What Exactly Does Thinking Mean? A Few Possible Answers to Preliminary Questions Concerning a Pragmatic-semiotic-psychoanalytic Theory of Thought

O Que Exatamente Significa Pensar? Umas Poucas Possíveis Respostas a Questões Preliminares Relativas à Teoria Pragmática-semiótica-psicanalítica do Pensamento

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Abstract: Regarding the question put as the title of this paper, the author's present work consists in building up a model of thinking which comprises the strong points of Sigmund Freud and Charles S. Peirce. In order to do this, there are a couple of questions to be answered, mainly methodological ones. The author starts with giving an overview over the work of authors who previously had compared the theories of Freud and Peirce. Afterwards she puts a couple of Freudian basic assumptions into the frame of the Peircean categories, showing that although the two authors emphasize entirely different issues in their respective works, there remains an extensive area of shared views. Her conclusion will be that Freud based his psychoanalysis implicitly on similar epistemological assumptions as Peirce. Also, in spite of their differing descriptions of mankind, their ethic vision overlaps to a great extent.

Keywords: Iconicity. Thing Presentation. Affect. Self. Change of Habits. Psychoanalytic Process.

Resumo: *A respeito da questão colocada no título deste artigo, o presente trabalho consiste na construção de um modelo de pensamento que compreenda os pontos fortes de Sigmund Freud e Charles S. Peirce. Com esta finalidade, há algumas questões a serem respondidas, principalmente as metodológicas. A autora começa oferecendo uma visão geral do trabalho dos autores que anteriormente compararam as teorias de Freud e Peirce. Após fazer isso, coloca algumas teses freudianas básicas no quadro das categorias peircianas, mostrando que, apesar de ambos os autores enfatizarem problemas completamente diferentes em suas respectivas obras, mantêm uma extensa área de pontos de vista em comum. A autora concluirá que Freud baseou sua psicanálise implicitamente em pressupostos epistemológicos similares aos de Peirce. Além disso, a despeito de suas diferentes descrições de humanidade, suas visões éticas sobrepõem-se em grande parte.*

Palavras-chave: *Iconicidade. Apresentação de Coisa. Afetos. Self. Mudança de hábitos. Processo Psicanalítico.*

How can we define exactly what we mean when we say that we are thinking? The problem consists in the inevitable subjective character of thinking and yet we claim to describe it objectively. As long as science and philosophy have no common basic assumptions, the objective, scientific approach cannot answer the question to our satisfaction. Meanwhile the more subjective approach of philosophy or psychology does not meet the demands of science. Neuroscience frequently claims to have the subjective processes in view—literally speaking: the imaging procedures are able to pinpoint, more precisely than ever before, the exact location in the brain where certain functions take place. With progressive understanding of the functioning of neurotransmitters, this science has attained a far better understanding of the production of psychic states and syndromes. This knowledge also (or especially) extends to how psychic syndromes are dependent on the malfunction of neurotransmitters and can therefore be understood objectively, and treated with medication.

However, compared with the magnitude of the human mind possessing such characteristics as memory, character, volition, purpose and hope, the issues neuroscientists study seem rather more dry and barren. The problem of capturing the intrinsic subjective and individual character of conscious experience and thinking stays unresolved. There is an urgent need to clarify the fundamental activity of the mind and to design a theoretical model that fits the need of both disciplines.

In my view, it is only Peircean pragmatic semiotics and psychoanalysis, that has, on the one hand, the capacity to create models which describe the process of thinking as a third-person process, and on the other, to take into account the inherent 1st person quality of experience and thinking.

Peircean pragmatic semiotics should be a basic tool for application in cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and psychology and psychoanalysis. My intention is to show their usefulness in my own fields of anthropology and psychoanalysis, which will be my work in the coming years. However, in this paper, I will restrict myself to Peirce and psychoanalysis. I also will only be able to cover some of the most important issues and will have to leave many more untouched.

Indeed, after the landmark books of the American authors John Muller (1996 and MULLER & BRENT, 2000) and Vincent Colapietro (1989, 1995 and 2000) is there anything more to be said? My own attempt to unite certain concepts of Peirce and Freud is based on the work of the above-mentioned two authors.

Muller (1996) in his "Beyond the psychoanalytic Dyad" presents Lacanian insights with the help of Peircean thought. At the same time, Muller's work sets out the substantial findings in the field of early development in childhood, especially the relationship between baby and mother, observed and documented by psychoanalysts and baby watchers during the last 50 years. He puts these findings into a semiotic framework, showing that mainstream psychoanalysis is considerably blind in this aspect and giving the observations a fundamentally diverse signification.

Whereas Muller's work is rooted in psychoanalytic theory, Vincent Colapietro is a philosopher. In his publications, the author finds within the Peircean universe of terms, a place for the Freudian unconscious. He also places considerable weight on a pragmatic understanding of Peircean semiotics.

Colapietro investigates our '*habits*' as a central concept, not only for deeds and activities, but also for the inward world of thoughts and feelings. Thinking can be considered as 'behavior in rehearsal'—a Freudian term (*Probehandeln*):

> It is plain that intelligence does not consist in feeling in a certain way, but in acting in a certain way. Only, we must acknowledge that there are inward actions—which might be called *potential* actions, that is, actions which do not take place, but which somehow influence the formation of habits (CP 6:286, 1893, italics of the author)[1].

Structuralism – Semiotics

European psychoanalysis is still much tied to the French Structuralism and its consequences and has not opened its eyes to the fascinating and far more elegant solutions that offer a combination of Peircean semiotics with psychoanalytic theoretical insights[2].

Without being fully aware of the important contributions of the above-mentioned authors, I suggested a couple of years ago that we should combine Peircean semiotics with the basic assumptions of Wilfred R. Bion, a psychoanalyst of the British School. I also proposed labelling a part of the psychoanalytic concept of unconsciousness as the 'habitual unconscious' (cf. SALLER, 2003, p. 123–144). Colleagues disagreed, objecting that Freud already had a name for this: *das Vorbewusste*—the preconscious. It seems to me however that this part of the unconscious activity which consists of our automated skills merits more attention, as well as being more extensive than we generally assume. In the second place, I would like to propose to psychoanalysts to be sensitive to the fact that a great part of the unconscious, i.e. the habits we are not aware of in everyday life, is not unconscious in the Freudian sense, but is rather learned and automated. The habitual unconscious implies our abilities to cope with everyday life, self-orientation in time and space and much more.

