

# On non-inferential structure of perceptual judgment

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ABSTRACT: This paper deals with Peirce's understanding of perceptual judgment, relating it to the conditions for the use of language defined by Michael Dummett. Namely, drawing on Dummett's requirement for harmony between descriptive and evaluative aspects of our linguistic practice, we will try to give an interpretation of Peirce's view of perception that implies rejecting the idea that the formation of a perceptual judgment has an inferential structure. On the other hand, since it is, in Peirce's opinion, the structure of abductive inference, this approach should enable us to draw some conclusions related to abduction in general.

KEY WORDS: Perceptual judgment, abduction, deduction, detection, percept, percipuum, descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning, non-conservative extension of language.

## I

In addition to the existing forms of valid arguments, induction and deduction, the great American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce has introduced another one into philosophy that he called abduction, defined it, *inter alia*, as an "induction respecting qualities" (CP 2.706.). By his own account, he came to this new form of inference by analysing Aristotle's syllogistic figures.

Namely, Aristotle made a distinction primarily between perfect and imperfect syllogisms. A perfect syllogism is one in which introduction of new premises cannot affect the truth of the conclusion. This is true in the case of deduction where, from the premises such as *Socrates is a man*, and *All men are mortal* we can infer that *Socrates is mortal* – which corresponds to Aristotle's first figure. However, the second and the third figure corresponding respectively to the form of the argument 1) *Socrates is a man*, *Socrates is*

*mortal*, therefore, *All men are mortal* and 2) *Socrates is mortal*, *All men are mortal*, therefore, *Socrates is a man* are examples in which introduction of new premises could affect the truth of the conclusion, which is why Aristotle considered them imperfect.

However, although they have some features in common of which the above imperfection or non-conclusiveness is certainly the most significant, these two types of inference in Peirce's view should, nevertheless, be distinguished. Namely, unlike the first one in which, based on the characteristics of a singular case we reach a conclusion about the characteristic of the entire population, the situation is quite opposite in the second one because we do not determine what the characteristic of a given population is, but to what population a particular case belongs. It follows that of the above, so-called imperfect arguments, the first would have the form of induction, while the second one would be an example of abduction.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, Peirce improved Aristotle's syllogistic by, *inter alia*, recognizing that each of his figures corresponds to one of the three basic forms of valid argument; deduction, induction, and a new type that he called abduction. However, what is significant to us is that Peirce also considered the process whereby we reach a perceptual judgment to be an example of abductive reasoning. In short, the formation of a perceptual judgment has, according to Peirce, the following structure:

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, while from the premises *Socrates is a man* and *Socrates is mortal* the conclusion *All men are mortal* follows by induction, in the case of abduction we would infer, based on certain characteristics of a singular case such as Socrates, to what population or class of objects it belongs. Thus, from the premises such as *Socrates is mortal* and *All men are mortal*, according to the abductive rules of inference, it follows *Socrates is a man* which clarifies the meaning of Peirce's thesis that abduction is in fact an 'induction respecting qualities'.

Object S has properties P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>

Class M has properties P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>

S is M

If we pause here and compare the above form of the argument with our initial example *Socrates is mortal, All men are mortal, therefore, Socrates is a man*, where S is - Socrates, P - mortal and M – a man, it seems that there would be sufficient grounds to conclude that perception and abduction are just different names for the same mental activity, i.e. one that has classification as its primary goal.<sup>2</sup> However, that they are not exactly the same thing even in Peirce's view is evidenced by the fact that, unlike the inference according to abductive rules of entailment, the formation of a perceptual judgment he treats as "absolutely forced upon our acceptance, and that by a process which we are utterly unable to control" (CP 5.157).

Although this thesis sheds light on Peirce's view as regards the specific difference between perception on the one hand and abduction on the other, it makes us recognize a certain tension in it that is important to us.

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<sup>2</sup> We should not be deceived here by extra predicates compared to the example we started with, because in addition to the predicate *mortal*, we could introduce others that would apply to both Socrates and the human species (such as *wise, rational, etc.*) without affecting the structure of the argument itself that remains abductive. In other words, since by using a general predicate such as in this case the predicate *man* 'something is subsumed under a class', we notice that the process whereby we reach a perceptual judgment has a specific inferential structure and that it is the structure of abduction; moreover, the function of abductive reasoning is in Peirce's view precisely that "to substitute for a great series of predicates forming no unity in themselves a single one which involves them all" ( CP 5.276).

Namely, if the formation of a perceptual judgment is, as Peirce says 'absolutely forced upon our acceptance by a process which we are utterly unable to control', this means that the process whereby we reach it is subconscious. However, if this is the case, the question is how it also has the inferential structure that Peirce claims it does, i.e. the structure of abductive inference?

