require a present, actual relation with a dynamic object in order to be a referring term. Let me

30 Hausman (1974: 21) hints at this point when he talks about a "teleological continuum" in Peirce's evolutionary cosmology.

31 Only Stephens 1980 deals explicitly with the problem of "psychological self-ascriptions." Hookway (1985: 26) claims: "it is rather surprising that Peirce does not offer an account of our ordinary first-person avowals." Although challenging, Hookway's remark might be 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 1999.

32 The best general introductions to Peirce's theory of signs are Liszka 1996 and Short 2007.

33 In order to do this, I mainly rely on David W. Agler's excellent reconstruction (2010).

explain this claim by saying a few words on point (5). A rhematic indexical legisign is different from a proper index insofar as its referent can simply be a *logically* real object, or an abstract object that is taken to be real in a "Universe of Discourse" or "Logical Universe" (R280: 36-37, 1905; see also 1.433), while a proper index refers only in virtue of an existential relation to a spatio-temporally present object. This semeiotic fact implies that the simple use of the indexical "I" is not enough to go beyond the possibility that the referent of self-referential statements is merely a logically real object. Hence, the fact that a rhematic indexical legisign is used in order to refer to an alleged individual self does not rule out the possibility that the individual self is only a fictive object. We will thoroughly discuss this problem in the next section. Also point (2) is fundamental in order to understand how self-referential statements apply to the study of the individual self. According to Peirce, there is a set of "collateral" conditions upon which the referring capacity of the rhematic indexical legisign depends. This includes epistemic, experiential and discursive factors (EP2: 494, 1909). Although these conditions are necessary, they are not part of the semantic function of the index, but belong more properly to the metasemantic conditions of its functioning. David W. Agler calls this background the "familiarity condition for reference" (2010: 619). It can be described as a kind of acquaintance with the individual object referred to that is prior or contextual to the actual indexical referential act and represents its metasemantic condition, without being included in its semantic content. In a 1908 text, "Common Ground" (R612), Peirce writes:

> By a Proper Name [also a personal pronoun, for the present purpose], I mean a name of anything considered as a single thing; and this thing which the Proper Name denominates must have been one which the Interpreter was already acquainted by direct or indirect experience. The process of gaining this experience is either one of two, or is some mixture of these. The first of the two is that the Interpreter should first by his own personal experience become sufficiently acquainted with that to which the Proper name applies, and subsequently with the Proper Name as denominating that thing. (R612: 33-34, 1908)

This passage is important because it points out that the experiential conditions for the fixation of the individual referent can be of two types, which usually work together. There is a direct experience process and an indirect one. In the second case, the referent can be fixed in two ways, both by collecting information about the object in various modalities and by receiving directions and indications on how to find that object (R612: 34-35, 1908; see also EP2: 286, 1903; R280: 38x, 1905; EP2: 405, 1907). It is important to stress again that this set of information is not part of the meaning of the index, but one of the conditions for fixing its reference (see EP2: 163, 1903; EP2: 172, 1903; EP2: 306, 1904). Although these two experiential modalities are equally important, direct experience is more crucial in order to grasp Peirce's understanding of self-reference. This is because, as I will show in the next section, Peirce believes that there is a specific direct experience, in the epistemic form of perception, that constitutes the fundamental condition for self-reference. Peirce writes that a rhematic indexical legisign, "when one meets with it for the first time, is existentially connected with some percept or equivalent individual knowledge of the individual it names" (EP2: 286, 1903).[34] It is at this level that the distinction between degenerate indices (designations) and pure or genuine indices (reagents) proves to be fundamental. In characterizing the two classes of indices, Peirce observes that while designations do not convey any information about their objects, reagents are potentially informative (CP 8.368). I believe that Peirce maintains that there is a direct perceptual experience that grounds the possibility of self-reference. In particular, I maintain that the possibility of self-reference rests upon a perceptual judgment which grows out of a *singular* genuine index, or reagent, which makes its appearance as the "percept" of that perceptual judgment. This is what I call, drawing from Peirce's analyses, the present&effort-perception. A few more words are needed in order to clarify the question I will address in the next section. As a matter of fact, the personal pronoun "I" is a conventional representamen that can be used in different ways, although it is primarily used as a "rhematic indexical legisign." Peirce himself explicitly uses the pronoun "I" as a common name in different instances. For example, Peirce claims that " … the leading part of the meaning which we express by "I" is the idea of an unrestrained cause of some future events" (R668: 16-17; see also R649: 36). It is clear that here the representamen "I" functions as a

34 Peirce is talking here about "proper names," but his claim is also valid for the first-person pronoun.

"rhematic symbolic legisign." The paradigm of this class of sign is the common noun (CP 2.260).[35] As a common name, "I" represents a definite description of philosophical expressions such as "empirical self," "individual self," or "human individuality." The important point to stress here is that this is not the use of the word "I" that will occupy us in the next section. On the contrary, it will be crucial to see whether the first-person pronoun "I" is used as a "rhematic indexical legisign" in self-referential statements, by delving into the conditions for this use. In other words, the immediate question is not what is, according to Peirce, the real nature of the human self, but what are the experiential conditions for the emergence and use of "I" as a rhematic indexical legisign in self-referential statements. It is my opinion that among the conditions for the use of "I" that have been pointed out by Peirce scholarship so far, insufficient attention has been devoted to what Peirce could have called the present&effort perception. Although my focus is on the conditions of indexical self-reference, I believe that this semeiotic approach can ultimately put us in the condition to understand more deeply Peirce's conception of the nature of human individuality.

2.1. Perception and Indexical Self-Reference

In the previous section I have given a general account of the conditions under which a rhematic indexical legisign can function as such. The aim of the present section is to substantiate the formal treatment of the previous section in relation to self-reference. 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." This is what I call the present&effort-perception. It also follows that it is this specific perception that constitutes, in Peirce's terms, the *existent object* to which the first-person pronoun refers when self-consciousness develops. Peirce claims that "the elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action; and whatever cannot show its passport at both those two gates is to be arrested as unauthorized by reason" (EP2: 241, CP 5.212, 1903). Hence, it is necessary to clarify what is the precise role that perception plays in the possibility of self-reference. Let me introduce my overall understanding of the present&effort-perception. Now, 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 analysis of the consciousness of time. I will call this perception simply consciousness of the present. Although the structures of human "inwardness" have not been overlooked by Peirce scholarship,[36] they have not been connected explicitly to the consciousness of time. However, in Peirce's view the consciousness of the present is not the only perceptual basis for self-reference. The second experience is the perception of a capacity of initiative and causal efficacy in agency. Peirce identifies it with that part of free will that is the "sense of effort."[37] I will call this second perception simply sense of effort in agency. It has been claimed that Peirce puts forward a broad notion of perception, which is not limited to sense-organ perceptions and which relies on a broad phaneroscopic approach rather than assuming the viewpoint of the special sciences.[38] As I will show, self-reference hits an existent target (the individual self) in virtue of a composite act of perception based on the consciousness of the present and the sense of effort in agency. Let me put my thesis in the following way by using the terminology of Peirce's theory of perception: there is a composite percept, the present&effort-percept, which is at the origin of our perception of ourselves and which constitute the existent referent of our indexical self-referential statements. All our narratives and descriptions of ourselves are ultimately rooted in this indexical self-reference. In what follows, I simply articulate this idea in greater detail. Let me begin by introducing Peirce's explicit claims about the consciousness of the present and the sense of effort in agency.

35 See Lizska (1996: 51).

36 See in particular Colapietro 1985 and DiLeo 1991 on this point.

37 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).

38 Peirce reserves the same treatment to the notion of "experience," as Cheryl Misak has amply shown. See e.g. (1994: 43-45), (1995: 99-108), and (2004: 152-158). See Chapter 2.

The clearest example of Peirce's analysis of the consciousness of time is found in 1905 "Issues of Pragmaticism." After having provided a metaphysical account of the past and the future in modal terms, Peirce provides a phaneroscopic and metaphysical theory of the present, according to which the consciousness of the present is the "conative externality" (something that presses and pushes) of the "Nascent State of the Actual" (EP2: 359, CP 5.462). This experience is the "living present" or the "Living Death" (EP2: 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" (EP2: 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. (EP2: 359, CP 5.462)

As we know, while the belief in 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 instead 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 turn now to the second crucial instance of perception, the sense of effort in agency. Whereas the consciousness of the present has a more passive connotation, the sense of effort in agency is more of the type of an active experience.[39] 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" (R283: 76; see also R614: 3; EP2: 383, 1906). This experience occurs at least in a twofold way. The first instance of the sense of effort in agency resides in the semeiotic and dialogic nature of the self. In Peirce's words, "the person is not absolutely an individual," since "his thoughts are what he is saying to himself" (CP 5.421). In this case, the self has the nature of an inner "conversation" (EP2: 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 thesis, which *prima facie* seems to contradict the thesis that there is something like a human individual, simply points out the dialogical nature of the self, whose *entire* reality is an inferential, semeiotic reality. What is important to acknowledge here is that it is this dialogical nature that makes possible the sense of effort in agency, at least in one of its modalities. In this case, part of the self performs paradoxically (but interestingly) the function of that opposing "non-Ego" (EP2: 154, 1903; EP2: 195, 1903; EP2: 268, 1903) against which the sense 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 some changes through a muscular effort in itself (the "central body") and in the surrounding environment (EP2: 412-413, 1907).[40] 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

39 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" (W6: 173, EP1: 250, 1887-1888).

40 Certainly, the acquaintance with that particular body that we end up considering "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, W2: 202, EP1: 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.

> 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).[41] 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? 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 an *existent* object. If we are seeking for a Peircean conclusive argument for the existence of the individual self, we have to look somewhere else. Let me consider the two phenomena at stake in Peirce's 1868 essay "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man." 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 hypothetical belief in 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 her own perception of that state of affairs, and, on the other side, her previous ignorance or different belief about the same state of affairs. "Abduction" is here an instance of inference to the possible explanation of the surprising event, which is then deductively and inductively confirmed through further experiences (e.g. W2: 218-219, EP1: 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 affair, 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. W2: 217, EP1: 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"

41 The obvious objection to my reading is that Peirce's statements about human "force" and "brute will" are usually extremely critical. For instance, in CP 5.520 Peirce talks about 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." Although from a general viewpoint it is probably true that Peirce believes that the reasonable growth (3rdness) of the individual human agents 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. The fact that a thesis is considered by a philosopher less central then others does not imply that a complete reconstruction of his thought should forget or deny also the less central theses.

that the belief in its existence is close to certainty, and not because we have an intuitive power of self-knowledge (W2: 169, EP1: 20-21, 1868). This constant inferential possibility counts as an inductive validation of the hypothesis in the existence of a private self. Furthermore, it is probably 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 mere abstract object represented in a highly probable hypothesis.

The two cases just highlighted constitute a collateral experience sufficiently strong to fix the self as an abstract 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 existent object in 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). In other words, these two phenomena justify the conclusion that the referent of the term "I" is an existent object in the real world only in a weak sense. I would like to point out that this difficulty is displayed also by the best Peirce scholarship. In an important article, Thomas L. Short 1997 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, i.e. the "self," is real or not. His conclusion is very instructive, both for the remarkable insights and the weakness it contains. For Short, the Peircean "self" is "no more than a harmony of parts" (1997: 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" (1997: 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" (1997: 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 is partial insofar as it does not grasp the kernel 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 world. If my interpretation is correct, the abstract object abducted in the two cases treated in 1868 are not the *only* referents of the first-person pronoun. In order to understand how "I" refers to a real object, the two 1868 theses must be read together with a third set of phenomena, i.e. 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. Before tackling the analysis of the present&effort-perception, we have now to consider some elements of Peirce's theory of perception and phaneroscopy.[42] 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, i.e., the "percept," the "percipuum," and the "perceptual judgment." The percipuum is in turn a particular instance of perceptual judgment, as 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 a content of cognition yet (e.g. EP2: 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 consciousness and hence acting as a compulsion (2ndness). Thus, "the percept is a single event happening *hic et nunc*. It cannot be generalized without

42 The best account of Peirce's theory of perception is still Bernstein 1964. Also Almeder 1970, Delaney (1993: 118-129), and Rosenthal 2004 are enlightening analyses.

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:[43] although perception can be educated over time and it is subject of criticism within certain limits, *while it happens* it is not controlled. 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. 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:

> how 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 premise 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)[44]

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 reactive experience and not with knowledge (see CP 6.336, 1906).[45] 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. The conclusion that I would draw from this passage is that the attribution of existence to an object is logically stronger when it is accompanied by the direct perception of that object in a percept. In considering the experiential conditions of self-referential operations, is there anything that resembles a direct 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 one's expectancy and someone else's linguistic testimony, while in the second case the percept is each one of the qualities of feeling actualized in human consciousness. 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 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 given 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.

Let me now integrate Peirce's theory of perception in the light of his phaneroscopy. In virtue of this approach, we discover that the present&effort-perception is characterized by two main aspects, 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 from the concept of "relation" and that the concept of relation is derived from the dyadic *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"

43 See e.g. "If one *sees* one cannot avoid the percept; and if one *looks* one cannot avoid the perceptual judgment" (CP 7.627).

44 This analysis could be furthered through a study of the "concepts" of "present in general," "IT in general," and "substance," in Peirce's early "On a New List of Categories" (W2: 49-59).

45 See Delaney (1993: 50).

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. 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. EP2: 270-271, 1903; CP 1.432; 1.456; 1.457; 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 6.333-335). 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" (W5: 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:

> imagine 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. (EP2: 4-5, c. 1894; see also the case of "surprise," EP2: 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" (EP2: 382-385, 1906), but does not mention the problem of the external or internal origin of the compulsion. According to Peirce's theory of perception, it is clear that 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.[46] One must subject her 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

46 DiLeo (1991: 96-97) comments: "This can only be determined by subjecting the activity to the "Tests of Externality" (CP 6.334). Haecceity is perceived and not inferred, whereas externality is inferred from tests and not perceived."

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 that the effort to suppress the percept should also be directed to the present&effort-percept. According to Peirce (and I think we all agree with him on this), 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. Let me conclude this section by analyzing the elements involved in the present&effort-perception and indexical self-reference from a semeiotic, phaneroscopic, and metaphysical standpoint. From a semeiotic 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).[47] 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. 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. As we have seen, the first-person pronoun "I" is a rhematic indexical legisign, i.e. a degenerate index. 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."[48] 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 EP2: 172, 1903). 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 (1rstness) 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. EP1: 327-329, CP 6.145, 1892). From the semeiotic 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. 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." It should be clear now in what sense Peirce believes that the first-person pronoun "I" has an individual existent referent.

2.2. Peirce on Kant's "*I* think" and the Empirical Self

Another important aspect of Peirce's approach to the problem of human "individuality" is the distinction between the empirical self, found in self-reference and psychological self-ascription, and what Kant called the transcendental unity of apperception, or "*I* think." Some scholars have focused their analysis on the relationship between Peirce and Kant on this topic and have produced enlightening commentaries (Ishida 2009, in particular; also De Tienne 1996; Colapietro 2006; Apel 1989; 1995; Harrison 1981; Maddalena 2012). Nevertheless, I

47 What Delaney (1993: 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.

48 See Liszka (1996: 49-50).

believe that further work is needed in this field, in particular in relation to what problem Peirce is addressing while developing his reading of Kant's "*I* think." Peirce is concerned with the problem of the Kantian "*I* think" early on in his "On a New List of Categories" (1867). The aim of this section is not to peruse in a detailed way the Kantian legacy which is found in Peirce's thought, but to highlight on the contrary that what Peirce says about the Kantian "*I* think" does not affect his conviction in the reality of the empirical self.

According to Kant, the "*I* think" is the transcendental unity of apperception, which constitutes the condition of possibility of experience or the phenomenon in general (B134). In other words, it is the numerically unitary self understood as a transcendental "I" which enables to bring the sensuous manifold to the unity of the representation. In commenting Kant's stance, Peirce writes:

> In his first-edition, he [Kant] does not call the act "the *I* think," but "the object = *X*." That which the act has to effect is the consecution of ideas: now the need of consecution of ideas is a *logical* need, and is due not, as Kant thinks, to their taking the form of the *Urtheil*, the assertion, but to their making an *argument*; and it is not "I think" that that always virtually accompanies an argument, but it is "Don't you think so?". (MS 636:26, 1909)

It is clear from this passage that the problem at issue is the logical unity (namely, the intelligibility) of the object of thought in general. The main argument of this passage is that the most fundamental unity of this object, or representation, is not given by the inquirer's judgment (Peirce says "assertion"), but by the elements of the sensuous manifold experience that are considered and grow at a certain point a symbolic unity. Peirce stresses correctly the two concerns of Kant's approach, which are: (1) the problem is the logical unity of the representation, as it is displayed by Kant's expression in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* "the object = *X*"; (2) the solution provided by Kant is that this logical unity results from the synthetic acts of judgment performed by the transcendental ego, or "*I* think." Therefore, Kant is neither saying that the representation of the "I" accompanies every representation as a further element of the object, nor that the belief in the transcendental ego results from the fact that from every representation it is possible to refer to an "I." Kant is dealing with the conditions of intelligibility of the object (same problem that Peirce is addressing in the "New List") and is furnishing a solution that Peirce will reject in part. In fact, according to Peirce, the synthetic function of "conceptions" emerges within the sensuous manifold itself as the consistency of the symbol and is not given by the activity of an alleged transcendental ego. Peirce substitutes the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception with the unity of consistency of the phenomenon that is already foreshadowed in the category of "substance" introduced in the "New List" (EP1: 1-2, 1868). Moreover, in the formation of the argument, self-reference does not have the assertive status of a positive and definite "*I* think," but the more fallibilist one of a "Don't you think so?". The *X*, the unity of consistence that grows in the formation of the object is a plea in the face of the empirical "I" who is articulating it. The teleological structure of semeiosis is already evident in this phenomenon. In conclusion, according to Peirce, there is no need to postulate a transcendental "I" which performs the activity of synthesis according to a priori principles, categories or rules, but is sufficient to admit that through experience certain general "forms" and "conceptions" emerge in the representation itself as the structures of experience or understanding in general. In this sense, Peirce's new conceptions ("transcendental" in a classical sense) are "general signs" or "symbols."

In any case, the main point to stress here is that Peirce's dissolution or rejection of the "*I* think" does not entail a correspondent dissolution of the empirical "I" of each individual agent. The fact that the transcendental super-empirical "ego" of Kant's analysis is not necessary according to Peirce's naturalistic approach to transcendentalism is not evidence in favor of the annihilation of the empirical ego. The mistake of interpreting the first rejection as a premise from which the second rejection follows results from (a) a wrong interpretation of the Kantian "*I* think" and (b) a connection of this rejection with the set of claims about the nature of individuality and self-consciousness dwelt above and often misunderstood.

In a passage of "Questions" (1868) Peirce distinguishes between the empirical "I" of the human individual and the "I" of pure apperception. Asking "whether we have an intuitive self-consciousness" and therefore how we know our self, Peirce makes clear that while

> Pure apperception is the self-assertion of THE *ego* … the self-consciousness here meant is the

> recognition of my *private* self. I know that I (not merely *the* I) exist. (EP1: 18, 1868)

It is important to keep in mind what Peirce wrote in the "New List" about the transcendental ego, because it is that theoretical framework which constitutes the background of what Peirce is claiming in this passage. Peirce is asking whether human beings have an "intuitive" self-consciousness. According to his externalist method in philosophy of mind, his first concern is to identify the mental fact that requires analysis and explanation, in this case the "fact" of self-consciousness. To do this, Peirce makes clear that the "self" or the "I" that is the focus of his analysis is not the "I" of pure apperception (granted that something like this existed) but the existent empirical "I" of each human individual. Peirce is individuating the subject of his inquiry by contrasting the empirical "I" of self-consciousness to the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception, but he is not agreeing with Kant. We learn from the "New List" how the conditions of unity of the phenomenon in general are not the unity of the transcendental ego but the "unity of consistency" of the represented object itself (articulated in new list of categories). Presenting Peirce's new approach to the self as a semeiotic alternative to the Kantian transcendental unity of the "*I* think" (De Tienne 1996: 1070-1071) is correct and useful, but faces at least a risk of partiality.[49] In this context, it is clear again that it is fundamental to understand what is the precise problem that Peirce is addressing. The risk of partiality results from the fact that the new approach to the "self" resulting from the semeiotic turn dissolves only the "self" understood as the "*I* think" of pure apperception but does not affect the empirical "I." On the contrary, the semeiotic approach highlights the new theoretical framework within which the empirical self is known and can be indexically pointed at. Peirce hints at this when he states in "Questions" that we *do* know our empirical "I" and not "*the* I," although in this article he does not address directly again his interpretation of the Kantian transcendental ego (EP1: 18, 1868). This analysis is confirmed by a later passage about the meaning of Kantian "*I* think." In it, Peirce makes clear again that his interest in questioning the need and plausibility of the transcendental ego for logic neither questions the representability of the "I" as an object, nor the existence of the empirical "I" manifested in such a representation.

> But Kant holds that though there is a distinction between cognition with self-consciousness and cognition without self-consciousness, yet the "I think" accompanies all our judgments; or rather … that it must *be able to* accompany every judgment. … But it is only necessary … that there should be a recognized unity in the objects of thought and that there should be a unity of the ego, but not that I should always refer the one to the other. And this seems to be nearly Kant's own opinion. For he does not … hold that the "I think" of which he speaks is a perception of one's own existence or that it is any knowledge of fact at all, but only that it is a form or point of view from which objects are conceived. To think consistently is one thing, to think about ourselves is surely quite another (W3: 51-52, 1872)

We learn from this passage that the unity of the ego is necessary not as a represented "object" but as the point of view from which everything is represented. I discern four different references here to the notion of "I": (1) "I" understood as the Kantian "*I* think," about which Peirce has already expressed his critical opinions; in this case, Peirce talks of "THE I"; (2) "I" understood as the "point of view" from which every object is conceived; (3) "I" understood as the empirical "self" of each human individual, to which Peirce sometimes refers as the personal individual or private "I"; (4) "I" understood as the forms of understanding or universal

49 In De Tienne (1996: 1070) we read that "it is because of this unity of representation in general that consciousness is one and capable of saying "I," not the reverse." De Tienne's interpretation is incorrect insofar it is partial. it is true that the consistency of an object or representation precedes the possibility of self-reference, and that self-reference is itself an object or representation, and cannot be represented but as an object. Therefore: "the bucket is heavy" (object 1); "I feel that the bucket is heavy" (self-reference, object2). However, although the unity of the self as an object is the same unity of any other object of representation, given by the unity of a symbol, the possibility of representation in general and the constant possibility of self-reference are facts which must be considered and explained. Peirce is denying the necessity of the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception, but is not claiming that the unity of symbolization/representation is the *only* condition of self-reference. What Peirce is further denying is that the "I think" is the *origin* of the categories and of the unity of representation; the "I think" is instead the intelligence *in actu* of reality, or the synthetic function performed by an empirical individual agent on the basis of a few categories born through experience. Thus, we have: (1) the "I think" as the transcendental unity of apperception becomes in Peirce the unity of consistency of a symbol, of an object and in the end of reality itself in its capacity of being represented; (2) the "I think" is fundamentally structured according to the "new" categories developed in "New List," which are the forms of all thinking or all possible experience. (3) Therefore, the individuality, or the empirical self, is not necessary insofar we want to describe the nature of this logical structure. However, from thesis (3) it does not follow that the empirical self is not existent. It simply follows that the empirical self, or what makes me different from you, is not the origin of logical laws and representability of reality. Midtgarden (2002: 115) makes the same mistake on this point.

conceptions found in experience. If we accept to discuss these different notions, it is possible to say that Peirce's reformation of Kant's transcendentalism transforms point (1) into point (4), so that it is not possible to distinguish anymore between a transcendental "I," its synthetic activity and the intelligibility that is a property of the sensuous multifold itself once it grows into a symbol. Point (2), the "I" understood as the point of view of understanding, is straightforwardly identified with the empirical "I" (point 3), although it can also be identified with point 4, namely, with the "forms" through which experience is always conceptualized.

In conclusion, it is possible to say, first, that the Kantian "*I* think" reinterpreted by Peirce is not a substance different from the laws of thought, the general forms of understanding or categories, but is the *synthetic function* performed by the same categories. Second, the "I think" understood as a the performance of the categories cannot be understood as the origin of the categories (see MS 636: 25-26, 1909): the categories are the forms of the whole phenomenal world, or the world of all possible experiences, and therefore the reference to the "I think" is partial; the laws belong to the phenomena and to the "I think" at the same title. Third, the "I" understood as the possible objective correlate *Y* of every object of thought *X* in what is called "self-consciousness" does not accompany *Y* all the time.[50] Rather, the "I" becomes an object and accompanies another object *X* only when an explicit act of self-consciousness is performed. The "I" to whom we have access in this case is not the "transcendental ego," but the empirical self of each individual human being.

2.3. "Corporate Personality" Reinterpreted

Peirce's ontological belief in the reality of corporate personalities intersects importantly with the problem of the empirical self. It is important to consider briefly this issue because it clarifies further Peirce's theory of the individual human agent, with particular reference to the problem of individual self-consciousness. I do not accept those interpretations (see Lane 2009; de Waal 2006) that tend to include in Peirce's ontology something like a higher-order consciousness *understood as* a higher order possibility of *self*-reference and psychological *self*-ascription.[51] At least, these interpretations do not clarify if higher-order consciousnesses are capable of self-consciousness. In fact it is clear that every time Peirce addresses the problem of what he calls "corporate personality," the focus of the discussion is not the demonstration of the existence of a higher-order consciousness but the explanation of certain phenomena among individual consciousnesses in relation.[52] Early on, in a manuscript titled "Critique of Positivism" (MS146; W2: 122-130, 1867-1868), Peirce comments two different meanings of "personality." He writes:

> We, also, feel within us in addition to elements peculiar to ourselves, elements also which are common to ourselves and others, among which are personality and intellect. Personality has two senses, 1st being personal and 2nd the special idiosyncrasy of a particular person. It is in the first sense that the sympathy we exhibit shows that we feel that it is the same, in others as in ourselves. Hence the love of the life of others is still a passion which centers in ourselves because we love them as having something in common with ourselves, that is, because a part of them is identical with a part of ourselves. This would be quite false if these elements were material but as they are general and purely formal objects, there is nothing in nominalism to refute such a sentiment. (W2: 124)

In this quotation, Peirce takes "person" to mean: (1) the mere " … being personal"; (2) "the special idiosyncrasy of a particular person." Strictly speaking, it is true that Peirce is not making clear whether the

50 It seems to me that Pape (1980: 220) is wrong on this point.

51 Though representing important studies, Lane 2009 and de Waal 2006 are lacking insofar as do not address the problem of self-reference in dealing with the metaphysical status of selves and corporate personalities. I think that these interpretations are a further example of the need to keep distinct all of Peirce's different approaches to the problem of human individuality. Also Harrison 1981 is lacking on this point.

52 My interpretation fits with Short's interpretation of "corporate personalities" and social entities as spatio-temporal continua. "Personalities" are general dispositions that govern the behavior of certain human beings and are instantiated though their spatio-temporal embodied actions. However, Short is not attentive enough in distinguishing the continuity found in 3rdness from the spatio-temporal continuity in individuals that include also an existential connection among the spatio-temporal parts of the extension. See Short (1994: 80).

"particular person" here mentioned numerically coincides with an individual human being or with a super-individual personal being. However, Peirce explicitly connects the first meaning to shared experiences such as "sympathy" and states that these shared passions "center in ourselves." The last expression makes us think to what we have been calling the empirical self, which numerically coincides with the individual human being. Moreover, in a passage of the same period, Peirce repeats the reference to the idiosyncrasy of the human being, which clearly entails individuality and reference to an empirical self. He writes that "each man has his own peculiar character. It enters into all that he does. It is his consciousness and … enters into all his cognition … his way of regarding things; not a philosophy of the head alone – but one of that pervades the whole man. This idiosyncrasy is the idea of the man; and if this is true he lives forever" (W1: 501, 1867).

We find in the "Critique of Positivism" passage all the elements which are necessary to understand that the reference to a "corporate personality" is not the admittance of a higher-order individual able of a higher order self-consciousness, but is the repetition of the traditional thesis that certain phenomena such as "sympathy" require a common ground among the human individuals involved. In other passages Peirce also puts forward the same thesis in relation to the phenomenon of communication. Peirce writes that "two minds can communicate only by becoming in so far one mind" (MS 498).[53] It is unmistakable that Peirce claims that, no matter what synechism and personality mean, still the passion we share "centers in ourselves." Once again, synechism does not imply individual nihilism. The individual self is the empirical center of all mental events, although this does not imply that human individuals live in isolation from one another or that they do not share metaphysically some reality with the other selves. Peirce's thesis is against a solipsistic self, not in favor of the annihilation of the individual self. This is also clear if the passages on the positive idiosyncrasy of the human individual are taken seriously.

I believe that Peirce's statements about "sympathy" aim to highlight three different aspects of synechism within the human community: (1) what is shared by different human individuals (beliefs, desires, purposes, etc.); (2) what are the conditions of sharing in general; (3) what are the conditions of specific experiences of sharing, such as sympathy, or, as in other passages, national and religious sentiments and moral sense (R 961a: 87, 1981; CP 1.337). It seems to me that the usual interpretations systematically overlooks (3). The fact that thesis (3) is usually overlooked produces misunderstanding of Peirce's theory, such as in the case of admitting the reality of a higher-order self-consciousness. It is true that Peirce claims sometimes that corporate personalities are instance of higher-order consciousness. For example, he admits that "the *esprit the corps* of a military company, a club, a university, a nation, is essentially of the same nature as consciousness of a person" (R 961a: 87, 1981). However, Peirce never writes that corporate personalities perform something like *self*-consciousness or psychological *self*-ascription. When Peirce connects corporate personality and consciousness he simply means to highlight the fact that certain experiences require a continuity among the individuals, which, however, does not annihilate the differences.[54] As Short observes, "continuity does not preclude but rather entails difference" (2007: 152). In particular, experiences such as sympathy and national sentiment require a shared set of semeiotic dispositions among the individuals. This thesis is not at odd with Peirce's claim that even in the case of a corporate personality the human individuals remain the centers of (their and most of the time shared) experiences. On the contrary, this claim fits nicely with the other different parts of his account of the individual human agent that I am trying to reconstruct in the present chapter and in the following chapters.

One of the passages that are usually taken to display Peirce's argument in favor of a higher-order self-consciousness is found in "Man's Glassy Essence." Peirce says that, if something like the law of mind is true and something like a corporate personality exists,

> there should be something like personal consciousness in bodies of men who are in intimate and intensely sympathetic communion. It is true that when the generalisation of feeling has been carried so

53 See also EP2: 3, "All communication from mind to mind is only through continuity of being." Peirce's argument is the following: (P1) All thinking is in signs; (P2) In order to communicate, people (different individual human beings) need to have something in common, namely, signs and symbols; (C) Insofar as these individual human beings share the same signs and symbols in communication, their thinking is identical with these signs symbols, and therefore these individual human beings coincide (are "one mind"). From this it follows that human beings in communication are the same *type*, not that they are the same *token*.

54 See also "Self-consciousness, as the term is here used, is to be distinguished both from consciousness generally, from the internal sense, and from pure apperception" (EP1: 18, 1868).

> far as to include all within a person, a stopping-place, in a certain sense, has been attained; and further generalisation will have less lively character. But we must not think it will cease. *Esprit de corps*, national sentiment, sym-pathy, are no mere metaphors. None of us can fully realise what the minds of corporations are, any more than one of my brain-cells can know what the whole brain is thinking. But the law of mind clearly points to the existence of such personalities, and there are many ordinary observations which, if they were critically examined … might … give evidence of the influence of such greater persons upon individuals. (EP1: 350, 1892)

What is clear in this passage is that, according to Peirce, (1) "corporate personalities" are real and that it is possible to provide experimental evidence for it; (2) at the same time, "corporate personalities" have an influence upon individuals. The problem of consciousness emerges therefore at this point. Do (1) and (2) imply that there is a corporate personality with a higher-order self-consciousness that influences individual personalities with their own self-consciousness (Lane 2009)? Or, do (1) and (2) imply that once a corporate personality with its higher-order self-consciousness is constituted, the lower-order self-consciousnesses disappear? Both interpretations are to be rejected. Not only it is metaphysically more economic to deny the existence of a higher-order consciousness, but also it is more consistent with what Peirce explicitly says and with what he claims in relation to different topics (in particular, morality; see Chapter 2 and 3). Moreover, the claim that corporate personalities have an influence upon individuals makes more sense if read in relation to the passage in which Peirce states that the human individual is always the center of psychological self-ascriptions.

Peirce's idea is not only that a corporate personality exists, but also that (1) the association of men makes possible certain types of sign-functioning which would not be possible without this association, (2) that this association is analogue to the possibility of sign-functioning which is enabled by brain cells in unity (compared to brain cells in isolation), and that (3) this thesis is confirmed by the law of mind. It is my opinion that the reference to the "body of men in intimate connection" and to the brain cells in isolation or in systemic connection has to be taken seriously. As the brain cells together make possible certain "feeling-qualities" which would not be possible in isolation, so the association among men understood as organisms and physical bodies make possible certain "feeling-qualities" which would not be possible in different conditions.[55] Peirce's view is therefore that human social association allows for the growth in human individuals of habits and sensibilities that could never emerge in an individual isolated from other individuals. Among the class of these phenomena, I would include moral sentiments, national sentiments and sympathy. The connection that Peirce makes between these phenomena and the "*Esprit the corps*" is literally true from his viewpoint and illuminating for understanding his stance (see also R961a: 87, 1981). As a consequence, it seems that Peirce's "corporate personality" thesis is a specification of (not a different thesis from) the "overlapping" thesis exposed by Lane; it is a specification of the "overlapping" thesis insofar as it states that: (i) human beings overlap because of their *common habits* of belief, feeling, desire, etc.[56]; (ii) these habits can emerge from the interaction of human beings with their environment or from their interaction among themselves. On my interpretation, Peirce is claiming for a type of shared sign-functioning that would not develop in human beings' consciousnesses taken in isolation. Those interpretations that take Peirce to admit in his ontology "higher-order consciousness, one that somehow transcends that of the individual group members" (Lane 2009:14) are correct insofar as they exclude at the same time the possibility of higher-order self-consciousness, but are limited insofar as leave this issue in a fundamental ambiguity.

While talking about the consequences of embracing "synechism," Peirce observes:

> Nor must any synechist say "I am altogether myself, and not at all you." If you embrace synechism, you must abjure this metaphysics of wickedness. In the first place, your neighbors are, in a measure, yourself … . Really, the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarist delusion of vanity. In the second place, all men who resemble you and are in analogous circumstances are, in a measure, yourself, though not quite in the same way in which your neighbors are you. (CP 7.571)

The metaphysical statement which is at odds with Peirce's synechism is "I am altogether myself, and *not at all*

55 See "the consciousness is a sort of public spirit among the nerve-cells" (CP 1.354).

56 Peirce explains that consciousness "really belongs to the subconscious man, to that part of the soul which is hardly distinct in different individuals, a sort of community-consciousness, or public spirit, not absolutely one and the same in different citizens, and yet not by any means independent in them" (CP 1.56, 1906).

you," where the stress has to fall on the denial of any metaphysical relation and shared reality. Similarly, Peirce states that neighbors are "*in a measure*" part of an individual's metaphysical constitution. In addition, the passage has a not-so veiled moral background and taste in its reference to "wickedness" and "vanity." These quotations do not contradict at all the status of objectual individuality or the possibility of reference to an empirical irreducible self which both belong to human beings.

An example of the dynamic of experiences that emerge only on the condition of a continuous interaction among human individuals is surely the case of a nation: without the unity of purpose, intents and values emerging among different human individuals through physical interaction with one another, something like a national sentiment would never arise. Similarly, Peirce talks about the necessity of admitting "such an entity as the spirit of an age or of a people," since "the individual intelligence will not account for all the phenomena" (EP1: 369). A further, more important example brings us in the field of morality: it is true that without the contact with other human beings, or without the "feeling-quality," or percept, produced by the repeated presence of other men, an individual would never develop over time something like a moral sentiment or a sense of human sympathy. It is true that "it may be possible to submit to experimental test" (EP1: 350) all these cases. In other words, it is easy to conceive cases in which a refined moral sense has not developed because of the scarcity of human interactions. The physical interaction provides human individuals with the necessary experiential condition for the development of certain "ideas," among which national and moral senses are the most important instances. The same consideration can be extended to the enterprise of science and civilization, which cannot be achieved in isolation (read in this sense the passage on "cells"; see also EP1: 246).

At this point of the analysis, it is possible to further the earlier twofold definition of "personality" given by Peirce. Always in "Man's Glassy Essence," Peirce states that "a person is only a particular kind of general idea" (EP1: 350). In another passage, he claims that this idea is a growing "idea" (e.g. EP2: 254-255, 1903). What is important to underscore in this section is that these different claims about the nature of personality not only are consistent, but are also more intelligible if understood in relation to the thesis that only a lower-level *self*-consciousness is real. Therefore, we have the two following notions of personality:

(i) *Lower-order "personality"*: it is the growing "idea," or developing total sum of semeiotic dispositions of a human individual. "Self-consciousness" is the property of the human individual, not of the "personality."

(ii) *Higher-order "personality"*: it is the growing "idea," or developing total sum of semeiotic dispositions of a group of human individuals, as it is made possible not only by their physical organisms in isolation, but by their physical organisms in connection and interaction. Since "self-consciousness" is the property of the human individual, at this level of personality, self-consciousness is still present but as the property of each human individual and not of the group of individuals. Something like a higher-order self-consciousness does not exist at all. The confusion among the different notions of "self," "person" and "personality" not only results from Peirce's terminological inconsistency, but also from their intimate interconnection. For instance, Peirce writes that "personality so far as it is apprehended in a moment, is immediate self-consciousness" (CP 6.155). This means that self-reference is accompanied by personality and that there is a strict link between the two. However, at the same time self-reference implies an indexical component that is not reducible to the generality of personality.

From the passages analyzed is clear that, when something like a corporate personality has developed among human individuals according to a process of "generalization" (see "law of mind") in virtue of a repeated mutual interaction (including physical proximity and perception of each other's behavior) (EP1: 350-351), this higher-order personality has the power to be shared, instantiated and furthered by its members, who are human individuals.[57] At the same time, however, self-consciousness and psychological self-ascription remain a prerogative of the individual human agents.

57 Human individuals are the locus of instantiation of more than one personality. Hence, for Peirce, the conflicting presence of multiple personalities and the somewhat imperfect unity and continuity among the different personalities which characterize individuals (e.g., NEM4: ix).

3. Individuality as "Destination" of Developmental Teleology. An Overview of "Incarnation" and "Carnification"

The aim of the final part of this chapter is to show that teleology or "final causality" is a further, indispensable ingredient in order to understand another facet of Peirce's account of the reality of the individual human agent. In particular, I will claim that Peirce's evolutionist appropriation of Aristotle's notion of final causality constitutes the metaphysical principle that grounds the most important meaning of "individuality" in relation to the human being.[58] "Teleology" has in Peirce's system many different facets. First, it means the metaphysical principle according to which a thing or individual object can be classified as an instance of this or that "kind" ("natural" or "artificial"). Second, it means the principle grounding Peirce's evolutionary cosmology. Third, in relation to human beings' life, it also refers to the fact that according to Peirce every individual human being, in relation with other human beings, is called to a unique although shared mission in life, which is ultimately identifiable as a contribution to the development of "creation." It is clear that this third aspect of Peirce's doctrine of teleology opens to the dimension of morality and normativity in general. While I will deal with these two latter issues in Chapter 2 and 3, I focus here on the metaphysical structure of the human individual as teleologically characterized. It is also true that in Peirce's terms the metaphysical and the normative approaches in characterizing the human being cannot be fully disjoined. However, this point instead of representing an objection to my analysis helps to fix the focus of this conclusive section and its meaning as a bridge to the next chapter on the "Normative Sciences." The fundamental claim of this section is therefore that *a metaphysical account of the human beings' final cause shows an implicit reference to a normative dimension*. In what follows, I only offer a more detailed account of this claim in relation to the problem of evolution and vagueness. As a further interpretative proposal, I will consider central two notions that occur in an early manuscript, 1864 "The Analysis of the Ego" (R1116, W1: 144-151, 1864), the notion of "Incarnation" and that of "Carnification." In § 3.1. I give an analysis of this manuscript. The background of my reflection is provided by an important statement contained respectively in 1892 "The Law of Mind," in which Peirce focuses on some consequences of his synechism. In it we read that "in the case of personality … teleology is more than a mere purposive pursuit of a predetermined end; it is a developmental teleology" (EP1: 331). Peirce continues by observing that

> This is personal character. A general idea, living and conscious now, it is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious. This reference to the future is an essential element of personality. Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality. The mere carrying out of predetermined purposes is mechanical. (EP1: 331)

As I will show in what follows, I take the structure of Peirce's argument on this issue to be the following:

(i) The final cause of an individual substance *is* (metaphysically coincides with) that substance in its developmental nature.[59] In particular, it coincides with the substance as a vague realization of a "function" that tends toward a more determinate realization. If Peirce's extreme Scholastic realism accounts for the nature of a substance as a bundle of habits, the insistence on the final cause shows how the habits that constitute a substance have a developmental vocation. The final cause of a substance has a developmental nature which has to be understood as what is "destined" to happen to this substance. In the case of the human being, the general function that is only vaguely realized but tends toward a better determination is what Peirce refers to with the phrase "rational instinct."

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58 This thesis is also true from a broader cosmological perspective. However, I will focus here on that particular type of entity that is the "human being".

59 I approach the notion of "substance" aproblematically here only because I discuss it the first part of the present chapter. For further studies and commentaries on the notion of substance in Peirce's thought, see Sorrell 2001; Sorrell (2004: 33-75); Potter 1992; Colapietro (1985: 81-83); Rosenthal (1986: 113-114). While Sorrell, Potter, and Colapietro affirm that Peirce admitted and articulated a notion of substance compatible with Aristotle's (although Sorrell's reconstruction based on the three Universal Categories presents several mistakes), Rosenthal claims that Peirce is actually replacing a metaphysics of the substance with a metaphysics of the process. As I have showed, I agree with the first three scholars's interpretation.

(ii) In turn, destination has to be understood not as a dyadic, brute "force" which acts on the events deterministically, but as a rational "power" which attracts a substance through the mediation of love, or like a beloved attracts the lover.

(iii) The dynamics of development of the final cause has the metaphysical and semeiotic structure of a gradual determination of the original "objective vagueness" of the final cause, or "idea."

(iv) The realization of the final cause in the substance is multi-level. In other words, at every point of the spatio-temporal development of a substance, the final cause is *already* realized at a certain level of vagueness but not yet developed in all its potentiality. Peirce's metaphysical account of the multi-level realization of the final cause in the substance resembles saint Paul's description of the present moment in the history of Salvation as an "already but not yet." This coincides with Peirce's theological evolutionary cosmology. Peirce's observations on this point open therefore to the perspective of an eschatological metaphysics of the human individual. While "Incarnation" stands for the vague and somehow indeterminate realization of a final cause in the substance, "Carnification" refers to its perfect realization.

I will start with the analysis of R1116 by showing that in this early text all the facets of Peirce's understanding of final cause are already foreshadowed. It seems to me that the notions of "Incarnation" and "Carnification" turn out to be an enlightening early perspective on Peirce's later thought on the status of individuals.

3.1. R1116, "Analysis of the Ego"

Before addressing points (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv), I dwell upon an early manuscript, the "Analysis of the Ego" (R1116, W1: 144-151, 1864). I devote an entire subsection to the analysis of this manuscript for the simple reason that it is almost never quoted in Peirce scholarship, although at a close reading it proves to be an extremely rich and promising early writing. Although a detailed commentary of this text is still needed and would be of great utility, also for its interesting early mix of Aristotelianism, Kantianism, and objective idealism,[60] I limit my analysis here to a few notions which casts an interesting light on Peirce's approach to the problem of the individual human agent. My task is twofold: on one side, I aim to highlight the terminology with which Peirce, at this early point of his intellectual life, characterizes the notion of "final cause"; on the other side, I want to stress three theoretical points, which will prove to be crucial in my following discussion. First, Peirce points out that the final cause is the metaphysical principle that gives a unity to a substance understood as a bundle of habits; the unity of the bundle is provided by the organizing power of the final cause. Second, I show that the realization of the final cause in a substance is a series of different degrees of perfection. Third, Peirce already refers in this early text to the individuality of a substance understood as a continuity of reactions. The formula used in the manuscript is a "collective subject" with "extension."

We have seen that for Peirce there is an "influx-relation" between a substance and we have interpreted this statement in the sense that, if there is a substance, there should also be an identical, general predicate under which every single instantiations of that substance can be described. In the passages we have read, Peirce does not specify which kind of property we should appeal to. In this early manuscript, Peirce claims that the common property that unifies a substance (as a general and as an individual), and that is shared by all the members of a "natural class," is a specific "idea"[61] in its teleological orientation ("plan," "function," or "final cause").

The opening question of the manuscript is: "how does anything which exists, exist? or What are the conditions of subjectivity?" (W1: 144). To be sure, the question is not about the metaphysical principle that determines a substance in its numerical individuality, but, rather, about the specific character, or type, of an

60 This does not imply that Peirce did not develop later on new his studies and understanding of Aristotle, Kant and German *Naturalphilosophie* (for historical information on this, see Reynolds 2002, in particular Ch.1). Therefore, my interpretation does not imply that the interesting mix of Aristotelianism, Kantianism, and objective idealism displayed in R1116 is a mature formulation of Peirce's view on these different traditions.

61 For a different meaning of "idea," see for instance EP2: 434.

existing entity and of the logical subject that represents it. The confirmation that the question relates to an entity as a law-like series of instantiations and not isolated series of instantiations is confirmed by Peirce's example, according to which, "the first thing to be said is that [whatever exists,] exists by virtue of being whatever it is. Thus, Gold is, by virtue of being heavy and yellow" (W 1: 144). A "subject" is specified by being the incarnation of an "idea":

> The subject is subject by being an incarnation of a predicate, which is an abstraction, and which when incarnated in the consciousness is called a conception or in relation to the exterior incarnation an idea. It is only, then, by its idea, that any thing exists. Of most things we do not know the ideas, of none wholly (W 1: 144).

In this passage, Peirce already foreshadows his later objective idealism (see EP1: 285-297, 1891) and introduces the notion of incarnation. The "predicate" is said to be an "abstraction" insofar it stays for a real general which cannot coincide with an individual thing.[62] The general predicate can be considered in a twofold way: in relation to cognitions, it is a "conception," while in relation to external things it is an "idea." However, the *general* is both the metaphysical principle that specifies a substance as this or that type of substance and the intelligibility that guaranties the unity of its representation.[63] The "idea" to which Peirce refers is an organizing and specifying *general* principle that makes whatever exists to be a certain *type* of being. In the case of its Incarnation in a substance, the idea is the principle which provides a matter with a certain unity, while in the case of its Incarnation in a representation, the idea is the semeiotic unity out of which a sensuous multifold is reduced to an "object." As we have seen (see §§ 1., 1.1., 1.2.), Peirce identifies this unifying principle in objects and substances with a metaphysical 3rdness, or habit.

However, what the notion of bundle of habits carries with it is just the statement of the unity itself of a subject more than the explanation of it. Moreover, as we have seen, a habit provides unity to different instantiations (so that different "prescinded" A-facts belong in reality to a unitary B-fact or event), but it is still unclear what provides unity to a substance understood as a bundle of habits. How can a bundle of habits be unified? Peirce's inquiry into the notion of "idea" seems to provide some clarifications. In explaining what an "idea" is, Peirce puts forward four, synonymical notions: "final cause" (W1: 144), "function" (W1: 148), "plan" (W1: 150), and performance (what the idea "performs," W1: 147). Peirce seems to say as early as 1864 that the "final cause" is the metaphysical principle that accounts for the unity of a substance. The interesting point is that the "idea" receives its ultimate unity and further unifying power from the final cause. In this early manuscript, Peirce refers to the final cause also with the synonymical notions of "plan," "function" and "performance." To be sure, there is not metaphysical distinction between the "idea" and its unifying final cause, but a possible logical separation. According to Peirce's account, the idea can be described as the *organic agency* of the habits of an X insofar as these habits show a certain common realization of a final cause. According to this perspective, there are different levels of realization of the same objectively vague final cause. At each level of realization, the *vague* final cause is "limited" or determined in a specific way, which corresponds to the *specific* final cause characterizing a substance. In this way, Peirce's metaphysical perspective contemplates a hierarchy of specific final causes and forms which are in mutual relationship of inclusion (the vaguer includes the more determinate) and limitation (the more determinate limits the vaguer). A final cause has therefore different levels of "application" to a matter (W1: 150). Let us consider one of Peirce's examples, i.e., the case of an artificial object such as a piano. The final cause of a musical instrument as a piano can be understood in a very broad and vague way, such as: "the final cause of an organ or a piano widely stated is to exalt the aesthetic nature and to produce remote effects upon the whole nature of man and thus to improve the condition of the universe" (W 1: 147). However, this final cause could also define something else, such as a work of art of any type. It is possible to define the final cause of the piano also in a more determinate way, so that we have that "all that this instrument can in itself do is to make the

62 See the study on the notion of "quality," "abstraction," "predicate," "fiction" or "figment" in relation to Peirce's early linguistically problematical approach to nominalism and realism. In particular, see Peirce's early cognitivism about the reality of the general that is at the same time a refusal of nominalism.

63 The emerging, inchoative unity of the "substance" in the development of a representation as it is described in the "New List" (see EP1: 1-2, 1868) is the point of intersection of semeiotic and metaphysics. For an insightful commentary of this early essay, see Ishida 2009, in particular 13-16 on the notion of "substance."

sounds when placed within an atmosphere of proper density" (W 1: 147). For this reason, "the idea of the piano is its final cause, namely a sonorous vibrating instrument" (W 1: 146). The proper "idea" of the piano is a final cause that is a "limitation" or restriction of a more indeterminate and comprehensive final cause. This restriction, of course, entails certain features, like being made of a material capable of producing vibrations. In other words, the specific restriction of a general final cause requires corresponding, specific means (W1: 150).

The further point to stress is that a function can specify a subject without being perfectly realized in it. There is a multi-level or multi-degree possibility of realization of the final cause that corresponds to its different level of determination. Peirce's distinction between Incarnation and Carnification is explicitly based on this possibility of multi-level realization and determination of the final cause. Peirce writes:

> When that incarnation of a predicate which we have called Function becomes Perfect, we have no matter left, in the sense of an impressed thing, so that there is no longer an incarnation but rather a Carnification of the predicate. … It is easy to see that this is not a subject except so far as the abstract predicate itself is its own subject; hence it is entirely beyond our present field of thought. The incarnation reduced to a nullity is merely the Function of Function … it may be called Materiafication. … Incarnation may be regarded as a Combination between Carnification and Materiafication. And how can this occur? By the determination of the Material by its idea. (W1: 149)

The partial realization of a plan (Incarnation) means that the function has a multi-level realization. Since this realization has the nature of the "application" of a function or plan to a matter, the gradual realization corresponds to the increasing level of organization that the matter and its lower "functions" and "forms" receives. In fact, a matter has already some set of structuring functions, which are not dismissed by the new instance of application but only subsumed under a new organized pattern of agency. For example, in describing human thinking from a neuro-physiological standpoint, Peirce makes clear that "thinking, as cerebration, is not doubt subject to the general laws of nervous action" (CP 3.155). However, the higher-level plan, as a new overarching function, transforms the previous structuring functions and makes a new subject out of them by giving them a new, comprehensive final cause. In this way, the matter becomes the actualizing mean for a new plan, or the occasion of application of a new function. In a R1116 example, the wood, considered as the material of a piano, has its own inherent structures. When the wood is used to build a piano, its original function is functionalized to a new function, e.g. a particular kind of capacity of vibrating. It is however possible that some of the previous forms are functionalized, while others are not. This corresponds to the possibility of a bad realization of the piano-plan and a good realization of a piano-plan. This point is not directly related to the different modalities of realization of a vague function (i.e., the different "classes" obtained through the multifold realization of the plan: piano, organ, harpsichord, etc., W1: 150-151; see EP2: 125, 1902), but to the possibility of a better or worse realization of the same determination (the same "class"). There can be different "intermediate conditions" of Incarnation between the two extremes of Materiafication and Carnification. Therefore, the reality of substance is an issue of "equilibrium" (W1: 150) among a defying function and the other functions that have to be organized by it.

A last point to make here is a reflection about Peirce's characterization of a real individual as a "collective subject" endowed with "extension." Peirce, after distinguishing among "monads," "collective subjects" and "universal subjects," observes that "no monad is known to exists, for all subjects which we know have extension" (W1: 144). It follows from this statement that a subject is something that have "extension" among its essential features. Peirce's rejection of monads echoes his later critical consideration about the possibility of an "absolute individual"[64] in metaphysics and "logical atoms" in logics (see e.g. CP3.93 n.1). However, an interpretative problem arises from this passage since Peirce does not seem to clarify further his notion of extension. The only suggestions he provides are that "extension is infinite" and that "all collective subjects are partial subjects" (W1: 144).[65] My interpretative proposal is to read this passage in the light of what I have shown in the first part of this chapter, when I developed a Peircean theory of individual objects as a law-like series of subsequent instantiations. As a consequence, Peirce's statement can be elucidated by saying that the "extension" of a subject coincides with its subsequent actualizations and developments in space and in time. In other words,

64 Or simply "individual" as distinct from "singular," see above.

65 See De Tienne (1989: 388-389) on the early development of the notion of "infinite."

a subject is extended if it has spatio-temporal parts. In this sense, a subject is a "collective subject," namely, a continuous series of instances in which every spatio-temporal slice has the metaphysical and semeiotic status of a "singular" (see e.g. EP1: 106-107, 1877; EP2: 208, 1903). Moreover, since "extension is infinite," "all collective subjects are partial subjects" (W1: 144). The potential extension of *S* and *T*, as we have seen in the section on the continuum, implies infinity, even though potential infinity.[66] Indeed, *T*, as a continuum, is the form of the indefinite, potential actualizations of the specific continuities that characterize a substance as this or that type of substance. Therefore, also the general dispositions of a substance (habits, laws, 3dnesses) have a metaphysical potential infinity. In other words, space, time and specific general dispositions are the inexhaustible matrix from which an infinite number of concrete instantiations can result. If this interpretative account is correct, Peirce's characterization of a "collective subject" as "partial" becomes simple and clear. In fact, (P1) if a subject considered as a general substance is a bundle of specific habits (produced on the metaphysical background of space and time), and (P2) if the metaphysical status of a habit is that of being potentially infinite in relation to existence, it follows that (C) every subject in its concrete reality (a law-like sum or set of successive spatio-temporal slices) is only a partial realization of what it could be. Later on, in an often-quoted text, Peirce makes this point clear in relation to the human life:

> The very being of the General, of Reason, *consists* in its governing individual events. So, then, the essence of reason is such that its being never can have been completely perfected. It always must be in a state of incipiency, of growth. It is like the character of a man which consists in the ideas that he will conceive and in the efforts that he will make, and which only develops as the occasions actually arise. Yet in all his life long no son of Adam has ever fully manifested what there was in him. So, then, the development of Reason requires as a part of it the occurrence of more individual events than ever can occur. (EP2: 255, 1903)

In this text we witness in a clear way how the logical and metaphysical account of individuality in general also accounts for the reality and experience of human beings. The individual human carries in herself both the limitedness of a spatio-temporal existence (she really is a "collective subject" partially realized in her extension) and the metaphysical vocation to a (impossible?) complete actualization of potentially infinite possibilities.

3.2. Final Causality and "Destination"

In this section I develop point (i). Just like the notion of "substance," also the metaphysical principle of final causation is drawn by Peirce from Aristotle (CP 1.22). Since this is a very broad topic in Peirce's philosophy and there is already a good deal of work in this field (Hulswit 2002; Short (1994: 91-150); Colapietro 2004a; Potter (1997: 112-121); Reynolds (2002: 57-59); Oliver 1964; Pape 1993; Wang 2005)[67], I will not develop it here as a separate topic, but only refer to it insofar as it is crucial for an adequate understanding of Peirce's philosophy of the human individual. Peirce provides at least two definitions of final causation. First, final causation is the metaphysical principle of a substance which determines not in what particular way an event has to be brought about, but only that that event "shall have a certain general character" (e.g., EP2: 120, 1902). In this sense, the final cause of an object is the general plan that regulates all the events that are subjected to that final cause. As a general, however, it leaves room for a certain amount of indeterminacy, so that different instantiations of the same final cause can have different traits, even though traits which do not contradict the "general character" of the final cause. Second, a final cause is the metaphysical principle that determines a substance not through a physical "force," but through an attractive "power" (CP 5.520). Final cause always becomes actualized through some efficient cause, which works as the organized matter determined attractively by the final cause and which interacts with the spatio-temporal concrete environment in which it finds itself. However, the two aspects of the

66 See e.g. "In any succession of events that have occurred there must be some kind of regularity. Nay, there must be regularities strictly exceeding all multitude" (EP2: 269, 1893).

67 In particular, Hulswit (2002: 84-91) offers an insightful reconstruction of Peirce's doctrine of teleology in relation to the notions of "objective chance," "creativity" and development. However, he does not focus on the problem of *human* teleology, being more interested in final causation as a cosmological principle.

final cause, generality and attractiveness, have to be understood in the context of Peirce's evolutionary philosophy (the cosmos is in the making) and tychism (objective chance is real). This is also true in relation to the human being, to whom I will limit my analysis. As we have read, the teleology characterizing a human being has a fundamental "developmental" structure, in which both generality and attractiveness *evolve*.

What I want to stress at this point is Peirce's characterization of the evolution of the human final cause as a "destined" development. In one of his defense of the teleological nature of all processes, Peirce writes: "what is a "final" cause? It is merely a tendency to produce some determinate kind of effect having some relation to the *destiny* of things" (EP2: 464-465, 1913; see also EP2: 342-343, 1905). In order to make clear Peirce's stance on this point, I would suggest to consider abstractly the notion of "destiny of things" either (1) in relation to a thing understood as a series of events characterized by a common final cause, or (2) in relation to the final cause in itself. Distinguishing these two points is important to underscore two aspects of the notion of destiny that do not coincide. (1) Now, a thing can be said destined in its tendency insofar as all its happenings, events and actions follow somehow a general character. This is a requisite that follows from the first definition of the final cause as a "general character" imparted to things, as well as from Peirce's extreme Scholastic realism. In this case, the subject of the destination is the thing considered as a series of instantiations. To give an example drawn from everyday life, if the ultimate purpose of my life at *t* is to become a music player, every single action that I will perform will show in different ways and degrees this ultimate aspiration of mine. (2) However, this is not the only point stressed by Peirce about final causation, insofar as destination has for him also a developmental implication. This developmental clause becomes clear when the destination is attributed not primarily to the thing understood as a series of instantiations, but to the final cause itself of that thing. In this second case, destination of a final cause means that the final cause that characterizes a substance evolves over time, assumes a different form. Taking again the same example, although the ultimate purpose of an agent at *t* is to become a music player, it is likely that that purpose develops over time at *t2* into a more determinate one, such as becoming a piano player, and maybe a jazz player. In the fourth 1903 Harvard Lecture, Peirce reinterprets the Aristotelian notion of *potentia* as that particular modality of being that is *esse in futuro* (EP2: 180, 1903; see also EP2: 123, 1903). Similarly, Peirce reminds us that the notions of "law of nature," or simply "nature," means in an Aristotelian and Scotistic sense "being in futuro" and "Germinal being," namely, the matrix from which not only new instances but also new habits can take shape (EP2: 68-69, 1901). Peirce also connects the idea of final cause to the notions of "birth," "natura," and "physis" (EP2: 121-122, 1902). Accordingly, the *potentia* or *esse in futuro* do not refer only to the will-bes of future instances of already established dispositions (given these dispositions, actions A would happen if conditions C occurred), but also to the would-bes of future habits which would take shape in the substance (and that would in a sense re-shape the substance) if certain conditions C occurred. In this sense, law of nature, natures and final cause are the different facets of the same "reasonableness energizing the world … which belonged to the essentially evolutionary metaphysics of Aristotle, as well as to the scholastic modifications of it by Aquinas and Scotus … and Gassendi" (EP2: 69, 1901).

A further analysis found in a 1909 letter to Williams James (EP2: 500-501, 1909) can help the understanding of the developmental teleology defended by Peirce. In this letter, Peirce distinguishes between three different metaphysical dimensions of reality, the "would-bes," the "may-bes" and the "facts" or "occurrences." The would-bes are the powers or the general laws according to which a substance interacts with the world; the "may-bes" are the positive, possible configurations (also names "qualities") of the being of a substance which could emerge and become actual if certain conditions occurred; finally, the "facts" or "occurrences" are the instantiations of the possible qualities, which actualize in a particular way the general character determined by the would-be. Now, the may-bes of a substance are determined by its would-bes, while the facts are the instantiations of these two dimensions.[68] The determination has to be understood as a final process and not as a deterministic process. What is important to stress here is the fact that the developmental aspect that characterizes the final cause of a substance concerns not only the facts and the may-bes, but also the would-bes.[69]

68 Read this passage together with an earlier text, in which Peirce observes that a Thirdness, a "capacity or a habit," implies certain possibilities and certain impossibilities" (EP2: 396, 1906).

69 Peirce refers sometimes to the teleological dimension of events as a "finious" instead of teleological dimension (CP 7.471). It is defined as the general tension to "act in one determinate direction and tend asymptotically toward bringing about an ultimate state of things." The notion of "finious" should add to the more traditional idea of teleology a component of evolution and irreversibility.

A last question should be asked about this point in order to solve an ambiguity in Peirce's thesis. In fact, if it is true that the cosmos is in the making and that part of this evolutionary process happens as development of the teleology of the substances, how is it possible then to talk about permanent substances as having this or that set of habits? From the standpoint of evolutionary cosmology,[70] the habits displayed in reality (including the habit of taking-habit) have developed over time (e.g. EP1: 297, 1891; EP1: 245-279) and will most likely keep developing. Peirce writes that "tychism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth" (EP1: 313, 1892; see also EP1: 352, 1893). As it is clear, this point is linked to the problem of "classification" of reality and to the related issue of the identity of a substance through different realizations. Although I cannot dwell here with the difficult problem of classification,[71] it is important to stress in relation to the first question that Peirce claimed for the possibility of "natural classification" (see EP2: 115-132, 1902). Interesting enough, Peirce believed that part of the task of knowledge was natural classification at least since 1864. In the "Analysis of the Ego," Peirce shows that the shortcomings of existent taxonomies depend upon the limits of our empirical knowledge and not upon the impossibility of such a task. Peirce makes clear that the "arbitrary" character of our taxonomies result both from considerations of contextual convenience and from the partiality of the information available to us. However, even though "we can classify [an X] according to any of its predicates," Peirce remarks that "were the representation *perfect*, it would be represent the idea of [X] fully, so that [X] would have no predicate which this representation failed to express; and classification according to such a representation would have nothing arbitrary in it. It is this classification which is the infinitely distant point at which we aim" (W1: 145). Always in this text, Peirce spells out that the restriction of the "final cause" that constitutes the specific plan of an entity should conform to the "really inherent" final cause of the substance, although the identification of this inherent property in science has always the perspective nature of an approximation. It is the "inherent purpose expressed as inherent" that constitutes the regulative criterion of the natural classification (W1: 147-148).

Moving now to the second question, we can ask: Is it possible to talk of stable substances if the world is a world in the making and the final cause and the habits characteristic of substances develop over time? The answer is no, in one sense, and yes, in another. The answer is no if we take stable substances in the sense of eternal entities, such in an Aristotelian cosmos, or entities incapable of any change.[72] In this respect, Peirce objection is not to a theory of a substance but to a theory of fixed cosmos. However, in this light, the problem turns into a slightly different one, which I would formulate in the following way: is it possible to talk of stable substances, namely, substances characterized by permanent habits and final causes, insofar as these substances have already appeared in the cosmos and have not disappeared yet? This question is an interesting one because it goes at the heart of the metaphysical and scientific implications of Peirce's theory of developmental teleology. A hint of Peirce's answer to this question is provided by a text on natural classes in which Peirce's characterizes "classification as genealogical." In this text, we read that

> … genealogical classification, among those objects of which the genesis is genealogical, is the classification we can most certainly rely upon as being natural. No harm will be done if, in those cases, we define the natural classification as the genealogical; or, at least, that we make the genealogical character one of the essential characters of a natural classification. It cannot be more; because if we had before us ranged in ancestral order all the intermediate forms through which the human stock has passed in developing from non-man into man, it is plain that other considerations would be necessary in determining (if it admitted of determination) at what point in the series the forms begin to merit the name of human. (EP2: 126, 1902)

There are at least two points in this passage that I want to underline. First, Peirce stresses the fact that, if

70 See also "idealism" or "Cosmogonic Philosophy" (EP1: 97, 1891). Short 2010 has recently claimed that Peirce did not manage to develop a "cosmology." Even assuming that this is a correct interpretation, it does not follow from this that Peirce did not conceive the world as a reality in the making. On passing, I only want to mention the fact that Short seems to take the notion of cosmology in too a narrow sense, as referring not to the general metaphysical doctrine that reality evolves but as the experimental science of the empirical laws of this evolution.

71 There is an ongoing debate on the precise understanding of Peirce's theory of "natural classes." See Hulswit 1997, Haack 1992, Hookway 1995, Rosenthal 1994, Hawkins 2007. I agree with Hulswit and Haack realistic interpretation of Peirce on this point.

72 Although Sorrell's recent reconstruction of Peirce's notion of substance is wrong in many respects, I agree on him on this point. See Sorrell (2001: 265).

there is something like a human being, it means that at the certain point a substance with this or that final cause and this or that habits made its appearance as an original reality ("non-human"), although in a synechistic continuity with what preceded her. Although the synechistic perspective prescribes "the passage from one form to another by insensible degrees" (CP 2.646), the passage is still real and can be known. Second, Peirce claims that it is at least a rational scientific hypothesis of work, connected to the activity of discovery of natural classes, to ask what is the point in the evolution of the cosmos in which the human being made her appearance. In other words, the problem highlighted in this passage is epistemological or scientific and not metaphysical. It fact, it is possible that "in the case of natural classes the final cause remains occult" (EP2: 116-117, 1902). This is however a description of the hard task of scientific discovery, which has to rely on empirical studies and statistical inductions, but not a skepticism about the reality of stable, defining final causes. This is so true that in the case of artifacts human beings can clearly state to identify the final cause. In many passages, Peirce hints at the "nature" of the human beings. For instance, in MS299:00021, Peirce observes that part of the human being's task in life is to "to work out his own nature and impulses." At the same time, Peirce was interested in the study and classification of human instincts, a topic that is closely linked to his doctrine of the "critical common sense."[73] In particular, Ayim (1982: 23-25) lists ten different types of human instincts, which are the evolutive ramification of the rational instinct.

We have now all the elements to answer the question about the stability of the human being as a substance in the face of the development of her final cause. We can say that for Peirce the ultimate final cause and most fundamental habit of the human being is what he calls the "rational instinct." Peirce arrives at the belief in the human "rational instinct" through epistemic and metaphysical considerations on the very possibility of the abductive inference, which we cannot reconstruct here.[74] I am interested here not in the structure of the method through which Peirce comes to this conclusion, but in the conclusion itself. The human mind is "akin" to reality because has evolved through it and it is this original familiarity that grounds metaphysically the capacity of guessing true explanatory hypothesis about phenomena or true judgments about moral, aesthetic etc. issues. Rationality plays its function in the human beings as a continuous attraction toward 3rdness in its entirety. The instinctive mind consists for Peirce in "*in posse* innate cognitive habits" (CP 5.504). In speaking about the "function" (the Aristotelian *ergon*) of the human individual, Peirce writes: "What is man's proper function if it not be to embody general ideas in art-creations, utilities, and above all theoretical recognition?" (EP2: 443, 1908). If we had to identify one property that is distinctive of the human being and of her teleological destination is the rational instinct. However, it should be clear that the property " … being rational" is extremely vague in its reality. The rational instinct, although vague, does not mean for Peirce emptiness of being or absolute indeterminacy, but refers on the contrary to a final cause already realized in the human being, although in a way which requires further development and specification. As such, the vague final cause overshadowed by the "rational instinct" can be considered as that final cause which both provides the "general," stable character" of all human activity, although its original objective vagueness undergoes a process of transformation (at different levels, both in the history of human stock and in the personal history of every human individual in her lifetime). The continuity in the evolution of the human being, understood as a general substance or type, is the stable teleology of each individual human being to model her or his vague sense of rationality onto the 3rdness of the world and to contribute to its evolution in this way. Again, the concept of evolution must be understood at different levels: 1. there is the evolution of the human being, who remains however the same general substance or type through this evolution insofar as the continuity coincides with different stages of determination of the *same* vague final cause; 2. there is cosmological evolution (without considering the contribution of human beings), according to which substances come into light and perish; 3. there is a cosmological evolution, which takes place mainly through the cooperation of human beings. The evolutive "destiny" of the human teleology is therefore to determine the vagueness of their rational vocation into the knowledge of the world and in the intelligence of a creative agency, mainly moral and artistic. Therefore, the important point to stress at the end of this subsection is only that the development of the vague teleology is not at odds with the permanency of this same teleology in its vagueness.[75] This permanency is manifested not in the permanency of a stable, specific habit

73 See Chapter 3.

74 See on this Ayim 1974 and Maddalena 2003.

75 I agree here with Short (1994: 406).

of behavior but in the continuity of the vocation of the human being to an intelligent growth.

A last point I want to make here is the connection between the action of the final cause, the destination implicit in the teleology of all things and the type of evolutive process that is considered by Peirce pivotal. As we have seen, the final cause performs a function different from the efficient cause, even though the two metaphysical principles always work in connection. While the efficient cause provide the actual "material" on through which the final cause can exercise its organizing and productive agency[76], the final cause constitutes the "ideal" general tendency in the light of which the matter is organized and put to work in one direction or the other. "Efficient causation is that kind of causation whereby the parts compose the whole; final causation is that kind of causation whereby the whole calls out its part. Final causation without efficient causation is helpless, by far; it is mere chaos; and chaos is not even so much as chaos, without final causation: it is blank nothing" (EP2: 124, 1902). A further clarification of the action of the final cause, as distinct from the efficient, is the distinction between "force" and "power" (CP 5.520). While an actual reality exercises in its actuality a force all around itself, so that its mere spatio-temporal presence produces an efficient causal agency on the environment, the same thing as characterized by a general teleology produces changes in itself and in its environment determined by the attractive power of that final end and its internal vocation to development.[77] Sometimes Peirce refers to this attractive dynamics as a phenomenon of "divination" in which early stages in the development of mind undergo a sympathetic fascination for what is still to come. "By the immediate attraction for the idea itself, whose nature is divined before the mind possesses it, by the power of sympathy, that is, by virtue of the continuity of mind" (CP 6.307). In a cosmological perspective, Peirce refers to this developmental dynamic as the Agapastic type of evolution (or "Evolutinary Love") as contextual but not reducible to the Tychastic and Anancastic types of evolution (EP1: 352-371). In a narrower anthropological sense, this developmental dynamic states simply that the process of determination of the vague final cause is neither only a random process, determined by chaotic variations (corresponding to Tychism), nor only an efficient process fully determined by causal antecedent (physical, social and historical, corresponding to Ananchism), but is a process led by an attractive power that the the "idea" exercises on the individual agent. The "genesis" of a reality, says Peirce, is in its most important aspect "production from ideas" (EP2: 127, 1902) instead of determination from antecedent efficient causes. Peirce pictures this type of evolutions as the action of "love, [which] recognizing germs of loveliness in the hateful, gradually warms it into life, and makes it lovely. That is the sort of evolution which every careful student of my essay "The Law of Mind" must see that synechism calls for" (CP 6.289).

3.3. Developmental Teleology as Determination of the "Objective Vagueness" of the Human Individual

However, how does Peirce clarify the thesis that the development of the final cause is determined in virtue of a process of loving attraction? In this section, I claim for one main point, namely, that the process of development of the final cause has the structure of a semiotic process real determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause. Two passages we have already quoted are extremely instructive on this point. In one

76 In Peirce's account, the Aristotelian distinction between the efficient and the material cause is reduced to the matter of the efficient cause that is "organized" by the final cause. In a certain sense, the brain-cells, the arm and the hands on the computer are one composite efficient cause that actualizes my "ideas" in the form of a written dissertation. See e.g. EP2: 121, 1902. On this, see Holmes (1963: 370-371) and Skagestad 1999.

77 It is worth quoting an illuminating commentary to this point contained in Colapietro (1985: 501-502): "Thus, in the course of one's life, one's mind is molded not only by the brute force of experience, but also by the gentle musing of mind. As Peirce suggests, a distinction can be drawn between being *forceful* and being *powerful* (CP 5.520). It is appropriate to speak of ideals being powerful, but not of them being forceful. Their mode of influence (which Peirce calls "logos-influence") is not brute compulsion, but creative love. To speak of creative love in this way means that there are influences truly operative in the world which possess these characteristics: These influences are gentle rather than brutal, i.e., they call forth rather than push against; these influences *qua* loving are respectful of the natures of the things which they mold. The action of the sun upon a flower would be an example of such an influence. … What this means, in part, is that there are *real* influences in the world other than the *actual* force or brute compulsion. These influences are, in effect (thought not in intent), loving: they call forth the most complete realization of that which they influence. Their action is far more like a sign giving rise to an interpretant than a projectile colliding with an object. True maturity requires us to become like children again and to see nature as a cosmos, a real in which Reason is immanent (CP 1.349)."

of them, Peirce states that the structure of the function of the human person is "to work out his own nature and impulses, to aid others, and to contribute to the fulfillment of the destiny of a person's generation" (MS299: 00021). In a different text, he adds: "What is man's proper function if it not be to embody general ideas in art-creations, utilities, and above all theoretical recognition?" (CP 6.466). The latter statement is repeated not only in relation to human beings, but as a general statement about developmental teleology, when Peirce remarks that "evolution is nothing more nor less than the working out of a definite end. …" (EP2: 117, 1902). The first quotation points out the concrete aspect of human beings' semeiotic agency, in the sense that "embodiment" refers to all the different concrete interpretants which every single individual produces in her life. Development of the final cause means here production of different instantiations (actual may-bes, Secondnesses) of the same final cause (would-be, Thirdness) in different contexts on the basis of the possibilities of instantiations allowed by the final cause (may-bes, Firstnesses). The second and third quotations, in their reference to the "working out" of the final cause, seem to imply more than the simple embodiment of the end. In fact, "working out" entails movement, transformation, creativity, and determination.[78] It is precisely this movement of transformation that has in Peirce's terms the nature of a semeiotic determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause. In CP 5.536, in the context of the discussion of our possibility of knowing God, Peirce states that our knowledge can only be "vague," so that we can approach theism only "vaguely like a man.[79]" This section focuses on human beings' vagueness in relation to the destined evolution of their teleology.

Talking of "objective vagueness" requires an adequate understanding of this notion in relation to different aspects of the issue of vagueness developed by Peirce. I will limit here to consider vagueness in relation to signs, in order to make clear what is the nature of the semeiotic determination of vagueness we see in developmental teleology. First of all, Peirce distinguishes two types of vagueness, one subjective and one objective. A sign is subjectively vague when its interpretability is already sufficiently determined but the interpreter's ignorance about the sign hinders an adequate comprehension of it. On the contrary, a sign is objectively vague when its indeterminacy does not depend upon the shortcomings of the interpreter. Peirce also remarks that his extreme Scholastic realism entails not only a metaphysical commitment to "real generals" and "real possibilities," but also to "real vagues" (EP2: 354, 1905; see also 355-356). Peirce writes:

> A sign is objectively vague, in so far as, leaving its interpretation more or less indeterminate, it reserves for some other possible sign or experience the function of completing the determination. "This month," says the almanac-oracle, "a great event is to happen." "What event?" "Oh, we shall see. The almanac doesn't tell that." (CP 5.505; 5.447)

In the case of the objectivity of vagueness of a sign, the indeterminacy is given by the fact that the sign requires further contextual knowledge which is not still available and the ignorance of which is not in the interpreter's responsibility.[80] A second point that is important here is to distinguish the indeterminacy of vagueness from another form of indeterminacy, namely generality. One of Peirce's strategies to mark the distinction between vagueness and generality is strictly formal and relies on the observation that while the principle of excluded middle does not apply to a general reality, it is the principle of contradiction that does not apply to vagueness (CP 5.448; see 5.505).[81] However, a more interesting analysis for our topic is a broader semeiotic approach to the distinction. According to Peirce, a sign is objectively general, and therefore indeterminate, when it leaves to the interpreter the interpretative function of determining it without the need of further signs and knowledge. If I say "Man is a rational being," the interpretation and determination of the symbol "man" only requires that the interpreter picks the instance of "man" he wants, without the need to wait for collateral clarifications about what is the man to which the sentence is referring. On the other hand, a sign is objectively vague when further signs and contextual knowledge are needed in order to determine the correct interpretation of the sign, such as in the previous example of the great event foreseen by the oracle. It is true that

78 Hausman 1975 develops this point talking of the "radical creativity" or "radical growth" of reality. He also talks of "teleological continuity" as the fundamental tie of the different phases of evolution.

79 For a discussion of Peirce's theism and theory of vagueness in the light of the expression "vaguely like a man," see Potter 1996b.

80 This point would require an analysis of Peirce's semeiotic in relation to the problem of reference, "entelechy," and "Truth" (beautifully exemplified e.g. in EP: 303-304, 1904), which is however impossible here. For an interpretation of Peirce's mature semeiotic as dependent upon a conception of final causation, see e.g., Short (1994: 63).

81 See Lane 1997.

every sign remains to some extent vague, so that its interpretability is never exhausted by present interpretations and signs but can always developed further (CP 2.357). This does not mean that the same reality, from a metaphysical viewpoint, cannot be both general and vague.[82]

The process of development of the final cause of human beings is therefore the transformation of the signs relative to each individual's purposes, ideals, desires, aspirations, etc. The signs here at stake should include the various dimensions of the human being's inner and outer life, propositions about moral goodness and aesthetic worth, events happened and planned, desires and emotions, feelings and hopes. I will deal with this topic in an ampler way in Chapter 2, so that it is not necessary to pull out the details of this topic here. However, what is important to stress here is a threefold thesis:

(i) Human beings's objectively vague final cause manifests itself in their life in the form of objectively vague symbols – in particular, "purposes" – and therefore has this vagueness as its metaphysical status.[83]

(ii) Thesis (i) fits nicely with Peirce's understanding of semeiosis as a teleological process (see e.g. EP2: 315-317, 1904).[84]

(iii) The semeiotic determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause-signs coincides with a metaphysical development of the final cause itself. In other words, there is no dualism between the development of life of the mind and the mind itself.[85]

The process of determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause must be understood both from the viewpoint of humankind and from the viewpoint of each human individual. In the former case, the product of the process of determination is the set of (still vague) "instinctive beliefs" which according to Peirce characterizes all human beings with some kind of universality.[86] In the latter case, the product of the process of determination is both the idiosyncratic development of the instinctive beliefs in each human being and the "Ideal" of life that each human being acknowledges as his or her unique normative responsibility.[87] When Peirce defines *real* as "that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you" (EP1: 52 and W2: 239, 1868), he is not only referring to what is already existent and we do not know only for epistemic irresponsibility and human limits. He is also referring to the fact that the process of semeiosis will determine *at some point* some vague aspects of reality that cannot be determined at present.

I conclude this subsection by simply illustrating Peirce's connection between metaphysical final causality, objective vagueness and practical purposes. In other words, for Peirce the development of the human teleology is brought about as a determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause through a constant semeiotic endeavor. In a 1903 text, Peirce spells out the dynamics of evolution implied in the idea of 3rdness:

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82 "The qualities, in so far as they are general, are somewhat vague and potential" (CP 1.419).

83 The nominalism generally opposed in Peirce's early theory of cognition takes on an "incognizable reality" behind appearances (CP 5.312), and the anti-nominalistic strategy undertaken asserts that "the absolutely incognizable does not exist, so that the phenomenal manifestation of a substance is the substance" (CP 5.313). See Colapietro (1985: 493), according to whom Peirce's doctrine of the "mind-as-semiosis" implies that a "substance is nothing other than the total range of its phenomenal manifestations. That is, there is no, in principle, unknowable entity underlying the totality of the appearances."

84 This is a shared conviction in Peirce scholarship, as displayed again by again Short and Lizska. See also: "the truth of the formula, that is, the law, is, in its strictest sense, the defining cause of the real individual facts. … Every sufficiently complete symbol is a final cause of, and "influences," real events, in precisely the same sense in which my desire to have the window open, that is, the symbol in my mind of the agreeability of it, influences the physical facts of my rising from my chair, going to the window, and opening it" (EP2: 315-317, 1904). See in particular Kruse 1986, who shows how the process of semeiosis is teleological and takes place through abductive phases that display a constant indexical element to the "object."

85 Some scholars have more or less explicitly related the topic of metaphysical teleology and semeiosis to the problem of the evolution of human mind. This is the fundamental tenet of Colapietro 1885, which constitutes the background of all his detailed analyses. See also Goudge 1964; Hausman 1974; Hausman (1993: 57-93; 140-193); Tiercelin-Engel 1992; Ventimiglia 2008; Wells 1964. Short (1994: 406) stresses the role of chance in the evolutionary, teleological process: "chance thus leads to new ends, but only when the new is a way of fulfilling a more general and already operative end." In addition, Potter (1997: 115-130) links together the metaphysical teleology of the human being and the practical life. However, none of these scholars point out what I believe is the crux of the problem, i.e. that the objective vagueness of the final cause evolves through determination in virtue of a semeiotic process performed by human beings. Only Oliver (1964: 297) seems to hint explicitly at this point.