As already mentioned, Colapietro shows the place of the dynamic unconscious within the Peircean formulations. He argues convincingly that Peirce himself seems to admit the existence of an unconscious part in our minds related to the enigmas of our lives, as well as with our inclination to deceive ourselves.

However, Colapietro's comments also show that the core interests of the two authors were quite distinct and guided them in completely different directions. Roughly speaking, Peirce highly approves of self-control whereas Freud, as a therapist, promoted a more permissive attitude towards socially-disapproved impulses. The latter was even considered as a revolutionary and was vaguely linked to what is called the "sexual revolution" of 1968.

The aim of this paper is to show, that although the two authors emphasize entirely different issues in their respective works, there remains an extensive area of shared views and common ground. Regarding the question I pose in my title, I would like to build up a model of thinking which comprises the strong points of them both. In order to do this, there are a couple of questions which need to be answered which are mainly methodological ones.

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1   Quotations from the works of Peirce cf. my notes on the end of this article.

2   For a more detailed discussion about the pre-eminence of Peircean semiotics over structuralism cf. COLAPIETRO, 1989; SALLER, 2005; SHORT, 2007, p. 228f.

My conclusion will be that Freud based his psychoanalysis implicitly on similar epistemological assumptions as Peirce. Also, in spite of the differing description of mankind by the two authors, their ethic vision overlaps to a great extent.

In the very beginning of his psychological thinking, Freud was preoccupied with epistemology. In the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and in the 7th chapter of his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* he tried to sort out how we perceive, think and remember. Meanwhile, in his subsequent life's work, he largely takes normal thinking and perception of reality for granted. It is the distortion of thinking that shifted into the center of his attention.

In contrast to this, Peirce's brainwork went on revolving around the question of how we are able to cognize reality and what thinking means. Still, the failure of cognizing reality is also interesting for Peirce because every epistemology has to deal with the possibility of failure, lying and deception. Despite the openness of Peirce for phenomena like repression of memory, hallucinations and dreams, he did not spend much time on it, whereas for Freud, they stood at the center of his interest. Nevertheless, as Colapietro showed, Peirce's preoccupation with the inward-aspect of our thinking was central and it resulted in the possibility of self-control as the highest achievement of mankind, the possibility to change habits deliberately.

There were two outstanding figures in European Psychoanalysis who picked up the epistemological thread in Freud's work, Jacques Lacan and Wilfred Bion. Referring to the mentioned works of early Freud, they asked themselves if mankind has at all the capacity to cognize reality. In my view, both of them did not differentiate clearly the processes of normal cognition from the others, dealt with by psychoanalysis, namely a distorted knowledge which—as Bion (1959) puts it—cuts mental links instead of allowing them. It seems they missed a more explicit epistemology in Freud's work and they ended up generalizing certain processes that, in my view, are relevant only for a limited number of psychic problems. Both luminaries of psychoanalysis conclude a certain non-cognizability of the world and the impossibility of perception of the real thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*). They also coincide in linking this with psychosis[3].

They ended up by adopting a nihilist or skeptical epistemological position. Peirce argued polemically against such assumptions.[4] I myself do not believe that these authors understood Freud correctly in this specific point. I would like to suggest that Freud's dealing with the questions whether and how the world could be perceived, was based on an understanding that is more in agreement with Peirce. I will show this at the end of this paper.

Correspondences between Peirce and psychoanalysis[5]

A couple of Freudian insights can be formulated as instances of Peircean categories. Starting with the Peircean category of the First, we find a correspondence, although

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3   Cf. also PAGEL &WEISS, 1993.

4   Cf. e.g. CP 5.311/312, 1868.

5   My exposed ideas about Thing Presentation and Iconicity draw on my formulations in a conference held in Toronto 2009 at the International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature.

maybe not in the very center of Freudian reflections. It is in another early work of his, where Freud dealt with the functioning of language. The paper "On Aphasia" was considered by certain authors as "pre-analytic"[6], but by more recent authors, it is valued as a first sketch of the future psychoanalytic technical terminology[7]. Comparing Freud with Peirce, it is interesting to see that Freud on several occasions when talking about thoughts, also mentions the existence of signs, and more interestingly still, signs, which are not necessarily linguistic[8]. It is in the mentioned booklet on aphasia where he postulates for the first time that within the mind, the linguistic sign, the word, is always composed of two ideas[9], the Thing Presentation (*Sachvorstellung*) and the Word Presentation (*Wortvorstellung*).

In this paper, he deals with the literature of the time and its explanations of linguistic/speech defects caused by brain damage. He proposed an understanding of language which emphasizes the memories and ideas as totally detached from their respective localizations in the brain. This understanding of the production of linguistic expressions was built on a holistic view.

As already noted, Freud showed in his early works, a considerable epistemological interest. He was worried about our ability to perceive, remember and think.

Meanwhile his interest shifted away from the foundations of our thinking to the disturbances of the same; the meaning of Thing Presentation also slightly changed. It mutated from an object in the outer world to the most private and unconscious fantasy. In his 1915 article *The Unconscious*, Freud offers a series of definitions and specifications of unconscious processes which he crowns with a new definition of the well-known defense mechanism of repression. He states that repression of an idea consists in separating the Thing Presentation from the Word Presentation. The Thing Presentation is separated from the word and kept in the Unconscious. The Thing Presentation therefore has been totally metamorphosed from a thing in the outer world to an inner fantasy.

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6   E.g. Freud's biographer Ernest Jones and the editors of the Standard edition.

7   Cf. May WEGENER, 2004, p.258ff; GONDEK, 1990, p.45ff.

8   I appreciate Freud's taking into account of pre-linguistic signs because of my firm belief that philosophy of the whole 20th century suffered from a severe misconception, taking for granted that thinking only could be studied through structure and use of language. This is true for American philosophy which in a regrettable disavowal of the deep understanding in Peirce's pragmatistic semiotics pursued pure analysis of language. In Europe it was the fashion of structuralism which put the pre-linguistic signs out of sight.

Cf. also Litowitz: "Unfortunately Freud lacked a unifying theory of semiosis and used instead the more limiting metaphor of language" (1991, p. 86). She goes on quoting Freud, mentioning the various dialects of the unconscious, for example the gesture language of hysteria, the picture-language of dreams and visions etc.