In a word, through thesis that the formation of a perceptual judgment is the result of using both our conscious and unconscious capacities, we can identify two hardly compatible, if not quite conflicting tendencies in Peirce's reasoning. Assuming that a process can be either conscious or unconscious – depending on which of these two levels it is realized – first we will try to specify this contradiction, and then to resolve it (to the extent that it is within our power) by applying Dummett's view of harmony between descriptive and evaluative aspects of our linguistic practice to Peirce's interpretation of perception.

## II

In a book dedicated to Frege's work, Michael Dummett specified various aspects of our linguistic practice as well as the requirement that, in order for it to be successful, there has to be an agreement or harmony between them.

Specifically, Dummett distinguishes two aspects of the use of a term or a sentence, the first one referring to "conditions under which an utterance of that sentence is appropriate, which include, in the case of an assertoric sentence, what counts as an acceptable ground for asserting it, and the consequences of an utterance of it, which comprise both what the speaker commits himself to by the utterance and the appropriate response on the part of the hearer, including, in the case of assertion, what he is entitled to infer from it if he accepts it" (Dummett 1973: 396).

Both of these aspects represent for Dummett aspects of the *meaning* of a term or an assertion: the former is called descriptive and the latter evaluative aspect. However, what is significant and what Dummett particularly insists on is that there must be harmony between them; otherwise, it would be a sign that the meaning of an assertoric sentence should be questioned.

While acknowledging that it is not easy to determine a general criterion for what might constitute this harmony, Dummett nevertheless gives an example when it would *de facto* be compromised.

Namely, "a simple case would be that of a pejorative term, e.g. 'Boche'. The condition for applying the term to someone is that he is of German nationality; the consequences of its application are that he is barbarous and more prone to cruelty than other Europeans" (Ibid., 454). However, although this will allow the distinction between descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning that philosophers of ordinary language tend to make, unlike them Dummett points out that we would have to assume "connections in both directions as sufficiently tight as to be involved in the very meaning of the word: neither could be severed without altering its meaning. Someone who rejects the word does so because he does not want to permit a transition from grounds for applying the term to the consequences of doing so. The addition of the term 'Boche' to a language which did not previously contain it would be to produce a non-conservative extension" (Ibid.).

Therefore, Dummett expresses the requirement for harmony between different aspects of the meaning (descriptive and evaluative ones) through one condition which is that introduction of a term into a language would be legitimate only in cases when it would represent a conservative extension of that language. Conversely, any disharmony between

descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning such as the one illustrated by Dummett's example would be a symptom of its non-conservative extension.<sup>3</sup>

The question is, however, how is this related to Peirce's interpretation of perception because the impression is that, whatever preconceptions we may have about him, the problem of perceptual judgment falls outside the domain of the philosophy of (ordinary) language?

In other words, does it not seem that, if we were to apply Dummett's method, we would have to uncritically identify objects in which the phenomenal aspect is predominant, with those that have their meaning in the foreground? Although this is true in a sense, we can state in our defence that we will, in what follows, stick to what they have in common which is primarily the fact that both linguistic and non-linguistic entities stand as *stimuli* in relation to cognitive subject, that is, they are both objects of our comprehension, and equally so.

Namely, what, despite all the differences between them linguistic and non-linguistic entities undoubtedly have in common is that we become aware of both through perception, as evidenced by the discipline whose subject is speech perception. On the other hand, the thesis about the linguistic character of entities that are the usual subject of a perceptual judgment is supported by the fact that it can easily be interpreted in the form of an assertion; more precisely, we can say that a perceptual judgment – at least in its most general form – is nothing but an assertion, but an assertion that would, in most cases, refer to something obvious which is why we usually do not utter it.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be said that the introduction of concepts such as conservative and non-conservative language extension is Dummett's generalization of the point made by Belnap, commenting on Prior's example of inconsistency of logical conjunctions; See Nuel Belnap, *Analysis*, Oxford Journals, Vol 22, No. 6, (Jun., 1962): pp. 130-134.

If we adopt these insights as our starting point, the thesis is that the application of abductive inference for the sake of forming a perceptual judgment would be an example of non-conservative extension of language, that is, it would always satisfy only evaluative conditions which would disrupt harmony that should exist between them and descriptive conditions. On the other hand, since our interpretation of what belongs to a language will be somewhat broader than the usual, that is, since we will treat perceptual judgment as part of our linguistic practice and include in it those entities that are traditionally not considered linguistic, it should be expected that our interpretation of which are descriptive and which evaluative aspects of the meaning of a term and harmony between them will be different from the one offered by Dummett. However, in order to get there, first we need to examine more closely the examples of valid arguments questioning Peirce's thesis that the result of our classificatory activity is always non-conclusive, or that this activity necessarily has the structure of abduction.