86 See Chapter 3.

87 See Chapter 2.

> … Thirdness consists in the formation of a habit. In any succession of events that have occurred there must be some kind of regularity. … But as soon as time adds another event to the series, a great part of those regularities will be broken, and soon indefinitely. If, however, there be a regularity that never will be and never would be broken, that has a mode of being consisting in this destiny or determination of the nature of things that the endless future shall conform to it, that is what we call a law. (EP2: 269, 1903)[88]

Such a statement about the connection of evolution and lawfulness can be understood only in relation to objective vagueness. We have seen that Peirce believes that although we know what the final causes of human artifacts are (e.g., a lamp), when we come to natural classes "the final cause remains occult" (EP2: 117, 1902). However, this interpretation cannot be taken as definitive, insofar as it aims to highlights only a difficulty in natural classification (epistemic empirical problems of taxonomy) if compared to the classification of human beings' productions. This dynamics is also common to signs in general, since for instance the ground of a rhematic symbolic legisign[89] (e.g., a common English word) is known more easily than, for instance, a dicentic indexical sinsign[90] (e.g., an unknown biological process). If taken literally, this claim would turn Peirce's position into a nominalistic approach to nature, substance and kinds, which is on the contrary Peirce's constant philosophical enemy. A few lines below, Peirce makes clear that we know our final cause in the shape of our "purposes," although this imply neither that our present purpose ought to be our definitive final cause, nor that purpose is the only form in which final cause is operative in nature. "A purpose is … that form of final cause which is most familiar to our experience" (EP2: 120, 1902). Now, the purpose to which I refer here is, in its simplest form, a proposition about what the agent ought to do (a complex dicentic symbolic legisign instantiated in one or more signsigns, such as a mental image or a scribble on a notebook) and therefore the possibility of a general disposition of action (a habit, a metaphysical 3rdness) through a process of growth (development and growth, a phaneroscopic 3rdness). As a consequence, the purpose is a symbol (EP2: 184-185, 1903) and as such it is subjected to the laws of semeiosis. In asking how abstract symbols determine a concrete action (such as in the case in which my "idea" to open the window determines the actual operation of opening the window), Peirce observes:

> They certainly do not, in their character as symbols, directly react upon matter. Such action as they have is merely logical. It is not even psychological. It is merely that one symbol would justify another … (EP2: 184, 1903)

As it is clear in this passage, the agency of the purpose and therefore of practical reasoning is not merely or primarily physical and not even psychological, but rather semeiotic. The final cause of human beings manifests in the form of "purposes" which attract upon review and ask for an adequate semeiotic interpretation by the interpreter. This thesis fits nicely with one of the passages in which Peirce mentions what the ideal of "reasonableness" is. In 1900, Peirce write: "experience of life has taught me that the only thing is really desirable without a reason for being so, is to render ideas and things reasonable. One cannot well demand a reason for reasonableness itself" (1900: 621). This implies that the development of concrete reasonableness most has most of the time the form of a determination of the objective vagueness of the purpose and produces the metaphysical development of the final cause of each and every man who is embarked in a process of self-understanding and practical self-constitution. In this sense, the human being is "the total sum of his language," a "symbol," and "the ideas he will conceive" (EP2: 254).

88 Peirce connects this developmental dynamic to the way in which "substances will get to be permanent" (EP1: 279). Such a statement refers to the ongoing creation of the cosmos and therefore to the appearance and disappearance of specific substances. However, it can also be read in relation to Peirce's problem (and solution) about the possibility that a substance is already this or that type of substance and that at the same time it becomes itself more and more through a developmental process of acquisition of "destined" habits.

89 See Liszka (1996: 51).

90 See Lizska (1996: 51).

3.4. "Already but Not Yet." Carnification and the Unique Mission of the Individual Human Individual

I turn now to the notion of Carnification, which will give me the possibility to develop some conclusive reflections. As I have shown, Carnification is for Peirce the perfect realization of a "predicate" in a matter, where predicate here refers to the "function" or final cause specifying the matter as this or that type of substance. There is one interpretative problem in the ideal of perfect realization of the predicate. In fact, how should perfect realization of the final cause (Carnification) be understood? It seems there is a fluctuation in what Peirce says about this point. On one side, in R1116 he seems to claim that Carnification determines a substance in a definitive way, where "predicate" has to be understood both as a factual determination and as a general disposition. In this perspective, once achieved the condition of Carnification, the substance could not undergo any new change, including those changes that are mere haecceities[91] (for instance, changes in spatial relations). However, this position seems to contradict later developments of Peirce's thought. The first interpretation of Carnification would mean the actualization of a "perfect" or "absolute individual," the reality of which Peirce firmly denies not only from a logical (the impossibility of a "logical atom") but also from a metaphysical standpoint. In a 1907 text, we read:

> Of the two loosely synonymous terms, "individual" and "singular," the former translates Aristotle's *τό άτομον*, the latter *τό καθ έκαστον*. "Individual" is usually and well defined as that which is absolutely determinate; the "singular" is that which is absolutely determinate as long as the time is so, or to generalize this definition, is variable only in two precisely opposite and converse ways of varying. Now it is quite impossible that any collateral observations, however they might be eked out by imagination or thought, should ever approach a positive idea of a singular, let alone an individual; … It is plainly impracticable, therefore, to restrict the meaning of the term "object of a sign" to the Object strictly so called. (EP2: 408-409, 1907)

Peirce is making clear that in speaking about individual objects only "singulars" are metaphysically admissible (which corresponds in my reconstruction to an A-fact, a punctual spatio-temporal instantiation of a 3rdness), although its reality constitutes a limit case of thought. An absolute individual, in which every possible predicate is actualized, is instead metaphysically impossible. The absence of any indeterminacy in a substance would correspond in Peirce's view to something like a metaphysical death. If we recall that the final cause is a general law of realization that, as a general, can never be fully actualized, it follows that a perfect realization of a predicate that entails also the impossibility of any further haecceity properties would contradict the final cause as an inexhaustible matrix of instantiations. It now appears in a clearer light every claim in which Peirce equates the absence of the final cause to the pure "nothingness." For instance "it would not be the utter nothingness which would befall matter (or spirit) if it were to be deprived of the governance of ideas … it would not have even a potential existence; since potentiality is an affair of ideas. It would just be Nothing" (EP2: 123, 1902; see also EP2: 124, 1902; EP2: 343, 1905; CP 1.414).[92] A further argument against the possibility of an absolute individual comes from semeiotic considerations, and in particular from Peirce's rejection of the descriptivist theory of rhematic indexical legisigns (R283: 145-146, c.1905; see also EP2: 408-409). In Peirce's view, if the descriptivist approach to indices were correct, it would imply that an index user is able to develop a perfect knowledge (logical atom) of an individual entity (absolute individual). This hypothesis is not only unlikely for the fact that it places an unreasonable epistemic demand on the index user for her activity of reference.[93] It is also absurd because in the perspective of Peirce's extreme Scholastic realism and anti-nominalism, since a logical atom is impossible, it is also impossible that something like an absolute individual exists. If it existed, it could not be experienced nor known, in a way that there would be something "real" which is however not knowable, not even

91 For a discussion of Peirce's notion of haecceity, see DiLeo (1991: 92-99).

92 This point is already made clear in 1864 with the terminology of the "Analysis of the Ego": "The Incarnation reduced to a nullity is merely the Function of Function … it may be called Materiafication" (W1: 149). The function which does not have a matter to organize is like a possibility of agency with no means of instantiation which hopelessly turns on itself ("Function of Function"); at the same time, the "matter" deprived of a teleological and organizing function is dumb absence of regularity, absolute chaos and therefore a nullity. In this case, an "absolute individual," i.e. an existent whose whole reality coincides with anti-generals or 2ndnesses, coincides with a nothingness.

93 See Agler (2010: 226).

in the long run. Also for this reason, Peirce rejects the metaphysical reality of the absolute individual.

In any case, the first interpretation of the notion of Carnification is not the only possible, and maybe not even the most insightful. In fact, Peirce remarks that the nature of the perfect realization of the predicate is the perfect realization of the final cause. I would interpret this perfect realization as the ultimate determination of the objective vagueness of the final cause, according to the reconstruction I have given in the previous subsections. Peirce repeats many times that a general disposition, being a general reality, is always metaphysically richer than any and all of its concrete instantiations. The consequence of this claim is that the ultimate realization in a substance of the final cause coincides with the realization of a set of destined habits and not of every possible properties, including haecceitaties. It is something of the nature of a complete reign of law, in which the world has become a "perfect, rational, and symmetrical system" (see CP 6.33, 1891). In other words, Carnification implies its perfect realization in relation to its *general* dispositions but not in relation to its haecceitaties. In the terms of Peirce's mature semeiotic, in this second interpretation Carnification would mean a set of true ultimate interpretants and not the end of the process of semeiosis (see e.g. CP5.491).[94] It is important to stress that the perfect determination of the vagueness of one's final cause (or the development of one's true ultimate interpretants, which are the same thing seen from two different perspectives) is not an evolutive dynamics that is identical in every human individual. In one of the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we read that the character of a man "consists in the ideas he will conceive … which only develops as the occasions actually arise" (EP2: 255, 1903). Similarly, in the passage on the contribution that the human being can give to the ongoing cosmic creation, Peirce refers to the role and mission that each and all human beings have as it is "up" to them (EP2: 255, 1993). We have also seen that every individual human being has a unique idiosyncrasy, which instead of being destined to perish is called to become true (see W1: 501; W2: 124). Although general, the ultimate interpretants developed by different human individuals are not fully overlapping. There is a gap that coincides for Peirce with the unique mission to which every human being is called.

The human individual lives in each moment within a polar dynamic of Incarnation and Carnification, of partial realization of a final cause and a perfectly realized determination of her Ideal mission in the process of creation, as in Saint Paul's "already but not yet." In the light of Peirce's evolutionary creationism, the different instances of Incarnation stay for the different intermediate phases between the "Absolute First," or "God the Creator," and the "Absolute Second," or "God completely revealed" (EP1: 251). Peirce names each and all these intermediate phases "Third," as the mediating reality in creation between the Alpha of absolute potentiality and the Omega of the perfection of creation.[95] This teleological and almost eschatological approach to the final cause gives an ultimate and architectonic unity to the human being, which coincides with the unique duty of each human life. Using the two notions of Incarnation and Carnification, we could say that the life of each human individual metaphysically coincides with a real but vague "Incarnation" of the Reason of the universe in teleological tension toward a specific Carnification.

94 I follow on this point Short 2007 instead of Lizska 1996.

95 See the excellent book Raposa 1989. On this point, see in particular Raposa (1989: 63-92).

Chapter 2
Peirce's "Normative Sciences" and Moral Realism

As Kelly Parker has written, Peirce's logic, ethics, and aesthetics, "together … constitute a comprehensive theory of value" (Parker 2003: 28). A significant part of the history of value theories in XXth century can be summed up as the struggle to find a place to human morality within narrow epistemic frameworks and physicalist ontologies. In a famous passage, John L. Mackie points out that moral facts and values have a "queer" metaphysical status if compared to the physical objects and properties we are acquainted with in life and science (Mackie 1977: 38), showing in a clear way the problem of finding the real identity of human morality. In this second chapter, I concentrate on Peirce's understanding of normativity in human life, by showing how his understanding of the "Normative Sciences" open to a broad theory of moral values. I proceed as follows. In the first part (§§ 0. - 1.9.), I reconstruct Peirce's theory of "Normative Sciences" and try to solve some interpretative problems related to alleged contradictions in Peirce's tenets. In particular, I show that Peirce's Normative Sciences should be understood as a unitary theory of human virtues. The fact that Peirce's "values" should be interpreted as "virtues" already gives to Peirce's theory a perspective that is not typical of the mainstream contemporary debate on "moral objects." In the second part (§§ 2. - 2.4.), I consider Peirce's conception of the "pragmatic maxim," the kernel semantic principle of his thought, and I point out how it is intrinsically intertwined with normativity. In the third part (§§ 3. and 3.1.), I focus on Peirce metaethical stance in relation to contemporary moral realism. For this last task, I develop Peirce's views and propose a theory of moral knowledge that is prescriptive in nature and of moral facts as dependent upon the judgment of a rational community. As I will show, Peirce's position can be considered as a kind of moral realism much deeper and refined than contemporary proposals.

0. Historical Sketch of Peirce's Classification of the "Normative Sciences"

Peirce's three "Normative Sciences" (NS) are logic, ethics and aesthetics. Before tackling the analysis of the NS, it is necessary to mention the fact that, as Peirce scholarship has amply understood (see at least Potter 1966; Potter 1997; Kent 1976; Kent 1987; Liszka 2005; Liszka 2012; Davis 1958), the reflection on the NS has always been for Peirce a constant and crucial object of philosophical interest but at the same time a perennial cause of perplexity. Apart from logic, his writings on the subject are often notes or isolated passages instead of fully developed studies. James Liszka writes: "As in much of Peirce's work, in his writing on ethics, there are only sketches, occasional remarks, differing – sometimes conflicting – drafts of material, fragments, and alternative terminologies. Still, Peirce does provide a general outline of a suggestive and innovative systematic approach to the subject matter, even if he does not provide us with a substantial body of completed material" (Liszka 2012: 46). Similarly, Beverly Kent points out that Peirce produced twenty different classification of the NS between 1866 and 1902 (Kent 1976: 267), point out constant doubts and perplexities. Although Peirce came to a better system of classification only in 1910, it is possible to say that his NS took an almost definite form from 1903. Since he was a boy, Peirce was really interested in the NS. He tells us that as an undergraduate at Harvard (ca. 1855) he thoroughly read Shiller's *Aesthetische Briefe* with his friend Horatio Paine (CP 2.197). At the beginning of the XXth, Peirce would have expressed regret that he had not taken seriously the study of aesthetics (CP 2.210; 2.197; 5.129). Although interested in ethical systems (CP 2.198), Peirce considered ethics to be nothing more than an art or a practical science until the 80s of the XIXth. He began to see the importance of ethics as a theoretical endeavor around 1882 (CP 2.198). In 1883 he undertook the study of the "great moralists" (CP 5.111; 5.129) and saw the fundamental link between ethics and logic (CP 5.111). Afterwards, Peirce became firmly convinced of the profound connection between ethics and logic (CP 2.198) and in 1899 he acknowledged ethics to be truly a NS (CP 5.129). In 1903 he made public his conclusions on ethics and logic. However, he was not persuaded that aesthetics was a genuine NS, but restricted himself to the mere hypothesis that aesthetics is a

normative science (CP 2.197; 5.533; 5.129; EP2: 189; 200). Since I am going to deal with the details of Peirce's understanding of logic beyond the fact that it is a normative science, I focus here on Peirce's intellectual background in ethics. Among the moral philosophers studied, he mentions Jouffroy, Whewell and Kant.[1] As Liszka remarks (Liszka 2012: 44-45), Whewell greatly influenced Peirce with his notion of "conscience," while Jouffroy probably influenced Peirce with his teleological and evolutionary approach to ethics. Both Whewell and Jouffroy drew abundantly from the Scottish philosophy of the commonsense. In a manuscript text (R683: 20-21), Peirce also mentions Shaftesbury, Edward Herbert, Thomas Hobbes, Ralph Cudworth, and Richard Cumberland.

But what is the position of Peirce's NS in the entire system of his science? In c. 1902, Peirce produces a mature classification of the sciences. According to this classification, there are two main branches, the theoretical and the practical. Interestingly, ethics is present in both (CP 1.281, c. 1902; see also 5.125, 1903). Theoretical sciences are divided into sciences of discovery and sciences of review, the latter concerned with the "integration and dissemination of the sciences of discovery" (CP 1.181, 1903). The sciences of discovery include mathematics, philosophy, and the empirical sciences (under the main division of physics and psychics) (CP 1.183, 1903). In turn, philosophy is subdivided in phenomenology (the study and classification of things as they appear, phenomena), normative sciences (the study of things as they ought to be), and metaphysics (the study of what is "real"). Let us focus on the NS, since this is the object of our present study. The NS include logic or semeiotic (the study of how we ought to proceed in thought and inquiry), ethics (the study of how should conduct ourselves in general), and aesthetics (the study of what ends we ought to pursue, or the study of the *Summum Bonum*, CP 1.186, 1903). "Ethics" as a theoretical science is different from ethics understood as a practical science (e.g. CP 5.125, 1903; EP2: 258; 458; 1.239; 1.243). This is not because the theoretical science "ethics" does not address the problem of normativity in human agency, as some interpreters seem to claim,[2] but on the contrary because it is only supposed to *discover* what are the normative ends of human agency. The "practicality" of ethics, when ethics is taken not as a theoretical science but as a practical science, results from the fact that the practical science "ethics" has as its ends that of producing certain skills or virtue in the agent, something that is out of the business of theoretical ethics.[3] In what follows, I only deal with ethics (but also with logic and aesthetics, insofar as they are relevant for an adequate understanding of Peirce's concept of normativity) in the sense of a normative science.

1. What Is the End of the Normative Sciences?

At least starting from 1903, Peirce maintains that logic, ethics, and esthetics are "theoretical sciences" and "positive sciences" (EP 2: 144, 1903). According to Peirce, the first feature of a positive theoretical science is that it aims to *account for real facts*, by relying on the observation of experience. In the case of philosophy (which include the NS), the experience studied is the common, daily life experience of every man. It does not require any special type of observation, but only attentiveness and acuteness of sight to what occurs in every phenomenon or phaneron. As a consequence, it is different from mathematics, whose goal is to elaborate purely hypothetical premises and to deduce from them the correct conclusions.[4] At the same time, however, the NS have a specific subject-matter of inquiry. They study particular kinds of "objects," namely, the various *dimensions of human self-controlled conduct*, which Peirce identifies with three different departments, i.e. (a) the deliberate practice of thinking (reasoning), (b) the deliberate agency in general, and (c) the deliberate cultivation of habits of

1 For a compared study of Kant's "power of judgment" on Peirce's NS, see Atkins 2008.

2 This is the wrong interpretation of Peirce's ethics when it is taken to be a "pre-normative" science. Davis 1958 and Feibleman 1943 make this mistake.

3 Short (2012: 331) writes: "Peirce distinguished "practical sciences" from "theoretical sciences" (EP2: 258, 458, 1.239) but seems to have viewed the practical sciences as arts or skills (CP 1.243), from which normative science is expressly distinguished (EP2: 197-198, 1.243). That was in 1902-1903; earlier, in 1898, he was less certain about how to classify ethics (EP2: 36) and later, in 1904, he entertained the idea that ethics as a "doctrine of rights and duties" is not a science (CP 1.577). If there is a practical science of ethics, it is not much developed by Peirce, perhaps because he doubted its reliability versus custom and sentiment (EP2: Ch.4, CP 1.666-9); the influence of philosophy on our moral practices should be "only with secular slowness and the most conservative caution" (EP2: 29)."

4 See e.g. CP 1.443. Cf. also De Wall 2005.

feeling. Hence, we have the two following definitions of the NS:

Def. (1): the NS are positive theoretical sciences and study facts of common human experience.

> by a *positive science* I mean an inquiry which seeks for a positive knowledge, that is, for such knowledge as may conveniently be expressed in a *categorical proposition*" (EP 2: 144); [NS are different from mathematics because] "in the first place, the hypotheses from which the deductions of normative sciences proceed are intended to conform to positive truth of fact and those deductions derive their interest that circumstance almost exclusively; while the hypotheses of pure mathematics are purely ideal in intention, and their interest is purely intellectual. But in the second place, the procedure of the normative sciences is not purely deductive, as that of mathematics, nor even principally so. Their peculiar analyses of familiar phenomena, analyses which ought to be guided by the facts of phenomenology in a manner in which mathematics is not at all guided, separate normative science from mathematics quite radically. (EP 2: 198)

Def. (2): the subject of the NS is the self-controlled conduct of human beings, identified with deliberate thinking, deliberate action and affective dispositions.[5]

> … esthetics considers those things whose ends are to embody qualities of feeling, ethics those things whose ends lie in action, and logic those things whose end is to represent something. (EP 2: 200, CP 5.129; see also EP 2: 378)

As we read in the last passage, "qualities of feeling," "action," and the reasoning that aims to "represent" reality are the three objects on which esthetics, ethics, and logic respectively focus. Let us move now to a closer analysis of the point of view from which these objects are studied.

1.1. The General Formal Object of the NS

It is a matter of fact that human beings have developed many different kinds of approaches and disciplines to study the self-controlled human conduct. The universe of human agency can be studied from various points of view: human thinking, for example, is studied from the viewpoint of experimental psychology, while the creative variety of human practices and their manifold systems of values are examined in anthropology. In turn, the various facets of human affective life constitute in turn the subject matter of other specialized sciences, such as psychology, anatomy, and physiology (EP2: 311; 385-386; EP2: 201; CP 1.579). As a logician, Peirce argued over and over again against the psychological tendencies of his time in the study of inferential processes, as it is shown exemplarily in 1903 "What Makes a Reasoning Sound?", where Peirce rejects Sigwart's understanding of reasoning and validity as based on the sentiment of logicality (see Poggiani 2012).

The normative approach represents a further viewpoint on human agency. Peirce's NS account for the facts of human behavior under a precise *respectus*, or in the light of a "peculiar appreciation" (EP 2: 199). Their formal object is the *distinction of what is valuable in human thinking, deliberate action and feeling from what is not*. This means that the NS, as theoretical sciences, put forward statements about the goodness and badness of *standard examples of behavior*, and, in this sense, try to establish which are the facts in human experience which ought-to be considered good or bad. A "norm", Peirce explains, is not an abstract precept, but is an "exemplar", an exemplary pattern of conduct (CP 1.586). Then, "these sciences have, as their only principle end, the general distinction of the *good* and *bad*" (EP 2: 272). It is important to decisively stress that the account of facts that the NS engage implies an intrinsic evaluative dimension of the object they inquire into, i.e., human behavior. Thus, the task of NS is not to

5 On the origin and historical development of the concept of self-control in Peirce, see Petry1992. The article is highly instructive not only because it reconstructs the historical influences on Peirce (Henry James, Swedenborg, Friedrich Schiller), but also because it hints at the distinction in the phenomenon of self-control of two components, respectively accountable as 2ndness (see Chapter 1) and 3rdness. As 3rdness, self-control is a type of knowledge, and coincides with rational deliberation. As it will appear clearly, the present chapter and Chapter 3 are about self-control as knowledge.

provide a precise catalogue of different logical[6], moral, or aesthetical traditions, but to state which instances of human practices have a normative universal value, namely, what is the model according to which every human being *ought to* appraise his own agency and to shape his personal identity. The "normative facts" displayed by the NS are, metaphorically speaking, the "ideal", normative characters of a fully rational community (see on this Bernstein 1981 and Smith 1965). From what we have just said, it is possible to draw the following third definition of the NS:

Def. (3): the general formal object of the NS is the distinction of good and bad in thinking, deliberate action, and affective dispositions. The "good" is what ought to be in thinking, deliberate action, and affective dispositions.

> … it is generally said that the three normative sciences are logic, ethics, and esthetics, being the three doctrines that distinguish good and bad; *Logic* in regard to representations of truth, *Ethics* in regard to efforts of will, and *Esthetics* in objects considered simply in their presentation. (EP 2: 143)

> We may say roughly that a normative science is the research into the theory of the distinction between what is good and what is bad; in the realm of cognition, in the realm of action, and in the realm of feeling, this theory being founded upon certain matters of fact that are open to the daily and hourly observation of every man and woman. (EP 2: 147)

> Logic and the other normative sciences, although they ask, not what is but what ought to be, nevertheless are positive sciences since it is by asserting positive, categorical truth that they are able to show that what they call good reality is so; and that right reason, right effort, and being of which they treat derive that character from positive categorical fact. (EP 2: 144)

In addition, Peirce makes clear that the NS, being theoretical positive sciences, have a different status from the "practical sciences." Peirce observes that "there is no doubt that they are closely related to three corresponding arts, or practical sciences. But that which renders the word normative needful (and not purely ornamental) is precisely the rather singular fact that, though these sciences do study what ought to be, *i.e.*, ideals, they are the very most purely theoretical of purely theoretical sciences" (CP 1.281; see also 1.243; EP1: 101). On the contrary, the "practical sciences" represent a type of investigation pursued "not because of the august nature of the truth sought, but for the sake of some anticipated utility of it to some man or men" (EP2: 372). This distinction has troubled Peirce scholars for a long time (e.g. Hooway 1997; Anderson 1997; Sheriff 1994). It also looks *prima facie* in opposition to the Aristotelian tradition, according to which sciences are classified in theoretical, practical, and poietical. However, the difference between the NS as theoretical sciences and the practical sciences can be simply put in the following way: while the aim of a the NS is to discover what the normative ideals of human life are, the aim of the practical sciences is to develop different types of pedagogical instructions that lead human agents to embody those ideals in their concrete conduct. While "Normative Science is not a skill, nor is it an investigation conducted with a view to the production of skill" (EP 2: 197), practical science is explicitly focused on these skills. Certainly, as Peirce explains, there are practical sciences of reasoning and inquiry, conduct of life, and practical sciences devoted to the education of feelings, that correspond to the NS and can receive important clarifications from them. However, their status, their goal and – we might say – their "spirit" are deeply different (EP 2: 197-198).[7] As we will see, Peirce's claims about the uselessness of philosophical ethics for life should be interpreted also in this light (CP 1.666-679): since the problem of life is not only to *know what the good is*, but to *become good*, philosophical ethics turn out to be a poor instrument to the development of the human personality. I think that Peirce's distinction is closer to David Hume's on this point

6 Notice that Peirce questioned Dewey's approach to logic because he saw in Dewey's method a clear misconception of the normative nature of logic. In his review of Dewey's *Studies in Logical Theory* (CP 8.188-190), Peirce makes clear that Dewey's conception of logic as a "natural history of thought" is not adequate to delve into the normative nature of logic. For a discussion of this point, see Colapietro 2002 and Kasser 1999.

7 Peirce acknowledges that also "logic" has a practical side, EP1: 212. He also explicitly writes that "… the very focus and centre of common education should be placed in the art of thinking, *ad omnium methodorum principia viam habens*. I do not know why a man should not devote himself to the training of his reasoning powers with as much assiduity as to corporal athletics" (RLT: 181).

rather than to Aristotle's. In his essay "Of the Different Species of Philosophy" (Hume 2000[1758]: 9), Hume draws a distinction between theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. While the theoretical philosopher is like an "anatomist" who aims to discover the fundamental elements of the moral phenomenon, the practical philosopher is more like a "painter," whose undertake is to depict moral virtues in order to raise in the human heart the desire of becoming virtuous. When Peirce talks about the theoretical nature of his NS he is making the same point. The task of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, is to discover moral facts instead of leading human beings to produce the virtue in themselves.[8]

1.2. The Specific Formal Objects of Each NS

Finally, the general formal object of the NS divides into the three specific formal objects of logic, ethics and aesthetics. A fourth definition of the NS reads as follows:

Def. (4): the formal object of logic is the logical good, or the conditions for obtaining a true representation of reality; the formal object of ethics is the ethical good, or the conditions for acting in a right way; the formal object of aesthetics is the aesthetical good, or the conditions for having a good "taste" in human affairs.

> Normative Science, which investigates the universal and necessary laws of the relation of Phenomena to *Ends,* that is, perhaps, to Truth, Right, and Beauty. (EP 2: 197)

> The three NS, in their "emphatic dualism", "may be regarded as being the sciences of the conditions of truth and falsity, of wise and foolish conduct, of attractive and repulsive ideas. (EP 2: 378)

According to the perspective developed in the NS, a value or normative fact has to meet two different requirements. First, a normative fact is a certain *type* of human conduct, broadly conceived (including thinking, acting and self-cultivated habits of feeling). Second, a normative fact is not only a certain type of human conduct, but must be a *valuable* example of self-controlled conduct, susceptible of being oriented toward different purposes and ends. The normative facts studies by the NS are therefore *the exemplary outcomes of human self-controlled agency*. In other words, in his NS, Peirce's focus is on what could be called *moral value*, since the category of "morality" simply stands for what in human life is susceptible of self-control. Peirce's normative facts do not belong to some "queer" realm of objects, but coincide on the contrary with our daily life, common behavior, considered in the light of what is truly valuable. In this sense, Dewey's position on the metaphysical status of "moral values" represents a legitimate (and more articulated) continuation of Peirce's thoughts (see Chapter 5).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Peirce's understanding of the human being is characterized by a fundamental teleology, centered in his conception of "rational instinct." I believe therefore that Peirce's conception of normative facts can be equated to a traditional virtue approach to human practices, according to which "virtue" stays for the Aristotelian adequate flourishing of human life, or the excellent actualization of the very ends and needs of human practices.[9] If this interpretation of Peirce's stance is correct, then, we could interpret the normative facts described by logic, ethics, and aesthetics, as epistemic virtues, ethical virtues and esthetical virtues. Hence, the list of NS values identified by Peirce constitutes a sketch of the spectrum of human virtues. Before moving to consider some textual evidence for this interpretation, let us deal with the different evaluative categories present in Peirce's NS and with their mutual relation.

8 However, Peirce is not committed to a Humean understanding of ethics. See next chapter.

9 Liszka (2012: 65) and Aydin (2009: 232) seem to agree with this interpretation.

1.3. The Evaluative Categories of the NS

We have hinted at the fact that the structure of the NS is, at the same time, an evaluative account and a classification of normative facts. Furthermore, since the classification is a hierarchy of sciences that lays out the foundations for the validity of NS values, the more we move towards the top science, i.e. aesthetics, the more we find a conclusive and full vindication of the NS values. Peirce says that the NS are a "distinctly marked whole" (EP 2: 378). This means not only that all the different types of values are strictly linked in their nature, being the values of thinking (logic) a determination of the general values of deliberate agency (ethics), and the values of deliberate agency a regional configuration of what is good in itself (aesthetics; EP 2: 188-189; 201; 378; CP 5.108; 5.551). According to Kent's reconstruction, there is a "principle-dependence" that governs for Peirce the mutual relations among the sciences. "According to that principle, preceding sciences supply principles to those which follow while succeeding sciences reciprocate by providing data or problems to those above" (Kent 1987: 263). The principle also implies that the three sciences themselves cannot be taken one by one in isolation. Thus, their descriptive function, as well as their justificatory power, comes from their combined effort. In this sense, it seems that what is at stake is not simply to state that aesthetics defines a particular department of NS values, i.e. the aesthetic values, different from the epistemic values and the ethical values. Maybe, this would be the case of a theory of beauty in nature and art, which however is not developed by Peirce (cf. CP 5.111; 5.112; 5.113). Instead, the point is that the aesthetic dimension of value provides the ultimate justification to the entire system of NS values.

Since every NS, as Peirce says, has its own "peculiar appreciation" of human conduct (EP2: 199), it is important to analyze the specific *evaluative category* of each NS and their mutual relation. Starting from logic, we see that

(i) *X* is good from the logical point of view if it enables the inquirer develop true beliefs about reality.

As a consequence, the evaluative category of logic is then "veracity" (EP2: 203). From a general point of view, *X* can be a statement, a principle of inference or a method of inquiry. Let us remember that in "What Makes a Reasoning Sound?" Peirce explains that "logic," understood as the study and classification of all the sound arguments, can be called "critic," and constitutes only a narrow department of the whole logical study of thinking (distinct from psychological studies), i.e. "semeiotic". The other department of logic in its broad sense are "speculative grammar", the theory of the different kinds of signs, and "methodeutic", the study of the norms that we have to pursue in the different fields of inquiry (EP2: 256). Hence, logical goodness relies upon a means-end justificatory structure: if a mean is suitable for the realization of an end, that mean is therefore good and is justified. In the case of logic, a method of inquiry or a logical principle is "good" and "veracious" insofar as they bring about true beliefs about reality. The obvious problem of this account of veracity is that the end on which veracity is fixed, i.e., seeking the truth," seems to be assumed as good instead of being justified in its normativity. Let us leave this problem open for now and move to the evaluative category of ethics.

With respect to ethics, Peirce holds that:

(ii) *X* is good from the ethical point of view if it enables the agent to realize, at least approximately, one of the ends of human conduct that are supposed to be objectively good.

Thus, the fundamental category in ethical assessments is "adequacy," "conformity" (see EP2: 377), or "righteousness" (EP2: 200), of a practical means for the realization of an end. I inserted the adverb "approximately" because for Peirce a means does not have to be perfectly "conform" to an end in order to be ethically good. According to his notion of "longitude" in the realization of an end (EP2: 118-119), there are different grades and levels in which a mean can realize that end and there are therefore different levels of ethical goodness. Also in this case, *X* can be different things: it covers all the possible means and sub-ends of human conduct in every conceivable field of activity. As Peirce says, an action has different conditions of adequacy (EP2: 199) to an objectively good end. What is important to stress here is that also in the case of ethical goodness, the structure that identifies what is good and what justifies an action as good is a means-end structure.

It follows that the evaluative category of ethics is only a generalization of the evaluative category of logic. This point is also made by Robin (1964), and in recent comments by Short on the NS (2012). For both of them, the development of Peirce's understanding of the NS follows the path of a growth from the mere assessment of the acts of reasoning to the broader scenario of human agency as a whole. If the logical goodness is the conformity of a mean to the specific end of seeking the truth, the ethical goodness is the conformity of a mean to each and all ends that are assumed to be worth of being pursued. In this sense, Peirce writes that ethical goodness "relate[s] to the *conformity of phenomena to ends* which are not immanent within those phenomena" (EP2: 199). Peirce continues stressing that "the approval of a voluntary act is a moral approval. Ethics is the study of what ends of action we are deliberately prepared to adopt. That is right action that is in conformity to ends which we are prepared deliberately to adopt. That is all there can be in the notion of righteousness, as it seems to me. The righteous man is the man who controls his passions, and makes them conform to such ends as he is prepared deliberately to adopt as ultimate" (EP2: 200). We face in the case of ethical goodness the same problem we found in the case of logical goodness, that is, the vicious circle of the definition of the ethical good, a mean, on the basis of something else, an end, which is assumed to be good. Also in this case, let us leave this problem open and move to esthetics, to see if the answer to the problem can be found there.

According to Peirce's treatment of aesthetics,

(iii) *X* is good from the aesthetical point of view if it is a habit of feeling oriented to what is admirable/adorable in itself, so that the human being comes to feel what is admirable/adorable in itself. Moreover, since aesthetics studies not only the aesthetically good habits of feeling, but also the ultimate ideal of human conduct, or the *Summum Bonum*, it is true that *A* is good from the aesthetical point of view if it is an ideal of human conduct and if it coincides with the admirable/adorable in itself.

Aesthetics, then, deals with habits of feeling evaluated under the category of nobility (cf. Parker 2003) or absolute "admirability." The puzzling aspect of Peirce's treatment of aesthetics is that esthetics is taken to deal with both the normative habits of feeling and the *Summum Bonum* itself. Between the normative habits of feeling and the normative ultimate ideal there is an immediate and essential link. In fact, on the one hand, Peirce states that since "ethics asks to what end all effort shall be directed," "that question obviously depends upon the question what it would be that, independently of the effort, we should like to experience", that is the essential question of aesthetics (CP 2.199). On the other hand, Peirce admits that "the moralist … merely tells us that we have a power of self-control, that no narrow or selfish aim can ever prove satisfactory …; and for any more definite information, as I conceive the matter, he has to refer us to the esthetician whose business it is to say what is the state of things which is most admirable in itself regardless of any ulterior reason" (EP 2: 253). The first quotation shows that esthetics aims to fix the good habits of feeling, while the second quotations makes clear that its object is extended to the definition of the nature of the *Summum Bonum*. As we know from the previous chapter, Peirce found that the ultimate normative ideal of human life, its *Summum Bonum*, is "the development of concrete reasonableness" in the world. The important issue that arises in this context, therefore, is what is the link between esthetics as the science of the normative habits of feeling and esthetics as the science of the "development of concrete reasonableness" in the world.

First of all, it is necessary to consider an obvious objection, of which Peirce was perfectly aware. The objection is the following: if the right ends of human effort (ethics), including the normative end "seeking for truth" of every process of inquiry (logic), get their definitive warranty from a habit of feeling (aesthetic), than all the endeavor of thought and of human effort rely on a feeling of pleasure *whatsoever*. In this case, the architectonic doctrine of the NS would be some type of hedonism, implying that the ultimate evaluative category of human value and virtue would only be the *subjective pleasure* for something, whatever the object of the pleasure might be (EP2: 189). However, Peirce explains that this objection rests on an unjustified assumption, namely on the idea that it is possible to give a full account of the feelings of pleasure and pain without considering the different objects by which they can be excited. This thesis, far from being only unjustified, is also wrong, since it is not possible to "recognize with confidence *any quality of feeling common*" to all pleasures or pains (EP2: 189-190). It is worth noting that according to Peirce we cannot limit the notion of "feeling" only to the pain and pleasure in human reactions to events. Criticizing Kant's reduction of feeling to only "one department of the mind" (CP

1.375; 7.540) and embracing the broader notion developed by Tetens (CP 7.540), Peirce takes indeed "feeling" to stand for *every possible content of consciousness*, stating that "what is meant by consciousness is really in itself nothing but feeling."[10] As Peirce explains,

> Among phanerons there are certain qualities of feeling, such as the color of magenta, the odor of attar, the sound of a railway whistle, the taste of quinine, the quality of the emotion upon contemplating a fine mathematical demonstration, the quality of feeling of love, etc. I do not mean the sense of actually experiencing these feelings, whether primarily or in any memory or imagination. That is something that involves these qualities as an element of it. But I mean the qualities themselves which, in themselves, are mere may-bes, not necessarily realized. (CP 1.304)

At the same time, however, Peirce has in mind a particular modality of feeling when he says that the object of aesthetics are the "habits of feeling" that every human being ought to develop in her own life, namely the *affective dispositions* of "sympathy" or "antipathy" for certain objects, or the "secondary feelings", whose nature is very close to pleasure and pain, which are the appropriate affective reactions to some previous content of consciousness (EP 2: 379; CP 1.311). Thus,

> Esthetic good and evil are closely akin to pleasure and pain … . What, then, are pleasure and pain? … They are secondary feelings or generalizations of such feelings; that is, of feeling attaching themeselves to, and excited by, other feelings. A toothache is painful. It is not pain, but pain accompanies it; and if you choose to say that pain is an ingredient of it, that is not far wrong. However, the quality of the feeling of toothache is a simple, positive feeling distinct from pain; though pain accompanies it. To use the old consecrated terms, pleasure is the feeling that a feeling is "sympathetical," pain that it is "antipathetical." The feeling of pain is a symptom of a feeling which repels us; the feeling of pleasure is the symptom of an attractive feeling. (EP 2: 379)

We can make sense of the richness of Peirce's notion of feeling – that includes, we might say, subjective and objective elements of consciousness, insofar as it is prior to any distinction of "subject" and "object" – by saying that the normative habits of feeling pointed out in aesthetics imply that the human being who embodies them – "the fully developed superman" (EP2: 379) – shall experience as admirable/adorable (subjective dimension of feeling) those things that really are admirable/adorable in themselves (epistemically objective dimension of feeling). Feeling pleasure for something, then, is not a purely physiological reaction, but is an "esthetic judgement" (EP2: 189), susceptible to education and transformation. Peirce often refers to the fundamental epistemic role of the "wise man" in establishing what is truly admirable and what is not.[11] In Peirce's terms,

> … when beginning in 1883 I came to read the works of the great moralists, whose great fertility of thought I found in wonderful contrast to the sterility of the logicians, I was forced to recognize the dependence of Logic upon Ethics; and then took refuge in the idea that there was no science of esthetics, that because *de gustibus non est disputandum*, therefore, there is no esthetic *truth* and *falsity* or generally valid goodness and badness. But I did not remain of this opinion long. I soon came to see that this whole objection rests upon a fundamental misconception. To say that morality, in the last resort, comes to an esthetic judgement is *not* hedonism, – but is, directly opposed to hedonism. (EP 2: 189)

As a consequence, the apparent risk of hedonism is completely avoided. Aesthetics is the NS of the habits of feeling, whose normative instances mark the difference between a virtuous habit of feeling, framed on what is truly admirable, and a vicious habit of feeling, that is the disposition of experiencing as valuable something that is not. As I will show in the next chapter, Peirce holds a broad theory of "cognition," in which he implies every mental phenomenon, including emotions and sentiments (see Barnow 1994).

Peirce claims that "the question of the goodness of anything is whether that thing fulfills its end" (EP2: 235). However, how does Peirce come to state that the ultimate normative fact is human life is the development of

10 On Kant and Tetens on pleasure and pain see also EP1: 258. On consciousness as "feeling" (EP1: 290-291) see the related notions of "pure indescribable quale" (EP1: 282-283) and "quale-consciousness" (CP 6.223). I believe that not enough work has been done in an account of Peirce's notions of feeling and consciousness studied with the tools of his semeiotic. I take it to be a promising field of inquiry for a different approach to what is called today "philosophy of mind."

11 See e.g. "*esthetic good* and *evil* are closely akin to *pleasure* and *pain*; they are what would be pleasure or pain to the fully developed superman" (EP2: 379). See also CP 2.156; 1.653.

concrete reasonableness? In particular, what is the link explicitly put forth by Peirce between the identification of the normative habits of feeling and the study of the *Summum Bonum*? In order to address this question, we have to take one more preliminary step and explain why according to Peirce epistemic and ethical virtues presuppose esthetic virtues.

1.4. Normative Facts as Virtues

As I have already mentioned, my interpretation is that according to Peirce the nature of the normative facts should be understood in the light of the virtue approach to human agency, i.e., as the excellent realization of the different dimensions of human life and practices (reasoning and inquiry, moral exigencies in activity and desire), which include ideal purposes and standards of feelings. The idea of human flourishing can be taken from a broader conception of the development of life, which concerns "every kind of system, form, or compound," according to which

> there is an absolute limit to a weakening process. It ends in destruction; there is no limit to strength. … Systems or compounds which have bad habits are quickly destroyed, those which have no habits follow the same course; only those which have good habits tend to survive (EP 1: 223).

Every living creature, then, faces the possibility of developing good or bad habits. In relation to the human being, the synthetic ideal of human life, the development of concrete reasonableness, divides into many different kinds of virtue, each correspondent to the adequate development of the cognitive, affective and, in general, practical dimension of the human being (e.g. CP 8.136). This position seems to be at least problematical insofar as Peirce clearly committed himself to a kind of evolutionist conception of reality, a process metaphysics in which Darwinian and Lamarckian tenets intertwine with a Christian conception of the real world as the product of an ongoing process of creation. The problem arises in a twofold way. First, from a general viewpoint, if our cognitive capacities are the result of an evolutive process, what justifies their alleged alethic capacity? Second, from a narrower viewpoint, in 1977 "The Fixation of Belief" Peirce maintains that the need for inquiry springs out of the "irritation of the doubt," so that its task becomes the removal of the doubt through the fixation of a belief. How do these positions fit with the claim that human "normative facts" are essentially related to the development of "reasonable" habits, in their relation to what is true, good, and admirable?

The first point shows a difficulty that also Peirce recognized. However, Peirce's psychologism flavored statements in "The Fixation" should be interpreted in the light of the following developments of his thought. The overall development of his thought on this point can be summed up in the following way: (1) the need for agency compels us to the "fixation" of a determinate belief (see e.g. CP 5.400: "The whole function of thought is to produce habits of action … we come down to what is tangible and conceivably practical, as the root of every real distinction of thought"; "The irritation of the doubt is the only immediate motive for the struggle to attain belief," EP1: 114). However, in 1903 Peirce laments the seeming psychologism of his early position: "My original article carried this back to a psychological principle. The conception of truth according to me was developed out of an original impulse to act consistently, to have a definite intention. But in the first place, this was not very clearly made out, and in the second place, I do not think it satisfactory to reduce such fundamental things to facts of psychology", EP2: 140, 1903). (2) Although the need for determining a belief for practical purposes is almost an efficient causality on our epistemic practices, it is true that from this need, it grows first a suspect about a "truth," then a desire about the truth, and then the establishment of the pursuit of truth as a valuable end. The "social impulse" turns out to be only the inchoative manifestation of the desire for truth. I agree on this with Short's comment on the "aversion to arbitrariness" that emerges in "The Fixation": "the desire for consensus is merely one manifestation of that aversion, which is why consensus achieved by coercion or by fashion will not be satisfactory, either" (Short 2000: 7).[12] Peirce points out that growth is due to the teleological

12 Talisse (2007: 56-56) provides an insightful reading of "The Fixation" as the description of the competition among epistemic practices, but misses the point of the developmental emergence of one perspective from the other. The movement from (1) to (2) is

power of Reason operating in every semeiotic process, even only in an inchoative way. Peirce writes: "My paper of November 1877, setting out from the proposition that the agitation of a question ceases when satisfaction is attained with the settlement of belief, and then only, goes on to consider how the conception of truth gradually develops from that principle under the action of experience" (CP 5.564). Of course, at this level, the establishment of what is normative neither has the systematic character resulting from the NS, nor appeals to the pragmatic maxim as a deliberate tool of inquiry (since we are assuming that at this time the pragmatic maxim has not born yet). The use of a logical strategy later described as "pragmatic maxim" would be the outcome, in the mind of the inquirer, of the end of pursuing the truth. Naturally, at this level the normativity of the pursuit of truth would be established without analyzing such a concept at its third level of clarity.

The second point is a broad one, and considering it at length would lead us astray. However, I think that Peirce's general argument on this issue can be sketched in the following way. In an above quoted passage, Peirce charges his early 1877 position as dangerously inclining to psychologism in relation to the topic of truth-pursuing (EP2: 140). However, in the same passage, he asks the fundamental question: "Why has evolution made man's mind to be so constructed? That is the question we must nowadays ask, and all attempts to ground the fundamentals of logic on psychology are seen to be essentially shallow" (EP2: 140). I believe that unpacking this statement corresponds to the articulation of an argument against the essential association of evolutionism and non-alethic cognitive powers of human beings. Peirce's point is the following: although it is true that belief-fixing processes are also regulated by a tendency to avoid the irritation of doubt with a stable belief (this would be the "facts of psychology"), how is it that our mind has evolved to consider *certain* beliefs stable and other beliefs unstable? In a certain sense, the final goal of evolutionism (which includes for Peirce Lamarckian and Darwinian elements) is subsistence and survival of a species, not the fixation of true beliefs. Peirce's crucial question is whether the law of survival can be an ultimate law in accounting for the process of evolution. For Peirce, at least starting from 1883-1884 "Design and Chance," an adequate scientific approach to natural laws and general tendencies in nature should be thoroughly evolutionary, so that assuming that a specific law is final or ultimate is a mistake. If the law of survival has evolved through time, at the bottom of its evolution there is an "intelligent" process in action. In this specific case, the intelligent process of evolution would have occurred as the organization of previous conditions C in order to produce an effect B (in this case, the law of survival) as a mean for the realization of a regulative goal G. "Intelligence" here does not mean consciousness, but only the sound or appropriate selection of means for a general end. Now, if the "law of survival" is not the final goal G but the product B of a broader process of evolution, what is the final end of this process? For Peirce, as we know, it is Rationality itself in its temporal development, which coincides with an ongoing process of creation. But if at the bottom of the development of the universe there is a "loving" process of rational creation, we can also admit that our normative epistemic processes, principles, and beliefs, can be a fair instance of the rationality or "mind" of the universe and have genuine alethic-capacity.

1.5. "Logic" and Epistemic Virtues

We can now turn to a closer look at Peirce's characterization of what we can call epistemic virtues. In this case, we have:

(i) The habit of the conscientious *pursuit of truth* (architectonic end of thinking), since truth is, at the same time, a self-subsistent "idea," attracting man's mind, and ought to be the ideal of human self-controlled processes of inquiry (cf. EP2: 43; EP 2: 47; EP 2: 122-123; EP 2: 343).

(ii) The habit of adopting the *principles of logic and semiotics* (leading principles-means of thinking).

(iii) The habits related to the three *logical sentiments*, necessary to keep constant and effective the end of the

also highlighted by Skagestad 1979, although the role of teleology is not explicitly grasped by him. Also Hookway's concern that Peirce has a psychologist conception of thinking (1985: 52-58) could be corrected in the light of my considerations.

pursuit of truth (habits of feeling).

(iv) The *virtue of Thirdness*,[13] namely, the ability of distinguishing what is true and what is false in the "art of [deliberate] mediation" ("logic is the art of reasoning", EP2: 11), i.e. through the scientific method and through the principles of logic and semeiotics (EP1: 202; EP2: 188; 190-191).

There is a great deal of textual evidence supporting Peirce's commitment to the above list of epistemic virtues, and some scholars have attentively worked on this department of Peirce's NS (e.g. Hookway 2010: 260 ff.). As Peirce's states, the work of logic is to distinguish the good "habits of mind" from the bad ones, given that "the habit is good or otherwise, according as it produces true conclusions from true premises or not" (EP1: 112). Then, its business is to state which "guiding principles" of inference – the linguistic formulations of the habits of reasoning – ought to be used in the logical endeavor. Also within the field of normative principles of inference, "the question of its validity is purely one of fact and not of thinking" (EP1: 111-112), in the sense that a principle "that tends to carry us toward the truth more speedily than we could otherwise progress is good", while "a method that has a tendency to carry us away from the truth is utterly bad, whether we naturally approve of it or not" (EP2: 252). Peirce himself provides a portrait of the virtuous inquirer – the ideal "man of science" (EP2: 58; 372), or the "experimentalist" (EP2: 332) –, by describing what his "dispositions" are. Among these dispositions, there would be the fundamental habit of mind shaped on the pragmatic maxim itself (EP2: 332). Logical goodness, then, is simply the "excellence of argument" (EP2: 205). The man of science is the "living" definition of a science (EP2: 372) and is characterized by an unshakeable "scientific curiosity" (EP2: 34). It is within this framework that we have to place Peirce's theory of deduction, induction and hypothesis (or abduction), which correspond to "three chief modes of action of the human soul" (EP 1: 327). For instance, Peirce says that in induction "industry" and "a habit of probity is needed for success" (CP 1.576), and that in abduction "still higher virtues are needed – a true elevation of soul" (CP 1.576).

A similar order of considerations applies to the problem of the method in inquiry, whose choice is "far more than the adoption of any intellectual opinion" and is instead "one of the ruling decisions of … life" (EP1: 122). Logic is, in Peirce's terms, "the art of devising methods of research, – the method of methods" (EP1: 209), or also "the theory of methods" (EP1: 211). Peirce's profession of faith in the "scientific method" is first of all due to the fact that the scientific method is the only method for the fixation of belief that rests upon "some external permanency – … upon which our thinking has no effect" (EP1: 120), that is self-corrective (EP1: 121; EP2: 43) and that, in the process of self-correction, "presents any distinction of a right and a wrong way" of conducing the inquiry (EP1: 121); in other words, the scientific method is the only method that can state, on the basis of experience itself, that "bad reasoning as well as good reasoning is possible; and this fact is the foundation of the practical side of logic" (EP1: 121). Among the epistemic virtues of the inquirer, then, Peirce also lists the trained skills of the three "mental operations concerned in reasoning", namely "observation", "experimentation" and "habituation" (RLT: 182).

The affective dimension of the inquirer is not neglected as well, but rather plays a crucial role in the life of the inquirer. Indeed, Peirce puts "three social sentiments" at the base of logic, namely, the "interest in an indefinite community", the "recognition of the possibility of this interest being made been supreme", and the "hope in the unlimited continuance of intellectual activity", as the indispensable requirements of good thinking (EP1: 150). These three sentiments coincide for Peirce with "that famous trio of Charity, Faith, and Hope, which, in the estimation of St. Paul, are the finest and greatest of spiritual gifts" (EP1: 150) and teach in the most authoritative way "the dispositions of heart which a man ought to have" (EP1: 151). Peirce also explains that inquiry ought to be animated by "true scientific Eros" (EP2: 29). In addition, methodological principles and sentiments can also work together, as in the "rule of hope" – an "intellectual hope" – namely the regulative principle, which should guide every kind of science, that every fact is intelligible, at least in principle (EP1: 275). At the same time, the self-correcting power of the scientific method can succeed only on the ground of the "Will to Learn" and of the "freedom from dogmatism", since "there is but one thing needful for learning the truth, and that is the hearty and active desire to learn what is true" (EP2: 47-48). Science can make progresses only if it is nourished by a

13 Cf. the expression "virtue of thirdness" in EP1: 265. I use the expression in a different sense.

genuine "theoretical interest" (CP 7.433). The inquirer who thinks that "seeking such a truth is ... worthy of life-long devotion" (EP2: 372), who "prefers the truth to his own interest and well-being" (CP 1.576), and who believes that "practical utilities, whether low or high, should be put out of sight by the investigator" (EP 2: 34; see also CP 1.43-45) is the best example of how the inquire ought to be.

In Peirce's "The Fixation of Belief" we can find an *internal justification* of the epistemic virtues. For "internal justification" of the values of inquiry I mean the possibility of partially grounding the normativity of the epistemic values without resorting to ethics (and, even more so, to aesthetics), despite the fact that the simple standpoint of logic cannot give the full set of reasons for understanding the normativity of the epistemic virtues.

In "The Fixation" we read that "the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion" (EP2: 114-115) and that "the irritation of doubt is the only immediate motive for the struggle to attain a belief" (EP2: 114). Peirce's argument to support the "scientific method" is that, *since the only goal of inquiry is to settle a belief*, the scientific pattern is the best method that allows the inquirer to fix an unshakeable and reliable opinion. In particular, in what aspect does the "scientific method" outstrip the others, i.e. the "tenacity", the "authority" and the "a priori" methods? First of all, it meets the exigency of settling a belief in the safest and most reliable way by being *based on experience* and by *taking seriously every occasion of real doubt*. Peirce explains that the method of tenacity consists in steadfastly *ignoring* every actual or possible occasion of doubt, which would disturb the beliefs that the subject already owns; in turn, the method of authority consists in struggling to constitute, or to join, a super-individual institution whose aim is to *prevent through the use of the force every occasion of doubt*, actual or possible, that would disturb the doctrines that are already settled; finally, the *a priori* method consists in stubbornly *avoiding* what is foreign to our own education, trying again to preserve our cherished opinions from the falsification that would come from experience. Then, if the three non-scientific methods tend to preserve the existing beliefs by ignoring the "surprises" of experience and the resultant doubts, the "scientific method" is the only one that does not strive for preserving existing beliefs by immunizing them against the "rough facts" (EP1: 121), but that "goes out of its way to test hypothesis by experiment" (see Misak 2004: 80). Consequently, the scientific method tries to develop beliefs that can face the further challenges of experimentation and that will not occasion doubts any longer. In other words, the scientific method is the only one that establishes beliefs "caused by nothing human, but by some external permanency – by something upon which our thinking has no effect" (EP1: 120). It tries to obtain opinions that "coincide with facts" (EP1: 122).

Second, Peirce's scientific method meets the *exigency of intersubjective control and of ideal universality*, which are a spontaneous *desideratum* of human inquiry. According to Peirce, the inquiry is often accompanied by the "social impulse", that is as much strong as the impulse to escape the doubt is (EP2: 116; see also EP2: 116-117). This means that striving for fixing a belief aims implicitly at an (ideal) intersubjective and universal approval of the conclusions drawn. Recurring to the common and public experience, then, is the best way to meet this implicit requirement of human thinking and research.[14] As Misak puts it, the responsiveness to reason and to public questioning is the constitutive norm of belief (2004b: 12). Thus, Peirce concludes, "the only cause of our planting ourselves on reason is that other methods of escaping doubt fail on account of the social impulse" (EP1: 150).

However, as we have already glimpsed, the full justification of the epistemic virtues cannot be found only in logic, so that the internal justification of the epistemic virtues is *only a part* of their full justification. The 1877 essay lets us think that Peirce has hastily identified the aim of the "fixation of a belief," implied in every process of inquiry, with the pursuit of truth, which is only one of the possible aims the man can be headed to in escaping the doubt. Thus, the interpretation of "The Fixation" comes to a crossroad: on one side, if it is true that the aim of the fixation of the belief coincides directly with the pursuit of truth, then the end of the pursuit of truth, and the "scientific method" itself, does not need a further justification in ethics and aesthetics. The pursuit of truth stands just on the basis of an internal logical justification. On the other hand, even within "The Fixation" itself, Peirce is already aware of the fact that an inquirer can settle a belief using the non-scientific methods of inquiry, and the essay can be read as the dramatic acknowledgement that the non-scientific methods are "really pursued by many men" (EP2: 115) because "they have their own merits" (EP2: 123).[15] Moreover, the later developments

14 "Experience being something forced upon us, belongs to the external type. Yet in so far as it is I or you who experiences the constraint, the experience is *mine* or *yours,* and thus belongs to the inner world" (CP 7.439).

15 Cf. in relation to the method of tenacity: "The man feels that, if he only holds to his belief without wavering, it will be entirely

of his thought and the idea of the classification of the NS suggest that Peirce was not satisfied with the idea that the simple aim of the fixation of the belief is just the pursuit of the truth,[16] or alike the rational conduct,[17] and consequently he was not sure that the mere exigency of settling a belief is sufficient for a full justification of the epistemic virtues.[18] Let us put Peirce's implicit struggle in this way: does the simple condition that every inquirer necessarily (we could say, psychologically) tends to settle a belief in order to escape the "irritation of doubt" (EP2: 114) directly imply that every human being ought to embrace the scientific method and the pursuit of truth? While Peirce was inclined in "The Fixation" to answer this question affirmatively, he came to realize that logic cannot give in itself an account of the normativity of the end "pursue the truth", upon which the entire endeavor of thought and discovery is built (including the "scientific method"). The full validity of the aim of seeking the truth can be fully assessed only as a component of the objective moral good, which is studied by ethics. We can understand then in which sense the epistemic values ask for an *external justification* in ethics and aesthetics.

1.6. "Ethics" and Ethical Virtues

Let us now consider Peirce's ethics and his characterization of ethical virtues.[19] At this level, moral sentiment and sentimental judgment play a fundamental role. Although I will deal extensively with the crucial importance of "sentiment" and "sentimental judgment" in Peirce's philosophy in Chapter 3, I present his thesis at this point for the sake of a systematic exposition of his catalogue of virtues (also Peirce's arguments in support to his sentimentalist tendencies in ethics will be given there). Now, in the context of "ethics," Peirce's catalogue of virtues could be the following:

(i) The habit of the courageous struggle for *realizing the objective moral goodness* (architectonic end of human purposive agency), or the right and just, since the right is a self-subsistent idea, attracting human energies, and, at the same time, a practical ideal for human beings' self-controlled conduct (cf. EP2: 122-123; EP2: 343). It is my opinion that, in Peirce's terms, the end of realizing the objective moral goodness is nothing else than the ultimate ideal – the development of the concrete reasonableness – considered in the light of what human beings ought to chose. If this interpretation is correct, then, the end of realizing the objective moral goodness requires the constant tension not to give up with a life devoted to the epistemic, ethical and esthetical values. At the same time, since the ethical virtues are the virtues of the human conduct in so far as it is considered as purposive conduct, and since the acquisition of the epistemic and of the aesthetic virtues depends on the human being's self-determination, the ethical virtues include also, as normative facts, the strive for acquiring or renewing the epistemic virtues and the aesthetic virtues. We can interpret in this way Peirce's statement that ethics is the core

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satisfactory. Nor can it be denied that a steady and immovable faith yields great peace of mind" (EP2: 116); in relation to the method of authority: "Its success is proportionately greater; and, in fact, it has over and over again worked the most majestic results. … the change is so slow as to be imperceptible during one person's life, so that individual belief remains sensibly fixed. For the mass of mankind, then, there is perhaps no better method than this" (EP2: 118); in relation to the three non-scientific methods: "It is not to be supposed that the first three methods of settling opinion present no advantage whatever over the scientific method. On the contrary, each has some peculiar convenience of its own" (EP2: 121-122).

16 It seems to me that we can find clues of this perplexity also in "The Fixation", even though Peirce's position in this essay is obviously inclined to identify the implicit meaning of the aim "fixing a belief" with "seeking the truth": "Hence, the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion. We may fancy that this is not enough for us, and that we seek, not merely an opinion, but a true opinion. But put this fancy to test, and it proves groundless; far as soon as a firm belief is reached we are entirely satisfied, whether the belief be true or false. And it is clear that nothing out of the sphere of our knowledge can be our object, for nothing which does not affect the mind can be the motive for a mental effort" (EP2: 114-115).

17 In the case of the discussion of the method of tenacity, for example, "it would be an egoistical impertinence to object that his procedure is irrational, for that only amounts to saying that his method of settling belief is not ours. He does not propose to himself to be rational, and, indeed, will often talk with scorn of man's weak and illusive reason. So, let him think as he pleases" (EP2: 116).

18 "Perhaps it might be possible to deduce the correct rules of reasoning from the mere assumption that we have some ultimate aim. But I cannot see how this could be done. If we had, for example, no other aim than the pleasure of the moment, we should fall back into the same absence of any logic that the fallacious argument would lead to. We should have no ideal of reasoning, and consequently no norm. It seems to me that the logician ought to recognize what our ultimate aim is" (EP2: 252-253).

19 Notice that when "action" coincides with "reasoning," the ethical virtues coincide with the epistemic virtues.

of the NS, in the sense that also the epistemic and the aesthetic virtues, *since they imply normative ends* of human action, need to be included in the list of ethical values (EP2: 377; EP2: 200).[20]

(ii) The *habits of action, in "vitally important topics", based on sentimental judgments*. As we will see in the next chapter, sentimental judgments are a particular kind of judgment provided by the "wisdom" of sentiment, instinct and tradition. Peirce's moral sentimentalism is a corollary of his "conservative sentimentalism" (CP 1.662). Among these habits, there are certainly the habits of *benevolence* and *self-sacrifice* (EP1: 357; CP 8.38).

(iii) The *deliberate habits of feeling calibrated on instinctual moral sentiments*.

(iv) The *virtue of Secondness*, namely, the ability to distinguish what is right and what is wrong. Peirce states that "every pronouncement between Good and Bad certainly comes under Category the Second; and for that reason such pronouncement comes out in the voice of conscience with an absoluteness of duality which we do not find even in logic" (EP2: 189). In particular, in "vitally important topics", this means to develop habits of action and feeling based not on reasoning, but on the solid ground of sentiment.

Also in this case, there is rich textual evidence in support of this interpretation of Peirce's ethical "normative facts" as virtues. It is at this level that Peirce expresses his half-hearted conviction that philosophical ethics can be of any help in the moral life. Peirce explains that "in the conduct of life, we have to distinguish everyday affairs and great crises." As far as "the great decisions" are concerned, he argues against the idea that "it is safe to trust to individual reason. In everyday business, reasoning is tolerably successful; but I am inclined to think that it is done as well without the aid of theory as with it. A *logica utens,* like the analytical mechanics resident in the billiard player's nerves, best fulfills familiar uses" (EP2: 30). In such things like religion and morality, "the man who would allow his religious life to be wounded by any sudden acceptance of a philosophy of religion or who would precipitately change his code of morals, at a dictate of a philosophy of ethics, – who would, let us say, hastily practice incest, – is a man whom we should consider *unwise*" (EP2: 32).[21] It is in this light that we can understand some of the criticisms Peirce addresses to the philosophy of religion: "You will observe that I have not said a single word in disparagement of the philosophy of religion, in general, which seems to me a most interesting study, at any rate, and possibly likely to lead to some useful result. Nor have I attacked any sect of that philosophy. It is not the philosophy which I hold to be baleful, but the representing it to be of vitally importance, as if any genuine religion could come from the head instead of from the heart" (CP 1.665). Therefore, philosophy (but we can include here every kind of systematic knowledge) is "baleful", harmful, only if one wants it to become the ground for the fixation of a belief about important in vitally matters; or if one thinks that it has to invalidate the "wisdom" of instinct and sentiment. What man has to remember is that "in practical affairs, in matters of vitally importance, it is very easy to exaggerate the importance of ratiocination" (EP2: 31). Indeed, "common sense, which is the resultant of the traditional experience of mankind, witnesses unequivocally that the heart is more than the head, and is in fact everything in our highest concerns, thus agreeing with my unproved logical theorem; and those persons who think that sentiment has no part in common sense forget that the dicta of common sense are objective facts, not the way some dyspeptic may feel, but what the healthy, natural, normal democracy thinks" (CP 1.654). Similarly, "true conservatism, which is sentimental conservatism … means not trusting to reasonings about questions of vitally importance but rather to hereditary instincts and traditional sentiments" (CP 1.661). As a matter of fact, Peirce argues, the "cold light of reason" leads man to regard his own self "as the highest thing"; on the contrary, the "conservative sentimentalism" teaches, as its "first command", that "your quite highest business and duty" is "to recognize a higher business than your business, *not* merely an avocation after the daily task of your vocation is performed, but a generalized conception of duty which completes your personality by melting it into the neighboring parts of the universal cosmos. If this sounds unintelligible, just take for comparison the first good mother of a family that meets your eye". This is the meaning of Peirce's claim that "the very supreme commandment of sentiment is that man should generalize …"

20 This is Vincent Potter's interpretative solution, see Potter 1967.

21 See on this Colapietro 1992.

(CP 1.673). As also Parker stresses (Parker 2003), in everyday life, (a) it is not possible to act according to a fully-developed reasoning, (b) it is not necessary to act according to a reasoned plan, or sometimes, (c) it is not desirable or ethically virtuous to act without a spontaneous and "sentimental" tendency toward what is morally good. The disposition of benevolence and self-sacrifice, what Peirce calls the "generalization" of the sentiment, "should come about, not merely in man's cognitions, which are but the superficial film of his being, but objectively in the deepest emotional springs of his life. In fulfilling this command, man prepares himself for transmutation into a new form of life" (CP 1.673).

1.7. Pluralism as Feature of the Scientific Method and Epistemic Virtue

According to Peirce, the notion of "truth" is an epistemic notion, in the sense that it is first of all a property of a proposition, and not a property of reality in itself.[22] If understood in its deepest meaning, the truth-relation can be understood as the correspondence between a representation and a state of things independent of human mind. However, in Peirce's terms, this is a verbal account of truth, which is philosophically satisfying insofar as it does not presume to be an ultimate definition. I will deal with the problem of "truth" in relation to action and experience in Ch. 5, with particular reference to Dewey's and Peirce's pragmatic approaches to the issue. For now, let me just say that the best way to approach the notion of "truth" is to consider *the point of view of the process of inquiry itself*. As Peirce explains:

> Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief … . The truth of the proposition that Caesar crossed the Rubicon consists in the fact that the further we push our archaeological and other studies, the more strongly will that conclusion force itself on our minds forever – or would do so, if study were to go on forever. (CP 5.565)

Therefore, it is evident that the notion of truth is essentially linked to the context of scientific inquiry and to the method it adopts, that is the "scientific method." At the same time, Peirce is neither claiming that what is taken by a science to be a settled belief is actually true, nor that only what science discovers can be said true.. More interestingly, Peirce is providing an ideal definition of truth in which justification, beliefs, and mind-independent state of affairs are intertwined in an interesting way. Peirce's definition of truth in relation to inquiry must be understood in a counterfactual way.[23] It would read in the following way: *p* is true iff *p* is the opinion on which all the rational inquirers would agree if all the necessary conditions for that agreement C would occur. These conditions are of various nature, contextual and contingently epistemic. What Peirce is claiming is that there is not obstacle in principle for human beings to develop true beliefs and cognitions about reality. For Peirce, experience is transparent. However, Let me defer the discussion of the notion of truth to Chapter 5 and focus now on the role played by the scientific method in Peirce's approach to ethics and the NS in general. What I want to show is that, contrary to some interpretations, Peirce is a cognitivist in morality and esthetics, just like he is against hedonistic and psychologist arguments in logic.[24] This will also cast light on the idea that the NS are positive sciences, in the sense that they aim at giving an overall description and evaluation of the most important "facts" of human self-controlled behavior. What I want to stress here is that the "scientific method," or the experimental method, can be used (and ought to be used) in inquiries into ethical and aesthetical matters only because it implies a broad and deep notion of experience, which cannot be limited to the physical experience, or to the action of an external world upon us. As Peirce spells out,

> different sciences have deal with different kinds of truth; mathematical truth is one thing, ethical

22 It can be considered a property of "reality" as a transcendental notion, see CP 5.572.

23 The following passage is clearly against the idea of "convergence" as something that will happen no matter what, although in a remote future: "We cannot be quite sure that the community ever will be settle down to an unalterable conclusion upon any given situation. Even if they do for the most part, we have no reason to think the unanimity will be quite complete, nor can we rationally presume that any overwhelming consensus of opinion will be reached upon every question" (CP 6.610)

24 See the section on moral realism.

> truth is another, the actually existing state of the universe a third; but all these different conceptions have in common something very marked and clear. We all hope that the different scientific inquiries in which we are severally engaged are going ultimately to lead to some definitely established conclusion, which conclusion we endeavor to anticipate in some measure. Agreement with that ultimate proposition that we look forward to, – agreement with that, whatever it may turn to be, is the scientific truth. (EP2: 87; see also CP 7.181, 1901)

Interpreting Peirce's account of the "scientific method" as it were built on a narrow conception of experience, you might say "physical experience," would be a serious mistake. In its general meaning, experience is indeed "the enforced element in the history of our lives" (EP2: 47). It can also be widely defined as "the sum of ideas which have been irresistibly borne in upon us, overwhelming all free-play of thought, by the tenor of our lives. The authority of experience consists in the fact that its power cannot be resisted; it is a flood against which nothing can stand" (CP 7.437). For Peirce, philosophy, NS included, doesn't require any specialized observation on facts, but merely strives to learn "what can be learned from that experience which presses in upon every one of us daily and hourly," that is our "*common experience*" (EP2: 196).[25] If we take this statement seriously, we already have some important clues of the fact that Peirce's idea of experience is a rich one, definitely irreducible to human beings' sense-organ perception of the external reality.

In another passage, Peirce explains that the fundamental feature of experience is "compulsion", which is almost a pure Secondness (EP2: 271), independently from the fact that the force of this compulsion on us is due to an external physical object, somehow pressing on our organism, or to something else. The common sense usually distinguishes between an "Internal World", the psychological dimension of human life made of fancy and of freely constructed imaginations, and an "External World" (EP2: 268), whose distinctive characters would be the constraining force of its objects played on our bodies, and the limited capacity of our muscles in determining changes in them. However, Peirce says, *compulsion* is not a suitable criterion of distinction between the Internal World and the External World, since also the non-external and non-physical dimension of human life has certain limitations and undergoes the action of some compelling forces:

> We naturally make all our distinctions too absolute. We are accustomed to speak of an external universe and an inner world of thought. But they are merely vicinities with no real boundary line between them. It comes to this: there are some ideas, – objects, be it remembered, – which will have their own way, and we cannot swerve them much … . They make up or indicate the outward world. There are other ideas which seem very docile, they are just as we think they ought to be. They form the inner world. Yet it will be found that the inner world has its surprises for us, sometimes. It isn't so exactly as we would have it as we fancy. It is rather our wishes which conform to it, Mahomet that repairs to the mountain. Neither is the moderate amount of control which we exercise upon the world of ideas nearly so direct as we fancy it to be. We go about instinctively, and without being aware how circuitously we proceed to change the current of thought. (CP 7.438; see also EP2: 369-370)

Cheryl Misak has thoroughly pointed out that Peirce's notion of human experience is manifold and comprehends different modalities, irreducible to each other (e.g. 1994b; see also Aydin 2009: 431-432; 438). Peirce never accepted an empiricist idea of experience. For instance, he writes: "If Mill wishes me to admit that *experience* is the only source of any kind of knowledge, I grant it at once, provided only that by experience he means *personal history*, life. But if he wants me to admit that inner experience is nothing, and that nothing of moment is found in diagrams, he asks what cannot be granted" (CP 4.91). Experience is a "teacher" (e.g. EP2: 194; EP2: 454) and performs this function in many different ways.[26] There are at least two different kinds of experience beyond the mere interaction of the human being's organism with a physical world, which are the *mathematical experience* and the *moral-affective experience*. Peirce acknowledges indeed that experiments and observations can actually take place as "real" or outward operations, like the ones that are in chemical and physical research, or as "ideal" or inward experiments, like in the case of the operations of the mathematician

25 Cf. "Nor again is Normative Science a *special* science, that is, one of those sciences that discover new phenomena. It is not even aided in any appreciable degree by any such science, and let me say that it is no more by psychology than by any other special science" (EP 2: 198).

26 In a letter to William James, January 23rd, 1905, Peirce writes that experience is "the effect which life has produced upon habits" and not a mere question of "feelings," like in James's theory of "pure experience."

upon his imaginary diagrams or on his drawing a deductive conclusion from a pure hypothesis. Thus, "experience is double", since "there is an *outward* and an *inward experience*. Under the latter head ought particularly to be reckoned a mathematical experience, not usually so called, which has compelled the development of pure thought to take a determinate course" (CP 7.440). However, inner experience does not concern only the compulsions of thinking in its pure abstractness, but has also an important affective implication. As Peirce writes in a striking passage,

> there is also an emotional experience, which has all the authority of any experience, provided it is equally *irresistible*. But experience and its irresistibility has a *public* character, which we shall study in another chapter. (CP 7.441)

As we can easily see, the fact that there is an affective experience, and that the emotional dimension of human life is susceptible of an intersubjective control, allows the ethical and aesthetical values to be studied through the "scientific method."[27] Hence, the affective experience meets the condition (i) of the above sketch of the notion of truth, and, as a consequence, it becomes clear how the assessments on ethical and aesthetical matters can be truth-apt.

The main point to stress at this point is that, if the "scientific method" is the method that simply warrants a certain belief on the basis of what experience constrains us to think, then, one of the resulting consequences is that the scientific method, to be fully sound, has to be sensible to the differences among the different possible objects of interest of the scientific research. This means, first of all, that in one field of inquiry, the criterion of the warranted acceptability of a belief will be of one sort, and that in another field the criterion will be of a different sort. To be explicit, Peirce's account of the way in which science has to proceed implies what I shall call *methodological pluralism*, that is, it requires that the justification of an ethical or an aesthetical assessment ought to be tested on the basis of affective experience and not, for example, on the base of a physical experience, just like chemical and physical inquiries ought to appeal to their proper criteria of research and acceptability. In this sense, even though within the same framework of the scientific method, there are *different criteria of inquiry and of acceptability* of a belief in relation to the different objects of study. As a consequence, another important component in the list of epistemic virtues is the capability to distinguish different experiential criteria of assessment in different fields of inquiry. It is evident, then, that methodological pluralism has to be listed as one of the most fundamental among the other epistemic virtues.

Thus, on Peirce's view,

> just as conduct controlled by *ethical reason* tends toward fixing certain habits of conduct, the nature of which (as to illustrate the meaning, peaceable habits and not quarrelsome habits) does not depend upon any accidental circumstances, and *in that sense*, may be said to be *destined*; so, thought, controlled by rational experimental logic, tends to the fixation of certain opinions, equally destined, the nature of which will be the same in the end, however the perversity of thought of whole generations may cause the postponement of the ultimate fixation. (EP 2: 342)

Hence, Peirce states that the correct method in questions concerning values is only "self-questioning" (CP 1.579) since consciousness is "the only witness there is" in this matters, even though sometimes it seems to be "one of the most mendacious witnesses that ever was questioned" (CP 1.580). The method of experience teaches us to put the *criterion* of what is good in moral life in the wisdom of sentiment. As a matter of fact, "on vitally important topics reasoning is out of place", and it is the scientific method itself and its indications that "furnish us conclusive reasons for limiting the applicability of reasoning to unimportant matters" (CP 1.652). In

27 Peirce's scientific method is against the *a priori* method in ethics, consisting in the acceptance of a value on the basis of its accordance with a previously defined "human nature". It is in this spirit that Peirce considers if the "simple satisfactions of the moment" can be embraced as the ultimate end of life: "Men might easily argue – indeed, do argue – that there can be no other good than the satisfaction of the moment's desire. But the moment I hear that word *can* used, where nothing in the world is pertinent but observations of what is, I cast the judgment aside as worthless. For "cannot be" means "not in accordance with a hypothetical construction" intended, this time, to represent human nature. But I do not care about hypothetical constructions. I just want to know whether a man *does* ever find any other satisfaction than the simple satisfaction of the moment" (CP 1.582).

particular, Peirce sees the spring of the moral life and the need of self-criticism, self-regulation, and inquiry into what is really good and admirable for one's life in the experience of dissatisfaction for the purposes, ideal, and experiences we already have.[28] Peirce observes that "what most influences men to self-government is intense disgust with one kind of life and warm admiration for another. Careful observation of men will show this; and those who desire to further the practice of self-government ought to shape their teachings accordingly" (EP2: 460). There is an "aesthetic understanding" (EP1: 283) that is not reducible to any different modality of experience. In this light, experiential criteria developed by human beings in order to assess their moral lives are something very different from what experience could tell them about physical reality. As Peirce clearly puts it, "different sciences are observational in … radically different way" (CP 1.238). This point is even more important if we think that some scholars have interpreted Peirce as a non-cognitivist because of his insistence on the role of "sentiment" (see chapter 3) and affective experiences of fulfillment in aesthetics and ethics (Parret 1994; de Waal 2012; Stuhr 1994).[29]

1.8. "Aesthetics" and the Esthetic Virtues

Finally, we find Peirce's characterization of the aesthetic virtues. These are:

(i) The habits of *feeling or taste oriented towards what is admirable in itself*, Reason, prior to all differentiations. Reason is an idea, subsistent in itself (EP2: 254), and, at the same time, a practical ideal for all human beings (EP2: 202). In the latter sense, Reason is the development of concrete reason, or the ultimate ideal of human conduct.[30]

(ii) The *virtue of Firstness*, namely, the acquired disposition of feeling what is fine in itself, the development of concrete reason, in the spontaneity of immediate experience (being beyond the necessity of self-correction) and throughout the constant novelties of life.

Peirce says that the development of reasonableness requires, among all the other things, "all the coloring of all qualities of feeling, including pleasure in its proper place among the rest" (EP2: 255). A conspicuous part of the human ideal, then, is to own the right "quality of feeling" for certain types of action, actual or imagined, which are the "object of the feeling" (EP2: 377). In the same way, "if conduct is to be thoroughly deliberate, the ideal must be a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms" (EP2: 377-378). It is a "taste" or a "deep and earnest emotion" for what is truly admirable (EP2: 378). "*Esthetic good* and *evil*", Peirce continues, "are closely akin to *pleasure* and *pain*; they are what would be pleasure or pain to the fully developed superman" (EP2: 379). It means that "the good is the attractive – not to everybody, but to the sufficiently matured agent" (EP2: 379). As a consequence, "the righteous man is the man who controls his passions, and makes them conform to such ends as he is prepared deliberately to adopt as *ultimate*" (EP2: 200).

But the fullness of esthetical virtue also requires pure spontaneity and immediacy. Thus, "the question of esthetics is, what is the one quality that is, in its immediate presence, *kalos*" (CP 2.199; see also EP1: 248). The aesthetic virtue, in its purity, excludes "all consideration of effort, but all consideration of action and reaction" (CP 2.199). Then, "immediate feeling is the consciousness of the first" (CP 382), and "the esthetic state of mind

28 See on this Colapietro (1989: 111). Also MS 980: 31.

29 On the contrary, Krois 1994 gets Peirce's cognitivism exactly right.

30 "This development of Reason consists … in embodiment, that is, in manifestation" (EP2: 255); "Under this conception, the ideal of conduct will be to execute our little function in the operation of the creation by giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the slang is, it is "up to us" to do so" (EP2: 255); " … the pragmaticist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined,* which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*" (EP2: 343); "[...] the continual increase of the embodiment of the idea-potentiality is the *summum bonum*" (EP2: 388); since, the creation is an on-going process, the *summum bonum* of human life is "to be fulfilling our appropriate offices in the work of creation" (letter 14 July 1905). Cf. also EP2: 3.

is purest when perfectly naive without any critical pronouncement, and that the esthetic critic founds his judgments upon the result of throwing himself back into such a pure naive state – and the best critic is the man who has trained himself to do this the most perfectly" (EP2: 189).

There are some formal aspects that Peirce recognizes to be essential features of the ultimate ideal. One of the most important components of Peirce's justification of his conception of the admirable – the development of concrete reason – consists in the fact that some of the *human exigencies* are met only if the ultimate ideal presents certain formal characters. These two normative features of the ultimate ideal are *generality* and *unity* in practical life. This is expressed by Peirce when he says that "the man *can*, or if you please is *compelled*, to make his life more reasonable" (EP2: 248; see also EP1: 239-240).[31] First, as Peirce explains, the ultimate ideal "should accord with a free development of the agent's own esthetic quality" (EP 2: 202) and should be "capable of being pursued in an indefinitely prolonged course of action" (EP2: 202). In this sense, the ideal of the development of the concrete reason is the most general aim that man can conceive, and, therefore, it is the only option that meets the human exigency of *axiological variety* and of *personal predilection*. In other words, the development of concrete reason is the overarching ideal *par excellence*, and for this reason is the only one that can cover all the objects of human action, interest and desire, preventing that one determinate object of activity and desire can be made absolute and exclusive. At the same time, it is also broad enough to welcome within itself the different selective sub-ideals in which each man can put his personal aspiration and tasks. It also fits the normative ethical values of *benevolence* and *self-sacrifice*, since "no narrow or selfish aim can ever prove satisfactory" (EP2: 253).[32]

Second, since the development of concrete reason is the most comprehensive ideal, it is also able to provide unity to the practical life of man. As a matter of fact, Peirce contends that "the identity of a man consists in the *consistency* of what he does and thinks" (EP1: 54), and that "inconsistence is odious" to man (EP2: 246). In this light we can also interpret Peirce's claim that "an aim which *cannot* be adopted and consistently pursued is a bad aim. It cannot properly be called an ultimate aim at all. The only moral evil is not to have an ultimate aim" (EP2: 202). The most serious mistake in moral life ("the only moral evil"), says Peirce, is to embrace an inconsistent ultimate ideal, namely an ideal that lacks the capacity of creating order among the different dimensions of life – cognitive, practical and affective –, for it produces inevitably damaging effects upon the different habits of man. Peirce's clearest reflection on the human need of unity is found in his 1908 "Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," in which he explains that one of the best criteria for the "Probation" of the hypothesis of God is the human exigency of practical unity and consistency in action (EP2: 446, 1908). Peirce's argument echoes Josiah Royce's claim that the "service" and "loyalty" to one consistent ideal is an unavoidable practical need of the human life (Royce 1995 [1908]: 56). Peirce's argument could be summed up in the following way: (i) the actual condition of every man is the contextual presence of contradictory purposes, desires, dispositions, and so on; (ii) the fundamental exigency of human life, *which emerges in experience*, is to get rid of the existential contradiction of incompossible purposes and desires; (iii) the normative ultimate ideal is that ideal that overcomes this contradiction. In this way, the "idea of God" and the ideal of concrete reasonableness share the same condition of being found adorable.

As it should be already clear, Peirce's "proof" of his theory of the admirable in itself is not a formal demonstration. Rather, it is instead a proof pursued on the basis of *human common experience*, and, in particular, of human experience of *what can be desired beyond any reasons*:[33]

> I do not mean to put this forward as a demonstration; because, like all demonstrations about such matters [moral values and, in general, what is admirable in itself], it would be a mere quibble, a sheaf of fallacies. I maintain simply that it is an experiential truth. (EP2: 60)

31 Hookway (2000: 242) interprets the need for unity in human conduct as the vocation of the self "to function as a rational integrated unity."

32 "The only ethically sound motive is the most general one; and the motive that actually inspires the man of science, if not quite that, is very near to it, – nearer, I venture to believe, than that of any other equally common type of humanity" (EP2: 60); "... no narrow or selfish aim can ever prove satisfactory, that the only satisfactory aim is the broadest, highest, and most general possible aim" (EP2: 253).

33 The ultimate ideal is "what is to be sought, not for a reason, but back of every reason" (CP 1.576); or "what it is that we can be content to wish for independently of any ulterior result" (CP 1.579); "the sole ultimate good independently of any ulterior result, and if not, whether it can be considered to be in itself a good at all, irrespective of its effects" (CP 1.581); "universally and absolutely desirable" (CP 1.586).

