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The Haunted Animal: Peirce's Community of Inquiry and the Formation of the Self

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

Portland, Maine

THE HAUNTED ANIMAL: PEIRCE'S COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

AND THE FORMATION OF THE SELF

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Honors Program Requirements
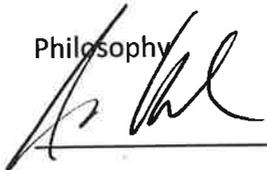

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May 2017

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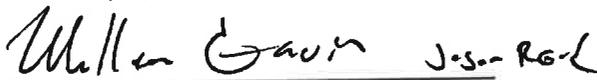
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Abstract

American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce pioneered the concept of a community of
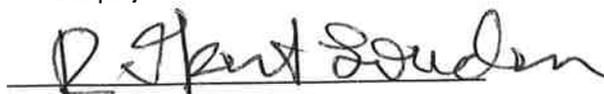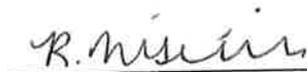
inquiry as a superior method of investigation to the approaches of any one individual.

Within Pierce's philosophy, accounts of developmental subjectivity appear alongside their

connections to community. Peirce grounded the application of the community of inquiry in

the social. Here the application of the community of inquiry extends to the level of the

individual, as a conceptual illustration of thought within the human psyche. Within this

reading, *haunted* emerges through memory as a central condition of the individual. The

term *significant* has here been used to represent the positions, arguments, and ideals

personified in the memory of a person. As such, the following project visualizes Peirce's

individual as a *haunted animal*—a being fashioned over time through the personal

inclusions of influential *significants*. In addition, this reading offers further continuity

within Peirce's system, redefining the formation of the individual though the community of

inquiry. Overall, the haunted animal serves to signify a sentimental foundation of individual

identity and thought as an ongoing synthesis of one's memories of others.

Acknowledgements

Here I wish to give my deepest thanks to all those who have supported and spurred

my intellectual endeavors during my time at the University of Southern Maine. These

acknowledgements point to the very heart of this thesis, such that my thought, personhood,

and academic paths have been so vitally consequential of the support and inspiration gifted

to me by you over these years. Of those who have worked alongside me on this thesis, I

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encouragement of my work, especially my father for all his efforts in this project. All here

have given a part of themselves to me. I sincerely thank you all and take with me

wholeheartedly what has been given into the future.

Note on Citation

In the following discussion several less standard in-text citations have been used. *Semiotic and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby* is cited as LW. *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings* is referenced by EP followed by the volume and page numbers (ex. EP2 56). The citations of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* are formatted as CP followed by the volume and paragraph numbers separated by a period (ex. CP 7.465). Lastly, the online *Oxford English Dictionary* database as been cited as OED. All other citations are MLA standard.

Introduction

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) worked as a logician, mathematician, astronomer, and chemist, but he is perhaps best known as the American pragmatic philosopher who founded semiotics in the modern conception. Much is argued over Peirce's philosophy due to the fragmented state of his works. Peirce did not hold professional academic positions throughout his life. Because of this fact, the greater portion of Peirce's contributions remained in unpublished manuscripts until approximately the 1950s. It was initially thanks to Peirce's contemporaries William James, John Dewey, and Lady Victoria Welby that his work lives on in American philosophy. Limiting the scope in terms of both Pierce's semiotics and philosophical works, which in some circles are argued as being inseparable, the focus here falls on Pierce's philosophical conceptions concerning human subjectivity and consciousness. More specifically, the following discussion explores Peirce's transpersonal notion of the human self as formulated in the sign-ridden context of community.

The community, for Peirce, is something basic, fundamental to his ideas of belief, reality, and subjectivity—something far more elusive and overarching than the colloquial senses of political and educational social groups. To begin, Peirce discusses community as a form, rather than any particular concrete example. In describing community Peirce purposively chose the qualifier *indefinite* to illicit a sense of boundlessness. Without spiraling too far into the abstract, Peirce, at heart, was attempting to place within community a sense of history as well as the urging spur toward futurity. Thus Peirce's

community functions within two dimensions: first, a sense of connectedness among its constituents, something Peirce referred to as continuity or synechism, and second, the ongoing experience of time, emphasizing community as an unfolding process. Now, given such an immaterial conception of community, where does one find the actual individual residing within? Said differently, what is the individual's relationship to community?

In approaching such an inquiry, one must first consider how Peirce's envisioned inquiry itself. Within Peirce's method of inquiry, a conception formed that would outlive his own philosophy, that of the *community of inquiry*. Peirce held severe reservations over the ability and outcome of any one inquirer individually seeking knowledge. He considered personal bias and tenacity to be temptations too strong to be simply ignored as benign. In answer to this, Peirce insisted that inquiry as a process must be rooted socially, as a dialectical exchange of positions, ideally gravitating toward an agreement (Buchler 38). While such agreement Peirce himself acknowledged as a *hope*, without it the pursuits of any inquiry quickly become idle. As such, W. T. Jones in his 1952 work, *Kant and the Nineteenth Century*, has accurately stated that Peirce admittedly concedes to accepting this point of progressive convergence axiomatically, on faith (275).[1]

Circling back now upon the question of the individual within Peirce's philosophy, it is paramount to consider how he conceived of subjectivity and thought. This Peirce chose both to investigate and illustrate through signs. To characterize something as a sign is to claim that it intelligibly stands in for something else, such that neither one can be entirely

---

[1] See also page 21, last paragraph, in Buchler. Here in Peirce's work, "The Fixation of Belief," he remarks on the intimate and sentimental dimension to choosing a method, comparing this choice to choosing a bride.

separated from the other. This classification of signs eventually led Peirce to illustrate consciousness, and thus persons, as signs. In the spirit of this, Peirce contended that "man is the thought" or sign (Buchler 249). Such a claim sought to challenge what Peirce understood as the mind-body dualism of Cartesianism and other Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment philosophies. Peirce argued that a person, understood semiotically, could not be a discrete entity, a closed system, as it were. For Peirce this would make communication, interaction, and learning all impossible. As Vincent Colapietro and others have argued, signs do not simply exist, but rather coexist with and within other signs, signifying for, and to, someone. Peirce referred to this interconnection as the "theatre of consciousness" (EP2 403). People as signs therefore function as entities *building from* and *pointing toward* something. Said differently, their existence as signifiers always take place within larger systems of meaning. Taking this point slightly further, within his discussions of subjectivity, Peirce made the claim that the social circle of a person can be understood semiotically as a "less-compacted self," a communal consciousness as it were. In this sense Peirce's philosophy of signs and selves would seem to take on the character of nesting dolls, every member being a set in itself, enshrouded within some larger superstructure.

Interestingly enough, in order for the individual to be properly parsed out within Peirce's philosophy, it is necessary to reexamine the notion of his community of inquiry. Given Peirce's strong interrelation between the individual and the communal, the community of inquiry as a conceptual framework cannot rest entirely within the context of the social. Addressing this point will serve as the universal thread throughout this thesis. More precisely, the argument will follow that, as a consequence of Peirce's philosophy, the

community of inquiry must function at the level of the individual inquirer—as a structural concept of the mind.

This interpretation of the community of inquiry functions as a means of illustrating a central sentimental aspect of human subjectivity believed to be present within Peirce's philosophy. For the purposes of this project, the scope of such an examination will be restricted to the influence of "persons of significance" within an individual's life, those who have become pivotal to a person's emotional and intellectual growth. Such persons here are termed *significants*. In particular, these significants encapsulate the positions, arguments, and ideals aligned to the memories of individuals. It will be shown that, within this reading of Peircean subjectivity, through the lens of the community of inquiry, one reaches an understanding of the human being as a *haunted animal*. Using haunted in its more general meaning—as "being with" or "visited upon" continually—an individual obtains and carries significants throughout his or her life, accounting for the continuous evolution of individual being. These significants become the psychical members of individuals' virtual community of inquiry, the structure and building of their personal thoughts. In this sense the individual in Peirce's philosophy is understood as a being haunted by thought.

In what follows, Chapters One and Two serve primarily to conceptualize the groundwork of terminology and ideas within Peirce's philosophy. Chapter One examines Peirce's conception of the community of inquiry whereas Chapter Two will discuss his interrelation of the individual to the communal. Building on this foundation, Chapter Three argues for the legitimacy of the community of inquiry as an individual cognitive aspect. Finally, Chapter Four uncovers some of the most significant consequences of reading the

community of inquiry as such. Such consequences will include added structural cohesiveness to Peirce's philosophy. Primarily, however, such a reading of the community of inquiry intends to illustrate a profound communal connectedness between individuals and thought, offering a sentimental argument for the care and reverence of others based on rational grounds.

Chapter One

What is Peirce's Community of Inquiry?