9   The term Freud uses for the ideas acting behind words and phrases is *Vorstellung*, a notion which was borrowed from the German philosophers. This German word could be explained as 'the idea of putting something in front of us, probably in order to see it more clearly'. In English the Freudian *Vorstellung* is generally translated as 'idea 'whereas in the compound words *Sachvorstellung* and *Wortvorstellung*, it was changed to 'presentation'.

A similar oscillating of inner to outer world is found when one deals with the category of the 'First' as Peirce uses it. Let's start with questioning ourselves, how an iconic sign or a sign on the level of the First can be imagined. Quickly we start brooding over the mere possibility of something like that. After all, we know that recognizing pictures has to be learned and follows certain rules. So how should we imagine a sign representing an object through similarity, without an ordering principle? Since every judgment of perception has to rely on a matrix of categories (i.e. legisigns), how should we interpret a sign without referring to it?

This question is also the starting point for Lucia Santaella who, in her article of 1996, differentiates between six degrees of iconicity. She explores the pure icon and characterizes it as sheer possibility. In her next steps, she demonstrates how indexical, and later on, symbolical aspects are added, a development that culminates in the hypo-icon. The pure icon, following her description and the notions of Peirce himself, can only be a vague possibility. It is a germ of a sign, not yet built up.

In an understanding of developmental psychology, we can imagine the building of a primitive icon on the level of the First as an early step toward the capacity of understanding and dealing with signs. The small child is eventually capable of recognizing recurring objects or experiences as similar; to be precise, a present perception reminds him of an experience or perception in the past. One of the most interesting issues in this field is that young children in their kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory and visual world that surrounds them are capable, not only of linking similar sense impressions, but also of relating the different senses among themselves. Reading the outcome of baby observations reported by Daniel Stern (1985), I was impressed by the capacity of babies to translate rhythms into visual images or sounds. Newborn babies, only a couple of months old and not yet able to speak, recognized their mother's face, scent and the way she walked, breathed and talked.

These—in a developmental sense—first signs that the baby may perceive or sort out (as described above) would, in the aforementioned classification of Santaella, already be accorded to a second stage of iconicity. This is because an inner picture, a memory, is to be compared with an outer object. In contrast, a pure icon has no reference to the outer world or even, as yet, to a system of signs. It follows that the similarity is altogether vague. Critics of iconicity sometimes point out that everything in our world can be considered as similar to everything else in some way. However, it is precisely here that iconicity plays its most important role in the process of semiosis and, most fundamentally, in the capacity of perception in general. In order to pinpoint this, I submit the following quote. Peirce here stresses the role of abduction[10] within reasoning. "It is recognized that the phenomena are like, i.e. constitute an Icon of, a replica of a general conception, or Symbol" (EP 2:287, 1903). Santaella's division of iconic signs proves to be a meticulous description of the elements that constitute the process of perception or perceptive judgment. In my view, the apologies and pleas for iconicity against the widespread thesis of conventionality and arbitrariness (especially in linguistics)[11] often miss the crucial

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10   Cf. also my comments on abduction at the end of this article.

11   Cf. e.g. SONESSON, 1999; DIPERT, 1996; ELGIN, 1996; HAUSMAN, 1996; RANSDELL, 1979.

point that is: *In order to understand what goes on in sensory perception, we have to assume an innate capability to recognize recurring patterns.* I would like to add as a passing note, that also in language, analogy and metaphor play a fundamental role.[12]

We see that the matching of inner pictures ('memory traces'—as Freud called them) with the signs that are perceived by the person at the same moment, form an essential part of the whole process. The fully fledged sign, which is to be found on the sixth level of Santaella's division, refers to a network of rules, a structure of semantic values, in spite of its iconicity. It is called hypo-icon by Peirce, who, by giving it this name, focuses on the difference between the pure icon as a mere possibility and the fully fledged iconic sign which has other aspects as well.

A similar comparison between the First and the Freudian unconscious is made by Joseph Smith (2000). He states: "The idea that consciousness begins as an undifferentiated affective and perceptual blur, inaccessible as such to consciousness, would not have been a point of disagreement between Freud and Peirce" (*ibid.* 71).

Second: Affect and Self

Being aware that not every feeling is a First, he also claims: "that even the immediacy of consciousness has some sort of promptings, even though not the kind of definitive response we take the conscious experience of feelings as secondness to be" (*ibid.* 72).

The feeling on the level of Second can also indicate something, i.e. it functions as an index. We are passing to the Peircean category of the Second, changing the sign type from the icon to the index. It is here that the meeting with reality takes place. I will pinpoint two subjects which seem to be of special interest for the psychoanalyst. First I will try to shed a light on the self within the Peircean picture of sign and the use of sign. Then I will focus on the similarities of Freud's and Peirce's concept of affect. I will start my considerations of the Second with a quote from Peirce: "[…] the second is the index, which like a pronoun demonstrative or relative, forces the attention to the particular object intended without describing it; […]" (W 5:243; 1885).

One may ask why the self should be an instance of the Second. I decided to put my remarks referring to the self in the section of the Second because of how it is expressed through language. Within language the most important indices are the personal pronouns. They link the speaker to the context, and obviously give concrete sense to the linguistic utterances which—without the localization in reality—would have little understandable sense.[13]

It seems obvious to me that the use of the first and second person, 'I 'and 'you', signify a certain consciousness of one's self. Thomas L. Short (2007) remarks: "Peirce alluded to Kant's observation that children are slow to learn the use of the

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12   Cf. HALY, 1999; LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1980.

13   Muller analyzed the language of a psychotic patient and found out that the phrases of the young man were perfectly fine, only what was missing were the indices. If indices (personal pronouns) appeared at all, the patient did not make it clear about whom he was speaking. Muller points out that without the clear localization of linguistic comment, the whole convention of speech collapses (cf. the same 1996, p. 109).

first-person singular. They 'manifest powers of thought much earlier' (W 2:201, [1868]), hence before they come to self-consciousness" (*ibid*. 312). He also quotes Peirce's hypothesis saying that "Ignorance and error are all that distinguish our private selves from the absolute ego of pure apperception" (W 2:203, 1868).