This proof is anyway an *experiential* proof. Its method asks for a "personal meditation" (EP2: 248; CP 1.600) in reviewing and criticizing the ideals we endorse. This has the form of a kind of "experimentation in the inner world" (EP2: 418). Furthermore, according to Peirce "this process is not a job that man sits down to do and have done with. The experience of life is continually contributing instances more or less illuminative. These are digested first not in the man's consciousness but in depth of his reasonable being" (EP2: 248). Just like any other science of discovery, aesthetics proceeds by abduction, deduction, and induction. Therefore, aesthetics puts forth the hypothesis that the *Summum Bonum* of human life is the development of concrete reasonableness and asks for a verification of this hypothesis, whose method is based on the method of common human experience, desire, and interest. As a consequence, "if … the future development of man's moral nature will only lead to a firmer satisfaction with the described ideal, the doctrine is true" (CP 5.566). The fact that the proposed hypothesis, if accepted as true, has to be beyond any possible criticism means that the ideal "should not ultimately tend to be disturbed by the reactions upon the agent of that outward world" (EP2: 202), namely, it should withstand the proof of affective experience. It is in this spirit that Peirce says

> if it were in the nature of a man to be perfectly satisfied to make his personal comfort his ultimate aim, no more blame would attach to him for doing so than attaches to a hog for behaving in the same way (EP2: 200).

Some of Peirce's comments in "Pearson's *Grammar of Science*" turn out to be helpful here. Peirce furnishes a long list of different hypothetical "ultimate aims" (EP2: 59-60). The crux of his analysis in the type of proof to which he appeals in order to warrant the admirability of the ideal of concrete reasonableness. Peirce's demonstration, here, consists in pointing out that "all motives that are directed toward pleasure or self-satisfaction, of however high type, will be pronounced by every experienced person to be inevitably destined to miss the satisfaction at which they aim" (EP2: 60). Hence, "the only desirable object which is quite *satisfactory in itself without any ulterior reason* for desiring it, is the reasonable itself" (EP2: 60, emphasis added). In the same way, Peirce wonders if the ultimate end might be "*gratification*, *pleasure* and *bliss*", or "the unrestrained gratification of a desire, regardless of what the nature of that desire may be"? He explains that this possibility is respectable at least in a sense, since the admirable, the ultimate ideal, is something that is satisfied with itself, and "pleasure is the only conceivable result that is perfectly self-satisfied" (EP2: 253-254). However, at a closer consideration and under the surveys of the experiential method, this can't be an option, for it doesn't take into account the higher dimensions of our life, as "love and reason" (EP2: 254). The ideal of the development of concrete reasonableness is what the human being's critical self-assessment finds to be convenient to its own nature upon reflection. The ultimate ideal grows in the human life as that ultimate end "attracts" the person "upon review," through an "almost purely passive liking" (EP2: 377-378). Although Dewey's position on the matter will be presented in Chapter 5, it is important to see that Peirce's and Dewey's positions are not too distant on this issue. With the words of James Rachel (1977: 169), we can formulate Dewey's account of the moral good in the following way: X is morally good iff "X is such that it would not be desired by someone who had considered, intelligently and without prejudice, X's nature and consequences." As we see, the end that an agent recognizes "upon review" as the genuine ultimate end of human life is the same end that can be identified through Dewey's account of the moral good.

What Peirce also stresses in his reflections on esthetic as a normative science is the fact that there seems to be an *aesthetic mediation* between a pure act of self-acknowledgment and of an act of self-prescription. In this reflective act, rationality acknowledges its nature (a semiotic nature characterized by a unlimited interest for 3rdness) and its convenient end as that nature (developing concrete reasonableness) and, at the same time, it prescribes that end in its formality (the principle "you ought to develop the concrete reasonableness) and the vague, practical specification that follow from it as theorems (you ought to pursue practical unity, you ought to pick a general end, you ought to pick an end that is susceptible of aesthetical development). These formal prescriptions and the prescriptions about the epistemic, ethical and aesthetical virtues are the different and ordered parts and specification of Peirce's vague appeal to the "development of concrete reasonableness" in the world.

We have also seen in the first chapter that the human being's nature, grasped as "rational instinct," has a developmental teleological structure. In other words, the human mind has a metaphysical vocation to "reasonableness." The ideal of reasonableness is the most "powerful" one (CP 5.520) and attracts human beings to reshape their practices in a new and originally reasonable order. *Before* this reasonable order is invented, articulated in a linguistic or diagrammatic form, or produced in our practice, the attraction performed by the ideal is a vague, yet powerful one. We face here a twofold process, both top-down and bottom-up: (1) in the case of the process seen as a top-down process, it is the ideal of reasonableness that attracts all the "material" of human life to a new, original, and personal order. Until this order is not produced, the attraction of the ideal at its fundamental level is more like a "feeling" for what is admirable rather than a determined cognition of what "it's up to us" to do; (2) in the case of the process seen as a bottom-up process, the knowledge of what we ought to do, of what reasonable order we should produce in own life, is always related to the "material" of our life, our present desires, purposes, dispositions, and circumstances. These are the signs that eventually grow into a clearer ideal of life. Now, if the "logical causation" of the ideal has the most fundamental role in orienting the human life (even when we cannot determine its vagueness through the articulation of purposes, plans of actions, determined desires, etc.), it also has a "logos-influence" on every aspect of life. This "influence" expresses itself as a vocation to reasonableness. The consequence is that every habit in the human being, although not fully reasonable, has however in itself a germ of rationality, i.e., a potential capability of being developed in a fully rational way.[34] As a consequence, we can make sense of Peirce's account of the *work* of moral self-criticism as a work of "creative love" (see Hausman 1975). This means that rationality, in the form of moral self-criticism, gradually acknowledges in certain types of conduct ("normative facts") the convenient, rational realization/improvement of those germs of rationality already present in their practices and gradually brings them to the mature status of an ordered and consistent whole of life. Peirce writes in this sense that "the movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting creations into independency and drawing them into harmony" (EP1: 353-354). The "reason operative in experience to which our own can approximate" (EP2: 212) shows here its importance in the moral life. There are two points to stress here. First, if human habits were lacking of an at least implicit vocation to be developed in a rational way, then they would never "ask" for a rational development. Second, it is rationality itself, in the form of moral self-criticism and sentimental aspiration to what is admirable, that tries to determine what is really normative for the human person and what are tendencies and signs that need to be developed. In a striking passage in "The Law of Mind," Peirce explains this dynamic:

> growth comes only from love, from – I will not say self-*sacrifice*, but from the impulse to fulfill another's highest impulse. Suppose, for example, that I have an idea that interests me. It is my creature; for as shown in last July's *Monist*, it is a little person. I love it; and I will sink myself in perfecting it. It is not by dealing out cold justice to the circle of my ideas that I can make them grow, but by cherishing and tending them as I would the flowers in my garden. The philosophy we draw from John's gospel is that this is the way mind develops … . Love, recognizing germs of loveliness in the hateful, gradually warms it into life, and makes it lovely. (EP1: 354)[35]

We can now answer the question about the link between aesthetics as science of the normative habits of feeling and aesthetics as the science of the *Summum Bonum*. The top-down action attractive dynamic of the reasonable ideal is experienced in its vagueness in an affective way. However, according to Peirce, this is a genuine cognition as well, insofar it brings in itself the power of 3rdness and aspires to further acknowledgments and determinations in other cognitions. Peirce writes that the three categories "appear under their forms of

34 Ahti-Veikko 2012 has given an interpretation of Peirce's norms in the light of a game-theoretic semantics. Although insightful, this interpretation is subject to a dangerous ambiguity. If Ahti-Veikko means that for Peirce the "rules" or "norms" developed in the NS are only "defining rules" and "strategic rules," then Ahyi-Veikko is wrong. A GTS is mainly formal. On the contrary, Peirce's NS are not a formal analysis of the structure of a norm, but they rather establish what ought to be done in human conduct ("norms"). As a matter of fact, there can be different rule-governed semantic games. Peirce's four different methods of fixing a belief clearly exemplify this fact. The simple appeal to GTS is taken by Ahti-Veikko as an exhaustive account of Peirce's thesis that "ethics provides grounds or support for logic." However, Ahti-Veikko's view is too narrow if it aims to be a complete account of Peirce's stance.

35 See also Peirce's claim that the Agapastic dynamic of evolution functions through the mediation of an "aesthetic experience", EP1: 363-364; 369. See on this Ventimiglia 2003, who analyzes the abductive structure of the developmental teleology of the human being once it becomes self-controlled agency.

Thirdness in the ideas of Signs of Firstness, or Feeling, i.e., things of beauty; Signs of Secondness, or Action, i.e., modes of conduct; and signs of Thirdness, or Thought, i.e., forms of thought" (EP2: 272). The first fashion in which the ideal of reasonableness operates in the life of human beings is as a feeling of beauty, whose aspiration is to grow into a more determined life made of good actions and true beliefs.[36] However, according to Peirce, the first steps of the development of a personal rational ideal are more or less of the nature of an affective meditation. He writes, "a man will from time to time review his ideals. This process is not a job that man sits down and to do and have done with. The experience of life is continually contributing instances more or less illuminative. These are digested first not in the man's consciousness but in the depths of his reasonable being. The results come to consciousness later. But meditation seems to agitate a mass of tendencies and allow them more quickly to settle down so as to be really more conformed to what is fit for the man" (EP2: 248).[37]

1.9. The Unity of NS Virtues Resulting from the Reference to the Ultimate Ideal

The esthetical virtues, due to their common reference to the ultimate ideal, give unity to all human conduct and experience, and also cast some light on the claim that the normative facts developed by the NS have to be understood as a system. It is the ultimate ideal that has the ultimate architectonic function and, as a consequence, that shapes every manifestation of the life of an individual. Thus, Peirce writes that

> if a man's whole life is animated by a desire …, there is a general character in all his actions, which is not caused by, but it's formative of, his behaviour. (EP2: 72)

It is for this reason that according to Peirce aesthetics, the theory of the admirable in itself, is the core of the NS (EP2: 379). Peirce's claim, then, can be interpreted in continuity with the traditional doctrine of virtue, according to which the different virtues cannot be understood (and developed) in isolation, but rather are the various facets of the same human flourishing. In tis way, the ultimate ideal is a *composite whole*, which includes cognitive, affective, and in general practical "reasonable" dispositions (e.g. CP 5.132; MS310, 1903). I would interpret in this sense the complex passage in which Peirce tries to define the nature of the "esthetically good" – namely, the ultimate end –, in the light of the category of Firstness. He argues "an object, to be esthetically good, must have a multitude of parts so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality" (EP2: 201; see also 379). Peirce also adds that the ideal "may be a complicated state of things. But it must be a *single* ideal; it must have *unity*" (EP 2: 253). Obviously, the aesthetic, self-sufficient character of the ultimate ideal branches out into every aspect of human activity.

36 In a passage about the nature of "pleasure and pain" in the "Neglected Argument," Peirce shows how this teleological approach is fundamental to his view of human being's life. He asks whether pleasure and pain "are … mere qualities of feeling," or "rather motor instincts attracting us to some feelings and repelling others" (EP2: 438). Peirce believes that this question produces a shit from a mere psychological viewpoint to a more broadly metaphysical one. In other words: if we realize through experimental observation that "pleasure" and "pain" are not mere brutal reaction to a state of affair, but show instead a general tendency of response to certain objects, we are led to pose a metaphysical question: does this empirical fact mean that affective response is governed by a general final cause? What is the nature of this final cause? Does this teleological phenomenon imply the operation of a rational power throughout mind and reality? Does it have a vocation to a more reasonable development? A feeling of "pleasure" can be therefore the sign which, if undergoes the adequate growth, can become the mark of a greater good. Peirce also says that not only conventional signs are legisigns, that is, signs capable of being developed into general habits. He writes: "Every conventional sign is a legisign, [but not conversely]" (CP 2.246). This is another strong clue of the fact that according to Peirce the circular movement of love in "anticipating" the ideal through an affective cognition and developing it into more determinate cognitions is not the product of conventions but is regulated by a metaphysical teleology.

37 In his review of Pearson's *Grammar of Science* (EP2: 57-66) in 1901, Peirce produces an interesting classification of the human ends. In 1903, Peirce reconsiders this classification "An Attempted Classification of Ends" (CP 1.586-88), that constitutes a reworking of the piece of 1901. Lizska (2012: 60-61) classifies these ends dividing them in "iconic" (based on repetition of similar actions), "indexical" (based on response to a command of some sort), and "symbolic" (critical and generalizable standards). The teleological nature of the emergence of good ends that I have tried to show belongs to Lizska's third class of ends.

2. The Pragmatic Maxim and the Normative Sciences: Peirce's Problematical Fourth Grade of Clarity

The aim of this section is to show that Peirce maintained a twofold attitude toward his "pragmatic maxim." I call this twofold approach *problematical* not because it is the origin of inconsistencies in Peirce's thought, but only because the collocation and use of the pragmatic maxim constituted a genuine "problem" on which Peirce continued to reflect over the years. My general claim is that Peirce, from the first clear statement of the pragmatic maxim in 1878 to its later formulations, assumed two different approaches about the use and the task of the pragmatic maxim. According to the first approach, Peirce through the maxim is pursuing a *pragmatic-explicating task* (PET), while the second approach corresponds to the use of the maxim for a *pragmatic-normative task* (PNT). Generally speaking, PET coincides with using the pragmatic maxim as a mere tool of semantic disambiguation of a proposition whatsoever in its "third" level of clarity. On the other hand, PNT coincides with the use of the pragmatic maxim as a tool for obtaining the pragmatic meanings of only those propositions that fit the normative ideal of the "development of concrete reasonableness." Peirce refers to this latter case as a grade of clarity higher than the third grade. Hence, I call this grade of clarity the fourth grade of clarity, following Krolikowki 1964. While PET aims to bring about the semantic disambiguation of every proposition, PNT intends to produce only true propositions and unconditioned prescriptions.

As I will show, the point of passage from the first approach to the second approach is marked by the role and weight that Peirce attributes to the connection between the pragmatic maxim and the "Normative Sciences" (NS). Among Peirce scholars, Vincent G. Potter has clearly spelled out this connection when he asked in 1967: "Just how did Peirce's speculation concerning the normative sciences modify his thinking about the meaning of his 1878 statement" of the pragmatic maxim (Potter 1967:53)? Many other interpreters have acknowledged the development of the maxim as a "principle of logic" and, therefore, as a normative methodological principle in scientific inquiry once logic became clearly for Peirce the first of the Normative Sciences. I would mention here in particular Richard S. Robin's 1997 challenging reconstruction of the development of Peirce's conception of pragmatism, which is somehow paradigmatic of the best Peirce scholarship on this point:

> Apart from the reversal of the justificatory roles of logic and psychology, what basis was there in psychology for thinking that all human beings ever want are sensible or practical results? Doesn't science in the pure practice of it aim at something else? Doesn't ethics demand a loftier ideal? […] Precisely this kind of questioning forced the reconsideration that eventually led Peirce to a reformulation of pragmatism. Originally, the pragmatic maxim was a logical rule for the clarification of concepts in terms of conceivable practical bearings … . The new formulation mentions a higher grade of clarity [the fourth level of clarity]. This reformulation of the original maxim avoided earlier psychologizing, […] and articulated a higher ideal for human motivation than personal satisfaction. Peirce effectively transformed pragmatism into pragmaticism … . (1997: 141)[38]

Although insightful because of the acknowledgment of the role played by the Normative Sciences in Peirce's understanding of the pragmatic maxim, I think there is evidence against the idea of a sharp passage from an early conception of the maxim ("the pragmatic maxim *was* a logic rule for the clarification of concepts," emphasis added) to a later, normative one ("the *new* formulation mentions a higher grade of clarity," emphasis added). Rather, I believe that PET and PNT are two souls or approaches to the maxim that Peirce develops over time without annihilating their mutual tension. In particular, I find three flaws in the usual readings of the link between the pragmatic maxim and the normative sciences, including Robin's. (i) First, the link between the maxim and the normative is usually considered only *external*, in the sense that it is limited to the fact that the maxim attains the clear role of a normative principle of logic as a tool of semantic disambiguation, PET (Misak 1995: 92; Brunning 1997: 9; Hookway 2002: 60). On the contrary, I claim that Peirce's mature use of the maxim

38 See also Conway (2008: 290): "The derivation of the Normative Sciences is an irresistible question. Vincent Potter discovers twin sources: (1) Peirce's cosmological speculations of the 1880's and 1890's and (2) his continual refining of the Pragmatic Maxim, i.e., that the meaning of a concept consists of its practical consequences. The results of these were (1) the Normative Sciences in 1903, and (2) a new brand of pragmatism in 1905, i.e., "pragmaticism," which additionally incorporated: thought considered as action; a *summum bonum* of concrete reasonableness and an instinctive belief in God, both developed from the esthetic activity of Musement; and a requisite emphasis on the "rational purport" or teleology of humans."

tends to include also an *internal link* to normativity, as it is displayed by PNT and the fourth level of clarity, in the sense that the normative use of the maxim becomes a tool for obtaining the pragmatic meanings of *only* those propositions that fit the normative ideal of the "development of concrete reasonableness." (ii) Second, it is usually claimed either that there has always been a mix of normative and explicating approach in Peirce's understanding of the maxim (Sorensen 2009: 178-179; Olshewsky 1983: 200, Parker 1998: 196; Shapiro 1995: 305; Apel 1981: 72; Apel 1995: 383), or that at least after 1902 Peirce takes a normative turn that represents a radical novelty in respect to his earlier understanding of the maxim (Robin 1997; Conway 2009: 290; Potter 1967: 54-55).[39] On the contrary, I claim that there is evidence to claim that also after 1902 Peirce after does not want the main task of the maxim to become PTN, but remains faithful to the "purity" of PET. Why is that? Why is Peirce interested in maintaining the priority in pragmaticism of the pragmatic-explicating task of the maxim? As I will show, I believe that the reason is the following: while PNT aims to clarify potentially *all* the pragmatic meanings of *exclusively* those representations which further the development of concrete reasonableness, it is only PET that is potentially able to unpack *all* the possible meanings of *all* the possible representations of reality (including the false ones). In other words, since it is from the dissatisfactory character of a bad interpretation of a sign that the good interpretations of that sign can eventually emerge, Peirce remains faithful to a semantic perspective which guarantees the clarification of all the possibilities of meaning of all signs, including those representations that are bad representations. (iii) This brings me to the third flaw of the traditional interpretation, which is in my opinion more a partiality than a serious flaw, moreover justified by the philosophical temper of the twentieth century. What Peirce scholarship has usually stressed is the difference between Peirce's pragmatic maxim and the verificationism of logical positivism. In this light, Peirce would be a "fallibilist," not a "verificationist" of the type of logical positivism, as claimed by A. J. Ayer in his 1968 interpretation (1968: 44; 49). The natural consequence of this concern has been to stress the fact that what mainly distinguishes Peirce from the logical positivists is his modal ontology articulated as "scholastic realism," with particular reference to the reality of "universals," in the sense of laws and general dispositions (Fitzgerald 1966: 96; Misak 1995: 91; 104; Moore 1971; Shapiro 1973: 25; Smyth 1977). Peirce himself laments as early as 1893 the "materialistic" tendency of his 1878 formulation of the maxim (see 5.402, n.2) and will explicitly reject its nominalistic flavor in mature texts such as "Issue of Pragmaticism" (EP2: 346-359, 1905). Although this is a most important aspect of Peirce's pragmatism, this interpretative tendency has caused that the importance of *possibility* has been overlooked in understanding what the pragmatic maxim brings about. In fact, possibility is not synonym of generality. I would say that possibility is dependent upon generality. It is true that Peirce's maxim defines meaning in terms of subjunctive conditionals and therefore counterfactuals. It is also true that, since counterfactuals are also possibilities, it might sound false that the importance of possibility has been usually overlooked. However, what I claim is that for Peirce the class of possibility includes both *what could happen if C* occurred and *what ought to happen* unconditionally, and that of course the two subclasses do not coincide. While PET highlights the former subclass of possibility, PNT brings to light the second one. I proceed as follows.

2.1. The Pragmatic-Explicating Task of the Maxim and Its Two Formulations

In its more basic use, the pragmatic maxim is a tool of semantic disambiguation of a proposition *p*. This is what I call the use of the maxim for a pragmatic-explicating task (PET). Peirce writes that "pragmatism" is "a mere maxim of logic instead of a sublime principle of speculative philosophy" (EP2: 125, 1903). As a tool for the identification of the meaning of a proposition, PET aims to distinguish meaningless propositions, which are simply "metaphysical rubbish" or "gibberish," from meaningful propositions, which are provided with a "plain, practical definition" (CP 8.191; see also "meaningless gibberish – one word being defined by other words, and they by still others, without any real conception ever being reached", CP EP2: 338-339; CP 5.423, 1905). In order to explain this point, I will mainly draw on two different formulations of the maxim, the first contained in 1878 "How to Make Our ideas Clear," the second written in 1903 "The Maxim of Pragmatism," the first of the

39 I take Potter's view to be of particular interest not only for its insightfulness, but also for a mistake that it contains, i.e. the merging of the notion of "generality" governing individuals and "normativity." See in particular Potter (1967: 54-55; 58; 60-63).

Harvard Lectures of the same year. The first formulation is the *conditional-mood formulation*, while the second is the *imperative-mood formulation*. Let us start with the conditional-mood formulation. As it is known, the 1878 formulation of the pragmatic maxim reads: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (EP1: 132). We can harmlessly extend the notion of "conception" to the idea of a proposition, taking it to mean a representation of an object. Therefore, Peirce points out as early as 1878 that a proposition *p* can be comprehended at different grades of clarity. The application of the maxim allows the interpreter to have access to the "third" grade of clarity, the pragmatic meaning of *p*, when the same interpreter already understands *p* at a lower level of clarity. The first two levels of clarity described in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" are the "familiarity" with *p* and the capacity of "logical analysis" of *p*. In other words, in order to grasp the meaning of a proposition at the first grade of clarity, an interpreter must be able to (1) pick out at least one instance of the object signified by that proposition ("familiarity," EP1: 124-125; 136), while to know *p* at a second level of clarity, she must be able to (2) give a verbal definition of the content of the same proposition ("logical analysis," EP1: 125-126; 136). The application of the maxim manifests the third level of clarity, the "pragmatic" understanding of *p* (EP1: 132; see also CP 3.457, 1897). Peirce's own understanding of the maxim develops over time. As early as 1893, Peirce voices his perplexities about the "materialistic" and nominalistic tendencies of his first formulation, which are explicitly corrected in the following years, up to the last formulation of the maxim in 1913 "An Essay toward Improving Our Reasoning in Security and Uberty" (EP2: 463-474). I would synthesize the tenets of Peirce's correction of his early formulation in the following three points. First, the "practical bearings" of a proposition and "what is tangible and practical" (EP1: 131) are not limited to instances of empiricistically understood sense-data and observation (see Quine's interpretation), but include a very broad notion of "experience," which admits also mathematical, aesthetic, moral, and religious "perceptions." Second, the practical bearings should not be understood as mere instances of action, or 2ndnesses, but as general dispositions of agency, or 3rdnesses (e.g. EP2: 341; 347, 1905). Third, the maxim, once explicated in its logical nature of a subjunctive conditional, covers counterfactual reality: in other words, it does not refer only to the actual interpretations of a sign that will take place in the future ("will-be"), but also to the possible interpretations of a sign of an object ("may-be" or "might-be") that would follow from the general dispositions of that object ("would-be") if counterfactual conditions C occurred (EP2: 401-402, 1907, CP 5.467; EP2: 354).

Although the tenets of Peirce's mature understanding of the maxim become clearer over the years, Peirce was already cultivating them in 1878. A single quotations displays all of them: "To develop its meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves. Now, the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are like to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be" (EP1: 131, 1878). Given this historical reconstruction, I would render the conditional-mood formulation of the pragmatic maxim in the following way:

Given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if an agent assumed as true in a belief B a representation *p* of O (B*p*), and (P2) if the same agent pursued one of *all* the possibilities of purpose that she could endorse, (C) then the meaning of *p* coincides with that specific disposition to act that the agent would have in this context.

There are two aspects of Peirce's understanding of the maxim that this formulation makes explicit. The first one is the fact that the "belief" in *p*, genuine or merely artificial, is a necessary condition of possibility for the application of the maxim to *p*, as it is displayed in P1. Simply put, if *p* is neither believed nor assumed as true by an agent, there can be no "practical bearing" of *p* on that agent. Peirce clarifies this point when he points out the difference between two different propositional states or acts, apprehending *p* and believing *p* (on this, see Hookway 1985: 128 ff.; Hookway 2002: 62 ff.; Maddalena 2009: 121-132). The nature of a belief, i.e. B*p*, is a disposition to act, or readiness to act upon *p* when the right circumstances occur, so that *p* performs the function of a "maxim of conduct" (EP2: 139, 1903). In Peirce's terms, what a belief is traces back to the "act of judgment," which is in turn essentially connected to the act of "assertion" of *p* (EP2: 140) or "acceptance" of *p*.

We read that: "a judgment is an act of a formation of a mental proposition combined with an adoption of it or act of assent to it" (EP2: 191, 1903). Judgments of assent or adoption imply an operation of self-control and therefore an acceptance of *p* in the light of epistemic, ethical, and ultimately aesthetical standards. Asserting that *p* has the form of an "affidavit" or a "bet" on the truth of *p* (EP2: 140; see also EP2: 200, 1903) and is therefore different from the mere apprehending *p*, in which no commitment to the consequences of *p* is present. From the context in which the distinction between asserting *p* and apprehending *p* is formulated in "The Pragmatic Maxim" (EP2: 140, 1903), it seems clear that while in the case of apprehension of *p* all the possibilities of meaning should be considered (also when *p* is false), the assertion of *p* implies, at least tentatively, the bet on p because he thinks that *p* is true and the contextual distinction of the truth of *p* from the falsity of non-*p*. While apprehension includes the meaning of all the possible propositions, assertion establishes a difference between what is considered true and what is not; it refers only to the meaning of true propositions, and therefore to a subclass of the meanings potentially disclosed by apprehension.

The second aspect that the conditional-mood formulation manages to display is present in P2 and is the purposeful nature of the semeiotic process. As Short has made clear, interpretation of "intellectual concepts" (EP2: 402), such as a proposition, is a teleological process, at least in the sense that the interpreter is always guided by a specific goal in interpreting a sign (1981: 213). Although I believe that according to Peirce the teleological nature of semeiosis cannot be reduced to the goals of the interpreter, it is also true that this is a fundamental aspect in order to understand Peirce's account of the maxim.

Before moving to the imperative-mood formulation of the maxim, it is important to stress a further point. The revolutionary import of the pragmatic maxim relies in the tenet that the pragmatic unpacking of the meaning of *p* is not an enhanced verbal definition of *p* in which the only concepts allowed are concepts semantically related to the dimension of human practice. As Kelly Parker underscores, the "third" level of clarity of a concept is not provided by a "super-dictionary" in which objects are described in practical concepts (1998: 182). On the contrary, the pragmatic maxim brings to light the fact that when an interpreter commits herself to *p*, the consequence is a fundamental "readiness" to behave is a certain determinate way, of which the ability of picking out instances of *p* and articulating verbal definitions of *p* are only sectorial cases. This point is also supported by the development of Peirce's semeiotic, with particular reference to the classification of the interpretants. Peirce came to the conclusion that the "ultimate" meaning or interpretant of a sign is not a further sign but is a habit of interpretation (e.g. EP 2: 430). When he talks about the "living definition" of a sign, Peirce refers to the habits of interpretation that a sufficient consideration of that sign would produce in the interpreter. As late as 1908, Peirce writes that the third level of clarity in the interpretation of a sign is its "living comprehension" (EP2: 448), i.e., an interpreter whose semeiotic dispositions allow her to correctly interpret that sign every time the occasion to do so occurs. Therefore, the third level of clarity of a proposition brought about by the maxim is not a super-definition of that proposition obtained through a special class of concepts (i.e. concepts referring to human agency), but it coincides rather with the semeiotic habits themselves developed by the interpreter, which include dispositions of affection, thought, and conduct in general. The 1903 formulation of the pragmatic maxim highlights this point in a clearer way. It reads:

> Pragmatism is the principle that every theoretical judgment expressible in a sentence in the indicative mood is a confused form of thought whose only meaning, if it has any, lies in its tendency to enforce a corresponding practical maxim expressible as a conditional sentence having its apodosis in the imperative mood. (EP 2: 135)

The prescriptive language used by Peirce in the imperative-mood formulation of the maxim, although rigorous, can be misleading. Does the apodosis of the conditional represent a norm, such as the ones elaborated in the NS? I do not think so. In this formulation of the maxim, Peirce makes use of a prescriptive language only to show that being ready to act in a determinate way given C (disposition of action) implies that in C the interpreter would coincide with an agent who has a certain type of purpose, X. In other words, the pragmatic meaning of a proposition can be expressed in the language of practical knowledge, which is prescriptive in nature. Once highlighted in its fundamental connection to human agency, the meaning of a proposition is what orients the agent's deeds, aims to guide her actions and therefore "prescribes." This is the typical logical structure of every practical judgment, also of those practical judgments that are not good from the viewpoint of the NS.

Also other authors who have stressed the importance of practical knowledge, from Immanuel Kant to John Searle, have recurred to the same "prescriptive" language. Therefore, when Peirce wants to analyze the intellectual meaning of *p* in relations to what an agent "means" to do, he appeals to the imperative-mood formulation. The ought-to formulation has the advantage over the former formulation insofar as it spells out that the "third" level of clarity of a proposition is not an enhanced verbal definition (in which instead of concepts of "objects" appear concepts of "human actions") but is the real readiness to act in such and such a way when the opportune circumstances occur (this readiness is real also if it is not expressed in verbal definitions). I would express the imperative-mood formulation of the maxim in the following way:

Given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if you assume a representation *p* of O in a belief (B*p*), and (P2) if you pursue an end E, where E is one of all the possible possibilities of purpose you could pursue, (C) then you ought to do X. X is the meaning of *p* in this context.

It is fundamental to stress the fact here that the imperative-mood formulation is still a rendition of the pragmatic maxim understood as a mere tool of semantic disambiguation. Therefore, it coincides with the pragmatic-explicating use of the maxim. This formulation not only allows for an explication of the action-guiding function of the meaning of *p* when it is revealed in its import for practical knowledge, but also for the purposive nature of semeiotic processes. The two formulations are equivalent in content and change only in the way in which they highlight the nature of the pragmatic meaning.

2.2. The Tension between the Pragmatic-Explicating Task and the Pragmatic-Normative Task of the Maxim

An account of the maxim as a mere pragmatic-explicating tool is subject to an internal *tension* toward a more specific task, which I call the pragmatic-normative task (PNT). This internal instability is well expressed in a 1907 passage, in which Peirce writes:

> Suffice it to say once more that pragmatism is, in itself, no doctrine of metaphysics, no attempt to determine any truth of things. It is merely a method of ascertaining the meanings of hard words and of abstract concepts. All pragmatists of whatsoever stripe will cordially assent to that statement. As to the ulterior and indirect effects of practicing the pragmatistic method, that is quite another affair. All pragmatists will further agree that their method of ascertaining the meanings of words and concepts is no other than that experimental method by which all the successful sciences (in which number nobody in his senses would include metaphysics) have reached the degrees of certainty that are severally proper to them today; – this experimental method being itself nothing but a particular application of an older logical rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (EP 2: 400-401)

Peirce apparently introduces here the distinction between (1) the pragmatic maxim in itself, understood as a semantic device for a pragmatic-explicating task, and (2) the practice of the "pragmatistic method," that is something "ulterior and indirect" if confronted to PET. Peirce adds that the pragmatistic method corresponds to the experimental method and that the experimental method is a type of verificationism in which the consequences of a hypothesis should be tested through "experience." This appeal to experience, called by Peirce "scientific method" in 1878, has as its typical characteristic the task of producing "true" beliefs and ascertain what is "real" (EP1: 120-123) and it is normatively defined by this alethic aim. It seems clear from the passage that the maxim is a part of the scientific method, although science goes beyond the mere use of the maxim. The question is therefore: when used in the context of the scientific inquiry, is the maxim only used in a pragmatic-explicating fashion or tends to a further, normative application? Moreover, if the maxim tends to a normative application, does it produce a new level of clarity in the meaning of a proposition?

I take the pragmatic-normative task of the maxim to mean something very precise. As we have seen, Peirce presents the pragmatic maxim also in the form of a prescription. However, this is not enough for having PNT.

As a matter of fact, it is possible to formulate PET in the form of a conditional in which the apodosis has prescriptive form. On the contrary, the necessary and sufficient condition for PNT is that a "norm" appears as one of the conditions expressed in the protasis. "Norm" means one of the ethically good and aesthetically admirable purposes established in the normative sciences. The *Summum Bonum*, which Peirce identifies with the purpose of development of the concrete reasonableness, is unconditionally normative for the human agency, and as a consequence also the more specific purposes covered by it (such as the pursuit of truth in inquiry) share the same normative condition. In the light of these considerations, PNT is formulable in the conditional-mood and in the imperative-mood. The conditional-mood formulation reads as follows:

Given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if an agent believed *p*, where *p* is a representation of O (B*p*), and (P2) if the same agent pursued one of the *good* purposes established in the NS, then (C) the meaning of *p* coincides with that specific resolution to act X that the agent would have in that context.

While formulated in the imperative-mood, PNT is:

Given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if you believe *p*, where *p* is a representation of O (B*p*), (P2) since you *ought to* pursue E, where E is one of the normative possibilities of purpose you could pursue established in the NS, (C) then you ought to do X. In this context, X is the meaning of *p*.

Peirce's two approaches to the pragmatic maxim are therefore determined by the relevance of normative concerns in the use of the pragmatic maxim. I am not only referring to the fact that the use of the maxim is claimed to be normative for scientific inquiry. As I mentioned, normativity relates to the pragmatic maxim in two ways: (1) in an *external* way, if the use of the maxim, also simply as PET, is normative; (2) in an *internal* way, if normativity appears as a logical component of the maxim, so that PTN requires the occurrence of a norm in the protasis. In the latter case, PNT, the role of normativity does not relate only to the use of the maxim, but also to its formulation. In the former case, PET, the pragmatic maxim does not admit normative concerns among its conditions. We have therefore:

(1) PET does not put any limit to the conditions under which the meaning of *p* is made explicit

While, on the contrary,

(2) PNT puts some restraints to the conditions under which the meaning of *p* is made explicit.

In particular, the essential restraint in PNT is a practical tie: the purposes of the agent involved in the hypothetical conduct upon B*p* cannot be *all* the possible purposes that an agent can endorse, but *only* "good" ends from a normative viewpoint.

Let us think about the following example. Peirce claims sometimes that the genuine man of science is not guided in his inquiry by practical or applicative concerns.[40] What we see here is not a pragmatic clarification of the idea of "science" through PET (what a given conception of "science" means at its third level of clarity), but an unpacking of the same notion through PNT (what the notion of "science" ought to mean in its third level of clarity). If we were to formulate in an extended form the idea of "science" through PNT, the "norm" that would occur in the protasis would be "you simply ought to pursue the truth" (indeed, refusing the goal of the pursuit of truth turns the practice of inquiry into something totally different from "science") and the apodosis would be a contextual application of the prescription "you ought not to be mainly concerned with applicative concerns."[41]

40 See e.g. "the investigator who does not stand aloof from all intent to make practical applications, will not only obstruct the advance of the pure science, but what is infinitely worse, he will endanger his own moral integrity and that of his readers" (EP2: 29, 1898).

41 Some interpreters read Peirce's statements as a declaration of the absolute independence of scientific experimentation from any ethical

Only PNT can disclose to the agent a use of the maxim that can serve human agency without contradicting the epistemic, ethical, and aesthetical norms of conduct. The Kantian distinction between a hypothetical practical maxim and the categorical imperative can work here as a clarification. Interestingly, Peirce remarks that "the instant that an esthetic ideal is proposed as an ultimate end of action, at that instant a categorical imperative pronounces for or against it" (EP2: 202). If PET translates into a hypothetical imperative, only PNT corresponds to a categorical imperative. As a matter of fact, only if a norm occurs in the protasis, the prescription that is produced in the apodosis is an unconditioned, "categorical," prescription. The shift from PET to PNT is not only in the conditions (a good purpose must appear among C), but also in the "result," that is, in the nature of what is prescribed in the apodosis: in the former case, it is *any* purpose whatsoever, expressed in a prescriptive language, would result from C if we believe *p*; in the latter case, it is only the good and admirable purpose, always expressed in a prescriptive language, that would result from C if we believe *p*.

What is more important here is to clarify my initial claim that PET is subject to an internal instability, or tension toward PNT.[42] I believe that the second approach naturally emerges from the first approach, or that it is already implicit, although in a germinal way, in the first approach. I find at least three reasons for which I claim that Peirce's PET has a natural inclination toward PNT. (1) First, since the general condition of possibility for the application of the maxim to *p* is that B*p* is genuinely given or assumed, the context to which the maxim can be applied entails a self-controlled act of acceptance that develops and applies standards of acceptance. (2) Second, semeiosis is a purposeful process and purposes tend naturally to become subject to self-criticism and a normative viewpoint. (3) Third, the justification of the pragmatic maxim as a normative principle of logic, i.e. the external relation between pragmatic maxim and normativity, tends to transform the maxim from PET to PNT. In fact, since the use of the maxim is normative because it better realizes the normative goal of the pursuit of truth, the application of the maxim entails the acceptance of the unconditioned normativity of the end "you ought to pursue the truth," which becomes part of the protasis of the application of the maxim.

Let us consider the three reasons in order. (1) In the first place, as we have seen, the only general condition of possibility for the application of the maxim to *p* is that *p* is the content of a belief, genuine or made-up. In fact, if *p* were not taken to be the content of a belief, than it would not be possible to analyze what the "practical consequences" of *p* would be. Since B*p* requires an act of acceptance, if the belief is genuine, the act of acceptance presupposes an "inquiry", or "consideration," in the plausibility of *p*. This act of acceptance is an "assertion" of a proposition, which involves "the deliberate exercise, in uttering a proposition, of a force tending to determine a belief in it in the mind of the interpreter" (NEM4: 248-249; see also CP 5.546, 1908). A genuine "judgment" implies to take a stance in relation to the proposition that is judged and its consequences (CP 5.547). That is, a genuine B*p* implies the production/assumption of standards of acceptability and the act of acceptance of what conforms to these standards, in this case, *p*. In other words, a genuine belief essentially requires self-control, and self-controlled acts are performed in the light of "norms." The issue of belief leads to the problem of self-control and normative standpoint. Assertion entails "taking responsibility" in the proposition accepted by the mind (CP 2.315; 5.546-547). In 1906 "Prolegomena to an Apology of Pragmaticism," Peirce writes: "it is self-control which makes any other than the normal course of thought possible, just as anything else makes any other than the normal course of action possible; and just as it is precisely that that gives room for an ought-to-be of

concern. Although some passages can lead to such a conclusion, I think that that is neither Peirce's conclusion, nor what logically follows from his claims. Peirce's claims are methodological considerations about the specific formal object of each NS. That "logic" ought to be governed by the "pursuit of truth" and nothing else is the (verbal) definition of inquiry in terms of practical consequences. Peirce is establishing the ultimate goal of conduct in inquiry, not the ultimate goal of conduct in general. Since inquiry also reveals moral and aesthetic truths ("truths" about moral and aesthetic reality), and since the human being is never only a scientific inquirer, the actual practice of scientific inquiry will also be subject to the normative authority of broader ethical and aesthetical norms.

42 See Colapietro (1997a: 264); Poggiani 2012; also Pihlstrom (2012: 18-19). However, I do not find in Pihlstrom an argument for clarifying these two aspects. I take the only clarification that is found in Pihlstrom to be wrong and somehow anti-Peircean: "In turn, modal realism, again pragmatically articulated … may have a crucial moral motivation [so far, so good because ambiguous]. Thus, a modal metaphysics, by articulating a categorical scheme needed in ethics, may ultimately be in the service of the good life, and this fact may, reflexively, count as an ethical consideration in its favor [wrong]"." How should we understand the "ethical relevance of our metaphysical commitments"? How should we take the pragmatic "deep entanglement of metaphysics and ethics"? The present section is also aimed to improve/correct the perplexities/mistakes contained in the following statement: "The metaphysics of modality can, and of course usually is, conducted in abstraction from any ethical concerns, and probably most modal metaphysicians would find the introduction of such concerns in this context absurd. The pragmatist, however, views the matter quite differently. Any metaphysical commitments we make are ethically grounded, especially in Jamesian (if not so clearly in Peircean) pragmatism."

conduct, I mean Morality, so it equally gives room for an ought-to-be of thought, which is Right Reason; and where there is no self-control, nothing but the normal is possible" (CP 4.540, 1906). Since PET explicates propositions believed to be true, the pragmatic-explicating use carries within itself a natural vocation to a normative perspective. "Belief," being the deliberate, mental act through which we aim to distinguish what is true from what is false, cannot be fully accounted just through an unpacking/analysis of what is the meaning of the proposition believed; rather, a *full consideration of the act of belief* and of the proposition believed has to deal with the normative dimension of human conduct; as a consequence, in order to fix the true meaning of an object, we cannot just ask what we are prepared to do (actual belief), but rather what we ought to be prepared to do (normative belief).

(2) In the second place, according to Peirce, all the purposes hold by agents tend to become subject to a developmental process of normativity. Since semeiotic processes are purposeful processes, and since the application of the maxim requires the interpreter's purpose among its condition, it follows that PET tends to turn into PNT. Although there is a great deal of evidence for this point in Peirce's treatment of the normative sciences, I find the most striking example of this developmental emergence of a normative perspective from a pre-normative one in 1877 "The Fixation of Belief." I have already analyzed this text, so there is no need to repeat myself in this section. It is only important here to stress that at an inchoate level of development, the establishment of what is normative does not have the systematic and fully deliberate character resulting from the NS (the pragmatic maxim as a deliberate tool of inquiry, or leading principle), since we are assuming that at this time the pragmatic maxim has not reached yet a full-fledged formulation. The use of a logical strategy later described as "pragmatic maxim" would be the outcome, in the mind of the inquirer, of the end of pursuing the truth. Of course, at this level the normativity of the pursuit of truth would be established without analyzing such a concept at its third level of clarity.

(3) In the third place, PET tends to become PNT because the unconditional normativity of the "pursuit of truth," which is the ground for the normativity of the use of the maxim as a tool of inquiry, tends to become one of the conditions of the application of the maxim itself. By talking about the normative sciences, a branch of his philosophy very close to the "secret of pragmatism" (EP2: 200), Peirce observes: "Now it will be admitted to be, at least, very likely that in order to correct or to vindicate the maxim of pragmatism, we must find out precisely what the logically good consists in; and it would appear from what has been said that in order to analyze the nature of the logically good we must first gain clear apprehension of the nature of the esthetically good and especially of that of the morally good" (EP2: 201; also EP2: 142). Furthermore, notice that also the reflective acknowledgement-establishment of the fact that the pragmatic maxim (both PET and PNT) is a norm that ought to be followed in inquiry is something that is found through inquiry. The same considerations for the development of the scientific method prove to be good for the maxim: "each chief step in science has been a lesson in logic" (CP 3.243, 1877); "But the method of science is itself a scientific result" (CP6.428, 1893). The movement is typically pragmatist: from the imprecise, unreflective explication of the meaning in pragmatic terms, to the reflective acknowledgment of the pragmatic meaning and the formulation of the maxim, to the acknowledgment of its normative value for inquiry, to the self-controlled use of the maxim at a superior level as a normative methodological principle. Only at this last stage of development the maxim becomes part of the third branch of logic, "methodeutic" (beyond "Speculative Grammar" and "Critical Logic"). The argument proceeds as follows: (i) if you justify the maxim because it furthers the development of concrete reasonableness, you accept the unconditioned value of the development of the concrete reasonableness; (ii) the application of the maxim is a purposeful process, just like any other semeiotic process; (iii) since you accepted the absolute value of the development of the concrete reasonableness in justifying the maxim, you should also accept it in each and every application of the maxim. In other words, the normativity of the *Summum Bonum* tends to *slide* into the conditions of the maxim, so that the PET is naturally inclined to develop into PNT.

I think that there are passages in which Peirce displays such a tension. In what follows, I consider five of these passages, which I take to be good examples of the point I am trying to make (there might be other, such as CP 1.251).

Ex. 1. "Since pragmaticism makes the purport [of a concept] to consist in a conditional proposition concerning conduct, a sufficiently deliberate consideration of that purport will reflect that the conditional conduct ought to be regulated by an ethical principle, which by further self-criticism may be made to accord with

an esthetical ideal" (CP 5.535, "Pragmaticism and Critical Common-Sensism"). This is the clear example of the tension within the pragmatic maxim. In this quotation Peirce gestures to the process through which from the mere apprehension of certain rules of conduct resulting from a representation the mind is teleologically led to assess these rules and develop "normative" criteria. A "sufficiently deliberate consideration" is the condition under which the agent gradually "grows" an ideal, which is at the same time ethical and esthetical. The shift from the mere explication of a purpose to the identification of the purposes that we ought to follow marks the insertion of a normative perspective.

Ex. 2. There is an essential difference between how a sign *could* be translated and how a sign *ought to* be translated. This distinction is expressed in another passage, in which Peirce appeals to both the wings of the translatability of a sign without stressing the shift from an explicating paradigm to a normative one. "[If] the meaning of a symbol consists in how it might cause us to act, it is plain that this "how" cannot refer to the description of mechanical motions that it might cause, but must intend to refer to a description of the action as having this or that aim. In order to understand pragmatism, therefore, well enough to subject it to intelligent criticism, it is incumbent upon us to inquire what an ultimate aim, capable of being pursued in an indefinitely prolonged course of action, can be" (EP2: 202). The same undeclared shift is displayed in the following passage: "[I]f, as pragmatism teaches us, what we think is to be interpreted in terms of what we are prepared to do, then surely logic, or the doctrine of what we ought to think, must be an application of the doctrine of what we deliberately choose to do, which is Ethics" (EP2: 142). In particular, there is a difference between the habits that could spring out of a sign in human mind or those that ought to be developed, namely, the "ultimate" logical interpretants (not merely because of a truly "general description," that is, habits, (see CP 5.3, 1902), but because they are the realization of the "immediate interpretants" of a sign, of its *correct* interpretability. This is displayed by the two uses of the maxim.

Ex. 3. In "Issues of Pragamticism" (1905), we read that "Pragmaticism makes thinking to consist in the living inferential metaboly of symbols whose purport lies in conditional general resolutions to act" (CP 5.403, n.3). Then Peirce quotes the "aesthetic ideal" ("the share which God permits him to have in the work of creation") and the way in which the "*vir* is begotten", showing the tension again.

Ex. 4. The problematical aspect of Peirce's approach is displayed also in the following passage, where Peirce explains that the pragmatic meaning "consists in the total of all general modes of rational conduct which … would ensue upon the acceptance of the symbol" (EP2: 346, Issues, CP 5.438). The problematical aspect relies in how to interpret the meaning of "rational." The notion of "rational" can be taken in a the basic sense of a general disposition or in the more specific sense of what is normative and good:

(1) If the meaning is what is obtained through the pragmatic-explicating use of the maxim, "rational" means *all* the general modes of conduct resulting from a deliberate acceptance of the symbol. It is obviously possible that the representation we have is false, so that the consequence of its acceptance is, yes, a general resolution to act, but a bad one. If it is bad, it is not "rational" in a normative way. If "rational" is meant to be a normative concept, the pragmatic-explicating use of the maxim cannot account for it.

(2) If the meaning is what is obtained through the pragmatic-normative use of the maxim, "rational" means all the *normative* and *good* general modes of action resulting from the deliberate acceptance of the symbol.

Ex. 5. "If the reader will turn to the original maxim of pragmaticism … he will see that the question is, not what *did* happen, but whether it would have been well to engage in any line of conduct whose successful issue depended upon whether that diamond *would* resist an attempt to scratch it, or whether all other logical means of determining how it ought to be classed would lead to the conclusion which, to quote the very words of that article, would be "the belief which alone could be the result of investigation carried sufficiently far" (it should be in "Issues of Pragmaticism", CP 5.453). This is the passage in which Peirce corrects the nominalist outcomes of his 1878 formulation of the pragmatic maxim. The passage is also instructive since it makes clear that the maxim is applied in its normative and metaphysical use (although he mentions "all other logical means of determining how it ought to be classed …").

2.3. The Pragmatic Maxim, the Normative Sciences and the Fourth Level of Clarity

In the 1902 definition of "Pragmatic and Pragmatism" written for Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*,

Peirce comments the use of the maxim presents a fourth level of clarity:

> We would venture to suggest that it [the Pragmatic Maxim] should always be put into practice with conscientious thoroughness, but that, when that has been done, a still higher grade of clearness of thought can be attained by remembering that the only ultimate good which the practical facts to which it directs attention can subserve is to further the development of concrete reasonableness; so that the meaning of the concept does not lie in any individual reactions at all, but in the manner in which those reactions contribute to that development. (CP 5.3, 1902)

We find in this passage the seeming dichotomy previously highlighted between the use of the maxim in its purity (which would coincide with PET) and the method of discovery of true beliefs, here individuated in those beliefs and those practical ends that contribute to the development of concrete reasonableness. What is clear is that only true propositions and ethically good/aesthetically admirable beliefs and purposes can attain the fourth level of clarity.

However, the dichotomy between PET and PNT is untenable. I have provided in the previous section some examples of comments on the maxim in which the internal tension of PET toward PNT is clearly displayed. In addition, it is clear that also the fourth level of clarity is obtained through the application of the maxim. If it is the pragmatic maxim that reveals the fact that the pragmatic meaning of *p* is of the nature of a habit, then also the fourth level of clarity is revealed by the maxim. As a matter of fact, the realities that contribute to the development of concrete reasonableness are ultimately "habits" and general dispositions and it is the pragmatic maxim that makes clear that the meaning of *p* is a habit. The only difference is that in this case the application of the maxim is "bounded." The only conditions are that the protasis contains at least one unconditioned norm. According to the reading I have put forth, the fourth level of clarity is obtained through a procedure that is not foreign to the maxim, but through a particular use of the maxim, PNT. I have also claimed that PNT is a natural development of the mere pragmatic-explicating use because all the conditions of the application of the maxim (belief and purposes) have a normative vocation, and because the normativity of use of the maxim as a logical principle tend to become part of its applications.

To make this point clearer, I would formulate the PNT in order to display *two different levels* in obtaining the fourth level of clarity of *p*. In order to display the first level of the fourth level of clarity, the needed formulation is the simple formulation of PNT that I have already provided. It reads: given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if you believe *p*, where *p* is a representation of O (B*p*), (P2) since you *ought to* pursue E, where E is one of the normative possibilities of purpose you could pursue established in the NS, (C) then you ought to do X. In this context, X is the meaning of *p*. I call this the first level of the attainment of the fourth grade of clarity because the attainment of the fourth grade of clarity is only partial. Consider the case in which *p* is a false proposition. Even though *p* is false, if the premises of the maxim are genuine scientific attitudes (such as the task of knowing the truth), the apodosis of the conditional will be a contextual prescription in which X is genuinely good and admirable for that agent in that context. In other words: even though *p* is false, if the agent in a particular context acts at the best of her epistemic, moral, and aesthetical beliefs, the prescriptive outcome of the application of the maxim will be at the same time contextually good and admirable. It will be the "necessary, intermediate step" in order to get at a full realization of the development of concrete reasonableness (in which also *p* must be true). As Peirce stated over and over again, an authentic scientific service to the cause of truth is not made only of achievements and successes. The "third" level of clarity corresponds to the pragmatic-explicating use of the maxim and its concern is expressible in the question: "does B*p* have a pragmatic meaning?". The "fourth" level of clarity corresponds to the pragmatic-normative use of the maxim and its concern is in turn: "does B*p* fit in the "development of concrete Reasonableness"?". As it is clear, the passage from PET to PNT shows a normative shift in the problem addressed. Being an instance of the development of concrete reasonableness, the "drama of creation," as Peirce sometimes calls it, is what makes of *p* (and of its various interpretants) something epistemically true, and of B*p*

something ethically good and aesthetically admirable. If among the conditions C of the pragmatic-normative use of the maxim, *all* the conditions were fulfilled (not only the condition of having a good norm in the protasis but also the other, contextual "necessary" conditions; think about this: are the "necessary" conditions only epistemic conditions of the type: "if the inquiry were pursued far enough"), then the apodosis of the conditional would contain a prescription which is ethically good and aesthetically admirable, and its propositional content would epistemically true.

The second level of the fourth level of clarity is obtained through the application of PNT (here taken in its imperative-mood formulation) in which a further condition P3 occurs:

Given all the possibilities of an object O, which depend upon its general dispositions, (P1) if you believe *p*, where *p* is a representation of O (B*p*), (P2) since you *ought to* pursue E, where E is one of the normative possibilities of purpose you could pursue established in the NS, (P3) if *p* is the result of an "investigation carried sufficiently far" on O (W3: 274, 1878), (C) then you ought to do X. In this context, X is the meaning of *p*.

The fact that the necessary conditions are not specified does not mean that they are not specifi*able*. On the contrary, they must be specified in a particular context. Its formality in the formulation we have provided is only a limit of universalization and abstraction, not a limit for the application of the maxim. What are the particular conditions that are *necessary* in a certain context so that inquiry can succeed cannot be stated on an abstract level, but can only be figured out in that particular context. A concept analyzed in its "fourth" level of clearness adds an element that is not contained in the "third" level of clarity, that is, an unconditional normative element. The proposition *p* which is prescribed in the apodosis of the pragmatic-normative use of the maxim is not "rational" merely in the sense that it is the general prescription that would follow C (even if *p* were false and the purposes of the agent were evil; here "rationality" = "generality"), but it is "rational" in the sense that it is the ethically good and aesthetically admirable purpose of action upon a true proposition in the context of C.

Peirce's concern about the "ultimate" meaning of a concept intersects this problem. As we have seen, the "ultimate" interpretant of a sign cannot be a sign itself, but has to be something different, namely, a habit. If this is true, we also see that the account of the pragmatic maxim at its highest level of clarity becomes: the "ultimate" interpretant of a sign is not the habit that an agent would develop if certain conditions C occurred, but that "destined" habit in which anthropological destined habits and objectual destined habits come to coincide. The interpretant would result from a set of conditions in which *p* is true and in which the agent is actually adopting the development of concrete reasonableness as the ultimate ideal of one's conduct.

2.4. Why Is Peirce Committed to the Pragmatic-Explicating Task of the Maxim? Possibility and Moral Truth

What is still to be answered is the question: why was Peirce so interested in keeping the pureness of PET even when the "secret" of his pragmaticism revealed an essential connection of the pragmatic maxim with the normative sciences? I believe that there are at least two reasons here. (1) The first reason is the most important and is related to Peirce's modal metaphysics. The modality of real possibility is broader than real actuality and real normativity (what "ought-to be"). The subclass of possibilities that are genuinely normative emerges in the field of what is possible in general. As we have seen, PNT limits the range of possibilities in at least two ways: on the one hand, the protasis of the conditional cannot be a purpose whatsoever, but must contain one norm; on the other hand, the apodosis of the conditional does not produce a purpose whatsoever, but only an unconditionally normative purpose, a good and admirable prescription in that context. In other words, PNT cannot cover *all* the possibilities of interpretation of *p* that could emerge from the application to *p* of the pragmatic maxim. Only PET can describe *all* the real possibilities, including those possibilities that should not be pursued. Only PET has the capacity of clarifying at the third grade of clarity what belongs to the broad metaphysical class of what is possible without being at the same time either normative or actual. In 1905 "Issues of Pragmaticism," Peirce claims that one of the most important doctrines entailed by pragmaticism is the reality

of "possibilities." The complete outcome of a modal metaphysics, enlightened by the application of the maxim, is not only the acceptance of real generals (beyond the mere existence of real individuals), but also the linked reality of "real vagues" and "real possibilities". Peirce writes that

> Another doctrine which is involved in Pragmaticism as an essential consequence of it, but which the writer defended (Journal of Speculative Philosophy 1868, and North American Review 1871) before he had formulated, even in his own mind, the principle of pragmaticism, is the scholastic doctrine of realism. This is usually defined as the opinion that there are real objects that are general, among the number being the modes of determination of existent singulars, if, indeed, these be not the only such objects. But the belief in this can hardly escape being accompanied by the acknowledgment that there are, besides, real *vagues*, and especially, real *possibilities*. For possibility being the denial of necessity, which is a kind of generality, is vague like any other contradiction of a general. Indeed, it is the reality of some possibilities that pragmaticism is most concerned to insist upon. (EP2: 354, 1905)

The reality of "some possibilities" upon which "pragmaticism is most concerned to insist" coincides with the pragmatic meaning of a sign displayed by PET (for different types of "possibility" see CP 6.371, "Notes of Metaphysics").[43] As it is clear, what is normative is only one subclass of the possibilities of interpretation that a sign carries with it. Peirce remains faithful to PET because it displays the semeiotic nature of reality in all its breath, while PNT only focuses on a subclass of the possibilities of reality. The "kernel of pragmatism" is PET because only the pragmatic-explicating task in the application of the maxim can unpack "the *total* meaning of the predication of an intellectual concept," or "the whole meaning of an intellectual predicate," which consists "in affirming that, under all conceivable circumstances of a given kind, the subject of the predication would (or would not) behave in a certain way, – that is, that it either would, or would not, be true that under given experiential circumstances (or under a given proportion of them, taken *as they would occur* in experience) certain facts would exist" (EP2: 402). Peirce also spells out the fact that obtaining the "total meaning" of a proposition should leave unbounded the conditions of the protasis as far as human purposes are concerned. He writes that for the pragmaticist "the rational meaning of every proposition" is "the form in which the proposition becomes applicable to human conduct, not in these or those special circumstances, nor when one entertains this or that special design, but that form which is most directly applicable to self-control under every situation, and to every purpose" (EP2: 340, 1905; CP 5.427). Similarly, Peirce states that "the entire intellectual purport of any symbol consists in the total of all general modes of rational conduct which, conditionally upon all the possible different circumstances and desires, would ensue upon the acceptance of the symbol" (EP 2: 346).[44]

If it is true that in Peirce's terms the pragmatic meaning of *p* is always and essentially tied to the "purpose" of an agent/interpreter of *p*, it follows that the perspective on *p* can be twofold. (i) The first perspective displays an attitude in which *p* is considered in all its possible "practical bearings," i.e., all the possible consequences that would follow if an unrestrained set of conditions occurred. This is the attitude related to PET. This perspective is complete on one side but partial on the other side. On one side, it is complete, insofar as it is concerned with *all* the possible practical bearings of *p* given all the possible conditions. However, on the other side, PET is partial, because it does not consider the aspect of normativity (logical, ethical and aesthetical) that according to Peirce is naturally related to the purposes of the semeiosis process. In the light of Peirce's normativity, only some of all the possible purposes are good and ought to be pursued. (ii) The second perspective displays a different attitude, more interested in the dimension of normativity. This is the case of PNT. In this perspective, the conditions of the application of the maxim are restricted only to the good purposes that an agent ought to pursue in her life. Also in this case, the perspective is complete on one side but partial on the other side. It is complete insofar as the concern with the ultimate interpretants of *p* allows for a broad consideration of B*p*, which does not exclude the normative perspective. However, it is also partial, insofar as from this viewpoint it is not possible to make explicit *all* the possible practical bearings of *p*, but only those that follow "purposes" which are good from the normative viewpoint.

43 It is highly instructive that in this passage Peirce laments that "moral possibility" is not usually taken to mean "something reasonably free from extreme improbability," but rather "morally permissible", showing that PET perspective on possibility, even in the field of human agency, should be left free from normative considerations.

44 I disagree on this with Poggiani (2012: 42).

(2) The second reason is found in the fact that it is in the context of the possibility of the false, the ethically bad and aesthetically repugnant that the normativity of what is true, good and admirable comes to light. Hence, possibility plays here a fundamental role also because it has a fundamental function in the development of the NS: it is in the contrast to all the possible instances of deformity of what is normative (the false, the morally evil, the aesthetically repugnant), what Peirce calls sometimes the "perversity of thought" (EP2: 342, 1905; CP 5.430) that the possibilities of the development of concrete reasonableness take shape and are perceived. Peirce's argument would proceed as follows: (1) What is normative is found in contrast to what is a deformity of concrete reasonableness; (2) What is normative is only a subclass of all the possibilities of meaning of a sign, since all the possibilities of meaning of a sign include also what is a deformity of concrete reasonableness. (3) Since the discovery of what is normative emerges in the contrast to what is a deformity of concrete reasonableness, then the normative sciences require an approach to the pragmatic meaning of a sign that is maximally broad. (4) The normative sciences require the pureness of PET.

3. A Peircean Rejection of Four Dogmas of Contemporary Moral Realism

The aim of this final section is to sketch a Peircean theory of realism about moral facts. In this way, I want to show that the type of metaethical realism that can be found in Peirce is different from the proposals of contemporary moral realists, such as David O. Brink and Russ Shafer-Landau.[45] In this way, I also want to argue that Peirce puts forth a sound theory of moral realism that can contribute to overcome certain "dogmas" which I find in contemporary moral realism.

While some Peirce scholars have made clear that Peirce is a moral cognitivist all the way through (so much that also moral sentiments are kinds of cognition; see Misak 1994a; Short 2007: 201; 204; 205; 2012; Liska 2005; Liszka 2012), some other interpreters have claimed that Peirce's approach to the NS and metaphysics leaves room for a moderate moral realism (Mayorga 2012; less important Pihlstroem 2003). However, I believe that further steps need to be done in this direction. My contribution in the reminder of the section is to relate what I believe is Peirce's semeiotic and logic nature of moral judgments to the problem of metaethical realism and to show how the notion of "truth" should be taken in the in context of moral issues. In doing so, I will question at least one possible interpretation of Misak's understading of moral judgment as "truth-apt."

In order to address the problem of metaethical realism, let me first sum up the central tenets of my reconstruction of Peirce's NS and then introduce the broad framework of what "moral realism" is taken to mean in contemporary discussions. As a matter of fact, there are some consequences of these tenets that need to be stressed, given the fact that some interpretations of Peirce still accept a too broad notion of "normativity." Peirce claims that (i) the "Normative Sciences" (NS) are theoretical sciences, that (ii) their aim is to account for "moral facts," and that (iii) they establish what "ought to be" in human conduct, which is in principle different from what human beings normally or generally do. The common assumptions of (i), (ii), and (iii) is that the object of NS is the human conduct and that a normative assessment of human conduct is possible only because human conduct is essentially self-controlled and reflective. There is a "gap" between what is and what a rational agent judges to be normative for herself as a rational agent. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to these fundamental points of Peirce's thought about the type of normativity sketched in NS in order to avoid serious misinterpretations of his doctrine. I believe that the most common interpretative mistakes are the following. First, "normativity," according to the broad meaning of this notion, applies not only to human agency, but also to the structure of the universe in general. According to this reading, the governing generality of laws in nature is already an example of a normative power ("normativity" is taken here to be a synonym of generality). The normativity at stake in NS is therefore only a regional realization of the broader normativity of the universe (Potter 1966, Potter 1967, Apel 1985). Second, since the universe, at least in some of its dimensions, has a

45 I do not deny that there are substantive differences among contemporary moral realists. However, I think that it is possible to identify some fundamental tenets shared by all moral realists.

normative structure, it follows that self-control and reflexivity are not the metaphysical conditions of possibility for the emergence of the phenomenon of normativity as it is articulated in the NS. I believe that these interpretations are mistaken at the bottom because they do not recognize human reflexivity and self-control as conditions for the emergence of that type of "normativity" developed in NS.

Some authors (e.g. Misak 1994a; Short 2012, Liszka 2012, Sullivan 1977, Pihlstroem 2005, Pihlstroem 2012, Tiercelin 1997) take Peirce to be a moral cognitivist and realist of some sort. Unfortunately, they do not clarify what is their understanding of moral realism. Mayorga 2012 and Tiercelin 1997 seem to me the best attempts to address this problem. Mayorga undertakes the specific goal of unpacking a Peircean notion of moral realism, by labeling it "moral realicism," that is, a Peircean "robust moderate moral realism" (Mayorga 2012: 101). Tiercelin makes clear that Peirce's understanding of moral facts and "norms" is neither a theory of Platonic-Fregean objects, nor a naturalist approach according to which moral norms are derived from psychological facts (Tiercelin 1997: 44).[46] Certainly, Short highlights the fact that Peirce's metaphysics, unlike Putnam's, does not admit only actual reality and efficient causality, but also possible and general reality and final causality, but he does not clarify what is Peirce's conception of moral knowledge and language and what is the specific metaphysical status of moral facts.

But, what is moral realism? If we focus on the latest discussions, it clearly appears that moral realism is one of the most important options in contemporary metaethical debates. The label "moral realism" entails in this debate a precise understanding of moral knowledge and language and of the metaphysical status of moral facts and properties (cf. Brink 1989, Shafer-Landau 2003, FitzPatrick 2009, Sayre-McCord 1988, Cuneo 2007). In my view, the common claims of the contemporary versions of moral realism are four. I name them "dogmas" because they are taken to be the only theoretical possibilities to grant some form of strong objectivity and non-relativism in morality. The four claims are: (a) moral knowledge and language are "assertoric" and "descriptive" in nature; (b) the aim of moral knowledge and language is to provide an adequate descriptive account of moral facts and properties; (c) the reality of moral facts and properties does not depend upon any function or disposition of the human being. In particular, the moral judgment has no "constitutive" function of moral facts and properties, but only mirrors them in true judgments. (d) At least some of our moral judgments and claims are "true" in the mentioned sense.[47] The merit of this approach is to overcome the limits of non-cognitivist positions, in all their different forms. However, I believe that there are also some crucial limits to contemporary moral realism, in relation in particular to the nature of practical reason and moral knowledge and language. This is so true that in a sense contemporary moral realism is somehow problematical if confronted with more traditional forms of "realist" about moral facts and properties. As a matter of fact, contemporary moral realism is a highly specific version of moral realism, which cannot be extended to all the philosophers who have been traditionally taken to be "moral realists." Also philosophers who are usually considered to be moral realists (e.g., Aquinas and the doctrine of "natural moral law") cannot be considered moral realists in the sense of contemporary metaethics. This conception of moral realism is closer to a contemporary variation of Modern jusnaturalism (cf. Locke [1676] 1954: 111)[48] than to other forms of the theory of the natural moral law. Mayorga (2012: 118 ff.) takes Peirce to be such a descriptivist. I disagree with this opinion.[49] As Colapietro writes, according to Peirce norms

46 In this sense, Peirce's moral realism eschews both a Platonic-Fregean understanding of [moral] objects and an idea of objectivity without a real objective domain upon which inquires agree (I believe that this second option is Hilary Putnam's position, at least in Putnam 2002: 108-109; 123ss.).

47 As it is clear, I isolate the main common tenets of moral realism, in such a way that the problem of naturalism or anti-naturalism can be left aside. It would be too big of a task to address also this problem in the present section.

48 "Hence, this law of nature can be described as being the decree if the divine will discernible by the light of nature and indicating what is and what is not in conformity with rational nature, and for this very reason commanding and prohibiting. It appears to me less correctly terms by some people the dictate of reason, since reason does not so much establish and pronounce this law of nature as search for it and discover it as a law enacted by a superior power and implanted in our hearts. Neither is reason so much the maker of that law as its interpreter, unless, violating the dignity of the supreme legislator, we wish to make reason responsible for that received law which it merely investigates; nor indeed can reason give us law, since it is only a faculty of our mind and part of us."

49 I see in Mayorga's interpretation a further problem. She writes (Mayorga 2012: 121): "Peirce's metaphysical "realicism" can account for moral properties being real, although they do not exist as natural properties do, and hence cannot be the object of scientific inquiry, as natural properties are." Mayorga defends Peirce's nonnaturalism only by appealing to the difference between 2ndness and 3rdness. I think that this is a partial interpretation of Peirce's thought on the matter. The mere appeal to 3rdness could still classify Peirce as a naturalist … of a Scholastic fashion. The point is that moral 3rdness is specifically different from the 3rdness of natural laws. The "laws of morality" are different from the laws of physics because: (1) they are ought-to; the final cause of rationality becomes an ought-to be upon reflection, as it is shown by the NS. Furthermore, (2) the ought-to refers to something that is not real

"are purely factual and irreducibly deliberative" (Colapietro 2006: 197). If this is true, Peirce's metaethical moral realism results more from the prescriptive nature of human self-understanding rather than from a merely descriptive approach to moral facts and properties. Hence, normativity and moral knowledge cannot be disjoined from deliberative self-constitution. Notice that Dewey and Peirce are closely related also on this point. Dewey's claim that the right approach to moral goodness requires a serious reflection on "deliberation" and "moral judgment" does not rule out, but guarantees on the contrary the possibility of a strong epistemic objectivity. In addition, Dewey's formula that the moral goodness is always "constructed" by contextual processes of deliberation is fully compatible both with a strong epistemic objectivity and a realist account of moral facts. This is the position put forth by Peirce and Dewey.[50]

In what follows, I claim that Peirce's account of normativity (including both a conception of moral knowledge and language and a metaphysical theory of moral facts and properties) cannot be labeled as "realist" in this contemporary sense. In other words, Peirce rejects all the four claims of contemporary moral realism. It is my opinion that Peirce is a moral realist, but in a different and more refined sense. In particular, I claim that Peirce cannot be considered a moral realist in the sense of contemporary metaethics because of his conception of moral knowledge as prescriptive knowledge and because of his metaphysical theory of moral facts as dependent on the rational community's capacity of moral assessment. Contemporary moral realists classify Peirce as a non-relativistic moral constructivist (Brink 1989: 16, Shafer-Landau 2013: 14; 17). My claim is that Peirce's alleged constructivism constitutes is actually a version of moral realism. To my knowledge, there is only one passage in which Peirce explicitly recurs to the phrase "moral realism." The passage occurs in the context of a discussion of Royce's thought. He writes:

> Dr. Royce says that different people will … take the position of the "moral realist" and say that moral distinctions are founded on some matter of fact (say a decree from Sinai), while others will take the position of the "moral idealist" and say that these distinctions are founded on an inward sentiment, – an ideal. Two such persons come into collision; they find by mutual criticism that both positions are unsatisfactory; external fact can only determine what is, not what ought to be; while inward sentiment cannot be a resting-place, because it is only individual caprice and has no authority for another man. (EP1: 238)

As it is clear from the passage, Peirce is critical against the notion of "moral realism." He implicitly defines his position a mix of moral realism and moral idealism, insofar as "idealism" is taken to be the only metaphysical perspective that admits the real power of "ideas," "ideals," or in general final causes and general dispositions. However, as we have seen in the first chapter, Peirce inclines to "objective idealism" only because in his view that philosophical tradition enables him to develop a broad theory of reality, which includes more than mere physical and existent facts. His "extreme scholastic realism" is exactly such a broad metaphysics, in which 1stness, 2ndness, and 3rdness constitute an irreducible system of modal dimensions of what is real. As a consequence, moral ideals can be admitted in Peirce's metaphysics and the label of "moral realist," if understood in a broad sense, fits Peirce's stance on this issue perfectly. Moreover, in the passage Peirce is not excluding moral norms from reality, but is making clear that reality understood as mere physical factuality is not a hospitable doctrine for moral ideals and aspirations and should be therefore considered unsatisfactory.[51]

(needs development as a 3rd) or not existent (needs embodiment as a 2nd), while natural laws are already real as regulating principles of natural events; they are would-bes. Finally, (3) in the perspective of Peirce's evolutionary cosmology, natural laws can be said "ought-to" only metaphorically and derivatively, since natural events do not have the capacity of reflection and self-control that on the contrary is characteristic of human beings.

50 In this sense, following the way in which De Caro and Macarthur (2010: 3) characterizes "naturalism," we can claim that both Peirce and Dewey put forth a "naturalistic" account of normative facts: "any form of naturalism will be opposed to Platonism about norms, where this is understood as the view that normative facts hold wholly independently of human practices (say, of reason giving) and are, as it were, simply there anyway waiting to be discovered. For similar reasons, it will be opposed to a Moorean non-naturalism that holds that our access to normative facts is by way of a sui generis epistemic faculty of intuition directed at just this kind of fact. And of course it will be opposed to any theistic foundation for normative facts or our access to them."

51 Notice that for Peirce logical principles of inference are themselves moral norms and are general "facts." See EP2: 252. See also on the same point the important letter to Cantor, December 23rd 1900, NEM III 2, 772-779.

3.1. A Peircean Account of Normative Knowledge and Normative Facts

In 1903, Peirce writes:

> The true principle purpose of these sciences [the three NS] is the Classification of the possible forms. But this must be founded on a study of the Physiology of those forms, their general elements, parts, and mode of action. Thereupon should follow the Classificatory part, including the general discussion of what is good and what bad; and this should be followed up by a study of the principles that govern the production of such forms. (EP 2: 272)

I take this quotation to be Peirce's declaration of realism in ethics. Peirce also characterizes a "form" as a "real general object" (EP2: 343). As we have seen in the first section, Peirce names the subject matter of the NS in different ways, but he calls them mainly "positive facts" concerning the good and bad in human agency. Now Peirce refers to these facts as "forms" or "real general objects." He also states that "justice" and "truth" are "great facts" in human life (EP2: 343). As we know, Peirce's notion of fact is a broad one, and, when taken as a synonym of "real *X*," implies a modal metaphysics which includes general dispositions, final causes, ideals, etc.[52] The "forms" are nothing more that the normative dispositions or virtues, with which we have dealt in the first section of this chapter. I will use the phrase "normative fact" in order to combine Peirce's two claims about the "forms" studied by the NS ("normative" = concerning what is good; "fact" = real as far as the destined, teleological development of the human being is concerned).

Let me now consider Peirce's three tenets about NS in relation to the problem of moral realism. Point (i) means that normative theories (about thought, action in general and feeling) are cognitive theories, in the sense that they are departments of scientific inquiry relying on experience and that they aim somehow to know what moral beliefs imply real facts and what do not.

Point (ii) refers to that fact that normative knowledge is genuine knowledge about some real X, and that it is neither the expression of certain emotions and sentiments (cf. Russell 19387, Ayer 1952, Stevenson 1941), nor the mere prescription resulting from previous commitment to a set of norms (cf. Hare 1952, Gibbard 1990). That normative knowledge is a cognitive endeavor about some real X does not mean that this X is an existent moral fact and that the essential function of moral knowledge and language is to describe the universe of existent moral facts in an appropriate way, as contemporary moral realism seems to imply. In the department of human agency, "normative fact" means first and foremost 3rdness, moral norm or law. In addition, according to Peirce, moral facts are objective. "Objectivity" has to be predicated primarily of the scientific method of inquiry, and secondly of the propositions obtained through this method and of the objects or facts represented in these propositions (Short 2012: 315). In Peirce's terms, an "objective fact" is the content of a proposition on which all the rational minds would agree if all the necessary contextual conditions for the agreement occurred. Therefore, an "objective fact" can be an existent physical object, a particular event, a general metaphysical law, or even a moral prescription.

There is however a difference between moral facts and the other types of facts above mentioned. Indeed, the reality of moral facts as objective general norms (3rdness) or as existent instantiations of those norms (2ndness) is somehow dependent on the reality of a being like the human being. Without human beings and their vocation to normativity, based on the developmental teleology characteristic of their "rational instinct," the 3rdness or 2ndness of moral facts would both be real. Yet, moral facts would have a type of reality, a possibility of coming to light in aspirations, norms, and deeds, in the case in which something like human beings existed. At this level, accepting the consequence of Peirce's pragmaticism concerning his modal metaphysics is crucial. In 1905 "Issues of Pragmaticism," Peirce writes:

> Pragmaticism makes the ultimate intellectual purport of what you please to consist in conceived conditional resolutions, or their substance; and therefore, the conditional propositions, with their hypothetical antecedents, in which such resolutions consist, being of the ultimate nature of meaning, must be capable of being true, that is, of expressing whatever there be which is such as the proposition express, independently of being thought to be so in any judgment, or being represented to

52 See the two meanings of "general" in EP2: 342. Peirce's idea of "norm" is somewhere in between the two.

> be so in any other symbol of any man or men. But that amounts to saying that possibility is sometimes of a real kind" (EP2: 354, 1905)

If something like a "human being" were not existent, the reality of moral facts would only be *possible* (1rstness), excluding the other two modalities of reality. The reality of moral facts, at least as 3rdnesses and 2ndnesses, is dependent upon the reality of something like a human being.[53] Moreover, as it is probably clear from our presentation of the NS, not every prescription is a good one, not every end is admirable for the human life. As a consequence, a moral fact is not only dependent upon the existence of the human mind and its normative vocation, but it can come to light as a genuine norm only through the refinement of the human capacity of judgment and assessment on the basis of moral experience.[54] This marks a difference between the non-moral world and the moral world: while physical objects and their general laws are real even on the hypothesis that human beings did not exist, moral facts and properties would not be real as 3rdnesses or 2ndnesses on that hypothesis, even though they would still be real as 1rstnesses (a kind of vocation of the "universe" to become moral through the life of human beings). Therefore, a moral fact can be defined as a good general prescription in the following way:

1. If there is something like a rational agent, endowed with a normative vocation and capable of assessment of her experience, and if all the other necessary conditions C occurred, a moral fact is the type of action that that rational agent would prescribe in a certain situation (ought-to be).

2. If there were not something like a rational agent, there would be no moral facts, as we take moral fact to mean a norm such as one of the norms developed by the NS (3rdness) or the concrete actions that instantiate them (2ndness). "Reality" would only have the general possibility to develop something like human beings and therefore moral values.

An alternative characterization of moral facts could be:

1a. (i) Given the present constitution of the world, (ii) given the existence in this world of deliberative agents, and (iii) given the fact that there is something like an adequately rational moral agent in this world, a moral fact is the value/normative claim that the adequately rational moral agent expresses in his moral life. What if the second and the third conditions were not be satisfied? We would have:

2b. (i) Given the present constitution of the world, (ii) and given that in this world we do not find something like a deliberative agent, and therefore (iii) given that we do not even find something like an adequately rational

53 See e.g. Wiggins 1998 and McDowell 1998, for whom human "sensibility" is the condition of possibility of the moral value (dispositional theories).

54 In this sense, a "moral fact" *is* the *recta ratio agibilium* of Aristotle's and Aquinas's philosophies. See Korsgaard and her distinction between "substantial realism" and "procedural realism" (1996: 33-35; 44-48; 205-208; 245-246). Peirce's moral realism cannot be reduced neither to the former, nor to the latter. Why isn't it a procedural realism? Because (1) the objectivity of a good prescription is not produced neither by a procedure, nor by the experimental method; instead, the experimental method is the only method that allows an inquirer to *find* and *formulate* objectively good prescription (which are "there" neither as already existent facts – 2ndness –, nor as already endorsed "norms" – 3rdness –, but as the *possible* norms toward which all rational minds would converge); (2) the reality of the "moral fact," that is, of a good prescription, is dependent on a rational agent's capacity of moral assessment and on her actual moral judgments insofar as it is the logical form of a prescription and, in this sense, it is the expression of a legislator. However, the content of a prescription and its being a good prescription do not depend in their validity on the fact that they are produced by a rational agent, capable of moral assessment; on the contrary, they depend on the obstinacy of experience and reality that the rational moral agent has to interpret and on the basis of which she has to formulate her prescriptions. In other words, a "moral fact" (that includes prescriptions about human agency and everything that might be linked to it: motives and ends, principles of thinking, habits of action, habits of feeling, thoughts, actions and feelings, consequences of agency, other human beings, other living beings and the environment in general, factual conditions in different moral situations) is the result of an interaction between a rational agent, who is able to express a normative viewpoint in her judgments, and the teleological structure of human nature and cosmos, which in itself is just a non-moral fact with certain tendencies and exigencies. In other words, without a rational agent, capable of moral assessment and of normative viewpoint, an objective *moral* fact (the stress is on "moral") would be a non-sense; without the obstinacy of experience and of reality, an *objective* moral *fact* (the stress is here on "objective" and on "fact") would be impossible. Although the prescriptive form of a moral judgment is the expression of a rational agent, its objectivity and factuality are not produced at all by her.

deliberative agent, a moral fact is the value/normative claim that an adequately rational moral agent *would* express if something like an adequately rational deliberative agent existed. According to Peirce, therefore, a normative fact is the coincidence of one's action (as 3rdness or as 2ndness) with the general ideal under which all rational agents would agree to act in a certain context. Peirce writes that the indispensable element for making "any action rational (action that can't be considered in the long run, since a decision has to be taken here and now) is to appeal to a criterion that, in the long run, will produce what it best for the humanity" (EP1: 90).

Moral knowledge and language are not aimed to describe independent and external moral facts and properties, but are better conceived as the attempt to guide one's actions through prescriptions on the basis of a self-understanding of human nature. Normative knowledge is not a descriptive knowledge about mind-independent facts, but is closer to a self-understanding of the deliberative agent's conduct and to a self-assessment and self-correction of this conduct. It coincides with a normative assessment of how the deliberative agent ought-to control her conduct according to certain norms, standard or "leading principles" (cf. Liszka 2012: 66). This means that the reality of the normative leading principle (in its possibility previous to a concrete action, in its actuality in the concrete action, in its tendency to reproduce itself as an established habit) can be independent from an individual deliberative agent and her understanding of the normative exigency of her experience, but cannot be independent from the viewpoint of a (fully) rational deliberative agent. In this sense, the dimension of moral facts is the *expression* of the (fully) rational deliberative agent, although on the basis of *experience* and scientific method of inquiry, which both imply intersubjectivity. However, there is a way in which moral facts can be said to be external in Peirce's terms. As early as 1871, Peirce writes that his metaphysical stance

> is also highly favorable to a belief in external realities. It will, to be sure, deny that there is any reality which is absolutely incognizable in itself, so that it cannot be taken into the mind. But observing that "the external" means simply that which is independent of what phenomenon is immediately present, that is of how we may think or feel … . (EP1: 90)

The "externality" of what is real means here not independent in principle from a rational mind, but its irreducibility to what is apprehended in an isolated instance of semeiosis (see also EP1: 120; EP2: 359). The externality belongs to the phenomenon itself insofar as it has in itself the power to correct, if inquiry is conducted far enough, the interpretants of human beings. Externality is therefore the power of experience in correcting human beings' beliefs, not the Kantian idea of an incognizable *noumenon*. According to Peirce, reality and cognizability are synonyms (W2: 208).[55]

Point (iii) means that moral knowledge and language is prescriptive in nature. This means that its essential function is an action-guiding function, not a description of what there is. This is true for at least two reasons:

(1) First, the imperative-mood formulation of the pragmatic maxim (EP2: 135), also in its PET version, makes clear that for Peirce the best linguistic rendition of a "purpose" is the ought-to formulation. This clearly shows that "prescription" is the linguistic or logical structure of purposeful agency and even more so of normative purposeful agency.