The relationship between Peirce's philosophy and the concept of the community of inquiry is oddly both foundationally explicit and implicitly cryptic. As Philip Cam in 2011 has suggested—and my best efforts have not been able to disprove—the term *community of inquiry* itself does not surface within Peirce's work (106). Yet numerous scholars of varying disciplines have accredited the concept to Peirce, with some exceptional testimonies placing its origins within the works of both Peirce and his contemporary John Dewey. In either case Peirce is quite unanimously seen as a father of this concept. Why? To begin unraveling this, let us first consider what the term has come to mean in our modern context and then see in what ways this seems compatible with Peirce's philosophy. The community of inquiry has been roughly defined as an intersubjective method of investigation, an evaluation and exchange of ideas among individuals invested in inquiry beyond any one personal investment. As John E. Smith wrote in 1983, the "community of investigators purporting to be scientific is defined by the willingness of each individual member to sacrifice what is personal and private to him alone in order to follow the dictates of an interpersonal method that involves free exchange of views and results" (50). Comparably, in 2006 Michael Pardales and Mark Girod described the community of inquiry as "thinking [that] must continually be subject to a community whose standards allow us to correct and revise our ideas in the course of living our lives" (302). Similar behavior can be

found within Pierce's concept of fixing belief, his interpretation of the scientific method. With what follows, this section will explore this behavior as a means to uncover the community of inquiry within Pierce's scientific method. Finally, as a contextual cornerstone to Peirce's scientific method, the community of inquiry will be defended as being a collective of evaluating agents functioning together as an active intermediary against individual fallibility and tenacity.

Within his essay "The Fixation of Belief," Peirce established his argument for the primacy of the scientific method. "The Fixation of Belief," first featured in *Popular Science Monthly* in 1877, was part of the series "Illustrations of the Logic of Science." It comprises a hierarchical approach to criticizing what Peirce believed were the currently "accepted" methods of fixing belief: *tenacity*, *authority*, and *a priori*. Each in order of comparative quality to the next more superior method, Peirce used the entirety of the work in an attempt to place science atop all three as the fourth, most superior, method. Ironically, little is positively illustrated of the *scientific method* within "The Fixation of Belief;" only in the negative sense, in Peirce's criticisms of the other three does one begin to conceptualize Peirce's choice method.

Tenacity Peirce defined as the willful ignorance of all experience and information contrary to a currently held belief. Such a position Peirce acknowledged has its merits as one of conviction and investment. However, as Peirce wrote, "this method of fixing belief [...] will be unable to hold its ground in practice. The social impulse is against it" (12). Such a position Peirce found to be too isolated and set in its ways, having no means of adapting and growing. Within social settings Peirce believed such positions would not survive over

time. Following this, Peirce asserted that any effective method of fixing belief requires a social component, the ability to fix belief in a community (13). Focusing the fixing of belief in the social, Peirce moved his consideration from tenacity to the method of authority.

Peirce expressed the method of authority as the indoctrination of a state's policies and values over its citizens. As Peirce described it, let "an institution be created which shall have for its object to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people" (13). This method, which was explored in further detail in "The Fixation of Belief," Peirce found to be mentally and morally superior to the position of tenacity. He felt the artifacts of past cultures and their social structures attested to this fact. However, Peirce still found fault with the method of authority, pointing out the finite incapacity of any institution to take on an opinion on all topics. Such an imperfection Peirce considered an asset to the movement of thought itself, growth through diversification and conflict. Peirce believed that opinion is fated to influence opinion, and so even "in the most priest-ridden states some individuals will be found who are raised above" the conditions of the state. Said differently, the suppression of thought and position can never be fully suppressed. As long as meaningful thought exists, there will always be challenges to any social decree. Moving now to the method of a priori, Peirce found such a position far more stable in logical fortitude, yet far less effective in the social application.

The a priori method, as Peirce described it, is a method of deduction solely justified on logical grounds, not beholden to reflections of experience. Such a method is far more effective than authority in its logical capacity to reason and conclude, yet Peirce still considered the a priori method a failure overall due to—as he saw it—being intrinsically

divorced from experience. As Peirce wrote, "[systems] of this sort have not usually rested upon any observed facts, at least not in any great degree. They have been chiefly adopted because their fundamental propositions seemed 'agreeable to reason'" (15). Peirce wanted a sense of intellectual progress in the world, and so he needed beliefs to coincide with approximations to objective truths in the world. As such, his understanding of the a priori was that it lacked experiential verification and so could not function as an appropriate method for fixing belief. In another, more colorful excerpt from "The Fixation of Belief" Peirce writes, "it makes of inquiry something similar to the development of taste" (16-17). This, Peirce concluded, was the predominant cause of discord in metaphysics among its differing positions. Such an approach could never, in Peirce's eyes, bring about the collective resolution he was seeking.

Now that Peirce's criticisms of each of the three methods above have been voiced, it is time to conclude what one may take from them in total, namely that the scientific method must be one of attention to doubt, logical examination, experiential verification, and communal debate. Tenacity as a method blocked the evolution of thought whereas authority's method held little means of logical examination. A priori upheld the logical while discounting the experiential as a guide. Overall, Peirce sought in the scientific method something that both brought logic's lens of examination and experience's testimony of error and correlation together while hoping to offer an open dialogue of constructive criticism toward more unified verifiable positions. Here the communal aspect is paramount as the dialogical aspect ideally functions as a countermeasure to the seductive power of individual tenacity. But to examine Peirce's choice method using the method itself asks the inquirer to look into the inspiration, the genesis, of such a position. Thus, as Michael

Pardales and Mark Girod adequately point out in their 2006 paper "Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future," in order to better understand Peirce's notion of inquiry, one must consider Peirce's relationship to Cartesianism.

Much of Peirce's philosophy developed as a reaction against Cartesianism, including the pivotal aspect of the community of inquiry within the scientific method. In his 1868 paper "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Peirce began by outlining his notion of Descartes's philosophy. In the paper's introduction Peirce described Cartesianism by what he saw as its positions toward earlier philosophical approaches.

> 1. It teaches that philosophy must begin with universal doubt; whereas scholasticism had never questioned fundamentals.
>
> 2. It teaches that the ultimate test of certainty is to be found in the individual consciousness; whereas scholasticism had rested on the testimony of sages and of the Catholic Church.
>
> 3. The multiform argumentation of the Middle Ages is replaced by a single thread of inference depending often upon inconspicuous premises.
>
> 4. Scholasticism had its mysteries of faith, but undertook to explain all created things. But there are many facts which Cartesianism not only does not explain, but renders absolutely inexplicable, unless to say that" God makes them so" is to be regarded as an explanation. (228)

While the validity of Peirce's caricature of Descartes's philosophy is arguable, what is important is that such conceptions spurred his philosophical work. Now Peirce's denial of Descartes's position should not be understood as a return to earlier methods. With the exception of thinkers such as Dun Scotus, Peirce equally voiced his opposition of earlier scholasticisms (228). Thus Peirce's criticisms against Descartes were not simply advocating philosophy's return to a previous conception of itself, but that Cartesianism as he saw it was an unfortunate misstep in philosophical progress. As for Peirce's emphasis on the communal, Cartesian individualism offered quite the adversarial spur.

On this point, the community of inquiry within the scientific method can be understood as Peirce's self-corrective measure against Descartes's a priori inquirer. The second and third conceptions of Cartesianism quoted above illustrate Peirce's concern with what he envisioned as the modern singular inquirer. As Peirce wrote, the "same formalism appears in the Cartesian criterion, which amounts to this: 'Whatever I am clearly convinced of, is true'" (229). This echoes Peirce's criticism of the "taste" of the a priori method found in "The Fixation of Belief." As Peirce claimed, within the a priori method the resolution of doubt occurs at the hands of a single inquirer with little or no regard to experiential data and testimony. Again, Peirce's criticism here is challengeable, as I'm sure this contentious point many have addressed. But, again, what is vital here is that Peirce himself valued this interpretation. Peirce fervently believed in the inadequacy of individual investigation, claiming that the finite and perspectival aspects of human life necessarily bind the private

inquirer to error and ignorance.[2] In order to battle such an obstacle, one would need a

system of checks and balances against such a monarchical aspect of inquiry. In other words

Peirce needed, as an aspect of his method, inquirers to engage in meaningfully critical

dialogue about centralized topics under investigation—an active, participatory community

of inquiry.

Such a system would serve as a strong measure against what Peirce saw as

Cartesianism's individualistic verification. In advocacy of this point Peirce wrote,

"[p]hilosophy ought to imitate the successful sciences in its methods, so far as to proceed

only from tangible premises which can be subjected to careful scrutiny, and to trust rather

to the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusiveness of any one" (229).

This notion of inquiry directly opposes Descartes's approach. As seen in *Discourse and*

Method, Descartes writes, "one sees that buildings undertaken and completed by a single

architect are commonly more beautiful and better ordered than those that several

architects have tried to patch up" (7). As understood here, Cartesianism allows for a single

individual arbiter of knowledge whereas with Peirce's approach there is necessarily a

social element. Regardless of interpretation, it is hard to see the community of inquiry as

being anything but antithetical to Descartes's method. For Peirce, an active community of

inquiry functions as a dialogical means of criticism whereupon any one individual is

exposed to a potentially wider world of experiential testimonies. But it is not only the

individual judgment that Peirce repels against in his conception of Cartesianism, for it is

also the particular flavor of doubt he found present in Descartes's model.