### III

As previously stated, Peirce believes that we form a perceptual judgment by subsuming several different predicates we are directly acquainted with under one general concept that is in fact, a sign of a class. In this regard, we gave an example of the argument where, from the premises *Socrates is mortal* and *All men are mortal* we arrived at the conclusion *Socrates is a man*.

However, from the minor premise that Socrates is mortal, and the major one that all people are mortal it does not follow conclusively that Socrates is a man, because mortality is not solely a human, but a feature of all living beings. Also, from the premise such as *Socrates is wise* we cannot infer with certainty that Socrates is a man because, even if all people were



wise Socrates would not have to be a man because he could be a some kind of deity. In other words, the fact that not only people are wise (that is, that wisdom is not a predicate attributed only to people), in conjunction with the fact that not only people are mortal serves as a confirmation that by simply multiplying premises, or by multiplying properties or predicates in the case of abduction we will still not come to a conclusion that would be conclusive, or whose truth would not be affected by the introduction of additional premises.

Although there is nothing here that would make abductive inference an invalid type of argument – because one of its characteristics is that it is, just like the inductive one, epistemically weaker than deductive inference – we must nevertheless note that all those predicates that can be attributed to the concept 'Man', or, as Peirce would say, which we replace with a general predicate that is 'Man' in this case do not have the same value in our inference. In short, it seems that the two predicates stand out in terms of the strength of the inference because not only they apply to the whole species, but they cannot be extended to other populations.

Specifically, what has been adopted to apply to all people and only them is that they are two-legged and rational creatures, so if we attribute these characteristics to Socrates, we could abductively conclude that *Socrates is a man*. However, since in this case the concepts 'Rational' and 'Two-legged' creature would be treated as synonymous with the concept 'Man', that is – to use Aristotle's terminology – since all three as signs would be reliable indicators of humanity, it seems that the argument *Socrates is two-legged/rational creature, All people are two-legged/rational creatures, therefore, Socrates is a man* would not in fact be an example of abductive argument because from the minor premise *Socrates is a man*, and the major one *All people are two-legged/rational creatures* in one case we could come to a conclusive *viz.* deductive conclusion that Socrates is a two-legged, and in the other that he is a rational creature. For the sake of clarity, we will try to reformulate the problem.

Namely, if we assume that these concepts are coextensive as it is usually assumed they are (i.e. the concepts 'Man', 'Two-legged creature' and 'Rational creature'), the question is which of them, if it appeared in the conclusion would be a sign that the argument used is an example of deduction instead of abduction and *vice versa*?

It seems that we cannot get a definite answer to this question because if the concept 'Man' signifies a particular class, we must assume that this also applies to every other that would be coextensive with it. It follows that, depending on which of the above concepts would be in the premises, abductively we could infer conclusively not only that Socrates is a man, but also that he is a two-legged and a rational creature. However, although with each of these arguments, as Peirce says, we "subsume something under a class" (CP 8.66) and therefore, each would be an example of abductive argument, the problem is that none of them would have the property that abductive conclusions are supposed to have, in short, none of them would be non-conclusive.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, although our intuition tells us that these terms are not entirely same – which, expressed in technical terminology would mean that although they have the same *reference*, they still do not have the same *sense* – it is also clear that we cannot determine this by purely logical means, or it would be possible only by introducing a certain convention

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<sup>4</sup> Therefore, by transposing the premises and conclusions in the above arguments we will not get anything that would indicate a specific difference between the concepts contained in them, because as soon as we adopt them as reliable indicators, we get a type of deductive argument that is considered a paradigm of logical validity because in it, as we have said, when the premises are true, the conclusion is necessarily true too. On the other hand, the matter is further complicated by the fact that, since they are coextensive and that all three are a sign of a class, in cases where they appear in the premises deduction would be such that we would come to the conclusion which 'subsumes something under a class', hence, Socrates under the classes of two-legged and rational creatures which in turn also brings into question whether the distinction we make between it and abduction is justified.

according to which the concepts 'Two-legged' and 'Rational' creature would not be coextensive with the concept 'Man'. And so the novelty that Peirce introduces, faced with such examples, *inter alia*, is to abandon a purely formal, anti-psychological approach to logic, increasingly acknowledging the role of normativity and context in logical research. In the context of current discussion, this would mean that the following question should be asked: how do we reach judgments – presumably true – such as: 'This is a man', 'This is a two-legged creature' and 'This is a rational creature'?