(2) Second, Peirce's comments on the nature and interpretability of commands show his view on the type of knowledge that has the specific function of guiding human beings' concrete agency. For instance, Peirce points out that a command can have different interpretants, among which, however, the more appropriate is the

55 Cf. Peirce's position with Bernard Williams's complex position on this issue, resulting from a mix of metaphysical materialism, metaethical antirealism and epistemic objectivism, as it is expressed e.g. in Williams (1978: 247). It seems to me that in Williams's position there is a problematic account of ontology (what is there?), metaphysics (what is the general structure of what there is?) and the property of intelligibility. If human beings reason about norms and standards of conduct (values) and sometimes achieve "objective" and intersubjective agreement on them, this means that human agency and its need of moral regulation is somehow intelligible. However, at the same time, Williams excludes the dimension of value from his metaphysics. In fact, he seems to attribute to values some type of intelligibility (values are somehow part of what there is, since we reason about them and we also achieve objective, although contextual, agreements on them) but not a metaphysical consistence (since the structure of reality is limited to material objects and properties). Since values seem not to be reducible to a material structure, they are not included in the domain of metaphysics. Metaphysical intelligibility seems to be limited to material objects studied by physics and described by physical theories in the long run. The "absolute conception of the world" is identified with the "adequate physics." The domain of value and norms, although acknowledged, is kept outside the domain of reality.

concrete action that responds to that command. The immediate interpretant of a command (its interpretability) is determined by the connection between the command as a representamen and its dynamic object (ground). Now, the dynamic object is, as Peirce says, the "will" of the utterer, that is, the final cause that is guiding the utterer (or quasi-utterer). The dynamic object can be different from the immediate object. If I am late and my friend shouts "Marco!," the immediate object of "Marco" as a representamen is, let us say, that human individual that I am, but the dynamic object is the will of my friend who wants me to get going. The "commanded" outcome includes: an emotion (maybe "shame" for being always late), a judgment (deliberation about what is the best course of action to get going in a fast way); a physical action (me moving toward the door and join him). If we exclude the emotion, the other two interpretants are both deliberate actions, even though one is "logical" (requires a deliberate mediation M to go from A to B in the form of linguistic inferences), while the other is "energetic" (the "energetic" is the somehow mysterious moment in which from a general plan of action a concrete action is produced). The important point to stress is therefore that rationality has a practical, deliberative nature (Colapietro 1999 has made this clear), also when "logical" interpretants are at stake. The formal consequence for Peirce's semeiotic is that the archetypical, "immediate" interpretant of thinking is a *good response*, in the form of a judgment, reasoning, and propositions (logical interpretant), in the form of a physic outer action (energetic interpretant), and even in the form of an appropriate emotion (emotional interpretant). The series command-response is therefore the basic unity of thinking. Since the viewpoint of reason is always practical, the problem is never how to move from "is" to "ought" (an ought is always implied), but how to extend the ought from the mere epistemic normativity to an ethical and aesthetical normativity.

This point is surprisingly misunderstood or neglected by Peirce scholars. Peirce's understanding of moral knowledge and language as prescriptive meets "Hume's practicality requirement" in moral knowledge (cf. Foot 2001), but does not commit itself to a form of non-cognitivism. The primary and fundamental form of a moral proposition is "you ought to do X." Peirce's exemplification of a series of commands and interpretants can be soundly taken as a viable version of a practical syllogism, in which at least a premise is prescriptive in nature. As we have seen, a situation in which a command-execution occurs presents all the elements of a semeiotic process. I use the notion of command because it is the notion presented by Peirce. However, I would rather appeal to the idea of a rational activity of persuasion to a good and admirable line of conduct that an "old" self performs over an emerging one. The claim that moral knowledge is prescriptive does not imply non-cognitivism, but it only means that 1. moral knowledge aims to direct human conduct rather than describe values etc.; 2. the objects of moral knowledge are not independent from human rationality. This set of theses does not even entail that the facts of the non-moral world (human nature, environmental circumstances, established social standards, etc.) play no role in moral knowledge. On the contrary, they are the subject matter of every possible moral consideration. However, moral knowledge organizes this manifold subject-matter in prescribing plans of action.

The prescriptive nature of moral knowledge in Peirce's terms casts also some light on the conception that moral judgments are truth-apt.[56] A prescription is primarily and fundamentally good or bad, not true or false. This fits with the categorical framework displayed in the reconstruction of the NS. Thus, a normative proposition in logic is good iff it prescribes a leading principle that is conducive to the general aim "knowledge of truth"; a normative proposition in ethics is good iff it prescribes a pattern of any kind of deliberate conduct that is conducive to a given general aim; a normative proposition in aesthetics is good iff it prescribes a type of habit of feeling that is conform to the requirements of the ultimate aim of human agency, the development of concrete reasonableness. All the norms that are developed or could be developed in the framework of NS are specification of the first and architectonic normative principle, which is the precept of developing the concrete reasonableness in the world.

However, at the same time, Peirce's theory of truth allows for a theory of prescriptions as truth-apt judgments. Although we consider prescriptions not to be truth-apt in themselves, the proposition that affirms the goodness of a prescription is always either true or false. Therefore, we have:

(a) If "truth" refers to the unquestioned agreement on a proposition by the community of all rational agents

56 This claim goes against the interpretation of moral judgments are truth-apt given by Misak 1994a. Lizska (2012: 66) seems to agree on this.

in "ideal" conditions,[57] the agreement can apply to both a declarative and a normative judgment, so that it also applies to a prescription. In this sense, a prescription is true.[58]

(b) If we take prescriptions to be originally and fundamentally either good or bad, then "truth" applies to a declarative proposition whose content is a good prescription. In this case, the truth-maker of a true moral proposition expressed in declarative form would be a good moral prescription. In this way, it is possible to retain contemporary moral realists' intuitive insight that moral knowledge is not relativistic without committing ourselves to their dogmas of description and stance-independence. In this way, Peirce writes that "good morals is the kind of human behavior that would come to be approved if studies of right behavior were carried sufficiently far" (R673, 1911).

In what sense is Peirce a moral realist in a more refined way than contemporary metaethicists? Peirce's modal realism, including moral realism as one of its declinations, results from his phaneroscopy, his theory of experience and his theory of scientific inquiry. In this sense, the category of "objective fact" can include the physical reality, the general structure of reality (would-bes and must-bes) and also the type of normativity developed in NS (ought-to-bes), that is, the world of logical, ethical and aesthetical prescriptions. Moreover, this approach to moral realism does not rule out the relationship to the rational agent's capacity of moral assessment. In this sense, Peirce is a moral realist without being committed only to the world of existent and general facts independent from human rationality and to an understanding of moral knowledge and language as essentially descriptive, as on the contrary contemporary metaethicists are. The judgment about the moral goodness of an action (in a similar way to the judgment about the truth of a proposition) depends both on the human capacity of a moral (and alethic) viewpoint and on the intelligibility of "reality."

57 "Ideal" means here not meta-contextual, but fully adequate to the individual context in which the agent is implicated. "Ideal" = if all the necessary conditions C for acknowledging X occurred. See Putnam (1992: vii-viii). Although Putnam's tenet is sound, his interpretation of Peirce's conception of truth is wrong.

58 As I will show in the next chapters, I believe that Dewey holds the same conception of truth and prescription.

Chapter 3
"*Vir.*" Peirce on Deliberation and Moral Sentimentalism

Although some scholars have interpreted Peirce as a moral non-cognitivist (Parret 1994; de Waal 2012; Stuhr 1994), Thomas L. Short has rightly claimed that "Peirce's semeiotic runs counter the modern notion that any value – aesthetic, moral, political, or cognitive – is subjective" (1997:206). In what follows I further this interpretative insight, with particular attention to some of Peirce's claims in which he seems to advocate for a non-cognitivist position in ethics. This is an important task insofar as what we have said about the reality of "normative facts" in Chapter 2 would collapse if the non-cognitivist interpretation of Peirce's sentimentalism proved to be correct. I proceed as follows. In the first part of the chapter (§§ 1., 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.), I show that according to Peirce "sentiments" are semeiotic interpretants and therefore cognitive acts. In addition, I show how from a Peircean viewpoint instinctive sentiments are in communication with rational deliberation and are therefore open to the normative claims of NS. In the second part (§§ 2., 2.1.) I put Peirce's moral sentimentalism in the context of his "critical common-sensism," aiming to show what is the justification provided by Peirce for his insistence on the centrality of sentiment in what he calls "vitally important topics." In the third part (§§ 3., 3.1., 3.2.) I conclude with some remarks about the relationship between Peirce's evolutionist perspective and ethical opinions, claiming that in Peirce's view the evolutionist perspective does not threaten moral normativity, insofar as "evolution" is taken in a sufficiently broad sense.

1. Propositions, Mental Acts and Sentiments

As we have seen, some scholars take Peirce to be a moral non-cognitivist (Parret 1994; deWaal 2012; Stuhr 1994). The evidence adduced in support of this interpretation is found in some of Peirce's statements about the ineffectiveness of rationality in establishing what we ought to do in "vitally important matters" (VIM). In VIM, says Peirce, sentiment ought to have some kind of authority over reason (EP2: 32; see Calcaterra 2003: 77-83). On the contrary, I have tried to show in the second chapter that taking Peirce to be a non-cognitivist in ethics constitutes a serious mistake, given that ethics and aesthetics share with logic the status of normative sciences. In addition, Roberto Frega (2012) has recently criticized Peirce's approach to ethics by pointing out some difficulties in his thought. In particular, he argues that although Peirce articulated a pragmatist theory of inquiry for the first time, he was not able to extend this logical model to the field of morality. In addition, he says, Peirce gives a cognitivist account of general moral judgments, but renounces to consider the same cognitive processes relevant for particular practical situations. It would be Dewey the pragmatist who finally extended in the most articulated way the model of "inquiry" to practical reasoning (see Chapter 5). Although some commentators (see in particular Misak 1994; Short 2007: 201; 204; 205; 2012; Liska 2005; Liszka 2012; Mayorga 2012) have corrected the interpretation of Peirce as a non-cognitivist in ethics, the import of Peirce's "sentimentalism" has still to be delved into. Colapietro 1992 at al. (see e.g. Misak 2004; EP2: 30; 505 endnote 15) have stressed the fact that Peirce's sentimentalist claims are gathered mainly in "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life," a lecture in which Peirce voices his polemical answer to William James, who has begged him to speak about some vital issues rather than logic. Although insightful and historically pertinent, I believe that this reading is partial if taken as a comprehensive account of Peirce on the real role of moral sentiment in building a philosophical approach to ethics. Therefore, in what follows I articulate Peirce's conception of moral sentimentalism in relation to three questions: (1) why does Peirce say that "rational deliberation" is misplaced in vitally important matters and urgent issues, while sentiment is not? Does this count as a commitment to non-cognitivism in ethics? (2) Is Peirce's moral sentimentalism compatible with a rational and normative approach to ethics? (3) Since Peirce believes that moral sentiments are instincts evolved over generations, what is the relationship between evolution and ethics? In particular, what is the role that normativity plays within the evolutive framework?

Before tackling the problem related to the first question, it is necessary to sketch Peirce's conception of "sentiment." Some important work has been done in trying to unpack Peirce's understanding of the semeiotic structure of sentiments (in particular, Savan 1981; see also Calcaterra 2003: 22-41; Stephens 1981; 1985; Beeson 2008; Short 2007), so that it is not necessary to repeat here what has been said elsewhere. However, it is important to mention that the analysis of sentiments and emotions[1] as semeiotic processes already shows that Peirce cannot be taken to be a non-cognitivist in ethics. On the contrary, Peirce could be almost considered a hypercognitivist, insofar as his semeiotic theory of mental activity grants to sentiment the status of a non-linguistic propositional state.[2] Peirce writes that

> every emotion has a subject. If a man is angry, he is saying to himself that this or that is vile and outrageous. If he is in joy, he is saying "this is delicious." If he is wondering, he is saying "this is strange." In short, whenever a man feels, he is thinking of *something*. Even those passions which have no definite object – as melancholy – only come to consciousness through tinging the *objects of thought*. (EP1: 43)

It should be clear that sentiment has the same logical structure of perception, including its categorical elements. This is also shown by the analysis of sentiment as a hypothetical or abductive inference, in which a predicate (3rdness) is tentatively attributed to the present instantiation (2ndness), in the form of a "feeling," of a mere possibility of interaction (1stness). To be sure, with his distinction between propositions and mental acts, Peirce anticipated the work of some more recent speech-act theorists (Austin, Searle; see Thibaud 1997). According to Peirce, the same proposition can be articulated in a variety of illocutory acts and mental operations. He writes that the same proposition can be affirmed, denied, judged, doubted, inwardly inquired into, questioned, wished for, asked for, commanded, taught, and merely expressed (see EP2: 312). Similarly, he claims that "the act of asserting is an act of totally different nature from the act of apprehending the meaning of a proposition" (CP 5.30), insofar as the act of assertion implies the utterer's "self-subjection to penalties" in the event that the propositions asserted turn out to be false. In its performative nature, therefore, an assertion or statement is "an act of an utterer of a proposition to an interpreter, and consists, in the first place, in the deliberate exercise, in uttering the proposition, of a force tending to determine a belief in it in the mind of the interpreter" (EP2: 312-313). Moreover, while a mental act is of course an actual phenomenon, the reality of a proposition has a further, independent reality, because it does not depend upon any actual mental act in order to have some sort of metaphysical status. As Peirce claims, a proposition "need not be asserted or judged. It may be contemplated as a sign capable of being asserted or denied. The sign itself retains its full meaning whether it be actually asserted or not" (EP2: 292-293). In other words, a proposition is a sign "that *might* be assented to and asserted" (R478: 58-59). What is important to stress here is that perceptions and sentiments are themselves propositional mental acts, even though they lack, in being spontaneous occurrences, the mediation of deliberation and assent.[3] As we have read, the semeiotic structure of sentiments is the attribution of a predicate to the object that represents the target of the sentiment. In its semeiotic structure, a sentiment is a thought in germ, whose propositional content is highly vague and highly tentative, since it has the logical status of an uncontrolled hypothesis (EP1: 43).

The cognitive status of sentiments is also witnessed by another element of Peirce's semeiotic approach to mental activity. In one of his classifications of the interpretants, Peirce distinguishes among three types of

1 Peirce does not seem to distinguish between "emotions," "passions" and "sentiments."

2 It would be odd for Peirce to be a non-cognitivist in ethics, not only for his approach to normative issues but also because of his understanding of "thought" and "mind" in a cosmological perspective. Peirce maintains that "thought is not necessarily connected with a brain. It appears in the work of bees, of crystals, and throughout the purely physical world. … Not only is thought in the organic world, but it develops there" (CP 4.551). Although I cannot dwell upon the details of Peirce's cosmology, I just want to point out that his seemingly "panpsychism" is at odds with a non-cognitivist position in ethics. Peirce's hypercognitivist sentimentalism should be considered a regional instantiation of his panpsychism. Therefore, at least at a merely interpretative level, Peirce's claims about the contrast between sentiment and rationality in VIM should not be taken as a declaration of non-cognitivism in ethics.

3 See Maddalena (2009: 121-132). In this sense, Peirce states that a sentiment "is not one determined by reason …, but is of an arbitrary nature" (EP1: 43). However, this does not mean that there is no relation between self-control and sentiment (or perception). On the contrary, as we have seen, sentiments ought to be developed according to the regulative criterion of the development of concrete reasonableness and are therefore characterized by a normative vocation, just as any other component of human mind.

interpretants, namely the emotional, the energetic and the logical. As early as 1904, Peirce includes sentiments within the determinations that a sign can produce on an interpreter (CP 4.536; see Short 2007: 52). Peirce's favorite examples are the sentimental interpretation of a piece of music (e.g. CP 5.475) and the sentimental "instinctive" judgments about certain possible lines of conduct or state of affairs, such as the moral disgust for incest (e.g. W6: 387).

As a consequence, it should be clear right from this point that Peirce's claims about the priority of "sentiments" over rationality in vitally important matters should not be taken as a declaration of non-cognitivism. Rather, they are the mark of a complex and articulated metaethical and ethical cognitivism in which sentiment plays a pivotal role in certain occasions.

1.1. First Order and Second Order Dispositions

The first question we want to answer about Peirce's alleged moral sentimentalism is: (1) why does Peirce say that "rational deliberation" is misplaced in vitally important matters and urgent issues, while sentiment is not? In particular, we want to know whether these claims commit Peirce to a form of non-cognitivism in ethics. As it is well known, Peirce assigns to sentiments and instincts a key role in the definition of the ethical conduct in what he calls "vitally important matters" (VIM). Even though I will dwell on this issue in a later section, I can already mention that Peirce's claim for the trustfulness of ethical sentiments in VIM is not an exhortation to an indiscriminate spontaneism, which would align him with ethical emotivists and relativists. Rather, his moral sentimentalism is a specific theory of normative ethics and moral epistemology (metaethics), in which the pivotal role of instinctual, moral sentiments does not rule out the fundamental function of a responsible, rational self-criticism and self-control. The aim of this section is to take a first step toward the comprehension of Peirce's moral sentimentalism and to introduce his understanding of self-control and deliberation in ethical matters by drawing the central distinction between *first and second order dispositions* in human conduct. This will show that sentimental instincts and critical self-control are not mutually excluding features of human agency, but rather coessential ingredients of the same ethical and metaethical position. This will cast hopefully some light on Peirce's troublesome claim that "rationality" is totally out of place in VIM. Moreover, as we will see throughout this chapter, Peirce's moral sentimentalism is the implication in the field of ethics of what he calls "critical common-sensism" (CCS), which is in turn an essential component of his pragmaticism (EP2: 356-359).

Sometimes it seems that Peirce associates "rationality" with the realm of science and "instinct" with the realm of "practice" (CP 1.634; 7.606). However, Peirce complicates the picture by saying that rationality is itself instinctual in its roots (e.g. R1114; see Ayim 1974; Maddalena 2003) and that the continuous progress of scientific inquiry is dependent upon the human inquirers' capacity of abducting good hypotheses (e.g. CP 1.630). Peirce also concludes that we know scientifically only what instinct allowed us to have access to so far (CP 1.118; 7.378).[4]

But what does "instinct" mean here? As it is known, one of the essential features of CCS is that there are indubitable propositions and that these propositions are of the nature of instincts. Propositions such as "fire burns" are taken by Peirce to be indubitable within certain limits and instinctual in character. Accordingly, *instincts* are pervasive dispositions of activity in an individual person, which are in great part shared with other people and are the result of the cumulative experience of the previous generations (see EP2: 32, 1898).

4 According to Peirce's classification, rationality and theoretical sciences developed from "social instincts," while practical sciences developed from "selfish instincts" (CP 7.378; 7.383). In any case, I think that rationality means here a capacity for abstract symbolic activity, the type of activity needed in theoretical science. Moreover, if we take "rational instinct" to mean "*il lume naturale*", i.e, the extraordinary capacity of guessing right making an explanatory hypothesis, we have again an instance of a narrow conception of rationality, which is a product as well of a certain development of social instincts. However, Reason in the sense of 3rdness is also at the origin of the process of evolution of the human being, not only at the end. In other words, social instincts and "rationality" in the narrow sense are the "working out" of the original final cause, 3rdness itself, which characterizes the human being in its specificity. On a different note, it is also interesting to stress how sociality (in the form of the activities dependent upon the social instincts) plays a fundamental role in the maturation and growth of rationality in its scientific sense. On the classification of the instincts, see Ayim (1982: 23-25).

Moreover, instincts are transmitted through education and childhood experience within community. In this sense, instincts are the *outcome of conscious and prolonged experience* if we consider them from the point of view of their genesis over generations of humans, and at the same time they are almost *inborn dispositions* if our standpoint is the life of the single man who acquires those dispositions as instincts through birth and upbringing (CP 2.170). The "originality" or "naturality" of human instincts, then, is not an ahistorical set of structures but instead the outcome of an ancient and long-lasting biological and cultural evolution.

But what are the conditions that must be met in order for a disposition to be classified as an instinct? I think that for Peirce there are at least three conditions that a disposition must meet in order to be a human instinct. For Peirce, instincts: (i) function spontaneously at a certain level of human experience (the *spontaneity condition*), (ii) retain a degree of indubitability even after a serious critical assessment (the *contextual indubitability* condition), and (iii) are attuned to primordial (or non-specialized) human experiences (the *non-specialized experience* condition).

First, the relation between instinctive dispositions and spontaneity appears in the characterization of instinctive dispositions as essentially acritical (CP 2.175). An *acritical inference* is an inference in which we know that the conclusion of the inference is determined by certain premises but we are *unaware* of the general principle that has led us to the conclusion. It is possible to elaborate Peirce's understanding of acriticality by showing that instinct operates mostly in a *spontaneous and uncontrolled way*, at least at a certain level of human experience. Similar to perceptual judgments (EP2: 92, 1901), there are certain types of judgments which are not deliberately performed at first, but to which instead every person is spontaneously led, e.g. "fire burns *x*" and the sentimental assessment of incest as an object worthy of "moral horror." However, while the instinctive, non-deliberate acceptance of *p* is limited to the level of spontaneous and uncontrolled interpretation of an object, such judgments can be overridden by personal initiative and self-control. As Peirce claims about the case of incest, some "rationalistic brother and sister" could marry and thereby go against their instincts (i.e., the wisdom of their sentimental judgment about the immorality of incest), but they "would find that the conviction of horrible guilt could not be shaken off" (EP2: 350, 1905). I would take this statement not as a description of what would necessarily happen in a similar case, but as an indication of what an instinct is and at what levels of experience it could show its effects.

Second, although instincts function spontaneously, they can become an object of critical consideration and assessment. The need for critical reflection upon an alleged "instinctive belief" is one of the most important features of Peirce's revision of Reid's common-sensism. Indeed, as Peirce writes, "if we are to admit that some propositions are beyond our powers of doubt, we must not admit any specified proposition to be of this nature without severe criticism" (EP2: 432-433, 1908). In other words, the content of the belief has to pass the test of genuine critical doubting before it can be considered a *genuine* "instinctive belief." Thus, mere spontaneity is not enough to consider a habit an instinctive one for since instinctive dispositions and the spontaneous interpretations resulting from them affirm something about reality, their content has to be tested through criticism and not simply falsified by experience. That is, criticism is needed to determine which part of the instinctive belief is seemingly being falsified. The status of Peircean instinct implies a *reflective component of evaluation and justified acceptance* of the propositional content of the instinct itself. If the belief with its content passes the test and so deserves the label of *indubitability*, then it can be provisionally included within the list of "instinctive beliefs." For our purpose, however, it is only necessary to underline the fact that the method of the real doubt, as opposed to "paper" doubt, entails that we genuinely doubt *p* not if we have *any* reason to question *p*, but only if we have a *good* reason to do so.[5] Peirce's conclusion is then a general epistemic stance he calls "true conservatism," according to which an instinctive attitude towards *p*, if it is a genuine instinct, is usually found to be indubitable by a sound rational assessment, since it is the product of many generations of experience (CP1.661). For these reasons, instinct "seldom errs," at least in certain domains (EP2: 349, 1905).

The third, and last, condition of instincts is that they concern, as Peirce says, "affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life" (EP2: 349, 1905). In other words, the propositional content of an instinctive attitude refers to a non-specialized form of human experience and of human interaction with the world. For instance, the

5 Cf. Agler 2012, which contains a good analysis of the difference between a "paper" doubt and a "skeptical doubt".

instinctive belief *fire burns the flesh* does not cover many artificial or specialized situations in which an agent can actually test whether or not fire burns *x*. This claim has of course further consequences, among which there are normative implications. Indeed, since the content of an instinctual belief is a general fact about non-specialized conditions of life, it follows that the (contextual) infallibility and indubitability of instinct is limited to these regions of human experience and activity. This is again a distinctive feature of CCS, as the Scottish school of common-sensism seemed not to be fully aware of the "limitations of indubitability and the consequent limitations of the jurisdiction of original belief" (EP2: 350, 1905). As a consequence, the alethic value of an instinctive belief has always to be placed within the limits of the vagueness of its propositional content and of the non-specialization of the context in which the same proposition is true.

We have explained in which sense, according to Peirce, we have "acritical" sentiments and instincts, and that these acritical mental acts – that is, mental acts we cannot help acting upon – provide us with cognitions which are the factual starting point of our further inferences, inquiries and activities in general. This is true even for some principles of basic reasoning, that is, some "natural judgments" and habits of inference "of the very simplest kind," which are the resultant of inborn dispositions and maybe of some infant and semi-conscious experiences (CP 2.170). They constitute, then, what would "normally" happen in the majority of cases of the mental activity of men (CP 4.540). It is important to stress the fact that the instinctual behavior itself is nevertheless partially subject to the influence of reflective mental acts, which imply critical self-control. According to Peirce's description of "instinct,"

> An animal instinct is a natural disposition, or inborn determination of the individual's Nature (his "nature" being that within him which causes his behaviour to be such as it is), manifested by a certain unity of quasi-purpose in his behaviour. In man, at least, this behaviour is always conscious, and not purely spasmodic. More than that, unless he is under some extraordinary stress, the behaviour is always partially controlled by the deliberate exercise of imagination and reflexion; so much so that to the man himself his action appears to be entirely rational, so far is it from being merely sensori-motor. General analogy and many special phenomena warrant the presumption that the same thing is true of the lower animals, though they are undoubtedly far less reflective than men. Yet the adaptation of the behaviour to its quasi-purpose in some definite part overleaps all control. (CP 7.49 n.1)

As a consequence, "instinctual" agency attains in human beings that specific level of interaction in which *almost* every occasion of activity is accompanied by awareness and *partial* control, in virtue of the high level of development of imaginative and reflective powers that characterizes human animality. What is worth noticing here is that, according to Peirce, human instinctive conduct is characterized by three essential features, that is: "it is conscious, is determined to a quasi-purpose, and that in definite respects it escapes all control." Thus, the attunement of an instinct to a "quasi-purpose," that is, to a general end that is not deliberate, is partly uncontrolled, even though under certain respects it is subject to rational determination. We will discuss throughout the next sections the place and the extension of this capacity of control, including its normative implications in ethics. The last sentence of the quotation will be also discussed in detail, by putting it in the context of Peirce's understanding of evolutionary theories, since it seems to represent a key claim about what Peirce thinks to be the nature and function of instincts in the life of man. However, according to Peirce, there is a *constant and constitutive circularity in man between instinctive dispositions and critical thought*, since even the instincts "have been so often furbished up and painted over by reflection upon the nature of things that they are, in mature life, mostly ordinary habits," that is, dispositions acquired through one's individual experience (CP 2.170). Thus, human capacity of reflection and of acquiring new knowledge on facts (even "normative facts") influences in a more or less conscious way our original dispositions. This is the pattern of functioning of the "natural reason of man" (EP2: 78). Indeed, "balancing reasons *pro* and *con* is the natural procedure of every man," and "no man can avoid doing so continually" (EP2: 78)[6], especially as far as deliberative processes about the future conduct are concerned. Although Peirce is here referring directly to the principles of rational inferences, his stance about the spontaneous, critical consideration of our instinctual beliefs and inferences by a reflexive activity can be

6 And Peirce continues: "and if he could, he would only have trained himself to the observance of rules having no foundation in reason. For reason is nothing but man's natural way of thinking, carefully and consistently observed" (EP2: 78).

rigorously extended to any other dispositions of human character, such as ethical and aesthetical dispositions. In other words, it seems that according to Peirce not only instinct is already characterized by some type of generality, but also it is naturally entangled with self-control.

This mutual entanglement of instinct and controlling consciousness opens to the epistemological level of moral knowledge and its characteristic normativity. As we have seen in the chapter on the "Normative Science, self-control is the formal condition for the appearance of something like "normativity". Peirce writes:

> I entirely agree, in opposition to distinguished logicians, that normality can be no criterion for what I call rationalistic reasoning, such as alone is admissible in science, yet it is precisely the criterion of instinctive or common-sense reasoning, which, within its own field, is much more trustworthy than rationalistic reasoning. In my opinion, it is self-control which makes any other than the normal course of thought possible, just as nothing else makes any other than the normal course of action possible; and just as it is precisely that that gives room for an ought-to-be of conduct, I mean Morality, so it equally gives room for an ought-to-be of thought, which is Right Reason; and where there is no self-control, nothing but the normal is possible (CP 4.540, "Prolegomena," 1906).

Now, a habit of affective response, a type of "sentiment," which goes under the category of instinct, can be understood as a *first order disposition*. I would interpret a first order disposition as a propositional content that we cannot help acting upon at first – something like a perceptual judgment. However, Peirce contends that it is possible to make these original dispositions the object of consideration in further mental acts and to transform them into reflexive beliefs through the mediation of deliberate acts of assent. In this sense, human beliefs might be called *second order dispositions* (which are "acquired habits"). In this way, human moral make-up presents:

1. Spontaneous habits of moral sentimental judgment: first order dispositions, or instincts ("natural" or "normal" level of human agency).
2. Reflective, self-controlled habits of feeling and conduct: second order dispositions, or beliefs (normative level of human agency).[7]

Instinctive sentiment is a kind of knowing or thinking, that is, a cognitive state. However, it is neither an explicit way of providing linguistic formulation of propositions (linguistic expression), nor of articulating reasons (deliberate reasoning). That is, it is not one of the ways in which human beings perform self-controlled operations of reasoning about things. It is a sentimental judgment resulting from certain hereditary affective dispositions, that is, a first order disposition. At the same time, this does not mean that human self-control does not relate, although *indirectly*, to our instinctual beliefs, among whom the sentimental judgments seem to be the most important element in VIM. Our "instincts" are always to be criticized if we want to assume them within our acquired habits of conduct, which are second order dispositions or beliefs. So, instinctive habits of sentiment are not the product of deliberate self-cultivation, but, at the same time, they are somehow related and subject to self-control, insofar as (1) these sentiments might provide an indication of what we should deliberately do, and as a consequence of how we should develop our beliefs. Moreover, (2) since instinctive sentiments are items of CCS, they are at the same time object of a methodic critical assessment, and can be eventually confirmed or modified.

1.2. Judgments, Beliefs and Deliberation

The aim of this section is to show at what level of human conduct Peirce considers the role of critical assessment of purposes to be fundamental. In other words, what is, in Peirce's terms, the role of deliberative rationality in conduct? This analysis is a necessary step in order to understand, in the next sections, the place of "instinctual sentiments" within deliberative conduct. Peirce writes that "in the ordinary conduct of everyday

7 Notice that the human "virtues" studies by NS are in this sense second order dispositions.

affairs, men really do act from instinct; and their opinions are founded on instinct in the broad sense … . A small dose of reasoning is necessary to connect the instinct with the occasion: but the gist and character of their conduct is due to instinct" (CP 2.176). This claim describes the real role and the *place* of self-control within human agency. In Peirce's terms, self-control and deliberative processes in their fundamental function are not relevant in urgent practical situation, but rather in the preparation of good habits of action, previously to any urgent practical situation. Of course, the formation of a habit requires itself a series of self-controlled actions (the repetition of external actions or the construction of imaginative diagrams about hypothetical practical situations in the future, see e.g. EP1: 47; EP2: 413). However, Peirce theory seems to be that the more substantial use of the self-control we endeavor in is not in the deliberation of what is the good action to do in a specific situation, but rather is the deliberation of what is the best habit according to which our moral character should be developed. We could say that the primary aim of rational deliberation is not to decide for a particular action in a certain urgent situation, but to direct the self-cultivation of one's "moral character" before the occurrence of any practical urgency. This position can be read as a Peircean insistence on the importance of the "moral" character and of its formation, in the same way in which this feature are central in the ethical doctrine of Aristotle, and of more recent authors such as Hume (1995: 399 ff.) and Dewey (e.g. LW3: 92-114).

However, the full picture of Peirce's conception of deliberation requires that we clarify that rationality also has an important, though less fundamental, role within urgent, practical situations. The only function of rational self-control in these cases is to find a suitable way of *applying* the general dispositions and rules of actions endorsed by one's moral character to the particular circumstances in which the concrete action is required. Thus, we could say that there is a twofold possible use of "critical" or "rational" self-control in Peirce's view, a more *substantive* one and a more *applicative* one. The more substantive one concerns the assessment and eventual development of certain habits, while the more applicative one implies that the critical effort of rationality is limited to adjusting the general axiological indication of the "rule" to the particular exigencies of a given situation. Peirce describes these processes of deliberation as an internal dialogue in which the previous "ego" appeals "to the reasonableness of the ego of the succeeding moment for his critical assent" (EP2: 402). Thus, this twofold model of the deliberative process can be formulated in the following way:

I. (a) "Critical" or "rational" self-control performs a function of committing the agent to the "moral facts," "norms" and "ideal" that are found to be good. I would name this level axiological self-control. At this level, self-control can intervene to review standards of technical operation.[8] More deeply, it intervenes at the level of the agent's moral character, that is, of the fundamental value commitments of the agent. The deliberative process described in "What Makes a Reasoning Sound?" is all about this, insofar as it shows how self-control operates from the choice of technical patterns of behavior to the commitment to an ultimate, aesthetical ideal. (b) The concrete action in an urgent practical situation results most of the time almost *spontaneously* from the moral make-up of the agent, or requires a subsidiary and merely "applicative" use of self-control. In any case, it is only at this level that the axiological commitments of the agent are directly assessed and evaluated. Moreover, axiological deliberation is always subsequent to the act, it is a retrospective assessment of a previous act and the general dispositions that underpinned it. Moreover, it is clear from Peirce's sketches of self-control that the genesis of the assessment of ideals emerges or grows out of the consideration of more basic "moral rules" and "principles" (CP 5.533). In other words, the "control" of an action by a "moral rule" entails at some point the need of controlling the moral rule by a higher-order "principle"; similarly, the moral principle asks for a further justification or control by an "esthetic ideal."

II. In addition, "critical" or "rational" self-control performs an applicative function. At this level, human self-

8 See e.g. "Now a purpose is only the special character (and what is, strictly speaking, special, as contradistinguished from individual, is essentially general) of this or that self-controlled habit. Thus, if a man has a general purpose to render the decorations of a house he is building beautiful, without yet having determined more precisely what they shall be, the normal way in which the purpose was developed, of which all other ways are probably inessential variations, was that he actually made decorations in his inner world, and on attention to the results, in some cases experienced feelings which stimulated him to endeavors to reproduce them, while in other cases the feelings consequent upon contemplation of the results excited efforts to avoid or modify them, and by these exercises a habit was produced, which would, we know, affect not only his actions in the world of imagination, but also his actions in the world of experience; and this habit being self-controlled, and therefore recognized, his conception of its character joined to his self-recognition, or adoption, of it, constitute what we call his purpose" (EP2: 430).

control intervenes only for adjusting the generality of the rule of action to the needs of a particular situation. Sometimes this level of deliberation is not required and the action springs almost spontaneously from the set of beliefs and commitments that constitute the moral character of each agent. When applicative deliberation takes place, it is always prior to the act.

Peirce clearly draws the difference between the two uses of self-control in the following passage:

> It has been a great, but frequent, error of writers on ethics to confound an ideal of conduct with a motive to action. The truth is that these two objects belong to different categories. Every action has a motive; but an ideal only belongs to a line [of] conduct which is deliberate. To say that conduct is deliberate implies that each action, or each important action, is reviewed by the actor and that his judgment is passed upon it, as to whether he wishes his future conduct to be like that or not. His ideal is the kind of conduct which attracts him upon review. His self-criticism, followed by a more or less conscious resolution that in its turn excites a determination of his habit, will, with the aid of the sequelæ, modify a future action; but it will not generally be a moving cause to action. (EP2: 377-378)

In this passage, the distinction between the two modalities of deliberation is traced back by Peirce to the two different categories of "ideal of conduct" and "motive of action." On this account, the *ideals of conduct* are the object and the product of the axiological deliberation, which takes place only in limited occasions, when the agent reviews one "important action," that is, an instance of conduct in which his value commitments are more clearly at stake. Thus, axiological assessment is performed only in determinate circumstances and is not concerned with the ideation of a determinate action, but rather with the evaluation of past instances of action and of the moral dispositions implicit in them. Peirce reminds us that VIM imply sometimes "urgency" and require "immediacy" of action (Ayim 1981: 48-49; Savan 1965: 41 ff.). On the contrary, a "motive" is the determinate content and the direction of a future or actual action. Most of the time, the *motive* results almost spontaneously from the moral character of an agent, or however is the product of a secondary and only applicative process of decision-making.

The axiological process of self-control implies the formation of what Peirce calls the "resolution" and the "determination," besides the critical assessment of the ultimate ideal itself of our conduct. Although Peirce states that this process of deliberation is not always available for the agent, since the imaginative capacity of anticipating future occasions of action cannot cover all the likely possibilities,[9] he believes at the same time that it is the most important way of getting to control our own conduct. The structure of this fundamental process of deliberation is then: (1) reflecting upon a past action; (2) assessing it on the basis of one's ideals, rules of action and axiological commitments; (3) imagining the adequate consequences of one's ideals, rules of action and axiological commitments; that is, imagining good "resolutions" (or "plans," or "diagrams") of how the future conduct ought to be, and how, as a consequence, our past conduct ought to be corrected. Moreover, (4) self-control and self-assessment can concern also the ideals themselves. It is at this level that the axiological process of deliberation exercises its full evaluative power. However, the destiny and the efficacy of a "resolution," that is in itself a mere "mental formula," is somehow dependent on the formation of a correspondent belief and disposition, that is, of an efficient agency in the inward nature" of the agent (EP2: 250).[10]

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9 See e.g.: "a man does not always have an opportunity to form a definite resolution beforehand" (EP2: 246); "I have thus endeavored to describe fully the typical phenomena of controlled action. They are not every one present in every case" (EP2: 248); "The formation of habit under imaginary action (see the paper of January 1878) is one of the most essential ingredients of both; but in the logical process the imagination takes far wider flights, proportioned to the generality of the field of inquiry, being bounded in pure mathematics solely by the limits of its own powers, while in the moral process we consider only situations that may be apprehended or anticipated" (EP2: 347). "In the formation of habits of deliberate action, we may imagine the occurrence of the stimulus, and think out what the results of different actions will be. … The result will be that when a similar occasion actually arises for the first time it will be found that the habit of really reacting in that way is already established. I remember that one day at my father's table, my mother spilled some burning spirits on her skirt. Instantly, before the rest of us had had time to think what to do, my brother, Herbert, who was a small boy, had snatched up the rug and smothered the fire. We were astonished at his promptitude, which, as he grew up, proved to be characteristic. I asked him how he came to think of it so quickly. He said, "I had considered on a previous day what I would do in case such an accident should occur. This act of stamping with approval, "endorsing" as one's own, an imaginary line of conduct so that it shall give a general shape to our actual future conduct is what we call a resolve. It is not at all essential to the practical belief, but only a somewhat frequent attachment" (CP 2.583).

10 According to Peirce, the notions of "special character," "nature," and "soul" are all synonyms of what we call moral character or moral make-up of the agent (EP2: 247).

> Being nothing more than an idea, this resolution does not necessarily influence his conduct. But now he sits down and goes through a process similar to that of impressing a lesson upon his memory, the result of which is that the *resolution*, or mental formula, is converted into a *determination,* by which I mean a really efficient agency, such that if one knows what its special character is, one can *forecast* the man's conduct on a special occasion. One cannot make forecasts that will come true in the majority of trials of them by means of any figment. It must be by means of something true and real. We do not know by what machinery the conversion of a resolution into a determination is brought about. … Suffice it to say that the determination, or efficient agency, is something hidden in the depth of our nature. (EP2: 246)

Peirce's geography of deliberative processes is clear. The way in which an agent can exert a radical "measure of self control over his future actions" is not the applicative moment of thinking that immediately precedes the actual action, on the basis of which we certainly are not able to impart to our actions "any arbitrarily assignable character"; on the contrary, it is the previous "process of self-preparation" that tends to "impart to action (when the occasion shall arise) one fixed character" (EP2: 337). In other words, new beliefs develop through the agent's labor of imaginary or concrete trials and errors of different lines of conduct, and to the eventual "deliberate stamp of approval" that some of them might obtain, giving as a consequence a general shape to his actual future conduct (CP 2.583). Then, in this sense, the first type of deliberation coincides with the process of *moral self-cultivation* of the agent, through which he assigns to his moral character specific "acquired habits" and "specializations" (CP 2.583). Peirce's notion of self-control and deliberation, as we can see, is not action-centered but, rather, habit-centered. If it is maybe possible that we do not act under the guise of good, the only possibility for the deliberate cultivation of our moral character is to judge under the guise of good, for our self-assessment and self-preparation require the positive axiological approval of certain past lines of conduct and certain standards of action (and complementary disapproval of others).

Placing deliberation in the right place is also important insofar as Peirce attributes to "self-control" (in which we should include the knowledge developed in NS and the personal development of rules, rules of rules, rules of rules of rules etc.) a key role in the development of human individuality. As Peirce says, "*vir* is begotten" through a repeated exercise of the self-control upon itself (CP 5.402 n.3; see Krolikowski 1964). Since self-control is a type of knowledge, it would be odd if Peirce denied once and for all the role of rational deliberation in ethics, committing himself to a form of sentimental non-cognitivism.

In the second chapter, we saw that one of the formal exigencies of human conduct is unity. It is clear that it is at the fundamental, axiological level of reflection and self-criticism that the agent must work in order to give rational unity to his conduct. "Rational unity" here means that the cognitive, practical and affective dispositions of the agent's moral character tend to realize a perfect embodiment of "reason." Hence, the regulative role of the ideals and the axiological commitments becomes pervasive and flawlessly effective in human conduct, resolving in this way axiological and practical incompatibilities.[11] This means that the obstinacy of instincts and tendencies conflicting with her critical beliefs is reduced to the minimum, or rather completely conquered. Peirce often describes the vocation of human conduct to "rational unity" as the struggle towards a "fully deliberate" conduct and towards "full liberty" (see e.g. EP2: 246). So, the continuous process of corrective reflection subsequent to our actual conduct is the essential spring of the "self-preparation for action" on the next occasion, which tends to "approximate indefinitely toward perfection of the fixed character" of a belief and will be marked by "entire absence of self reproach" (EP2: 337).[12] I might call this normative end the *perfection of deliberative agency*. Peirce

11 "If conduct is to be thoroughly deliberate, the ideal must be a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of hetero-criticisms; and the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*" (EP2: 377-378).

12 The criterion of the "absence of self-reproach" could be subject to the following objection: provided that the agent has a certain set of believes and desires (no matter what those beliefs and desires are), then the agent would judge her actions in relations to that set. However, we can imagine a case in which the agent manages to conform her deeds to the exigencies of her beliefs and desires, although her beliefs and desires are evil ones. In this case, following the objection, the agent would not experience any self-reproach, but would be at the same time an immoral agent. However, Peirce's cognitive theory of moral judgments meets this objection. Indeed, the absence of self-reproach has to be taken not only in a factual sense, but in an ideal and counter-factual one. The agent would be a moral and "free" agent only if her basic commitments and actions would not be object of criticism in the long run. Therefore, if the agent does not experience any self-reproach at the present time because her deeds are adequate to her basic commitments, and if her basic commitments are evil at the same time (even though she does not know or accept it), she would not be a "free" agent.

explains that "a habit of which we are not aware, or with which we are not deliberately satisfied, is not a belief" (EP2: 12). This statement means that, even though we have judged a proposition to be practically good and we are willing to endorse it as our rule of action in every suitable circumstances, we are still struggling to make of that newly born belief a fully "practical belief," that is, an effective purpose in *every* circumstance we have judged it to be a suitable principle of action. If this does not happen yet, it means that conflicting and uncontrolled tendencies instinctively act against our fundamental commitments.

> A *Belief* is a state of mind of the nature of a habit, of which the person is aware, and which, if he acts deliberately on a suitable occasion, would induce him to act in a way different from what he might act in the absence of such habit. … If a man really believes that alcohol is injurious to him, and does not choose to injure himself, but still drinks for the sake of the momentary satisfaction, then he is not acting deliberately. [that is, not according to what he "beliefs," that is, what he has deliberately accepted] (EP2: 12)

Human capacity of reflection proves to be fundamental because of the inertial force of the agent's original, behavioral dispositions to become controlled and rationalized. In a passage, Peirce even states paradoxically that "reflection" is not, properly speaking, an indispensable component of perfect rationality, or, in a more general sense, of fully intelligent conduct.[13] According to this opinion, the essential conditions of a fully intelligent conduct for man would be (a) the unity of "cognitions," that is, a set of non-conflicting beliefs, and (b) the fact that "our actions should proceed from the entirety of our knowledge," that is, again, from our deliberate beliefs (EP1: 222-223). Thus, it is "because our thought is only imperfectly brought to unity," that "it requires effort to collect it," and that "it requires a watchful eye to be directed to the imperfections of this unity." Indeed, "were we so happily constituted that we should always without reflection completely assimilate everything we learned, so as to take due account of it in every act, we might well be spared the trouble of reflecting; and we should be only the more rational if we could thus behave with intelligence by the first intention of the mind, without reflection" (EP1: 222-223). As we have said, then, it is the axiological deliberation that carries out this unifying function of our beliefs.

However, the role of deliberation within particular practical situations is important as well. As we have glimpsed before, the knowledge of the rule of conduct cannot be immediately effective, since a maxim, in its generality, is not able to provide all the necessary information to act in the suitable way in a particular circumstance. So, what is the real effectiveness or power of this second level of deliberation? Has it just an instrumental or limited applicative role or, on the contrary, is it able to autonomously determine in the agent's imminent behavior an unpredictable and fully new line of conduct? Sometimes Peirce seems to think that a certain concrete action would inevitably result if a specific moral make-up happened to interact with certain conditions (cf. Hume and the compatibilist approaches to the problem of free will that results from his theory). He seems to imply this conclusion when he says that the "determination" produced in the moral character is an "efficient agency, such that if one knows what its special character is, one can *forecast* the man's conduct on a special occasion" (EP2: 246).[14] Similarly, he explains that

> the necessitarians tell us that when we act, we act under a necessity that we cannot control. I am inclined to think that this is substantially so. We certainly cannot control our *past* actions, and I fancy it is too late to control what is happening at the very instant present. You cannot prevent what already is. If this be true, it is true that *when we act*, we do act under necessity that we cannot control. But our *future* actions we can determine in a great measure; can we not? To deny *that* were mere gabble and word-twisting. … The point is that our future actions will be controlled by present endeavors. That is sufficient. But let us describe the all-familiar phenomena of self-control. (EP2: 245)

It is apparent that the last appeal to "self control" in the quotation refers to the axiological deliberation, not to the applicative one. Does this really mean that the applicative thinking only has an instrumental function, in a

13 Cf. "There is no reason why "thought," in what has just been said, should be taken in that narrow sense in which silence and darkness are favorable to thought. It should rather be understood as covering all rational life, so that an experiment shall be an operation of thought" (EP2: 337).

14 "One cannot make forecasts that will come true in the majority of trials of them by means of any figment" (EP2: 246).

way that, if we had a perfect knowledge of all the relevant facts of a particular practical situation (both concerning the moral character of the agent and the conditions of the external world) we could almost unerringly predict the agent's action?

The answer is no. Indeed, these statements cannot be read as an affirmation of radical psychological determinism in action for at least two reasons. The first point to stress is the psychological and moral insight that the moral character of an agent has always a definite and effective practical weight in orienting and determining within certain limits the concrete actions of an agent. Indeed, as Peirce remarks, moral habits are characterized by a particular "obstinacy" and "persistency," which are not found, for example, in the principles of scientific reasoning (CP 2.160). The second point is the meaning of the expression "fully deliberate line of action." When is our action fully deliberate? For sure, it is when the first type of deliberation has fully taken rational possession of our uncontrolled and contrasting instincts and tendencies, letting our spontaneous, actual conduct to be a perfect mirror of our conscious beliefs and purposes. As Peirce remarks, this is the real meaning of human "liberty".[15] However, a fully deliberate conduct also requires a repeated decision of relying on what we have previously judged to be the good patterns of behavior and, then, a contextual re-confirmation of our beliefs. For instance, Peirce says that "to say that a man believes anthracite to be a convenient fuel is to say no more nor less than that if he needs fuel, and no other seems particularly preferable, then, if he acts deliberately, bearing in mind his experiences, considering what he is doing, and exercising self-control, he will often use anthracite." Deliberation in action entails then "attention to memories of past experience and to one's present purpose, together with self-control" (CP 2.583). This means that the high probability of the occurrence of an action, given a set of circumstances *C*, includes within *C* a contextual, deliberate act of acceptance of our old beliefs and of their contextual operativeness. Thus, the occurrence of an act is describable by the following conditional according to which, (i) any time certain occasions will arise (external circumstances and subjective circumstances, as beliefs and desires) and (ii) any time we will act "deliberately," then (iii) a certain type of action will follow. "Deliberately" has here a precise meaning: an agent acts "deliberately" at *t1* if he acts (1) according to the propositions he believed in at *t2*, (2) without any change in his beliefs (follows from 1.), that is, without the endorsement of a new purpose, and (3) without external constriction. It is quite clear that (1) and (2) requires an act of decision and self-control.

It is convenient to develop schematically the two previous cases presented by Peirce in order to understand the specific role that self-control has respectively at the level of axiological and applicative deliberation in making human conduct perfect from the point of view of deliberative power. Indeed, "to say that any thinking is deliberate is to imply that it is controlled with a view to making it conform to a purpose or ideal" (CP 1.573).

I.

P1. I believe that *p* (I have a deliberately developed habit whose purpose is *p*). Ex.: I believe that alcohol is always unhealthy; the following practical maxim is "I will not drink alcohol in any circumstances."

P2. I wish to do *A* and I don't have a rival wish (instinct, desire, uncontrolled tendency). Ex.: "I wish to drink water instead of alcohol now."

P3. Option 1. I accept my belief that *p* and my wish to do *A* (self-control). Option 2. I do not express any explicit act of acceptance.

C. I do *A*. I actually drink water here and now.

II.

P1. I believe that *p*.

P2. I also have an uncontrolled inclination for non-*p*. The implicit line of action required by this inclination is "I will drink alcohol in certain circumstances."

P2. According to my deliberate belief that *p*, I wish to do *A*. However, I also have a further tendency to do non-*A*. "I wish to drink alcohol now in order to please my momentary satisfaction."

P3. Option 1. Even though I accept my belief that *p* and my wish to do *A*, my habit and my decision are not

15 Cf. again: "the man *can*, or if you please is *compelled*, to *make his life more reasonable*. What other distinct idea than that, I should be glad to know, can be attached to the world liberty?" (EP2: 248).

strong enough to overcome my uncontrolled inclination to non-*A*. The wish to do non-*A* gets the upper hand. Option 2. I do not express any explicit act of acceptance. The wish to do non-*A* gets the upper hand.

C. I do non-*A*. I actually drink alcohol here and now.

According to Peirce's definition, (II) displays a practical case in which the agent does not act "deliberately." This is an interesting formulation of the ancient problem of *akrasìa*, or weakness of the will. As we can see, Peirce does not deny that an act of acceptance can have an important role also at the level of applicative thinking, although it seems to argue that this function is not performed *any* time a man expresses an action. However, Peirce's tenet is that the chore of self-control in producing a whole disposition to integrated, rational conduct is not found at the level of applicative deliberation, but at the most fundamental level of axiological reflection.

1.3. Theoretical and Practical Knowledge

A further step in understanding Peirce's account of moral sentimentalism and deliberation concerns the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge. In 1904 ca., Peirce writes

> Of the two great tasks of humanity, *Theory* and *Practice,* the former sets out from a sign of a real object with which it is *acquainted,* passing from this, as its *matter,* to successive interpretants embodying more and more fully its *form,* wishing ultimately to reach a direct *perception* of the entelechy; while the latter, setting out from a sign signifying a character of which it *has an idea*, passes from this, as its *form*, to successive interpretants realizing more and more precisely its *matter*, hoping ultimately to be able to make a direct *effort*, producing the entelechy. (EP2: 304)[16]

The aim of this section is to point out that the chore of Peirce's declarations about the complex relationship between "theory" and "practice," "science" and extra-scientific conduct concerns the different nature of two modalities of human knowledge, that is, the *theoretical* and the *practical knowledge*. As we will see, Peirce's attributes to theoretical and practical knowledge two different function and therefore different epistemic features and criteria of justification. Moral sentimentalism itself proves to be one of the most important features of practical knowledge, at least as far as certain specific practical issues are concerned.

First, it seems to be necessary to study Peirce's notion of "belief" in some of its different facets, starting from a controversial statement often found in his writings. Many passages seem to imply that a "belief is out of place in pure theoretical science" (EP2: 156; also EP2: 33; 85). It is clear, however, that this claim has to be interpreted in a nuanced way, since its literal meaning is evidently at odds with a basic understanding of the scientific activity. Indeed, since a belief in its general meaning is a deliberate tendency to act upon a proposition in certain circumstances, it easily follows that the scientific *activity* requires many "beliefs," if we are to make sense of the different procedures and operations implied by scientific inquiries. Peirce admits this point when he says that a sound principle of a given science, that is, an accepted opinion or a methodological rule, can be a belief in a limited sense, that is, "a sound maxim of *scientific procedure*" (EP2: 156,). That is to say, "belief" also plays a role in scientific inquiry, even though in the limited sense relative to the activity of designing theories and explanatory hypotheses and of experimentally testing those hypotheses. "Activity," then, should be taken here in a very broad sense, and should comprehend also diagrammatic and imaginative activity, like in mathematics,[17] besides the external and public operations of experimentation required by certain sciences. There are then genuine "purely theoretical beliefs" (CP 2.583). However, how should we make sense of Peirce's claim that beliefs do not play a

16 This distinction has been recently restated in the form of the different "direction of fit" of practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge. See e.g. Searle 2001.

17 Cf. "… to believe the concept in question is applicable to anything is to be prepared under certain circumstances, and when actuated by given motives, to act in a certain way. This is quite clearly the case with all mathematical concepts. To say that a collection consists of seventeen single members involves, if thought out to its ultimate meaning, the act of counting in the imagination, and, of course, the action must be generalized into a habit connected with the predication seventeen" (EP 2: 432).

fundamental role in scientific inquiries?

One way is to consider Peirce's different definitions of "belief." Peirce distinguishes among a "practical belief," a "full belief" and a "living belief." We have then:

(a) *Practical belief*. Most of the time, "practical belief" is merely a synonym of "belief." In other words, it refers to every proposition that we have deliberately established in us as a habitual rule of action in certain circumstances *C*. However, it is also true that the notion of "practice" is sometimes treated by Peirce in a more technical sense. In these specific contexts, the Peircean idea of "practice" means only the systems of conduct – including first of all ends and goals implied in them – that belong to the extra-scientific conduct. Indeed, Peirce's statements about this topic also imply the simple fact that in "purely theoretical sciences" a practical belief is out of place in the sense that no relevant action for the extra-scientific activity would follow from purely theoretical hypotheses. Similarly, a "stout belief" is what is a proposition we have the habit to act upon in "real practical concerns" and can really help those situations (EP2: 156). In this sense Peirce states that a "practical belief, such as that anthracite is a convenient fuel," is different from a "purely theoretical belief, such as that the pole of the earth describes an oval of a few rods' diameter, or that there is an imaginary circle which is twice cut by every real circle" (CP 2.583). Some important considerations are implied by the distinction between "practical" and "theoretical" activity, i.e. practical beliefs (1) usually represent "universal concerns," while the concerns of science are specific and selective; (2) their ends and goals do not have – and do not need to have – the scientific level of clarity. Hence, these ends are usually vague, and as ends of human, common "practice," they are perfectly fine in their vagueness. Within the world of practice, we find the systems of conduct linked to VIM, that is, practical urgent situations related to general ends like self-preservation, sexual behavior and preservation of the stock etc., which include, as a consequence, also the "vital crises."[18] VIM also comprises practical situations characterized by "urgency" and the need of "immediate" response. The definition of this category of systems of practice and goals is not always clear. It also comprehends those "instinctive" beliefs upon which the common-sensical mind "risks" its choices in the world of practice. These systems of practice have a further fundamental character, that is, (3) they are essentially characterized by deep sentimental responses. The nature of the link between vitally important systems of practices and corresponding sentiments will be deepened later. However, it is clear that when Peirce states that the scientific beliefs, that sometimes he calls "opinions," are only relevant "in relatively insignificant affairs," he means that those systems of conduct and their constitutive goals are highly specialized ones, and that they are endorsed only by some specialists within artificial contexts, like those of scientific experimentation (EP2: 349-350). Moreover, compared to the convictions and opinions of the particular sciences, which *in principle* can be rejected and substituted with another from one day to the other without producing any change in the "practical" systems of conduct of the non-specialist, the beliefs implied in human, common conduct seem to have a greater stability and a higher grade of improbability of being replaced in a short time (EP2: 33).

(b) *Full belief*. It is a proposition that we deliberately established in us as a habitual rule of action in those specific conditions *C* that are "vital crises" and VIM. So, says Peirce, "full belief is willingness to act upon the proposition in vital crises, opinion is willingness to act upon in relatively insignificant affairs" (EP2: 33).[19] In this sense, the fact that certain propositions gain the status of premises in scientific inquiry is not enough for them to be "beliefs" in this sense. Their meaningfulness covers too a narrow field and their status is much more

18 "But in vital matters, it is quite otherwise. We must act in such matters; and the principle upon which we are willing to act is a *belief*. Thus, pure theoretical knowledge, or science, has nothing directly to say concerning practical matters, and nothing even applicable at all to vital crises. Theory is applicable to minor practical affairs; but matters of vital importance must be left to sentiment, that is, to instinct" (EP2: 33).

19 Peirce continues: "But pure science has nothing at all to do with *action*. The propositions it accepts, it merely writes in the list of premises it proposes to use. Nothing is *vital* for science; nothing can be. Its accepted propositions, therefore, are but opinions at most; and the whole list is provisional. The scientific man is not in the least wedded to his conclusions. He risks nothing upon them. He stands ready to abandon one or all as soon as experience opposes them. Some of them, I grant, he is in the habit of calling *established truths*; but that merely means propositions to which no competent man today demurs. It seems probable that any given proposition of that sort will remain for a long time upon the list of propositions to be admitted. Still, it may be refuted tomorrow; and if so, the scientific man will be glad to have got rid of an error. There is thus no proposition at all in science which answers to the conception of belief" (EP2: 33).

uncertain that certain beliefs that have continuously been acted upon by generations of human beings.

(c) *Living belief*. It is a proposition that we have deliberately established in us as a habitual rule of action in certain conditions *C* and that is not overcome by some conflicting tendencies in relevant occasions. That is, it is a belief that is actually operative in every circumstance that has been judged pertinent by the agent. It is a synonym, then, of a belief operating in a "fully deliberate" conduct.[20] In this case, the characterization of the belief is not taken from what the belief is about, its subject-matter (e.g. a "full belief" is about VIM while a scientific "opinion" is about highly specific fields of application), but from the psychological strength of the belief in relation to uncontrolled and conflicting inclinations. Hence, both "practical" and "full beliefs" can be living beliefs.

(d) *Theoretical belief*. It is a proposition that we deliberately established in us as a habitual rule of action in certain conditions *C*, limited to the system of practices required by the scientific activity.

Thus, one of the possible answer to our question is that, since a belief, in its most important meaning, refers to the notions of "practical" and "full" belief (that is, to the sphere of the common and non-specialized conduct of man), the "theoretical" and "scientific" beliefs, because of their extremely circumscribed application, are just a secondary instance of the human being's deliberate habits and moral character. However, it seems that Peirce's stance has further implications, which show that his claim involves a further, normative claim. The normative meaning of the statement "belief is out of place in pure theoretical science" can be understood both as a feature of the sound development of scientific and theoretical inquiry and, more interestingly, as a key-point about the difference of theoretical and practical knowledge. The first implication of the normative principle is that, since *the function of theoretical knowledge is only to discover the truth*, every consideration about utilities and suitable applications of theories and discoveries ought to be kept away from the *internal criteria* through which a theoretical science develops and tests its contents. Of course, Peirce says, there are sciences, like physiology, engineering and chemistry that have almost immediate possibilities of application and technologic effects, useful for improving concrete situations of human life.[21] However, if the aim of a particular science becomes the discovery of useful applications for resolving practical problems, then that science loses its theoretical nature and turns into a technical or poietical knowledge. These considerations are closely related to Peirce's insistence on a genuine and uncontaminated "theoretical interest" as a necessary epistemic virtue for the man of science, including the philosopher.[22] In a clear passage, Peirce spells out his stance on this matter:

> Logic, then, is a theory. The end of any theory is to furnish a rational account of its object. . . . A theory directly aims at nothing but knowing. Maybe, if it be sound, it is likely, some day, to prove useful. Still, fairness forbids our making utility the *criterion* of the excellence of the theory. (CP 2.1, emphasis added)

Then, the *criteria* for the acceptance of a theoretical opinion are not factors of practical utilities, but are instead internal, specific standards of acceptability and of experimental evidence, which are different for every theoretical

20 Cf. "Speaking strictly, *Belief* is out of place in pure theoretical science, which has nothing nearer to it then the establishment of doctrines, and only the provisional establishment of them, at that. Compared with living *Belief* it is nothing but a ghost" (EP 2: 156). Cf. also, "the most intense and living determination (*Bestimmung*) of the soul toward shaping" the "whole conduct into conformity with the hypothesis that God is Real and very near; and such a determination of the soul in regard to any proposition is the very essence of a living Belief in such proposition" (EP2: 446). And cf. also, "a living, practical belief," and "not merely a scientific belief, which is always provisional" (EP2: 449).

21 Cf. "Even if a science be useful – like engineering or surgery – yet if it is useful only in an insignificant degree as those sciences are, it still has a divine spark in which its petty practicality must be forgotten and forgiven" (CP 1.671). "There are sciences, of course, many of whose results are almost immediately applicable to human life, such as physiology and chemistry. But the true scientific investigator completely loses sight of the utility of what he is about. It never enters his mind. Do you think that the physiologist who cuts up a dog reflects, while doing so, that he may be saving a human life? Nonsense. If he did, it would spoil him for a scientific man; and *then* the vivisection would become a crime. However, in physiology and in chemistry, the man whose brain is occupied with utilities, though he will not do much for science, may do a great deal for human life. But in philosophy, touching as it does upon matters which are, or ought to be, sacred to us, the investigator who does not stand aloof from all intent to make practical applications, will not only obstruct the advance of the pure science, but what is infinitely worse, he will endanger his own moral integrity and that of his readers" (EP2: 29). Then, "the two masters, *theory* and *practice*, you cannot serve" (EP2: 34).

22 Cf. "I stand before you an Aristotelian and a scientific man, condemning with the whole strength of conviction the Hellenic tendency to mingle Philosophy and Practice" (EP2: 29).

science. Theoretical knowledge, then, should not admit within itself the criterion of utility.[23]

The second implication of the normative principle concerns the difference between theoretical and practical knowledge. The first thing to say is that, if theoretical knowledge categorically excludes any appeal to applicability among its ways of developing discoveries and settling beliefs, practical knowledge finds in the criterion of applicability its fundamental feature. As we have already glimpsed, what practical knowledge aims at is the settlement of a belief on the basis of criteria of convenient, contextual applicability and practicability, and, eventually, the determination of a concrete action. The character itself of the convenience and of applicability of a practical belief does range from the aesthetical and ethical criteria of evaluation to the purely instrumental and technical ones. However, the point here is that practical knowledge, especially in the form of axiological deliberation, *weights different, conflicting considerations and reasons* not for the aim of fixing a theoretical belief, but *for establishing a practical belief*, that is, a convenient habit of action, which can be either an aesthetical and ethical ideal, or a more technical resolution.[24] In other words, if the acceptance of a proposition as a belief obeys the criteria of practical goodness (from an ethical or an instrumental point of view), the establishment of a good scientific hypothesis on the contrary obeys the scientific principle of being the best explanation available of a phenomenon. The aim of practical knowledge, then, is the establishment of a justified practical belief, while the aim of the theoretical knowledge is the establishment of a justified explanation as a new scientific opinion.

At this point, it is important to prevent two possible misunderstandings about the link between "reasoning" and practice, on the one hand, and between meaning and practice, on the other hand. First, the epistemic gap between theoretical and practical knowledge does not deny that from an ontological point of view the theoretical knowledge is a type of deliberative performance. The distinction only aims to underline that "accepting" a proposition explicitly because of its nature of rule of action, i.e., because of its practical content, is a defining property of practical knowledge, and ought to be excluded from the way in which a theoretical opinion is settled. Second, the claim that, according to the pragmatic maxim, the semantic content of every proposition and mental act, in its third level of clarity, corresponds to a maxim of conduct, does not imply that every belief has to be settled on the basis of its utility and practical effects for human conduct.

With respect to practical knowledge, we have seen that Peirce admits scientific and theoretical beliefs, that is, procedural principles required by the practical operations of each science. Thus, the general issue of what belief we ought to embrace has to be specified through an explicit reference to the nature – scientific or extra-scientific – of the context of conduct. Whether the *conversion* of a mere proposition into a belief (by induction) is justified or not cannot be established in general terms, but only in relation to the context of its application. As Peirce says

> a practical belief is what a man proposes to go upon. What ought it to be? That must depend upon what the purpose of his action is. What, then, is the purpose of a man? That is the question of pure ethics, a very great question which must be disposed of before the logic of practical belief can be entered upon to any good effect. With science it is entirely different. A problem started today may not reach any scientific solution for generations. … Really the word "belief" is out of place in the vocabulary of science. If an engineer or other practical man takes scientific result, and makes it the basis for action, it is he who converts it into a belief. In pure science, it is merely the formula reached in the existing state of scientific progress. The question of what rules scientific inference ought to follow in order to accelerate the progress of science to the utmost is a comparatively simple one, and may be treated by itself. The question of how a given man, with no much time to give to the subject, had best proceed to form his hasty decision, involves other very serious difficulties, which make it a distinct inquiry. (EP2: 85)

This is the epistemic framework within which the role of sentiment in Peirce's ethics and metaethics should be studied. As it is clear, there is nothing in what we have said to far that leads to think that Peirce made a mockery of a philosophical approach to ethics. The NS establish that the theoretical discovery of moral facts is not sufficient to infuse the aesthetically beautiful virtues in the human being. At the same time, Peirce observes that in VIM rational deliberation is not effective. In these cases, moral sentiments should be followed instead.

23 Cf. e.g. CP 7.186, in which Peirce argues against Pearson's tenet that the end of science is the "stability of society."

24 Cf. "A fundamental question like this [the issue of the beautiful in itself], however practical the issues of it may be, differs entirely from any ordinary practical question, in that whatever is accepted as good in itself must be accepted without compromise. In deciding any special question of conduct it is often quite right to allow weight to different conflicting considerations and calculate their resultant. But it is quite different in regard to that which is to be the aim of all endeavor" (EP2: 253).

Why is that? We can now move to the next question we want to address, which is: (2) Is Peirce's moral sentimentalism compatible with a rational and normative approach to ethics?

2. Peirce's Moral Sentimentalism and Critical-Common Sensism

The aim of this section is to take a further step in offering an account of Peirce's moral sentimentalism, this time in the light of what he calls "sentimental conservatism" (CP 1.661). This doctrine maintains that "great respect should be paid to the natural judgment of the sensible heart" (EP1: 356). Moral sentimentalism is that component of Peirce's "critical common-sensism" (CCS) which concerns ethical issues, above all good conduct in "vitally important matters" (VIM). A preliminary definition of VIM might be helpful. The expression covers a wide set of practical questions, from the reality of God (EP2: 434-450; cf. Raposa 1989) and the choice of the personal conception of the good life (the "free development of the agent's own esthetic quality," EP2: 202), to more prosaic matters of daily life. Regarding such questions, our instinctive *logica utens* and sentiments possess greater epistemic and practical authority than "theory" (EP2: 30). This category also refers to pressing practical problems or sudden "crises" (EP2: 33), as in the case of a shipwreck (EP2: 156). On this occasion, however, I will focus on one particular claim related to VIM, that (a) there are *moral values of "universal concern"* (CP 5.522) and that (b) these values are recognized on the basis of our *affective dispositions*, like in the universal experience of "horror" for incest.[25]

I want to show that according to Peirce there is a *universal moral experience based on sentiment* and that this experience implies a twofold normative doctrine about human conduct in VIM. In fact, it entails both an *epistemic claim* about the sound moral knowledge of vitally important values ("semeiotic," or metaethical level) and an *ethical claim* about the virtuous development of man's character in this field of experience ("ethical" level).[26] Furthermore, I contend that moral sentimentalism is a component of the broader doctrine of CCS and that it is within this doctrine that it is possible to find Peirce's vindication of his normative claims about human conduct in VIM.

As we have already mentioned, Peirce's sentimentalism can be fully grasped only in the light of the continuity between sentiment and rationality. Peirce's "semeiosis" includes different modes in which *cognition* can be articulated, not only in linguistic way. First, the role that he accords to sentiments does not entail a rejection of reason, though it does demand a reconceptualization of what *reasonableness* means. Just as sentiments and even emotions have a cognitive nature, so reason itself has an affective dimension. As David Savan has pointed out, Peirce is a "cognitivist in emotion theory," which means that emotions are identical with cognitive or evaluative

25 As far as I know, only Cheryl Misak has directly addressed the issue of what a VIM is (2004: 150-174). Beeson 2008, Hookway 2002 and Short 2001 indirectly address the problems related to "vital important matters," but they do not provide a definition of what a vital important matter is in Peirce's terms. As Misak (2004: 172) puts it, "(1) a vital matter, for Peirce, is any urgent question about what we ought to do. (2) The category of the vital is wider than the category of the ethical." I agree with the first part of the definition, but not with the second. As far as the first part is concerned, it is true that a vital matter is an "urgent" practical issue. The only problem with this definition is the ambiguity of the category of "urgent." Does this category only refer to those sudden "crises" (EP2: 33) in which we must act and "we need to reach a definite conclusion promptly" (2004: 151) or also to something else? I argue that, in Peirce's view, "vital" and "urgent" do not describe only pressing practical situations like sudden crises, but also *a universal level of human moral experience and the values implied in it*. As far as the second part of the definition is concerned, it is important to remember that ethics studies every form of voluntary, self-controlled conduct of man, including deliberate thinking. However, according to Peirce, formal and systematic reasoning is usually excluded from the set of VIM (CP 1.663). Therefore, the "vital," far from being wider than the category of the "ethical," is rather a sub-category of the latter.

26 It is necessary to point out that moral sentimentalism is only a limited case of the prescriptive doctrine contained in Peirce's Normative Sciences (see Chapter 2), since it does not deal with the entire range of self-controlled practices, but only with the conduct related to VIM. For instance, although scientific reasoning is a type of deliberate activity and is studied by that particular normative science that is logic, sentiment, in the particular form of "feeling of logicality," is never the criterion for establishing the truth of a proposition or the reliability of a statement (EP2: 32-33; 244). Peirce's criticism of the German theory of *Logisches Gefühl* does not mean that "sentiments" and "instincts" have no role in the activity of reasoning. Rather, Peirce's view of logic includes two important epistemic figures, which are the "logical sentiments" and the "rational instinct." However, we cannot dwell on these topics here. Cf. Maddalena 2002 and Poggiani 2012. Ethical issues are not coextensive with VIM, since the latter are just a sub-set of the former. Therefore, the claims of this paper about moral sentimentalism have to be understood within the limits of the VIM and of what I have called moral values of universal concern.

judgments (1976: 320) and have therefore an implicit propositional content (W2: 206-207; 228-229). The cognitive and semeiotic nature of sentiment means that Peirce's anti-rationalism should not be interpreted as a rejection of reason (Peirce is not Humean), but part of the pragmatist call for a radical reconstruction of our inherited conceptions of human rationality. Peirce puts forth an understanding of the human "mind" as a power of different semeiotic operations, which also includes instinctive and affective inferences in their own right (CP 2.475).[27]

Second, although moral sentimental judgments result from instinctive, uncritical dispositions,[28] the two normative claims of Peirce's moral sentimentalism (the logical and the ethical claims) are a consequence of the agent's critical, self-controlled activity of judgment and acceptance of his own dispositions. It is "reason" itself that acknowledges its own impotence in VIM and that establishes the epistemic and ethical normativity of instinctive, sentimental judgments in this context (EP2: 32-33). Thus, while Peirce provokingly denies any authority to rationality in VIM (EP2: 32), at the same time he attributes to critical self-control a constitutive function in establishing the normativity of building our deliberate beliefs about VIM on our instinctive moral sentiments.

There are some passages in which Peirce explicitly stands for an anti-rationalistic position about what man ought to follow in VIM.[29] For instance, he explains that "conservatism, true conservatism, which is sentimental conservatism, … means not trusting to reasonings about questions of vital importance but rather to hereditary instincts and traditional sentiments" (CP 1.661; cf. also CP 1.50). Peirce's declaration that "hereditary instincts and traditional sentiments" are "safer guides than … feeble ratiocination" has to be interpreted first of all as an epistemic claim about moral knowledge. Thus, the doctrine that Peirce displays in his reference to metaethical sentimentalism is an account of *human moral knowledge*, when human beings come to cope with VIM. Peirce's moral sentimentalism, then, is first of all a metaethical, epistemic theory of vitally important values, and could be compared to Hutcheson's ethics of the "moral sense" rather than to Hume's sentimentalism, provided that we pay attention at least to the essential evolutionist component of Peirce's philosophy that is missing in Hutcheson's.[30] Most of the time, in facing moral dilemmas and issues about VIM, we should appeal to the insight conveyed by our affective states rather than to formal reasoning or systematic reflection, which can easily lead us to self-deception. It follows that Peirce's metaethical sentimentalism is not tied to a Humean theory of practical motivation (moral psychology), according to which only an object of sentiment can motivate the agent to act in a certain way while reason is completely impotent in activating the agent upon a certain line of conduct.[31] Peirce somehow hints at this when he explains that the only unthinkable element in human conduct is the "determination of man's nature," and not the aspiration to pleasure, where determination means "an efficient agency prepared previously to the act." Even if the agent's "very nerve of pleasure were cut so that the man were perfectly insensible to pleasure and pain," he would nonetheless pursue the line of conduct upon which he is intentionally directed (EP2: 249).[32]

But what does Peirce's refusal of rationality mean? At this juncture, it is important to stress that Peirce's conception of human mind does not imply the structural opposition between "sentiment" and "reason" typical of certain models of mind of the Modern Age, as it is apparent at least in Hobbes, Hume, and, in a more

27 The fact that Peirce maintains a broad conception of "rationality" as including affective semeiotic processes as well as conscious and controlled logical operations does not deny that according to him the linked notions of "rationality," "reason" and "reasoning" refer in their narrower and more precise meaning only to conscious and controlled logical operations. Indeed, Peirce explains that in this narrower meaning "rational means essentially self-criticizing, self-controlling and self-controlled" (CP 7.777). For the essential co-implication of deliberation and rationality see Colapietro 1999.

28 I cannot develop this point here.

29 Besides the personal quarrel with James that generates Peirce's polemical attitude in "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life," it is not clear who is the butt of Peirce's harsh criticism. Relying on textual evidence (EP2: 189), I might guess that Peirce's polemical target in dealing with the role of rationality and sentiment in ethical matters concerns both Whewell and Kant.

30 Cf. e.g. Hutcheson (2004: 89-100).

31 Cf. e.g. Hume (1978: 413-418).

32 Hookway (2002: 235) seems to claim that according to Peirce (1) sentimental beliefs are necessary in order to "mimic" an epistemic foundationalism (the basic beliefs with which scientific inquiry is enabled to start are not scientific conclusions, but rather common-sense beliefs); (2) sentiments are necessary in order to make a basic belief motivationally effective. The first thesis concerns epistemic issues, the second one belongs to a specific way – we might say, Humean – of conceiving human psychology of motivation. I agree with (1), but I reject (2).

problematic way, in Kant.[33] According to Peirce, the endeavor of human rationality (in its broad sense) coincides with an expansive array of human activities of interpretation of reality (semeiosis). The different possibilities of a sound interpretation of reality entail not only linguistic interpretants but also sentimental interpretants in their own right. Indeed, according to Peirce's semeiotics, certain aspects of an object can be truly and soundly interpreted only by the agent's proper affective responses. In one of his classifications of the meanings of a sign, Peirce claims that there are at least three types of interpretants, i.e. the "emotional," the "energetic" and the "logical" interpretant (EP2: 409). The "sense of beauty" and the "moral sense" share in this case the same condition of being the suitable habits of the emotional interpretation of two different but interwoven dimensions of an object, that is, the aesthetical and ethical admirability (W2: 206-207). This means that the opposition between moral sentimental judgment and rationality, according to Peirce, does not entail the anthropological and semeiotic conception of a dualism between sentiment and rationality. In this dualism, the moral sentiment would be an a-logical, anarchic response to a given situation, in principle at odds with the other types of interpretant and beyond the endeavor of semeiosis. This is so true that, as we have mentioned, for Peirce sentiments have the structure of a hypothetical inference (W3: 337). Indeed, Peirce's refusal of "rationalism" in dealing with VIM is, at the same time, a declaration of trust[34] on the cognitive power of our moral sentimental judgments, which has its root in the same semeiotic attitude of the linguistic interpretants.

Allow me a word regarding our moral judgments as sentimental judgments. As Peirce says, both human beings and animals possess "ideas" and expectations about how the events of their respective physical and social environment will occur. The two sets of "ideas" are "kinds of performances" and have respectively developed in relation to instincts of "feeding and food getting" and of "reproductive instincts" probably according to a Darwinian process of evolution (CP 7.378; 7.379, 7.384). Thus, human beings and lower animals share, although at a different title, the same condition of being "applied physicists" and "applied psychologists" in their non-reflective practices (CP 5.586). However, in addition to that, man is endowed with an inborn "moral sense," a specificity of his natural constitution that is not present in lower animals. "Consciousness" is the human structure from which the moral distinction between "right" and "wrong" in VIM springs (CP 1.56). According to this stock of inborn moral tendencies, human beings not only usually refuse or embrace certain lines of conduct, but most of the time experience "irresistibly" (CP 7.441) a sentiment of *horror* towards the first ones, and a sentiment of *admiration* for the second. This folk morality, that broadens the set of inborn habits labeled as "folk physics" and "folk psychology," is a set of "instinctive ideas about human nature," and is a spontaneous, affective knowledge of certain types of conduct which are found by every human being to be convenient to her (CP 2.753). Human instinct is in Peirce's terms an "inherited disposition" but, at the same time, is not opposed to educability, since it includes both inborn habits and dispositions "due to infantile training and tradition" (CP 2.160; 2.170).

In order to understand the actual meaning of Peirce's reservation about our reliance on "reason" in this context, it is necessary to disambiguate this term. Above all else, three points need to be made. The first element of Peirce's criticism of rationalism in VIM is the broad remark, valid for any type of inquiry and conduct, about the impossibility of ruling out at once the beliefs that we already have and that constitute our basic comprehension of a certain subject-matter. Reason is, contra the dominant tendency in the modern epoch, not to be defined in opposition to tradition (EP2: 336). Rather, our traditional beliefs, including theoretical and axiological beliefs, are the standards we originally trust in our experience and which we cannot help but act upon at first. The problems that emerge within our experience and the epistemic strategies we arrange in order to solve them are originally *framed* according to our background convictions. This is the historically situated starting point of any human undertaking. As a consequence, Peirce's anti-rationalism maintains that, if rationality meant a total lack of background beliefs in our critical activities—i.e., a radical holistic criticism—that concept of rationality

33 Of course, this claim should be detailed and justified on the basis of textual evidence and of general interpretation of the moral philosophy of the three authors, but I cannot develop this topic here. Cf. Hobbes (1994: 22-35), Hume (1978: 413-418) and Kant (2012: 36-37).

34 Cf. the fundamental epistemic role of "self-trust" in Hookway's account of Peirce's theory of instincts and sentiments (2002: 256-271). Peirce talks about the "trustworthiness" of the abductive inference (R692), including in it by extension also sentiments.

would be totally abstract, naïve and ultimately self-contradictory.[35] As Vincent Colapietro (1997b: 17; 32-33) explains, Peirce's anti-rationalism is an instance of his general opposition to a conception of reason as an "uprooted" power of criticism and knowledge that disowns its traditional background. Therefore, moral sentimentalism can be considered as an instance of Peirce's general opposition to the rationalistic faith in a disincarnate reason.

The second, more specific implication of Peirce's moral sentimentalism is that rationality is misplaced in VIM if it is conceived as formal reasoning and systematic inquiry. He maintains that a deliberate inquiry in vitally important values cannot be the original and pivotal method for knowing what line of conduct would actually benefit the general goals of VIM (EP2: 33). Among those values, we find moral admiration for certain "mental qualities" or natural virtues, like "the maiden's delicacy, the mother's devotion, manly courage, and other inheritances that have come to us from the biped who did not yet speak" (EP2: 31). These so-called natural virtues, which are spontaneously and universally perceived as such through an affective act of interpretation, exceed the mere biological dimension, although they are anyway means for the preservation of the stock (EP2: 33-34). Peirce's point here is that human beings would overrate their logical powers if they believed that it is in virtue of arguments or even deliberate inferences (abduction, deduction, induction, cf. EP2: 31-32) on ethical matters that they could get in touch with vitally important values. The chief source of knowledge in this field of moral values is not a deliberate knowledge, but is instead an affective and instinctive grasping of the "heart" (CP 1.654). Then, it would be idle and conceited to pretend that a deliberate activity of *weighing reasons* can lead us to understand that the type of conduct *X* is rather than *Y* a genuine vitally important value, and to believe that that critical method is more effective than our *uncritical and universal tendency* to embrace *X* rather than *Y* through our emotional interpretants (CP 7.777). The sentimental grasping and acceptance of a moral proposition about vitally important values is the result of an instinctive and uncritical inference, in which the deliberate process of considering conflicting reasons before coming to a conclusion is not performed. Sentiment can be considered as an "intuition," or an "instinctive uncritical process" (CP 2.129). According to Peirce, the category of "instinct" includes the "instinctive ways of forming opinions" and "all habits of which we are not prepared to render an account" (CP 2.175). Peirce makes this point when he distinguishes between the "natural judgments [on] what is good reasoning" and the sentimental "judgments … of conscience" on vitally important values. While the former are "accompanied by a sense of evidence" for what is considered a good pattern of reasoning, the latter are "simply felt, without any accompanying sense of evidence" (CP 1. 171). This distinction has to be read in relation to what Peirce states about the epistemic features of an emotional interpretant. The emotional interpretant is understood as the "feeling which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign, although the foundation of truth in this is frequently very slight" (CP 5.475). Therefore, moral sentimental judgment is an instance of the emotional interpretant in relation to vitally important values. This implies that the poverty of reasons typical of the emotional interpretant corresponds to an absence of epistemic foundation, or lack of evident reasons, in the moral sentimental judgment (CP 1.661).[36] The only available evidence, in this case, seems to be the force and universality of the sentiment itself, rather than a logical evidence of reasons (EP1: 357; CP 7.441).[37] Let me give some more textual evidence of this point. As in the case

35 Since every mental operation has the nature of an inference, rational activity essentially requires premises and leading principles. Traditional background beliefs can be considered the starting assumptions of every rational activity.

36 "Place before the conservative arguments to which he can find no adequate reply and which go, let us say, to demonstrate that wisdom and virtue call upon him to offer to marry his own sister, and though he be unable to answer the arguments, he will not act upon their conclusion, because he believes that tradition and the feelings that tradition and custom have developed in him are safer guides than his own feeble ratiocination. Thus, true conservatism is sentimentalism." Cf. also CP 1.50.