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[2] See "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1868. For a further, more complete, understanding of the relationship between individuals and error please see the following discussion in Chapter Two.

Peirce's approach to inquiry argued against Descartes's conception of complete

doubt, claiming inquiry must necessarily begin from an imperfect state, immersed within

the inquirer's prejudices. Within *Meditation on First Philosophy*, Descartes describes

himself "withdrawing into solitude" in order to reconsider, on logical grounds, the validity

of any and all beliefs held (59-60). This approach Peirce fervently disagreed with. Peirce's

position required that logic must be verified via experiential testimony. As such, certain

beliefs must be at least tentatively accepted in order to engage with any experiment and

judgment. Thus, from this position one cannot possibly begin from a place of complete

doubt. For Peirce there is no primordial state of thought—no Archimedean point—

preexisting experience. Experience and belief must instead precede doubt. Simply put,

before doubt can begin, a person must have something to fall into doubt over. Therefore,

any and all inquirers must begin from a position of possible error, built from their own

personal and cultural biases. As Peirce wrote, we "must begin with all the prejudices which

we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy" (228). Taking this position,

Peirce found the Cartesian maxim of complete doubt to be self-deceptive in its approach, it

being impossible to apply genuinely. In an interview concerning the release of his 2013

book *The Pragmatic Maxim: Essays on Peirce and Pragmatism*, Christopher Hookway noted

that one key difference between the philosophies of Descartes and Peirce is that, with the

former, belief requires reasons whereas, with the latter, doubts requires reasons.[3] For

Peirce the reasons for doubt must be *live* in the sense that they come to the inquirer from

his or her own experience. This implies that uncertainty functions as something that

happens to the inquirer, not something solely of self-imposition. There is another

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[3] See "New Books in Philosophy" among the works cited.

important caveat here. From Peirce's argument doubt cannot exist without the engagement of the inquirer with a community or world. Thus, for Peirce, the community of inquiry is necessary, at a foundational level of inquiry, as a genuine means of manifesting doubt. Yet this does not alone encapsulate the function and impact the community of inquiry holds within Peirce's method.

As a further end, the community of inquiry functions as a means toward Peirce's notion of truth. Concerning his method of science, Peirce, in notes from 1896, attested that the scientific method "does not consist so much in *knowing,* nor even in 'organized knowledge,' as it does in diligent inquiry into truth for truth's sake," based upon "an impulse to penetrate into the reason of things" (Buchler 42). Such a claim places emphasis on the path of inquiry over any definite object or result. Concurrently, Peirce held within this position that *reals* must exist axiomatically—that objects in the world outside of human participatory control necessarily exist[4]. For Peirce, living in a post-Darwinian world, the wedding of these two thoughts required *truth* to be understood as something paradoxically both movable and objective. In "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" Peirce claimed that the reality of any one thing "is what it may finally come to be known to be in the ideal state of complete information" (250). But what and when is this ideal state? Considering Peirce's landmark phrase "Do not block the road to inquiry,"[5] such a state cannot exist as a moment without symbolizing the end of inquiry (54). Instead, in keeping with Peirce's mathematical background, such a state makes sense as an "ideal point," the

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[4] This argument is presented within Peirce's 1877 essay "The Fixation of Belief," published in *Popular Science Monthly*.
[5] See Peirce's manuscripts c. 1899.

expression of a point at infinity, definitively future to all concrete instances in time. Said

differently, such an ideal state is a horizon. Thus, truth in any functional sense, at any

definite time, is by its very nature both paradigmatic and partial. As such, this points

toward the horizon as an ideal to strive toward.[6] Most important, however, is that truth

here understood requires indefinite inquiry, and so by proxy requires an indefinite

inquirer. To this very point in his 1868 paper, Peirce claims, we "individually cannot

reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it,

therefore, for the *community* of philosophers" (229).[7] Therefore, as Peirce saw it, the idea

of inquiry needed to undergo a shift from the individual to the social—from the private and

personal eye to a community of interrelated inquiry. This shift marked the genesis of the

community of inquiry.

As such, the community of inquiry became a force of convergence over inquiry and

thought. Peirce believed that, given sufficient investigation and honesty, beliefs agreed

upon amongst a community would, in the long run, tend toward truth. Within his 1878

Popular Science Monthly publication "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," Peirce wrote,

individuals "may at first obtain different results, but, as each perfects his method and his

processes, the results are found to move steadily together toward a destined centre" (38).

This process of approximation would be indefinite. As such, all situational truths for Peirce

included the designation "approval pending further investigation." This proposed a

problem, however. What guaranteed such a "destined" convergence of testimonies and

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[6] "A Religion of Science" was published in 1893 as part of the 7th volume of the weekly journal *The Open Court.* Within this essay Peirce claimed, "[t]hat which is essential, however, is the scientific spirit, which is determined not to rest satisfied with existing opinions, but to press on to the real truth" (6.428).
[7] While perhaps others may more accurately add to this, as far as I have been able to gather, "*community* of philosophers" is the closest Peirce ever came to using the phrase *community of inquiry*.

opinions? Peirce recognized this issue, which later led to the softening of his claim of convergence from a destined outcome to a *hope*. In a response to Paul Carus, who interpreted his position as one of destiny Peirce wrote,

> We cannot be quite sure that the community will ever settle down to an unalterable conclusion upon any given question. Even if they do so for the most part, we have no reason to think the unanimity will be quite complete, nor can we rationally presume any overwhelming *consensus* of opinion will be reached upon every question. All that we are entitled to assume is in the form of a *hope* that such conclusion may be substantially reached concerning the particular questions with which our inquirers are busied. (CP 6.610)

Peirce needed the community of inquiry, and so needed inquirers. As such, Peirce found it necessary that individuals believe that inquiry was possible. Without this hope, inquiry would become superfluous. Thus in the spirit of his contemporary and lifelong friend William James, Peirce needed to exercise his *will to believe*[8] in the scientific method and its claims of progress. Thus the community of inquiry was an essential aspect of how Peirce conceptualized science as well as truth. In this way Peirce did not claim ideal objectivity in his theory of inquiry, but rather a self-corrective behavior he believed to be superior to other methods of investigation. Given the community of inquiry found within Peirce's philosophy, the question of Peirce's accreditation to the concept still bears investigation.

Given Peirce's lack of academic standing in life, it is very plausible his authorship in

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[8] See more on this point in "Part Two: Conversations" of William J. Gavin's 1992 book *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague*.

the community of inquiry came about through the works of John Dewey. Dewey, who received large academic success over his lifetime, wrote extensively on a variety of subjects. In his 1938 work *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, Dewey spoke of the "self-developing and self-corrective nature of scientific inquiry" (490). This description went on to state that an "inquirer in a given special field appeals to the experiences of the community of his fellow workers for confirmation and correction of his results" (490). Such a description of inquiry mirrors Peirce closely. More importantly, however, is Dewey's acknowledgement of Peirce's influence over this conception. In a footnote connected to the above passage Dewey wrote, "C. S. Peirce is notable among writers on logical theory for his explicit recognition of the necessity of the social factor in the determination of evidence and its probative force" (490). Moving past the initial structure of inquiry, Dewey also went on to accredit Peirce for his notion of truth. Once again footnoted, Dewey wrote, "[the] best definition of *truth* from the logical standpoint which is known to me is that of Peirce" (345). Following this remark Dewey goes on to quote Peirce from his essay "How to Make our Ideas Clear." From this it seems very promising that Dewey's success and influence in the academic world served to embed Peirce's community of inquiry into American history.

Drawing from Peirce's conceptions of science and truth, his community of inquiry functioned as both a means to manifest doubt and allow for belief within a social intersubjective setting. As a repellant to his understanding of Cartesianism, Peirce's community of inquiry acted as self-corrective countermeasure against individual tenacity and error. Considering Peirce's claims surrounding the problems of consensus and the "ideal state of complete information," the community of inquiry needed to have both an abstract nature and concrete influence. The community of inquiry needed, at one level, to

exist as an instance of itself—with actual inquirers pursuing actual projects—while still functioning more broadly as an intellectual outline. To hold to his landmark phrase "Do not block the road to inquiry," the community of inquiry needed to refer to an indefinite community existing beyond any particular members. As with what follows in the coming chapters, the abstract nature of the community of inquiry will be further explored along with Peirce's conception of individual self. As such, both the community of inquiry and the individual become ever more welded together by their relationship to error.

Chapter Two

The Coexistence between the Community and the Individual.