Discussing this rather negative statement of Peirce[14], he specifies that the essence of the self has to be seen in the contradiction of the small child that is only aware of his flaws on the one hand and, on the other, the outrageous activity of the mind which acquires the ability of thought and already analyses his failures. He evokes an image of the toddler that "like Pinocchio easily led astray, he is not yet quite real, but desperately wants to be" (*ibid*. 313).

The child that is aware of his smallness and of his mistakes becomes conscious of his/her 'self'. Colapietro (1989) captures this "desperately wants to be" by conceiving the Peircean self as essentially being a "coordination of ideas" (*ibid*. 76) and a learning unit.

> In other words, the sort of mind that can evolve into a self must possess the capacities to feel, to act, and to learn. My warrant for putting the capacity to learn in the place of the capacity to take habits is a text in which Peirce himself asserts the identity between the two: 'To learn is to acquire a habit' (*ibid*. 88).

In the end of this paper, I will come back to the question of the self, exploring how it is that this ashamed little child can develop the strength to grow and learn. However, I would like to mention another of Peirce's remarkably 'modern' thoughts, in which he states that the self is essentially dialogic. The sociality of man from his beginning, only now being rediscovered by today's philosophers[15] and social theorists[16], was, for Peirce, a matter of course. This idea is another example of the common ground of the two authors Peirce and Freud. The corresponding idea within the psychoanalytic background is Freud's conceptualization of the start of thinking as a hallucination. As Smith (2000) shows, these hallucinations are related to each other. I now will give a short summary of Smith's notions, describing further the Freudian formulation of the social self. Afterwards, I will summarize my thought on sociality of thinking with a quote of Colapietro where he comments on Peirce's dialogic thinking.

Freud repeatedly states that the baby, aware of hunger, evokes the image of the mother and her breast. Only later, when it recognizes the failure of this—hallucinatory—method, it becomes ready to accept the reality principle. Smith summarizes:

> If the idea arises in a hungry infant as an image of the remembered and anticipated mother, would not that situation itself structure the implicit sentence, 'I want you'? Consciousness, then, beyond the primitive, is *consciousness of relationships* (SMITH, *ibid*., 73, our italics).

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14 Cf. also KAPPNER, 2004, p. 359; COLAPIETRO, 1989, p. 72f.

15 Cf. e.g. KUHN, 1962; TOULMIN, 1990; HABERMAS, 1981.

16 Cf. HABERMAS, *ibid*., JOAS, 1992.

Smith describes how the baby masters his first task, namely to differentiate between me and not-me. He inserts a quote from an unpublished manuscript of Peirce of 1913, i.e. in the last year of his life

> From the general mass of consciousness, as yet void of any marked determination, suddenly a more definite idea, the Object or Not-Me, separates itself like a crystal from a clear solution, and like a crystal grows, while the rest of consciousness—the mother liquor, so to speak—the Me, seems, as it were, to boast of the new birth, as Its Own, oblivious of the seminal suggestion that must have been present as a nucleus (MS 681, quoted in HOUSER, 1983).

And here we have a first answer to the question of our title, which both Peirce and Freud, could identify with.

> The conception of thinking as dialogue implies a view of the self radically different from Descartes' notion of the cogito. In the Sixth Meditation, he wrote that 'inasmuch as I am only a thinking thing, I cannot distinguish in myself any parts, but apprehend myself to be clearly one and entire'. According to Peirce, it is crucial to remember that the person is not absolutely individual, that is, indivisible. […] Thinking involves two such roles—what Peirce called the critical self, on the one hand, and what we might call the innovative self, on the other. When one thinks, it is the critical self that the innovative self is trying to persuade. The former represents the habits of the person, while the latter represents a challenge to these habits (COLAPIETRO, *ibid*., 93).

I will spend the second part of my exposition to the Second with a slightly different subject, the emotional response within the perception that means the affect. As we already mentioned, the Second is the category where reality is experienced. In the simplest diagram of the sign, the Second is in the place of the object. As is well known, Peirce suggested the division into two objects, the immediate and dynamic one. Whereas the dynamic object is the real thing in the outer world[17], the immediate object is the effect that thing has on us. It is the indication through a hint, the dynamic object leaves on us.

Speaking clearly of the effect of the sign, we however already are in the field of interpretants, more precisely, in the field of the immediate interpretant. However, speaking of the very moment of "affection", we stay in the dyadic relation of thing and person.

Coming to psychoanalysis, the affect has been a critical issue for a long time. André Green, considering the great emphasis on language in French psychoanalysis, began in a well-regarded article of the year 1977 to investigate about the affect.

He states that Freud was quite interested in affect in the beginning (*Sketch* and *Studies on Hysteria*). After the publication of the *Interpretation of Dreams* until 1919/23 (year of publication of *Das Unheimliche* und *Das Ich und das Es*) however,

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17   Or a former experience, memory trace and/or actual expectance. Further down, I will also pay attention to the question of realism or the concept of "truth", especially for psychoanalysis.

Freud's main preoccupation was with the content, the ideas (*Vorstellungen*). He had succeeded in creating a consistent theory of the psyche in 1900 in the *Interpretation of Dreams*. However, this theory only explained what happened in the area of the ideas.[18] According to Green, Freud studied in the following years the fate of the repressed content (ideas), whereas he often did not care any longer about what happens to the affect. At the end of his article, Green makes a distinction between two entirely different types of affect: The first type is a concomitant of the unconscious and the preconscious chain of ideas (the Thing Presentations). This type of affect confirms and backs the organization of the Thing Presentations within chains of associations. The affect is experienced as sensible affiliate of an integrated succession of incidences. It is consequently "material" for the process of thinking in pictures.

However, there is also the second type of affect. The quality of this type is fierce and destructive. Thanks to its intensity, it breaks the unconscious chain of associations. Green compares them with a stream that floods its riverbed. The resulting breakthroughs disorganize existing links and destroy the structures of significance.

I would like to present also another author, Marie Luise Angerer (2007). She is an author in the tradition of cultural studies, who wrote a critical overview about the enormous emphasis that was put on the affect in studies of all kinds in the last ten to twenty years, beginning with cultural studies going on in media research, art theory, philosophy, psychology and neuropsychology of today. Her definition of affect is strikingly similar to the one I propose with the aid of Green, although she follows clearly the Lacanian understanding. As Freud's definition of affect she refers to "the phase of the movement where the representations and the affect get out of place" (the same 125, my translation).