37 I disagree with Stephens (1981: 134), who contends that Peirce's cognitive theory of emotions is a "reductivist project" which aims at *reducing* every mental activity to a cognitive process. According to him, on the one hand, Peirce fails in recognizing the difference between an emotion and a thought when he affirms that emotions have a cognitive nature. On the other hand, his project also fails when he recognizes that the analogy between emotions and hypothetic inferences is inaccurate and opts for a theory of emotions based upon man's "emotional constitution" and no longer upon thoughts and cognitions. In my view, this interpretation neglects Peirce's broad conception of "cognition" as a semeiotic process, which includes also the emotional interpretant. At the same time, it doesn't pay attention to the fact that an emotion, although having the logical structure of an inference, is not a thought, insofar as it lacks deliberate control and epistemic foundation. In this sense, Peirce's cognitive theory of emotions (1) makes sense of emotions as cognitive operations and propositional attitudes and, at the same time, (2) does not imply a reductivist confusion between emotions and thoughts.

of the cognitive dimension of a perception, also in the case of moral sentiment "the interpretation is forced upon us but no reason for it can be given" (CP 7.677) while the perceptual interpretation is performed. Furthermore, in R692, Peirce explains how this feature is related to the abductive logical structure of sentiment. As such, it is characterized by "groundlessness." It "needs no reason," because it does not make any claim to certainty in itself but "merely suggests that something *may* be" (CP 5.171). Peirce's characterizes his critical common-sense stance as a mix of "credibilism" and "fallibilism" (CP 5.451). In Robin's words, "as credibilist, he affirms that some propositions are presently free from genuine doubt; as fallibilist, he denies that there can be absolute immunity against such doubt" (1964:273).

There is also a third, complementary element that clarifies in which sense a sentimental judgment has a non-rational character. Rationality and reasoning, in their precise meaning of self-controlled logical activity, usually imply a deliberate effort of the agent in passing from a moment of pure reverie to a condition of controlled inference and argumentation, and in directing her thoughts according to different epistemic standards and goals (EP2: 22; 250). On the contrary, sentiment is an uncritical, spontaneous judgment of the mind, which suddenly occurs in certain conditions without the deliberate acceptance of the agent (W2: 206-207). The confirmation of this distinction is found in the different phaneroscopic properties of the "emotional" and the "energetic" interpretant. In fact, the emotional interpretant is characterized by a phenomenological *passivity*, while producing a dynamic interpretant takes the agent a voluntary *effort* and *activity*, muscular or mental (see CP 7.433), which belongs to a totally different phaneroscopic category.

However, what I said about Peirce's moral sentimentalism and its anti-rationalism does not imply that in the case of human conduct in VIM the exercise of self-control is totally out of place. On the contrary, Peirce's metaethical and ethical position is a twofold normative claim, which requires, as any other normative commitment, the constitutive play of self-control (CP 4.540). Peirce even argues that in a certain sense "logic" itself can be considered "scientific and yet vitally important," since it is logic "which demonstrates in the clearest manner that reasoning itself testifies to its own ultimate subordination to sentiment" (CP 1.672). On the one side, the metaethical component of moral sentimentalism argues that sentimental moral judgment is the soundest method of knowing vitally important values. It is, as any other sound "logical" or "epistemic" claim, a normative doctrine. On the other side, the properly ethical component affirms that the agent, in order to shape his moral character in relation to VIM, ought to rely on the insight conveyed by the sentimental moral judgments. We find here an instance of the distinction between a first order disposition (e.g. an inborn habit of sentimental judgment) and a second order disposition (a deliberate belief). Also the claim that the constitution of our ethical beliefs about vitally important values has to follow the rule of the "natural" or "normal judgment of the sensible heart" (EP1: 356-357) is an explicit normative claim ("ought-to-be"), which essentially requires the *constitutive mediation* of self-control and reflection (CP 4.540).

Thus, the two normative claims – epistemic and ethical – require the constitutive role of a critical assessment of the sentimental judgments. They can be formulated in the following way: (i) we *usually have good reasons to deliberately rely on our sentimental moral judgments* rather than on alternative sources of knowledge about vitally important values (metaethical claim). Instinctive sentimental judgments are the way in which man originally interprets certain dimensions of his moral constitution and gets to know some practical values and disvalues. As a consequence, (ii) *we ought to develop our deliberate beliefs and conduct according to those sentimental judgments* (ethical claim). So, even if we do not know the reasons that justify each vitally important value in its specificity and determination, at the metaethical level we have good reasons to believe that trusting the epistemic insight of our instinctual and sentimental make-up is the best way of discovering vitally important values. Man's sentimental judgments are then what Peirce sometimes call "simple" or "incomplex thoughts," that is, they are extreme cases of cognition in which the justifying reasons for the validity of that cognitive content are not available (W2: 230-231). The epistemic attitude of the wise man is now clear (CP 1.661): the wise agent sentimentally judges that the type of action *X* is admirable from the point of view of what is vitally important, he recognizes that he cannot show specific reasons for why *X* is such a morally admirable type of conduct, but at the same time he knows that he has good, general reasons to rely on his sentimental judgments in dealing with these kinds of values.

2.1. The "Experiential" Basis of Moral Sentimentalism

Having addressed the two normative claims of moral sentimentalism, it is now time to consider Peirce's theory of "critical common-sensism" (CCS) and the essential link that moral sentimentalism has with it. As some scholars have pointed out (Buchler 1939: 2-92; Feibleman 1946: 302-319; Short 2001; Hookway 2002), CCS is a wide topic in Peirce's thought, involving many fundamental elements of his late pragmatism (e.g. EP2: 339; 347-359). However, the goal of this section is only to articulate the relationship between moral sentimentalism and CCS. This involves describing Peirce's vindication of the normative relevance of moral sentimentalism and clarifying a component of CCS that can be called *conservatism in matter of practice*.

Before reconstructing Peirce's argument in favor of conservatism in matters of practice, it is useful to provide a schematic summing-up of his position about the relationship between instinctive, sentimental judgments and critical reflection. It might be phrased in the following way:

(a) We do not have a reasoned, scientific knowledge of *many* propositions about *certain* moral facts, as the case of vitally important values shows. Rather, we have a sentimental, instinctive knowledge of vitally important values and disvalues, such as the type of action "incest". Strictly speaking, at the moment we cannot provide reasons for the fact that they are considered to be the morally right or the morally wrong lines of conduct.

(b) However, we do have a critical, rational assessment of the general claim that our sentiment is the best source of knowledge we have about vitally important cases.

Keeping in mind this reconstruction of moral sentimentalism, I contend that this doctrine is a component of Peirce's CCS. In particular, (a) is a description of a state of affairs, while (b) is a normative claim that requires a justification. In the next few lines I show that Peirce's justifying strategy for (b) appeals to the same argument present in his general vindication of CCS.

Peirce states that "pragmatism is a species of prope-positivism" (EP2: 339). However, one of the features that distinguishes pragmatism from other forms of "positivism" is its critical common-sensistic component, or, as Peirce says, "its full acceptance of the main body of our instinctive beliefs," at least in a provisional way and in their vague formulation (EP2: 339). He further claims that these beliefs "concern matters within the purview of the primitive man" (CP 5.498; CP 5.511), which also include our dispositions for sentimental judgments about vitally important values. Thus, CCS involves a commitment to indubitable propositions, which Peirce contends are of the nature of instincts. These instinctive beliefs include sentimental judgments. It follows that moral sentimentalism is a component, or a case, of the broader theory of CCS. One of the essential understandings of CCS is the evolutive nature of the "instinctive beliefs" and the *experiential basis* of their genesis and development. Peirce states that instinctive beliefs are the "result of human experience" and rest "on the total everyday experience of many generations of multitudinous population" (CP 5.522).[38] Peirce continuous explaining that

> Such experience is worthless for distinctively scientific purposes, because it does not make the minute distinctions with which science is chiefly concerned; nor does it relate to the recondite subjects of science, although all science, without being aware of it, virtually supposes the truth of the vague results of uncontrolled thought upon such experiences, cannot help doing so, and would have to shut up shop if she should manage to escape accepting them. No "wisdom" could ever have discovered argon; yet within its proper sphere, which embraces objects of universal concern, the instinctive result of human experience ought to have so vastly more weight than any scientific result, that to make laboratory experiments to ascertain, for example, whether there be any uniformity in nature or no, would vie with adding a teaspoonful of saccharine to the ocean in order to sweeten it. (CP 5.522)

The same is true of vitally important sentimental instincts, which as Peirce says "embrace objects of universal concern" (CP 5.522). For instance, Peirce says that "the regnant system of sexual rules is an instinctive or sentimental induction summarizing the experience of all our race" (EP2: 32). As it is already clear in the early essay "The Fixation of Belief," the best, general method for the confirmation of a theory or a belief is the

38 Cf. also CP 1.654; 2.754.

"scientific method," that is the method of intersubjective experience (W3: 253-257). According to Cheryl Misak's formulation of this methodological stance, *p* is true (i) if it is the conclusion of a "scientific" (public and experimental) inquiry, and (ii) if this conclusion can face the further questionings and verifications by an indefinitely prolonged "scientific" inquiry (see 1991:187; see however Chapter 5 for clarifications of this point). "Scientific" has to be taken here in a broad sense, implying essentially the resort to a public and experiential test of a belief. In this case, the category of "science" covers both the systematic inquiry of positive sciences and the traditional knowledge acquired over generations by a community. Thus, sentimental moral experience and its claims are themselves somehow related to the scientific process of inquiry (see Misak1994). Just as the instinctive beliefs are the outcome of a multi-generational cumulative experience, they can also develop over time under the force of further experience and the individual's "critical" assessment, which is an essential component of Peirce's version of common-sensistic philosophy. In fact, the acknowledgment of our historical situatedness and cultural inheritance does not preclude the *transformation* or *transcendence* of the tradition into which we have been born. As Peirce puts it, instinctive beliefs can slightly change from generation to generation (EP2: 349). Although conservatism and reformism are the two sides of the same CCS, the remainder of the chapter is devoted only to the vindication of the former.

It is now possible to formulate Peirce's argument for conservatism in matter of practice, and its coessential metaethical and ethical component with respect to VIM (moral sentimentalism):

(i) Instinctive beliefs are *practically* "undoubtable" in the sense that we cannot help but act upon them. In this case, "undoubtable" describes the practical impossibility for an instinctive belief of being not acted upon, at least at a first, unreflective level. At this level, stating that we doubt these beliefs would be a case of "paper doubt."

(ii) Instinctive beliefs are also *epistemically* "undoubtable" in the sense that we cannot *really* doubt them, i.e., it doesn't occur to us to doubt them and we do not have at the moment *good* reasons to doubt them. In this case, "indubitability" requires a more detached and reflective attitude towards the belief. "Indubitable" stands here for the epistemic claim that we should accept an instinctive belief if it is a "genuine" one, in so far we don't have any good reasons to question it. At this level, pretending to doubt an instinctive belief would be a case of self-deception and of "skeptic doubt" (CP 5.498; EP2: 336-337).

(iii) The genesis of these instinctive beliefs lies in a multigenerational experience, compared to which the experience acquired by the individual man in his lifetime is far less reliable.

(iv) The method of experience is the only suitable method for establishing a true belief (W3: 253-257).

(v) As a consequence, it would be foolish not to develop or further the content of our instinctual habits in our second-order dispositions, that is, in our beliefs.

(vi) Therefore, since moral sentimental judgments are a particular sub-genus of instinctive beliefs, it follows that the agent ought to appeal to sentimental judgments as the most reliable method for acquiring knowledge about vitally important values (metaethical norm), and that he ought to shape his moral character according to the same sentimental judgments as far as vitally important values are concerned (ethical norm).

The general conclusion of CCS, at least within the limits of the present analysis, is the twofold normative claim according to which relying on our *genuine* instincts and sentimental judgments is *usually* the more rational conduct we can keep in VIM. There is a remarkable disproportion between the amount and the quality of the experience gained by a whole tradition over generations and the experience acquired by a single human being during her short lifetime. In this sense, instincts and sentimental judgments in VIM are characterized by the property of "practical infallibility" for the *individual.* As Peirce explains, CCS does not maintain that a sentimental judgment is "abstractly and absolutely infallible," but only that is, most of the time, "practically infallible for the individual," ("which is the only clear sense the word "infallibility" will bear"), so that "he ought to obey it and not his individual reason" (EP2: 32; CP 1.661). In other words, moral sentimentalism can be understood in the following way: 1. it does not claim that sentimental judgments about VIM are definitively true, since they might be reformed and corrected over time through further semi-conscious experience, conscious experience and critical reflection (EP2: 349). 2. At the same time, it entails the prudential rule according to which the same sentimental judgments should be considered by the individual agent, at least at first, the most reliable source of

knowledge about vitally important values. The metaethical and ethical principles of moral sentimentalism are *prudential rules* rather than categorical imperatives (CP 1.661), and as a consequence admit exceptions and require critical vigilance. Peirce's moral sentimentalism and CCS should be understood as one of the best examples of the human need for critical awareness in assessing the richness and the shortcomings of a tradition. Traditional awareness and sensitivity for moral reform are the two sides of the ongoing challenge, both theoretical and vital, of being historical beings.

3. Moral Sentimentalism, Evolution, and Moral Civilization

Let us now turn to the last question we want to address about Peirce's moral sentimentalism. Given that "moral sentiments" are of the nature of instincts, what is the link between moral sentiments and evolution? This question also entails a related one: what is the place of normativity in the context of Peirce's framework, according to which moral sentiments are evolutive instincts? We are led to the topic of evolutionism since Peirce explicitly attributes to CCS "instinctive beliefs" the property of being slowly mutable over time, marking in this way an essential difference between Reid's common-sensistic philosophy and his own CCS.[39]

As it is known, evolution is a somewhat ambiguous term, insofar as it can refer to different models of the development of the biological world (such as Darwin's and Lamarck's) or to a broader, metaphysical scenario. Moreover, evolution has been recently associated to the traditional problem of knowledge and theories development in a new attempt to naturalize epistemology. The question I want to address in this final section is related to what is today called the "evolutionary epistemology of theories" (Bradie 1986), according to which the genetic and explanatory models used in evolutionary biology are taken to be a paradigm in order to account for the evolution (i.e., transformation and improvement) of theories, concepts, beliefs, etc. I will show that Peirce displays a highly critical perspective on this possibility, by claiming that the emergence of self-control in human experience marks a crucial gap between biological and non-deliberative forms of evolution and deliberative ones.

A full-fledged study of Peirce's appraisal of Darwinian and Lamarckian theories would lead us astray, since our focus is in elucidating my thesis that Peirce's moral sentimentalism is a deep form of moral cognitivism. Therefore, it is enough to remind that, as some scholars have shown (Short 2007; Skagestad 1979), Peirce's position on Darwinian evolutionism is a controversial one. Indeed, he is not totally confident about the scientific plausibility of the Darwinian version of biological evolutionism. He considers it just a likely explanatory hypothesis, and, if true, a partial one. To be sure, however, he does not believe that the cultural evolution, that might also be called a process of moral civilization, follows the same dynamic displayed by Darwinism (see Goudge 1964: 330 ff.). According to Peirce, evolution undergoes a radical and qualitative turn when it becomes self-controlled. The moment in which cosmic evolution becomes self-controlled coincides with the appearance of the human race on Earth. This fact represents a turning point in evolution, as long as "at its higher stage," says Peirce, "evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control" (EP2: 343). The reason of this breakthrough is that cultural evolution and civilization are *self-controlled processes, which are subject to deliberate criticism and normative constraints*. Therefore, Peirce's moral sentimentalism and its coessential evolutionism can only be understood within the framework of the NS (see Chapter 2).[40] Thus, I will show in which sense the moral sentimental judgments can evolve over time. Moreover, I will contend that according to Peirce the epistemic gap between the unconscious and the critical, self-controlled evolutionary process leads to two fundamental

39 Cf. "I do not remember that any of the old Scotch philosophers ever undertook to draw up a complete list of the original beliefs, but they certainly thought it a feasible thing, and that the list would hold good for the minds of all men from Adam down. … Before any waft of the air of *evolution* had reached those coasts how could they think otherwise? When I first wrote, we were hardly oriented in the new ideas, and my impression was that the indubitable propositions changed with a thinking man from year to year. … it has been only during the last two years that I have completed a provisional inquiry which shows me that the changes are so slight from generation to generation, though not imperceptible even in that short period, that I thought to own my adhesion, under inevitable modification, to the opinion of that subtle but well-balanced intellect, Thomas Reid, in the matter of Common Sense" (EP 2: 349).

40 In this sense, Wells (1964: 309-310) is wrong when he says that "Peirce's philosophy includes a version of the Is-Ought identity." Although continuous, for Peirce "is" and "ought" are not identical (not even in the long run, see Chapter 2). As a consequence, Wells's claim that Peirce is somehow compelled to accept some form of Darwinian philosophy and ethics is misplaced.

consequences: first, the limitation of a mechanical evolution to the unconscious development of VIM values; and second, the functionalization of the VIM values, as any other type of ethical value, to the architectonic ideal of "development of concrete reasonableness."

First of all, it is important to make clear that, as clearly appears in *Evolutionary Love*, Peirce's notion of "evolution" is a metaphysical one, instead of a merely biological one. "Metaphysical" here means that, according to Peirce, evolution tends to describe the developmental character of the entire reality, including the physical, the biological and even the cultural world. The laws of the physical world are as well the outcome of a history of evolution of the cosmos (EP1: 218-224). Hence, we might say that the biological evolution is for Peirce a regional case of a general cosmological doctrine. The notion of evolution applies to different contexts not in a univocal way, but in an analogical one. Moreover, Peirce clearly links his understanding of evolution to his theory of final causes. In this sense, he claims that "evolution is nothing more nor less than the working out of a definite end. A final cause may be conceived to operate without having been the purpose of any mind: that supposed phenomenon goes by the name of *fate*" (CP 1.204). Now, the "working out," or gradual realization of the general and vague reality of a final cause can concern both an *unpurposeful end* (which goes by the label of "fated" process) and a *purposeful end*, that is, a deliberate ideal. As we have seen in the first chapter, final causation is an operative force within the entire universe and does not limit to the purposefulness of human agency. The important point here is that, even though final causality and growth belong to both non-human and human reality, it does not follow that the modality of evolution and growth itself occurs according to the same structure at every level or region of reality. Although the non-human biological world and the biological make-up of human beings are the product of a Darwinian evolutionism, this explanatory hypothesis (1) neither entails that every reality that is susceptible of growth is subject to a Darwinian process of evolution, (2) nor that it ought to be subject to a Darwinian goal as its regulative criterion. Thus, the analogical meaning of the notion of evolution refers then to the different structures of the process of growing in different regions of reality, and in particular (i) to the *different ends* of the process of evolution in different regions of reality, and (ii) to the *different modalities* in which the process of actualization of a general end is brought about in different contexts.

I will focus now on Peirce's account of VIM values. Peirce's tenet that CCS instinctive dispositions are subject to evolution needs some clarifications. Limiting the issue to VIM "instinctive beliefs," the question sounds like this: what does "evolution" mean in relation to sentimental judgments and to its related moral knowledge? First, it is necessary to point out the fact that Peirce considers that the process of evolution of VIM sentimental judgments have been subject to two different although interwoven processes, the one that is *unconscious* and *unintentional*, and another that is *conscious* and *deliberate*. This is what Peirce states in the following passage:

> Conclusions men reach they know not how are better than those fortified by unscientific logic. By logic Aquinas, if not Calvin, persuaded himself that one of the chief joys of the blest will be to peer over heaven's parapet and watch the damned writhing in torments and rage below: by instinct, or half-conscious inference, a poor peasant girl will inwardly reject the doctrine, for all revered pastor may say. No moral sentiment more universally violent than reprobation of intermarriage of near relatives. Assassin will shudder at thought of incest. But had a man to depend upon conscious reasoning to instruct conscience in this matter, while he might be led to condemn the act, he would be unlikely to regard it with the extreme horror in which actually all share. Generation after generation has, *in almost unconscious mode*, taken measure of ordinary experiences about family relationships, has transmitted its impression to the next, partly by tradition, partly, one guesses, by congenital bequest, this next has made its *observations and discussions*, has modified in some insensible degree the sentiment it derived from its fathers, and so at last our strong feeling has been developed. That races tolerating occasional incest have died out and that *so* horror of it has been bred, there is scant room to believe. (CP 6.570, emphasis added)

It is worth noticing that all the dispositions related to VIM, either they have been developed through an unconscious Darwinian process or through a sort of critical reflection over generations, have been selected (mechanically or deliberately) on the basis of the same criterion, that is the efficiency in realizing the general end of "reinforcing the stock." Therefore, there is a high probability that the genetic make-up of the human beings has developed specific biological tendencies directed to the goal of the reinforcement of the stock. However, the selected habits related to VIM, which are the outcome of the history of human race, also include non-biological

dispositions, like patterns of non-biological behavior. These virtuous dispositions, which can be considered "natural virtues," are also suitable means of realization of the general end "reinforcing the stock" and have been selected on the basis of that general end.

However, it is also clear that the second modality of evolution of sentimental judgments, the one that results from "debate and criticism," constitutes a case in which *deliberate* inquiry plays the fundamental role. Hence, at this level, evolution raises as such the problem of *normativity*, that is, the problem of how the further development of VIM sentimental judgments ought to be considered. Moral development requires genuine processes of knowledge and entails deliberate commitment to certain conclusions, so that the problem of the elaboration and choice of a "moral" leading principle becomes crucial. Indeed, once the process of evolution enters the space of human self-control and deliberation, the development of our "instinctive beliefs" becomes subject to the reflective activity of *weighing reasons* and of *reasoned acceptance of a conclusion*. Peirce's position on VIM "instinctive beliefs" seems therefore to outline the following scenario: some of the VIM "instincts" have been developed through a mechanical process of selection, some others through a partially conscious and deliberate cultural selection, although both the processes have been regulated by the same general end of the "reinforcement of the stock."

In a general sense, then, both processes can be generally labeled as Darwinian fashioned patterns of evolution, paying attention to the fact that one occurs in an unconscious way, while the other is led by self-control and implies normativity. Moreover, in this sense, the general goal of the "reinforcement of the stock" can also represent an aspect of a self-controlled Lamarckian process of evolution.

However, there is a fundamental difference between the two instances of the Darwinian evolution (the biological and the cultural), which concerns both (i) the *status of the end* of the process and (ii) the *modality* in which the process itself is brought about. This difference essentially results from the fact that the biological evolution is a mechanical process, while the cultural one is a deliberate one. As we have seen, Peirce repeats that all the natural processes that are not the outcome of self-controlled operations are not subject to the "normative distinction" between good and bad, and in this sense are not human values of any types. On the contrary, a traditional norm of behavior, for example, can be said "good" only because it has been assessed and judged to be ethically good. Only through this process of evaluation a "norm" has been retained and passed on to the following generations as a vital bequest. A corollary of this framework is that only a process that is capable of self-control and reflective commitment can produce or recognize "moral facts," that is *values*, which are the contents of the moral reflective commitment. On the contrary, a process that develops without self-control and reflective commitment is outside the domain of moral values and disvalues, and it can just produce factual tendencies, dispositional properties of a certain sort. In this way, if a specific end or a specific type of mean is selected, it is not because of a mechanical chain of events, but in virtue of a critical assessment of both the end-means and a *deliberate choice* for them. This means that, in the case of the cultural instance of Darwinian evolution, the general ends of the *adaptation* to the environment and of the *reinforcement of the stock* are assessed as good ends and obtain therefore the *status of moral values*. An interesting consequence of this framework is that the same structure of the Darwinian evolution – selection of well-suited means for the general end of "reinforcement of the stock" – undergoes a deep transformation once it enters the world of human culture. Peirce writes that

> The instincts of those animals whose instincts are remarkable present the character of being chiefly, if not altogether, directed to the preservation of the stock and of benefiting the individual very little, if at all, except so far as he may happen as a possible procreator to be a potential public functionary. Such, therefore, is the description of instinct that we ought to expect to find in man, in regard to vital matters; and so we do. It is not necessary to enumerate the facts of human life which show this, because it is too plain. It is to be remarked, however, that individuals who have passed the reproductive period, are more useful to the propagation of the human race than to any other. For they amass wealth, and teach prudence, they keep the peace, they are friends of the little ones, and they inculcate all the sexual duties and virtues. Such instinct does, as a matter of course, prompt us, in all vital crises, to look upon our individual lives as small matters. It is no extraordinary pitch of virtue to do so; it is the character of every man or woman that is not despicable (EP 2: 33-34).

As we can see, then, the means which have been selected through the critical reflection of a tradition upon its

VIM practices go over the mere biological world, within which the best way of reinforcing the stock is the selection of the best fitted exemplars for sexual reproduction.

3.1. The NS beyond the General Ends of Darwinian Evolution

At this point, it is worth trying to draw the most fundamental implication of the link between moral sentimentalism and the NS. Indeed, as I have shown, moral sentimentalism is a metaethical and ethical doctrine according to which the individual agent most of the time ought to follow his instinctive sentimental judgments in dealing with VIM. Thus, the epistemic authority of moral, sentimental judgments is limited to VIM. We have also pointed out the fact that the development of moral, sentimental judgments occurs according to the structure of Darwinian evolution, where the phenomenon is the overall outcome of the cooperation of mechanical events and cultural processes of assessing and refining standards of practice. This implies that the conscious dimension of the Darwinian evolution acknowledges that the general end of "adaptation," or "reinforcement of the stock," is *a* morally good end for human being's deliberate conduct in VIM, that is, a good ethical value. However, does it imply that the general end of the Darwinian evolution ought to be *the* ultimate, architectural end of human conduct? Is it, then, the ultimate, aesthetical ideal?

According to Peirce, the answer must be negative. It is worth considering the case of knowledge and of scientific discovery, which represents the "logical" aspect of deliberate conduct. Peirce addresses the issue of the role of a Darwinian pattern of conduct in inquiry in two different ways. The first place, Peirce details what shape inquiry would take according to the Darwinian hypothesis in epistemology. He writes:

> In the evolution of science, a Darwinian mode of evolution might, for example, consist in this, that at every recall of a judgment to the mind – say, for example, a judgment in regard to some such delicate question as the marriage of the clergy – a slight fortuitous modification of the judgment might take place; the modified judgment would cause a corresponding modification of the belief-habit, so that the next recall would be influenced by this fortuitous modification, though it would depart more or less from it by a new fortuitous modification. If, however, by such summation of modifications an opinion quite untenable were reached, it would either be violently changed or would be associationally weak and not apt to be recalled. The effect of this would be in the long run that belief would move away from such untenable positions. It is possible that such a mode of influence may affect our instinctive feelings; but there can be nothing of this sort in science, which is controlled and exact. (CP 1.107)

The conclusion of the quotation is highly instructive not only because it stresses again the possibility that "instinctive feelings" (among which, moral sentiments) can be the product of a Darwinian evolution, but also because it shows Peirce's rejection that "chance" operating in conjunction with a Darwinian mechanism can be the crucial aspect of "science." In particular, the evidence is the fact that inquiry is "controlled," so that with the appearance of self-control evolution undergoes a normative turn.

In the second place, Peirce claims that the process of development in inquiry ought not to follow a biological and mechanical chain of adaptive events. Rather, it is assigned to the individual and collective responsibility in distinguishing what is true from what is false. This doctrine is the result of Peirce's struggles against a psychologistic and a behavioral account of the settlement of the belief, as it is shown in *The Fixation*. As we have seen, although the early essay displays a tension between an adaptive and an alethic criterion for fixing a belief, it is already clear in it that there is an essential difference between fixing a belief because it is biologically or socially adaptive and because it appears to be true on the basis of an experiential method of verification. As a consequence, the epistemic criteria of acceptance of a conclusion, then, are broader than the mere standards of biological and social adaptation, so that in the context of scientific inquiry the adaptive criteria prove eventually to be misplaced. Also Peirce's insistence that the category of "utility" and the scientific endeavor are essentially incompatible should be read in this light.

This is so true that even the discovery of the values and virtues elaborated in NS cannot appeal to the criterion of "adaptation" to the environment as its only epistemic criterion. If the standard of adaptation to an environment is the regulative principle of human deliberation in VIM, it does not follow that the same standard ought to govern our judgments and assessments about what is the ultimate, ideal rule of human conduct. As we have seen, the inquiry around what is "admirable in itself" has different standards of recognition and of acceptance. Let us take the example of the three "logical sentiments" (…). Are they "moral norms" because of their adaptive capacity? The answer must be negative again. Instead, they are logical norms only because they favor the epistemic practices that lead to the general normative end "pursuing the truth." And this general end in turn is normative not *because* of its adaptive capacity to human environment, but because (1) the pursuit of truth has a value in itself, regardless to the utilities that could result from it, including the adaptive capacity, that belongs to the category of utility. More specifically, it is normative because (2) the reflective agent judges that it is one of the structural components of the aesthetic ideal of human life. However, in the long run, Peirce would say, the discovery of truth and the linked habits will guarantee in the long run an effective adaptation of man to the constitution of reality. But the adaptation is here, I might say, a consequence, or a by-product, of an end that is a "normative" because is assessed as the ultimate, aesthetical ideal of human conduct, and not because of its utility.

Peirce's doctrine about the relationship between adaptive criteria and scientific development can be schematized in the following way:

(1) Each step of scientific inquiry does not have to follow a biological or sociological adaptive pattern.

(2) The criterion on the basis of which human beings shape their logical, ethical and aesthetical beliefs is not given by the pattern of biological or social adaptivity, but is instead the scientific method of experience.

(3) However, this does not mean that, in the long run, the results of the discovery of truth will not help a full adaptation of men to their environment.

All the purposive effort of human agency and its coessential critical activity have an intrinsic normative vocation, which ultimately aims to define and make operative the aesthetic ideal of the *Summum Bonum*. Therefore, the phenomenon of "evolution" becomes itself involved within the critical activity of human reflection on what the ultimate aim of human life ought to be. Indeed, pragmaticism makes the normative crux of human conduct to consist

> in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*, which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*. In its higher stages, evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control. (EP 2: 343)

The fact that the instincts themselves are involved into the self-controlled realization of the normative ideal of the "development of concrete reasonableness" casts more light on the relation of the "instinct" as a first order disposition and the "belief" as a second order disposition. We can attempt the following sketch of Peirce's view on the relationship among moral instinctual sentiments, evolution and normativity:

1a. Some instincts are oriented to the "quasi-purpose" of the reinforcement of the stock. For instance, consider the case of the sentimental judgment of "horror" about incest.

1b. It is extremely likely that these instincts have been selected through a process of natural selection.

1c. Within certain limits – "in some definite part" (CP 7.49 n.1) – the instincts are absolutely beyond the domain of self-control. That these instincts are absolutely beyond the domain of self-control just implies that, at first, we cannot help but acting upon them (ex. experiencing certain sexual sentiments, being inclined toward certain types of actions rather than others). This means that the human being has certain inborn dispositions (first order dispositions) and that, at first, his responses to a given "object" of interest – the particular "acts" of those dispositions – are somehow unavoidable. However, this position doesn't imply that those dispositions and acts cannot be included within deliberate dispositions (second order dispositions – beliefs), which are essentially

able to direct those inborn dispositions towards broader and deliberate ends.

2. Hence, since human conduct is deliberate and self-controlled, that is, since the agent always establishes her own purposes, which become the fundamental axiological commitments of his moral character, the non-purposive aim is assumed within human self-controlled conduct and assigned to the human responsibility of re-orienting it towards superior goals and ideals by including it within fully purposive aim.

3a. Then, it is true that, in VIM – for instance, for the "quasi-purpose" of preserving the stock – we ought to rely on sentiments and instincts (first order dispositions) rather than on ratiocination in building our beliefs (second order dispositions).

3b. However, it is also true that the "quasi-purposes" of VIM are always included within deliberate ends, subject to the analysis of the NS. For instance, it is apparent that the same sexual instinct can be oriented towards extremely different general goals and global conception of the good life.

3.2. Moral Epistemology, Evolutionism and Rationality. Final Remarks

The evolution of CCS instinctive beliefs, then, can be considered in a twofold way. On the one hand, it can be the evolution in the *content of the instinctive, sentimental judgments*, in the sense that, over generations, the propositional content of our instinctive judgments concerning VIM values can undergo radical changes. On the other hand, the evolution entailed by CCS can also mean, in a secondary sense, the *development of the type of knowledge* toward the same proposition about VIM values.

The first case displays the scenario in which human beings realize, at a certain point in their cultural development, that they have good reasons to doubt some of those beliefs they have previously considered to be "instinctive," and to endeavor into a new process of inquiry in order to settle new beliefs. This is the case in which human beings move from the acceptance of a proposition as "instinctive" and "indubitable" to the rejection of its indubitability and eventually to the belief that that proposition as false. Once new beliefs are fixed, then, a certain tradition would instill new instinctive beliefs in the following generations, through the upbringing of the young people, or through a parallel although slower process, that is, a thousand-year succession of confirmed beliefs, which would bring about in the human race inborn habits of response to the human environment. On the contrary, the second case, that is the case of evolution in the type of knowledge towards the same proposition, shows a situation in which human beings, on the basis of further generational experience and reflection, find new *good reasons* in support of the same values that in a previous stage were just apprehended through sentimental judgments.

As we have seen talking about the NS, some moral facts are nowadays rationally known. For instance, we can show *good reasons* in favor of the thesis that the aesthetical ideal of human life is what development of concrete reasonableness rather than hedonism. In Peirce's terms, the affective experience of a life devoted to pleasure ultimately leads to dissatisfaction. On the ground of this experience, we understand that there are other aspirations in human life, such as the scientific understanding of the world, which cannot be ruled out nor satisfied by the hedonist ideal. Moreover, reflecting on our affective experience of dissatisfaction, we realize that the hedonistic ideal brings into human life an existential fragmentation that contradicts human aspiration. As a consequence, the agent realizes, in a more or less explicit way, that the ideal of human conduct, whatever it can be, has to possess at least the properties of capacity of full fulfillment and of practical unity. This means that the affective experience of dissatisfaction is further illuminated by the discovery of these reasons.

However, other values, like VIM values, are apprehended through sentimental judgments and therefore acritically. Peirce's evolutionary position entails that it is possible and likely that at least some aspects of the sentimental-instinctive knowledge will evolve into a critical and rational knowledge. This does not mean that the "sentiment" itself is necessarily a transitory aspect of human experience, or a primordial method for ethical inquiry destined to be overcome by more rationalistic ones. This is because Peirce explicitly points out that the essential character of moral experience in VIM is a sentiment. He writes on this point:

> If I am persuaded that incest will have deplorable effects upon off-spring, I feel a distinctly duplex condemnation of the practice, the one of a cool, almost sceptical kind, the other peremptory and without apology. There are some questions about which I, and I suppose it is the same with every thinking man, find these two voices quite at odds, my reason temperately but decidedly asserting that I ought to act in one way, my instincts, whether hereditary or conventional I cannot tell, most emphatically and peremptorily, though with no pretence to rationality, giving reason the lie (CP 2.172).

More generally, sentiment and affectivity have in human life an irreducible, semeiotic autonomy. As stated previously, sentiment extends to the entire sphere of human experience in the form of affective responses to a given "objects." Indeed, there are certain dimensions of reality that can only be grasped and interpreted by emotional interpretants.[41] Just like in the case of the critical understanding of the ideal, it is likely to suppose a rational development of the instinctive judgments about VIM values. This means that the function of sentiment as the *exclusive modality* through which we get to know certain moral facts shall be improved by a further reasoned and critical awareness of practical reasons for acting according to those moral facts. Thus, the sentimental knowledge will be improved and supported by a dialectical one, but not overcome by it.

According to what I have said so far, it seems that *rationality* has a threefold relation with the sentimental judgments about VIM values: (1) it represents the reflective mediation though which instinctive, sentimental beliefs gain a normative status for human conduct and deliberation; (2) it is the way in which the vague content of a sentimental judgment can be made precise and applied to particular situations; (3) it is the way through which sentimental beliefs are subject to rational criticism, which in the long run might produce a revision of the content of the beliefs themselves.

However, it is important to restate the broader role of critical thinking and deliberation within human life, in particular in relation to the issue of the aesthetical ideal of conduct. Indeed, rational reflection, even in the narrow sense sometimes used by Peirce, is crucial to the aim of understanding which are the genuine moral values for men. One of the important features of rational knowledge is that we can provide arguments and reasons for the plausibility of what we claim to know, or that we can also perform deliberate inferences. In this sense, it is possible to *deduce* from a moral hypothesis its conceivable, practical consequences. As we have previously seen, Peirce's doctrine of the ultimate aim of conduct affirms that the development of concrete reasonableness is the only plausible *Summun Bonum* because its capacity to meet certain formal requirements (unity, greatest generality, continuity, full-fulfillment capacity). A hypothetical scenario provides an exemplification of the effective role of rational reflection at this level. Consider the possibility that my affective, moral experience at time *T* suggested me that the pursuit of pleasure is an adequate, fully fulfilling ultimate end; even though my affective experience at time *T* suggested me that the pursuit of pleasure is the most convenient ultimate end of life, I could rationally know, at the same time, that that end is not a good one from an aesthetical and ethical point of view, simply because it would not meet the formal requirement of the greatest generality. That the ultimate ideal needs to possess *necessarily* the property of the greatest generality means that from the description of the ultimate ideal it is possible to infer that property. The sketched demonstration shows that the property "greatest generality" cannot be deduced by the ultimate aim "pursuing pleasure," and then, being that property a necessary property of the normative ultimate aim, the pursuit of pleasure has to be rejected. Thus, rationality plays within certain limits a fundamental role in the definition of the moral good, even though its subject-matter is the result of the "affective" or "moral" experience of satisfaction gained by the human subjects.

There is then what we might call a *positive*, *epistemological circularity between sentiment and rationality* in ethical

41 Cf. "Now the problem of what the "meaning" of an intellectual concept is can only be solved by the study of the interpretants, or proper significate effects, of signs. These we find to be of three general classes with some important subdivisions. The first proper significate effect of a sign is a feeling produced by it. There is almost always a feeling which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign, although the foundation of truth in this is frequently very slight. This "emotional interpretant," as I call it, may amount to much more than that feeling of recognition; and in some cases, it is the only proper significate effect that the sign produces. Thus, the performance of a piece of concerted music is a sign. It conveys, and is intended to convey, the composer's musical ideas; but these usually consist merely in a series of feelings. If a sign produces any further proper significate effect, it will do so through the mediation of the emotional interpretant, and such further effect will always involve an effort. I call it the energetic interpretant. The effort may be a muscular one, as it is in the case of the command to ground arms; but it is much more usually an exertion upon the Inner World, a mental effort. It never can be the meaning of an intellectual concept, since it is a single act, [while] such a concept is of a general nature. But what further kind of effect can there be?" (CP 5.475).

matters, according to which the immediately "felt" moral goods are subject to critical reflection, in order to figure out whether or not they match the necessary requirements of the genuine normative ideal of human conduct. In this sense, the role of rationality is not only required as the critical tool through which, over generations and with extreme slowness, the instinctive judgments about VIM will be eventually corrected. Its function is not even limited to the constant supervision of critical sense in CCS, in which the rational reflection on the contents of instincts and CS beliefs consists. Rather, the circularity of sentiment and reason is practiced by the agent in evaluating her moral character on the basis of the normative standard of the development of concrete reasonableness.

Chapter 4

"Action is the Heart of Ideas." A New Look at Dewey's Conception of Experience: Indexical Existence, Semantics, and Truth

Jaime J. Marcio has claimed that "*action* must be one of the key elements in both logic and epistemology" (2001: 99). In this chapter, I develop the topic of action in relation to Dewey's understanding of the semeiotic nature of experience, meaning and truth. More precisely, I aim to show the manifold implication of the notion of indexical existence, which, although absent as a literal expression in Dewey's texts, is however well suited to grasp many aspects of his theory of semantics and metaphysics which have been systematically overlooked (§§ 1., 1.1., 1.2., 1.2.1., 2.). According to Dewey's approach, semantics is the threshold of metaphysics and a right understanding of semantics is the key to solve or dissolve metaphysical problems. Dewey's approach to semantics, metaphysics and truth cannot be understood if not in relation to the semeiotic nature of experience and its nature as agency. Therefore, I address the problem of "substance," (§§ 3., 3.1.), the relation between "common sense objects" and "scientific objects" (§§ 3.2., 3.3., 3.3.) and the Deweyan theory of truth (§§ 4., 4.1. and 4.2.) in relation to Peirce's.

1. Appearances, Indexical Existence and Semeiotic Properties

I have shown in the previous chapters how the notion of "experience" plays a fundamental role in Peirce's philosophy. However, it is not surprising that the notion of "experience" is usually associated with John Dewey rather than Peirce when pragmatism is considered. Why? What is experience for Dewey? Although the Deweyan notion of experience has been largely developed by the pragmatist scholarship (e.g. Bernstein 1961, Bausola 1955, Deledalle 1967; Frega 2006a; 2006b; Frisina 1989, Jung 2010; Kahn 1948; Maddalena 2004; Stuhr 1976; 1992; Tiles 2010), it is surprising that its semeiotic structure has been mainly overlooked. The aim of this first section is to introduce an appreciation of Dewey's semeiotic understanding of experience through the key notion of indexical existence. I believe that Dewey's theory of experience as "interaction" or "transaction" (LW16: 4-294). Although this notion is not explicitly present in Dewey's texts, it can grasp what Dewey is trying to develop in his theory of experience. In particular, if we take the problems of semantics, metaphysics and truth as relevant for a Deweyan understanding of experience (against e.g. Rorty 1977), the notion of indexical existence proves to be not only heuristically fruitful, but also theoretically indispensable in order to make sense of a series of theses present in Dewey's work.

A possible justification for the use of the composed expression "indexical existence" can be found in the essay "Appearing and Appearance" (LW3: 55-72). In this essay, Dewey, in order to clarify the purport of his theory of experience, aims to distinguish and clarify three different notions of "appearance." As a consequence, this text is fundamental for an adequate understanding of his approach to semantics and ontology. The three notions of appearance analyzed by Dewey are the following:

(1) Appearance1, a mere physical existential interaction between the perceptual apparatus of the human organism and environing conditions. Dewey calls this modality of appearance "appearing" or "coming into view" (LW3: 56).

(2) Appearance2, a sign settled in its semeiotic capacity. Dewey calls this modality of appearance "manifestation," "exhibition," "revelation," "representation" (LW3: 58), "display" or "expression" (LW3: 70).

(3) Appearance3, or indexical existence, that is, an existential interaction which is no more a mere physical existential interaction and not yet a sign settled in its specific semeiotic function. Dewey refers to it as an "index" subject to inquiry (LW3: 62-63; 70).

The first meaning of the notion of appearance simply refers to the event of interaction between the organic

perceptual structures of an agent and her environing conditions at a moment in time *t* (LW3: 56-57). Let us call this first type of appearance "appearance1". Appearance1 is a temporal event that has the form of an existential interaction between perceptual organic structures and extra-organic conditions due to which something becomes "emphatically realized" in the organic perceptive capacity of an organism. At this level, a purely physical description is suitable to account for the nature of the phenomenon. The first point to stress here is that this existential interaction does not have the nature of a "mental," "intentional" or "epistemic" relation between a subject and an object, taking "mental" and "epistemic" to mean in a first approximation something somewhat related to activities of inquiry and knowledge (LW3: 57). With regard to this point, some scholars have addressed the problem of Dewey's consideration of realism and idealism (Boisvert 1988; Tiles 1988: 130-153; Tiles 1995). In a more recent work, Hildebrand 2003 deals both from a historical and theoretical viewpoint with Dewey's "pragmatic realism," "naïve realism" (MW6: 105 ff.; LW14: 81), "technology" (LW15: 88) and his mature rejection of New Realism and Critical Realism on one side, and of idealism on the other side. What is important to stress here is that according to Dewey, since the epistemological philosophies, including the forms of realism and idealism he criticizes, take appearance to be immediately dependent upon a "mind" or a "consciousness," appearance is uncritically interpreted as a mental state or as an external reality modified by the mind. On the contrary, Dewey says, an appearance in the sense of appearance1 only refers to the actual existence of something in the external environment in relation to the perceptual apparatus of the human organism, so that this relation is "physical" and not cognitive. As such, appearance1 is not an instance of knowledge (taking knowledge to mean both a present process of inquiry or the beliefs acquired through past inquiries) but only the condition for knowledge.

The fact that appearance1 is only the physical existential interaction of perceptual organic and extra-organic conditions is very important from Dewey's viewpoint, since it rules out many mistakes that have characterized "epistemological" philosophies (LW3: 69). More precisely, it rules out mistakes relative in general to the "ubiquity" of the knowing relation, and in particular to the nature of the self as a knowing mind (see MW6: 112 ff.). As such, appearance1 does not require a knower or a mind, but only an organism endowed with certain perceptual structures and environing conditions whose potentialities become actualized together in an existential interaction here and now (LW3: 56-57). Something comes into "actualized presence," namely, something becomes part of one's situation or experience (LW3: 70). "Existences are immediately given in experience; that is what experience primarily *is*" (LW12: 514). According to this statement, appearance1 is for Dewey already a dimension of experience, although a primitive and undeveloped one. Appearance1, however, is already "entering into more complex relationships" (LW3: 57) than the relationships that constitute a phenomenon as a mere physical interaction. This means that the mere appearance1 as a physical phenomenon can become an object of intellectual interest and inquiry (LW3: 60). As such, the existential interaction is susceptible of becoming "problematic" and can be intellectually "challenged" by the agent. When appearance1 becomes an object of such an intellectual interest, the existential interaction becomes a potential sign, the potential evidential basis for something else. In this sense, it is an indexical existence (LW3: 70). It is neither a mere physical existential interaction anymore (appearance1), nor a settled sign (appearance2). At that moment, it is still something "*to be* known" (LW3: 57) instead of something already known. The task of inquiry is turning "final" physical existences into "means" for grounded inferences, that is, into settled signs. In this sense, a settled sign, the object of the warranted conclusion of an inquiry into X, is an appearance2. Any appearance1 is as real as every other and stands on the same level as every other, since its ontological nature is that of an interaction among physical conditions. Therefore, the problem is not establishing which one among different appearances1 is more real, but distinguishing among them on the basis of the different semeiotic and evidential functions they perform ("what is the *better sign* of … ?", LW3: 69-70). A certain appearance1 is a better sign for a certain inference, while a different appearance1 of the same existent can be a better sign for a different inference. It is at this level of experience or in this intellectual context that the question of truth and falsity emerges as the problem of the right or wrong inferences that can be performed on the basis of X (LW3: 59-60). Let us call this new type of appearance "appearance3". When appearance1 becomes a problematic presence and is intellectually "challenged," it becomes a potential sign, i.e. X as an indexical existence in experience. It is not a mere existence anymore, since it is now an object of intellectual attention and has the possibility of acquiring a determinate semeiotic property of being the sign of something else. X, the indexical existence, is a sign in the making.

Although it is not a settled sign yet, X has acquired nevertheless a property "additive" to the mere physical existence as a consequence of the "reflexive relationship" it now has to the inquirer (LW3: 62). As such, X "sets a problem to be inquired to" (LW3: 70) rather than an existent with a settled semeiotic capacity. Dewey writes:

> The nub of the whole matter turns upon the nature of the reflexive relationship, the relation which an appearing object in its intrinsic qualities [appearance1] bears to the properties that capacitate it to be a sign of something else. That the appearing object is *in* evidence is a truism; the statement is tautologous. But *of* what is it evidence? The latter question introduces a distinction *within* the thing used as a sign, a reflexive relation. That the relation to something else involved in being a sign of it is reflected into the appearing object itself is obvious from the fact that we take things as signs when we do not know *of* what they are signs. This happens in every inquiry, since inquiry implies first that some appearing object is a sign, and secondly that we do not as yet know of what it is a sign or evidence. This mode of taking would be impossible unless there were a distinction and relation set up with the appearing object between itself in its primary qualities and itself in its signifying office. … Relationships react into the thing used as symbol to redetermine its *prior* estate. (LW3: 62-63)

This shift in the function of the appearance, from mere physical existential interaction in appearance1 to indexical existence in appearance3, is expressed by the possibility of labeling X with an indexical term, such as proper names and demonstrative terms.[1] It is Dewey's conviction that a purely denotative term does not occur in discourse (LW12: 240-242), so that, using Peirce's jargon, rhematic indexical legisigns are not possible. X is still an empty sign, a mere "*this* pointing at …" with a blank space. However, denotative terms and propositions with no descriptive content at all do not occur in discourse. Denotative terms always have a minimum of descriptive content, even only as a consequence of a hypothetical and extremely vague classification. The logical theories that claim that "*this*" can be purely denotative assume a perspective that abstracts from specific inquiries and that overlooks the fact that in a real inquiry the singular referred to by the demonstrative is always the product of a "selective discrimination" (see LW12: 363-364). Although X is still a sign in the making and does not allow a highly specific classification, X, as an actual object of inquiry, is at least classifiable as a possibility of future highly specific classification. Continuity of experience and inquiry makes almost impossible the presence of a mere denotative reference. At least in the sense of the possibility of classification that eventually results from an inquiry, every denotative term has a minimum of descriptive content.

The result of inquiry is "knowledge" in its honorific sense (LW12: 146), "belief" or "warranted assertibility" (see LW12: 14-15) about X. These three expressions are synonyms for Dewey. The conclusion of an inquiry takes the form of a classification of X as a certain "kind," that is, the transformation of X as indexical existence into a manifestation or appearance2. Its semeiotic function is settled, so that X has become a "sign of Z" and is classified more or less immediately as an object A. This classification of X is more or less circumscribed in its spatio-temporal conditions and more or less certain according to the level of justification of the conclusion. At this point, Dewey's distinction between the logical notions of "quality," "characteristic" and "property" is fundamental (LW12: 291-292). The same statement "X is generous" can be interpreted in many different ways according to the different logical force it can have in different contexts of experience. Limiting our analysis to the case of the propositions produced within a process of inquiry, "X is generous" can mean X is acting in a generous way here and now, or X acted in a generous way at some point in the past, or X will act in a generous way at some point in the future. In this case, the proposition is a particular proposition and the predicate is a quality, that is, the observation of a particular change of X as an isolated event. The predicate does not stand for a kind. However, the same statement can have a different logical force, on the basis not only of how we are using this proposition but also of our experience about X. X, as enabling "reasonably safe" inferences about certain consequences if certain conditions C occur, can be determined as "generous" and this predicate can stand for a characteristic descriptive of a kind. In this case, the proposition is a singular proposition: X is a specimen of a kind and the predicate stands for a general disposition or way of behaving instead of a simple punctual change. Further experience and knowledge about X provide the statement "X is generous" with further logical force. The predicate "generous" becomes a property when it is determined by implicit (but which can be made explicit) knowledge about both the positive and the negative conditions on which certain consequences would follow

1 In this sense, the idea of indexical existence as denoted by indices is close to Peirce's notions of "substance," "IT," or "present in general" in "On a New List of Categories."

from X. In this case, the proposition is always singular but the predicate has a stronger logical force, since it stands for the possibility of better and more precise inferences about X. Only in this last case does the predicate denote a "universal" (LW12: 351; see "abstraction" in LW1: 106; LW4: 191).

Sometimes Dewey, in speaking about the content of a belief, refers to "objects" as distinct from "events" (LW1: 132; 244-246; see also "things" and "characters" as distinct from mere "entities," MW3: 83).[2] In this sense, an object is an appearance2, while an event is an appearance1 (this does not exclude the fact that there are events in the existent world which are not part of human experience). It is necessary to remark upon this notion in Dewey's later works, because fundamental studies in this topic (Boisvert 1988: 85; Dicker 1972: 152-153; 158; Dicker 1973; Gale 2010a: 127; Ryan 1994)[3] do not provide a sufficiently subtle account of the notion. I will deal more deeply with this topic in a further section on substance, since the two notions are almost synonymous. However, it is important to anticipate in this section something about Dewey's understanding of the notion of "object" in order to rule out as much as possible any source of misinterpretation. According to Dewey, X has become an "object" insofar as X is a more or less settled sign established through past inquiries. As such, X has acquired a semeiotic and semantic structure and has undergone therefore a *real* change. It is an X classified as this or that kind when this classification is the content of a "grounded" judgment. In the section on substance, I will show that the semeiotic property of X "being a sign of Y" is a real property that "accrues" to X as any other property in consequence of certain events, in this case, a successful inquiry. No "*object* of knowledge" can be pre-existent to a successful inquiry (LW1: 124-125). What is "antecedent" to inquiry is not the object of knowledge, but the conditions of the object of knowledge, since inquiry necessarily "transforms" those antecedent conditions (LW14: 62). In other words, what is pre-existent to the institution of an appearance1 as a settled sign is the natural event appearance2, which has the possibility (i) of becoming a sign in general, that is, of developing a semeiotic property. This potentiality is a potentiality of every existent as such and is named by Dewey "transition toward experience" (see "Reality as Experience"). (ii) Moreover, what is pre-existent also has the potentiality of becoming *this* type of sign, a "sign of Y." When X is instituted as a sign with a specific referent, this new semeiotic function becomes as real as any other artifact (e.g., LW1: 108; 147). What is artificial here, namely, what is dependent on human intervention, is not the given condition that X has the potentiality of becoming a "sign of Y" but the fact that X at a certain point actually becomes a "sign of Y" in the field of human practices and by virtue of human inquiry. An "object" is always a social object, a human institution, not because it is constructed as such but because its capacity of acquiring a semeiotic property is only actualized through social practices of organization. The acquisition of this new semeiotic property by X "marks a stage in the history of [the existential interaction X] … owing to varied relations to other things" (LW3: 57), in particular to the inquirer. It is now clear that for Dewey a semeiotic function is a new property that really accrues to an existential interaction: it becomes part of the existential interaction's ontological constitution, and not something psychic or mentalistic.

This is the crux of what Dewey calls the "incorporation of the physical environment in the cultural" (LW12: 48-49). This incorporation is at the heart of the dynamic of recognition (see next section). "When the inference is completed in the categorical assertion of an object, both the appearing (perceived) thing which has been employed as a sign and the inferred (intelligible) object lose the isolation they possess during the process of inquiry and delayed inference. They both become members of an interrelated inclusive whole, so that the category of "manifestation" becomes applicable (LW3: 66-67). X is part of a "whole" not as a member is part of a class, but as an individual is a specimen of a kind, a "*this*" which is a case or representative of a kind (LW12: 292). In recognition, X is almost immediately classified as a kind, where immediately means that the classification is substantially a-problematic and does not require a process of inquiry.

2 For a different notion of "event," see LW12: 222. The move from index to "object" is restated in Dewey's link between "objects" and "data" (LW4: 79-80). For Dewey's account of the passage from an "event" to an "object," see LW1: 244-245.

3 Notice that Gale's claim ("the nature of objects is determined by what they are experienced as") is ambiguous and wrong if it is not clarified.

1.1. Inquiry, Acquaintance and Indexical Residuum

According to Dewey, the "problematic" character of a situation and the intellectual character of an experience is proportional to the "focal" role that an indexical existence has for the inquirer. Although all Dewey scholars have dwelt more or less explicitly with the issue of inquiry (see e.g. Alexander 1992; Boisvert 1988; Burke 1994; Burke-Hester-Talisse 2002; Frega2006a; 2006b; Dewey 1977: 1-51; 110-118; 142-163; Gale 2006; Gale 2010a: 29-42; 61-87; Hickman 1990a; 1990b; Levi 2010; Lu 1970; Margolis 1977; Pratt 1998; Rogers 2007; Sleeper 1986), this aspect has not received sufficient attention. The crux of Dewey's theory of inquiry is expressed in the definition found in *Logic* and in many other texts. It reads: "Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole" (LW12: 108). A common criticism addressed to this theory is that it reduces the process of thinking to a process deterministically or causally initiated by external environmental conditions. This criticism is sometimes parallel to criticisms of Peirce's theory regarding the origin of inquiry and the fixation of belief, as the "need" to remove the irritation of doubt expressed in "The Fixation" would prove. Far from being a mark of hetero-determinism, such a conception of inquiry is part of Dewey's tenet, which aims to highlight, in particular, the fact that thinking is not intrinsically separated from non-linguistic and non-conceptual modalities of experience and behavior. Furthermore, the inquisitive process is not identifiable with psychical events but is essentially related to processes of concrete experimentation, manipulation and direction of the environing conditions, starting from organic perception (e.g. LW4, Ch.4; LW12: 41). A "naturalistic" theory of thinking implies that no occult power of knowledge, in principle inaccessible to public consideration, can be admitted as a legitimate part of the theory (LW12: 26). However, this interpretation requires to be completed by the active and purposive role of the inquirer in this process. The stress of the purposive role of the inquirer goes together with Dewey's struggle to uproot the general picture of "epistemological" philosophies that the knower is a mirroring passive mind of a ready-made world. The importance of this point is that the purposive activity of the inquirer can choose to focus on existential phenomena that have not been intellectually challenged yet, or aspects of the "objects" of experience that still have to be studied. This is a large part of the activity of scientific research. Dewey says:

> The remarkable difference between the attitude which accepts the objects of ordinary perception, use and enjoyment as final, as culmination of natural processes and that which takes them as starting points for reflection and investigation, is one which reaches far beyond the technicalities of science. It marks a revolution in the whole spirit of life, in the entire attitude taken toward whatever is found in existence. When the things which exist around us, which we touch, see, hear and taste are regarded as interrogations for which an answer must be sought (and must be sought by means of deliberate introduction of changes till they are reshaped into something different), nature as it already exists ceases to be something which must be accepted and submitted to, endured or enjoyed, just as it is. It is now something to be modified, to be intentionally controlled. It is material to act upon so as to transform it into new objects which better answer our needs. Nature as it exists at any particular time is a challenge, rather then a completion; it provides possible starting points and opportunities rather than final ends. (LW4: 80-81)

The point is that the "problem" which originates within a situation and around which inquiry develops is always constituted by the presence in experience of an indexical existence. The condition of this presence is not sometimes there and sometimes not. As the quotation on scientific activity and the many passages on purposive experimentation in *The Quest for Certainty* show, reality can always become an object of study, inquiry and discovery, so that it can always become problematic. It is true that there are dimensions of experience (or different *individual* experiences) where the overarching quality is not determining a full inquiry. However, this fact only shows that there is a gradation in experience that ranges from contexts in which the focus is entirely about inquiry and contexts in which inquiry or intellectual activity are extremely limited and only functional to practical and volitional uses. When the focus is on the indexical existence X as such, then we have a genuine problematic situation, whereas when the focus on indexical aspects of what "appears" in experience (in the sense of appearance2) is overlooked for the most part, the intellectual aspect of activity becomes secondary and

subordinated. The purposive mediation of the inquirer does not rule out the fact that in a certain sense the "problem" characterizing a situation is given in an individual quality and that it teleologically regulates the development of inquiry. On the contrary, it only means that reflection is always a matter of "selective emphasis" (LW1: 31).

There are modalities of experience different from those of inquiry in a strict sense. These are:

(1) "Recognition" (LW1: 154-155; 247) or "apprehension" (LW12: 146-147) or "identification" or educated perception of X (LW1: 144).

(2) Practical and volitional use of X.

(3) Affective focal experience of X.

(4) Esthetic fruition of a meaning (theoretical contemplation).[4]

These modalities of experience are usually taken to be cases of "immediate knowledge" (LW1: 35; LW12: 142-143; 154, LW14: 12). On the contrary, according to Dewey, these are all "non-cognitive" modalities of experience, resulting from past successful experiences and inquiries. It is important to stress that the term "non-cognitive" in Dewey's vocabulary does not have the same meaning it has assumed in contemporary metaethical debates, in which cognitive and non-cognitive ethics are distinguished according to the epistemic status of moral judgments and the ontological status of moral values. It does not even refer to Quine's understanding of non-physical languages as non-cognitive. For Dewey, a modality of experience is non-cognitive insofar as it is different from "inquiry," "reflection" and "intelligence" properly taken. (1), (2), (3) and (4) are all forms of "acquaintances" with the objects of the world and not stages in experience in which the overarching quality is asking for or directing the solution of a problem (LW1: 154; 248-249). In general, acquaintance means "knowing *how* to make appropriate active responses to an event" (LW15: 31). It means "intimate connection with emotion and ability to act" (LW12: 154). Therefore, the property " … is non-cognitive" refers to a modality of experience in which the focus is not at all or is only minimally about an indexical existent. These types of experiences and their objects, "immediate empirical things," are always the "endings of natural histories" (LW1: 110). In the case of appearances1, these histories are only physical and physiological events that eventually become indexes, or appearances3 when they are intellectually challenged. In the case of appearances2, or "objects," which are the result of past experiences, the histories involved are not only conditioned by physical events, but they are also already histories of past successful inquiries, judgments and semantic syntheses. In the former case, we have something like a pure indexical existence, while in the latter case we have structured objects characterized by what we might call indexical residuum. As some scholars have pointed out (Pappas 2008: 35; Hildebrand 2003; Shusterman 1999), the main difference between Deweyan pragmatism and contemporary neopragmatism is the fact that for Dewey experience is not linguistic all the way through and that no matter how the organism is developed in its habits and functions in grasping "objects," there is always more in experience then our classification and semantic skills, linguistic or not. This becomes philosophically poignant when this experiential phenomenon is traced back to the ontological and semeiotic nature of the indexical existence in experience, in both the forms of a pure indexicality or of an indexical residuum.

The reality of an indexical residuum is shown in Dewey's understanding of the "intension" of a demonstrative term (or a proper name and in general an indexical expression). Dewey claims that proper names, pronouns, demonstrative and indexical terms in general are "inexhaustible in their meaning in intension." (LW12: 364) I have already shown that according to Dewey a pure demonstrative term is impossible, since in the continuity of experience and inquiry a demonstrative term always has a minimum of descriptive content. In dealing with the intension of a demonstrative, Dewey writes:

> What is demonstratively denoted by a proper name is inexhaustible in its meaning in intension, instead of being lacking in all such meaning. Take London, England, for example, as a conventional mark enabling a singular object to be the subject of discourse and inquiry. Its meaning in intension is first of all topographical, but it extends far beyond physical location and area. Its meaning in intension is historic, political, cultural; it includes a past, a present and potentialities not yet realized. What is true

4 E.g. LW1: 102; 249 ff.; LW12: 64.

> of its intension is that it cannot be completely circumscribed at any given time by any set of descriptive qualifications; i.e., its meaning in intension is inexhaustible. The same statement holds in principle of any singular term, for such a term denotes a spatio-temporal career. (LW12: 364)

The notion of intension can only be understood in relation to the notions of extension and comprehension, insofar as intension refers to the property of a term in denoting a singular or an individual, while extension and comprehension denote or designate kinds (LW12: 357-360; 364). The "extension" of a term is the property of a term that refers to kinds instead of singulars and designates all the kinds that are included or might be included in that term. In the case of the term "ship," "the extension is simply and strictly the *kinds* of ship that exist or have existed or will exist." The comprehension of a term is the necessary conceptual content of an "abstract universal" once it becomes more determinate, so that it coincides with the "definition" of that term. In the case of the term triangle, its comprehension is e.g. "right-angled," "scalene" and "isosceles." The notion of intension instead refers to the property of a term as denoting a singular or individual indexical existent in all its possible meanings, classifications or kinds, already developed or yet to be developed. In this sense, a proper name, a pronoun, a demonstrative and in general all the other indices (like "here" and "now") in denoting a singular or individual existential indexical are "inexhaustible in their meaning in intension." This means that the same X not only is susceptible at present to different classifications, but also that it can always be developed into new classifications on the basis of new inquiries. In other words, the same X can support different "kinds," "objects" and semeiotic properties. The classification of an X through a "kind" and reference to it through a demonstrative term can be both delimitating and widening in different respects (LW12: 292). Insofar as the potential meaningfulness of X is at stake, the intension of a demonstrative term is the "full qualitative existence," namely, X in all its potentiality as an object or a sign, so that its intension is more ample than any actual classification as this or that kind. In this respect, intension represents widening while classification represents limitation. However, as a mere indexical existent, X is not an object or a sign yet. In this sense, its semeiotic and logical force or functionality is only potential and ineffective. The "determination of a singular as one of a kind involves a limitation of *this*," but at the same time establishes the effective power of drawing from X certain inferences. In this respect, intension represents limitation while classification represents widening.

If it is true that a demonstrative reference is inexhaustible in its meaning in intension (although it is not such in its extension and in its comprehension), it follows that every modality of experience, including (1), (2), (3) and (4), always includes an indexical residuum which can demand a certain amount of intellectual activity, although minimum. "A singular as a mere *this*," says Dewey, "always sets a problem" (LW12: 249). In *Experience and Nature* (LW1: 233; 261) Dewey addresses the issue of intellectual activity in establishing a connection between reflection and "redirection of meanings." The points in experience in which a redirection of meanings is required are different instances of focal "conscious" activity. "Consciousness, an idea, is that phase of a system of meanings which at a given time is undergoing re-direction, transitive transformation" (LW1: 233). "Consciousness" is taken here as a logical notion rather than a mere psychological or physiological notion. Although the moment of maximum focal consciousness is represented by an inquiry, it is true that (1), (2), (3) and (4) represent instances of conscious activity in their own right, distributed along a scale or gradation. This is to say, conscious activity in "acquaintance" ranges from (a) focal consciousness as educated perception of "objects" (minimum of intellectual activity, intellectual properties (like explicit signification, LW1: 237) and problems), (b) through all the other different non-cognitive modalities of experience (see LW1: 240), to (c) focal consciousness in inquiry (maximum of intellectual activity, intellectual properties and problems).[5] The point is that all these forms of experience, (1), (2), (3) and (4), are forms of *contextual inferences* and *new semantic synthesis*, although these operations are not comparable to implication and rational discourse (LW1: 250) and have more the nature of a contextual application (LW12: 375) of old regulative semantic commitments rather than of the judgment that brings a new problem to a conclusion. What characterizes the first three cases of acquaintance is a minimum of intellectual or cognitive activity. In these cases, intellectual activity is given by the need for application of different regulative semantic commitments to Xs, in which case a minimum of semantic synthesis, or "redirection of meaning," is needed. This dynamic is well expressed in the following passage:

5 See LW1: 230 ff.

> "This," whatever *this* may be, always implies a system of meanings focused at a point of stress, uncertainty, and need of regulation. It sums up history, and at the same time opens a new page; it is record and promise in one; a fulfillment and an opportunity. It is a fruition of what has happened and a transitive agency of what is to happen. It is a comment written by natural events on their own direction and tendency, and a surmise of whither they are leading. Every perception or awareness, marks a "this," and every "this" being a consummation involves retention, and hence contains the capacity of remembering. Every "this" is transitive, momentarily becoming a "that." In its movement it is, therefore, conditioning of what is to come; it presents the potentiality of foresight and prediction. (LW1: 264-265)

However, in the case of (4), "contemplation" (LW1: 249 ff.; 262) seems to have a different status. It seems that it is the form in which intellectual activity is almost absent. This is because in theoretical contemplation the role of the indexical is completely isolated, or excluded, while in the first three cases of acquaintance its function, although mostly latent and not prominent, is nevertheless not completely absent. In the case of contemplation, semantic synthesis is the mere repetition of past meanings and associations, while no indexical element is allowed into the process. It is an intellectual and repetitive manipulation of "self-sufficient objects" (LW1: 118). In the context of a theoretical contemplation as such, no genuine intellectual "problem" can arise. This possibility is on the contrary present in the first three cases of acquaintance.

According to Dewey, an existence cannot be reduced to a singular or to a finite multitude of objects. "The same existential events are capable of an infinite number of meanings" (LW1: 240). In the metaphysical constitution of reality, the indexical, given residuum implicit in every object and the constructive nature of every object are the two wings of the same pragmatic naïve realism that are overlooked by both idealism and presentative realism (LW1: 234-235; 241-242; 245). In particular, on the one hand, some of Dewey's arguments against idealism rely on his rejection of the thesis that an event is ultimately a bundle of meaning which lacks indexical residuum. In this sense, Dewey is much closer to Peirce's reclamation of the role of 2ndness in experience against an orthodox Hegelian understanding of it, in which the presence of 3rdess becomes overwhelming. On the other hand, Dewey's refusal of presentative realism consists in rejecting the thesis that perception is intrinsically and immediately cognition of "objects," which would have therefore an "antecedent" reality previous to any form of inquiry.

While there is continuity among the different modalities of experience, there is not a sharp distinction or dichotomy between dimensions of experience that play different functions. This is well exemplified in the Deweyan distinction between "primary" and "reflective" experience (e.g., LW1: 15-16). All Dewey scholars have virtually dealt with this distinction in Dewey's theory of experience, although only a few in my opinion have grasped its functional import (Douglas Browning has done this, see Browning 1998:71-72 in particular). "Primary" understood in a functional sense refers first to (i) the dimension of experience that might result in an inquiry and that is prior to an inquiry, and to (ii) the dimension of experience that constitutes the background of an inquiry. As such, it is "had" (LW1: 111; 113). What is important here is (i) something can be "had" as a mere physical interaction (appearance1), as an indexical existence (appearance3), or as a semantic structure or "object" (appearance2). In the third case, "immediately had" means one of the non-cognitive modalities of experience (see 1, 2, 3 and 4), in which the indexical existence or indexical residuum X does not constitute the focus and is at most the focus of operations of application, while it tends almost to disappear in (4). In the case of (1), (2), (3), the imperfect reference of regulative semantic commitments to the indexical existence X (appearance3) is relevant, so that, on the one side, they represent borderline cases of intellectual, conscious activity and, on the other side, they can perform the function of "primary" experience and be the starting point of a new process of inquiry, in which intellectual and conscious activity is furthered and becomes maximal (LW1: 264-265). In describing his theory of primary and reflective experience, Dewey also characterizes (1), (2), and (3) respectively in relation to their "objects" (LW1: 15-16). While primary experience is characterized by a "gross, macroscopic, crude subject-matter," reflective experience is characterized by "refined, derived objects of reflection." Again, these two functional dimensions of experience have to be taken prospectively and can be better understood in relation to the notion of indexical residuum. As a matter of fact, the same "object" can be considered a case of a gross, macroscopic subject-matter G, or as a refined, derived object R. As an R, the object is the result of past, successful inquiries; as a G, it is the starting point of new inquiries. However, even as a G, the object is not absolutely "gross," except for the borderline case of an appearance1. This means that the object of primary

experience G is a refined object (appearance2) in the function of becoming the subject-matter of an inquiry because of its indexical residuum (so that it is at the same time an appearance1, although not pure). Although G is already an object with a semantic structure, it can be considered "gross" because of its indexical residuum and in relation to the further inquires which will reflectively shape G into more refined objects (LW1: 262). Therefore, indexicality plays different functions in experience between primary and reflective phases of it: (i) a mere physical event is the potentiality of an indexical existence and of signs (appearance1 as a potentiality of appearance3 and appearance2); (ii) an indexical existent is the possibility of different developed signs (appearance1 as the potentiality of different appearances2); (iii) a sign is the possibility of further signs because of its indexical residuum (appearance2 is the potentiality of further and different appearances2 because of its indexical residuum).

1.2. Sensa

Another important point related to the distinction among types of appearances and to the function of indexicality in experience is Dewey's approach to the problem of sensa, sense-data and sensational perceptions (hereafter, sensa). In a further section, I will deal with Dewey's understanding of the epistemic status of what Murray Murphy calls "S statements" (Murphy 2003:287). However, at this point it is important to stress the significance of the distinction between appearance1 and appearance2 in order to understand Dewey's view on sensa. As a matter of fact, sensa can be understood as mere appearance1, namely, as physical existential interactions between a human perceptual apparatus and the environing conditions. However, sensa can be taken to be the result of cognitive activities of inquiry and discrimination when a sensa as appearance1 is found to be a reliable sign for something else, an appearance2, and not a merely psycho-physical event. In *Experience and Nature* (LW1: 198-200; 226; 250-255), Dewey makes clear that sensa can be taken: (1) as "qualities of organic action," as mere "feelings" or products of "sentiency"; in this sense, sensa are appearances1 (a-noetic factors) and should be called "sensa" or "stimuli" for action only proleptically (they are only the product of "sensory excitation," LW4: 91); (2) as "meanings of events," or "sensations," or "sensory-perceptual meanings," they are appearances2, they are noetic and can be called sensa or significations. As appearances2, sensa are:

(1) Instances of inference and semantic synthesis in the form of recognition. This thesis goes against the idea that they are unmediated, direct and simple knowledge of external environmental conditions. The classical realistic objection to Dewey's tenet is that, given a pragmatic account of the statement "this is red," all of the content of the perceptual experience is going to be dissolved in something that depends on the semantic capabilities of the utterer, which is absurd, since the awareness of an observer of the sensa "red" does not depend on her semantic skills but only on the integrity of her perceptual faculties. It is the same objection that might be addressed to Peirce's conception of perception as inferential in nature. This objection relies on the ambiguity of the different meanings of the notion "appearance." The sensa, understood as mere feelings or appearances1, are physical realities resulting from the interaction of environmental and organic conditions, and are as such independent from the observer's habits of semantic interpretation. Dewey's point is that when the feeling "red" becomes cognitively or logically relevant (a "universal," in classical terms), it depends on the agent's semantic capabilities of discrimination and inference. "Red" means then an X that would behave in this and that way if certain conditions C occurred and is the conclusion of an inference (LW1: 250).

(2) In particular, they are not "the original form of elementary awareness from which other forms of cognitive consciousness develop. On the contrary sensory-perceptual meanings are specifically discriminated objects of awareness" (LW1: 254-255). From a logical standpoint, Dewey does not deny that propositions about sensa play a function, but rejects the view that these propositions play a somewhat fundamental role in knowledge and that their logical status (their logical "force") can be decided in isolation from the context of an inquiry (LW12: 151-152). Sensa might be primitive in the physical or psychological sense of appearances1, but as "observations" endowed with logical power they are appearances2 or appearances3 and are not primitive at all (LW12: 153). "Red" as a sense-datum, as an "object" and not as a mere physical interaction is the content of a

belief, the conclusion of an inquiry and purposeful discrimination. As often happens, Dewey draws his example from the observation of child development. He points out that the capacity of discriminating "red" as a sense-datum is developed in the child as a highly specialized cognitive activity. "Red" as a sign is discriminated insofar as it points at an object of common use or of importance, such as a toy or a dress. In this case, therefore, the discrimination of the object "toy" or "dress" is a prerequisite of the discrimination of the sense-datum "red" in its semeiotic function, which is therefore more refined (not logically more fundamental) than the object "toy" or "dress." The process of discrimination of the sensa as characterized by a semeiotic properties requires the semantic priority of a different "object," in this case the "toy" or the "dress." A different example is found in the reconstruction of our present common belief that e.g. the sense-datum "red" is the content of a "proposition of sense perception" (LW12: 290). Dewey would subscribe this belief, but he would firmly deny its logically fundamental character for any other beliefs about red objects. His point is that the notion of sensation is a highly specialized one, since it presupposes not only the knowledge of something that is red (like in the example of child development) but also the knowledge of the perceptual apparatus of the human organism and the fact that its interactions with environing conditions cause something of the nature of a feeling that is later called "red."

> The fallacy in the theory of logically original complete and self-sufficient atomic propositions is thus an instance of the same fallacy that has been repeatedly noted: the conversion of a function in inquiry into an independent structure. It is an admitted fact that ideally, or in theory, propositions about irreducible qualities are necessary in order adequately to ground judgment having existential reference. What is denied is that such propositions have complete and self-sufficient logical character in isolation. … The doctrine under criticism rules out the context in which such propositions occur and the logical end for which and logical ground upon which they are instituted. This may be verified by anyone who calls to mind a case in which, either in common sense or science, such propositions are present and have weight. As to their ground, I call attention to the fact that there is no this which is merely and exclusively red or any other single quality and that, therefore, there must be some ground for selection of one quality as predicate rather than another. … The material towards which behavior is *directly* impelled is but the focal aspect of an environing field. The kind of behavior which occurs must, in order to be adaptive and responsive, vary with the kind of field of which the immediate object is focal. (LW12:152)

These reflections about the sense-datum "red" show that red, as an appearance1, can develop into many different objects or signs, that is, several different appearances2. In other words, an indexical existence has almost an indefinite semeiotic potentiality, which can only be furthered and developed through human inquiry and experimentation. The same appearance1 red can be classified as "toy" or, at a higher level of reflection and sophistication, as "sensation resulting from the interaction of … with …". "Only functional position in a contextual situation can discriminate an actual *this* from an indefinite number of potential *thises*" (LW12: 241). In other words, the X classified in a certain way has at the same time an indexical residuum that allows the object to be further interrogated, as connected with new events and established in new semeiotic properties.

1.3. "Existential Reference" and Indexicality

The aim of this section is to show that the locus in which an indexical existence is at work in human experience is what Dewey calls "existential reference." Before dealing with the relationships between "existential reference" and indexicality, it is important to make a few distinctions relative to the notion of "existential reference." It is sometimes hard to grasp some distinctions implicit in Dewey's text. Among the possible examples, see the following passage in *Logic*:

> Consider … propositions of mathematical physics. (1) As propositions they form a system of *related* symbol-meanings that may be considered and developed as such. (2) But as propositions of *physics*, not of mere mathematics, they have reference to existence which is realized in operations of *application*. (3) The final test of valid reference or applicability resides in the *connections* that exist among things. Existential involvement of things with one another alone warrants inference so as to enable further connections among things themselves to be discovered. (LW12: 61)

Let me point out four introductory remarks. In the first place, "existence" can refer to an event in its interactions in isolation from man, or to an existent event as the result of a human interaction with the environment. In this latter case, only human experience has an "existential reference." I will focus on this latter case.

In the second place, existential reference can be potential or actual, linguistic or operational and extra-linguistic (LW12: 61). "Particular," "singular" and "general" are the logical properties of propositions and terms that have an "existential reference" (LW12: 283; 289-300; 351-352). In this case, "existential reference" is defined in relation to the existential use of a proposition or a term and in opposition to the merely attributive or conceptual use of a proposition and a term. It can also be defined in relation to "denotation" and in opposition to "designation" (LW12: 357). However, in the case of language, "existential reference" is only potential. It should be called "demonstrative reference" rather than full existential reference (LW12: 356-357). It is only a potential existential reference and not an actual one. The distinction between potential and actual existential reference corresponds to the distinction between propositions and judgments, since on the one hand the existential reference in propositions is only potential and operations are performed only on symbols, while on the other hand the existential reference in judgments is actual since it coincides with the operation itself (LW12: 283-287). It is only the actualization in action of the conclusion of inquiry that fixes the existential referent of a proposition in its ultimate determination (LW12: 356-357). In this sense, "inventions, plans and intensions prior to execution" have not reached their final completion yet and do not have "demonstrative application" (LW12: 356-357). At this stage, they are without "determinate demonstrative reference" but are the plans or rules that can make an actual demonstrative reference possible. Since a proposition or in general a piece of communication is only a rule for a possible operation, it is the operation itself in its actuality that realizes the existential reference of ideal factors to environing conditions which was only potential at the level of language. The existential referent is ultimately fixed only in an actual operation on X and not in language. Similarly, Dewey states that "without the intervention of a specific kind of existential operation they cannot indicate or discriminate the *objects* to which they refer" (LW12: 60). I focus mainly on existential reference in its actual and ultra-linguistic realization, since according to Dewey it is this actual realization that constitutes the *analogatum princeps* of the notion of existential reference.

In the third place, existential reference in its actual and ultra-linguistic realization can have a descriptive use or a eulogistic use in inquiry (LW4: 189; LW12: 135; 302; 374-375; 499). On the one hand, a belief has an existential reference in a purely descriptive sense when it is somehow *applied* here and now in a context. Existential reference means in this case "*application* … a matter of existential operations executed upon existential materials" (LW12: 375). In this sense, "inferences" have existential reference, while "implications" do not (LW12: 345-346). Moreover, according to this sense, not only settled beliefs, but also tentative and hypothetical experimental propositions (operations, observations) have existential reference, while the propositions issued by rational discourse do not. Therefore, both "assertions" and "affirmations" can have existential reference (excluding the assertions which are issued by rational discourse and are not part yet of experimental operations, LW12: 123-125). This sense of existential reference as application also clarifies Dewey's interpretation of the traditional distinction between "sensitive" and "rational knowledge" (LW15: 90-91). As Dewey claims, the real import of the traditional distinction between "sensitive knowledge" and "rational knowledge" is the distinction between knowledge of the individual and knowledge of the general. Therefore, the distinction is not between two separate modalities or faculties of knowledge, but between two logical functions of knowledge in inquiry. In particular, "sensitive knowledge" is the phase of inquiry that is characterized by application, namely, by existential reference to the environment through actual interaction, while "rational knowledge" is the phase of inquiry in which existential reference is only potential. On the other hand, a belief has existential reference in its eulogistic sense when it is not only applied, but also verified in this application. In this sense, existential reference is defined in relation to verification or warranted assertion or *successful application* and in opposition to hypothetical propositions, issued both from experimentation and rational discourse. I will focus on existential reference in both the descriptive and the eulogistic sense, making clear which sense I am referring to as needed.

In the fourth place, actual existential reference can be non-focal or focal. As Dewey states,

> In actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; *an* object or event is always a special part, phase, or aspect, of an environing experienced world – a situation. The singular object stands out conspicuously because of its especially focal and crucial position at a given time in determination of some problem of use of enjoyment which the *total* complex environment presents. There is always a *field* in which observation of *this* or *that* object or event occurs. (LW12: 72-73; see also 351-352)

Actual existential reference can be therefore the contact with an "individual" situation as a whole in a feeling, or the contact with a focal "singular" object in an operation (including observation, LW12: 125-126). In the first case, the existential reference is not focal and is about a situation as a whole. It corresponds to the overarching quality of a situation or an experience, where its "controlling presence" regulates the focal operations that are performed within that situation. In the second case, the existential reference is focal and is about this or that object. It is "an ordering and organizing of responses in a focused way" (LW4: 189-190). It corresponds to operations of acquaintance, experimentation and judgment in inquiry understood as the various modes of "application" of theories and beliefs. The non-focal existential reference of a situation is the "universe of experience" which constitutes the precondition of focal operations, which in in the context of inquiry becomes a "universe of discourse" (LW12: 74).

Given these four introductory points, it is now possible to highlight the connections between actual existential reference and indexicality, and in particular to elucidate the thesis that the locus in which an indexical existence is at work in human experience is what Dewey calls "existential reference." If what we have said in the previous sections is true, there is an indexical residuum in both the individual situation and the individual focal operation. (A) In the case of an individual situation, the indexical residuum is more or less latent in the form of an aproblematic individual quality that regulates a situation. In this sense, the indexical residuum is revealed in the capacity of the individual quality to regulate the new operations on further focal individual objects. It manifests itself when the individual quality becomes problematical and gives rise to a new inquiry. As we have seen, an indexical existence, appearance3, is a sign in the making because of its problematic character; it is an X which is no longer an appearance1 anymore and not yet an appearance2. The problematic individual quality of a situation is the first step in the shift of an event from an appearance1 to an appearance3. The emergence of a problematic individual quality marks the experience of a situation in which *something* is emerging as problematical and is already somehow pointing to a solution yet to be found, even though at this level of vagueness the X which is problematical cannot even be isolated yet with a demonstrative term "*this*." As we have seen, Dewey claims that a demonstrative is "inexhaustible in its meaning in intension." Bearing this in mind, it is clear that given the level of vagueness in the emergence of a problematic quality, the indexical existence is given in the form of a "feeling" and not yet in the form of discourse. Dewey claims that the situation "as a qualitative whole is sensed or *felt*. … Such an expression is … valuable only as it is taken negatively to indicate that it is not, as such, an object of *discourse*" (LW12: 73-74). Similarly, the situation as an "individual whole … is not anything that can be expressed in words for it is something that must be *had*" (LW12: 75). Speaking proleptically, it is possible to say that its referent at this stage of experience is so rich in meaning and possibilities that it cannot be pointed to with a demonstrative term, nor can it even be used in its inexhaustible intension. This is the semeiotic reason that an experience in its individual quality can only be had and felt instead of been represented in language. The further logical steps would be (1) use of the term "this" in its inexhaustible logical intension; (2) use of the term "this" as guiding inquiry as a demonstrative term with at least a minimum of descriptive content, that is, as a tentative classification (particular proposition or singular proposition).