The community of inquiry in Peirce's work is a concept embedded in the social. As such, to place the individual within Peirce's philosophy and community of inquiry, it is necessary to explore the ties between the personal and the wider existence of the social. This relationship, between the individual and the social, is paradoxically symbiotic. For the state of community to function, it must, at its most base level, maintain existing individuals. Yet equally true for Peirce, the community constitutes the individual. This nonlinearity of one hand sketching the other is central to Peirce's conception of human experience.[9] When touching upon questions concerning phenomenology, it is common, due to Descartes's longstanding influence, to begin with the individual working outward. Whether an approach begins in the consideration of human axiomatic faculties or by considering the integral emotive attention of individuals to their living context, both considers the idea of progress to some extent linearly with the individual as their emanating point. Now this behavior is by no means unheard of in Peirce's work, as can be seen in essays such as "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" and "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities."[10] The difference here is that Peirce was actively anti-Cartesian in his philosophy. Not only did Peirce work from the individual outward, but equally labored

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[9] For a visual reference, please see M. C. Escher's 1948 print *Drawing Hands*.

[10] Both works by Peirce were featured in 1868 in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

from the social inward. More importantly, Peirce permeated the long-held metaphysical

firmament between the human mind and the outer world. This, to a large extent, was

captured in Peirce's triadic theory of signs, his semeiotics. To the purpose of this chapter,

Peirce's intersection between the individual and the social will be explored in order to

defend the position that, within this semeiotic landscape, the individual and the community

are indeed inseparable.

 To begin, for Peirce, individual self-consciousness and identity develop alongside

one another in reference to a social landscape. For Peirce human beings are not born with

self-consciousness, a sense of private self, but rather develop it within experience.

Beginning from a state of consciousness, i.e. for Peirce a state of sensory feeling, a child is

introduced to life preliminarily without a sense of disconnection between his or her body

and the world. At this point there is little or no sense of the *outwardness* of the world, for

there is little or no sense of things apart from the child. Everything of experience orbits

about what Peirce referred to as the "central body" of the child. Peirce formed this position

within his 1868 article "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," featured

in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. In particular Peirce built this claim in response to

the question of whether or not self-consciousness is intuitive to human beings.[11] Here

Peirce began by stating that, with a young child, only "what it touches has any actual and

present feeling; only what it faces has any actual color; only what is on its tongue has any

actual taste" (EP1 19). For Peirce the child is, quite literally, the center of its universe. As is

widely accepted, Peirce argued that language and mannerisms develop in the child through

the close observation of others. Via the mimicking of others' speech and gestures, a child

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[11] See Question 2 in Peirce's "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man."

begins to develop an ongoing sense of identity through performance (19). Yet even this

process to some extent requires a self that is knowingly differentiated from others. In effect

what Peirce decided upon, as the cornerstone of self-realization, was the notion of error.

As Peirce wrote, "*error* appears, and it can be explained only by supposing a *self* which is

fallible" (20). As Peirce saw it, until error is experienced, there is no delineation for a child

between his or her views and understandings and those of the world. At this point the child

has an illusionary sense of objectivity. *Its* ideas are *the* ideas. It is not until the child is met

with surprise that he or she begins to comprehend a sense of personal, or private,

conception. Peirce illustrated this by writing, a "child hears it said that the stove is hot. But

it is not, he says; and, indeed, that central body is not touching it, and only what that

touches is hot or cold. But he touches it, and finds the testimony confirmed in a striking

way" (20). This surprise is the manifestation of error over the child, and with it comes the

beginning conception of a private self that embodies that mistake. Vincent Colapietro of

Penn State University summarized this phenomenon quite well in his 1989 book *Peirce's*

Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective of Subjectivity. Here Colapietro wrote, "the

eventual discovery of privacy is, in effect, a simultaneous discovery of error" (73). Here

"privacy" is understood along the lines of self-consciousness, the recognition of one's

internal counsel and self. Thus, for Peirce, the privacy of the self is not something innate to

the human mind, but rather is something that comes into being in the stream of experience.

Similar to how the community of inquiry in Chapter One has been shown to facilitate error

and thought among its inquirers, the exteriority of community and the world is necessary

for the development of individual self-consciousness.

Yet more than simply offering a catalyst for the realization of the self, Peirce made the stronger claim that community functions as the very constituent of reality for the individual. In "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," Peirce wrote, "what do we mean by the real? It is a conception which we must first have had when we discovered that there was an unreal, an illusion; that is, when we first corrected ourselves" (Buchler 247). This passage is interesting because, while it does not tie reality to community explicitly, it does so tangentially. In this passage Peirce claims that, for a human being, the origin of the conception of reality surfaces alongside the realization of error. But as discussed previously, community facilitates the means for experiencing one's error. Therefore, for Peirce, both community and reality are irrevocably intertwined. Peirce goes on to state more directly that,

> The real, then, is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY, without definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge. (247)

Community here is general, abstract. There is no particular social group in question, but rather community at large. This conception therefore extends beyond any particular members. This is once again reminiscent of Peirce's language surrounding truth, as something extending from the obscured past to the distant state of "complete information" (250). Community here is ideal. Without delving into the existential aspects surrounding the living relationships amongst its constituents, at its base level community is here

conceptualized as the concentration and intersection of testimony. It is a dialogical

symphony turning over and back again, evolving and digressing among its members.

Reality for Peirce is fostered by the dialogical and experimental examinations of testimony.

It is brought on through error and correction. Realities for Peirce are thus, ideally, socially

accepted beliefs established indefinitely by genuine inquiry. Now given that both

community and the community of inquiry have surfaced as terms within Peirce's

philosophy, it is important to draw briefly a distinction between the two. Most simply put,

this distinction lies in the dual nature of how science is perceived. On one hand, people

perceive science as an ever-growing body of "facts" whereas, on the other hand, science is

understood as a method. The same holds true between the community and the community

of inquiry. While community is a moving body of history and belief, the community of

inquiry is the method wherein such beliefs are subject to challenge and revision. In this

way, for Peirce the community of inquiry continually constitutes and destabilizes the

community. Moving forward, Peirce further entwines the individual with the social by

conceptualizing each within his theory of signs. However, before such a relationship can be

examined, a momentary aside is needed in order briefly to sketch out Peirce's concept of

signs.

   In simplest terms, a sign for Peirce is a representative of something. It is a stand-in

for some object directed toward someone. In his 1897 manuscripts Peirce wrote, a "sign, or

representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or

capacity" (99). For Peirce, this relationship was irreducibly triadic: *sign*, *object*, and

interpretant. By interpretant Peirce meant an additional sign, one generated by the original

sign in the mind of an interpreter (99). As examples of this, an individual's determinations

of a situation, object, or question are all instances of interpretants. Furthermore, a sign's

existence rests on its ability to reference, to signify. Thus, its very being is dependent on a

larger structure of reference to function. Here surfaces the exponential behavior to Peirce's

signs—as they always exist interior to some semiotic superstructure, and where every sign

produces another sign ad infinitum. Now that the broad strokes of Peirce's signs have been

outlined—and very broad these stokes are—it is time to fold this back into the discussion

at hand.

The individual appears specifically as a sign within Peirce's philosophy. Amongst the

writings of Peirce, one of the more prominent works concerning the connection between

persons and signs is his essay "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities." Within this work

Peirce is notable for stating,

> It is that the word or sign which man uses is the man himself. For, as the fact
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> that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a
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> train of thought, proves that man is a sign […]. That is to say, the man and the
>
> external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words homo and
>
> man are identical. Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is
>
> the thought. (Buchler 249)

Here Peirce equated the presentation of human beings with the referential behavior of

signs. Communication, ideas, inference, and deduction all had their roots in sign process for

Peirce. The presentation of one's self at any given juncture is a function of previous signs.

Therefore, as a sign, a person is something which both *comes-from* and *points-toward* its

landscape of meaning. In this way Peirce embeds the human being in context and in time. A

person here constitutes a moving phenomenon, an evolving entity absorbing and expelling

information and meaning. Among other means, this is how Peirce effectively broke from

Cartesianism. In *Meditation on First Philosophy*, Descartes speaks of two distinct

substances, the extended material and the indivisible soul, such that neither one is

comparable to the other (76).[12] In opposition to this dualism, Peirce's semiotic permeated

the barrier between the inner self and the outer world. As such, the demarcations between

the individual and community became akin to an object's imprint pressing through a sheet.

There is clear shape and form, but equally so a firm connectedness as the imprint is found

through and upon the fabric.

Going further, Peirce encapsulated community under the classification of signs.

Featured in *The Monist*, within his 1905 publication "What Pragmatism Is," Peirce wrote,

"man's circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a

sort of loosely compacted person, in some respects of higher rank than the person of an

individual organism" (258). In one respect this passage implies an individual's identity

exceeds beyond the singular biological organism. Here the biological organism is as much a

text as its surroundings, and such interplay between the two can lead to an understanding

of personal presence as a relational locus of meaning about the body. Peter Skagestad

discusses this aspect of consciousness in Peirce in his paper, "Peirce's Semiotic Model of

Mind," found in the 2004 *Cambridge Companion to Peirce*. Skagestad refers to a passage

found in Peirce's 1902 manuscript *Minute Logic*, wherein Peirce somewhat sarcastically

remarks on the locality of a person's faculty of discussion, residing equally both in the brain

and an inkstand (CP 7.366). Setting aside the sarcasm, Skagestad points out that here

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[12] For more on Descartes's discussion on this point, see Meditation Six (pgs. 93-105).