I will show later on that this definition fits well with the concept of habit change that will be fundamental for the understanding of the psychoanalytic process. Another striking description of the first reaction to something, be this a thing in the outer or in the inner world, by Angerer is: "[…] this ego-alienated condition which transposes angst, happiness and excitation into images and translates them into reality. […] [T]his dimension of translation which allows an opening of the body through language" (the same 123; my translation).

Coming to the Third we will see that, after all, the inward world which the self inhabits becomes more enriched. I will quote further evidence for the dialogical nature of thought, which shows the richness of the inner world. In an article about scientific methods Peirce wrote ca. 1910:

> In reasoning, one is obliged to *think to oneself*. In order to recognize what is needful for doing this it is necessary to recognize, first of all, what 'oneself' is. One is not twice in precisely the same mental state. One is *virtually* (i.e. for pertinent purposes, the same as if one were) a somewhat different person, to whom one's present thought has to be communicated. Consequently, one has to express one's thought so that that virtually other person may understand it (CP 7:103, italics of the author).

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18   For another characterization of the inconsistent concept of the affect in Freud's work cf. VER EECKE, 2000, p. 84ff.

As the above-mentioned Short has shown, Peirce's theory of sign went through a considerable change in 1907. From then on, the formerly "endless semiosis" has purpose and takes root. The ideally set aim of the sign interpretation, the final interpretant which in its turn produced new interpretants in an endless process of semiosis, was replaced by the ultimate interpretant, the interpretant that consists in a habit or, more precisely, in a habit change.

> Shall we say that this effect may be a thought, that is to say, a mental sign? No doubt, it may be so; only, if this sign be of an intellectual kind—as it would have to be—it must itself have a logical interpretant; so that it cannot be the *ultimate* logical interpretant of the concept. It can be proved that the only mental effect that can be so produced and that is not a sign but is of a general application is a *habit-change;* meaning a modification of a person's tendencies toward action, resulting from previous experiences or from previous exertions of his will or acts, or from a complexus of both kinds of cause (CP 5.476, 1907, italics of the author).

Paragraph 491 of the same article even suggests that Peirce, in bringing together the ideas about pragmatism and semiotics, appreciated the habit-change more than the finding of final truth.

> The concept which is a logical interpretant is only imperfectly so. It somewhat partakes of the nature of a verbal definition, and is as inferior to the habit, and much in the same way, as a verbal definition is inferior to the real definition. The deliberately formed, self-analyzing habit—self-analyzing because formed by the aid of analysis of the exercises that nourished it—is the living definition, the veritable and final logical interpretant (CP 5.491, 1907).

Thirdness: Self-reflections and habit change

For me, the ability to reflect on one's self is at the very center of what differentiates humankind from animals. This characteristic of mankind shows itself in such a simple and beautiful manner in Thirdness. It is our capacity to think about what is happening to us in our collisions with the world and with our habitual interpretation of it that makes us human. The breadth of our developed inner world of significance (i.e. habits of thought) allows us a constant dialog with ourselves. We are permanently looking after the part of us which is forced to take and accept patiently what the world offers us or sometimes imposes upon us. This touching of our own experience is naturally only perceptible when there is a distinction in the momentous perception of the world and our own former expectation of it[19].

As I explained in my commentary on iconicity, we have to concede mankind an innate capacity to become aware of similarities, i.e. re-cognize recurring feelings and sensations. Similarly, Peirce states, speaking of the perceptive judgment, that there is something in the first moment of perception that we cannot control consciously.

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19   Kappner also puts considerable emphasis on this distance between experience and inner dialog. Cf. for example the same 2004, p. 236, 376ff.

> Where then in the process of cognition does the possibility of controlling it begin? Certainly not before the *percept* is formed. Even after the percept is formed there is an operation which seems to me to be quite uncontrollable. It is that of judging what it is that the person perceives (CP 5.115, 1903, italics of the author).

During the constant growing of our fund of habits, the possibility to prepare and control our perception increases enormously, opening the door to misunderstanding, errors, but also to creativity. It is here, in the expanding realm of interpreted signs, where intentionality and Thirdness come into being.

We have to be aware that the possibility of being one's own trainer, as Short puts it, implies that we are able to put a distance between our immediate emotional effect and reaction, and our deeds. This is—in part—a consequence of the comprehensive fund of signs and habits. In the extended phase of man's childhood, during which he is entirely dependent on his parents, he has the chance to acquire this immense treasure—treasure which allows him to play with signs, to deceive and lie, to choose and pick out the meaning that best fits his intentions; treasure which allows irony, poetry and art and which allows mankind to adapt his language to its purposes, even to the purpose of simply taking pleasure in signs.[20]

While the child is learning, taking in the significance of what it hears in its surroundings, from parents, brothers and sisters, it dreams and plays "to be adult." Acquiring of habits and signs is oriented toward purposes and the future. It is teleological.[21] Colapietro gives a very vivid description of Thirdness, of the fluidity with which we rely on acquired habits of thoughts.

> The fluidity experienced as the result of a finely nuanced and deftly flexible attunement, such as our embodied agency affords us in countless circumstances, could be called the firstness of thirdness. It is the qualitative aspect of an effective habit and, as such, is like the felt qualitative integrity of a melody in which one phrase melts into another (the same 1995, p. 493).

Peirce and Freud: Unconscious

I claim to have shown that both authors consider the process of thinking in a similar manner. Peircean First and the Freudian Unconscious have in common that both authors seem to base thinking primordially in a vaguely definable state of mind. This underlying vague state of mind is always present but never really attainable for awareness. For the category of Secondness, I tried to show the importance of perception and affect which can be considered as an emotional answer to the shock of encountering reality. Speaking of the Third, we pointed to the immense enrichment through conventional signs (especially language) that provides the possibility of creativity, sociability, irony and deception. We brought out the inward activity of the mind. I did not already point this out, but the authors also coincide perfectly in defining thinking as "behaviour in rehearsal" (Freud) or "experiments in the imagination" (Peirce, cf. COLAPIETRO, 1989, p. 102).

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20   Cf. SHORT, 2007, pp. 148–310.