(B) In the case of an individual object, the indexical residuum is more or less latent in the form of operations of acquaintance (in which however a certain degree of "application" is always required), while it is manifest in the tentative and focal operations of experimentation (manipulation, observation, etc.) within the process of inquiry and in the judgment. As far as rational discourse or reasoning is strictly concerned, indexicality is limited to the clash between ideas in the free play of ideas (LW12: 347), in deductive synthesis in rational discourse (LW1: 152; LW12: 313-314), or in diagrammatic experimentation, and to the presence of linguistic expression as proper names, demonstratives etc. (indexical terms). These are, as I showed, only the linguistic mark of a possible eventual actualization of an existential reference and do not constitute an existential reference in themselves. In

this case, it is more appropriate to speak of "relations" among symbols-meanings rather than "reference" to existents (LW12: 61; 289 ff.). The case of "causal proposition" is interesting because it marks the logical status of existential propositions in the phase in which they are about to produce and acquire actual existential reference through being acted upon (LW12: 454-456). In this function, a causal proposition shares the same logical status and function of a "sentence," (LW12: 124-125) since a sentence is a proposition that is distinct from the other propositions issued in the inquiry "in that it takes overt effect in operations which construct a new qualitative situation." It is the individuality of the field (or situation, or experience) which determines the teleological or regulative criterion of the selection of the subject-matter of an inquiry. The indexicality given in a "feeling" or "quality" of a situation, although too vague and rich in meaning in intension to be determined through discourse and focal operations, has at the same time a directive logical power. This directive logical power is given by its teleological or regulative function within an inquiry, even in its immediate phases of determination of the problem at hand and selection of the "facts" and of the "ideas" of the case. Dewey writes that "discourse that is not controlled by reference to a situation is not discourse, but a meaningless jumble" (LW12: 74). This is so true that without the controlling presence of a "universe of experience" it would be impossible to determine the "relevancy, weight or coherence of any distinction and relation" with regard to a given inquiry. This means that the non-focal existential reference and indexicality given in feeling is the precondition of the focal existential reference and indexicality realized in localized operations. This is evidenced by the fact that "quality" of a situation performs the same function also in relation to the propositions issued in rational discourse. Among the indefinite possible meanings of an object that could emerge from its indexical residuum, only some of them are "valid" and appropriate in a situation, and are determined by the indexicality of the situation as a qualitative whole given in feeling. The distinction between "validity" and "formal correctness" in arguments is instructive.[6] According to Dewey, (1) validity-invalidity is the property of a proposition, and not of an argument; a proposition is a "means" in the construction of the final judgment; therefore, it is useful or non-useful in giving the appropriate direction to the individual inquiry that is at stake in leading to the construction of a true final judgment; (2) the formal correctness pertains to an argument (what is usually called "validity"); (3) the syllogism "all the satellites are made of bread, the moon is a satellite, therefore the moon is made of bread" is a formally correct syllogism, but it is invalid. This is the case not only because the premises are "materially false," but also because the propositions do not promote inquiry and would instead mislead the inquirer if taken up and used.

This analysis of the connected role of existential reference and indexicality in experience is confirmed by a later text, "Peirce's Theory of Linguistic Signs, Thought, and Meaning" (LW15). The combined analysis of Dewey's theory of existential reference and Dewey's interpretation of Peirce's semeiotics and doctrine of the categories shows that Dewey understood his theory in continuity with Peirce's. According to his reading of Peirce's semeiotics and categories,

> To connect *things* with *indexical* signs is, in Peirce's position, a way of *denying* that they are connected with *linguistic* signs, with words, or anything he calls a *symbol*. For an indexical sign is a case of what Peirce calls *Secondness*, while a linguistic sign is a case of *Thirdness*. (LW15: 146) … This perceptual-manipulative behavioral event determines the indexical sign which brings "us" into connection with "things," something it is impossible, according to Peirce, for symbols, linguistic signs … to do. (LW15: 148)

For both Peirce and Dewey, existential reference takes place "when and only when, there is a conjunction of the "Secondness" of an indexical sign with the movement of linguistic signs, or "Thirdness." The "perceptual-manipulative behavioral event" referred to here corresponds to the instances of individual experiences as a whole and focal existential reference specified above. The focal operations can be cases of appearances3, namely, pure indexical existences, cases of appearances2, both in the fashion of mere acquaintances, or operations where the focus is on the indexical residuum of previously constituted objects. In addition to this, Dewey displays the original centrality of the "feeling" as the locus in which an appearance1 is in the process of becoming an appearance3 but because of its vagueness and inexhaustible meaning in intension it cannot be determined through discourse yet.

6 See Burke (1994: 204-206).

1.3.1. The "Is" of the Judgment as Actual Existential Reference

As I will show in Ch. 5, Dewey's account of deliberation, moral propositions and judgment also has a revolutionary impact in the conception of the logical function of the copula "is" insofar as the construction of judgment and its final outcome are concerned. This new conception of the "copula" is linked not only to the structure of a moral judgment, but to the nature and function of judgment qua judgment in its logical function of closing a process of inquiry. In particular, the judgment has the logical function of instituting a new and settled existential reference. In the judgment, the existential reference is fixed in its ultimate determinate target and becomes actual in the enactment of the proposition produced through inquiry. Let us rephrase Dewey's understanding of the copula and see how the existential reference is instituted through it. Dewey formally agrees with the traditional conception that the standard form of the proposition is the connection of a subject and a predicate through the copula "is."[7] However, he reinterprets the meaning of this logical structure showing how human agency and semantics are thoroughly entangled. Dewey points out that etymologically the word "is" indicates to stay or to change, to remain or to endure, that is, a "mode of action" (LW12: 137; 307). The copula can be used as a mere connection of abstract characters outside a process of inquiry, as in the case of universal propositions, used simply to communicate an informative content or to report someone else's opinion (LW12: 174; 284) or at a very abstract level of the inquiry. In this case, the copula designates "a non-temporal or strictly logical relation between meanings" (LW12: 137). On the contrary, if a proposition is used as a moment in the development of the construction of judgment and has a focal existential reference (in the sense of a provisional applicative import), the copula has itself an existential reference and therefore a "temporal force" that is lacking in the previous case. The subject of a proposition corresponds to the existential material that contains the "facts" of the case or the existent conditions on which the possible operation should be performed, while the predicate represents this possible operation. In the intermediate propositions, the copula means that in this problematic situation this specific existential material (existential reference) *could be used* in this specific kind of way (type of operation), while in the judgment it means that that specific existential material is actually fixed and determined in its ultimate and contextual function. The copula "is" in its logical function in the judgment coincides with the actual transformation of existential conditions and with the fixation of the existential reference of the subject-matter. This is clearly stated in Dewey's explanation of the temporality of inquiry (LW12: 137-138), according to which only the judgment constitutes the "actual transformation" of the subject-matter of an indeterminate situation to a determinate one. This means that the existential reference of the previous phases of inquiry becomes fixed, determined and actual only in the enactment of the judgment. Early on, Dewey makes clear that

> the connection between fact and meaning is made only by an act in the ordinary physical sense of the word act, that is, by experiment involving movement of the body and change in surrounding conditions. (MW13: 63)

The "connection between fact and meaning" refers here clearly to the existential reference of a human experience. Actual existential reference is realized in an actual operation. In language, the object denoted is always "presented *as* absent, as intended" (MW13: 53). "It is not a case of sheer absence, such as total ignorance would imply." In order to fulfill the semeiotic reference of the sign, the singular signified has to become existentially present in action. Rational discourse as a dimension of inquiry aims at the actualization/embodiment of the prospected end-in-view. The propositional content of the sequence of affirmations *grows* until it *becomes* the overt act itself. The symbolic synthesis represented in a proposition is the existential and experiential final synthesis in the making. At the end of the process of inquiry there is no more distinction between the propositional, representational content about future possible operations, acts of judgment and possible existential reference. In the final act, the distinction of "object" and "subject" is partially and momentarily overcome and the existential reference is fixed and determined in its ultimate actual realization. The simple action upon symbols, operated in the internal phases of deliberation, does not realize this unity, since the use of

7 See Peirce's "On a New List of Categories."

symbols still belongs to the dimension of propositional representation. "As long as the operations are not executed, the subject-matter of such propositions is therefore abstract or non-existential" (LW12: 302). "Possibility" of operation, that is, the logical function and meaning of every predication, "is existentially actualized only when the operation is performed not with or upon symbols but on existence" (LW12: 288-289). The consequence is that in the judgment the subject-matter elaborated in the previous moments of inquiry coincides with the act itself that the agent is performing here and now on existential conditions which are fixed and determined in their new contextual function. The actual existential reference and the application of a proposition coincide.

2. "Intellectual" Properties, Semblance-Propositions and S-Propositions

In the present section I want to address the problem of what Dewey calls "mental" properties and of two types of propositions that originate in inquiry and which have those "mental" properties as their subject-matter. "Mental" includes both semeiotic properties and intellectual properties (see MW3). When X functions as a sign, its activity is not in itself a psychical event (although it has physical and physiological conditions), but it is the semeiotic relation on the basis of which something performs the function of being evidence for something else. "Intellectual" properties are a sub-category of semeiotic properties. The semeiotic properties of an X are not mental in the sense that they belong to the "inner world" of an inquirer but not to the "outer world" of things. The acquired function of X of "pointing at …" is a property as real as any other properties of X. It is the actualization of a possibility of X produced through successful operations of inquiry on X, where the conclusion is the fixation of a new "known" object. Becoming a "sign of … " is a modification of X as real as a physical modification of X is at a less inclusive level of interaction. As I have shown, semantics is a dimension of metaphysical development. "Intellectual" properties can be defined as the specific semeiotic properties ("X is a sign of …") that "accrue" to existential conditions in the context of an inquiry. They denote the subject-matter of an inquiry as problematic. The context in which Dewey deals with the problem of intellectual properties is that of an inquiry in its process:

> There are … many cases in which we can not complete an attempted inference; when that is, we can not tell just what some thing means although it is undoubted in its existential manifestation. (LW3: 65)

The distinction between "semeiotic" and "intellectual" properties is mainly found in LW4. As often happens in Dewey's works, the distinction is not always regular from a terminological viewpoint. A different notion of "intellectual" is given for example in LW1: 101-105, where semeiotic and intellectual are synonyms, and "instrumentality" of thought is taken to mean the fact that thinking is semeiotic all the way through and that a sign is an instrument, that is, it plays an evidential function (LW1: 134). However, the terminological inconsistency does not overshadow the distinction of the two concepts. The following properties are the forms of all the possible "intellectual" properties:

(1) Vagueness or Indeterminacy (VS. adequate definiteness, LW4: 184; 187-188; LW12: 115-116)
(2) Contradictoriness (VS. consistency, LW4: 184 ff.)

It is possible to characterize the intellectual properties in at least two ways. First, the intellectual properties are the properties of an indexical existence that does not allow at the moment a *safe inference* to a determinate conclusion. Second, they are the properties that accrue to the subject-matter of an inquiry when the *existential reference* of observations, experimentations and rational discourse is problematic. Following Dewey, let us call the propositions in which the intellectual properties occur "Semblance-propositions." In "Appearing and Appearance," Dewey claims: "Deferred inference, or relation to a missing but signified object, is expressed in

such propositions as "This seems to be pure milk (but perhaps it is skimmed milk)" (LW3: 68). On the one hand, these intellectual properties are properties that "accrue" to the subject-matter of an inquiry, to antecedent existent conditions, when these conditions enter the field of a problematical interaction between a human being with environmental conditions. An indexical existence (a mere indexical or the indexical residuum of an object) *really* acquires these intellectual properties when it is turned into the subject-matter of a reflective process and during the time it performs such a function. In these cases, "the inferred object … is merely "apparent," that is apparently but not surely signified" (LW3: 68). "Appearing now takes temporarily the form of seeming rather than of showing. But "seeming" does not signify that something seems to exist, but that a certain *object* seems to be *pointed* to: "seeming" denotes an essayed, but temporarily blocked, inference" (LW3: 70). The intellectual properties do not have any special mentalistic or psychic status, in the sense in which epistemological philosophies take the reality of such properties to be dependent only upon the representing mind of the subject and not upon the object represented. What Dewey does not accept is that: (1) there is a metaphysical dichotomy between the "mental" and the "extra-mental" or "physical"; (2) that the problematic situation is understood in a purely subjective way; (3) that cognitive and non-cognitive experiences are confused; and (4) that the deposit of past cognitive experiences in present non-cognitive experiences is overlooked. On the contrary, the "reality" of an indexical existence at a certain stage of the inquiry *is* its problematic or intellectual reality, in its vagueness, indeterminacy and contradictoriness. X *is* a sign too loose for an adequate resolution of the problem (vagueness) and simultaneously X *is* the sign for competing and incompatible inferences (contradictoriness). The reality of an X is neither in isolation from a field of interactions, nor is it prior to that particular field of interaction with a human organism in which it acquires semeiotic and intellectual properties. Therefore, the indexical existence X *really is* vague and contradictory, at least in one phase of its career. X has the potentiality of being problematical and unsettled, and this problematical character is what becomes actualized in inquiry. The reality of X is not reduced to its "mental" existence (so that, e.g., X as a physical phenomenon is neither vague nor contradictory), but *part* of its reality includes the problematical subject-matter in which it is articulated in the present inquiry.

On the other hand, however, the terms that occur in Semblance-propositions and denote intellectual properties do not have an existential function, but only a conceptual and attributive one. The recurrence to indexical and demonstrative terms does not rule out the fact that operations of experimentation and observation are problematic (vague and contradictory) in their existential reference. Moreover, when the existential reference is taken in its ultimate actual realization in the judgment, the proposition is now a causal proposition and cannot be a Semblance-proposition. In other words, the subject-matter has been transformed through inquiry into a conclusive "whole" (a subject and a predicate united by a copula) which can be acted upon and which is therefore neither vague, nor indeterminate, nor contradictory. As a matter of fact, the task of a process of inquiry is to transform through rational discourse and the other phases of inquiry the subject-matter from a vague condition to the definite condition which is not only more determinate than the initial conditional but also adequate and pertinent to the problem of the situations. This is what Dewey calls "rigor and productivity" in inquiry (see Ch. 5, §4.2). The task of inquiry is, at least in part, to turn a vague, indeterminate and contradictory subject-matter into a determinate and operable one.

One way of pursuing the task of inquiry is to transform Semblance-propositions into S-propositions. I am drawing the notion of "S-proposition" from Murray Murphey (2003) but adapting it to Dewey's logic. An S-proposition is a proposition that is determined at least in relation to the organic structures that are involved in the process of inquiry in specific cases of observation, in order to clarify as much as possible the "exact nature of the evidence at hand" (LW3: 68; see also LW3: 69; 70). Clearly stated:

> … the force of the substitution is to call attention to a specific relation, to that particular part of the nervous organism which is involved as a condition, a physical or causal condition, of the appearance of the thing which is to serve as a sign. The propositions under discussion make explicit the exact nature of the thing to be used as evidence, before it is used. (LW3: 68)

The process of substitution is not different from the one of the scientist who specifies the experimental conditions he has employed in producing the phenomena observed. Dewey claims that the inquirer has to guard against the ambiguity of terms such as "seems," "appears" etc. Therefore, "we must specify the respect in which [something] appears, to eye, ear, touch, smell." If I say that "a straight stick rising out of water looks bent

(implying relation to the eye) I but state an objective fact, verified by a camera, and explained by well-known physical principles" (LW3: 68). To state in the course of an inquiry that something is seen, heard, tasted, felt etc. is to formulate S-propositions. In the section on sensa, I made clear that sensa as appearance2 are already semeiotic classifications of physical existential interactions or feelings and are therefore fallible. For Murphey, as for C. I. Lewis, these S-propositions are classifications of mere sensational inputs in perceptual judgments but are at the same time "given" and infallible. The point is to understand that these propositions are something different from sensa as appearance1 but are at the same time a partial inference, or an inference performed within an inquiry that has not produced a conclusion yet. An S-proposition is "infallible" in the sense that it aims to establish the real evidence played by an observation at a certain point of the inquiry with no pretension to constitute a conclusion or to draw further inferential consequences from this observation. Saying "this stick *looks* bent" is different from saying "this stick *is* bent," in the sense that in the second case the use of the expression is existential while in the first case it is only attributive and conceptual and is limited to an adequate formulation of the evidential material at hand. The S-proposition is infallible in the sense that the inquirer is suspending any further inferential judgment and is limiting herself to the determination of the evidential "facts" of the case (LW12: 152). It is true that an S-proposition is already the product of an inferential judgment and a classification (it requires the notion of "looking," etc.) and is therefore the consequence of a highly specialized knowledge, but it is at the same time taken to be intermediate and not conclusive in a process of inquiry, which means its "material truth" can rely on a minimum of evidence (LW15: 124). As a matter of fact, if the inquirer is not lying, the S-proposition is "materially true," although the problem of truth is strictly speaking related only to the final judgment (the conclusion of the inquiry). Therefore, the same proposition, although materially true, can be "invalid" for the present inquiry (see Burke 1994: 204-206). "Sense-knowledge," as distinct from "rational knowledge," is not at all "a special kind of knowledge nor yet a separate component of knowledge" (LW15: 90-91). On the contrary, it is a *function* in inquiry, namely, "that aspect of the system of knowledge in and by which knowledge extending across an indefinitely extensive spatial and temporal range of facts is anchored and focalized in that which is *here-and-now*." S-propositions are clearly instances of sense-knowledge, that is, observational singular propositions aiming to establish the material evidence, the "facts" of the case, within a process of inquiry. The content of S-propositions is therefore "sensory-perceptual meanings" (LW1: 255) and not immediate qualities or feelings. This is the same conclusion Dewey comes to when he opposes his "naturalistic theory of perception" to the "epistemological" one (LW2: 46 ff.). With his naturalistic approach, Dewey rejects the two tenets of the epistemological theory of perception, namely: (1) that sense-knowledge is a special kind of knowledge, "consciousness," and that (2) sensa have a special metaphysical status, a "psychic" or "mental" existence, so that the problem of knowledge becomes the epistemological problem of how it is possible in general that psychical or mental entities correspond to extra-mental entities. Dewey argues against (1) by positing that sense-knowledge is a function within inquiry, not an isolated or autonomous kind of knowledge parallel to what is called rational knowledge. Against (2), he argues that sensa as appearances1 are the product of a psycho-physical interaction, where the site of existence is the "field" of interaction itself. As appearances2 or appearances3, sensa are the indexical reference of an act of recognition or as an act of inquiry, both inferential operations in different way and measure.

In my view, Bernstein 1971 (see also Shusterman 1999) has clarified once for all the nature of Dewey's anti-foundationalism. Broadening this account of Dewey's thesis, I would say that Dewey is against foundationalism as entailing that (1) the ground of knowledge is an "antecedent," ready-made reality (presentative realism); (2) the ground of knowledge is sense-data grasped in self-evident atomic propositions, examples of non-doxastic awareness or apprehension (empiricism); (3) the ground of knowledge lies in rational principles grasped through intuition (rationalism). I believe that my reconstruction of Dewey's sensa in relation to the notion of indexical existence further clarifies this interpretative line.

S-propositions are intimately connected to what Dewey called "the postulate of immediate empiricism" (MW4). According to the postulate of immediate empiricism,

> … things – anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term "thing" – are what they are experienced as. Hence, if one whishes to describe anything truly, his task is to tell what it is experienced as being. (MW4: 158)

Dewey's rhetoric is sometimes excessive in equating ontology with a description of an experience *whatsoever*. For instance, he claims that "this is a different experience – that is a different *thing*" (MW4: 162). However, an example can easily show that what Dewey is claiming is valuable. Let us say that if an inquirer experiences X at *t1* as "frightening," the inquirer is entitled to state that "X is frightening at *t1*." One the one hand, this statement can be more cautiously translated into the S-proposition "X *looks* frightening at *t1*." However, if she limits the existential use of the predicate to the event of X at *t1*, she is actually entitled to state that "X *is* frightening at *t1*." In this case, the proposition is a particular proposition and not a singular proposition. Moreover, the inquirer could study the case of why X looks frightening in all conditions C that are similar to those that occurred at *t1*, and consequently could classify X as a specimen of the kind "frightening" every time similar conditions C take place. In this case, "X *looks* frightening when conditions C similar to the conditions that took place at *t1* occur" and "X *is* frightening when conditions C similar to the conditions that took place at *t1* occur" would be singular rather than particular propositions. Let us also assume that X is a friend and that among the conditions C there is an error of recognition of X. If this were the case, the following logical picture would follow: (1) "X looks frightening at *t1*" and "X is frightening at *t1*" can be both particular propositions, formulated in the middle of an inquiry as instruments to determine the problem at stake (LW12: 309). The first case, the S-proposition, should be given priority over the other formulation insofar as the reference to one causal condition of the event ("… looks … ") makes it heuristically more effective. Assuming that X is eventually identified as a friend and the S-proposition is classified as a mistaken observation, it remains true that X looked frightening at *t1* and that in this sense it was frightening at *t1*. The mistake would have been to infer from it that X *is* actually frightening in all conditions. (2) "X looks frightening when conditions C similar to the conditions that took place at *t1* occur" and "X is frightening when conditions C similar to the conditions that took place at *t1* occur" can be both singular propositions formulated in the middle of an inquiry on the basis of past experiences, where the conclusion that X was considered frightening was actually a *mistake* in consequence of a wrong identification of X. Again, the mistake mentioned here is relative to the inference from the S-proposition at *t1* to the classification of X as frightening also when one essential condition, that is, the wrong identification of X, is removed. I will address in a further section the problem of truth in Dewey's terms. For now, it is sufficient to make clear that strictly speaking the fact that X looks frightening in conditions C is as real as the fact that X is in different and more standard conditions non-frightening. A significant use of conceptual oppositions such as "real" and "apparent," "subjective" and "objective" is to be aware of the fact that these categories apply to the evidential, semeiotic function of Xs and not to Xs taken "in their original and innocent occurrence" (LW14: 25-26).

3. Substance, Existential Conditions and Predication of Kinds

Let me now move to Dewey's notion of "substance." The notion of substance is important insofar as its analysis gives also the possibility to grasp Dewey's understanding of the mechanism of predication of kinds, or better, the semantic link between the "kinds" predicated and the properties that these predicates denote. Some scholars (Boisvert 1988; Dicker 1972; Black 1962: 515-516; Burke 1994:59; 81-82; 246-247; Burke 2002a: 147; Gardner 2000; Garrison 2005: 826; Hildebrand 2003: 81-82; Randall 1957; Randall 1958: 223; 231-235) have dwelt on Dewey's theory of substance providing insightful and historically informed analysis of this concept. However, these reconstructions, although insightful, are lacking at least as the notion of indexical existence is concerned. Therefore, a new consideration of Dewey's claims is needed.

One of the most explicit series of statements on substance is in *Logic* (LW12: 130-133). The fundamental claim to be unpacked is that "substance" is first and foremost a *logical* notion and not an ontological one. ""Substance" represents … a logical, not an ontological, determination" (LW12: 131). "Logical" refers in this context to the semeiotic properties acquired by an X when it is settled as this or that sign or set of signs, and represents therefore a semeiotic function. "Substance" is therefore a synonym of "object." "The condition – and the sole condition that has to be satisfied in order that there may be substantiality, is that certain qualifications hang together as dependable signs that certain consequences will follow when certain interactions take place.

This is what is meant when it is said that substantiality is a logical, not a primary ontological determination" (LW12: 131-133). A formal definition of "substance" could be:

Def. Substance: a set of existential factors *used* as a warranted sign for sets of stable inferences, predicaments and operations in general; similarly, a set of existential factors that would produce certain consequences if certain conditions occurred.

In what follows I explain the different components of this definition in detail. The claim that a substance is first and foremost a semeiotic and semantic structure, a consequence of past experiences and inquiries, does not deny that this semeiotic structure is "warranted" by the existent conditions that have made inquiries possible and successful. The birth certificate of a substance is the construction of a judgment and its conclusive function in inquiry. As an abstract substance, its locus is the "assertion" ("subject-matter which has been prepared to be final," LW12: 123), while as an actual substance, it coincides with the "affirmation" or final judgment (LW12: 123-125). In this sense, substances are not original but are a "happy outcome of a complex history" (LW1: 135; see also LW1: 143). In talking about the structure of the judgment, Dewey introduces the notion of logical substance as the "coherent whole" structured through inquiry and judgment in a final assertion:

> The subject is existential, either a singular this, or a set of singulars. But there are conditions of inquiry which must be satisfied by anything taken to be a subject. (1) It must delimit and describe the problem in such a way as to indicate a possible solution. (2) It must be such that new data, instituted by observational operations directed by the provisional predicate (representing a possible solution), will unite with its subject-matter to form a coherent whole; and it is capable of incorporating into itself other predicated qualifications until it becomes, as such, a unity of inter-connected distinctions, or "properties." (LW12: 130-131)

The *same* indexical existent X, here taken in the form of the existential conditions to which the demonstrative refers, is something that becomes in the course of different completed experiences and inquiries the *evidential basis* for different inferential predicaments. The experience of different existential consequences following different manipulations with X shows that X *allows* for different inferences. The "properties" that are taken to reside, cohere, inhere and be instantiated in an object are in reality the content of conclusions of different warranted inferences drawn on X. When I say that the same X is sweet, white, granular etc., I am committing myself to the provisional statement that the same X, when experienced in certain conditions C, will produce the feeling that is called "sweet"; in other conditions C1, it will produce a certain "quality" commonly labeled as "white", etc. Once established as "unified whole," X is treated as an object, "sugar"; it is used and enjoyed as such in daily practices of life and symbolically represented in language and communication. The more complex the interactions in which an X enters and is experienced, the more properties the correspondent substance will contain.

There are at least four reasons why Dewey claims that a substance is first and foremost a logical and not an ontological notion:

(i) First, every substance is *selective* of what an X is. As it is clear from the study of Dewey's theory of inquiry, the "data," or the manipulation of the subject-matter of an inquiry, are never "given," but more appropriately "taken" (actualized or "produced" through operations and selected for their contextual logical functional force, LW12: 127) on the basis of the needs of the situation and the tasks of inquiries. The "selective emphasis" implied in the process of construction of a substance refers to the "specified functional way" in which an X is settled as consequence of operations of inquiry (LW12: 132; see also LW1: 31; LW4: 191). Selection is due to different reasons such as human structural organic conditions and interests. What X is warranted to be when it is classified as a "substance" or an "object" is always in a certain sense semantically poorer than what X *is* also outside our organizing practices and furthermore of what X *could* be as a sign. Dewey claims that "essence is never existence, and yet it is the essence, the distilled import, of existence" (LW1: 143). As I have shown, according to Dewey, the singular denoted by a demonstrative term is inexhaustible in its meaning in intension, so that every classification cannot help but be a semantic demarcation. At the same time, however, a substance instituted as a semeiotic structure actualizes some of the potentialities that were unexpressed and latent in X,

namely the potentialities of performing this or that semeiotic function. Once an event becomes a substance it enters a new phase of its career and in a sense it gains a "double life" (LW1: 132), in such a way that it can be object of "ideal experimentation" beyond the "interaction with crude and raw events" which it has as a mere existent.

The fact that substance has a selective dimension based on the organizing practices performed by human beings does not mean that the existent conditions have no structure in themselves apart from their semeiotic life. On the contrary, Dewey denies that

> … there is or can be any such thing as mere existence – phenomenon unqualified as respects organization and force, whether such phenomenon may be psychic or cosmic. (MW2: 333; see Sleeper 1986)

Reflection and institution of semeiotic properties in X are like the "organic growth" of an experience which is "already organized" and which keeps sustaining the sign-significance relationships among parts of reality. The fact that the existent conditions are already organized, at least as a set of potentialities, and that every singular is inexhaustible in meaning in intension further clarifies the reasons why Dewey stresses his theory of the primary logical purport of the notion of substance. What he wants to claim in saying that the import of substance is not immediately ontological but primarily logical is the fact that, as some other naturalists have made clear (mainly, Randall Jr. and Woodbridge), what an X is as an event and *can* be as a semeiotic structure is never reducible to what X *is* presently taken to be as this or that substance. Add here Dewey's reconstruction of teleology

(ii) Second, the status of substantiality is not dependent upon long existential duration in time (LW4: 103). A fast event such as lightening has the same substantial character as a mountain has. In this sense, Dewey says that a substance has first and foremost "*logical* solidity and endurance" (LW12: 133) and not metaphysical endurance in the sense of existential duration in time. A substance is not a durable set of existential conditions, but is the stable relation, fixed through inquiry, between a set of existential factors and given conditions whenever they occur and for the time they occur, and the consequences that follow. When a "transitory event" becomes "subject of scientific judgment," that is, when it becomes a target of warranted predication, enters the condition of substantiality. This is because a substance has primarily a "functional nature." In other words, it refers to the inferential possibility of taking existential conditions as dependable evidential signs of certain consequences, independently from the extension of their temporal endurance. Dewey also claims that in this sense substances can be taken to be "eternal" (LW1: 119), although only as dialectical and non-existential objects. Although this claim might bring Dewey close to a nominalist position, the first implication of such a claim is again that substance has first and foremost a logical import and not a direct ontological one. The almost immediate existential transitivity of certain existential conditions is not an objection to the possibility of attributing to them a comprehensive substantial status, which is first and foremost inferential. The substantive character of existential conditions is quite independent from their duration, so that, if an event has a brief existential permanence (e.g., a lightening), this "property" of having a brief duration becomes part of the series of classifications in which the substantiality of X can be expressed.

(iii) Third, the existential conditions and the "substances" *really* grow through development of experience and knowledge, in the sense that the semeiotic properties instituted in X are *real* properties. They are real actualization and institutionalization in X of semeiotic functions that were only potential or not even potential before. Dewey's tenet is that what grows is not only the agent's set of beliefs and habits about X, but *X itself*, which, as appearance3, is already the growth of appearance1 and which in turn can be institutionalized as this or that substance, that is, an appearance2. In their temporal "career," existential conditions acquire new properties, among which are also semeiotic properties. The successive passages (a) from mere existent outside the field of interactions with a human organism to the status of an evidential part of one's experience thanks to the organic perceptual apparatus appearance1, (b) from the status of appearance1 to the status of indexical existent appearance3, and (c) from the status of appearance3 to the status of a dependable evidential set of signs for warranted inferences appearance2, all mark real development in the ontology of X. This is because the knowing-relation, understood as inquiry, implies phases of interaction-experimentation on existential conditions and not only produces new phenomena and actualities, but also brings about as its conclusion a final reorganization of

these existential conditions into new wholes. "Any predications," says Dewey, "is a requalification, or operational means of instituting a requalification, and so involves a change" (LW12: 239-240). However, the symbolic predication marks already in itself the emergence of a new property in X as an actualization of its semeiotic potentialities. The new organization produced in the judgment, once verified in the overt action, is not merely "mental" or "psychic," but is the constructive production of a new real artifact at its fundamental level in the form of an institutionalized sign or group of signs, that is, a substance. Semeiotic properties are at the same time "ideal" (dependent on the constitutive or constructivist agency of man's intelligent behavior) and "real" (they become new real properties of X and are grounded in the potentialities of X of acquiring these new semeiotic properties). Semantics is the first step in the human contribution to the real development of the universe.[8] The new substance that emerges from X at *t2* is not entirely new, since the inferential consequences which were previously operable on X at *t1* are still possible. However, the substance at *t2* is not the same substance as that of *t1*, although they are both new phases and developmental stages in the career of X.

Dewey's opposition to presentative realism and idealism relies on the following considerations. According to Dewey, "knowing is something that happens to things in the natural course of their career, not the sudden introduction of a "unique" non-natural type of relation – that to mind or consciousness" (MW6: 121). In the "natural continuity" between *existents* and *knowns*, "things in becoming known undergo a specific and detectable qualitative change" (MW6: 121). Dewey rejects all the following alternative options. In particular, Dewey denies (1) that the knowing-relation is only a presentative relation of transparency and not a relation of construction and selection (VS. presentative realism); (2) that the semeiotic properties fixed in a substance are not the product of a real change undergone by X on the basis of its potentialities and of real operations of inquiry, but are pre-existent and actual in X and only manifested by inquiry (VS. presentative realism); (3) that reality is ultimately reducible to "objects" and "substances," with no further existential residuum (VS. idealism). In *Logic* (LW12: 137), Dewey makes clear that inquiry and judgment produce a temporal reconstruction of their subject-matter. The temporality of inquiry and judgment does not refer to the trivial fact that the act of inquiry and judgment takes time, but that at the beginning *t1* of the process of inquiry, X does not have certain semeiotic properties that it has at the successful conclusion of the process of inquiry *t2*.

It is in the light of these considerations that some interpretations of Dewey's constructive side regarding to the notion of substance prove to be inadequate (Boisvert 1963:85: 87-88; 171; Dicker 1972). According to these interpretations, Dewey's notion of "object" has to be understood only in an epistemological and not in an ontological sense. The simplifications of these interpretations does not rely on the fact that a "substance" is the semantic structure relative to X, which is the result of a successful inquiry (or series of inquiries) on X, but in the assumption that the acquired semantic structure is not something real that has become part of the temporal reality, or "career," of X. A correct interpretation has to pay attention to the fact that Dewey is not only arguing for the tautology that since inquiry is a temporal process, the "knowledge of X" as the conclusion of the inquiry at *t2* was not real at *t1*. More deeply, his fundamental tenet is that X *as known*, namely, X as having a newly actualized semeiotic property, is the product of a new real substance or the reshaping of an old one. X has undergone a real change by virtue to the process of inquiry.

A last point needs to be made here in relation to an ambiguity in Dewey's characterization of the constitution of a substance as the "acquisition of potentialities" (LW12: 132). "Potentiality" can have here two meanings: (1) it can mean active potentiality, in the sense of a real power to do something, even when that power is not actualized; in this sense, the potential nature of a sign is defined in opposition to the situation in which the sign is actually used as a sign. The potentiality does not refer to the susceptibility of a series of existential conditions to be reconstructed in the judgment, but to the susceptibility of an organized "substance" to be used as such in action, to be acted upon. (2) However, acquisition of potentiality can also have a more fundamental meaning. It can refer to the susceptibility of a series of existential conditions to become a new whole or substance through inquiry and judgment. In this sense, the potentiality is a passive susceptibility of a series of existential conditions to become a new organized whole or substance, susceptibility to be organized in this or in that way. Again, "kinds" are dependent upon certain operations (LW12: 385-387). X can be classified as a specimen of the kind "food" only when the operations of eating and digesting X are actually performed by an organism (X is food in

8 On Dewey's evolutionary naturalism as "humanism," see Gale 2010b.

actuality), or when an organism could perform those operations (X is food in potentiality). However, outside the possibility of contact with organisms with certain functions, X is potentially "food" only in a weak sense.[9]

(iv) Fourth, substantiality is a primary logical and not ontological determination in the sense that certain existential conditions have to be "dependable evidential signs" (LW12: 132) in order to be taken as constitutive factors of a substance. This thesis does not entail that a substance does not have a strong ontological import. As the content of our beliefs, practices and linguistic formulations, a "substance" corresponds to reality when these formulations are *warranted* (see below the notions of truth and correspondence pragmatistically understood). The tenet that substance is primarily a logical structure does not mean that it is a structure *only* with a conceptual designation, or that it is an object with a special "mental" or "psychic" reality that does not concern an extra-mental reality. It does not even mean that a substance is a wild construction or a metaphysical illusion. There is no doubt that the "constructive" side is important in Dewey's metaphysics in many ways. For instance, the indexical existence X is the result of the interaction of environing conditions with a human perceptual apparatus and is in this sense a construction. In its function as a settled sign, the event is constructed again. Moreover, the demarcation of an X as this or that type of sign is itself the product of a selection (selective emphasis) and is therefore constructed. However, as is often the case in Dewey's work, the opposition between constructivism and non-constructivism is reframed once the tacit assumptions of one of the opposing terms are revealed (some scholars have dwelt more or less explicitly with the problem of constructivism in Dewey: Burke 2002a: 150-151; Clark 1960: 42-43; Dicker 1972:152-153; Hildebrand 2003:60; Hickman-Neubert-Reich 2009; McDermid 2006: 46; 82-83; Murphy 1951: 205; Piatt 1951: 126; Rosenthal 2003: 46; Ryder 2003: 61; Shook 2002: 101; Shook 2003: 343; Zedler 1969: 78).[10] The interpretation of human experience and knowledge as constructivist of an extra-mental reality works with the unjustified assumption that reality in its eulogistic sense is the total sum of events and connections (let us say, the state of "nature," N) before N enters in relation with a human organism (see "Reality as Experience"). The understanding of reality that is operative behind this approach is therefore: (1) reality is what is previous to or isolated from interactions with a human organism and inquiry. (2) A correct understanding of what reality is in its eulogistic meaning has to consider the distinction between intrinsic properties (the properties that an entity has "in itself") and extrinsic properties (the properties that an entity has because of its relations with other entities). According to this view, only the intrinsic properties would be eulogistically real, while the other properties would be mental constructs. Dewey rejects this distinction, or accepts it only in a perspectival sense (see Rockwell 2005, Ch. 4). From a general viewpoint, however, Dewey's concern is that there is no reason to think that the knowing-relation is a special type of relation, in such a way that its products should have an ontological status *sui generis*, either "psychic" or "mental". A "substance," explained in its semeiotic structure (existential conditions X which are firmly taken to point to certain consequences, which could occur as existents under certain conditions – and consequently are classified as a kind), proves to be a set of existential occurrences which are taken as the sign of the occurrence of other eventual existents on the basis of a constant relation between the first set of occurrences and the second set. Relations here are of three types (see LW12). In any case, all the factors implied in this definition are something real, including the semeiotic relation, the property of functioning (actually or potentially) as a sign.

3.1. Substances and Predication of Kinds: Dewey's Two Souls

The fact that "substance" is first and foremost a logical notion is also related to Dewey's reconstruction of the concept of "property." In particular, this reconstruction refers to a different understanding of the mechanisms of predication of kinds and of the semantic link between our true predications and the properties that are denoted by them. Although this point has not been discussed in Dewey scholarship (see however Browning 2002: 170; Burke 2002b: 229; Gale 2006: 78-79; Gale 2010a: 117-129),[11] I take it to be a key step in

9 It is in the light of these reflections that Dewey comes to criticize the notion of "inherent potentiality" in LW1.

10 My position is close to Piatt's reading. Also interesting that Sleeper (1986: 6-7) sees in Dewey both an Aristotelian and a Kantian legacy.

11 However, some ambiguities remain unexplained. For instance, Gale (2010a: 122) states that "the generic trait of existence are inquire-

understanding Dewey's potion of realism. Dewey displays two different attitudes on this point, almost two different souls, one wherein greater weight is given to the reality of singulars over generals, and one wherein generals are taken more into account as realities in their own right. Let us call the first approach (i) the *non-transparency approach* and the second approach (ii) the *distinction between ontological and logical generality* approach. The non-transparency approach can be briefly introduced by saying that the predicability of the same predicate P to two singulars x and y does not depend on the fact that x and y instantiate the same property, although it is supported by the respective properties of x and y. This position brings Dewey closer to a nominalist position instead of a realist one (LW12: 260-263). In particular, Dewey agrees with a nominalistic position in claiming that the logical generality has necessarily the character of a "symbol." This point can be introduced through the following biconditional:

"Px" is true and "Py" is true ↔ P denotes the *one and the same* property Q instantiated or exemplified by x and y, and Q is a metaphysical universal instantiated by x and y

in which x and y denote two singulars or individuals. The biconditional could be made more complex by taking into consideration the attribution of the same predicate to the same individual in different moments and eventualities (such as "Px" is true at *t1* and Px" is true at *t2*); or even by attributing the same predicate to two different individuals in different moments and eventualities. Howeve, this would not change Dewey's point. Dewey questions this double implication in the following way:

(1) He does not deny that the predications Px and Py are possible and true
(2) He does not deny that these predications are true in virtue of the properties of x and y (although he reinterprets pragmatically the notion of "correspondence," see below).
(3) He does not even deny that Xs have real general ways of behaving
(4) He denies that the predications are true because x and y instantiate *one and the same* property.

Dewey writes:

> The identification of a sudden light as a flash of lightening, of a noise as the banging of a door, is not grounded upon existential qualities which immediately present themselves, but upon the qualities with respect to the *evidential function* or use in inquiry they subserve. What is recurrent, uniform, "common," is the power of immediate qualities to be *signs*. Immediate qualities in their immediacy are, as we have seen, unique, non-recurrent. But in spite of their existential uniqueness, they are capable, *in the continuum of inquiry*, of becoming distinguishing characteristics which mark off (circumscribe) and identify *kinds* of objects or events. As far as qualities are identical in their functional force, as means of identification and demarcation of kinds, objects are of the same kind no matter how unlike their immediate qualities. … The question, then, concerns the way in which the general form is instituted, it being noted that recurrence is connected with inference and not with existences apart from their function in inference. (LW12: 248-249; see also LW4: 189-190)

Dewey repeats that his theory "rejects completely the view that a conception represents simply a selection of material that is found to be antecedently "common" to a number of singulars" (LW12: 260-263). Dewey's rejection depends "(1) upon interpreting the "common" in terms of the function performed by existential qualities in inference, and (2) upon the necessity of the abstract universal in order to warrant inferential use of qualities in any inquiry. The latter consideration is the more important in that it indicates the logical necessity of conceptions that, while *suggested* by singulars, are not *logically* derived from them, even from that which is common among them" (LW12: 261-262). Dewey's point is that x and y, as mere qualities or existential interactions, are unique points. To become a "kind," the quality must become a sign, and its *universality* is a logical property (the property of a standard use of a sign) instead of an ontological property. The universality coincides with the function of predication upon x and y, not with the same metaphysical property instantiated by x and y. As a universal, it is first a logical function rather than an ontological property. This universality of the sign indicates a constant possibility of classification or operation on X, namely, a warranted predicability. Again,

related" with no further substantive explanation.

Dewey claims that "qualities are not recurrent in themselves but in their evidential function. As evidential, they are characteristics which describe a kind" (LW12: 351; see also LW4: 127; 130; LW10: 219). The notion of "property" might be ambiguous given the particular treatment that Dewey accords to it. I have shown that the concept of property has first a logical and epistemic sense and only derivatively an ontological import, similar to the way in which substance is taken to be first and foremost a logical notion. However, insofar as we interpret the notion of universal "property" in a direct realistic sense, as the *one and same* something instantiated in x and in y, then Dewey's position becomes clear.

The non-transparency thesis is indirectly supported by other claims, such as that "comprehension" and "definition" (designing the "kinds" that constitute the analysis of a broader "kind") have existential reference in Aristotelian logic, wherein knowledge is ultimately a vision of the essences, the intellectual grasp of forms, while they do not have existential reference in Dewey's theory (LW12: 357). Is "universality" real or it is a mere *ens rationis*? Dewey would say that it is real as *ens rationis* because it *is* an *ens rationis*. "Universality" becomes part of reality as a logical or semeiotic property that X acquires by virtue of human inquiry. It is not a "psychological accretion – as seems to be implied in logical conceptualism," but is the logical function performed by an X in inquiry. In other words, universality is not part of reality because x and y *qua* mere existents instantiate one and the same universal property denoted by P, but rather because x and y become, through inquiry, the evidential basis on which their individual differences can be overlooked and the same predicate can be attributed to them (or the same operation can be performed on them). Universality is the property of objects and substances, not of events or mere existences (which have, however, their own internal organization and their own general ways of behavior). Dewey would say therefore that there are general ways of behavior in events and existences independent from semeiotic properties by way of human inquiry, although he would not admit that universal "kinds" are real independently from human practices of organization. "Kinds" *become* real as semeiotic properties.

At the same time, Dewey displays a different soul, in which a scholastic realism closer to Peirce's plays a greater role (LW12: 260-263; LW14: 23; see Boisvert 1988).[12] Dewey's claims are allied with scholastic realism in that general ways of acting are as real as singulars. "Individually qualified things have some qualities which are pervasive, common, stable." (LW1: 119). The distinction he draws between ontological generality and logical generality relies on this truth of scholastic realism. However, he affirms that ontological generality is only a necessary condition for logical generality but is not sufficient, since logical generality makes its appearance ("accrues" to existential conditions) only when "the existentially general is used as a controlling function" in inquiry. Logical generality accrues to existential singulars and ontological generality, but is neither reducible to nor deducible from it. It also furthers the potential logical generality present in a habit of expectation that has not yet been made explicitly linguistic in a formulation (LW12: 250). In this way, it would be possible to claim that if "Px" and "Py" are true, this is because the same ontological generality is instantiated by x and y, even though this is only one necessary condition for the predicability of P to x and y. The further needed condition for the truth of Px and Py is that the ontological generality instantiated in x and y has been *established* as a general *sign* through past inquiries (a universal "predicate," or a symbol with a universal logical force). With regard to this point, Dewey's theory differs from nominalism because logical generality "has its ground in existence (and hence is not a mere convenient memorandum or notation for a number of singulars)" (LW12: 263; see also LW4: 165), even though logical generality does not merely conform to nor reproduce ontological generality, but is rather a *use* of it for the task of inquiry.

12 See in particular LW 14: 21, in which Dewey replies to Reichenbach's charge of nominalism ("reduction of abstracta to concreta") by appealing to Peirce's realism. Peirce's extreme scholastic realism faces the following question: "whether *laws* and general *types* are figments of the mind or are real" (CP 1.16, 1903) and answers that laws, types, dispositions are real generals (metaphysical 3rdnesses). I take the following claim as sufficiently representative of Peirce's understanding of "kinds": "All classification, whether artificial or natural, is the arrangement of objects according to ideas. A natural classification is the arrangement of them according to those ideas from which their existence results. No greater merit can a taxonomist have than that of having his eyes open to the ideas in nature; no more deplorable blindness can afflict him than that of not seeing that there are ideas in nature which determine the existence of objects" (EP2: 127, 1902). As we have seen, Peirce's stance about nominalism/realism debate is object of different interpretations. However, I agree with interpretations such as Mayorga 2007, Roberts 1970 and Lane 2004 that see also in Peirce's early writings (i.e., also before 1868) a realist metaphysics of generals. For instance, W2: 181 clearly affirms a realistic view of generals. For a more constructivist reading of Peirce, see Ishida (2009: 45-46).

3.3. Common Sense Objects and Scientific Objects: Semantic Priority and Ontological Parity

The aim of this section is to show how the distinction between indexical existence and objects is at the bottom of Dewey's rejection of all theories that claim semantic or ontological incompatibility between "common sense objects" and "scientific objects." This is Dewey's attempt to overcome allegedly insoluble metaphysical oppositions among different types of objects (e.g. LW1: 109). Some scholars have more or less indirectly addressed this issue (Burke 2002: 147-148; Gale 2010: 121; Godfrey-Smith 2002, Hildebrand 2003: 48; Kannegiesser 1977: 96-109; Margolis 1977: 141-144 is right; Shook 2003: 326; Shook 2009: 106; Shook 2011: 12-13; Teehan 1996: 85), often in relation to Dewey's version of "naturalism" (on this, see also Bernstein 1959; Capps 1996; Delaney 2003; Manicas 2008; Roth 1963; Tiles 1995; Shook 2000; De Caro 2011).[13] My claim is that according to Dewey there is a twofold relationship between common sense objects and scientific objects. Simply stated, Dewey maintains that common sense objects have a *semantic priority* over scientific objects, and that at the same time there is an *ontological parity* between the two classes of objects.[14] In Dewey's terms, this is a metaphysical thesis (LW1: 50; LW4: 108; LW14: 80). As I have already briefly suggested, Dewey's approach to the notion of "object" does not allow for a purely "logical" or purely "ontological" interpretation: objects, substances, classes, kinds, and properties are foremost logical notions with consequential ontological implications. Therefore, it would be a mistake to overlook the logical or semeiotic structure of the "metaphysical" questions and subject-matter in Dewey's texts. The intermingled nature of logical and ontological issues can be displayed in what I call the Deweyan metaphysical question, which is:

Deweyan Metaphysical Question: How *should* we *think* about *indexical existences* Xs?

The normative formulation of the metaphysical question (see in particular LW4: 108) is a unified reconstruction of Dewey's different claims regarding metaphysics. Dewey makes at least two important statements about metaphysics, in particular in relation to its methodology and its subject-matter status. (1) First, an "empirical naturalist" takes metaphysics to mean "the more generalized statements about Nature which he finds to be justified" (LW14: 80). (2) Second, while "philosophy" is "love of wisdom," "metaphysics" as a discipline is "cognizance of the generic traits of existence" (LW1: 50). The first claim is a methodological claim about the right approach to inquiry in philosophy, that is a "naturalistic" approach; while the second claim expresses a distinction internal to philosophy between "wisdom" and "metaphysics."[15] What is common to both claims is that (a) metaphysics as a discipline is a cognitive enterprise and that (b) metaphysics as a subject-matter deals with the "generic" or general features of what exists. Let me clarify points (a) and (b) in greater detail. First, the claim that metaphysics is a cognitive discipline means that Dewey attributes to this discipline the task of studying "knowledge-objects" (LW1: 30), or "cognitive objects" (LW1: 31), i.e., objects articulated in linguistic representations and beliefs, not existents given in different modalities of experience. Knowledge-objects can be both objects of common sense and science (LW14: 18). As a consequence, "affectional and volitional objects" (LW1: 30) are excluded from the field of metaphysics, not as possible knowledge-objects but as contents of experience different from linguistic representations and beliefs. Where metaphysics deals with esthetic "beauty" or moral "goodness," these two properties constitute a *known*-subject-matter, represented in beliefs (see LW12: 292), and not the content of esthetic and moral perceptions. In this sense, metaphysical subject-matter is X as *known* and not X as the content of different types of experience. Insofar as we deal with "metaphysics," philosophy is the description of the general traits of reality with linguistic tools, or the science of "reality" understood as the science of different types of known objects with their respective properties. Therefore, philosophy does not coincide with wisdom, which is rather the ideal of the experience of reality as distinct from linguistic representation. In this sense, "metaphysics" and "wisdom" are the two irreducible polarities of the same philosophical organon. Second, the fact that metaphysical subject-matter is the general trait of what exists confirms that metaphysics deals with knowledge-objects. These objects are therefore characterized by *logical*

13 Dallas (2000: 24; 30) seems to provide a contradictory account of Dewey's theory on this point.

14 I take the notion of ontological parity from Teehan (1996: 85).

15 I take Dewey's quotation not to affirm that metaphysics is excluded from philosophy, but only to state that wisdom and metaphysics are the two complementary and irreducible tasks of philosophy.

generalities and properties. This does not mean that what is grasped through representation is only logical generality. On the contrary, knowledge-objects refer to what exists in all the different fashions in which what exists presents itself. The distinction between appearances1, 2 and 3 is already a metaphysical organization of what exists in its general trait. The threefold distinction of the appearing X is somehow a formal and highly general classification of what exists. The considerations developed about the notion of substance are again a formal and general characterization of what exists. Third, the distinction among appearance1, 2 and 3 and the notion of indexical residuum in every "object" shows that the same indexical existent can be developed into different objects: either the same object can acquire new properties over time through further experimentation and inquiry, or the same indexical existent X can be classified in different ways at the same time with no contradiction.

The problem of the compatibility between the two "worlds," the common sense objects world and the science objects world, is therefore a problem of compatibility between two "universes of discourse" or "symbols-meaning constellations." It is already clear that since the metaphysical question is "how should we think about indexical existences Xs?", the answer is: we should think about X in all the possible ways which are justified and warranted by experience. Different classifications of X do not stand in contrast to one another, but are the different classifications of the same indexical existence that are the result of different experimental approaches and successful inquiries in X. In presenting his metaphysical stance, Dewey claims:

> … the present thesis sticks to the common-sense belief that universals, relations, meanings, are of and about existences, not their exhaustive ingredients. The same existential events are capable of an infinite number of meanings. Thus an existence identified as "paper," because the meaning uppermost at the moment is "something to be written upon," has as many other explicit meanings as it has important consequences recognized in the various connective interactions into which it enters. Since possibilities of conjunction are endless, and since the consequences of any of them may at some time be significant, its potential meanings are endless. … And if we say that after all it is "paper" which has all these different meanings, we are at bottom but asserting that all the different meanings have a common existential reference, converging to the same event. We are virtually asserting that the *existence* whose usual standardized meaning in discourse is paper, also has a multitude of other meanings; we are saying in effect that its existence is not exhausted in its being paper, although paper is its ordinary meaning for human intercourse. (LW1: 240-241)

There are at least two complementary theses contained in this quotation. (i) First, different objects can have the same existential reference. (ii) Second, the same existent can have endless meanings. Thesis (i) can be elucidated in this way: different objects can have the same existential reference at the same time if the existential reference is understood as possible; different objects have necessarily different existential references if existential reference is understood as actual. However, the unambiguous point is that the same indexical existence can be warrantedly developed into different objects and semantic structures with no contradiction. The existent, isolated and individuated at first as indexical existence, is therefore the common referent of different objects, such as the "paper" as "X usually used as something which can be written upon" and the "paper" as "X as displaying typical chemical structures and properties." Thesis (ii) restates what Dewey claims with regard to the meaning of any demonstrative term in intension. An indexical existence is potentially inexhaustible in meaning through the development of different objects. The common sense object and the scientific object are legitimate objects that refer to the same X. The fact that they display different properties does not show a problem of compatibility in principle.

The inexhaustibility of the meaning in intension of an indexical existence X *implies* therefore the compatibility of different classifications of the same X. At the same time, however, Dewey admits the possibility of contextual "incompatibilities" between a common sense object and a scientific object. Dewey reinterprets this incompatibility that however takes place only at a semantic level and in isolated cases. The alleged ontological or metaphysical incompatibility of the two classes of objects is for Dewey the consequence of a mistake.

Let us consider the following case. (A) "X is cold" and (B) "X has a certain type of distribution of particles." (1) At the semantic level, the incompatibility between the predicate " … is cold" and the predicate " … has a certain type of distribution of particles" signifies the incapacity of finding a way to transform A into B via a homogeneous medium. "If the word "language" is used not just formally, but to include its content of

substantial meanings," says Dewey, "the difference [between common sense objects and scientific objects] is a difference of language" (LW12: 82). As Dewey explains, common sense and science are two different "regulative schemes" (LW12: 70) in treating the same indexical references. Similarly, he explains that common sense and science are different approaches that develop different but complementary classes of knowledge-objects, i.e. different systems of symbols-meanings, which works in our experience as "regulative and normative of specific beliefs and judgments" (see LW12: 18-19).

The highest achievement of modern science is that it has produced this homogeneous medium thanks to a purely quantitative approach to what exists and to a methodological exclusion of qualities (LW4: 103; 105; 107; 173; 192; LW12: 71; 475-477). Different individual existents are therefore treated as "members of a comprehensive, homogenous, or non-qualitative system." When this happens, the subject-matter of specialized inquiries "react into the latter in a way that enormously refines, expands and liberates the contents and agencies at the disposal of common sense" (LW12: 72). This is why it is possible to state that the same object, the cold X, has at the same time a specific type of distribution of particles, or even further that the cold is this typical distribution of particles (LW4: 108). In this case, the common reference is the common sense object, not the indexical existence. The common sense object identified as "paper" becomes a more complex object through scientific inquiries, so that from it new inferences are possible (LW12: 155). However, strictly speaking, the common sense object can acquire scientific properties because (i) both the common sense object and the scientific object refer to the same indexical existence and (ii) modern science has been able to overcome the semantic incompatibility by identifying a homogeneous medium that transforms common sense properties into scientific properties. The important point here is that the scientific articulation of the experience and knowledge of indexical existents according to "measured quantities" through different techniques and procedures does not entail that "this is the way they *must* be thought, the *only* valid way of thinking them" (LW4: 108). Its only implication is that objects constructed through measured quantities are the best tools for the purpose of "generalized, indefinitely extensive translation" (LW4: 108; see also LW4: 109) of one phenomenon to another. (2) At the ontological level, the incompatibility only emerges when we turn the object of scientific knowledge into an alleged absolutely "real" object or when common sense inquiries are taken to produce the ultimate knowledge of reality, often in connection with the thesis that "perception" of the macroscopic world is an intrinsically cognitive operation (see MW3: 159; LW4: 176; LW12: 72-73).[16] This is more a "social" use of the results of science rather than a consequence of scientific knowledge in itself (LW12: 81-82). Taking these different meanings (common sense and science) to be "final" ontological commitments results either in one instance of the epistemological problem (what is the type of knowledge that gives as the absolute image of reality?) or the metaphysical problem (how is it possible that X is at the same time a qualitative object and an object of physics?). If we avoid the fallacy perpetuated by the Greeks and by Newton, of taking a knowledge-object as the representation of reality in its ultimate or most fundamental nature, the ontological problem disappears and what remains is only the semantic problem, which is contextual and limited to specific cases. The problem of the compatibility lies between two images of the world or two universes of discourse (LW12: 240-242). At the ontological level, both objects can be real at the same time, as they are different warranted classifications of the same X. What changes is the "kind," the predicate attributed to X, the classification. The predicate A "… is cold" and the predicate B "… has a certain distribution of particles" are the result of two different "reals of experience" (MW3: 159) or "doings" (LW4: 191; LW14: 28) or "manifestations" (LW1: 27) of the same piece of "nature" X. A, as a property of X which results from the sentiency of a human organism, refers to a "natural" or "cosmic" event in the same way that B describes a natural event (LW1: 204). Dewey writes that

> … qualities characteristic of sentiency are qualities *of* cosmic events. Only because they are such, is it possible to establish the one to one correspondence which natural science does establish between series of numbers and spatial positions on one hand and the series and spectra of sensory qualities on the other. The notion that the universe is split into two separate and disconnected realms of existence, one psychical and the other physical, and then that these two realms of being, in spite of their total

16 On the contrary, daily perception becomes cognitive within processes of inquiry in order to keep our activity going, so that the "objects" discriminated in daily perception are not the ultimate reality but are settled meanings, habitual and warranted inferences relative to the recurrent "problems" of our daily experience.

> disjunction, specifically and minutely correspond to each other – as a serial order of numbered vibrations corresponds to the immediately felt qualities of vision of the prismatic spectrum – presents the acme of incredibility. The one-to-one agreement is intelligible only as a correspondence of properties and relations in one and the same world which is first taken upon a narrower and more external level of interaction, and then upon a more inclusive and intimate level. (LW1: 204-205)

The "one and the same world" is identifiable as an indexical existence or as an indexical residuum. Both A and B are potentialities of the same X actualized through different types of inquiries and established in predicate/possibilities. Do A and B describe the same phenomenon? The answer depends on the notion of phenomenon. If "phenomenon" means the same X, the same indexical existence or indexical residuum (appearance1), it is possible to say that A and B describe the same phenomenon. If "phenomenon" means one of the two "objects" (appearance2), A and B describe different phenomena. The metaphysical problem (what is real in the sense of how we *should think* about reality) does not include the problem of the incompatibility of two different images of the world. Similarly, it does not pursue the task of establishing which is the only image adequate to the world. As a consequence, the genuine metaphysical problem concerns the truth or falsity of our different beliefs about X, that is, the truth or falsity of the specific modalities of predication about X. In other words, what constitutes a problem is not that A and B are *more than one* predicate, but that A and B can actually be incorrect predications. Intellectual, moral, esthetic and broadly speaking physical properties of an X are all doings of nature emerging from X in different fields of interaction and in relation to different methods of study. The same X can constitute different "problems" and ask for different inquiries, solutions, and classifications (LW12: 71; 82; see also LW1: 13-14).

The thesis regarding the inexhaustibility of the meaning of a demonstrative term in intension is complementary to the "technological" and "constructive" conception of knowledge developed by Dewey (see also LW4: 168; 195; 476-477; LW15: 88). According to him, a naturalized understanding of inquiry must (i) reject the thesis of the archetypal status of the "antecedent" reality and (ii) realize, as experimental science has brought to light, that the object of knowledge is always the result of interaction (perceptual and more broadly operational). This interaction lies between organic or extra-organic tools on the one side and environing conditions on the other, so that both the indexical existent and the object of knowledge are always the product of operations of interaction and manipulation. E.g., the indexical existent X would not be actually "red" outside the concrete interaction with a human organism, and similarly X would not become the knowledge-object "red X" without human experimentation, inquiry and final judgment. What is experienced and known is never an antecedent reality, but the result of a present interaction. Dewey says:

> the true object of knowledge resides in the consequences of direct action. When we take this point of view, if only by way of a hypothesis, the perplexities and difficulties of which we have been speaking vanish. For on this basis there will be as many kinds of known objects as there are kinds of effectively conducted operations of inquiry which result in the consequences intended. … For if consequences are the object of knowing, then an archetypal antecedent reality is not a model to which the conclusions of inquiry must conform. (LW4: 157; see also LW4: 172; 191; 194; LW12: 71)

Once we admit that reality is constituted by networks of relations, the fact that what we experience and know is in part the product of our operations (that is, of the active relationship between the organisms that we are and environing conditions) is not a problem anymore. The "antecedent" reality is only a stage of reality at *t1* antecedent to the interaction with an organism and ontologically poorer than the same reality when it enters at *t2* the new field of interactions with the human organism (LW4: 237). In Dewey's terms, "that there is existence antecedent to search and discovery is of course admitted; but it is denied that as such, as other than the conclusion of the historical event of inquiry in its connection with other histories, it is already the object of knowledge" (LW1: 125). According to the theories that attribute an archetypal value and regulative function in inquiry to the antecedent reality, the object of experience and knowledge is the "thing previously complete in itself" (LW4: 171). The "thing in itself" can have two interpretations. According to the less extreme interpretation, the "thing in itself" is an existent that does not have the properties resulting from its relation to our operations. According to the more extreme interpretation, the "thing in itself" is an existent independent from other existents, in the sense that its relations to other existents only produce "extrinsic" properties in the

"thing in itself." From Dewey's "technological" approach to knowledge it follows that a "thing in itself" of the first type (i) is only the antecedent reality. The belief that (i) has an archetypal ontological status and a regulative function in knowledge likely relies on two wrong assumptions: (1) the first assumption is that what counts in the definition of an existent is its intrinsic properties, while its extrinsic properties are only a by-product of its interactions; (2) the second assumption is that an existent is characterized also by its extrinsic properties, but the knowledge-relation is the only extrinsic relation which counterfeits the real nature of the object. Dewey denies (1) by rejecting the ontological distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties, and by claiming that every property is the result of the interaction of an existent with a set of conditions (LW4: 195). Consequently, he rejects (2) because of its inner contradiction. This contradiction lies in the fact that although (2) claims that an existent is structured in relation to other existents, the knowing-relation nevertheless carries a special status; this means that rather than actualizing further potentialities of X, this relation is taken to counterfeit the nature of the existent.

According to my reading, Dewey's further tenet is that common sense object has a semantic priority over the scientific object. This means that:

(i) The concrete activity of the scientist starts with and goes back, at least ideally, to the world of common sense objects (LW1: 114-115; 205; LW4: 192-193; LW12: 71; 75; 150). The semantic priority of common sense objects over scientific objects is shown here in the activity of experimentation and verification.

(ii) At a low level of abstractness, the object of science is semantically dependent on common sense objects (LW1: 114-115; LW4: 192; LW12: 75; 150). The semantic priority of common sense objects over scientific objects is shown here in the linguistic report of the activities of experimentation and verification.

(iii) At a high level of abstractness, the object of science is a mere "conceptual" object and functions to transform some common sense objects into other common sense objects, or produces the occurrence of a common sense object (LW1: 110; 117; LW4: 175; 238; LW14: 12). Due to the instrumentality of scientific objects for the mutual translation and manipulation of common sense objects, one can see the semantic priority of common sense objects.

Theses (i), (ii) and (iii) neither imply the ontological superiority of common sense objects and properties over scientific objects, nor the ontological superiority of scientific objects over common sense ones. Occasionally one finds in Dewey claims that might lead one to think that he defends the ontological superiority of the common sense objects over the scientific objects. Dewey writes:

> The problem which is supposed to exist between two tables, one that of direct perception and use and the other that of physics … is thus illusory. The perceived and used table is the only table, for it alone has both individuality of form – without which nothing can exist or be perceived – and also includes within itself a continuum of relations or interactions brought to a focus. (LW4: 192)

The "only" object mentioned is either the object that first presents itself or eventually tests an hypothesis in the context of a concrete scientific activity (therefore, its priority is (i)); or it is the object referred to, at a low level of abstraction, by the quantitative aspects of scientific inquiry in reporting the results of scientific analysis (therefore, its priority is (ii)). Therefore, the right interpretation of such claims is semantic and not ontological, as Dewey explicitly confirms (LW14: 22). Semantic priority does not entail ontological superiority. The semantic priority of the common sense object is related to "ecological" reasons, not to ontological ones.

3.4. Common Sense Objects, Scientific Objects and "Perception"

The problem of the relation between common sense objects and scientific objects intersect with the problem of "perception." Perception has to be taken in the sense of recognition or educated perception (appearance2). Sometimes Dewey seems to think that the divide between common sense objects and scientific objects is a matter of perception. This position is well exemplified in *The Quest for Certainty*. As we have seen, perception is a

borderline case of knowledge (it is inferential but it is usually an instance of acquaintance with X and not an inquiry of X). According to this distinction, only the common sense object, the "table," is grasped by an act of perception. On the contrary, the scientific object is "conceptual," which means that it cannot be grasped in perception but is the result of symbolic transformation of what is perceived (this of course does not mean that is wildly constructed). In this case, a scientific object, the "mass" of X, would be the result of a mathematical calculus and not an object of focal perception. In this sense, Dewey says, "the perceived and used" object is the only object, "for it alone has both individuality of form – without which nothing can exist or be perceived – and also includes within itself a continuum of relations or interactions brought to a focus" (LW4: 192). The scientific object is only a system of relations obtained through calculation and its function is only to compare qualitatively different perceptual objects and to enable a better control of their occurrence.

This stance, however, presents a problem. Dewey acknowledges this when in *Logic* he explicitly differentiates his "logical" approach to the distinction between common sense objects and scientific objects from the "epistemological" or metaphysical" distinction between the two classes (see also LW14: 21). Dewey writes:

> The problem of the relation of the domain of common sense to that of science has notoriously taken the form of opposition of the qualitative to the non-qualitative; largely, but not exclusively, the quantitative. The difference has often been formulated as the difference between perceptual material and a system of conceptual constructions. In this form it has constituted, in recent centuries, the chief theme of epistemology and metaphysics. From the standpoint that controls the present discussion, the problem is not epistemological (save as that the word means the logical) nor is it metaphysical or ontological. In saying that it is logical, it is affirmed that the question at issue is that of the relation to each other of different kinds of problems, since the difference in the type of problem demands different emphases in inquiry. (LW12: 71)

The problem relies in the following considerations. In what sense does the criterion of perception work in relation to scientific objects that are not conceptual objects, such as in the case of a molecule? It is true that it cannot be the object of perception through merely organic tools of perception. However, it can be perceived with extra-organic instruments, e.g. a microscope (LW15: 88). Moreover, even if perception is taken to mean only perception through organic structures there is a problem with such a criterion. Everything that becomes object of perception, microscopical or macroscopical, has the same qualities: for instance, it has a shape, it has a color, and might also have esthetic qualities (e.g., spatial order, symmetry, structure). The beauty of a molecule is a common sense property and results from treating the molecule from the viewpoint of common sense. It is clear once more that the distinction between common sense objects and scientific objects is first and foremost semantic or "logical" rather than ontological. The scientific object "H2O" has an indexical residuum that allows for further common sense inquiries in it and for the settlement of esthetic properties in it. It means treating an X with certain operations and therefore fixing this X as a "kind," as the possibility of certain standardized operations. Operations of esthetic appreciation (an instance of common sense treatment) can be addressed to tables and to molecules, and similarly operations of extended convertibility (an instance of scientific treatment) can be addressed to tables and to molecules.

As a consequence, "perception" (as a form of concrete operation) turns out to be the criterion for distinguishing an *individual* existent from an abstract object, not for distinguishing a common sense object from a scientific one. In perception, an object (both commonsensical and scientific) has an actual existential reference. Therefore, the compatibility between common sense objects and scientific objects is not provided by the fact that the common sense object is the only individual existent, grasped in an act of perception, while the scientific object is only conceptual. The compatibility is given by the fact that the two objects are semantically different but semantically and ontologically compatible, being the results of different successful inquiries in the same X and both understandable in an abstract sense (like when I talk about the table as a "kind," or the molecule of water as a "kind"), or in an individual, existent sense, grasped in an operation or in an act of perception here and now. The two alleged incompatible "objects" are simply two predicates and properties ("kinds", "types", "substances", etc.), two types of classification of the same indexical existent X.

3.3. Denotation, Connotation and Indexicality in Common Sense and Science

The regulative commitments (of both common sense and science) play a twofold function in human experience.[17] This twofold function is exemplified in Dewey's distinction between the "denotation" and the "connotation" of a term. In turn, denotation and connotation can be better understood in relation to the notion of indexical existence or residuum. Strictly speaking, only a concrete term denotes, while only an abstract term can connote (LW12: 349-351). While "denotation" refers to the singular X described and to the "properties" attributed *de facto* to it, "connotation" refers to the properties which *de jure* must be attributed to X in order to be classified as a specific kind of object. Between "denotation" and "connotation" there is therefore a logical gap, in the sense that a denoting term and a connoting term play a different logical function. A denoting term classifies an X as a specific kind, while a connoting term expresses what types sub-kinds a kind must have in order to be that specific kind. In *Logic*, Dewey criticizes the confusion, perpetuated by Mill, between "denotation" and "connotation" (LW12: 352-354). According to Mill, the same term is denotative and connotative at the same time in the following way: the term "ship" is denotative since it refers to the indefinite number of individual objects which are ships, while it is connotative since it expresses the meaning of ship, namely, the properties that an object must have in order to be considered a ship. According to Dewey, this distinction between the two uses of a term does not highlight the difference in logical function between the two uses of a term and does not leave room for attributive terms ("shipness" instead of "ship"). While the denotative use is descriptive, the connotative use is prescriptive. If "ship" denotes a singular of a certain kind and the traits that are de facto attributed to that singular, the term "ship" is performing the one and the same logical function, related the description of the singular. On the contrary, "when it is said that connotation determines the *applicability* of a set of traits to describe the kind, inquiry has moved into another logical dimension," better formulated in an abstract term or universal. "If "connotative" means something other than descriptive, then the same term cannot have both denotation and connotation" (LW12: 353-354).

As a consequence, "every denotative term is related to a corresponding or conjugate connotative term as far as its denotative capacity is *warranted*" (LW12: 354). A regulative commitment relative to X can be either applied to X in denotation or assessed in its warranted applicability to X in connotation. The distinction between the denotative and the connotative use of a term is marked by (1) the *critical distance*, (2) the more or less implicit act of *assessment* (of the meanings and the predication) present in the connotative use and absent in the denotative use and (3) the *prescription* of certain meanings. I take (1), (2) and (3) to be the content of the distinctively human "intelligent" behavior, i.e. inquiry, in which the human being faces the problematic situation "as problematic" (LW4: 179). In Dewey's terms, (1), (2) and (3) are not due to an original structure of the self, but to the development of symbols within the community of human organisms and their endorsement instead of on external environmental conditions (see Colapietro 1999). Critical distance is not an interruption of agency tout-court but only a modification of the medium on which the agency is performed (on symbols and not on the existential conditions; see MW13: 57). The point here is that through a system of linguistic symbols the implicit habits that regulate our meaningful practices in the overt world can be *made explicit* in "formulation" (LW12: 501), allowing therefore for a critical distance from X, for a linguistic or conceptual appraisal of the regulative commitments relative to X and for the eventual prescription of them and action upon them (LW12: 62-63). The pure organic activity does not include this possibility, although the adjustment of "means to consequences" is a trait of life in general (LW12: 26). Since the symbols are socially instituted and are therefore public, the development of symbolism and symbolic performances essentially imply the assumption of a public, and in this sense "relatively general and objective," standpoint (LW12: 50-52; see also LW12: 58-59).

The point here is that the logical move from denotation to connotation requires a move from acquaintance to inquiry and reflection. As a consequence, the change in situation entails a different functioning of the indexicality of the existent. In denotation, the indexicality of X is minimum or latent, in connotation is latent, while in the reflective process that leads from denotation to connotation it is maximum. We have therefore:

17 I take the notion of "regulative commitments" from LW12: 24: "To engage in an inquiry is like entering into a contract. It commits the inquirer to observance of certain conditions." The different formulations of these demands "make definite what is involved in a demand. Every demand is a request, but not every request is a postulate. For a postulate involves the assumption of responsibilities. The responsibilities that are assumed are stated stipulations. They involve readiness to act in certain specified ways."

(i) Denotation (on the basis of certain regulative commitments) = beliefs and habits on the basis of which we immediately infer about X. Denotation is the use of a linguistic category in acquaintance. In this case, regulative commitments are applied to X and the indexicality of X is only the occasion of a new application and not of a consideration of whether or not the regulative commitments are justified. The function of denotation is displayed in many instances. As soon as we *say* something about an X, we display here and now our partial regulative commitments about X. As soon as we *do* something with X, we find ourselves in the same situation. This fact shows that there is no meta-perspective inferential context which includes all the possible meanings of X, not even all the meanings of X that are already available to us. In different situations, we have different types of regulative commitments (in a common sense situation and in a scientific situation). We "apply" these different commitments, in a non-deliberate ("feeling" of a qualitative whole of a situation and all the different instances of acquaintance) and in a deliberate way (deliberate construction of the judgment and deliberate action). It is the situation itself in its individuality that determines which system of regulative commitments is relevant for a particular case. The partiality in relation to X required by a situation does not mean that either the common sense object or the scientific object is absolute or an ultimate account of reality. It only implies that there are different possibilities of classification and re-classification of an existent due to its inexhaustible indexical nature. As Dewey reminds us, the common sense object determined by social practices is not less real than the object of physics. The classification of X is context-dependent, so that "telling the truth, telling a thing the way it is, means designating things in terms that observe the conventions of proper social intercourse. I do not tell the truth to the man about town by addressing him in the formulae of higher mathematics" (MW6: 15). The legitimate *methodological* distinction and exclusion among systems of regulative commitments remains methodological and does not raise a metaphysical problem of compatibility.

> To pass over in science the human meanings of the consequences of natural interactions is legitimate; indeed it is indispensable. To ascertain and state meanings in abstraction from social or shared situations is the only way in which the latter can be intelligently modified, extended and varied. Mathematical symbols have least connection with distinctively human situations and consequences; and the finding of such terms, free from esthetic and moral significance, is a necessary part of the technique. Indeed, such elimination of ulterior meanings supplies perhaps the best possible empirical definition of mathematical relations. … In physical science, the abstraction or liberation is complete. Things are defined by means of symbols that convey only their consequences with respect to one another. … Water still has the meaning of everyday experience when it becomes the essence H2O, or else H20 would be totally meaningless, a mere sound, not an intelligible name. (LW12: 150)

(ii) Connotation (on the basis of certain regulative commitments) = prescription of certain regulative commitments. In this case, regulative commitments are not only applied but also prescribed and taken to be warranted. The focus is on abstract terms or universals, which are non-existential or attributive terms. Therefore, the indexicality of X is overlooked. The prescription included in connotation has the status more of the communication of the result of past inquiries than the conclusion of a present inquiry.

(iii) Assessment and Inquiry = the move from (i) to (ii) requires a normative appraisal, actual or potential, of the regulative commitments relative to X. When the appraisal is potential, the situation is not a real inquiry. In the case in which the appraisal of the term is actual, the situation has become an experimental situation, an inquiry. The indexicality of X is the focal center of attention of new operations of inquiry, experimentation and verification.

4. "Where Is the Point of Truth?". Truth, Operational Isomorphism and Indexicality

Different authors have addressed Dewey's account of truth (Bernstein 2010, Ch. 5; Burke 1994: 63; 236-245; Browning 1998: 89; Dicker 1972: 158-159; Dicker 1973: 213-217; Ezorsky 1963; Kannegiesser 1977: 15-18; Kaufman 1959: 826-827; 835; Gale 2006: 87-88; Garrison 2005: 820; Hildebrand 2003: 31-32; 830; Lu 1970: 68;

Margolis 1977: 125-129; 132; McDermid 2006: 3460; 156; McDermott 1970: 42; Shook 2003: 339; Sleeper 1986: 21; 157; 161; Tiles 1988: 104-135).[18] However, none of them has stressed the twofold role that the notion of index plays in Dewey's account of truth.[19] The notion of truth has been traditionally understood in the light of the notion of "correspondence."[20] Dewey does not aim to deny the fruitfulness of this approach, but he deepens the understanding of the notion of correspondence between "thought" and "existence" by reinterpreting it pragmatically (MW6: 5; LW14: 179; LW12: 462). For Dewey, as for Aristotle (but also Peirce and Ramsey), "truth" stands for a relation between knowledge and existences, so that a judgment of some sort about existences is required in order to introduce the notions of "truth" and "falsity." I believe that all the pragmatists take the notion of "truth" to be an epistemic one (see Pihlström 2004: 52). Mere existences apart from human judgment are what they are, "events" to which the notion of truth and falsity do not apply (MW6: 6; 33).

In this section I aim to defend three claims relative to Dewey's theory of truth which have been overlooked by the scholarship, namely, (1) that the notion of correspondence pragmatistically reinterpreted is what I call operational isomorphism, (2) that the relation of correspondence or operational isomorphism requires an actual existential reference between knowledge and reality and that, as a consequence, (3) the analogatum princeps of the notion of truth is a concrete action performed on existential conditions. This means that truth as operational isomorphism implies an indexical reference. In MW6: 22 Dewey asks the question: "Where is the point of truth?". It is my claim that the point of truth is an actual operational isomorphism.

(1) In Dewey's writings it is possible to find at least two types of "isomorphism," which I will call abstract isomorphism and concrete isomorphism. Before addressing these two notions, it is important to remember in which context Dewey uses the notion of isomorphism and in relation to what. I will deal at length in Chapter 5 what a proposition is in Dewey's terms. Dewey introduces the notion of isomorphism when he describes the similarity in function of maps and propositions (Garrison 2005). Both maps and propositions represent some existential conditions and some objects, but this representational property is not instrumental to the function of copying or reduplicating them in knowledge, but to the function of guiding men's action in an appropriate way (MW6: 45-46; LW4: 110). The isomorphism between linguistic expressions (or maps) and the existential factors these propositions are about is a matter of correspondence in action.

(i) *Abstract isomorphism* between propositional knowledge and "kinds" or abstract universals.

Abstract isomorphism can concern linguistic expressions that are mere pieces of communication or linguistic expressions which are genuine propositions in an inquiry. A linguistic expression P can be interpreted in Dewey's terms both as a piece of linguistic communication and as a proposition. The difference does not rely on the linguistic formulation of P, but on its logical function. P can be the simple linguistic communication of the result of past inquiries, or can be the formulation of a proposition within a process of inquiry. In the first case, the piece of communication does not have intellectual power, since it is not a factor within an inquiry, it is the result of past inquiries and the "memorandum" for further guidance (MW6: 38). In both cases, "truth" has a derivate and secondary meaning. In relation to the first case, a piece of communication can be said true only as a consequence of past instances of inquiry in which the linguistic content now reported in communication has been propositionally elaborated and actually tested. In relation to the second case, a proposition can be said true, strictly speaking, only in relation to its "validity" in producing a final judgment that will stand the proof of final experimentation. Abstract isomorphism in relation to proposition coincides with the warranted implication among propositions. It corresponds to rational discourse and employs propositions with only potential existential references. It is lacking of intellectual power, since it is only the product of past true judgment and the "memorandum" for further activities. A proposition has intellectual power since it is a component of an inquiry but it is not "true" in itself. As such, it is only hypothetical (MW6: 38; LW12: 264-265). It is a "proposal"

18 For a broader contextualization of the problem, see in particular Kunne (2003: 172).

19 Mayorga (2012: 112-118) sketches a comparison between Peirce's and Dewey's conception of truth. Although I agree that Dewey has a (dangerous?) penchant to nominalism, I believe that his account of "existence" and "verification" van be read as a theory close to Peirce's than it has been thought.

20 According to Dewey, the notion of "truth" has been traditionally explained as "correspondence" or "coherence." Realists have stressed the former notion, while idealists the latter. Although Dewey highlights the positive insights of the notion of coherence in truth, he stresses much more the aspect of correspondence. I will focus on this aspect, since it is the most important for a reconstruction of a Deweyan theory of truth.

of a judgment that could be true but that will not be true until it is tested in an overt action.

> … when we are told that the essence of truth is correspondence of an idea (a meaning or judgment) with fact, that for example my idea that my friend is in Constantinople is true if he is really there, our first inclination may be to exclaim: A Danial come to judgment! But our second, is to note that either I am already sure that he is there, in which case the "judgment" is no judgment, but a mere putting in words of an established fact, (involving no more "mind" than it is necessary to control the organs of speech). Or else I do not know that he is there, and hence to assert as a truth that he is there, is a piece of presumption on my part, indicative, not of "truth," but of my dogmatic attitude toward truth. If there is a proposition, intellectually speaking, then the fact is that I have reason to *infer* that he is there, and that I believe that that inference would be borne out if certain further inquiries were undertaken, there being legitimate doubt pending their execution. (MW6: 37; see also MW6:43)

Abstract isomorphism is practical and has the nature of a warranted practice of implication among propositions relying on the basis of meanings fixed through past inquiries. In both cases, the content of what is said true (piece of communication or proposition) is the linguistic articulation of beliefs which have been produced in the past through experience and inquiries and their value depends both on the validity of those past inquiries or on the validity of further tests. In short, "origin, content, and value" of abstract isomorphism is not abstract but relies on a concrete operational isomorphism (MW6: 4).

(ii) *Concrete isomorphism* between judgment and *"this* kind" or concrete universal.

This is the type of isomorphism that I call operational isomorphism and that describes Dewey's pragmatistic notion of truth. In this case, the "kind" dealt with has an actual existential reference. It is a concrete X actually "perceived" as this or that object or acted upon. Concrete isomorphism coincides with a "fulfilled" or "successful" concrete operation (MW6: 42; 46; LW14:13; 54-57; 59; 169-170; 182-183; LW12:80). "Fulfilled" has a logical meaning. It refers to an operation in which the consequences foreseen in deliberation are not falsified by the execution. It is a "working hypothesis in action" (LW8: 172; see also MW6: 9). "The success of the meaning or judgment in performing this office (which of course is a matter *in actu*) constitutes the worth or truth of the meaning or judgment" (MW6: 46). The existential conditions isolated in the subject of the judgment at *t1* and acted upon at *t2* morphologically coincide with the content of a concrete operation, formulated in the predicate of the judgment at *t1* and actually performed at *t2*. In this second case, isomorphism is actualized in a concrete operation on environing conditions and not in imagination or in merely symbolic activity. In rational discourse, "forms" are always general kinds, or general possibilities of action on X, and never forms instantiated here and now. Concrete isomorphism is also practical, as rational discourse is, but in a more fundamental way. It has the nature of a "fulfilled" concrete operation and has an existential reference. In this second case, "correspondence" has the nature of an operational isomorphism, where "operational" = (relation) localized in concrete, overt action, and "isomorphism" = relation in which the same form is functioning. It should be clear that according to Dewey (i) is originally grounded in (ii).