Peirce is making an interesting point as to the locality of thought and the relationship of the mind to the brain. Skagestad writes,

> Similarly, the 'localization' of the mind in the inkstand or the brain is not localization, but something which has the efficiency of localization, in the precise sense that this is where you look for the mind. In Peirce's view you do not find the mind inside the brain, any more than you find electricity inside copper wires. (249)

This idea challenges the long held notion of thoughts and mind residing within the body. Instead the person is enshrouded in thought,[13] as the mind becomes something attached to the body, extending around and about it—a particular locality of sign process and meaning. However, because Peirce reads persons as signs, the earlier excerpt additionally infers that particular communities share semiotic likeness with persons—that communities function as signs as well. If a person be a sign, and one's community be understood as an "individual's circle of society," then transitively a community can be interpreted as a sign. So at least when brought into effective practice, instances of community function semiotically. This makes sense as communities have been shown to develop identities and recognizable behaviors. As such, Peirce's philosophy characterizes communities and persons as semiotically comparable. Even more interesting, Peirce envisions thought in very much the same fashion.

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[13] In a footnote found in his essay "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," Peirce wrote, "just as we say that a body is in motion, and not that motion is in a body we ought to say that we are in thought, and not that thoughts are in us" (Buchler 236).

Moving further inward from the community toward the individual, Peirce illustrates reasoning as an internal dialogue between persons and their future selves. At this point both the community and the individual have been classified as signs. Taking these two claims in concert leads to the conclusion that signs are interior and exterior to other signs. At a very primitive level of understanding of Peirce's signs, the image of nesting dolls begins to develop. A person is a sign interior to the sign that is the person's community, which perhaps is also interior to other larger communities or social structures. Without extending this idea too far, consider the reversal inward. A person is a sign encapsulating thoughts that are signs. For Peirce this is very much the case. Returning to "What Pragmatism Is," Peirce wrote,

> [A] person is not absolutely an individual. His thoughts are what he is 'saying to himself,' that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time. When one reasons, it is that critical self that one is trying to persuade; and all thought whatsoever is a sign, and is mostly of the nature of language. (Buchler 258)

Acknowledging the excessive intricacies of signs within cognition, consider now simply what Peirce refers to above as the "critical self." For Peirce, one is never quite alone in the strict sense. The very act of consideration toward an answer or decision is a conversation with one's self. But this "critical self" is quasi-future to the thinking agent. It has a potential existence, pointing toward the future instillation of the person. Peirce wrote, "thought is what it is, only by virtue of its addressing a future thought which is in its value as thought identical with it, though more developed" (250). Imagine a flipbook with the first page

bearing the resemblance of a person. Now imagine that, as the page begins to turn, the figure begins drawing itself, with slight variation, onto the following page. Let this process repeat again and again, from page to page. In between each page there is an interval of conversation between the present drawing the following one coming into being. Given enough pages and a sufficient frequency of turns, an onlooker will experience the drawn instances as a continuous person in motion, alive. The above passage draws the dialogic aspect of community inward into the internal privacy of the singular person.

In summation, Peirce's community and individual coexist symbiotically. The community is the backdrop of the individual's reality just as the individual has a hand in shaping that reality. The defining lines about persons are both being blurred into, and pulled outward from, the testimonies and actions culminating within the community. Such an understanding of the personal and the social can give fresh eyes to Peirce's concluding remarks to "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities":

> The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man,
>
> ... proud man,
>
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
>
> His glassy essence.[14] (250)

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[14] Beginning at "proud man," the last three lines of this excerpt Peirce borrows from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1603-1604).

In response to such passages as above, critics such as Richard Bernstein have voiced the criticism that "There is serious incoherence in what Peirce says about the self [...][for] 'where' and 'what' is the 'I' that controls and adopts ultimate ideals?" (198). Those adhering to this criticism understand Peirce to be negating the individual self within the streams of semiotics. But what is not fully appreciated in this criticism is Peirce's use of the concept of error and negation. Peirce does not negate the self through semiotic process. Remember, for Peirce, error is the force that gives a sense of self to the individual. As such, the negation spoken of above conveys Peirce's warning in service of the personal. Such a warning positively speaks to the consequences of attempting to isolate people away from their context. What *expression* does any individual have without a world, or others, to *express too*? Furthermore, Peirce claimed that "determination is by negation," that, in order to recognize something it must be identifiably different in some way or fashion from its surroundings (240). Objects appear distinct from one another in what aspects each has negated from the other. Yet it is necessary that similarity also remain. The negating force of distinction only operates effectively in opposition to similarity. Here both the conjunctive and disjunctive are at play. Thus, both the individual and the community must rely on one another for existence. Just as Peirce states that a "rainbow is at once a manifestation both of the sun and of the rain," severing a person from others effectively negates the individual's meaning away. Taken in this way, Peirce argues against any conception of the individual self akin to an insulated Cartesian substance. More on this point will be discussed within Chapter Four concerning Peirce's concept of freedom and agency though self-control. In the following chapter, the interwoven existence of the individual and community will lay the foundation for an extended reading of both the community of inquiry and the inquirer.

Chapter Three

The Emergence of the Haunted Animal:

Bringing the Community of Inquiry Inward toward a Virtual Conception

As discussed, the community of inquiry was paramount to Peirce's method of fixing

belief. It ideally functioned as a means of manifesting both doubt and intersubjective

agreement within social settings. Peirce's position further relied on the notion of

community as the basic constituent of reality. Thus, the community as a whole for Peirce

was something abstract—equally past, present, and tentatively future. This social

foundationalism extended beyond Peirce's method of inquiry, however, to his conception of

the individual self. In this way a person constituted a process of becoming through time.

Furthermore, Peirce equated persons to instances of community semiotically, each

functioning as signs. As discussed in the previous chapter, the individual is realized in the

dialectical mire of community while the testimony of each person conversely acts to

support and reconstruct this social structure. One hand draws the other, as both the

community and individual coexist symbiotically. Given this relationship between the

personal and social, there seems a discrepancy in the scope and role of the community of

inquiry. Peirce exclusively embedded the concept of the community of inquiry in the social,

yet he also fervently argued for the inseparability between the social and the individual. As

such, it would follow that the community of inquiry, as a structural concept, cannot exist

merely at the social level. Instead, it must also thread back into the individual as a structural concept within human experience and thought. Extending the community of inquiry inward upon the individual mind affords a closer look at the influence of others within an individual's thought. Such a conception revisions the human being into what I have here termed a *haunted animal*—a being visited upon in thought by its own virtual community of inquiry.

As a preliminary, it is important to note that the qualifier *haunted* here used in no way intends to infer any concept beyond the natural or scientific. This is not a discussion of specters from beyond the grave. Rather, in this reading of Peirce's philosophy, *haunted* is used to connote how thought weighs upon the subject. To understand better the placement and use of *haunted*, it is useful to consider briefly its history. *Haunt* has a dual nature of functioning both as a verb and a noun. As to which form precedes the other, this remains debatable. What is agreed upon is that *haunt* derives from the 12th century French *hante* (OED). Considering its conception as a verb, *hante* refers to a reoccurring visitation or habitual practice. Referring to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one finds among the whole the following definitions of haunt:

1. To practice habitually, familiarly, or frequently.

2. To use or employ habitually or frequently; *t*o use, accustom, or exercise *oneself*.

3. To resort to frequently or habitually; to frequent or be much about (a place).

4. To frequent the company of (a person), to associate with habitually

5. Of unseen or immaterial visitants. (OED)

Definitions 1-4 share the commonality of both habit and frequency. Whether it is a person

or place visited upon, or another habitual practice entirely, these four understandings of

haunt share this recursive nature. The 5th description, however, is of particular interest.

There are two further interpretations of this description by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

One interpretation connects *haunt* to the more modern colloquial sense of a supernatural

specter. While this reading is not pertinent to the discussion, the alternative conception is

particularly relevant. This reading understands "unseen or immaterial visitants" along the

lines of memories, feelings, and thoughts such that they "present themselves as recurrent

influences or impressions" (OED). Within the context of this conversation—that of the

conception and influence of the community of inquiry—this is how *haunted* should be

understood. As with what follows, the encapsulation of recurring memory and thought are

integral to bringing the community of inquiry inward upon the individual mind. To bring

about this encapsulation, however, a close look at Peirce's notion of *interpretants* is

necessary.

All memory, for Peirce, functions through interpretants. As discussed briefly in

Chapter Two, in its broadest surface conception, an interpretant is the sign generated in the

mind of some interpreter interpreting a sign. Said differently, interpretants are the mental

reactions of an individual to signs. Thus, one's understanding of any sign is itself either one

or a collection of multiple interpretant(s), depending on the versatility of the sign and what

in encapsulates. This idea of the interpretant is quite broad in scope, as any experience will

have its corresponding interpretant, or collection of interpretants, in the mind of some

viewer. Said differently, interpretants function to express the process of thought

corresponding to some mind. Yet since thought and reflection occur upon the foundation of

having memory, interpretants constitute the experience of memory. Now why is this so important to mention? Certainly, memory as an existing process is no novel conception today. But it is where memory sits in relation to Peirce's philosophy that is important.