21   Cf. SHORT, 2007, pp. 91–150.

The really interesting point meanwhile is the question whether or not Peirce would have admitted an unconscious part of the mind, which in the Freudian sense, was the product of the mechanisms of defense, i.e. mechanisms that hinder the growth of knowledge[22]. This was one of the subjects of Colapietro's investigation of 1989. We already mentioned that in the quality—or possibly in the definition—of Firstness, there is something that cannot coincide with consciousness. However, as we already stated and as Colapietro also points out: not everything that is unconscious forms part of the unconscious in the Freudian sense. "All activities of the mind are forms of semiosis; yet not all of these activities are visible to the subject in whom they are taking place" (*ibid*., p. 40).

And he continues:

> It might be objected however, […] that Peirce was conscious of the preconscious or non-conscious regions of human subjectivity, but not a consciousness of the unconscious in the strict sense (namely, as a region of repression). In response to such an objection, one need only to quote the following text: 'Men many times fancy that they act from reason when, in point of fact, which unconscious instinct invents to satisfy the teasing 'whys' of the ego. The extent of this self-delusion is such as to render philosophical rationalism a farce' (CP 1.631, [1898]) (*ibid*.).

The quotation does not allow any doubts; Peirce thought of something similar to the Freudian Unconscious. Still it may be put in question if Peirce's description coincides with his own theory of signs. Is there any space for this—let's call it—*negative force* that impedes the growth of significance? I think, although Peirce did not spend much time thinking about this possibility, theoretically it must be supposed as being within the frame of his semiotics. Since, I mentioned and emphasized the many possibilities that the conventional signs open up, why should there not be the possibility of deceiving one's self?

However there remains the question, how to conceive of this repression or negation. Colapietro in his essay of 2000 speaks of "quasi-final interpretants," whereas De Lauretis prefers the term of "unconscious habits."

It follows from what I said above that I consider it as important to make a clear division between what I called "habitual" and "dynamic" unconscious. This is the reason why the exposition of Colapietro makes more sense for me. It refers to the deceit that is implicit in a mechanism of defense, whereas De Lauretis does not take into account that the great majority of habits are unconscious, but not in a dynamic form (the Freudian term). In the article of 1995, Colapietro gives a wonderful description of the working of this negative force.

> While conscious agency plays only a modest role in the actual determination of present conduct and an even more modest part in the

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22 Although the Bionian "attacks on linking" (1959) point on a special mechanisms of defense, it is appropriate to say that psychoanalysis, generally, is more interested in mechanism that hinder knowledge and associations, whereas in Peircean thought, this subject is not given much consideration.

> formation of our habits, such agency truly does exert an influence
> over, how we are about to act and, beyond this, how we are disposed.
> But such agency is thwarted in its attempts to assist in the often precarious
> processes of evolving 'normal interpretants' (Savan 1987-88, 61-2). The
> more or less law-like ways in which the evolution of such interpretants
> is arrested are, upon my interpretation, the mechanisms of repression,
> the strategies by which the unconscious disrupts and undermines the
> ability of the self to develop more finely attuned, appropriately flexible,
> and effectively nuanced patterns of cognition, affection, and volition
> (COLAPIETRO, 1995, p. 495).

Still, this negative form of linking is not entirely understood yet. For me it is important to pinpoint the negative force exactly in relation to the processes of interpretation that take place. Also the process of unconscious fantasy (in the Kleinian/Freudian sense) should have its place in such a description. The unconscious fantasies are successors of the above-mentioned first hallucinations and as the hallucinations did, so do the fantasies: they refer to the other, and are related to the future. As Colapietro rightly states:

> The imagining of what might be is fantasy in its most rudimentary sense.
> The imagining of what might be in such a way that the image of the
> possible absorbs and controls attention with the same force and authority
> as the percept of the actual is fantasy in its most characteristic form (*ibid*.,
> 2000, pp. 149/150).

As far as the interpretation in the process of perception and thought is concerned, every individual has his preferences in choosing an interpretant that fits his intentions, fears, narcissistic and libidinous needs. As we saw, in the first perception, the formation of the percept is not conscious and consequently not deliberately changeable. Yet how should we then in the analytical process be able to reach these fantasies? I think that an analysis of the analytical process will help to clarify this.

Freud and Peirce: Realists

Much has been said about Peirce's realism. In my exposé on the Second, I tried to show that with the dynamic object, Peirce claimed a realistic position for his semiosis. In the ideal end—an end that Peirce well knew will never be reached—science will know the object as it really is. The final interpretant will then coincide with the dynamic object.

Peirce was well aware of the variety of methods used in the science of his time. According to Short (2007), Peirce's claim was to show that research methods in quantum mechanics, thermodynamics and evolution theory are not mechanical at all and that they do not exclude teleology and final causes.[23] Within this continuity

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23 Cf. SHORT, 2007, pp. 791-151. Unfortunately it exceeds my knowledge to make a judgment about the more scientific parts of Peircean texts. For a similar approach to the variety of methods in sciences cf. HAMPE, 2003; this author however does not relate his statements about variety of methods to the perspective of teleology.

of scientific methods, theories of mind, founded deeply in semiotics, could well find their place. Also, within such a theory, it is possible to describe phenomena of consciousness objectively without denying their subjective quality.

Freud, in an everyday sense of the term, was a realist too. Referring to psychoanalysis meanwhile we have to ask ourselves to what reality we refer, given that the inner reality cannot be seen or even proved. There is certainly an argument whether the epistemology of psychoanalysis can be considered as realistic. There are authors within psychoanalysis who argue against relativism and claim that psychoanalysis is being true to one's self.[24]

On the other side, Arnold Goldberg (2002) justifies the divergence of theoretical schools within American psychoanalysis with a woolly concept of truth that he calls "pragmatistic." He starts with the following statement about psychoanalysis:

> Although many of its adherents study, teach, and claim psychoanalysis to be a monolithic set of ideas and procedures, in truth it is a diverse and heterogeneous bundle of claims and techniques held together by a somewhat vague allegiance to the seminal ideas of Sigmund Freud (*ibid.*, p. 235).

Similarly Owen Renik (1998) postulates for the dyad of analyst and analysand a subjectively discovered "truth" that seems to be resistant to further analysis. Meanwhile Hanly (1999) recommends not to exaggerate the relativism and describes Freud's epistemological position as critical realism (*ibid.*, p. 441).