Truth interpreted as operational isomorphism has the advantage of highlighting the essential role of human purposes and interests in constructing and testing a judgment, avoiding the mistake of presupposing a ready-made set of substances and a ready-made set of beliefs and a correspondent "ready-made static property" between them (MW6: 8). In order to establish the truth or falsity of our belief in a substance, the substance has to be shaped through inquiry and judgment and tested in action. At the same time, however, operational isomorphism requires that human judgment "works" in "cooperation with the environmental factors," and that the "coadaptation" of judgment and environmental factors is both ""correspondence" and "satisfaction" (MW6: 10). Dewey also uses the metaphor of the "interlocking" of the ideal factors and extra-ideal factors (MW6: 6; 7). In this interlocking, the ideal, linguistic and purposeful factors coincide operationally with "independent factors" (MW6: 45) and the "other efficient conditions involved," where "independent" and "other" mean not instituted by man's action, even though selected and met in it. It is now possible to clarify Dewey's objections against the notion of correspondence understood in a non-pragmatistic way. According to Dewey: (a) a non-pragmatistic notion of correspondence is an "ultimate and analyzable mystery," since it does not explain in what the correspondence consists in and what its origin is (MW6: 8). Theories that do not tie together "organically" the notion of truth and the notion of verification face therefore a serious dead-end. (b) A non-pragmatistic notion of

correspondence can be only "defined in iteration" (MW6: 5), in the sense that pieces of communication are said true only in relation to other pieces of communication, and propositions are said true only in relation to other propositions. To say that a piece of communication or a proposition represents "a thing as it really is" requires a "third medium" in which the piece of communication or the proposition and the reality in itself are contemplated in their adequacy and coincidence (MW6: 34-35). However, in the case of a non-pragmatistic view of correspondence, this third medium can only be a further piece of communication or a further proposition, *ad infinitum*. In this case, we remain in the field of abstract isomorphism. When we say that "P" is true (in L) = P, we are still dealing with linguistic symbols. This account of truth is a highly abstract account of truth that relies in the best case on symbols-meanings developed in past inquiries. However, the existential reference can be here only potential. Only a concrete action makes the existential reference actual and localizes the "truth" relation in an operational isomorphism between interlocking ideal factor and extra-ideal factors.

(2) At the same time, the relation of operational isomorphism requires an actual existential reference between knowledge and reality. This point is well clarified by Dewey's claims about the knowledge of the past (MW6: 7; 41-42; 43; MW13: 41; 46; LW12: 223; 231). Although Dewey's terminology is sometimes contradictory (see e.g. MW13: 49), it is clear that his stance is that while the content of a proposition can be about past existents, its existential reference is always present (actual operational isomorphism in the present) or future (possible operational isomorphism in the future). Dewey states that "the representation has intrinsically and necessarily reference to a future" (MW6: 41-42). A proposition can be about past existents and is always generated by past existents, but its actual existential reference is always present or future. The role of "antecedent" existents for a belief and the propositions that spring from it is clear (LW4: 110): they are the genetical causes of the formation of a belief and can be the content of it, what the belief is about. "Ideas … being connected with operations to be performed … are tested by the consequences of these operations, not by what exists prior to them" (LW4: 133). Julius Caesar existent at *t1* in the past is the existent antecedent that produced the belief in his existence and that is the "content" of my present belief in his existence in the past. However, the problem of the existential reference of a belief comes into play when the issue is not the past fact generating my belief but the problem of the "truth" of my belief in the light of the Deweyan understanding of the notion of correspondence. One instant after the happening of X as a fact, Julius Caesar existing at *t1*, that fact is gone and the correspondence with that fact has to be found in something that it is continuous about that fact now or in the future, or, as Dewey says, in one of its present or future "consequences." The future existential reference of a belief about the past is one of these "consequences" at *t2* of the existing fact at *t1* and becomes important if we want to make sense of the notion of correspondence as actual correspondence. To say "the correspondence exists" even though we do not find it, so that it is existent independently from the knower and antecedently to its verification is to take the problem of truth independently from the status of a belief, actual or possible. This gives the chance to reflect on the different meanings that the notion "true" or "truth" have. We can say that a belief is "true" because that belief has been verified in the past. In this case, according to Dewey's understanding, the statement that expresses this belief is not a proposition in its logical or cognitive sense, but is more a piece of linguistic communication of the result of past inquiries. In this case, the predication of "truth" is parasitic of past inquiries and verifications and somehow taken for granted. In its most pregnant sense, then, "true" is the predicate of a belief or judgment that results at the end of an inquiry. In this case, the conclusion of the inquiry is the concrete enactment upon the proposition elaborated through the previous stages of the inquiry, so that we have again that the "true" proposition, belief or judgment is the "ideational" content of this act in its operational isomorphic correspondence with extra-ideal factor.

Once we accept that the problem of truth is not independent from the problem of a belief, we are not far from Dewey's understanding of truth. As I will show in the next section, the problem of the "truth" becomes the problem of the actual verification or the possible verifiability, if all the necessary conditions C occurred, of a belief. In this sense, the belief in the past existence of Julius Caesar is "true" because it gives course to actions which fit extra-ideal factors in the present (actual operational isomorphism, verification in the present) or in the future (possible operational isomorphism, verification in the future), or which would fit extra-ideal factors in the present and in the future if all the necessary conditions C would have occurred.

(3) If "truth" is first and foremost a matter of operational isomorphism between an ideational factor, or belief, in action and extra-ideational conditions, "truth" would apply first and foremost not to the linguistic

formulations of such beliefs, but to actions which spring from these beliefs understood as habits of behavior (LW12: 128). These habits would be habits of behavior that allow interaction with environing conditions in which "problematic" situations do not occur and their indexical residuum can be somehow overlooked. In this sense, the first *analogatum* of the notion of truth, the *analogatum princeps*, is the concrete action as an operational isomorphism between ideal and extra-ideal factors. The second *analogatum* is the belief as a habit of action that is capable of producing actions in which operational isomorphism is actualized. The linguistic formulation of a belief or a habit of action is only the third *analogatum* of the notion of truth, since it only performs the function of "communicating" the result of past experiences in which concrete actions have proved to be cases of operational isomorphism, or expressing and articulating linguistically the content of a habit. In this sense, "ideas" are only "surrogates" of the modes of response that they try to articulate linguistically (MW6:3). In an article devoted to "Peirce's Theory of Signs, Thought, and Meaning" (LW15: 148-149), Dewey makes clear that the semeiotic nature of the concrete action that localizes and actualizes the operational isomorphism is the nature of an indexical. In a passage, Dewey writes:

> It is not part of the present paper to go into detail about the way in which linguistic signs interlock with indexical signs. It suffices to say that such interpretation takes place and that by and through it linguistic signs get that reference to and connection with "things" which by themselves they lack. It is also true to say that our scientific knowledge … and those portions of "common sense" knowledge which possess generality along with existential reference represent an interlocking of linguistic with non-linguistic modes of behavior. (LW15: 148-149)

Dewey repeats here the metaphor of the "interlocking" of ideal and extra-ideal factors and clarifies the fact that the "point" in which the correspondence occurs is in the context of an actual existential reference. The notion of correspondence pragmatistically intended substitutes the idea of the "brute fact" (mere existences) with the notion of "ideas and hypotheses" (mere symbols) verified on given existential conditions (indexical existences), (e.g. LW14: 173).

A last point relates to the notion of "truth-making." In Dewey's terms, this notion describes the relation between the ideal and extra-ideal factors in their operational isomorphism. "Truth-maker" (or "sufficient verifier," LW14: 178) means literally the property of *making* something true. It is not a causal relation, but a mutual operational isomorphism between a judgment with an actual existential reference and existential conditions shaped and acted upon in a certain way. It is usually understood as something in virtue of which something else is true. According to Dewey's approach, the notion of "truth-maker" is functional and perspectival in relation to its reference. This means in particular that, since "truth" in its full realization is the relation of operational isomorphism, the non-ideational factor is as much a truth-maker for the ideational one as the ideational one is a truth-maker for the non-ideational one. On the one hand, without the isomorphic operational coincidence with the non-ideational truth-maker, the ideational factor remains a hypothesis of verification, a mere potentiality of truth or a fancy in the worst cases. As a consequence, "true" is the logical form or property that "accrues" to (1) judgment (analogatum princeps), (2) beliefs as habits of behavior that result from that judgment (second analogatum), and (3) statements which articulate linguistically these beliefs (third analogatum). On the other hand, "reason" and "thought" have a "creative, constructive function" in relation to what exists previously to human intelligence (LW2: 13). "Nature … supplies potential material for embodiment of ideals. Nature … is idealizable" (LW4: 241) through deliberate agency. I take this to be the fundamental claim of *A Common Faith* (LW9: 3-58). Without the human ideation and isomorphic operational coincidence with the ideational truth-maker, the non-ideational factors remains a simple event, which is metaphysically what it is but which does not have that property of being actualized as "true" in an operation and being shaped and developed into "substances". The "truth property" does not belong to an "idea" or to the "things" in advance to verification, but at most the "property of *ability to work* – an ability revealed by its actual working" (MW6: 8; see also MW6: 11; 38-39; 65; 68; LW4: 168; LW2: 303).

I have already mentioned what is Dewey objection to the different, traditional forms of foundationalism. It is possible to further this insight in relation to the notion of truth. According to the thesis of operational isomorphism, the ground of true knowledge is not "reality" in itself, but a settled, working operation guided by "ideas." A traditional foundationalist approach to the notion of reality can only lead to a conception of a

fundamental reality as ready-made structures (presentative reality), or sense-data as immediate and non-doxastic ground of knowledge (empiricism), or rational principles (rationalism).

4.1. Dewey and Peirce on Truth, Verification and Counterfactuals

"Truth" as operational isomorphism is localized and actualized in a concrete successful operation between an "idea" and non-controlled existential conditions. The successful operation is the *analogatum princeps* of the notion of "truth". The operation or judgment has a propositional content, elaborated through inquiry and eventually stated or acted upon. This shows that for Dewey the mistake is not in saying that a proposition is true or that a proposition is isomorphic to what it represents, but in denying that this isomorphism between a proposition and the represented state of affairs is realized not in discourse but in a concrete action, namely, when a proposition is actually giving intelligible content and direction to an operation on existent conditions.

A further element of Dewey's theory of truth relies in the fact that Dewey rejects the intellectualistic theories that do not tie together organically the notion of "truth" and the procedures of "verification" (MW6: 7-8). As I have shown, Peirce's theory of truth contemplates the same mutual relation between "truth" and "verification." Peirce's understanding of the notion of "truth" at its third, pragmatistic level of clarity can be exemplified in the following biconditional:

Peirce:

B is true ↔ B is a belief that *would* be indefeasibly held by a rational inquirer if all the necessary conditions C occurred.

Peirce is not saying that truth is the content of our present or future beliefs, but that the problem of truth which is not put in relation with a possible or an actual beliefs is just nonsense. This claim is linked to what Peirce says when he claims that the conception of a piece of reality that is not intelligible in principle is a contradiction.[21] In a certain sense, this is the same move Ramsey makes when he says that beyond the problem of beliefs there is no problem of truth. According to this definition, a belief can be hypothesized and said to be true even if nobody will never discover it, in the sense that it is the belief that rational inquiries *would* have developed *if* all the *necessary* conditions C *had occurred.* As a matter of fact, there are conditions of C which will never occur and which will never allow the possibility of developing true beliefs. As a consequence, the "*Minima Trivialia* Objection" misses this point of Peirce's mature theory of truth.[22]

Is Dewey's theory of truth dependent only on the actual processes of verification? Sometimes, it seems that Dewey is arguing for a strong link between actual verification and truth:

> … to be a truth means to have been verified by use under test conditions. (MW6: 46)

Therefore:

Dewey (1):

B is true ↔ B is a belief that can be actually verified in its operational isomorphism with existential conditions, in this moment or in an indefinite moment in the future.

21 See Kunne (2003: 393-399) on Peirce's theory of truth. Kunne defines Peirce's theory of truth "alethic anti-realism." This definition cannot be accepted insofar as it gives for granted what realism is, without discussing Peirce's semeiotic and metaphysics which are, on the contrary, a strenuous articulation of a non-constructivist stance. An extremely interesting although problematical discussion of Peirce's account of truth is Price 2010. Without being able to discuss the details of Price's interpretation (which shares with pragmatism its alleged anti-metaphysical account of truth but rejects its definitory task and alleged reduction to justification), it seems to me that Price misses the subjunctive-conditional nature of Peirce's formulation of the meaning of truth.

22 See Kunne (2003: 396).

The existential conditions here referred to are what Dewey calls sometimes extra-ideal factors (MW6: 3). The operational isomorphism is between "ideal" or "mental" factors and extra-ideal factors. This is a possible interpretation of what Dewey implies in the quotation above. (In favor of this interpretation, see MW6: 7; MW6: 20; MW6: 28; MW6: 46-47; MW6: 56; MW13: 42-43; LW12: 17). In this case, the British objection would work. Something "real" would be excluded in principle by the field of truth because of historical circumstances. Even admitting that singular propositions about "characteristics" and "properties" could be verified, what about particular propositions about "qualities" (LW12: 291-291)? Nevertheless, "reality" would still be a bare existence or event, independent in itself from the attempts of true classification performed by men.

However, this is not the only possible interpretation of Dewey's theory of truth, and probably not the most correct and comprehensive. In fact, it is also possible to interpret Dewey's claims as he is saying that a true belief is a belief that *would* have been successfully actualized in a moment of time in an isomorphic operational coincidence with an extra-ideal reality if all the necessary conditions had occurred. The definition or description of "truth" as the "warranted assertibility" of a belief instead of the warranted assertion as a matter of fact of a belief seems to entitle us to think that Dewey would accept the counterfactual. If Dewey accepts the counterfactual, his definition of truth would then be:

Dewey (2):

B is true ↔ X is a belief that could be actually verified in its operational isomorphism with existential conditions, in this moment or in an indefinite moment in the future, if all the necessary conditions C occurred.

This interpretation is supported by the following passages, LW2: 11; LW14: 56; LW15: 124. However, further claims not directly related to the problem of truth help to support interpretation (2). In MW6: 4 Dewey makes clear that the extra-ideal factors to which knowledge should conform, sometimes referred to as "transcendence," can be interpreted in two different ways: first, transcendence can mean the "unexperienceable, unknowable, "things in themselves"" (MW6: 4); second, transcendence can mean either something that is actually experienced, or something that could be experienced. The pragmatistic approach to reality excludes the first possibility and embraces the second. If this is the case, then Dewey's theory of truth claims at least that extra-ideal conditions, whether they are actually experienced or not, are the conditions to which our belief must conform in order to be true beliefs and to which our beliefs could conform if all the necessary conditions C have occurred. Two further statements are noteworthy. In these statements, Dewey relates his notion (1) of truth to the "denotative" meaning of truth. He writes: "to science, truth *denotes* verified beliefs, propositions that have emerged from a certain procedure of inquiry and testing" (MW6: 28). In a different passage, he adds that "truth, denotatively taken as the logician say, designate those beliefs which have been accepted (and, indeed, more or less formed) because of a certain critical process of testing: so many truths, so many verifications" (MW6: 56). What Dewey is saying here is that "truth" understood as "true beliefs" denotes all the beliefs that have been verified so far and are justified. All these beliefs could be falsified in the future, even though the possibility of being falsified does not entail the necessity that they will be falsified in the future. At the same time, however, truth, as the sum of all the possible objects in which an indexical existents X can be articulated, is indefinitely broader than the beliefs which have been verified so far or that will be verified in the future. The true beliefs relative to an indexical existence are "inexhaustible" in their meaning in intention. Therefore, the meaning of truth in intention covers not only the beliefs that have been verified so far or will be verified in the future, but also all the beliefs that could be verified if all the conditions C occurred. In LW14: 56, Dewey affirms that in his theory of truth there is a distinction between "validity" and "truth." "Truth" is not what is verified but what *would* be verified and indefinitely verifiable in the "continuity of inquiry."

All these clues lead us to think that Dewey would accept the counterfactual definition of the notion of truth. In this case, the *Minima Trivialia* Objection does not work and Dewey's stance is closer to Peirce's mature theory of truth than it has been thought.[23]

23 Dewey's references to Peirce on this topic seem to offer some evidence for my interpretation, LW12: 343 footnote; LW15: 148-149. The pragmatist scholarship has dwelt with the historical and theoretical problem of figuring out whether the classical pragmatists shared a common view on truth. In a remarkable passage, Pihlström (2004: 30-31) writes: "On of the points where James has been taken to have distorted Peirce's pragmatism is the *theory of truth*. … Peirce mentions James's doctrine of the "mutability of truth" as

If this interpretation is correct, Peirce unpacked stance on truth would be:

(i) B is true ↔ B is a belief that *would* be indefeasibly held by a rational inquirer if all the necessary conditions C occurred.

(ii) indefeasibility is the property of a belief that would not be falsified in any of its verifications and applications.

(iii) if such an indefeasible belief had ever been obtained by a rational inquirer, it would have never been falsified by any of its verifications and applications. Using Dewey's jargon, it would be actualized, in this moment or in an indefinite moment in the future (whenever the verification takes place), in an isomorphic operational coincidence of "ideal" or "mental" factors and extra-ideal factors (MW6: 3). In this case, Dewey's formulation only unpacks what Peirce would claim in (iii).

On the other hand, Dewey's unpacked stance on truth would be:

(i) B is true ↔ B is a belief that could be actually verified in its isomorphic operational correspondence with an external reality, in this moment or in an indefinite moment in the future, if all the necessary conditions C occurred.

(ii) if B is a such a belief that could be verified now and then, it is a belief that would not be falsified neither now nor then (see 8). In Peirce's jargon, it is an "indefeasible" belief.

(iii) if such a unlimitedly verifiable belief had ever been obtained by a rational inquirer, it would be actualized, in this moment and in an indefinite moment in the future (whenever the verification takes place), in an isomorphic operational coincidence with an external reality.

One final problem is to understand the "field" in which according to Dewey the extra-ideal factors on which propositions are tested plays its role. In the case of Peirce, it is clear that this field is "experience" in its broad meaning and includes different dimensions (physical existences, mathematical imagination, moral desire etc.). Dewey agrees implicitly with this idea of experience, when he claims that "existence *is* existence and facts about it are stubborn" (LW12: 265). However, his views about the breadth of experience, or of the levels at which the operational isomorphism can be realized, is less clear. I have shown in Ch.4 Dewey conception of ethics and moral judgment. It is not the place here to develop Dewey's understanding of mathematics. Some reflections are however necessary here. In MW6: 67, he claims that "no truth of mathematics is true as long as it is only a mathematical truth." Dewey states that mathematics does not have "existential reference," but does not say which is the experiential ground on which mathematical statements are verified (LW15: 148). In some passages, it is only the rules of symbolic operations and the conditions of satisfaction of mutual transformability among symbols that determine the value of mathematical statement (LW1: 223; LW4: 123; LW12:352). In other passages, he seems to state that only the link between "mathematical ideas" and "acts performed" are ultimately capable of accounting for the origin and the value of mathematical propositions (LW4: 124). In this sense, only the applications of mathematics through experimental sciences would be the final test its statement. The ambiguity relies in the interpretation of the status of the "act performed". In a crucial passage in LW4: 128, Dewey claims that mathematical ideas are designations of possible operations which are first and foremost

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one of the "seeds of death" with which his original pragmatism became infected in the hands of later pragmatists (CP 6.485, 1908). Yet the pragmatist theory of truth is, according to Haack (1976: 236, 247), a "cosmopolitan" theory, containing both correspondence and coherence elements and receiving different emphases in different authors. It need not be a rival of the correspondence theory, but it is meaningful to say that there is one single pragmatist theory, differently developed by Peirce, James, Dewey, and others. Hookway (2000: 82, 89) also notes that James's theory of truth, instead of competing with the competing with the correspondence theory, was designed to elucidate what agreement with reality means, and so, though differently, was Peirce's." Far from being a settled answer to the pragmatist account of truth, Pihlström's following remarks still stress some radical differences between Peirce and Dewey on truth: "One of the major differences between Peirce's and Dewey's conceptions of inquiry is related to their accounts of truth. … Dewey (like James) was more idealistically or constructivistically oriented than Peirce in his quite explicit view that the actions of inquirers constitute the objects of knowledge instead of being answerable to pre-existing real things (cf. Dewey 1929; see Shook 2000)." I tend to see a greater continuity between Peirce's and Dewey's views than Pihlström does.

symbolic operations with respect to one another and their test is not found in "performance with respect to existence," but in the "*com*possibility" or "non-incompatibility" of symbolic operations. However, in the following page, "the formal development" of symbolic logic and mathematics "is a specialized offshoot of material thinking" (LW4: 129). Dewey wavers between the idea that mathematical propositions, although lacking existential reference, can be true or false merely on the basis of symbolic transformability, and the further claim that only in their application and thanks to an actual existential reference to existential conditions it can be verified and acquire truth.

4.3. Experiences, Truth and Reality

It is important to draw the consequences from Dewey's account of the fact that the analogatum princeps of the notion of "truth" is not a proposition or a representation. Reality in its entirety cannot be represented in a indefinite series of sentences and goes beyond what can become a knowledge-object (MW3: 86; 159; LW1: 28). It is a metaphysical "dream" to think that reality and objects have "no nature save to be known." Reality also includes "the universe of immediate experience, of action and passion, coming and going" (MW3: 86). One of the most important points in Dewey's argument against the epistemological theory of human experience is that "knowledge" is neither the only nor the privileged modality of experience and that reality reveals itself only or mainly as known. On the contrary, reality is not only the abstract object of knowledge, but an X immediately "had" in its individuality as known, as appreciated in its beauty, as loved, etc. (MW3: 160). The "field of discourse" is not absolute (LW14: 31). Reality therefore is not limited to the content of a true, indefeasible linguistic account of fact, in so far as the representation of an X in a sentence ("Julius Caesar was murdered at …") is different from the immediate cognitive, moral, esthetic etc. experience of X. This immediate moral experience is not representable, or in its representation it is transformed from an immediate experience into an object of knowledge. Representations and different immediate experiences all refer to the same indexical existent X (MW6: 121-122).

According to Dewey, the mistake of claiming that "reality" in its entirety is what is or could be represented in an indefinite number of sentences is due to three prejudices. These three prejudices are:

(1) the "ubiquity of the knowing relation" prejudice , which states that the knowing relation is the only modality of human experience. On the contrary, "knowledge" is not the only modality of human experience (e.g. MW3: 159; MW6: 112; LW1: 27-28; LW4: 175; 232; LW14: 11-12).

(2) The "intellectualistic" prejudice, which states that the knowing relations is the only modality of human experience in which reality reveals itself for what it is. On the contrary, reality reveals itself also in esthetic experience, moral experience, etc. (e.g. MW3: 159; LW1: 27-28; LW4: 175; 232; LW14: 10).

(3) The "spectatorial" prejudice, which states that reality is what is given to knowledge independently from the knower; in this case, the knowing relation itself is not considered part of reality, and is therefore systematically excluded. On the contrary, the knowing relation is an event that happens as a part of the world and therefore needs to be represented in the belief, if the belief aims at representing reality in its totality (e.g. MW6: 140-141; LW4: 232; 236). This task turns out to be impossible. Also assuming that a belief at *t2* can represent all the reality that happened earlier at *t1*, it is true that this belief could not represent that new part of reality that is the belief as a "had" moment, as a new event. This new event, can be only represented in a successive belief, and so on (MW3: 104-105).[24]

The consequence is therefore that:

1. "truth" is not first and foremost the property of propositions and representations; it is the property of concrete operations (analogatum princeps) and beliefs and habits (second analogatum)

2. "reality" does not manifest itself only in cognitive representations (objects of knowledge), but also in

24 For a similar argument, see also MW3: 159-160.

esthetic, moral, cognitive immediate experiences.

3. "truth" can be the property of moral and esthetic operations and moral and esthetic beliefs and habits even when these operations and habits are not linguistically articulated in statements.

Chapter 5
Synthetic Agency and Contextual Moral Normativity. Dewey on Deliberation and Moral Judgment

Mark Johnson has recently stated that "one of the most underdeveloped areas within the embodied-cognition paradigm is the origin and nature of value" (2006: 53). In this chapter, I reconstruct different aspects of Dewey's metaethics and ethics showing that the pivotal element of all of them is a conception of moral value as a contextual, concrete interaction between a deliberative agent and her environment. In other words, moral value is a *purposeful experiential synthesis*. It is at this concrete level of interaction that moral value finds its realization as an embodied function of human agency. In other words, the moral value is the function performed by a concrete action here and now in furthering the agent's agency in an appropriate way given her character and contextual demands. It is true that Dewey uses the notion of "value" to denote different realities, so that we can say e.g. that a habitual disposition is a moral value or that a social institution represents a set of moral values. However, I will show that the most important meaning of value is the concrete purposive interaction of an agent with her environment and that all the other meanings rely on this concept.

In the first sections (§§ 1., 1.1., 2. and 3.), which have an introductory function, I present some basic notions elaborated by Dewey, like habit, value and problematic situation. In the following sections (§§ 4., 4.1., 4.2., 4.3., 5., 6. and 8.), I give an interpretation of the different aspects (logical, qualitative and aesthetic) of deliberation and moral judgment, including the continuity of human agency between deliberation and overt action in relation to question of normativity. In section 7., I apply the logical notion of "formativity" to Dewey's metaethics, developing further the role of aesthetic elements implied in his approach to human conduct. In the final sections (§§ 9., 9.1. and 9.2.), I focus on the problem of moral progress and ethical fallibilism, showing how ethical fallibilism is required granted the possibility that new values emerge in experience through new syntheses.

1. Human Agency, Impulses and Habits

In the previous chapter I have mentioned that Dewey uses the notions of "interaction" and "transactions" as the standard terms to define what (human) experience is. The implicit idea of this paradigm of experience is that the human being is a being *in activity*, both from the biological and the mental viewpoint. According to Dewey, it is a "monstrous" assumption that "man exists naturally in a state of rest so that he requires some external force to set him into action." On the contrary, "man acts anyway, he can't help acting. In every fundamental sense it is false that a man requires a motive to make him do something. To a healthy man inaction is the greatest of woes" (MW14: 84).

But how should we take activity to imply? Let us start from of a vague but challenging definition given by Dewey: "Man is a creature of habit, not of reason nor yet of instinct" (MW14: 88). First, habits can be considered as the standard modes of behavior learnt by human beings through life in society. Each particular bundle of intertwined habits, which corresponds to the individual's "character", is determined is Dewey's view by the cultural environment in which that individual finds herself and grows. In other words, human habits are mainly determined by the "mind," that "system of beliefs, desires and purposes which are formed in the interaction of biological aptitudes with a social environment" (MW14: 4). As a consequence, habits are the subjective dispositions to agency molded on the basis of the dramatic meanings of the different Xs that constitute the human world (see Alexander 1993: 384). Therefore, the interactions/transactions that characterize human experience take this or that shape on the basis of the different habits developed by an agent.

Second, habits are also characterized by a certain stability and tendency to reproduce certain types of activity. They represent an "inherent tendency to action," or dispositions with a "projectile power"; they are "demands for certain kinds of action" (MW14: 21). Being specific modes of possible activity, habits also determine a particular sensitiveness or responsiveness to the environment. This is, roughly speaking, the idea implicit in

Dewey's "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," according to which a certain interaction become a stimulus insofar as our "character" is able to grasp it. According to Dewey, it is the habit that substitutes the Kantian transcendentals as "natural transcendentals" (MW3: 83-84), in which the gain is not only the continuity with the biological world but also the developmental and historical origin of the transcendentals.

However, human beings are not inactive before developing social standard patterns of behavior. Human beings are originally endowed with "impulses" and "instincts". As Dewey makes clear, "habits as organized activities are secondary and acquired, not native and original. They are outgrowth of unlearned activities which are part of man's endowment at birth" (MW14: 65). What is clear, both from *Human Nature and Conduct* and the later "Does Human Nature Change?", is that Dewey takes human impulses as largely flexible and plastic. Human nature is characterized by an "indefinite plasticity" (LW13: 291). The gist of his bio-cultural approach to human experience is that organic impulses are the raw material provided by nature for the development of human systems of action. In this sense, Dewey says that "the inchoate and scattered impulse of an infant do not coordinate into serviceable powers except through social dependencies and companionship. His impulses are starting points for assimilation of the knowledge and skill of the more matured beings upon whom he depends. They are tentacles sent out to gather that nutrition from customs which will in time render the infant capable of independent action" (MW14: 68). Human tradition is the intelligent "designer" through much the material of instinct is turned into a mature character. Impulses are in themselves "meaningless" insofar as the meaning of any X is given by a cluster of intended anticipated consequences of certain operations on X. Society plays the role of the first type of mediation through which a given behavior acquires meaning to the mind of the child. In other words, the first mediation and source of meaning for the development of a young mind is not the individual experience, but the social patters of behavior shown by the adult members of society. In "Does Human Nature Change?", the discussion about what human impulses are is linked to the problem of human nature and its stability. Although Dewey clearly spells out that there are certain impulses and instincts which cannot change insofar as the human being has to remain a human being (which therefore represent for Dewey something like a set of conditions of identity of the human being at a very general level, see LW13: 286-287), it is also true that this fact does not imply the immutability of human nature. Indeed, according to Dewey, "human nature *does* change" (LW13: 286). Dewey seems to believe that since the *whole* reality of a human being is highlighted by her embodied set of habits, it is not possible to limit a description of what a human being is to her inborn habits. Since historically and socially developed habits are the specific configuration in which a concrete human nature is shaped, Dewey concludes that human nature develops over the lifetime of each individual. In fact, we would make a wrong inference if we believed that from human beings' unchangeable constitution it follows that the "manifestation" of instincts is unchangeable as well. On the contrary, the manifestations of inborn "needs" change according to both "physical environmental and social custom" (LW13: 288). Also for the interest in the political and social implications of a theory of human nature, Peirce questions the assumptions of those theorists who merge together "instinct", "needs" and "social patterns" in which the inborn needs are organized (LW13: 288).

Moreover, not only the impulse can be molded, but *needs to* be molded. Human beings lack the teleology to a somehow pre-designed development of organized activities that characterize the other animals. Human development is in a minimal part determined by pre-established patterns that grow out of the initial impulses through social and environmental interaction. While animals are characterized by "original instincts which manifest themselves in specific acts in one-to-one correspondence" (MW13: 104), this is not the case for human beings. In the most part, human behavior is apprehended by a tradition of beliefs and customs not as a consequence of a pre-designed teleology of development but because of a previous history of human achievements. Moreover, human beings' behavior compared to animals' is virtually open to any possibility of learning and requires a work of molding, shaping and improving one's habits, including possibilities unknown to the rest of the animals.

2. Causal/Casual Values, Reflective Values and Moral Principles

Before tackling the nature of moral deliberation, I have to introduce a second important set of notions, which allow us to grasp the background of Dewey's conception of practical reasoning. These notions are: causal/casual values, reflective values and moral principles. Although it is clear that a detailed of these concepts will come along with the next sections, it is important to stress right from the outset the fundamental distinction between causal/casual values and reflective values. Now, Dewey's main point is that while we are always "valuing" creatures, what we ought to do is to be rationally "evaluating" agents. For Dewey, the dimension of value is always present in human experience, so that from a Deweyan viewpoint we could say that the first way to determine an ontology is to define objects as systems or cluster of values of different kinds (for instance, McDonald's pragmatist metaphysics goes in this direction, see McDonald 2004).[1] However, although reflection and thought are not needed on order to enjoy and suffer things and activities, the possibility of a convenient (whatever convenient may mean) enjoyment requires a reflection, or, in Dewey's terms, inquiry. While immediate goods "casually occur" (EW4: 304), constant and higher goods require some sort of rational planning. For instance, in *Logic*, Dewey writes:

> "to value" is to enjoy and the resulting enjoyment is figuratively called a value. There is neither reflection nor inquiry in these cases of enjoyment as far as they occur spontaneously. … On such occasions *to value* means to weigh, appraise, estimate: *to evaluate* – a distinctively intellectual operation. Reasons and grounds one way and the other have to be sought for and formulated. (LW12: 174)

In Dewey's view, the formulation at a propositional level of what is found in experience is one of the most important steps in order to guarantee a convenient flouring of the human being (LW12: 19-22). However, inquiry is not the first step in determining what the moral good is, because there is a more immediate, non-intellectual level in which casual or causal "values" are found in our unreflective dealings with the world (including ourselves, of course). The valuing or liking is "an act, if not an overt one, at least a dispositional tendency and direction" (LW1: 320). It is "unwitting" selection of X and implies rejection of Y. Although it is true that casual/causal values teach not only what human values are but also deceive, there is no easier access to the self-understanding of our moral constitution. As Dewey reminds us, his "experimental idealism" (EW4: 264) in morals is "the empirical theory of conscience is that individual has no immediate knowledge of right and wrong, either has to particular acts or general principles, but that such knowledge is the outgrowth of continued experience" (EW4: 309).

In what follows, I describe why, how, and when reflective moral values emerge out of casual/causal values. In other words, I will now deal with the problem of moral deliberation.

3. The Moral Deliberation in Its Logical Structure and the Moral Judgment as its Aesthetic Telos. First Steps

Before addressing the problem of the logical structure of moral deliberation and its ultimate telos, it is necessary to restate briefly some important features of Dewey's concept of human experience. As we have seen, human experience is for Dewey a qualitative and rhythmic affair. Against empiricist psychology, like Hume's and Locke's, he claims that the unities of human experience are not static and isolated "impressions" and "ideas," but composite wholes, in rhythmic alternation or overlapping, individualized by a characteristic overarching quality and developing in varying portions of time. An experiential unity is what Dewey calls "*an* experience" (LW10: 42). An experiential unity is also characterized by a teleological structure, in the sense that all the factors included in it are directed as a whole toward a final achievement, i.e., the consummatory apex of that experience. When a subject is having an experience, "the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment" (LW10: 42) and the

1 In this sense, for Dewey the hypotheses of (1) a non-moral viewpoint in experience and (2) metaethical nihilism about values are just impossible. See e.g. LW4: 238.

successive moments of that experience "run a sense of growing meaning conserved and accumulating toward an end that is felt as accomplishment of a process" (LW10: 45). The tensional unity of a set of elements in a whole in virtue of an individualizing quality and the teleological structure towards a final consummation are the formal properties of every experience that can be called "an" experience. These two basic characters, using the language of aesthetics, constitute the formal properties of a "form" (LW10: 142). Form is therefore the formal structure of every unity of experience. As Dewey says, "in every integral experience there is form because there is dynamic organization. I call the organization dynamic because it takes time to complete it, because it is a growth." There is inception, development, fulfillment" (LW10: 62).

A moral problematic situation emerges always as impossibility in the realization of an expected teleological consummation. According to Dewey's analysis, it is possible to single out at least three broad types of "problematic situations": (a) the interaction can become problematic when the biological balance between the organism and its environment is interrupted; (b) the deliberation on what to do in a certain situation is delayed or made harder by the incapacity of applying abstract patterns of behavior to a concrete situation; (c) the deliberation on what to do in a certain situation is delayed or made harder not because of the incapacity of applying abstract moral schemes, but because there are different "independent factors" that function in the situation as legitimate but conflicting criteria for the decision (see the three factors goodness, justice and virtue in *Three Independent Factors in Morals*). However, what is important to stress here is that the overarching value quality of immediate experience and some of the factors implied in it are interrupted in their teleological aspiration. The agent is therefore faced with two options in this situation. She can either be asked by the problematic moral situation to find new instances of old types of means in order to realize the type of consummation prospected before the emergence of the problem, or she can be asked to respond to the new objective demands of the new situation and, maybe, to revise her moral habits and principles. In the first case, the final new experiential synthesis produces a new application of old moral standards. In the second case, the new experiential synthesis brings about a new and original moral quality (or characteristic, or property), in general, a new type of value. It this second case, the situation might be the beginning of the development of new general moral dispositions. If a particular problematic moral situation is the former or the latter depends on the nature of the objective demands of the situation and on the "passionate intelligence" of the agent in facing it. In both cases, however, the agent has to deliberately produce a new experiential synthesis through a process of moral inquiry. Also a moral problematic situation is an experiential unity in development: the present problem is the individualizing quality of the situation (the absence of perfect unity is itself the individualizing quality of the present problematic situation), while the resolution of the problem vaguely alluded to by the same quality is its aesthetic telos and apex. Dewey writes:

> It is not possible to divide in vital experience the practical, emotional and intellectual from one another and to set the properties of one over against the characteristics of the others. The emotional phase binds parts together into a single whole; "intellectual" simply names the fact that the experience the fact that the experience has meaning; "practical" indicates that the organism is interacting with events and objects which surround it. The most elaborate philosophic or scientific inquiry and the most ambitious industrial or political enterprise has, when its different ingredients constitute an integral experience, esthetic quality. For then its varied parts are linked to one another, and do not merely succeed one another. And the parts through their experienced linkage move toward a consummation and close, not merely to cessation in time. This consummation, moreover, does not wait in consciousness for the whole undertaking to be finished. It is anticipated throughout and is recurrently savored with special intensity. (LW10: 61)

In this section, I show how the "practical, emotional and intellectual" elements of all experiences play a fundamental and interconnected role in that specific type of experience that is moral inquiry and deliberation. In particular, I show that the whole logical structure and the whole enterprise of moral deliberation aims to the intelligent and "grounded" actualization, or embodiment, of the value demanded by the situation. Its task is to produce a new intelligent synthesis in experience. It is in this embodiment that Dewey constitutes the aesthetic telos, that is, "consummation,"[2] of the logical process of moral deliberation.

2 Of course, the final and complete "consummation" is partially anticipated in the intermediate steps and results of the reflective process of reconstruction of experience in general, and, therefore, also of the act of deliberation. See e.g. LW10: 62-63. See also LW1:

For Dewey, moral deliberation is a type of inquiry. It has, as any other types of inquiry, a well-defined logical structure and development. In this dynamic structure, moral inquiry is the reflective process emerging from a problematic context and is teleologically oriented to the solution of it. From a general viewpoint, Dewey is interested in stressing the nature of moral deliberation as inquiry because "inquiry" highlights the idea that also contextual moral knowledge, as any other occasion for knowledge, is potentially a matter of discovery and improvement, rather than a mere application of old moral standards and principles. The broad philosophical point implied in the idea of "moral deliberation" as moral inquiry is first of all then a conception of the moral life lived in experimental attitude. This entails an experimental revolution both in the attitude of the individual moral reasoner in facing a particular problem, and in the development of a "systematic moral theory," since the latter is only a systematic and critical development of the former reflective process. In a first approximation, "experimental" has the somewhat vague meaning of "adventurous" (LW10: 149). Before clarifying what this means in detail, it is important to stress this comprehensive approach to the issue of moral knowledge and its breakthrough in moral philosophy. It is usually claimed that Dewey's ethics continues the scientific approach to morality inaugurated by authors like Hume, Bentham and Mill, who saw an opposition between an empirical study of the human nature and any form of theological ethics, and took this opposition as a program to develop a new moral philosophy (e.g., Welchman 2010: 167; Calcaterra 2011: 100-101; Frega 2006a; 2006b; Frega 2010). However, this element of continuity should not eclipse the novelty brought about by Dewey. What is completely different in his approach is that, while his "scientific" forerunners saw the possibility to ground a philosophical ethics on absolute principles (though developed through induction on the basis of experience), Dewey took this task to be impossible. His philosophical ethics not only develops the previous appeal to empirical observations of moral phenomena, but also realizes the fallibilist spirit of modern and contemporary natural sciences. Therefore, in a certain sense, there are no absolute or definitive moral principles and values. Of course, there are moral principles which are the critical standardization of the result of the past moral inquiries and experiences, but these principles are never definitive and need always to be considered fallible and susceptible of reform. As we will see, this fallibilism in ethics is the consequence of the specific conception of metaphysics put forward by Dewey, which implies the possibility of the emergence of new contexts and moral demands. However, in approaching Dewey's theory of moral inquiry and deliberation, we should keep in mind that his "systematic moral theory" is anything but a system of moral principles and values. Moral epistemic fallibilism goes together with the stress of the possibility of real discovery in the process of moral inquiry.

Although inquiry is the general notion used by Dewey for the genuinely reflective thought, "moral inquiry" has a characteristic "emphasis" (LW14: 70). "Inquiry" in morals originates from the "doubt" about what action should be done and has the task of producing a grounded "belief" or "knowledge" about what ought to be done in a particular situation by the individual agent. Its task is to establish an end-in-view. In other words, the "warranted" asserted conclusion of a deliberation is the prescription of an action to do here and now (LW12: 14-15), that is, an ought-to. Although Dewey stresses the importance of moral deliberation in the formation of character as much as Peirce does, it is possible to see in Dewey a stronger confidence in the role of deliberation in the context of ongoing practical perplexities. The agent, as subject of immediate experience, withdraws from the overt action in the presence of a problem and undertakes a reflective and imaginative process to construct the future, new possibility of action (LW12: 142; see also LW4: 178). However, just like in the case of Aristotle's practical syllogism, the ultimate conclusion of the process of deliberation is not a mere symbolic synthesis about a hypothetical end-in-view but is the actual action in the overt world. The conclusion of the process of deliberation is what Dewey calls "moral judgment." Therefore, the ultimate reality of the moral judgment is not a logical act understood as a symbolic synthesis of subject and predicate (propositional content), but is the actualization in overt action of the propositional content of that logical act, that is, of the type of operation conceived as an abstract object in the process of deliberation. The symbolic moment is therefore "instrumental" to the realization of a new set of actual conditions of consummatory experience (LW12: 163-164). Since the telos of the process of deliberation is the "close or termination" of the problematic situation, the deliberation itself as a reflective moment "terminates in the institution of conditions which remove need for doubt" (LW12: 15). In this sense, judgment is the "resulting transformation" and nothing psychological or mental (LW12: 161).

30 footnote 5 on the constant presence of a "qualitative" field and background also in inquiry. For a characterization of "quality," see Browning (2010: 172-173).

Deliberation originates from the emergence of an obstacle in the development of an immediate experience towards the enjoyment of a certain value and is teleologically oriented to the reestablishment of the consummatory possibility of a value quality through the production of a new actual interaction. The important point to stress here is the difference between the intermediate and developmental stages of deliberation and the judgment, its conclusion. The main difference is that while the first have the status of symbolic syntheses, the latter becomes concrete as an overt action. Dewey writes that

> judgment may be identified as the settled outcome of inquiry. It is concerned with the concluding objects that emerge from inquiry in their status of being conclusive. Judgment in this sense is distinguished from *propositions*. The content of the latter is intermediate and and representative and is carried by symbols; while judgment, as finally made, has *direct* existential import. The terms *affirmation* and *assertion* are employed in current speech interchangeably. But there is a difference, which should have linguistic recognition, between the logical status of intermediate subject-matter ands that are taken for use in connection with what they may lead to as means, and subject-matter which has been prepared to be final. I shall use *assertion* to designate the latter logical status and *affirmation* to name the former (LW12: 123).

It is true, in a derivate sense, that also the final judgment, or assertion, has a propositional content, but only in so far as we understand the logic function of that proposition is to be a "means of instituting the sentence" in the world through an overt action (LW12: 125; 165). Similarly, it is true that, since the judgment has a temporal structure, the intermediate cognitive acts that lead to the final judgment, that is, the affirmations also share the nature of the judgment in so far as they are considered its provisional, tentative and partial "completions," functional to the real completion in the conclusion (LW12: 178). In fact, "judgment as final settlement is dependent upon a series of partial settlements" (LW12: 125). This truth about the moral judgment is apparent both in the continuity and in the distinction between the symbolic synthesis and the overt action. This aspect is also clear when we pay attention to certain terminological inconsistencies in Dewey's terminology in talking about what a moral judgment is. Sometimes he uses the notion of judgment as indicating the propositional content of an affirmation in which the end-in-view is only symbolically represented (LW12: 131; 134). In other cases, just like in the passage quoted above, it is clear that the rigorous notion of judgment refers to the end-in-view not as a possible action symbolically represented in a proposition, but as actualized/embodied in the overt action (LW12: 125; 162; 168; 288-289). In so far as the final aim of deliberation is the actualization/embodiment of a value, moral judgment coincides with an "application" of a proposition, since application is "a matter of existential operations executed upon existential materials" (LW12: 375). As we have seen, deliberation originates from the crisis or interruption of an enjoyment in the immediate experience and its telos is to establish a new value quality in immediate experience through the production of new interactive conditions. The fact that the ultimate and appropriate conclusion of deliberation is an act in the overt world and not a mere symbolic synthesis is the reflection in the realm of logic of the experiential need of establishing again the conditions for new consummations. "Execution of the operation upon symbolized ideational material does not produce the consequences constituting resolution of tension. It produces them … only by operationally introducing conditions that institute a determinate kind of interaction" (LW12: 288-289). The instrumentality of the process of deliberation as an act that serves the cause of immediate experience is mirrored by the instrumentality of the intermediate affirmations and their propositional content in order to make the final overt action possible. Therefore, the logical need for the actualization/embodiment of the represented value as the adequate conclusion of a deliberation is a consequence of the nature of the reconstructive, experiential function of deliberation itself.

3.1. Propositions, Rigor & Productivity and Epistemic Creativity in Deliberation

The metaphysical locus in which values are fully realized is the world of immediate consummations, so that a genuine reflective process on moral conflicts always starts from an instance of interrupted consummation and always ends up realizing a new consummation through the agent's deed. There is therefore a continuity among all

the experiential phases (immediate consummation, deliberation, new action, new immediate consummation) of the moral life, and this is the development of values from the status of immediate enjoyments, through the status of hypotheses of action, to the status of concrete action in the overt world and new enjoyment. The different phases of the moral inquiry show well this continuity. I will focus on the importance of this continuity in relation to two specific topics, namely, the normativity of moral principles and the formation of motivation to action. In this section, however, I want to highlight the continuity of moral experience in relation to the constant reference to the dimension of value in all the phases of the process of moral inquiry or deliberation. Moreover, I will stress the fact that all the phases of the process of deliberation are teleologically oriented to the actualization/embodiment of a new value, namely, to the realization of a new experiential synthesis. The vocation of every reflective value is to become the center of a new consummatory interaction with the environment. In that case, the final "consummation" (or "appreciation") has a structural reference to a previous reflection, in the sense that it is the final enjoyment (as a fulfilling climax, peak or culmination) of the previous cognitive and deliberative processes about what to do in a context. "Appreciation, if genuine, is toward a subject-matter that is *representative.* … Appreciation thus differs in a fundamental way from causal enjoyments that are just hit upon or let drop" (LW12: 177).

Dewey reminds us that "inquiry demands … operations of both observation and ideation" (LW12: 136) and both these operations require rational discourse and other non-cognitive skills. Let us focus for the moment on the strictly cognitive aspect of this process. Dewey defines inquiry as the "controlled or directed" transformation of an indeterminate situation into a new unified whole (LW12: 108). All the different stages of the development of deliberation, from the institution of the problem of the case, to the determination of a problem-solution through the activity of reasoning (taking for granted, again, that, reasoning is not the only operation involved in deliberation), is a controlled, inferential mediation of successive hypothesis of action towards a warranted assertion (LW12: 142). When an agent is faced with an indeterminate situation, the organic habits more closely involved in this situation are spontaneously turned into "suggestions." However, the hypotheses of action presented in the suggestions are more "mental" events (spontaneous guesses) rather than intellectual operations determined by the agent. At the same time, they do not have real logical force, since they need the active intervention of the agent to be controlled, modified and used in order to pursue the inquiry (LW12: 300-301). The task of inquiry is to establish deliberately the "material means" and the "procedural means" that would lead to overcome the problem once realized (LW12: 139; 162), that is, the existential conditions on which the action should be performed and the operation itself to be performed. Through the intervention of the agent, the suggestions are transformed into "ideas" and "propositions," that is, into systems of meanings. The rational discourse, or reasoning, is a cognitive process put in action by the agent in order to develop the first meanings that come to the mind into meanings that are more detailed and close to the exigencies of the present situation (LW12: 164). A proposition is the linguistic content of all the different moments of a process of reasoning. In other words, it is the symbolic formulation of the relations of meanings of facts and possible actions that constitute therefore a system of meanings (LW12: 115). While a judgment is individual, that is, is an individual act, propositions are abstract symbolic formulations of relations of meanings and can be therefore particular, singular, generic and universal (LW12: 283). As the etymology of the word shows for Dewey, a proposition plays the logical function of "proposal" in the construction of the judgment, which in the case of a deliberation corresponds to a tentative indication of a hypothesis of action. Propositions are "provisional, intermediate and instrumental" (LW12: 283). All the elements implied in an act of deliberation as its subject-matter, that is the observations, the moral principles taken into consideration, the declarations about the "facts" of the case and the possible solutions of the problem, share the same logical status in so far as they all are propositions. All the factors studied during the inquiry are turned into propositions, namely, into "tools" or "instruments" for the reconstruction of the indeterminate situation. Again, the status of the knowledge of all the elements implied in the process of deliberation is hypothetical. This is also true of the moral principles. Since the task of the reasoning is to contribute to the determination of an end-in-view in order to reconstruct the situation, the moral reasoner (1) has to choose which moral principles are suitable for the case. Just like a map is not a constant or suitable instrument for all of our journeys, similarly moral principles are "not always operative in the existential work of reconstructing existential material" (LW12: 138). Moreover, she (2) has to use and cognitively operate on the chosen principles in order to apply them to the present situation. In both cases, the moral principles of the

agent have only a hypothetical relevance and normative authority at the outset of the process of deliberation.

Therefore, the logical function of all the propositions is the one of an hypothesis, that states that under certain condition C, if a certain operation O is performed on an set of existent objects M, certain desired consequences E will probably occur ("if … then", LW12: 165). Dewey clearly states that a genuine inquiry only takes place when the agent has to discover and establish the content of all the variables present in the hypothetical proposition. It is possible, indeed, that the agent acts often on the basis of her moral taste and the "relatively immediate judgments" that spring from it (LW4: 209). It is instructive to read at length a passage in which Dewey criticizes the mistaken or oversimplified account of an action through a practical syllogism constituted by a general premise, a particular premise and a conclusion. Dewey states the traditional account of a practical syllogism is the following:

> The propositions "I am ill" and "When one is ill, one should consult a doctor" are taken respectively as the minor and major premises of a syllogism form which the conclusion "I should see a doctor" necessarily follows. The interpretations rests upon taking advantage of an ambiguity, It may be but a linguistic rendering of a genuine judgment already made. … Taken literally, however, the interpretation means that there was no inquiry and no judgment. It only means that the person in question, whenever he fancies he is ill has the habit of going automatically to a physician. Here is no element of doubt or indeterminateness, no inquiry and no forming of propositions. There is a direct stimulus and it is responded to in accord with a previously formed habit. The alleged syllogism is but an externally imposed account of what has taken place in action in which no logical forms are involved. The situation is of significance because it brings out by contrast the situations in which judgment does occur. A man may have a regular habit of consulting physicians because he is valetudinarian and on that account does not exist judgment. Or he may have the tendency to go whenever his symptoms are severe and yet on this particular occasion be in doubt whether he is sufficiently ill to justify going. Then he engages in reflection. … The account which reduces a proposition of practice to a formal combination of a singular and a general proposition thus applies only ex post facto linguistic analyses of either an act performed from habit without the intermediation of judgment or else of a judgment that has been completed. (LW12: 166-167)

Rational discourse and reasoning, among the other operations of the agent, is precisely aimed at defining these different variables through the inferential articulation of different propositions. Dewey's classification of proposition includes particular, singular, generic and universal propositions (LW12: 283-309). Particular and singular propositions have the form "This is X." The value of X, however, varies if we are dealing with a particular or a singular proposition. In the former case, X means a particular "quality" expressed by "this" in a precise spatio-temporal moment, and not a stable property. In the latter case, X means a stable property of X, or a "kind" to which X belongs in a more or less stable way.[3] Generic and universal propositions have the form "All X are Y," where the value of both X and Y vary according to the use of the proposition as a generic or a universal one within a process of inquiry. Generic propositions are about "kinds" of things and have existential import, for they refer to spatio-temporal connections between existents. On the other hand, universal propositions do not have existential import. They formulate "necessary relations" between abstract characters (or possibilities) and may be valid even though nothing in existence possesses any of the latter. Dewey claims that "particular propositions function as instruments for determining the problem involved in an indeterminate situation, while the other forms listed represent stages in the attainment of the logical means for solution of the problem" (LW12: 309). He also states that "all propositions about policies to be pursued, ends to be striven for, consequences to be reached are propositions about subject-matters having the formal relation *means-consequences*, and are, in the sense defined, causal propositions" (LW12: 456). What is important to stress here is again the fact that the logical form of the conclusion of the moral deliberation is a conjunction of singular and particular propositions, that is, propositions about a selected material M on which to perform O here and now. The logical analysis of the propositions of the moral deliberation confirms that the telos of the moral deliberation is to actualize/embody a value. The determination of the problem has the propositional form "this is X here and now." The identification of the material and procedural means is developed through universal propositions which have the propositional form "X is Y," through generic propositions "All X are Y" or "This and this and

3 The distinction can probably be associated to Peirce's distinction between a mere 1rstness and a 3rdness (both understood as actualized in a concrete instance, 2ndness).

this and … are Y" and particular propositions "this belongs to the type X in a more or less stable way." The final proposition is a causal proposition constituted by a set a conjunction of particular propositions, i.e. "here and now, in *these* conditions C, if I do O on this selection of existent conditions M, the desired consequence E will occur."

The description that we have been given is completely formal. The problem is to define how the agent brings about the inferential process. In fact, it is clear that a set of propositions might imply many different conclusions. In other words, many different propositions can be inferred from a proposition or a set of propositions according to the purposes and ends that give direction to the process of reasoning. The quality of the individual problematic moral situation plays here its teleological role, in the sense that it is first for the determination of *its* problem and second for the solution of *this* problem that the inferences are performed. The "peculiar quality" and "unique doubtfulness" (LW12: 109) of the problematic situation play therefore a teleological function for the inquiry (LW12: 128). Hugh MacDonald has recently defined Dewey's position a "moral holism" (MacDonald 2004: 109-122). The meaning of this definition is that for Dewey the entire moral reflection originates from and revolves around what he calls the particular "problematic situations," that is, situations in which the fluidity of human agency is somehow interrupted by the occurrence of a problem. The whole cognitive process develops through series of different disjunctive propositions indicating alternative courses of action, towards a final action (LW12: 173; see exhaustiveness of the disjunctive propositions). The direction of the reasoning is from a "vague" idea or proposition to a "workable" and "applicable" hypothesis of action in an individual situation. The inferential development of a system of meanings goes in the direction of finding "through a series of intermediate meanings, a meaning [that] is finally … more clearly relevant to the problem in hand than the originally suggested idea" (LW12: 115). This means that a genuine process of moral deliberation, therefore, needs to have what Dewey calls "rigor and productivity" (LW12: 313-314). The development of a particular system of meanings into series of different propositions and implications needs to be performed in a particular direction, namely, the solution of the problem at hand, and needs to show the following two properties. First, (a) in the process of reasoning, the propositions inferred from a precious set of propositions have to be "equivalent in logical force" with the previous set of propositions. This is the requisite of *rigor*, which means that the inferred proposition has to be helpfully and correctly directed toward the production of an end-in-view. Second, (b) the proposition inferred must not be "tautological" in relation to the set of propositions from which it is derives. This second requisite is the *productivity* of reasoning, which entails that the informative content of the inferred proposition is richer than the ones of the previous propositions and tends to the knowledge of an "operationally applicable" plan of action here and now. Dewey often insists on the fact that a moral principle does not have all the "instruction" and "information" necessary to become a "*working* principle" of action here and now, that is, an end-in-view (EW4: 262). The capacity of finding "equivalent" but not tautological propositions in the process of deliberating about what one ought to do in a particular case is therefore the basic capacity required by a sound process of reasoning. All these three properties, rigor, productivity and equivalence in reasoning are again teleological properties and aim at the establishment of the appropriate end-in-view of the situation. The crucial problem is then how in any given case the vague and general propositions employed acquire "that *content* which is a condition of their determinate applicability." In other words

> It is not enough that the propositional function "If *Y*, then *X*" should be seen to be a required from for reaching any scientifically grounded conclusions. It is necessary that Y should be given a determinate value such that X may also have be given a determinate value. In addition, it is an acknowledged principle that no universal proposition "implies" singulars, so that in any case there is no direct transition from universal to existential propositions. (LW12: 374)

In the case of a moral deliberation, the "singulars" that are not "implied" by a general proposition are the singular (and, even more so, particular) propositions that constitute the conclusion of the deliberation. All the efforts of the inferential process, including the choice of the moral principles that are relevant in this particular case, are directed towards the ideation of the appropriate end-in-view. The proposition articulated in conclusion of the deliberation, that is, in the moral judgment, is therefore an end-in-view in which the material and the procedural means have been selected and developed in relation to an individual situation and synthesized in the end-in-view (LW12: 168). The claim that a general proposition does not imply neither a singular nor a particular

proposition means that the problem of the contextual "deduction" of consequences from a general premise is for Dewey a problem of application of that general proposition to a subject-matter. Application, Dewey says, is in its essence a matter of "selection" and "arrangement" (LW12: 374). In other words, in a genuine process of inquiry, to say that "All X are Y," "This is X," therefore "This is Y" requires not only the selection of the general proposition "All X are Y" as a suitable one for the present case, but also the need to identify "this" as an "X," for example. Therefore, the application of a general proposition to a particular subject-matter requires not only the knowledge of the general premise and of formal rules of inference, but requires a real inquiry, through observation and existential or imaginative experiments, into the problematic situation. In other words, the application of a general proposition requires the *acquisition of new knowledge about the particular problematic situation* that is the subject-matter of the inquiry. "Reflective observation … partakes of the nature of analysis and synthesis" (LW12: 177). Dewey explains in the following way the interplay between deduction/analysis and induction/synthesis:

> As far as *processes* of inquiry are concerned, there is no difference between induction and deduction. Sagacity in evaluation, scrupulous care in notation and record, cherishing and development of suggestion, a keen eye for relevant analogies, tentative experimentation, physical and imaginative shaping of material so that it takes the form of diagrammatic representation, are all demanded whether the subject-matter is observational or conceptual; that is, whether the *function* of the subject-matter in question is inductive or deductive. The distinction between induction and deduction does not lie then in the process of inquiry but in the *direction* which the processes take – according as the objective is determination of relevant and effective existential data or relevant and effective interrelated conceptions. … The notion that there is one logic of induction and another of deduction, and that the two logics are independent of each other, is an expression of a certain stage of intellectual history. … The *processes* involved in the work of analyzing and reordering accepted material cannot, it seems to me, be any different from those involved in any strictly existential inquiry.

The fact that deduction/analysis and induction/synthesis[4] are not possible as distinct logical operations but always happen simultaneously implies that an essential component of every inquiry is what I call *epistemic creativity*. The deliberative reasoner, in order to deduce a conclusion from a general proposition, has therefore to discover and select the contextual conditions and ways to perform that operation. That is to say, the process of analysis or deduction, in so far as it is application, is brought about simultaneously with a process of synthesis or induction. Since it is a logical necessity that the subject-matter of every new deliberation includes new synthetic factors, the conclusion of every moral judgment is necessarily a new and unique "good." (MW14: 146).[5] Again, the process of deliberation has the realization an individual action as its regulative principle.

Epistemic creativity, however, is not limited only to the problem of the knowledge required by a new application or exemplification of an old moral principle, but can also have a power of radical reform in our standards. Dewey writes

> The generalized and abstract conceptions of truth, beauty and goodness have a genuine value for inquiry, creation and conduct. They have, like all genuine ideals, a limiting and directive force. But in order to exercise their genuine function they must be taken as reminders of the concrete conditions and operations that have to be satisfied in actual cases. In serving as such generalized instrument, their meaning is exemplified in their further use, while it is also clarified and modified in this use. (LW12: 179)

The first element implied in this passage is the need for application. Application, however, might imply a possible change in the conceptions we have and, therefore, in our moral principles and standards. This means that the inquiry in the present situation can be relative to new and unforeseen possibilities of action, which might require modification of our general principles and standards. The synthetic and inductive moment of the moral

4 See also LW1: 151-153.

5 Also, Dewey says that the "individualized" value in context is the real "absolute," as opposed to the a-contextual absolutism and "relativism" (e.g. EW4: 263-264; 317). It also follows from this that "the construction of a moral judgment" is literally the construction of a (contextual) good (e.g. LW12: 123; LW4, Ch. 10). Dewey's "constructivism" is a corollary of his theory of a moral knowledge as distinctively practical (oriented to action, MW8: 14-82) and in itself does not imply any rejection of "objective" moral rules and values.

inquiry can exemplify the property of epistemic creativity in two ways. (1) First, epistemic creativity means that synthetic knowledge is necessary for the application here and now of a general moral principle. In this, "creativity" in knowledge means production of the semiotic conditions for the application of a moral principle. (2) Second, it can refer to synthetic knowledge about new unforeseen possibilities of action that lead to a modification (instead of application) of our moral principles. In this case, "creativity" in knowledge means creation of new moral principles and standard and eventually of new habits (LW12: 250). The synthetic moment of knowledge can refer both to the needed conditions of application *of* a general rule or to the condition for a need modification *in* the general rule. It cannot be established in advance whether a new situation is an instance of (1) or (2), but it is the duty of the agent to be attentive and curious enough to detect what the new situation asks from him.

This point makes us understand Dewey's stance in relation to the problem of deduction in ethics. It is often claimed (e.g. Lekan 1998; 2003) that Dewey's reconstruction of moral reasoning and deliberation is in overt opposition to a deductive approach in ethics. Although this claim is true, it might hide an ambiguity. The ambiguity relies on the fact that Dewey is not rejecting the idea that deductive inferences play a role in moral reasoning. As we have seen, deduction/analysis, performed in synergy with induction/synthesis, is an indispensable component of all reasoning. The conclusion is that Dewey does not argue against the idea of deduction in itself, but against one possible use of deduction and against one broad philosophical interpretation of the role of deduction in the development of knowledge. His argument is against deduction as a non-creative rational process and to the usually related understanding of moral principles as fixed moral axioms (fixed moral principles indicating "end-in-themselves"). This is also the chore of Dewey's anti-Platonism of values ("hypostatization" of the good as "ontological absolutes," LW12: 178). The non-creative use of deduction exemplifies a process of deliberation in which the construction of the new moral judgment, or the mediation of the new overt act, is more an occasion for the repetition of old schemes rather than for an intelligent response to the novelty of the situation. The stress on the novelty of the situation and the exigency of a "creative" attitude is not rhetorical since we have seen that deliberation always requires in its logical structure new synthetic knowledge. The intrinsic problem of a wrong conception of deduction relies first and foremost in the bad logical use of moral principles, in the sense that, when they are assumed as moral axioms, they do not work as "tools" for actualizing the potentialities of the present situation, but as rules to which the situation has to be conformed. In this sense, the possibility of epistemic creativity is essentially undermined in both of its versions. Dewey explains

> From the standpoint of method, such conceptual generalizations … *pre*judge the characteristic traits and the kinds of actual phenomena that the proposed plans of action are to deal with. Hence, the work of *analytic* observation by which actual phenomena will be reduced to terms of definite problems that may be dealt with by means of determinate specific operations is intrinsically compromised from the start. (LW12: 499-500)

Just like deduction was the logical structure of demonstration in the study of the natural world, in ethics deduction was used as the unmediated and a-contextual prescription of alleged moral axioms (LW12: 480). However, for Dewey, just like for Peirce before and for C. I. Lewis later, deduction is not the structure of scientific demonstration anymore, but the analytic process of inferring conclusions from hypotheses to be tested experimentally. The negative exemplifications of this philosophical use of the wrong conception of deduction were the conception of ends-in-themselves that are fixed in and by Nature (and hence ontological and cosmological) in classical moral and political theory; the doctrine of "natural laws," in the variety of forms throughout different epochs; the theory of intuitions of *a priori* necessary truths, and finally the doctrine of an intrinsic hierarchy of fixed values. In *Logic* (W12: 497-498), Dewey describes the case of Adam Smith's and John S. Mills's classical political theory, showing how the logical method connected to its natural norms of the economical behavior of men is a perfect instance of the wrong, axiomatic use of deduction. The natural norms were such as "the universal desire of each individual is to better his condition," "each individual has the desire to do so with the least effort (since effort constituted cost in the sense of pain to be minimized)," "each individual has the impulse to exchange goods and services in maximum satisfaction of wants at least cost," etc. Dewey's

concern is not first and foremost about the truth or the falsity of these claims, but about the method and the logic implied in such an approach to human behavior. For him, the problem is that a dogmatic and axiomatic use of deduction rules out all the possibilities of creativity in knowledge and action because of its own constitutive logic. "Classical political economy, with respect to its logical form, claimed to be a science in virtue, first, of certain ultimate first truths, and, secondly, in virtue of the possibility of rigorous "deduction" of actual economic phenomena from these truths. From these "premises," it followed, in the third place, that the first truths provided the norms of practical activity in the field of economic phenomena; or that actual measures were right or wrong, and actual economics phenomena normal or abnormal, in the degree of their correspondence with deductions made from the system of conceptions forming the premises" (LW12: 497-498; see also EW4: 262). The norms are supposed to "govern" human deliberation and moral economic assessment, not as cognitive tools of new and creative experiential syntheses but as natural fixed demands to be reproduced.

3.2. Non-Discursive Factors in Deliberation

Rational discourse strictly considered as the series of analysis-synthesis acts and of corresponding propositions is only an abstract account of the full reality of reasoning. As a matter of fact, inquiry and deliberation include also "qualitative" and "aesthetic" dynamics, that is, semeiotic operations that are not formalizable in or reducible to rational discourse but that are somehow the necessary conditions for it. The general statement for this need is the following:

> It is quite true that certain things, namely, ideas, exercise a mediating function. But only a twisted and aborted logic can hold that because something is mediated, it cannot, therefore, be immediately experienced. The reverse is the case. We cannot grasp any idea, any organ of mediation, we cannot possess it in its full force, until we have felt and sensed it, as much so as if it were an odor or a color. Those who are especially addicted to thinking as an occupation, are aware when they observe the process of thought, instead of determining by dialectic what they must be, that immediate feeling is not limited in its scope. Different ideas have their different "feels," their immediate qualitative aspects, just as much as anything else. One who is thinking his way through a complicated problem finds direction on his way by means of this property of ideas. Their qualities stop him when he enters the wrong path and send him ahead when he hits the right one. They are signs of an intellectual "Stop and Go." If a thinker had to work out the meaning of each idea discursively, he would be lost in a labyrinth that had no end and no center. Whenever an idea loses its immediate felt quality, it ceases to be an ides and becomes, like an algebraic symbol, a mere stimulus to execute an operation without the need of thinking. … When there is genuine artistry in scientific inquiry and philosophic speculation, a thinker proceeds neither by rule nor yet blindly, but by means of meanings that exist immediately as feelings having qualitative color. (LW10: 125)

The first point to stress is that the qualitative, non-discursive operations performed in inquiry are not activities separate from the rational ones. As Dewey says, these operations constitute the "qualitative thought" of men (LW5: 243-263). We have seen in Chapter 3 that according to Peirce sentiments are as cognitive acts as inferences are. Similarly, Dewey maintains that "qualitative thought" a necessary function for the rational discourse to be developed *as* discursive. Human thinking, as rational discourse, requires sensitivity for "ideas" and directions of inquiry just like it needs capacity for subtle observation and perception in the existential conditions of a problematic situation in order to select the suitable factual evidence for elaborating the end-in-view. In other words, the non-discursive dimension of the thought is an internal *condition* of the discursive development of thinking, not an extrinsic emotive coloring or outcome. This is true of the indeterminate moral situation from its emergence to its resolutive transformation, since both the conceptual determination of the problem and its final moral judgment require a selection and organization of elements that would not be possible without the teleological function of the individual "quality" of the situation (LW12: 124). As we read in the passage, for the reasoner endowed with skills in non-discursive operations, ideas perform a fundamental semeiotic function in their "immediate felt quality." This means that a first and fundamental function of the idea

is to have a non-linguistic, non-propositional and non-discursive (that is, "qualitative" and "felt") evidential ground for intellectual operations. Although non-linguistic and non-propositional,[6] ideas perform semeiotic functions in so far as they give *direction* to inquiry. Of course, once grasped and qualitatively selected, ideas can and must be developed in systems of meanings and propositions thought rational discourse. However, Dewey seems to claim that none of the further symbolic stages of inquiry could be performed without the previous qualitative and non-propositional semeiotic function of the ideas. These non-logarithmic semiotic functions ground all the other symbolic and somehow logarithmic operations in the process of inquiry.

Just like any other semeiotic process, also the qualitative semeiosis of ideas relies on the reasoner's interpretative habits. It is the expert reasoner who has developed a certain "familiarity" with her subject-matter and who therefore performs on it certain operations more easily and successfully. As a matter of fact, the "immediacy" of the qualitative semeiosis to which Dewey refers has to be understood, in a Hegelian sense, as a mediated immediacy. It is true that the qualitative semeiosis is not mediated in the sense that is not the product of a deliberative process of operations on symbols, but it is however the result of a spontaneous inference based on the reasoner's interpretative habits. These various habitual skills include "familiarity with the material, sagacity in discrimination, acuteness in detection of leads and clews, persistence and thoroughness in following them through, cherishing and developing suggestions that arise" (LW12: 280). Dewey underlines this concept in relation to the notion of "taste" (EW4: 308; LW4: 209). Taste is a disposition that operates more or less spontaneously in the life of a person but that is "the funded product of much thoughtful experience."

A person might have "taste" in intellectual, aesthetic and moral subject-matter. This part of the character is so important that Dewey claims that "the formation of cultivated and effectively operative good judgment or taste with respect to what is esthetically admirable, intellectually acceptable and morally approvable is the supreme task set to human beings by the incidents of experience." Let us focus briefly on the case of morals, in which "taste" plays the role of classical virtue of wisdom (EW4: 353).[7] In this field of experience, moral taste is a capacity of perception of important moral features of a situation. It is so crucial for moral life that Dewey claims that "educated interest or taste is, ultimately, supreme, the *unum necessarium*, in morals" (LW2: 76). It is relevant at least under two respects. First, in morally demanding situations, the agent is not always led to engage in a fully developed reflective process, but has to rely mostly on her moral taste in order to figure out the indeterminate situation she is facing and acts consequently. In this case, the agent acts upon her "relatively immediate judgments" (also "tact" or "intuition")[8] without recurring to rational discourse. The agent's habits and attitudes work more as direct "*causes*" of evaluation in the new situation (LW12: 245) instead of working as the organic conditions for propositional reasoning. As we can see, this is certainly a Peircean legacy in Dewey's understanding of the role of deliberation in a problematic context. Second, when the agent starts a reflective process of deliberation, her taste for moral features operates as one of the most important leading principles in order to detect the possible connections and implications among "ideas" on what is the action required here and now. Among the different cognitive materials dealt with in deliberation, the selection of the moral principles that are adequate and relevant for the present situation is a momentous example. The choice of the right standards for the case is not only a matter of rational discourse, but is also at its bottom a matter of moral taste for the real demands of the situation and the moral principles that can function as the best tools of reconstruction. Of course, moral taste is fundamental at the same time for detecting the existential conditions of the case, its "facts" and their suitable operational meaning. As we have seen, the development of deliberation is always and at the same time a process of application/analysis/deduction of a conceptual, operational matter and a process of discovery/synthesis/induction of a material, existential matter. It is clear then that moral taste operates conjunctively with both processes.

In Dewey's view, there are in moral inquiries two non-discursive capacities of moral perception that are crucial for producing a grounded moral judgement in an individual context. These are the capacity for "sympathy" and for "imagination." Among the scholars, Gregory Pappas (2008) and Thomas Alexander (1992; 1993) have stressed the indispensability of these two operations in the most interesting way. Also Stephen Fesmire (1995; 1999; 2003) and Mark Johnson (2010) have given an interpretative contribution to this part of

6 Dewey disagrees with Peirce on the "propositional" nature of feelings, without endorsing though a non-cognitivist perspective.

7 Cf. e.g. Bohman (2010: 196), "context sensitivity" is the highest realization of moral rationality.

8 See EW4: 309.

Dewey moral theory.[9] In what follows, I want to provide a more comprehensive account of moral deliberation beyond its strictly linguistic aspects, but also to show the role played by the non-discursive and qualitative dimension of it. Once again, the elements of deliberation taken into consideration prove to be directed toward the actualization/embodiment of a value. The qualitative operations of deliberation, in their contextual use and organization of conceptual and material elements, are teleologically directed by the individual quality of the situation and teleologically active in order to help the discursive process to articulate that vague quality into a "workable" end-in-view. One final point has to be made here. Qualitative phenomena are operative not only in the making of the moral judgment, but also at its end, when the overt action is performed in the world. In fact, as Dewey points out, the success in the production of a desired action is usually accompanied by a pleasant emotive reaction:

> the valuation of an act assumes an objective and a subjective form. The objective is the analysis of the act into its various conditions, its definition or limitation – the ideal, intention, etc. The subjective is the feeling excited in the individual, by either the contemplation of the act in thought or by its actual execution in deed. The thought, the intention, is not colorless; it represents a projection of the self, and the moral emotion is simply the realization by an individual of the value of the projected act for himself as an individual. The thought of every act must have, therefore, its own peculiar, qualitative, emotional accompaniment. (EW4: 300)

If the qualitative thought and the other non-discursive factors in deliberation are instrumental to the moral judgment, the final experience of pleasure that accompanies the action is expressive of it. In *Ethics*, Dewey, reformulating Aristotle, states that a human moral act has three formal properties, that is: 1. a certain "state of mind," or the conception of an end-in-view (the agent has to know, or be aware, of the end-in-view she is pursuing); 2. the choice, or the end-in-view as a motive (the agent choses her end-in-view and reflectively transforms that end-in-view into a stimulus for her action) and 3. expressivity (the choice has to be the expression of a "character", or the "general tenor and set of personality"). Dewey's full account of the features of a moral act needs to be completed with this reference to the experience of pleasure that ought to accompany a morally good act. Pleasure, therefore, is the final qualitative response of the agent to its action during and after the realization of the action (EW3: 266-267; 276-277). The pleasurable experience is a natural outcome of the actualization of an action, in which the psychological tension of the indeterminate situation is released. However, the chore of this new qualitative experience is again the valuable action, that is, the actualized/embodied value. If the qualitative semeiotic processes within deliberation are teleologically oriented to the construction of the value to be actualized, the final pleasure is a semeiotic response that is causally determined by that value once it is embodied through the new interaction. In the pleasure that accompanies the morally good action, therefore, the causal and the reflective values coincide in the one final experience of pleasurable consummation. A genuine moral deliberation, just like the artistic activity, grows and terminates with an action that is colored by a particular "moral emotion," in which the development of deliberation itself is finally fulfilled as a process also from an affective viewpoint (EW3: 300-301). Of course, also this final moment in the reconstruction of the situation is not without moral import. As it has been recognized since Plato, the moral value of a pleasure depends on the object to which it is intentionally referred. Similarly, an objective moral good that is not emotionally experienced as such by the agent implies that the agent herself is not fully virtuous. Therefore, the final act cannot be morally good only in the intention of the agent and in its consequences, but needs to be felt as such. For instance, a morally good action requires that eventually the sense of duty "must be swallowed up in inclination and love" (EW4: 315; cf. also EW4: 295). The actualization/embodiment of a true moral value requires the agent's appropriate joyful response, so that if this response is missed, the deliberation and the moral judgment might be said to be incomplete. The pleasurable experience of a morally good action is a constitutive part of the deliberation in its final outcome. It follows that part of the moral task of every moral deliberation is to develop in the agent's character a moral taste that recognizes with emotive responses the moral nature of her acts.

9 The "imaginative" is distinct from the "imaginary" (MW9: 244-245), as the product of human mind is distinct from a bad, too abstract product of human mind. See also LW1: 170-171.

4. "Is"

This comprehensive account of deliberation, propositions and moral judgment has also a revolutionary impact in the conception of the logical function of the copula "is" in the construction of the moral judgment and in its final outcome.[10] Dewey agrees formally with the traditional conception that the standard form of the proposition is the connection of a subject and a predicate through the copula "is." However, he reinterprets the meaning of this logical structure showing how human agency and semantics are thoroughly entangled. As we have already mentioned in Chapter 4, Dewey points out that etymologically the word "is" indicates to stay or to change, to remain or endure, that is, a "mode of action" (LW12: 137; 307). The copula can be used as a mere connection of abstract characters outside a process of inquiry, like in the case of universal propositions, used simply to communicate an informative content or to report someone else's opinion (LW12: 174; 284) or at a very abstract level of the inquiry. In this case, the copula designates "a non-temporal or strictly logical relation between meanings" (LW12: 137). On the contrary, if a proposition is used as a moment in the development of the deliberation and has a clear existential reference, the copula has itself a clear existential reference and therefore a "temporal force" that is missing in the previous case. As we have seen, the subject of a proposition corresponds to the existential material that contains the "facts" of the case, or the existent conditions on which the possible operation should be performed, while the predicate represents this possible operation. In the intermediate propositions, the copula means that in this problematic situation this very existential material (existential reference) *could be used* in this very kind of way (type of operation), while in the conclusion of the process it means that very existential material *ought to be used* in this kind of way. In both cases, however, the copula is the logical connector in a hypothetical or normative practical synthesis between an existential matter and an operation. Dewey explains that

> the judgment, like inquiry, is temporal. It is temporal not in the external sense that the act of judging takes time, but in the sense that its subject-matter undergoes reconstitution in attaining the final state of determinate resolution and unification which is the objective that governs judgment. It is necessarily involved in what has been said that the linguistic form which expresses, or is the symbol of, judgment is a true verb; that is, one expressing action and change. … The situation to which the sentence refers determines unambiguously whether "is" has an active force, expressing a change going on actually or potentially, or whether it stands for a relation between meanings or ideas. In a sentence having no contextual situation, its logical force is indeterminate. For any sentence isolated from place and function in inquiry is logically indeterminate. The copula in a judgment, in distinction from the term of formal relations, expresses, accordingly, the actual transformation of the subject-matter of an indeterminate situation into a determinate one. So far is the copula from being an isolable constituent that it might be regarded as what sets the subject-and-predicate content at work executing their functions in relation to one another. In complex undertakings a plan for division of functions is usually laid out on paper. But this plan is not the actual division of labor. The latter consists in the actual distribution of the active factors of what is doing in their cooperation with one another. The distribution, as well as the cooperation, is arranged with reference to an end or objective consequence. The plan may be set forth and explained in propositions; its propositional exposition may be a means of criticism and of rearrangement of the plan of distribution. But the *actual* division can only be enacted. As just indicated, it may be stated in symbols, and symbolic representation of the division may be an indispensable means of an actual enactment. But it no more is a functioning division of labor than a blueprint is a house in process of building or a map is a journey. (LW12: 137-138)

This is the most fundamental example of the pragmatic account of the impossibility of establishing dichotomies in our understanding of reality. In this case, the dichotomy would be represented by the propositional content of an act of affirmation and the mental act, on the one hand, and the eventual, overt deed of the agent on the other hand. If what I have said so far is correct, this distinction does not hold any more as a fundamental dichotomy, but has to be understood as a distinction that takes place in experience under certain, limited conditions. These conditions are of course the emergence of a problematic situation and the reflecting activity of turning or formulating habits of action into linguistic propositions that follows it. In this sense, the

10 What is at stake here is not the copula as a sign of one type or the other (also as the absence of sign, e.g. Peirce), but the unifying *function* played by the copula or by every other systems of notation.

distinction between propositional content and moral judgment represents the contextual modality in which the development of the action of the agent takes the form of a rational discourse on what the future action should be. However, as we have seen, the rational discourse as a dimension of deliberation aims at the actualization/embodiment of the prospected end-in-view. The propositional content of the sequence of affirmations *grows* until it *becomes* the overt act itself. The symbolic synthesis represented in a proposition is the existential and experiential final synthesis in the making. At the end of the process of deliberation, there is no distinction anymore between the propositional, representational content about future possible operations and subjective acts of judgment. In the final act, the distinction of "object" and "subject" is partially and momentarily overcome. The simple action on symbols, operated in the internal phases of deliberation, does not realize this unity, since the use of symbols still belongs to the dimension of propositional representation. "As long as the operations are not executed, the subject-matter of such propositions is therefore abstract or non-existential" (LW12: 302). "Possibility" of operation, that is, the logical function and meaning of every predication, "is existentially actualized only when the operation is performed not with or upon symbols but on existence" (LW12: 288-289). The consequence is that in the moral judgment the subject-matter elaborated in the previous moments of deliberation coincides with the act itself that the agent is performing here and now. Dewey is hinting at this when he claims that "the subject-matter (object) of final judgment is a situation … it is a qualitative existential whole which is unique" (LW12: 124). Early on, Dewey writes:

> Moral theory, then, is the analytic perception of the conditions and relations in hand in a given act, – it is the action *in idea*. It is the construction of the act in thought against its outward construction. It is, therefore, the doing, – the act itself, in its emerging. So far are we from any divorce of moral theory and practice that theory is the ideal act, and conduct is the executed insight. (EW3: 95)

This means not only that the intelligence that is already operative at the symbolic and imaginative level *grows* in deliberation until the relations propositionally established through rational discourse enable the agent to act upon them "in the overt world."[11] It entails the stronger thesis that the *intelligibility* of the subject-matter about possible operations that is represented in the symbolic syntheses of propositions becomes the *intelligence in action* of the moral judgment every time that an end-in-view is actualized. Similarly, the telos of the logical function of the copula is not to synthesize a subject and a predicate in a symbolic representation, but to be actualized in the living and experiential synthesis of the overt act (see also LW2: 17).[12]

5. "Ought-to"

As we have seen, the appropriate conclusion of a deliberative process is not a moral judgment as a symbolic synthesis of a subject and a predicate, and not even a hypothetical "decision" to act in the future if a set of conditions occurs, but it is an actual "choice."[13] In this sense, Dewey's metaethical stance about the metaphysical status of "values" is close to Peirce's, insofar as asking what is a moral value independently from a reflection on human agency and its vocation to normativity is seen as a serious mistake. We have also seen that the (almost ultimate) conclusion of a deliberation is a belief, or warranted assertibility. Dewey defines the belief as "the settled condition of objective subject-matter, together with readiness of act in a given way when, if, and as, that subject-matter is present in existence … overtly or in imagination" (LW12: 15). Although the conclusion of a deliberation might be the establishment of a future plan of action, so that a concrete deed does not have to take place here and now, its experiential and logical telos is however the action itself. This means that the moral judgment in its ultimate and fullest realization is an actual/existential operation, through which the agent acts in

11 Dewey shows that the distinction between thinking and acting is flawed also from the physiological viewpoint (EW4: 272). Cf. LW1: 237-238 on thinking and acting in relation to the problem of focal perception.