While Peirce rarely used the word, *memory* as a central theme threads back to the foundation of his epistemological pursuits. "The Law of Mind" was featured in *The Monist* in 1892. Within this essay Peirce discusses the problem of conceiving of ideas as discrete units. If one builds on this conception of ideas, Peirce claimed, "an idea once past is gone forever, and any supposed recurrence of it is another idea. These two ideas are not present in the same state of consciousness, and therefore cannot possibly be compared" (Buchler 340). [15] How then can a past idea be present? How is it that we have memory? Peirce attempts an answer to this problem by denying the hypothesis that an idea is a discrete unit. From his perspective the experience of memory renders such a hypothesis false. As such, an idea can neither have sharp distinctive borders, nor be something encapsulated in an instant. Rather it must be permeable and encapsulate some interval of time. From this Peirce gathered that, as a mind passes over an idea, the transition from this idea to another could not be determined clearly at any one point. As Peirce wrote, an idea "cannot be wholly past; it can only be going, infinitesimally past, less past than any assignable past date. We are thus brought to the conclusion that the present is connected with the past by a series of real infinitesimal steps" (341). What Peirce is describing here is a mathematical

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[15] Here it should be noted that Peirce is not referring to the ability to record information in books and other media. He is considering why there should be any connection between one idea and another. An idea lost from memory cannot then be recorded. For Peirce, the very ability to hold an idea in one's mind implies that the thought occupies an interval of time in the mind and thus is both past and present.

continuum, connected insofar as it cannot be partitioned into distinct pieces.[16] This is what W. T. Jones in *Kant and the Nineteenth Century* accurately described as the analytical mirror to William James's "stream of consciousness" (280). With this conception, thought is a continuum of ideas, each being connected as well as continuums in themselves. What is important to note here is that Peirce used the experience of memory as an empirical justification for the existence of this continuum, what he saw as continuity. This continuity, which Peirce later termed synechism, is present throughout Pierce's thought.

Peirce further extended this idea of continuity outside of thought into the world of matter. As another among his 1892 essays published in *The Monist*, within "Man's Glassy Essence," Peirce furthered his claim of continuity as what W. T. Jones describes as a "basic metaphysical category" (281). Here Peirce claimed that "all mind is directly or indirectly connected with all matter, and acts in a more or less regular way; so that all mind more or less partakes of the nature of matter. Hence, it would be a mistake to conceive of the psychical and the physical aspects of matter as two aspects absolutely distinct" (EP1 349). This is not to say that Peirce considered himself a materialist. On this point, in his 1891 *Monist* publication "The Architecture of Theories," Peirce wrote, "[the] materialistic doctrine seems to me quite repugnant to scientific logic as to common sense" (Buchler 322). Peirce felt it absurd to claim that mechanisms can feel. Instead, he postulated matter and mind were related in a sense closer to idealism. As seen in his opening of the "Law of Mind," Peirce confesses that his thought infers "a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind" (339). This continuity of thought and matter leads some to take Peirce as a monist, and in a very real sense he was.

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[16] See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuum.

Rather than consider matter and mind as two distinct substances, Peirce understood them as two opposing attributes defining a continuous band over which all things fall in between. Peirce attested that what is primarily habit-bound, almost completely indeterminate, is what is commonly understood as matter, as the inanimate. In turn, that which is less habit-bound, and so more indeterminate, is what Peirce understood as conscious, as living. As Peirce states in "The Architecture of Theories," the "one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws" (322). In this sense, for Peirce, habits are equally prominent in understanding persons as they are in conceptualizing objects. These ideas of continuity extend within Peirce's conception of science and the community of inquiry. Just as one idea continuously builds from and towards other ideas, inquirers and their inquiries build similarly upon others and the objects connected to them. So not only does synechism hold in thought for Peirce, it extends throughout all matter and in between. Therefore, it is probable that interpretants—understood as building blocks of memory—cannot be demarcated away from matter in any definite sense as for Peirce there is no sense of absolute separation between mind and material objects.

A person's recognition and understanding of another follows under Peirce's process of interpretants, in particular with what Peirce termed as indices. Within his taxonomy of signs, Peirce described an index in several ways. Peirce broadly describes an index as "a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed" (104). Here an index is a sign that exists through the direct influence of its object. What is unique here is that this sign need not bear any visual resemblance, or any arbitrarily chosen connection, to its object. Rather, a sign functions as an index wherein its

object directly forces the relation between the two. Indices are signs in direct consequence of their objects. As an example of this, Peirce uses the illustration of a fired bullet forming a bullet hole as its sign. The hole as sign is understood as such through its forced existence from the bullet. Now one might ask, what if the bullet were removed? Is the hole then not an index? Not necessarily. Even though the bullet might be physically removed, as long as the memory of the bullet remains or even the common understanding of what a bullet hole looks like, the object of the bullet remains in the conception of the hole as a sign. Therefore, to remove the bullet entirely, so as to make the hole not an index, the idea of a bullet corresponding to the hole must itself be removed as a possibility to the interpreter. Further describing the index, Peirce states, "[an index] is in dynamical (including spatial)[17] connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses of memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand" (107). What is important to take from this is again the consequence of the object upon the sign as an index. Furthermore, there is an individualism present in both the index and its object. An index cannot refer to the idea of person in general but can signify a particular individual. In terms of persons and memory, indices are present as signs whether their objects are items distinguished by particular persons or the persons themselves. With the latter form, Peirce referred to these signs as degenerate indices (108). Therefore, as understood here, the memory and recognition of people in one's life fall under the sign classification of interpretants as indices.[18]

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[17] The use of the word "spatial" refers to Peirce's connection between matter and thought, matter being the at occupies space and thought which occupies memory.

[18] Some may make the seeming counterclaim that what I refer to above are in fact not indices, but rather what Peirce termed "dicisigns" or "dicent signs." Dicisigns Peirce defined as "a Sign, which, for its

In 2007 Kieran Cashell offered a similar argument concerning indices and persons. Published in the academic periodical *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Cashell's "Ex Post Facto: Peirce and the Living Signs of the Dead" offers a rigorous argument for understanding individual persons through indices. In particular, however, Cashell's theme centers on objects and signs referencing individuals postmortem. Through these signs Cashell reframes questions surrounding how the living relate to death. While Cashell's argument surrounds the absence of individual persons as objects, the focus given to indices also operates within a more general structure of sign-person relation. The absence of persons due to death is a particular sense of absence, different from, say, the absence formed by physical distance between people. Gone is the physical existence of the person as an object, but the memory of individuals continues. Furthering Cashell's idea, this phenomenon holds even in cases of live interaction with a person. Past conceptions of, or memories involving, a known individual are certainly present here. Within this understanding, there is no sense of live consciousness without memory. Hence, absence is always present, albeit in varying degrees. What is most important here, however, is that interpretants as indices constitute and refer to the memory of individuals—in this particular case, individual people. So how does this connection of memory to interpretants, and finally to indices, matter to the overall discussion at hand? How does understanding these connections help to revision the concept of the community of inquiry within the

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Interpretant, is a Sign of actual existence" (Buchler 103). That a sign represent actual existence is of course necessary in the criterion of representing a particular person. However, in context of representing individual persons, the division between index and dicisign seems a moot one. This is because Peirce also noted, that "the only kind of sign whose Object is necessarily existent is the genuine Index. [...] Consequently a Dicisign necessarily represents itself to be a genuine Index" (EP 2, 275-276).

individual? It is simply that these aspects of Peirce's philosophy, when brought into connection with one another, consequentially imply that the concept of the community of inquiry extends to the inner workings of personal consciousness.

Based on Peirce's insistence of continuity at all levels of existence, for the community of inquiry to function within the social, it must also be operative at the level of the individual. Broadly speaking, continuity across any given interval requires continuity at every point within. Where this set can be understood as the social, points within this set constitute individuals. Peirce's acceptance of the existence of social instances of the community of inquiry implies the further existence claim that such a structure of interaction holds within the individual person. It is no surprise then that Peirce refused to conceive of persons as discrete units. Rather, akin to how he described ideas, Peirce understood persons as continuous interconnected beings. In an 1892 manuscript titled "Synechism and Immortality," Peirce remarked that no person subscribing to synechism can rightfully claim, "'I am altogether myself, and not at all you'" (CP 7.570). Peirce continues, "In the first place, your neighbors are, in a measure, yourself, and in a far greater measure than, without deep studies in psychology, you would believe" (7.570). Here Peirce encourages a deep sense of connection between people. His use of the word neighbor is of particular importance when considering that, in his 1893 *Monist* publication "Evolutionary Love," Peirce remarked, "'Our neighbor,' we remember, is one whom we live near, not locally perhaps, but in life and feeling" (Buchler 362). In this sense, one's neighbors are the *significants* paramount to that individual's experience and determinations.