As I already explained, my intent is to show Freud and Peirce having similar epistemological positions, namely realistic and anti-relativistic. It is therefore quite annoying that the above mentioned authors claim to back up a *pragmatic* concept of truth. Renik denies the reality of an unconscious scheme of life and reduces the claim of psychoanalysis merely to looking for a view of the analysand's life that suits him better: "We were trying to devise a view of Ethan's [the patient's] life, present and past, that worked, i.e. that helped him feel better" (1998, p. 492). Renik holds that therapeutic efficiency ought to be the single criterion. He seems to feel secure with a "pragmatic" concept of truth, which emphasizes in his view, a coherentist, inter-subjective aspect of the assumed truth. All the same, he declares psychoanalysis to be scientific because psychoanalysts are testing hypothesis. However, this is a farce unless he does not focus on the possibility of discourse between colleagues and does not pay attention to the question if and how the group of analysts is able to discuss this way of finding the truth.

Meanwhile Peirce, the founder of pragmatism, emphasized the sociality of knowledge. He states that truth in science is to be approached within the community of scientists. As I already mentioned, he was convinced of the existence of reality and objected to epistemological skepticism and nihilism. The fact that it is scientists who define today's truth does not contradict the assumption of reality independent of our ideas of it, because today's truth can never be comprehensive. Only *in the long run,* do scientists approach reality, which means what already existed before and independent of them.

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24   Cf. VER EECKE, 2000; BELL, 1999.

The analytic process

In my argumentation, I tried to unite truth-theories of correspondence on the one hand, with a theory of coherence on the other. Another author who opposes relativism and insists on psychoanalysis' realism is Michael Hampe. He concludes with a special kind of theory of coherence:

> Such a conception [he refers to his above statement, that it is fundamental contradictions that brings about diseases, V.S.] is, without doubt, in accordance with the philosophical conception of realism with respect to truth and deception, rationality and contradiction: it presupposes that there are real facts, not only fictions and construction of the psychic state of a person, and that contradictions and coherences are facts of the very state of that person's psychological situation.
>
> […] But it seems evident to me that classical psychoanalysis starts out, at least, from a strong realist conception of truth and a coherence theory of rationality, as far as Freud's own writings are considered. The fact that a coherence theory of truth is not applicable to the whole range of sciences does not imply that we have to abandon a coherentist theory of rationality in every respect. […]. It is self-evident that there is a striving for coherence and that whenever it is unsuccessful, this produces pain and suffering. (*ibid.*, 2003, p. 60).

As the title of Hampe's paper suggests, the author is concerned with a common ground for scientific work in view of the fact that methods of science vary widely. I share his opinion that in the end rationality is indivisible.[25] However his statement, that coherence of the patient's thoughts is the aim of psychoanalysis could be misleading. I agree that truthfulness (his term) is one of the conditions of analysis and its aim. I would say however, that the rationale of psychoanalysis is to change the patient's approach to his own irrational parts, to make it gentler, more caring and more tolerant.

I would like to illustrate this with a meticulous analysis of the analytical process. My intent is to show how to adopt a theory of correspondence within the mechanisms of analysis. What is the reality that psychoanalysts are looking for? It is certainly not—as Freud used to call it—the *material reality* of the patient's childhood memory. Although Freud in his early case histories, i.e. with the Wolf Man, seemed to be obsessed with the idea to reconstruct the true events of the patient's past, in the 1937 "constructions in analysis" he admits the impossibility of an exact reconstruction of the past. The aim of psychoanalysis now is what he designates as the *historical truth*. It is the past events *and* its effects on the psyche of the patient that is to be understood. His theme in this passage of the text is a special form of hallucination and he speaks of accepting the "kernel of truth" in it, which means: to recognize the traumatic effects of the past that express themselves in the present. His endeavor is to find a common ground for further psychoanalytic work with the patient, accepting this "kernel of truth." He wants to render the

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25 Cf. with Kasser's statement referring Peirce's anti-psychologism. He states that following Peirce, anti-psychologism means that the law of logic shall not be derived from psychology. In this sense, Freud also could be taken as an anti-psychologist.

distortions of reality back to the spot in the past, where they belong (summary of 1992, Ergänzungsband, 403ff).

It seems quite interesting to me how this glimpse into Freudian thought reveals two inherent concepts of reality. In Peircean semiotics this *historical truth* could be equalized to the immediate object, being the important point in this aspect—as I explained above—the affective reality (in a certain moment in the past), whereas the outer reality would be the dynamic object. Contrarily, we could argue that analyst and analysand are trying to understand the past, the affective reality (Freud's historical reality) and therefore this could be taken as the dynamic object or even the final interpretant of this moment of the process.

Speaking of hallucinations: we already mentioned them as the source of thought, and simultaneously as evidence of the other (the mother), included in the very first cry and symbolization of the newborn.

This also means that our thought habits, i.e. our symbolizations, are dependent on the possibility to share them with others. Being aware of the thought of others also contributes to our continuous changing of habits, i.e. learning. As Colapietro states, for the scientist, as well as for everybody, our life is a constant series of being corrected, correcting ourselves and learning:

> The distinction between the immediate and dynamic object is, thus, intended to secure the status of a standard by which our assertions and, more generally, our representations might be judged. If our assertions and representations are self-enclosed—if the very possibility of exposure to corrective influences is ruled out—then processes of self-correction are also ruled out. Self-correction requires corrective others; it demands the bold yet humble willingness to expose oneself to the other as other. Though scientific inquiry is a self-consciously fallible process, all semiosic processes are— no matter how blindly groping, no matter how unconsciously executed— ones in which something analogous to the distinction between immediate and dynamic object can be discerned. Though scientific investigation characteristically involves deliberate experimentation [26], human semiosis always involves unwitting trials and unconscious processes: the scientist is the self-conscious, practical fallibilist, whereas human agents are generally unwitting, and unconsciously fallibilists. This is the reason they are *im*practical fallibilists! Their errors are too costly: time, energy, and their very selves are spent too freely for so little. Their negotiations with their inner drives and outer circumstances extract from them a payment with more courageous, attentive, sustained agents might avoid. (COLAPIETRO, 2000, p. 141, italics of the author).