12 This point is overlooked almost by all the scholars. Tristan (2002: 214) claims that copula represents the "unchanging and timeless Being." Burke 1994, which is still the most important work on Dewey's logic, does not address the problem. Garrison (2005: 823; 826; 828-829) hints at this but does not develop the point.

13 For instance, Searle 2001 speaks of a level of "practical intentions" as "intentions in action." See the same terminology in Brandom 2000. For a broader contextualization of the problem of intention in action in a neopragmatist view, see McDowell 2011.

the overt world and synthesizes the ideal and the existent factors of the case into a new unity. Moral judgment, just like every other judgment, is transformative. We might be inclined to think that the content of the moral judgment is therefore a prescription, an "ought-to" here and now. It is certain that for Dewey the moral judgment is practical in nature.[14] This means that the moral judgment plays the logical function of producing the directing and guiding knowledge about what the agent believes she is supposed to do, rather than a statement of what people think is right and just or a purely descriptive belief. Some critiques might argue that the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is not legitimate from a pragmatist viewpoint, since the meaning of every known X always refers to the dimension of human action.[15] However, this criticism does not hold. Although it is true that the predicate that occurs in every judgment expresses possible operations, there is still a difference in the function that a judgment plays as the conclusion of an inquiry (EW3: 108). In the case of theoretical knowledge, the end of the inquiry and the function of the judgment are to ascertain the facts and to move to their experimental test. In the case of practical knowledge, the end of an act of deliberation is to prescribe to the agent what she ought to do in a certain situation. In this sense, there is a functional and logical distinction between the knowledge of the actual with implication for the possible (operations, consequences, etc.) and the knowledge of the possible in order to change the actual (re-direct the action, transform the situation). Dewey is therefore committed to a certain distinction in logical function between the "is" and the "ought," or obligation. Dewey says

> Just as the consciousness of truth is not adventitious to a judgment of fact but constitutes its content, so the consciousness of obligation is not an annex to the judgment of action. Any being who is capable of acting from ideas – that is, whose conduct is the attempted realization of proposed ends – must conceive of these ends in terms of something to be done – of obligation. And that is what is meant by saying not only that the "ought" rests upon and expresses the "is," but that it is itself the "is" of action. (EW3: 109)

In a passage of *Experience and Nature* (LW1: 317), we find an interesting observation about the distinction between "is" and "ought." In it, Dewey discusses the extreme of opposite positions on the relation between "is" and "ought." On the one hand, empiricist positions reduce the standard of value to a mere immediate goods. On the other hand, rationalism draws the standard of value from a supposed transcendent or transcendental dimension of reality. However, it is interesting what Dewey says in confuting the former stance. He stresses again the need for a distinction between "is" and "ought," between "immediate values" and "standards of value" (LW1: 317). In fact, if this distinction is not maintained and developed, it is not possible to inquire into the nature of genuine moral values as distinct from causal and casual valuings. If the constitutive and prescriptive role of human intelligence is not admitted, the "standard" is reduced to another immediate value, so that, "it is by definition only another name for the object of a particular liking, on the part of some particular subjective

14 See again in particular Frega 2006a; 2006b; also Welchman 2010; Anderson 2010; McCarthy 1999.

15 It seems to me that there is a distinction between the meaning of an object O as "Y and Z would happen if S did X" and the normative claim that S ought to do X here and now. The factual meaning of O is inseparable from the general dimension of practical values. Therefore, if it is true for sure that Dewey overcomes the dichotomy facts/values (against empiricism, logical positivism and certain types of analytic philosophy, cf. Putnam), but it is still problematic that the meaning of O, at the same time factual and practical, implies a genuine moral value. The clarification of the meaning of an object in terms of possibilities of action implies only that the dichotomy facts/values is a misunderstanding and an intellectualization of human experience, since the domain of value is embedded with the domain of the meaning right from the origin. Since the properties of any one entity are dispositional properties, whose discovery requires interaction and whose actuality consists in interaction, the determination of the properties of the facts of the world has a constant element, that is, the reference to the human possibilities of action. This goes back to the problem of the mediation of the impulse that constitutes the human level of experience. The fact that the factual meaning of O implies a value dimension is a specification, and a formal one, of the nature of the mediation of the impulse; the world is always mediated in reference to human purposiveness and possibility of action. However, as we have seen, the mediation does not meet always conditions of truth or moral goodness. Just like the domain of the "possible actions" is not identical with the domain of "morally good actions," the domain of possible practical values is not identical with the domain of moral values. There is continuity between the two domains, but there is also a discontinuity, that is, the discontinuity resulting from a moral judgment. This discontinuity is found in Dewey in the distinction between what is "valued" and what is rationally "valuable." What is needed for finding the domain of moral values is a principle of delimitation of the domain of the values in general. There are two options available: (1) moral institutions (the accepted and shared standards of morality). However, these might be in need of reform, as Dewey repeatedly claims. The domain of moral institutions is not always identical with the domain of genuine moral values. (2) moral good represented in a sound moral judgment. Yes. If there is not a dichotomy between the "is" and "the can be done" (is/can be done dichotomy), there is however a distinction between the "can be done" and the "ought to be done" (can/ought modal distinction). See also LW12: 66-67 on this point.

creature. If the liking for it conflicts with some other liking, the strongest wins. There is no question of false and true, of real and seeming, but only of stronger and weaker. The question of which one should be stronger is as meaningless as it would be in a cock-fight" (LW1: 317). Again, Dewey does not seem to argue against the distinction between "is" and "ought" in general. Nevertheless, Dewey seems to be polemical against the notion of "ought" as the defining and exclusive logical character of ethical discourse, and, more importantly, as constituted in complete isolation from the world of facts. An interesting formula used by Dewey is that the "ought" is at the same time the "is," the "is" of the action to be done (EW3: 105; 108). Some authors, claiming to follow Dewey, have tried to reduce the "ought" to the "is."[16] It seems clear to me that Dewey does not question that the "ought" is the logical function of the moral judgment.[17] Interpretative perplexities result from the fact that he argues against five misunderstandings of the moral subject-matter that might be hidden under the notion of "ought-to." His concerns about the notion of "ought" are more broadly philosophical rather than strictly logical. First, (a) the sharp distinction between the "is" and the "ought" has brought to the idea that our experience of the real world, if genuinely understood, includes only facts but not values. In the light of this mistake, therefore, some philosophers felt the necessity either to deny any type of reality to values, or to embark themselves in the epistemological endeavor of justifying the existence of value and moral values in particular. Dewey's method of experience clearly shows, without the need for a proof, that the world is right from the start value-laden for all forms of life and for man in particular. Second, (b) the dichotomy between "is" and "ought" might lead to the conviction that science has only a descriptive and explanatory function, so that science has only "is-facts" as its subject-matter but never "ought facts" (LW17: 351-352). Dewey's reconstruction in moral philosophy is explicitly in opposition to the non-cognitivistic tendencies in ethics present at his time, typically put forth by the logical positivists, as it is paradigmatically shown by his *Theory of Valuation* (both [a] and [b] have been questioned by Hilary Putnam's attack to the "dichotomy" between "facts" and "values," Putnam 2002). Third, (c), the sharp distinction between "is" and "ought" has led to the conception that moral values, principles and standards are not the critical result of past moral inquiries and experiences, but are transcendent objects or transcendental standards, as certain form of Platonism (e.g., T. H. Green) and rationalism (e.g., Kant, Royce) have claimed. Similar positions have also claimed for one sort or another of ethical intuitionism. On the contrary, for Dewey moral knowledge is empirical in its origin and in its outcome as any other form of knowledge. "The "ought," says Dewey, always rises from and falls back into the "is"" (EW3: 105). Therefore, the ""ought" too is from intelligence rather than a somewhat let down from supernal flies or sprung from an unearthly trap" (EW3: 108). Fourth, (d) it seems possible to read in Dewey also the worry that the consequence of a prescriptive understanding of moral knowledge could lead to the idea that moral duty is first and foremost a property of moral principles (understood as moral axioms) or hypostatized values (Platonism, again), instead of the content of a conclusive moral judgment within a particular context. As Dewey points out, "a man's duty is never to obey certain rules; his duty is always to respond to the nature of the actual demands which he finds made upon him." In fact, "the "ought" of a moral principle is never its own justification," since it always depends from the existing practical situation and is, in a certain sense, the "outcome" of certain "facts" and concrete relations to men and things (EW3: 105; also LW4: 222). As we have seen, the process of deliberation *as* inquiry consists of using moral principles as hypothetical tools instead of as required or necessary rules (LW12: 264-265). Fifth, (e) the dichotomy between "is" and "ought" can lead us to neglect the essential importance of inquiry in moral problems and to conceive the moral principles either in a purely sentimental way or as fixed, abstract standards. On the contrary, "it is only because the "ought" rests upon and expresses the "is" that it is something more than vague, ill-directed sentiment or rigid external command" (EW3: 108).

Dewey states that the following statements are different linguistic formulations of the same moral judgment and have therefore the same logical function. 1. "This act will meet the situation" and 2. "The act ought to be done" (EW3: 109). He also makes clear that, as we have seen, 3. every genuine proposition about an end-in-view

16 For instance, Gale (2010b: 72-73). Gouinlock (1978: 219; 224) claims that Dewey is not interested in the normative question and in the logical function of the "ought." An ambiguity of interpretation is present in Tiles (2010: 21-22). Romanell 1958 criticizes Dewey's epistemic natural monism because a merely experimental method (observation and verification) cannot discover or establish ethical norms. Dougherty 1959 defends the possibility of a naturalistic normative ethics and claims that Romanell's objection confuses naturalistic social psychology, anthropology and descriptive ethics with normative ethics. My position is close to Rachels (1977: 160-164).

17 See also the normative "gap" between "connotation" and "denotation" in Chapter 4.

is a "causal proposition" (LW12: 454-456) and that has in its last formulation a "demonstrative reference" (LW12: 356-357). These different formulations of the same moral judgment highlight different but equally essential aspects of the moral judgment. Point (1) can be easily linked to point (3) as the statement of the factual convenience of certain means for an end and the appropriateness of the end to meet the demands of the context. Point (2) stresses the logical function of the moral judgment as directive of the new action. We have therefore the following:

I. "I ought to drink this water" is equivalent in logical function to

II. "This x is water" (singular proposition) and "I ought to do Y on this water in order to get the Z as an effect" (prescriptive and causal particular proposition).

Both I. and II. are then logically equivalent to

III. "This x is water" and "if I do Y on this water, this water will quench my thirst here and now."

The objection that III. is a factual provision rather than a moral prescription misses the point of Dewey's logic. What we have to remember is that propositions acquire their "logical force" and function within the process of inquiry in a context (LW12: 166). A logical function "accrues to" a proposition only when this proposition is used within a process of inquiry to reach a definite goal. For instance, material-existential propositions within a moral inquiry are not used in their pure declarative or enunciatory function of describing or reporting existent conditions, but as an evidential basis (sign) of a possibility of future interaction (LW12: 252). In the case of a process of deliberation, III. is the propositional content of a moral judgment and constitutes therefore a moral "ought," although this aspect is not linguistically explicit. In Dewey's view, "when a linguistic form is separated from the contextual matter of problem-inquiry it is impossible to decide of what *logical* form is the expression" (LW12: 290). It is true that III. can represent the linguistic formulation of content of the conclusive judgment of a factual inquiry, but that proposition at the same time would not have the same logical function of the one that appears in the moral judgment.

6. The Aesthetic Aspects of Deliberation and the Notion of Formativity

Dewey refers often to the role of the "aesthetic" in moral life not only in relation to its lived immediacy, but also as an essential feature for an adequate understanding of certain aspects of the process of deliberation. Some scholars (Gouinlock 1972; 1978; Alexander 1992; 1993; Pappas 2008; Fesmire 1995; 1999; 2003; Gale 2010b) have pointed out the implications of aesthetics for the moral life. Gregory Pappas, in particular, highlights the importance of the "aesthetic" in the methodological necessity of starting moral reflection from the individuals' immediate experience and not from abstractions (Pappas 2008: 20 ff.). In continuity with these authors, it seems to me that it is possible to highlight at least nine further "aesthetic" features of the moral life and reflection. Let me list below the nine notions of "aesthetic" that Dewey develops in relation to the moral subject-matter:

(i) The moral problematic situation is characterized by an individualizing problematic quality. This unifying quality is the "aesthetic" quality of the problematic moral situation. Paradoxically, in a moral problematic situation, the unifying quality is at the same time the symptom of disunity, moral conflict and need for reconstruction.

(ii) The moral problematic situation aims at its own resolution and consummation, which is somehow suggested by the individualizing quality. The final consummation to be found and produced is the "aesthetic" telos of the problematic moral situation.

(iii) The process of deliberation requires the use of "qualitative" thought. The qualitative thought might also be called "aesthetic" thought.

(iv) The process of deliberation requires the use of an "aesthetic" attitude, that is, the use of creative

imagination.

(v) The process of deliberation requires the use of "aesthetic" materials, that is, moral instances understood as exemplars of ethically good conduct. This aspect of the "aesthetic" dimension of moral deliberation leads us to talk of the character of formativity of all the moral examples.

(vi) The final consummation is not the action simply represented and prescribed in the symbolic content of the moral judgment, that is, the moral judgment in its propositional and symbolic stage of constitution, but is the actualization or embodiment of that prescription in action. "Aesthetic" means here the actual interaction between the agent and her environment in the immediate experience as opposed to a purely symbolic stage of the development of the action (e.g. LW10: 139; 178).

(vii) The final consummation has to be of a certain type in order to be ethically good. It has to produce "the growth of the meaning of the present experience" (realization of the best or broader values possible; full awareness of these values). The category of "aesthetic" refers here to the moral growth required by an ethically good action.

(viii) The final action has to show an "aesthetic" balance between means and ends, that is, an adequate proportion.

(ix) The final action has to realize a full interest of the agent in her present action. The fully interested engagement of an agent with her own activity is an aesthetic character of her agency (LW8: 348).

Although different, there is a common ground that binds together all these meanings of "aesthetic" in morals, that is, the reference to the dimension of moral value and to its final embodiment. In this respect, the aesthetic and the logical in deliberation coincide in their ultimate telos, which is the actualization of the value needed in the present context. In (i), the moral problem arises because a consummatory experience is interrupted, so that it is necessary to reconstruct a new moral order in that context. In (ii), the dimension of the moral value is present as the moral synthesis required as the telos of the ongoing process of moral inquiry. In (iii), the value refers both to the property of ideas of being "felt," immediate signs for the direction of the development of reasoning, and to the fact that the ultimate goal of this process of reasoning is the embodiment of a moral value. In (iv), the exercise of imagination aims to perceive the actual in the light of the possible. In the case of moral deliberation, the possibility refers to the action that could and ought to be conceived and actualized. In (v), moral examples are "formative" of new, possible moral syntheses, in the sense that they constitute standards of action and moral attitude that can (and ought) to be taken into consideration as tools for a problematic situation through the embodiment of the conceived value. In (vi), the moral value reaches its contextual highest possibility of expression in its proper actualization in a point in space and time. In (vii), the meaning of aesthetic refers directly to the fundamental property that an action needs to have in order to be a genuine ethical good, that is, growth. In (viii), the aesthetic refers to a formal property of balance that needs to be shown by the articulation of means and end in every action that is ethically good. Finally, in (ix), perfect interest of the agent in her deeds is the realization in the field of everyday life of the artist's full engagement with the means and the products of her work.

Some of these features (vii and viii) are constitutive parts of the fundamental moral ideal that Dewey calls the "growth of the meaning of the present experience" (see §9). In this section, I limit the discussion to what I call, drawing from Dewey, moral formativity. I believe that moral formativity is a deep and crucial point for a theory of metaethics and ethics. This point of intersection between aesthetics, ethics and logic shows that aesthetic reflection is close, according to Dewey, to the logical development of deliberation and moral judgment. Points (i) and (ii) have been sufficiently explained. Points (iii) and (iv) are explained in 6. Point (vi) has been developed throughout all the chapter. Point (xi) is another formal property of a genuine moral act. In this section, therefore, it is sufficient to address the problem of the moral exemplarity as "formativity." Although Dewey addresses the problem of what a form is in his *Art as Experience*, he introduces the notion of formativity in the *Logic*. As we have seen, Dewey explains that the logical forms and properties originate in the ongoing processes of critical inquiry, so that the logical principles that a competent inquirer uses are the outcome of the past experience. This means that the logical principles are genetically *a posteriori* in themselves and "operationally *a priori*" for the (competent) inquirer. It is in relation to the notion of operationally *a priori* that Dewey introduces the category of formativity. He says that logical forms and principles, once formulated and critically established, are "*formative*,"

because "they regulate the proper conduct of the activities out of which they develop" (LW12: 21; see Seigfried 2002). The parallel with the genesis and the role of moral principles and standards is striking. It is interesting, therefore, to see the deep connection that lies in relation to formativity at the bottom of the logical, the aesthetical and the moral subject-matter. First of all, it is important to point out the nature of the work of art and of its function. The reality of the work of art is to play a certain function in experience. For sure, it has an independent subsistence as the "completeness of relations within a chosen medium" (LW10: 139). However, its full meaning cannot be abstracted from the net of actual and potential interactions that it has or could have with the individuals. The nature of the "work" of art consists in its "working." (LW10: 144). "Only when the constituent parts of a whole have the unique end of contributing to the consummation of a conscious experience, do design and shape lose superimposed character and become form" (LW10: 122).[18] Through art, meanings of objects that are otherwise "dumb, inchoate, restricted and, and resisted" are clarified for the artist at first and the observer later, since the function of the work of art is the "creation of new experience" (LW10: 138). In other words, "in esthetic experience … the material of the past … is not employed as a bridge to some further experience, but as an increase and individualization of *present* experience. The scope of the work of art is measured by the number and variety of elements coming from past experiences that are organically absorbed into the perception had here and now" (LW10: 128). Therefore, the work of art constitutes the realization of a "form" *in* the experience of the artist and in the experience of the perceiver. Through the fruition of the work of art, the perceiver has to overcome a problem in his experience just in the same way the artist did in producing the work of art. Both in the case of the production and the fruition of the work of art, the people engaged in a genuine aesthetic experience re-build their past experiences into new "patterns" (LW10: 143). Since the work of art functions as a factor of reconstruction of individuals' experiences, it is "instrumental as well as final" and its appreciation has no final terminal end. When an aesthetic experience occurs thanks to a work of art, "we are carried to a refreshed attitude toward the circumstances and exigencies of ordinary experience" (LW10: 144). Dewey also writes

> Form is a character of every experience that is an experience. Art in its specific sense enacts more deliberately and fully the conditions that effect this unity. Form may then be defined as the operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to its own integral fulfillment. The connection of form with substance is thus inherent, not imposed from without. It marks the matter of an experience that is carried to consummation. (LW10: 142)

Dewey says that the content of "an" experience can have exemplar value (LW10: 43) for other similar experiences. In other words, *an* experience is the concrete universal, that is, an exemplar realization of aesthetic or moral excellence that is "a part of the acknowledged world," that is, an existent like anything else that exists and, at the same time, an inspiring standard for further experiences of "reconstruction" and "recreation" (LW10: 112). This function of being an inspiring standard is what I call aesthetic formativity. Dewey is often critical of moral casuistry (MW14: 165). This means that we have to understand the essential difference between moral casuistry and moral formativity. According to Dewey, casuistry constitutes the worst outcome of an axiomatic approach to moral subject-matter, since it brings the fixity and the self-sufficiency of the moral principles straight down to the procedural rules in typified context of action. "Casuistry, so called, is simply the systematic effort to secure for particular instances of conduct the advantage of general rules which are asserted and believed in." This is to say that casuistry is simply the production of moral axioms, just like in a bad conception of systematic theory of morals, but with the further danger that its moral rules have a less vague content and in this sense have a stronger pretense on what the particular good of a situation is. On the contrary, moral formativity pertains to the appropriate use of moral examples as "instrumental" standards for facing new occasions of action and not as ends-in-themselves. In the case of morals, aesthetic formativity applies to the possible function of moral examples in order to provide orientation and inspiration in facing new moral problems and free the potentialities of value contained in them. The universality of moral examples is not a "monotonous identity" in so far as it allows for new interpretations and experiential syntheses. Varying Kant's formula, it is likely to say that moral examples have the status of concrete generalities without concepts. Moral exemplars are "symbols" in so far as

18 Cf. in the same quotation the difference between other objects and the work of art.

they are "direct vehicles, concrete embodiments, vital incarnations" (LW1: 72). Saying that they are formative means that they are "potential" and productive" (LW1: 89). These examples have however to be continually criticized through the experimental, evolutionary (MW2: 3-38) or historical method and its two questions (LW17: 351-360).[19] An existent is a concrete generality only if "it can continuously inspire new personal realizations in experience" (LW10: 114-115). From a Deweyan perspective, both the work of art and the moral examples as concrete universals "continue to operate in in indirect channels" through the "re-education of vision" that they produced in the individual (LW10: 144).

8. The Continuity or Developmental Unity of Human Agency in Epistemic and Ethical Normativity

The unity and continuity of every moments and parts of human agency is one of the most fundamental tenets of Dewey's approach to the subject. He claims, for instance, that

> the key to a correct theory of morality is recognition of the essential unity of the self and its acts. (LW7: 288)

The unity can be understood in a weak sense and in a strong sense. According to the weak interpretation, the unity and continuity between the self and its acts is a matter of expression. In particular, the act is "unity" with the self" (1) because it is the actualization of an end-in-view constructed by the self, and (2) because it is the realization of an interpenetration of dispositions, or moral "character," in a concrete action. The self is not a "cause" of the act, as a match is somehow the cause of a fire. This is because the self as the responsible factor for the emergence of an act in the world is not external to the act as an effect, but it enters it. In particular, as we have just seen, it enters it because the action is the actualization of an intention and volition of the self, and because it is the actualization, in different measures according to the situation, of dispositions acquired through experience and developed in the character. At this level, the notions of "conduct" and " character" are very instructive (LW7: 168-173). According to Dewey, the notion of "conduct" grasps the agency of the single individual in its continuous typicalities, that is, as characterized by more or less stable emotional, cognitive and practical dispositions that enter in different measure into every single action. As we have seen, the interpenetration of different habits in the agent corresponds to her "character." It follows that the typical way of behaving of an agent, or "conduct," results from her "character." More precisely, the notions of "conduct" and "character" designate the same reality of the subject, but apprehended from two different points of view: the former is the subjective set of dispositions understood as the effect and deposit of the previous actions, while the latter is that same interpenetration of dispositions understood as the antecedent of the future actions, as their responsible factor. Dewey puts forward a non-atomistic conception of human agency, according to which every act is connected to others in a "series" or in a "chain." This connection is neither of a causal-deterministic type, nor of an external causation, but consists in the formation of habits, that is in leaving "an enduring impress on the one who performs them, strengthening and weakening permanent tendencies to act." It does not determine a mechanical repetition of certain acts, but the formation of a self of a certain type, whose stability is given by its "enduring unity of attitudes and habits." According to Dewey, self, character, intentions, volitions and concrete actions are the different moments of the development of human agency, when "human agency" is appropriately considered as a dynamic whole (LW7: 287). Moreover, since the self is an integrated set of habits *always* in actual interaction with the environment, the present action of a self coincides with what that self *is* at a given point in time and space. "The self is what he is doing" (Lectures: 205). Although the topic of this section is limited to the problem of the continuity between epistemic and ethical normativity in morals, it is important to hint at the problem of practical motivation in order to understand the pivotal role of Dewey's unitary conception of the self-in-action. Dewey's conviction is that practical motivation becomes a somehow unsolvable philosophical problem when it is addressed on the assumption that the human self is passive in nature. In fact, if one starts

19 Roughly, the two questions are: (1) "What is the genesis of a standardized value?" and "What are the effects of this standardized value?".

from an abstract conception of the self as not essentially engaged within experience and action, practical motivation becomes a hard problem because it becomes necessary to explain how it is possible that a passive self is activated and motivated by an intention. On the contrary, as Dewey argues on both empirical and speculative bases, the self is originally in action, at first impulsive and then controlled and intentional.[20] This is why desire and aspiration accompany the whole process of deliberation and turn the end-in-view into a motivation *in actu* when the self chooses it.

I turn now to the continuity in human agency exemplified in normativity. I have tried to show throughout the previous sections not only the experiential and logical necessity of moral deliberation in producing embodied values, but also the deep continuity of experience that lies at the bottom of both consummatory and reflective stages of moral life. This continuity is provided by the binding force of value, here as the actual consummatory experiences and there as the telos of their reflective reconstruction in deliberation. Experience therefore shows a developmental unity in its rhythmic alternation of consummatory moments and reflective endeavors. As I have started to show, from the moment in which experience emerges as problematic, human action grows through the work of intelligence from a mainly imaginative status to the concrete actuality of the action in the overt world. This is the underlying conception of the continuity or developmental unity put forth by Dewey when he claims that "theory is the cross-section of the given state of action in order to know the conduct that should be; practice is the realization of the idea thus gained: it is theory in action" (EW3: 110; cf. also EW4: 224). We can now deepen the nature of this developmental continuity in reference to one classical problem in theories of moral deliberation, that is, the problem of the normativity of the moral principles.

When we talk about normativity in Dewey's ethics, we have to remember that normative criteria apply both to the reflective human agent in the role of a moral reasoner and to her in the role of an agent. Dewey writes:

> in inquiry a *deliberate* operation intervenes; first, to select the conditions that are operative, and secondly, to institute the new conditions which interact with old ones. Both operations are so calculated that as close an approach as possible may be made to determining the exact kind of interaction, inclusively and exclusively, necessary to produce a determinate set of consequences. (LW12: 288; see also 107-108)

A reflective human agent binds herself to criteria and principles both as a reasoner and as an agent in the overt world. In the former case, the principles are strictly speaking logical, while in the second case, the principles are moral. More precisely, the agent as a moral reasoner binds herself to standards of action, used as a principle of inference in reasoning on moral subject-matter, while she binds herself, at the end of the process of inquiry, to a new end-in-view, which synthesizes, if it is the case, those principles into a new consummatory experience. In so far as the value represented in the moral principle becomes part of the content of the end-in-view, the agent binds herself to that principle, as it is applied here and now.

Moral principles are at first used as "governing" or "leading" principles in moral reasoning, as the principles of inference among moral meanings and propositions. In this case, moral principles play the function of epistemic principles and have therefore *epistemic normativity*. In this case, we can speak of logical goodness. Be S a reflective human agent, P the governing or leading principles of a process of moral deliberation and C a particular problematic context or situation that requires moral deliberation; P is "contextually normative" in C iff P successfully allows a "rigorous" and "productive" (LW12: 316) inference from certain vague propositions to a proposition that is applicable in C and that indicates an "intelligent" action (LW12: 480). Among these principles we find the general principle of "intelligence" (LW12: 480). Dewey also stresses the fact that when a process of deliberation is a sound one, the moral principles owned by S are selected on the basis of their relevance for C and turned into the logical status of propositions within the process of inquiry. They are tools in the reconstruction of a problematic situation. This means that moral principles need first of all to be considered as logical principles of a deliberation in dealing with a moral problem in the preparatory steps of the inquiry and only later and occasionally as the standard of a morally good action. We can also say that, when a process of deliberation is needed, a moral principle always appears at first as a belief for imaginative conduct and only later and occasionally as a belief for overt action. Only if it is the case, the process of deliberation establishes that a

20 Cf. Anderson 2010.

moral principle is somehow relevant for the reconstruction of the present situation and *uses* it in order to move from a vague proposition or system of propositions about the problem and its possible solutions to an applicable one. When a moral principle is actually used as a tool in the production of a conclusive proposition, it becomes part of the content of that proposition. When the proposition is acted upon in the conclusion of the deliberation (the conclusion of the process of deliberation, or the conclusive moral judgment *is* the overt action), the dimension of value displayed in the "principle" in the form of a proposition becomes embodied in the action. This fact shows the singular and most interesting aspect of Dewey's account of moral normativity, in the sense that the continuity of the activity of deliberation and overt action is exemplified also in the continuity of the contextual normativity of the moral principles used as logical principles of inference and as criteria of the experiential moral synthesis in the action. In bringing the process of inquiry to its conclusion and consummation, S turns herself into a reflective agent in the overt world. The value hypostatized in a linguistic formulation of a "moral principle" (for reasons of communication) has gone through different transformations, from the status of a proposition about a hypothetical convenient action, to the status of a leading principle in matters of morals, to the content of a moral judgment, to the embodiment in the overt action. Once again, the value is realized through different phases and eventually realized in actual, operative interactions between S and certain conditions of her environment. Moral principles, therefore, are turned at first into "logical forms" in a moral inquiry and only secondarily and eventually into the content of what S ought to do here and now. Again, in other words: before the over action, a moral standard can only be a leading principle of inference among propositions about moral subject-matter; this logical function is pushed up to its extreme consequences, when the moral judgment is produced; when the overt action is performed, the moral standard does not play its role of inferential principle anymore but is applied and becomes realized as an actual value. Inquiry and moral judgment are for Dewey "practical" in nature, so that the final overt action is only the final realization of an activity that has started before as "dramatic rehearsal." From the outset to the extinction of a problematic situation, then, human agency *grows* from the form of a deliberation about what to do (which includes not only cognitions, but also feelings, sympathy, imagination, etc.) to the final consummation of the overt deed. This developmental dynamic is also apparent in the case of normativity, in which a moral principle grows from the status of logical principle about moral subject-matter to the one of eventual component of the final action judged to be ethically normative here and now for an agent.

When deliberation has established that a certain context requires the application of a certain moral principle, that moral principle becomes the content of the end-in-view. In this case, the moral principle has an *ethical normativity* in the context, in the sense that its intelligibility is required to become part of the intelligence in action through the effort of the self. Epistemic normativity has turned into ethical normativity and will become an ought-to be in action here and now. In this case, we can talk of moral goodness. Be S a reflective human agent, X the content of her moral judgment and C a particular problematic context or situation that requires moral deliberation and action; X is "contextually normative" in C iff X brings about new conditions which will produce in C a desired actual interaction between S and her environment, whose qualities (new actualizations in her immediate experience) (1) remove the problem that initiated the process of deliberation, (2) actualize all the possible values, required by C, in removing the problem and (3) foster or at least do not hinder habits other values, according to the ideal of the "growth of the meaning of the present experience." I take (1), (2) and (3) to be the analysis of the content of the principle of the "growth of the meaning of the present experience."

> The whole process of working out ends, of selecting means, of estimating moral values, of recognizing duty, is, as we have seen, one of activity at every point; it is dynamic and propulsive throughout. The deed is simply this activity focused, brought to a head. The deed is the activity, concluded; it is the "round up," and in this conclusion at once (1) defined, marked out, and (2) unified. (EW4: 337)

It is true that from a pragmatic viewpoint, epistemic and ethical normativity are not two different domains of the normativity of deliberative agency, but instead two moments in the development of the normativity of the moral judgment in context. In fact, reasoning is as deliberate a conduct as intentionally raising one's arm, so that the ethical question is somehow essential to both cases. However, the continuity between thinking and acting (overtly in the world) does not mean that functional differences cannot be found. In this case, the functional

difference lies in the fact that, within the same deliberative process, the moral principles are at first epistemic instruments of individuation of the problem and of hypothetical resolution of it and only eventually and if it the case applied factors in the intelligent, final reconstruction of the situation through a concrete deed.

8. Moral Progress and Epistemic Ethical Fallibilism in the Light of Dewey's Ethical Contextualism

In the previous sections, I have stressed the centrality that the embodied value plays in Dewey's understanding of moral deliberation at each one of its stages, both as a telos or as an actual realization. It seems to me that the concept of embodied value is also crucial in order to fully understand the reasons of Dewey's doctrines of moral progress and ethical fallibilism. A first element necessary to understand Dewey's views on ethics is his conception of moral progress. Some authors have stressed the fact that looking for an ultimate ideal or grounding value in Dewey's ethics is to misinterpret his radical reconstruction of the real needs of lived moral life, moral psychology and of the status of the systematic theory of morals.[21] For sure, this interpretative caution is correct in the case of three particular understanding of "ultimate" ideals and values, that is, when a moral value coincides with a specific end-in-view, when a moral principle is understood as a moral axiom and when a moral value is worshiped as an immutable Platonic entity. However, as a matter of fact, Dewey presents two clear claims about the ultimate moral ideal of human conduct. The first is expressed in *A Study of Ethics*, in which Dewey claims that ideal of human conduct consists in the realization of the "concrete individuality" of the self (EW4: 357). The second is contained in *Human Nature and Conduct* and *Ethics*, and states that the ultimate ideal of self-control is the "growth of the meaning of the present experience" (MW14: 182; 194; 196). Both these claims are better understood as formulations of the ideal of moral progress, individual and social. A second element necessary to understand Dewey's stance is his epistemic fallibilism in ethics (ethical fallibilism now on). According to him, every moral principle and standard not only emerge from experience, but can also be reformed and eventually abandoned on the basis of new contextual experiences. For Dewey, even logical principles are "provisional" in their validity for inquiry, so that logic itself is a "progressive" discipline (LW12: 21). As we have seen, the propositional function of moral principles is to be linguistic "tools" for the reconstruction of the indeterminate situation, that is, for the realization of the new experiential synthesis required by the situation. If the moral principles and their correlative ends are instead used as moral axioms or ends-in-themselves, the new experiential synthesis is not an intelligent response to the objective needs of the situation, but the reproduction of old behavioral patterns. Dewey's ethical fallibilism claims that, in the progress of our knowledge and moral self-awareness, there are "relative discontinuity or nodal points" that can lead us to revise drastically our moral principles and standards (EW4: 317), both in our individual and social experience. In this section, I claim that Dewey's idea of radical fallibilism in ethics makes the pair with his broader conception of moral progress and civilization and can be understood only within this framework. His ethical fallibilism, however, does not entail that is not possible to find genuine values and ideals (in inquiry and in the other dimensions of human conduct) that are continuous through different and successive contexts. In other words, Dewey's ethical fallibilism and contextualism does not imply an immediate rejection of cross-contextual principles.

It seems to me that there are three common mistakes in the interpretation of Dewey's ethical fallibilism and conceptions of ethical ideals. The first mistake is that, since Dewey is a moral contextualist or situationalist, therefore it is impossible on his assumptions to find moral ideals and principles which are entitled to claim a normative authority also beyond a limited set of particular contexts.[22] It seems that the pragmatist rejection of external and meta-contextual principles, together with the fundamental idea of contextual application, leads sometimes to the rejection of the possibility of cross-contextual moral principles, or moral principles that are continuous through different and successive contexts. However, even if we keep firm the essential importance of the contextual genesis and applicability of all moral principles, this assumption does not imply that there cannot

21 See in particular Pappas (2008: 58); Putnam (2002: 98); Carden (2006: 49).

22 This is the interpretation given for instance by Barhurst 2002, who sees in Dewey the forerunner of contemporary moral particularism.

be abstract principles that, in their abstraction, have a cross-contextual normative authority and apply to all the possible subject-matters encountered in particular situations. Of course, the principle in its abstractness is the result of a historical work of scientific refinement of moral experiences and standards and not an a priori intuited absolute model of goodness. At the same time, it does not constitute a "workable" end-in-view directly, but it requires the agent's reflective mediation in the use of that principle to reconstruct an individual situation. However, in its abstractness, the moral principle can have a cross-contextual normative force. Generalization can lead, even from a pragmatistic viewpoint, to the establishment of a cross-contextual ideal. Dewey observes:

> Abstraction is the heart of thought; there is no way—other than accident —to control and enrich concrete experience except through an intermediate flight of thought with conceptions, relations, abstracta. What I regret is the tendency to erect the abstractions into complete and self-subsistent things, or into a kind of superior Being. (LW 7:216; cf. also LW7: 343)

The ideal of moral progress, in both its formulations, is exactly a cognitive abstraction that plays its instrumental crucial role in helping the reconstruction of each indeterminate situation and the realization of new, appropriate experiential syntheses. This ideal is an abstract principle that has, at the same time, normative authority in all contexts and directive power in the deliberative process.[23]

The second mistake is to understand ethical fallibilism only in a weak sense. One first point to make is that ethical fallibilism does not cover those cases in which a principle that seems to be *prima facie* normative turns out to be not the case in a particular deliberation after some reflection on it, like e.g. in Aristotle, Aquinas and W. D. Ross. As we have seen, this is more a problem of the appropriate selection and application of a moral principle in a particular case rather than a problem of its general fallibility. Dewey's point is more radical because it entails that a moral principle might lose its normative value not only in limited contexts but also in general. For instance, we can say that the moral principle (i) "be loyal to all the members of your community" is fallible in a weak sense since it ought not to be selected and applied in the case in which a member of my community is planning an attack against some other members of the same community. However, this falsificatory instance does not imply that the moral principle has lost its general normative authority. It only means that in this particular case other moral principles and concern have a priority over it, e.g., "promote the well being of all the members of the community." It is true that the moral principle (i) will be conceived in a somewhat different way after that situation, but this will be only the occasion for a better comprehension and growth of the meaning of the same principle, since a better understanding and formulation of X requires a continuity in its normative content and authority. The principle "be loyal to all the members of your community" will still be a moral principle after the example provided. This feature of ethical fallibilism also marks a difference between the generalizations of natural sciences and the generalizations of a scientific ethics. If a scientific law in one of the natural sciences is not confirmed in an experiment, it means either that the experimental conditions are inaccurate or that the law has to be revised/relativized (or rejected, in extreme cases). On the contrary, if a moral principle Y is not furthered here and now in a moral judgment, this fact does not mean that there is something wrong with the moral principle Y. If the deliberation is a sound one, the fact that Y is not applied here and now only means that this is not the case for Y and that the realization of other values is required. In the *Logic*, Dewey makes clear that the theory of inquiry neither excludes the possibility of cross-contextual principles, nor the fact that the irrelevance of a principle in a particular situation implies that it ought to be rejected. He says:

> But when it is found that there are habits involved in every inference, in spite of differences of subject-matter, and when these habits are noted and formulated, then the formulations are guiding or leading principles. The principles state habits operative in every inference that tend to yield conclusions that are stable and productive in further inquiries. Being free from connection with any *particular* subject-matter they are formal, not material, though they are forms of material that is subjected to authentic inquiry. Validity of the principles is determined by the coherency of the consequences produced by the habits they articulate. If the habit in question is such as generally produces conclusions that are sustained and developed in further inquiry, then it is valid even if in an

23 However, there are scholars who acknowledge this point. Welchman (2010: 183-184) distinguishes in Dewey between "thin-cross cultural" and "thick context-dependent" moral concept. Cf. also Hook 1959; Callan 1982; Pekarsky (1990; 1991); Pappas 2008 has the most refined and articulated appraisal of this point.

occasional case it yields a conclusion that turns out invalid. (LW12: 22)

As it is clear, this account of the role played by "habits" and "principles" in inquiry applies to moral principles and virtues as well. Dewey's epistemic moral fallibilism implies a strong fallibilism, in the sense that moral principles *might* eventually lose their normative authority not in isolated cases, but in general. This claim leads to the third possible mistake in the interpretation of Dewey's ethics, in relation to the broad philosophical ground on which the notion of fallibilism makes sense. This possible mistake results from the understanding of the notion of fallibilism without reference to the idea of moral progress and civilization. Dewey's radical experimentalist approach, including discovery and self-correctiveness as its essential features, entails a substantive fallibilism in moral knowledge as in any other field of human knowledge. Two initial considerations can be in place here. Dewey's fallibilist claim is easily understandable in relation to the case of detailed procedural rules of conduct and of social institutions. As it is shown in "The Evolutionary Method as Applied to Morality" and in other texts, the analysis of the conditions and the consequences of a social practice enables us to assess that value scientifically. However, this position might sound odd in the case of abstract moral principles. Are the moral principles "be loyal to all the members of your community" and "a peaceful community is better than a belligerent one" fallible? Dewey's answer is positive. However, the plausibility of this stance can be shown if some philosophical ghosts are ruled out. First, a radical fallibilism in ethics does not imply that all or some of the moral principles that we consider correct at the present time *will* turn out to be wrong. It only entails that, *in principle*, any one moral standard might lose its normative authority on the basis of further experience. Second, some critiques might argue that this epistemic position represents the logic ground of ethical relativism. On the contrary, it seems to me that Dewey aims to account for the possibility of a genuine development of moral practices and knowledge once we have established that an intuitive knowledge of a priori moral principles and values is impossible. Therefore, this position does not require that the moral principle "be loyal to all the members of your community" *will* be falsified, although it does not deny this eventual possibility. In general, it represents a broader account of how human knowledge in all fields develops and ought to be furthered in experimental spirit.

If it is true that Dewey claims that moral "forms," just like "logical forms," *originate* through human practices within precise contexts and sets of conditions, it is possible and maybe likely that new "forms" will develop as experiential and moral novelties in the future through new interactions of conditions and practices. Therefore, Dewey's main concern in developing the idea of fallibilism in ethics is to stress the fact of the historical process of civilization and of its moral products. It is not unlikely that in the first phases of the history of humankind the conditions of life led individuals to belligerent and violent moral habits and social standards, which could be hardly assimilated to moral principles of benevolence. Moral progress and civilization developed, on the basis of new conditions (environmental, social, political, economical, scientific and religious), through the experience of new valuable "qualities" and the reformation or substitution of old standards with new ones. At a certain point in the history of mankind, the belief that the other human being was only a resource for one's interests has been questioned by the perception of the value of the other person in her individuality, although at certain conditions, e.g. the bindings of blood. In this sense, the former moral standard "all the living beings, including the human beings, are an instrumental resource for my survival" was somehow falsified by new social experiences in which the exceeding value of the human being appeared for the first time on earth. A new standard, such as "a human being cannot be subjugated to my will and interests," took its place in the mentality of a community at a certain moment of the development of history. As I will show in the last section, Dewey's idea is that certain experiences, with their inner teleologies and their defying fulfilling "qualities," are possible as immediate value experiences *only within a certain context*, that is, under certain historical and anthropological conditions, so that, in a certain sense, if those conditions do not occur, the relative experiences and qualities are not even *possible*. Quality is the individualizing feature of an experience, as we have seen. We have also seen that an experience is essentially characterized by a dynamic structure as a development towards a final consummation. Its structure is a telos. Therefore, the emergence of a new quality through a new interaction implies the introduction of a new telos. In fact, says Dewey, life is "a thing of histories, each with its own plot, its own inception and movement towards its close" (LW10: 43). These histories evolve together with the development of new interactive conditions. New experiences, qualities and telos are made possible by new interactions. The notions of moral

progress and civilization are very instructive in this regard. On the one hand, Dewey seems to deny the possibility of moral progress, or at least to question it. In a passage, after criticizing reductionist moral philosophers who consider the morality of benevolence to be "illusory" because it is temporally subsequent and somehow causally determined by the "savage morality" of a previous phase in history, Dewey writes:

> The idealist falls into exactly the same error from the other end. He assumes that the last thing has a superior and a finer value, and that everything that has gone before has to be interpreted as a sort of half-baked inadequate attempt to get what we have now gotten. The significant thing is the process of moralization and that process shows itself both in primitive morality and in such morals as we have now. There is no more finality attaching to our present stock of ethical conceptions. The only thing that does have finality is the relation between the process, between a situation, and a certain way of looking at that situation which exists now and all the time. (LW17: 359-360)

In this text, the idea of moral progress seems to be undermined by a radical moral particularism. Similarly, in another passage, Dewey claims that "in the strict sense of the term, there has been no evolution of morality" (LW17: 393). However, these statements do not coincide with a rejection of the reality and possibility of moral progress. In fact, Dewey is not arguing against the idea of moral progress as such, but against a certain conceptions of history and its implicit conception of moral civilization. In particular, he is arguing against the Hegelian view of history as a teleological development toward a final revelation of an absolute moral goodness. According to Dewey, the crucial mistake of this theory of history is that it does not take into account the notion of context and its constitutive conditions. If the context is the center of the moral life, a final, perfect realization of moral goodness to which the past epochs are mere instruments of realization or tentative approximations is a metaphysical myth. Similarly, just like Hume maintains, the fact that a perfect, final realization of moral goodness does not exist entails that there cannot be an a-historical or meta-historical moral model for assessing the instances of behavior of different epochs. It is at this level that the notion of context plays its crucial role in relation to the possibility of talking about a linear moral progress and of assessing different cultures from a unique viewpoint. Deweyan contextualism means that it is only within a concrete context, which is a system of interactive historical conditions, that certain consummatory experiences are possible and can emerge as such. Of course, it also implies that within certain historical conditions, certain teleologies and "qualitative" fulfillments are simply impossible. For instance, the value that a human being as such is a subject of moral dignity *becomes possible as a consummatory experience* (a "quality" as a causal value) and *can be eventually established and endorsed as a normative value through a reflective process* (moral or reflective value) only if a specific set of conditions have developed, e.g., a certain history of struggle for the survival, a certain welfare and social stability, a certain kind of exchange among different communities, a certain critical and intelligent attitude, etc. At the same time, this claim also implies that without these conditions a particular value is not possible neither as a causal value, nor as a reflective value. In this case, the context is a set of historical interactive conditions that make possible the consummatory experience "every man is a subject of moral dignity," that is, the experience in which different factors operate, as a new teleology, towards the possibility of experiencing the moral dignity of each human being as their own fulfilling "quality." The other side of this conception is that every particular context has its own conditions of consummatory experience and therefore in a certain sense its own moral standards. Dewey writes that human beings have to trust "either the world and themselves to realize the values and qualities which are the possibility of nature" (LW4: 240). An agent is supposed to meet the moral standards that spring out of the consummatory experiences that are possible in her historical context and not a somewhat "external" and meta-contextual moral ideal. In this sense, every historical context and epoch has its own moral ideal and its moral outcomes need to be assessed according to its own experiential possibilities. Of course, the real, genuine moral standards of a historical context is not identical in principle with the social institutions accepted in it. In fact, as Dewey stresses over and over, socially accepted moral values and standards might be inadequate to the new emerging and not yet acknowledged moral possibilities of a situation. As a consequence, this approach implies that different historical contexts and epochs are incommensurable only if we think that a common, external and meta-historical model of moral goodness is needed to compare them. In this sense, different historical contexts have their own standards of moral excellence and they can all be examples of morality at the same title.

In another text, however, Dewey not only affirms that moral progress is possible, but also states its most momentous stages. According to this reconstruction of the history of moral civilization, the turning points of moral civilization have been 1. the replacement of superstition with "intelligence" as the appropriate tool to address moral problems and the correspondent "faith" in experience,[24] 2. "the widening, the extension of the field, of the area of human beings between whom moral relations exist" and a sense of "sympathy" beyond the limits of restricted communities, 3. the development of a "uniform, impersonal standard and ideal of action," that is, the ideal of justice, which takes the place of narrow social institutions and standards, and 4. the "democratic ideal," understood as the "respect and the reverence for the capacities of the individual, because there is something unique in him not found in others" (LW17: 395-400). Although the realization of these ideals is an ongoing process that shows many shortcomings, it is true that modern societies are "sensitive, as the people in the past … were not." This movement in history constitutes therefore a moral progress, but neither because the appearance of the values of equality and moral dignity among all human beings, justice, intelligence and democracy, are the actualization of an "external," meta-historical or final, moral goodness, nor because human beings at that point in time finally realized those values that have always been there ready to be realized. The point is that only the occurrence of *new interactive conditions* makes certain consummatory experiences possible, so that they can become new moral habits and standards through moral reflection if it is the case. This point shows the essence of the connection between fallibilism and moral progress. Dewey's concern is to show that the appearance of the conditions for the experience of, let us say, the moral dignity of a human being outside the limits of one's family, clan and community, constitutes a "relative discontinuity or nodal points" with the previous phases of history. The discontinuity is strengthened when these value experiences are reflected upon, put in relation to other experiences and values and thus turned into new moral, normative values and standards. This evolutionary and developmental process concerns the life of people and communities in different epochs as much as the life of single individuals in the same epoch. In the process of moral reflection, these new moral "qualities" and "consummations" (e.g., the consummatory experience of the moral dignity of a man as such) are judged to be the right consequences to produce, or the right ways of organizing deliberately and practically the conditions of the present context. The experience of the moral dignity of the human being beyond familiar, political and religious circles was at that time a new, teleological value "quality" whose experience was enabled by the new contextual conditions. When human beings reflectively established a new set of values, the previous moral principle (a) "a man who does not belong to my clan does not have moral dignity" was substituted by (b) "every man has moral dignity." This shift from (a) to (b) marks the abandonment of (a) and is an example of the fallibility of a moral principle.

A new individual situation might bring about new interactive conditions and therefore new teleologies and consummatory experiences. Among all the possible teleologies and consummatory experiences of a context, it is the agent's responsibility to reflectively select the most appropriate and develop them into moral values, if it is the case. The priority of the causal consummatory experience, however, is not only temporal, but also *epistemic* sometimes. This means for sure that there is a continuity, deeper than the discontinuity, between causal moral values and reflective values, so that "appraising … represents a more or less systematized development of what is already present in prizing" (LW15: 105; cf. also MW3: 166). However, it also means that the qualitative experience of certain teleologies and consummations *has the experiential power* to lead the agent to the reflective resolution that these teleologies and consummation have to be preferred to others or have to substitute old ones. In other words, these qualitative experiences might play the function of the *evidential ground* (in an anti-foundationalist and anti-intuitionalist sense) for the production of new reflective moral values. Dewey writes:

> There are values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis – the goods of human association, of art and knowledge. The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in climacteric moments of experience and projects them. We need no external criterion and guarantee of their goodness. They are had, they exist as good, and out of them we frame our ideal ends. (LW9: 33)

The consummatory experience "every human being has moral dignity" is a clear instance of the "goods of

24 See LW1: 174-175 on the relation between "myths and fancies" and experimental intelligence are different ways to perform the same function of control on experience. The shift from the former to the latter marks an improvement, so that following superstitious methods is a flaw in addressing any question and problem.

human association" that might be experienced ("realized") as a causal consummation ("upon a natural basis"). This experience might constitute a sufficient experiential authority in itself, without the need to an "external criterion and guarantee," for playing also the role of the epistemic ground for its transformation into a moral reflective value. According to the claim contained in this text, the experience of certain "qualities," teleologies and consummations, might constitute itself the ground on which an old value is replaced by a new one. The continuity of moral experience between valuings and evaluation is given by the diffuse presence of "intelligence," although in different fashions throughout all experience.[25] Dewey writes that

> Critical appreciation, and appreciative, warmly emotionalized criticism occur in every matured sane experience. After the first dumb, formless experience of a thing as a good, subsequent perception of the good contains at least a germ of critical reflection. For this reason, and only for this reason, elaborate and formulated criticism is subsequently possible. The latter, if just and pertinent, can but develop the reflective implications found within appreciation itself. Criticism would be the most wilful of undertakings if the possession and enjoyment of good objects had no element of memory and foresight in it; if it lacked all circumspection and judgment. Criticism is reasonable and to the point, in the degree in which it extends and deepens these factors of intelligence found in immediate taste and enjoyment. (LW1: 300)

One more point needs to be addressed here, namely, the nature of ethical novelty. I have talked about new interactive conditions of a context and consequent possibilities of new consummatory experiences and moral values. The contextual "novelty" here referred to as one of the most fundamental factors in the process of moral progress is a particular type of novelty, and not the undifferentiated and unqualified novelty that characterizes an interaction simply considered from the viewpoint of its existence. In fact, from a strictly metaphysical viewpoint, every single interaction of a set of conditions is an absolute novelty. Take the example of the presence of some water here and now. "*This* water" that emerges here and now from the interaction of certain conditions is an absolute individuality and novelty, "just as if it were a special creation made by the deity, and when it is gone it does not come back. When we get water again it is another water, so far as its existence is concerned" (LW17: 355). Therefore, also in the case of value experiences, it is true that from a Deweyan metaphysical viewpoint every individual instance of "qualitative" consummation at the end of an experience within a certain context is an absolute novelty in the world. As *this* individual existent consummatory interaction, it did not exist before, and will not occur ever again. However, although the "quality" of *this* individual interaction is every time a metaphysical novelty, this type of novelty is not relevant in all cases in relation to the problem of moral progress. In fact, most of the time a new consummatory is reconnected to past experiences on the basis of the agent's habits of memory and imagination. In this case, the new interaction produces a consummatory "quality" that is the new instance of the same type of a past value experience. That is to say, the interactive conditions of a context allow new instances of old types of consummatory experiences, or at most complications and variations of those, but do not make possible new *types* of qualitative and consummatory experiences. In this case, a new consummatory experience in its individual existence represents an absolute novelty from a metaphysical viewpoint, but from the point of view of the type of consummatory experience, it only means the reproduction of an old pattern. For instance, for a certain period of time in the history of humankind, the interactive conditions only allowed a certain type of consummatory experience in relation to the moral status of a human being and its normative value, e.g., (i) "only the members of my community have moral dignity." As a consequence, every case of consummatory experience and moral deliberation in that context in relation to the moral status of the human beings was only the new application of the same moral principle (i) and the new occurrence of the value experience implied in it. It is true that the meaning of a moral principle grows through its actualizations/embodiments, but in this case the *possible growth* is only a variation or complication of the same (i). Nevertheless, as it happened in the history of humankind, the development of contextual conditions can bring about the emergence of new types of experiences and teleologies, that is, new types of "qualitative" consummations, and therefore the possible institution of new moral values through reflection. If Dewey is neither a general consequentialist, nor an utilitarian, it is not correct to say that the full structure of his fallibilism

25 Cf. Jung (2010: 153-154) points out that language and reflection is the "reflective articulation of what is already operative in the form of bodily actions schemas and preconscious volitions."

in ethics is exemplified, for example, by the idea that at a certain point in history the moral principle (i) turned out to be a bad means for a certain desired, fixed consequence, that is, for a fixed consummatory goal, say, the maintenance of well being of the members of the same community. In this case, since the denial of the status of moral dignity to the members of different communities brings about potentially harmful tensions between a different community and my community, the principle (i) has to be abandoned because it is a bad means for the realization the consummatory goal "preserving or improving the well being of all the members of my community." Of course, this utilitarian structure in the assessment of a moral principle is a *component* of the logic of moral assessment and is well exemplified in the case of the consideration of the usefulness of highly specialized moral standards, social institutions and technical procedures in varying historical contexts. However, to state that this utilitarian logic is the chore of Dewey's ethical fallibilism is to deny the possibility of a genuine *consummatory novelty* in value experiences on the basis of the development of the contextual conditions and human intelligence. It also means to reduce Dewey's understanding of the novelty in experience to a mere occasion for instrumental improvement of old moral consummatory goals. In the example provided, a genuine growth from (i) to (ii) "all human beings have moral dignity" requires a novelty in experience that is neither the mere metaphysical novelty of a new individual existent, nor the perception of a new means for an old type of consummation, but a novelty as the possibility of a new type of "qualitative" consummation or value experience. In other words, at a certain point in history, thanks to certain contextual conditions, the consummatory experience of the human beings outside one's community not as a thread or an instrumental resource but as "equally dignified" human beings became possible. This fact represents a radical novelty in experience as a new type of consummation or value experience, and starts the work of reflection in order to put it in relation with other experiences and values and try to figure out whether this new "problematic" good is a genuine good, entitled to replace the previous one.

8.1. "Faith" in Experience

A comprehensive account of Dewey's ethical fallibilism has to take into consideration the role of "faith" in experience. "Faith" in experience means that experience *has the power and the resources* to lead the inquirer to the development of appropriate strategies of inquiry and to eventual successful conclusions in inquiry. In relation to this point, Dewey claims that "common experience is capable of developing from within itself methods which will secure direction for itself and will create inherent standards of judgment and value" (LW1: 41). Of course, the faith in experience is not an assumption or blind postulate. On the contrary, it is a broad characterization of human experience resulting, through generalization, from innumerable instances in which human beings have inquired into particular problems and have found in experience itself the resources for developing, correcting and making the same inquiries somehow successful. In particular, the principle of faith in experience can refer to four different cases.

(i) *Development of the appropriate epistemic attitudes and viewpoints*. A prolonged and honest inquiry into moral problems has the power to discover the *attitudes* and *viewpoints* from which both means and ends ought to be judged and selected in deliberation. "Intelligent inquiry" is the product of a cumulative process of experience over generations and varies in nature according to the viewpoints adopted.[26] In a sense, superstition also represents an intelligent conduct, in so far as it prescribes certain attitudinal standards and requires their endorsement in activity. However, "intelligence" as a process of inquiry whose normative criteria are intesubjectively produced through experience, tested in experience and open to indefinite process of self-correction, is only a late achievement. Experimental intelligence is therefore to be preferred to superstitious behavior because it constitutes a better viewpoint in addressing indeterminate situations and in producing solutions to them.

Dewey writes that

26 In order to overcome Moore's naturalist fallacy argument, Rachels (1977: 169) provides a Deweyan clarification of moral "good" based on the centrality of the viewpoint assumed: X is good iff "X is such that would be desired by someone who had considered, intelligently and without prejudice, X's nature and consequences."

> one can only see from a certain standpoint, but this fact does not make all standpoints of equal value. A standpoint which is nowhere in particular is an absurdity. But one may have an affection for a standpoint which gives a rich and ordered landscape rather than for one from which things are seen confusedly and meagerly. (LW6: 14-15)

On the basis of real cases, men have judged that addressing a moral problem with an experimental attitude is better than addressing it with a superstitious one because it produces more effective solutions of it (the solutions meet the needs of the situations more effectively) and because it enables us to experience things in a way that would not be possible otherwise. The issue of the correct attitude and the viewpoint in moral inquiry is so important that Dewey claims that "the question of method to be used in judging existing customs and policies proposed is of greater moral significance than the particular conclusion reached in connection with any one controversy" (LW7: 338). These general viewpoints can of course be formulated in abstract principles, such as "adopt an experimental attitude in inquiry," "be open-minded and ready to change your convictions on the basis of experience," etc. Experimental intelligence is primarily for Dewey, as it is for Peirce, not a procedural matter, but a virtue, an attitude in experience. Pappas synthesizes these virtues in openness, courage, sensitivity, conscientiousness and sympathy (2008: 187 ff.). He also stresses the virtues of trust (2008: 239), responsibility, humility, love of learning, forgiveness and compassion as present in Dewey's work but somehow underemphasized (2008: 265-266).[27]

(ii) *Development of the appropriate specific criteria of inquiry in a subject-matter*. The intelligent inquiry into a morally problematic situation has the power to lead the agent to discover (and to develop/reform when and if it is necessary) the *specific criteria* and *principles* according to which inquiry in a certain subject-matter ought to be performed. Also "wide sympathy, keen sensitiveness, persistence in the face of the disagreeable, balance of interest enabling us to undertake the work of analysis and decision intelligently are the distinctively moral traits – the virtues of moral excellencies" (MW12: 173-174). As we have seen, this feature is also important for Peirce's epistemic pluralism. As far as moral inquiry is concerned, the principle of "democracy," the principle of "justice" and the ideal of the "growth of the meaning of the present experience" belong to this category.

(iii) *Development of new means for old moral values*.

(iv) *Development of new consummatory experiences that become new moral values*. This is the case of the substitution of the moral principle "a human being who does not belong to my clan does not have moral dignity" with the other principle "every human being has moral dignity." (I will focus on this point in the next section.)

The content of the principle of faith in experience is therefore that experience itself, and, in particular, every individual situation or context, *has the resources* to instruct the inquirer to find (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). This is the meaning of the claim that the individual situation is "the controlling factor" in Dewey's view, "namely the function of a problematic situation in regulating as well as in evoking inquiry" (LW14: 44). In all the four points, faith in experience implies that an attentive and sensitive attitude towards a situation can bring consummatory experiences and knowledge that *exceed* all the previous consummatory experiences and all the information contained in the previous standards and principles of the agent. It is this conception of the function played by the individual situations that determines Dewey's ethical fallibilism and opens the possibility of moral progress. At the same time, however, Dewey's claims about ethical fallibilism have to be contextualized within his theory and put in place. As we have seen, the fact that all the "forms" developed through experience (logical, ethical, aesthetic, etc.) are fallible in principle does not entail that they are falsified now or that they will be falsified. The most important case of a form that seems to be non-fallible is the "form" exemplified by the habit of experimental intelligence and by the principles that codify it. Dewey acknowledges this when he claims that "since reflection is the instrumentality of securing freer and more enduring goods, reflection is a unique intrinsic good. Its instrumental efficacy determines it to be a candidate for a distinctive position as an immediate good, since beyond other goods it has power of replenishment and fructification" (LW1: 303-304). The falsification of the principle of experimental intelligence and of the virtues related to it on the basis of experience is self-

27 Cf. also Honneth (1998: 702-703). He stresses the same point but is critical of Dewey since the openness to others as an effect of sympathy is not warranty of universality. In this sense, Dewey's revised notion of sympathy cannot be a translation of the Kantian categorical imperative.

contradictory. In fact, the experimental viewpoint described in (i) is not fallible, since 1. the hypothetical discovery of its falsification presupposes its use and 2. the future possibility of improving attitudes, standards, means and values relies on the exercise of it, since experimental intelligence is the "tool" that enables to modify all the other tools of inquiry. The moral criteria and principles exemplified in (ii) are fallible, since, for example, it is not self-contradictory to conceive a situation in which the intelligent behavior does not coincide with the respect of the individuality of each human being. Although the fallibility of these principles is highly unlikely, they are nevertheless fallible and constantly open to revision thanks to the experimental attitude. In particular, the principle of the growth does not seem fallible, since it is the immediate translation in the field of morals of the principle of experimental intelligence. The discovery of new means and new moral values on the basis of the discovery of new consummatory experiences and teleologies is always possible and therefore the prescriptions of particular means and values are fallible. The point to stress here is that all the possible discoveries are determined by the individual situation, which therefore plays a regulative, teleological function in every inquiry and which furnishes to the agent the possibility of growth in knowledge, action and consummatory experience in relation to all the points stated above.

8.2. Metaphysical Condition, Sensitivity Condition, and Reflective Condition in Contextual Normativity

The fact that ethical normativity is context-dependent means that moral values are in a sense *functions* of a context. I have already shown that the contextual normativity of certain moral values, in the form of moral principles, means that it is the individual nature of a problematic situation that asks for the application of certain moral principles instead of others. In this section, I aim to show a deeper meaning of the relevance of context for the emergence of moral values. There are three conditions within the context that make possible the appearance of values and their varying over time. The three conditions are what I call (1) the metaphysical condition, (2) the sensitivity condition and (3) the reflective condition. All the three conditions are the sufficient complex condition for the emergence and establishment of a moral value, although taken in isolation they are just necessary. Dewey states that the task of moral criticism is to "liberate and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience" (LW1: 305). This task constitutes the process of "embodying intelligence in action" (LW1: 304). What follows is an attempt to unpack the many aspects of this claim.

(1) To understand the relevance of the metaphysical condition, it is important to stress again Dewey's metaphysical stance when we refer to the notion of context. Every context is made of actual interactions of a multitude of different conditions and general relations that get actualized in those interactions. Man is one of the centers of these interactions in which the individual qualities become "conscious." Consciousness describes a type of interaction between contextual factors, one of which is the human being herself, which is characterized by "the conspicuous and vivid presence of immediate qualities and of meanings" (LW1: 96). In the case of morals, the individual qualities that emerge from a situation have the form of "immediate goods," "enjoyments" and in general consummatory experiences, while the general relations are the general traits of a human nature codified in social and cultural habits. The important point is that new interactive conditions and new modalities of interaction can produce new "qualitative histories" (LW1: 323). In this sense, the notion of a "predetermined limited number of ends inherently arranged in an order of increasing comprehensiveness and finality" has to be rejected (LW1: 296). This is because:

> since there is only relative, not absolute, impermeability and fixity of structure, new individuals with novel ends emerge in irregular procession. It must recognize that limits, closures, ends are experimentally or dynamically determined, presenting, like the boundaries of political individuals or states, a moving adjustment of various energy-systems in their cooperative and competitive interactions, not something belonging to them of their own right. (LW1: 296)

As some scholars have stressed (e.g. Bennett 1980), a context is in a Deweyan sense an evolving system. While the approach of the natural sciences have to recur to artificial and isolated systems, in which by definition

no intervening external factors are allowed, it is important to remember that nature is not such an isolated system. New interactions of intervening processual conditions bring about the "uniqueness" and the "novelty" of new individual events (LW1: 95; LW1: 323; LW3: 114; LW4:197; LW4:167). In particular, the human being is that point of interaction in nature in which interactions happen at their most intensive and extensive level, since she is able of consciousness and awareness of meaning. From the viewpoint of moral life, this evolutive process means first of all that changes in the context introduced by new interactive conditions and new modalities of interaction (evolving systems) can bring about new consummatory teleologies and new possibilities of value. The fact that human beings exist "within nature" and are not "little god[s] outside" of it (LW1: 323) not only refers to the fact that the means of their action has to be produced on the basis of their environmental resources. At a more fundamental level, it means that all the possibilities of value, including moral value, have to be made possible by the context before human beings can sense them and intervene reflectively on them. This is what I have called the *metaphysical condition* for the appearance of a causal value CV. In this sense, new possibilities of value are primarily conditioned not by the moral sensitivity, responsibility and willingness of human beings, but by broader metaphysical conditions. As it is clear, the contextual normativity of a value requires at least the metaphysical condition for its appearance as a new consummatory experience.[28]

2. However, the metaphysical condition is not enough for the emergence of a new value. Although certain conditions can make a certain value possible, its realization as a value depends on the responsiveness of human beings to those conditions. In its first emergence, a value is an immediate good, or immediate enjoyment, and depends on metaphysical conditions as much as the capacity of moral perception of man. This condition I call *sensitivity condition*. The human being has to experience a new consummatory teleology in its "causal" and "casual" immediacy before having the possibility to establish it eventually as a reflective value, and sensitivity is in this a necessary condition (LW7: 269). The human being is a function of her experience also in the sense that the consummatory experience of a new consummatory teleology in a context is given to the man as a new "immediate good" thanks to the occurrence of new conditions of interaction, among which her sensitivity and attention play a crucial role. In this case, the meaning of "function" is more passive than active. Of course, as we have seen, also the valuings have a constitutive and implicit reference to possibility of action, but they are unintentional enjoyments of certain states of affairs and objects rather than purposeful acts. The main objection to this stance is that, since a human being's valuings depend on her moral constitution, no novelty in the immediate experience of value is possible, since the limits of what is experienceable are determined by that very constitution. However, this objection assumes that the moral constitution of man is a closed system and that therefore experience is not generative of new values. As Pappas has shown (2008: 21-22; see also Shusterman 1999), we do not experience ourselves as inside or trapped in our subjectivity and language. Adopting the "method of experience" in philosophy implies first of all that we acknowledge the fact that experience is a matrix of new contents and values, so that the linguistic and in general habitual dispositions of the agent are not an obstacle to new experiences and enjoyments. Although it is true that our valuings depend on our moral constitutions (character, habits of taste) and on our linguistic categories, it is even truer that contexts are evolving systems and that novelties are brought about by new interactive conditions. Dewey does not claim that immediate experience is not theory laden. On the contrary, he claims that the neutral, brute matter of fact or given is a myth and that all experience – pre-reflexive and reflexive – is always "selective" (LW1: 31). However, not *all* primary experience is theory-laden or tragically limited by non-linguistic dispositions. The fact that we have a pre-reflective selectivity in our immediate experience (cf. habits, language and concepts socially apprehended) does not mean that all the content of our experience is determined by our linguistic and non-linguistic presuppositions. The encounter with reality in experience is a rough mix of selectivity and gross givenness. Therefore, it is possible that man becomes sensitive to new consummatory teleologies, when and where these are made possible by the context. In this experience, man encounters something of the nature of what Kant describes as a teleology without a scope in his theory of aesthetic judgment. Dewey himself stresses the fact that "the attitude involved in the appreciation" of new consummatory teleologies is "esthetic" (LW1: 70-71) and that the consummatory teleologies are "esthetic objects" at full title (LW1: 75-76). To become an immediate experience, the metaphysical conditions require the human being's sensitivity. When this happens, old

28 In LW12: 46, Dewey links fallibilism to the fact that "we live in a world in process.

generalities, such as a moral principle and habit, might start to be questioned, more or less consciously. As a matter of fact, human beings always have a determined moral character and are therefore always committed to certain moral values, so that the experience of the new consummatory teleology might constitute for him a "problem." The agent might start to consider whether or not traditional principles and habits are limited, limiting and inadequate in relation to what is operating in the actual, dynamic state of affairs (the new consummatory teleology) of the present, immediate experience. What is interesting to stress here is the fact that the first moment in the process of genuine and radical moral improvement is not the abstract conception of a good, but the received experiential synthesis of a good that is given in a valuing. The immediate enjoyment of a good is the unintentional embodied value that asks for assessment and that, at the same time, compels the agent to an assessment of his present moral standards and commitments. The moral intelligibility stored in symbolic syntheses has always to be compared and assessed through the moral intelligence operating in experiential, concrete synthesis here and now. The necessity of any reflective endeavor is temporally preceded by an immediate experience of goods. Dewey stresses this point over and over. For instance, he says that "man is naturally more interested in consummations than he is in preparations," so that "consummations have first to be hit upon spontaneously and accidentally … before they can be objects of foresight, invention and history" (LW1: 71; cf. also LW1: 308). Even more explicitly, he claims that

> like any finalities, [consummatory teleology] had to be hit upon, achieved without premeditation before it might become an object of reflective choice and endeavor. (LW1: 98)

Sometimes Dewey also talks of moral reflection as the "way of deliberate quest for security of the values that are enjoyed by grace in our happy moments" (LW4: 241). For instance, the immediate experience of the value of the moral dignity of a human being who does not belong to my community precedes every reflection on that event. According to Dewey, this is made possible by many different conditions of interactions. This possibility introduces not only the appreciation of a new consummatory value, but a conflict and contrast between the new immediate value ("also this man, who does not belong to my own community, deserves absolute respect") and past, alleged moral values, codified in a moral principle and incarnate in a habit of moral perception and conduct ("only the members of my community are subjects of moral dignity"). This contrast is part of the problematic nature introduced by the new immediate value. It demands a process of reflection, in order to consider whether that value can be turned into a reflective moral value. Most of the time, this process aims to produce new "integrative" assimilation of the new value to the past.[29] However, sometimes the conflict cannot be synthesized without a tragic loss in terms of values that ought to be realized and that instead cannot be perpetuated into a new synthesis. As we have seen, Dewey acknowledges this tragic feature as a real possibility in moral conflicts in the contrast of the "good," the "duty" and the "virtue" in *Three Independent Factors in Morals*.

3. In addition, the emergence of a problem asks for a reflective process of inquiry in trying to reconstruct the situation. In the case of the type of moral problem I am considering, the task of deliberation is to consider whether the new consummatory teleology can be considered a genuine moral value or not. As Dewey says, "possession and enjoyment of goods passes insensibly and inevitably into appraisal. … Primitive innocence does not last. Enjoyment ceases to be a datum and becomes a problem" (LW1: 298). This is what I call the *reflective condition* for the emergence of a moral value. At this level, the emergence of a moral value coincides with its deliberate and conscious institution as such through a reflective process. In this case, the problem faced by reflection is not only to see whether or not the new immediate consummatory teleologies, taken in isolation, might be turned into moral reflective values. There are no moral values in isolation, since reflection itself is *logos*, an activity of connecting elements into a system and of making their relations explicit. Most of the time, "moral conflicts" are conflicts between goods that are or have been satisfying and that now are found to be incompatible, not between good and evil (LW4: 212). The formula used by Dewey is that the reflective process turns the immediate values into intelligible objects through the analysis of their "conditions and consequences" (LW1: 298; LW1: 305; LW1: 321; LW4: 208; LW4: 219). The structure of the evaluation is the analysis of the "conditions" and of the "consequences" of the value. Evaluation is performed at multiple levels, in particular because the different phases of appraisal of a good are structured according to an experimental attitude. In what

29 See Alexander (1993: 388) and Honneth (1998: 701).

follows, I explain what are the phases of evaluation of a new consummatory teleology, or immediate value, as a possible new moral value. In particular, this structure of the evaluative process (analysis of conditions and consequences of a value) applies at a threefold level.

(i) The first level of "criticism" consists in putting the new immediate value in relation with already accepted moral values, in order to test its entitlement to be established as a new moral value. According to Dewey, this new connection of traditional and new values is the new object to be evaluated. As every new object of genuine inquiry, all its factors and elements have a hypothetical status, so that in this process of evaluation not only the new immediate value, but also the old ones are in question. In fact, as we have seen, the agent starts to consider whether traditional principles and habits are limited, limiting and inadequate in relation to what is operating and "at work" in the actual, dynamic state of affairs (the new consummatory teleology) of the present, immediate experience. The new, individual interaction, realized in a new qualitative consummatory teleology, can bring within the context new moral factors and axiological possibilities to be considered. Hence, Dewey's ethical fallibilism. The test has to be performed using the ideal of "growth" as a criterion and experimental intelligence as a method. Dewey claims that "the better" in morality "is that which will do more in the way of security, liberation and fecundity for other likings and values" (LW1: 321). The aim is to perpetuate "more enduring and extensive values" (LW1: 302). The task of morality is "freeing and harmonizing" the moral potentialities of a context (MW14: 159; cf. also LW10: 273). "Appraising" here means "to bring to conscious perception relations of productivity and resistance" among values, and thus to make them significant, intelligible and mutually more intelligent through this connection. In this case, the analysis of the conditions refers to the causes of the immediate experience of that value ("What changed in the environment to make this experience possible?, "What changed in me?," etc.), while the analysis of the consequences concerns the consideration of the relations of that immediate value with other values, already established. This is the first kind of consequence that moral evaluation has to take into account. If this new value does not hinder or narrow the other values and on the contrary fosters, develops or reinforces them, then that value might be established as a new moral value and the moral horizon of the agent can be reformed. In this case, the institution of a new moral value implies the reconfiguration of the axiological horizon of the agent, so that the conflict is synthesized into a new comprehension of the moral nature of man. Old standards can be detailed, reformed or in extreme cases abandoned, and new standards arise. At this level of moral reflection, the point is to figure out if the new good can be admitted and endorsed as a moral value on the basis of the ideal of growth and through the use of an experimental attitude. This is still an imaginative process. In the case of a positive response of the dramatic rehearsal, however, the hypothesis has to be tested in experience.

(ii) The second level of the evaluation concerns the attempt to re-produce intentionally and purposefully that consummatory experience that has been judged worthy of being pursued. A fitting definition of moral reflection at this level is "the conscious art of remaking goods" (LW1: 321). Here the study of the conditions of the appearance of a value is instrumental for an efficient realization of that consummatory experience through a concrete action. In fact, the agent's action is the means, or intentional condition, thanks to which, through the interaction with environmental, unintentional conditions, the consummatory experience is supposed to be reproduced (LW12: 454-456). On the other hand, the study of the consequences of the action is the attempt to verify whether or not one's action has really realized the consummatory experience to which the agent was aiming. The evaluative moment requires the human being's initiative not only in imagination, but also in the action in the overt world. Through deliberation and action (which is, as we have seen, the conclusion of deliberation), the human being is a fully active and creative factor in the production of the moral values context required by the context.

(iii) The final level concerns the retrospective consideration of what successful instances of realization of consummatory experiences have actually realized. The new conditions of interaction purposefully established by the agent produce new "qualities," new consummatory experiences. Do these consummatory experiences really constitute an instance of growth of experience? Are our new standards, habits and decisions really making our actual interactions grow? We might also say: are these consummatory experiences really convenient for the flourishing of human life? A moral value is genuine only if produces the growth within our new experiential syntheses. The final moment of criticism implies that the "re-making in subsequent action" of a consummatory experience "tests the conclusion of theory" (LW1: 323). Moral values and principles should be "treated as

intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed … through consequences effected by acting upon them" (LW4: 221). The ideal of "growth" has to play again its fundamental role, not in measuring the immediate consummatory experience as a candidate of future action, but in assessing what an action already performed has brought about in experience. At the same time, the method of experimental intelligence is the best resource for establishing whether the case under examination is an instance of human flourishing or not. A consummatory experience constitutes a real instance of growth only if an "ideal" experimental intelligence would recommend and recognize it as such. "An *ideal* spectator is projected and the doer of the act looks at his proposed act through the eyes of this impartial and far-seeing objective judge" (LW7: 246). At this level, Dewey rehabilitates Kant's categorical imperative (MW5: 283-284), not as a demand for strong universalism in morals, but more because the categorical imperative is a tool to consider a particular case from a general perspective, and because it prescribes the use of experimental intelligence.[30] Of course, in most of the cases, the ideal experimental perspective, being a historical viewpoint, includes many moral principles, values and standards that are not questioned. Certain virtues are not questioned, since they are constitutive of intelligence itself. It is also likely that other moral values ("be loyal to friends," "do not kill for the sake of pleasure"), although fallible in principle, will not be falsified. "Conscience" is the virtue of the honest agent who, on the basis of an experimental, retrospective evaluation of the consequences of her action, acknowledges its moral status. What is important to notice is again the fact that the produced consummatory value is the new experiential synthesis on the basis of which moral principles and beliefs need to be tested. If these principles do not show in actual interactions an effective amelioration, it is likely that they are not good standards.

30 This is also the crux of Putnam's rehabilitation of Dewey's ethics (see Putnam 2000 and 2004).

Conclusion

The task of the previous chapters has been to inquiry into some aspects of Peirce's and Dewey's philosophy in order to try to clearly formulate and tentatively answer some problems related to human agency. I shall conclude that there is much work still to be done in the pragmatist tradition on these topics. In particular, I take this endeavor to be of some importance, both from a historical and theoretical stance. In particular, I believe that a deep, historically informed and philologically rigorous reconsideration of Peirce's and Dewey's thought could shed some light on contemporary matters, including what has been called the "resurgence of pragmatism" in the past years (see Bernstein 1992). In this work, I have tried to accomplish the first part of this task, by making clear what Peirce's and Dewey's problems and what their tentative answers were, hopefully contributing to the pragmatist scholarship's task to articulate in a precise way the tenets of the classic pragmatists. It is not necessary to repeat here the detailed analyses presented in each chapter and their results. However, in this conclusion I only want to restate the mutual entanglement of normativity and experience in both Peirce's and Dewey's views and face two objection to my overall reading. I have shown how, according to Peirce and Dewey, the problem of normativity grows out of the womb of human practices. For Peirce, as we have seen, all human practices (using the notion of "practice" in a broad sense, including in it also epistemic procedures and affective dispositions) are studied within the framework of what he calls the problem of the "fixation of the belief." As a consequence, the problem of fixing a belief presupposes a critical distance from any "sign" that is taken into consideration and entails the need for figuring out what is the best experiential method to creatively formulate explanatory hypotheses and testing their validity. Moreover, the fact that the fundamental categories of the "Normative Sciences" are evaluative categories brings to light that Peirce sees in self-controlled human agency an irreducible normative vocation. At the same time, I have shown that the pragmatic maxim itself suffers from (or benefits of) a tension between a merely explicating function of the meaning of "concepts" and a prescriptive indication of how "concepts" ought to be developed (and therefore, what "concepts" ought to be held). Similarly, for Dewey, the dimension of value is coextensive with human experience as a whole, since we are always immersed at least in what he calls "casual" values. The presence of dissatisfaction and contradictions within our already-value-laden experience lead us to the normative question about how we ought to guide our action and "reconstruct" our experience. For Peirce and Dewey, the dimension of value is already present in experience, so that the need for a rational normativity of human agency grows out of experience and is responsibly assumed in what they respectively call deliberation about Ideals and moral inquiry.

In a comment on the never-ending issue of the relation between Peirce's pragmatism and contemporary analytic philosophy, Nathan Houser writes:

> Quite clearly we can say that Peirce was an empiricist or, at least, a minimal empiricist as described by McDowell. He held, rather like Brentano, that the mark of the mental is directedness toward the world (although he thought of this directedness as purposive in some general sense). For Peirce to suppose that thought has a purpose follows straightforwardly from his naturalism – from viewing mind in the context of biological evolution. "What is the function of thought?" Peirce asked. "To produce belief," he answered. And what is belief? "Belief," Peirce said, "consists in the establishment of habits or rules of action," very much like software programs that prepare us for what we are likely to confront, or what we at least *may* confront. Peirce would have agreed with McDowell that this view puts things in a normative context. (2011: 64-65)

I would like to stress one point that emerges from Houser's remark. Peirce has usually been portrayed as the great denier within the pragmatist tradition of the importance of a philosophical inquiry into morality. However, if it is true that Peirce's philosophy is rooted into a normative conception of experience, it follows that Peirce's claims about the inutility of philosophy in the moral life should be better understood in their context. As a consequence, it is a mistake to say that Peirce was not interested in normative ethics, although his ethical system is not fully developed beyond his reflections in the context of the Normative Sciences. A different strategy is to

interpret Peirce's philosophical enterprise on the basis of the two categories of "scientia" and "sapientia." As Colapietro remarks,

> There is little question that, in Peirce's writings, philosophy as scientia largely eclipses philosophy as sapientia. But, at the center of Peirce's philosophy, there is an askesis, a self-imposed discipline. But there is also a confidence that the insights derived from this discipline will contribute to wisdom. "The soul's deeper parts can only be reached through its surface" (CP 1.648). In this way, the insights obtained from "mathematics and philosophy and the other sciences … will by slow percolation gradually reach the very core of one's being; and will come to influence our lives." Impersonal inquiry, where personal concerns are sacrificed for the overarching ideals of a communal undertaking (where one comes to identify oneself with the success of what transcends oneself), is a moral achievement of personal agents. (2004b: 119)

Famously, Peirce once claimed that "every symbol is a living thing, in a very strict sense" (CP 2.222). As a consequence, Peirce's stress on semeiotic is not at odds with the normative sciences at all, including ethics and aesthetics. On the contrary, it is the life of signs themselves that has the power to orient us in freely thinking what is true, acting what is good and feeling what is admirable in itself. It is in the sign itself that something like a moral exigency emerges.

On the other side, Dewey's most recent fortune (or misfortune) is due to Richard Rorty's popular claim that Dewey is with Heidegger and Wittgenstein the most important philosopher of the twentieth century (1979: 5) since he gave up the task of developing a metaphysical philosophy and started a different project, something of the nature of a historical, radically situated critical appraisal of (his) culture. There is no doubt that Rorty's interpretation is correct in some sense, although it is unjustified to catalogue Dewey as the king of pragmatism and, at the same time, dismissing Peirce as a victim of Kantianism and "methodolatry" (1999: 36). Indeed, it is true that Dewey harshly criticized some metaphysical stances of his time, such as some versions of the new realism (e.g. W. P. Montague, W. T. Bush, Woodbridge) and critical realism (e.g. J. B. Pratt, Roy W. Sellars; see Hildebrand 2003). However, while a quick overview of Dewey's work might lead us to take Rorty's opinion at face value, a closer analysis of Dewey's thought shows that some traditional interpretations of Dewey as a reductionist naturalist are simply wrong. My attempt to develop an analysis of Dewey's theory of experience in semeiotic terms aimed to show that both Peirce and Dewey similarly approached the problem of normativity (in all its forms) relying on human experience's vocation to growth.

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