Going further, Peirce's exploration of interpretants illustrates a mirrored correspondence between their behavior and that of the community of inquiry. Lady Victoria Welby, a self-educated 19th century English philosopher, held a long-standing correspondence with Peirce following his sympathetic review of her 1903 book, *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance*. Much of their correspondence consisted of Peirce's evolving ideas and classifications of signs. In a 1909 letter to Lady Welby, Peirce wrote, "the Final Interpretant is the one Interpretative result to which every Interpreter is destined to come if the sign is sufficiently considered. [...] The Final Interpretant is that toward which the actual tends" (LW 111). The language here is highly reminiscent of Peirce's descriptions concerning scientific inquiry. "Sufficiently considered" harks back to an ideal sense of completeness, to a conception of the *Real*. Similarly, "destined" seems to imply once again the sense of convergence toward a complete understanding. In agreement with such an interpretation, T. L. Short in *Peirce's Theory of Signs* remarks that the above passage illustrates "scientific inquiry, conceived by Peirce as an indefinitely prolonged 'fixation of belief' carried out by an indefinitely extended community of inquirers, all of whom have the same ultimate purpose" (Short 190). This is Peirce's notion of the ongoing refinement of an idea. Only here, instead of the refinement being necessarily spread between inquirers, the process of refinement is captured between interpretants. Considering this, the correspondence of behaviors between interpretants and the community of inquiry seems evident.

Taking stock of Peirce's interpretants brings this discussion full circle back to the term haunted. What does it mean for one to be haunted? A reoccurring frequency of immaterial visitants seems to suffice on most accounts. Grounding this idea in the context

of memory, this conception yields an informative aspect of the human condition. Given

Peirce's synechism and conception of interpretants, it is by no means a radical leap to

interchange the members of a community of inquiry with the interpretants of a personal

mind. Such a leap seems quite evident in Peirce's work, albeit an implicitly stated one. This

virtual conception of the community of inquiry emphasizes the interwoven nature of

selfhood and consciousness within every person. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted

that this interpretation is one of broad strokes only. As such, this sketch seeks to rest at

interpretants corresponding with the memory of people found to be significant to some

individual. Such interpretants, or collections tending toward a final interpretant, are

termed here as *significants*. These *significants*, members of a virtual community of inquiry,

are what in fact *haunt* the individual subject. As understood here, thought is a recollection,

redistribution, and in some cases redetermination of memory and values. As discussed

previously in Chapter Three, the pursuit of an answer or decision involves conversing with

one's self in a literal sense. Adding to this the memories of others embodying situations and

values, the community of inquiry of the mind begins to take shape as an ever shifting and

converging mire of interpretants. Here convergence can be reconsidered as the "destined

outcome" Peirce sought in his earlier, more radical, conceptions of the How to Make Our

Ideas Clear method. This convergence is guarantied by the simple inevitability of action on

the part of the individual being embedded in the world. In a 1907 manuscript Peirce

remarked, "that signs mostly function between two minds, or theatres of consciousness"

(EP2 403). Within the context of this discussion the distinction between two minds or two

characters of the same mind is negligible. What is striking here is Peirce's use of the

illustration of a theatre. For is this not how the dialogues of Plato and Hume, as well as the

plays of Shakespeare, gather around questions? Only here, with Peirce, the argument is more than one displayed through literary means. Here the argument is—and for—the literary method itself, as an actual existent phenomenon. This is the haunting nature of thought in Peirce's philosophy. Here, within the individual, the virtual community of inquiry is his or her theatre of consciousness. This theatre is ever growing in membership and diversity through the individual's life as he or she influences and is influenced by others. The individual carries the memories of these persons throughout life, ever incorporating them into his or her being. Here one's virtual community of inquiry—the ongoing personal mire of interpretants of others—*haunts* the individual, both in part being that person and further pushing toward future determinations of self. This is the haunted animal, the human being as seen through the lens of Peirce's synechistic philosophy.

Chapter Four

Conclusion:

Some Consequences of a Virtual Community of Inquiry

Peirce conceived of genuine inquiry as a communal endeavor. Furthermore, within his synechism, Peirce embedded the individual within the community. As a consequence of this, the individual becomes what has been previously termed a *haunted animal*, a being whose mind is a theatre of consciousness, continually constituted by a virtual community of inquiry. Here at present an important question arises. Given the emergence of the haunted animal within Peirce's philosophy, what are the foreseeable consequences both to Peirce's philosophy and to the individual's life? Does such an account of personhood seek to strengthen or further delegitimize the self? In what follows, the virtual community of inquiry grounds Peirce's method of inquiry by reorienting the perspective to the individual. Furthermore, the haunted animal as an illustration of human self-consciousness seeks to emphasize human connection as the catalyst of self-realization. As such, the haunted animal functions to demonstrate an important, yet less emphasized, sentiment in Peirce's philosophical works, a sense of care and reverence for others manifested in the understanding that one's individual self is continually forged within the memory of others throughout life.

Considering the community of inquiry at the individual level solidifies Peirce's conception of indefinite inquiry at the hands of the inquirer. Describing scientific inquiry as an ongoing indefinite process, manifesting a definite sense of progress, is at best cryptic. How can something with such an abstract expanse be understood at the level of a single individual? Restricting the community of inquiry within the bounds of the social limits its understandability to the concrete personal. Yet considering the community of inquiry virtually, as a theatre of significants, bridges the gap between the abstraction of the community and the concrete of the individual. From the perspective of the individual, envisioned here as a haunted animal, the self is the ongoing product of Peirce's indefinite process of inquiry. In his 1989 book, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity*, Vincent Colapietro remarks, that persons "are always *simultaneously* who they have been, who they are now, *and* something other and far more than this" (76). Here *self* is the symbolic signifier given to the evolving semiotic process known as human individual consciousness. As seen at the social level in Peirce's scientific method, the past forms, through the present, the possibilities of the future. Only here the process rests on a more understandable context. While at the social level convergence of informed opinion may at best occupy a hope, at the level of the individual convergence can be said to occur in a far more definite sense. This stems from the necessity of action of the organism in the world. At some point a decision is either chosen or forced upon the subject. This does not imply the action represents the organism's final perfected response, only the current outcome of thought at a given moment. Within Peirce's philosophical approach, individuals are in a sense of continuous growth throughout the totality of life. As such, the individual self appears a largely consistent expression of Peirce's method of inquiry. Yet it is

commonly held that one's fluid construction of self cannot manifest without the evolution of moral convictions. In almost every aspect of life, one's personal identity is predicated on values and actions held.

Bringing the community of inquiry inward extends Peirce's scientific inquiry more directly into the moral investigations of the self. While synechism objects to any absolute breach between the individual mind and the world, Peirce did concede to a soft differentiation between the two. Within his lectures on pragmatism, Peirce stated that every "sane person lives in a double world, the outer and the inner world, the world of percepts and the world of fancies" (Buchler 283). This soft division by Peirce stemmed from direct observations in life. Peirce argued that forces in the outer world, such as gravity and electricity, have been shown to exert far greater and consistent influence over the individual than the objects of the inner psychical world. Inversely, Peirce contended, was the individual's level of influence over each realm. Focusing on Peirce's inner world, Colapietro writes, "one's conscience, in any internal dialogue, is the focal presence of one's underlying dispositions: It is the court to which appeal is made and, like other courts, its particular form is due to its historical development" (94). This illustration of a court is paramount. Not only is there the emphasis on historical evolution, the court metaphor places the mind in a firmly dialogical picture. Such an image follows suit with the behavior of Peirce's scientific method. As such, an individual understood as a haunted animal, a theatre of consciousness, serves to substantiate synechism throughout Peirce's philosophy.

Going further, the inner world of the individual—as described by Peirce—functions as an ongoing realization of the self though habitual acts of self-control. Here it is helpful to

return to the flipbook analogy given in Chapter Two. As the self moves though time it revisions itself over and over again. With Peirce's sense of self-control, however, there is present an added emphasis on growth over simply process and change. As Colapietro correctly expressed in his 1989 work, Peirce conceived of autonomy not as a state or condition, but rather as an unending process of ascension (108). At any organism's base is the process of semiosis. Ascending from here, semiosis forms into overarching habits, which give a sense of continuous existence. These persisting qualities are, for Peirce, what constitute an organism's living identity. Yet, as Peirce accurately claims, these habits alone do not constitute an autonomous self. For example, the idea of *mother* is a general conception. It is a role and, as such, constitutes particular associated behaviors without differentiating particular individuals. This is an archetypal distinction, not an individual one. Peirce's answers this problem, claiming the emergence of the self as an ongoing personal constitution of *intentional* habits. To this point Peirce, in his lectures, stated,

> Moreover—*here is the point*—every man exercises more or less control over himself by means of modifying his own habits; and [...] those cases in which circumstances will not permit him to practice reiterations of the desired kind of conduct in the outer world shows that he is virtually well-acquainted with the important principle that *reiterations in the inner world—fancied reiterations—if well-intensified by direct effort, produce habits*, just as do reiterations in the outer world; *and these habits will have power to influence actual behavior in the outer world*; especially, if each reiteration be accompanied by a particular strong effort that is usually likened to issuing a command to one's future self. (Buchler 284)

Here Peirce returns to his emphasis on the power of individuals' influence upon their inner world. This virtual roleplaying, what Peirce refers to as *fancied reiterations*, exists as a demonstrative application of a virtual community of inquiry. Without this intentional shaping of habit, it seems hard to conceive of one's individual autonomy in any definite sense. This is the fuller response to the general criticisms voiced by Bernstein and others concerning the individual self is Peirce's philosophy[19]. The intentionality of shaping habits is the "I" at work within the mind. This is how Pierce conceives of autonomy.[20] One's sense of character and morality manifests through the ongoing expression of intentional habits.