As far as I interpret this quote, the author compares three situations: everyday life, science and psychic disturbances. Comparing everyday life and science, he states that we make our experiences and are compelled to adapt our representations to them, or to the objections of others. However, this fallibilist procedure is more effective in the case of science because the scientists' experiments are deliberate. In contrast to that, in our everyday life, we are very slow.

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26   Atkin (2008) gives a convincing account of how to conceive the process of investigation in Peircean semiotic terms. Cf. the same pp. 66-69.

In the third line meanwhile, he also helps us to understand where the problem of neurotics stems from. He insinuates that there are assertions and representations which are self-enclosed and therefore immune to the corrective influence. Taking this as the starting point, we could characterize psychoanalysis as the attempt to make corrections to these enclosed assertions and representations, if possible at all, and to do so faster than in the normal development.[27]

How is the couple analyst-analysand doing analysis? First there is the frame, the so called setting, the agreement between analysand and analyst about frequency of sessions per week, the arrangement that the patient lies on a couch and should try to express all ideas that pass through his mind.[28] By means of free association, the analysand's inner representations become visible. The task of the analyst then is to give the analysand the opportunity to become aware of his being bound to a very special representation of what happened to him. The analyst mirrors the particular traits of the analysand's speech, or tries to find similarities in the formulations of the patient of which he is unaware. Obviously the activity of the analyst reminds us of the finding of a new hypothesis by a scientist. Occasionally he may already have a certain theory and intentionally tests a hypothesis.[29] Still, when he practices 'suspended attention' as Freud advised, what he tries, is, to find a new hypothesis. The comparison of abduction and analytical interpretation is certainly an interesting subject. Only, this is not proof that the analytical technique can be considered as a scientific procedure, as Matthias Kettner (1998) suggested.[30]

Furthermore, in my view, it is not only the action of the analyst that has this very inclination to abduction. In my view, the fixation of ideas, that the patient suffers from, often (not always) consists of an inhibition of the natural metaphoric thinking. Therefore, a good part of the analyst's task is to stimulate and to encourage the patient's creativity and his courage to become aware of his own—repressed, inhibited—ideas.

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27 Psychoanalysts may excuse the much abbreviated form in which I refer to their job. Certainly for a more accurate exposition, a list of symptoms and their characterization in Peircean terms would be indispensable.

28 CODIGNOLA, 1986 gives an impressive analysis of the epistemological aspects of the frame in psychoanalysis.

29 McKaughan (2007, pp. 466–458) mentions possible meanings of abduction: 1) The discovering of a new hypothesis, and 2) the judgment about the relative pursuit-worthiness of a new hypothesis. According to this distinction, the above mentioned mechanism could even count as abductive in the second sense.

30 Kettner tries to give the psychoanalyst's work of interpretation a methodologically reliable fundament, because this work also consists in finding hypotheses which are liable to rational critique and control. He formulates a couple of interesting clarifications on the term of abduction. All the same, in my view, this does not make sure that psychoanalysis has to be seen as science. For a further comparison of abductive thought and psychoanalytic interpretation cf. also VASALLI, 2001, who unfortunately does not rely on Peirce. He demonstrates that the invention of psychoanalysis relies on the Greek concept of *techne* and that Freud had rehabilitated 'guessing' (erraten) as a method to find truth. For the Peircean article with the title "Guessing" cf. SORENSEN *et al*, 2007. I agree with the perspective of the authors who claim that in the Peircean picture of cognition, there is a strong abductive (i.e. metaphoric) trait.

The analyst's attitude nevertheless is not solely "motherly" in the sense of encouraging and animating the patient. As mentioned above, a great part of perception is unconscious and we therefore have to count with considerable stability on these unconscious habits of looking at reality. The task of the analyst is to incite change. In order to do that, he has to turn to the representations that have their foundations in a very subjective "immediate object" of the past and which have to be activated again. The effective moments for change are affective breakthroughs, the moments where the representations of the client smash to pieces (cf. the definition of the affect above) and allow the abductive activity of the patient to go on. Analysts therefore have to fulfill two functions. They help to break down the old representations, but must simultaneously ascertain that the patient feels secure and has confidence in the analyst and analysis, so that a corrective experience can take place and new symbolizations can emerge.

I stressed the affect as agent of change. However where then, is the Freudian drive?[31] What has this affective moment to do with the iconic, unconscious "ground" of the First? Although this is just an incipient idea of mine—maybe not even properly thought through—I would like to point out the common ground in the concept of purpose and drive. I really liked Short's (2007) exposition of teleology and purpose in the Peircean system of thoughts. These subjects are so contrary to the mainstream, and although being aware of them in the work of Peirce, nobody dared before to express them clearly.

My picture of the intrinsic analytical moments would then look like this. The patient has his emotional moment. His usual representations fade away and in an immediate synthetic process, he creates a new image of—let's say—the inner image of his mother. In the shock of the emotional moment, something shifts out of place and he catches a glimpse of the richness of images that before were buried in what he normally has taken for granted (i.e. instances of First). This new image meanwhile is fostered through the presence of the analyst and the patient's emotional relationship to him. There is an aspect of hope and future in the activity of the two. The energy that expresses the self in this split second creation is the purpose and/or drive.

Let me turn now to the last similarity of the two authors, Peirce and Freud. Both considered the most important characteristic of humankind as the capacity to learn. They formed their inner picture of goodness of mankind in accordance with the picture of the truthful scientist. So Peirce stated that: "'scientific' intelligence […] is] an intelligence capable of learning by experience" (CP 2.227, 1897).

Freud, as far as I know, did not state this central idea of Peirce's explicitly. Yet still, one of Freud's followers put as the title of one of his most famous books "learning from experience," an expression that had the quality to become a saying (BION, 1962).

Regarding the Peircean formulae of the self, I wondered how the incipient self, confronted with its errors and its smallness, can find the strength to learn and grow. Colapietro shows that in the development of the child, as Peirce conceived it, there are two essential aspects: the child's own body and his innate power to

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31 The Freudian *Trieb* was translated by James Strachey, the translator of the Standard Edition, as 'instinct.' There was much discussion about this issue; I will use here the term 'drive.'

converse.[32] These two points formulated in general terms—biological needs and capacities on the one hand, sociability on the other—coincide wonderfully with what Freud called *der Trieb*, the drive.

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32   *Ibid.*, 1989, p. 70-72

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