Now, given the moral focus around autonomy and the self, there is an issue that must here be addressed. Within his manuscript notes from 1896, Peirce has been understood to purposely distance morality from the scientific method. As Peirce wrote, "in more ways than one an exaggerated regard for morality is unfavorable to scientific progress" (44). On the surface this statement by Peirce can appear quite antithetical to the notion of the haunted animal. Remember, the virtual community of inquiry bridges the construction of the self—and so one's values and habits—with Peirce's scientific method. But in fact, upon closer examination of Peirce's hesitancy surrounding the comingling of morality and scientific inquiry, the community of inquiry as a "theatre of consciousness" provides the possibility for what Peirce sought from moral investigation.

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[19] See the concluding remarks (pg. 29) from Chapter Two for Bernstein's original criticisms.

[20] In part Peirce's system appears reminiscent of both Aristotle's virtue ethics and Søren Kierkegaard's inwardness. With Peirce, the intentional establishment of habits functions as an ongoing manifestation of an individual's values (Aristotle's Virtue Ethics in the "Nicomachean Ethics"). Such manifestation challenges both an individual's character and sense of personal autonomy toward an assumed greater self. This challenging either reorients or further solidifies one's convictions (Kierkegaard's inwardness in "Concluding Unscientific Postscripts to Philosophical Fragments"). Herein lies both a sense of fallibility and conviction surrounding one's values.

In the face of current moral structures, Peirce sought a context-based evolutionary modal wherein values must be open to the possibility of revaluation.[21] Rather than pursue inquiry into *the good* as some ultimate object of testaments, Peirce wished to focus on a method in which an individual can attempt to uncover the good within given situations. Within Pierce's 1898 lectures on philosophy and the conduct of life, he satirically remarked, we "all know what morality is: it is behaving as you were brought up to behave, that is, to think you ought to be punished for not behaving" (CP 1.666). This sense of morality, of course, Peirce considered unreflectively dogmatic and thus harmful to any genuine form of agency and ethical inquiry. Found within Peirce's *Minute Logic*, he remarks, "[the] difficulty is that morality chokes its own stream" as it "destroys its own vitality by resisting change, and positively insisting, This is eternally right: That is eternally wrong" (CP 2.198). Said differently, Peirce did not want the institution of morality to block the road of inquiry surrounding its values and customs. Thus such a system must be open to change upon good reason. At the time of Peirce's activity, existentialism as an established vein of philosophical thought had not yet introduced itself within the American philosophical landscape. While the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard[22] had been active prior to Peirce, his influence was considerably bottlenecked by the lack of translations at the time. As Peirce understood it, in his time morality and ethics at large were not seen as elements of conversation and debate, but rather sign posts demarcating sides of commitment. Opposing this, Peirce wrote, "Moral ideas must be a rising tide, or with the

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[21] While not explored here, it would be interesting to inquiry into the connections, if any, between Peirce's sense of morality and values and the concept of the *transvaluation of values* seen within the works of the German existentialist Friedrich Nietzsche. Such works by Nietzsche in question include, but are not limited to, "On the Genealogy of Morality" (1887), "The Antichrist" (1895), and "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" (1883-1891).

[22] Søren Kierkegaard is understood by most to be the founding father of Existentialism.

ebb foulness will be cast up" (2.198). Peirce wanted people to be committed to their

actions, not in advance by some set of universalized definitions, but rather through a more

genuine existential course of inquiry beholding to current situations. As in his 2009 paper,

"On the Significance of Ideals: Charles Sanders Peirce and the Good Life," Clano Aydin

remarks, "for Peirce the task of ethics is not to establish directly whether a decision is

morally right or wrong but rather to investigate under what conditions an adequate

(sentimental) disposition can be developed, which could increase the chance of making

morally right decisions" (Aydin 429). Given this understanding of Peirce's priorities, the

haunted animal again situates itself comfortably within Peirce's task of ethical inquiry. The

virtual community of inquiry, through memory, allows for the individual to invest

internally in scenarios built upon past examples and experiences. This allows for a

malleable approach to morality embedded in context, one that equally attempts to resist—

through historical influence—the entropic nature of relativism.[23] At this point the

discussion arrives at the central advantage of accepting the individual as a haunted animal.

Understanding the self as a haunted animal offers greater depth into the connection

between individuals coexisting in the world. Within Peirce's paper "The Doctrine of

Chances," published in 1878 in *Popular Science Monthly*, he discusses a social sentiment as

a guiding influence for ethical conduct. Peirce's discussion here does not contradict his

claim for context-based ethical inquiry, only clarifying that his philosophy insisted on

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[23] This division between Peirce's modal and moral relativism follows once again from Peirce's sense of inquiry leading toward an ideal future state. With Peirce it is not simply that different people have different valid moral systems, but rather that no moral system is ever perfected or finished. All moral systems for Peirce are incomplete, and in his methodological hope, have the possibility to tend toward a more complete and true moral system. This is why the reconsideration of moral values and customs is paramount for Peirce. Hence, for Peirce, moral relativism as an established position is antithetical to his view, being that it once again blocks the road to inquiry.

widening the scope of ethical inquiry beyond the immediate needs of any singular

individual. As Peirce wrote, ethical interest "must not stop at our own fate, but must

embrace the whole community. This community, again, must not be limited, but must

extend to all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate

intellectual relation" (Buchler 162). Such a task is, for any individual, no doubt a

monumental task. However, at a surface understanding, Peirce is advocating for the

charitable sentiment of solidarity. What does the haunted animal have to contribute on this

front? Given this Peircean sense of self, the vision of the haunted animal seeks to illustrate

the semiotic fact that, as individuals, we are quite literally built upon, and through, those

around us. The virtual community of inquiry represents an individual's *significants*

throughout life, not only in the narrow sense of romantic partners, but also in the wider

sense of all those who have significantly influenced us. Within one's theatre of

consciousness the memory of these significants actively shape the self. Thus, an individual's

self and thought is privileged upon his or her experiences of others. Even in their

adversaries, people have much to learn of themselves. The haunted animal is the individual

being realized from the reoccurring participatory memories of those significants known

throughout life.[24]

In closing, the haunted animal offers a humbling account of personal identity and

subjectivity. The hunted animal realizes Peirce's method of inquiry at the level of the

individual by taking it to task within the formation of the self. As seen in Chapter Three,

Peirce's interpretants follow in step with his conception of the community of inquiry. As

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[24] As an extension of this concept, authors are equally possible among the members of a person's virtual community of inquiry. As such, honest passionate scholarship and literature offer throughout history ample evidence of this process and its effects on thought.

such, a virtual counterpart to Peirce's scientific method resides within the personal mind.

As these interpretants represent thought and thus memory, the virtual community of

inquiry illustrates the *haunting* of the individual. This haunting is the sentimental and

actual *carrying-with* of persons by the individual through memory. This conception ties the

carrying of others in one's memory to the formation of that person over time. Thus we are

quite literally active compositions—musical scores—of those we have come to know in life.

Such a reading of the community of inquiry connects human beings fundamentally through

their very being. Without others there is quite literally no self. Such a way of envisioning

the human being encourages individuals to pause in their dealings in life in order to better

reflect upon those who constitute their world, and themselves. The haunted animal

advocates for the consideration and reverence of others through the realization of our

communal ongoing gift of self to one another. Within his 1893 paper "Evolutionary Love"

Peirce wrote, 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" (363).

As shown through the haunted animal, an individual's ideas are, in large proportion, the

memories of those persons closely affiliated in life, whether it is by the written word or the

lived experience. Here, within this interpretation, the ongoing understanding and

consideration of one's self cannot be meaningfully approached without the mirrored

acknowledgement of others. No one is radically independent and self-supporting in this life.

Rather, we are all sentimentally entwined with others in our thoughts and deeds. As such,

to treat the memories of others poorly as means alone, and not equally as ends in

themselves, is to falsely acknowledge one's own existence as merely a means toward an

end indifferent to its makings. Such a paradoxical, life negating thought—seeking radical

independence and autonomy—achieves only to explain the self by explaining it away in isolation.

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