#### IV

Therefore, both in the case of affirmation and in the case of negation of these concepts being coextensive, Peirce believes that this is, ultimately, always a certain (linguistic) convention. However, by moving from the formal to contextually sensitive logic<sup>5</sup> he will increasingly point out that judgments such as 'This is a man', 'This is a two-legged creature' and 'This is a rational creature' actually impose themselves on us by a process we cannot control and which we identify with perception. Although, generally speaking, Peirce will do it too, he will nevertheless maintain the idea of continuity between the view in which perception is regarded as the result of a process we cannot control, and the one that it has a certain inferential structure as evidenced by theses such as that "perceptual judgments are to be regarded as an extreme case of abductive inferences", and that "abductive inference shades into perceptual judgment without any sharp line of demarcation between them" (CP 5.181) etc.

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed, and even a more accurate account of this transition as well as the reasons that led to it see: Isaac Levi, "Beware of Syllogism: Statistical Reasoning and Conjecturing According to Peirce", *Cambridge companion to Peirce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 257-286.

While there is no doubt that the multitude of Peirce's comments on this subject include those that would support the presumed continuity – such as the idea that perceptual judgment is not only an integral part, but "the starting point or first premiss of all critical and controlled thinking" (Ibid.) – as we pointed out at the beginning, this seems completely unacceptable. In order to show that this view is untenable, we will assume the presence of a hypothetical subject or perceiver who has before him an object he is trying to classify. We will assume that the result of our perceptual judgment is 'Man', while for the hypothetical perceiver it is a concept that he calls 'Quoche'.

If it is only a matter of the difference in the linguistic convention we use, as a sign of a certain class, this concept could in many ways be the same as the notion we have. In other words, if we assume that the judgment 'Quoche' is formed by subsuming under it several predicates that do not form a unity by themselves, there is no reason to reject in advance the possibility that our hypothetical perceiver, in line with his linguistic convention subsumes under it the same predicates that we do when we form the judgment 'This is a man' such as a two-legged creature, a rational creature, etc. Yet we do not know what the content of the term 'Quoche' is; moreover, we can with great certainty assume that the result of the perceptual judgment in these two cases is, as Peirce calls it, a substantially different *percipuum*. However, we can also notice that it is caused by one and the same stimulus or, as Peirce would say, *percept*; this allows us to, since we are unable to decipher his, our perceiver try to teach our concept so that in the future he would interpret the percept that excites it in the way we do. In this regard, if we assume for the sake of example that the concept in question has the value of a class, it seems that teaching the term 'Man' would imply the reverse application of the rule we would follow when deciphering the term 'Quoche', i.e. in both cases we would start with the assumption that what constitutes an abstract notion of an object is in fact a set of predicates included in it.

In other words, in order to get a more or less complete idea of what we mean when we form the judgment 'This is a man', Peirce's approach implies that we would have to teach the hypothetical perceiver all the predicates we subsume under it, such as a two-legged creature, a rational creature, etc. However, although it would have a certain cognitive value, we believe that this strategy would be quite inappropriate for the purpose of perception, because even if we were to teach our hypothetical perceiver the concept 'Man' in this way, it seems that in his case it would never had the strength to 'impose itself on him by a process he cannot control', that is, it would never be the result of perceptual judgment in the way it is supposed to be in ours. To verify this, we will use Dummett's distinction between descriptive and evaluative aspects of our linguistic practice which, *inter alia*, has the advantage that it seems much more appropriate as a strategy aimed at teaching a term.

Namely, if we accept Dummett's suggestions, it seems that by distinguishing descriptive from evaluative aspects of the meaning we would be in a position to make a certain distinction between predicates that we would use for this purpose, thus introducing systematicity into our method which is necessary in such circumstances. In this regard, of the predicates that we could teach our hypothetical perceiver, it seems that the predicate 'Two-legged creature' would be the one that, due to its phenomenal content, he could adopt most easily in the sense that its implementation would not significantly disrupt his own interpretative apparatus, or lead to its non-conservative extension.

In other words, we will assume that descriptive aspects can, at least in principle, be explicated in such a way that despite different interpretative frameworks used by us and our hypothetical perceiver, it would still be possible to reach a consensus that they are universally applicable, so we would start from them and gradually introduce him to the concept 'Man', namely, teach him all the predicates we subsume under it. However, the problem here is that we have no basis for the assumption necessary to avoid the infinite regress we came across

following Peirce's suggestions, that is, we have no guarantee that what belongs to descriptive aspects of the meaning of a term or an assertion cannot be further divided according to Dummett's criterion.

In fact, if we go back to the example given by Dummett himself, where the descriptive condition for introducing the term 'Boche' into a language that did not have it until then would be that it is a person of German nationality, and the evaluative one that this person is more cruel and cruelty inclined than other Europeans, the question is what would be the condition for introducing the term 'German' or 'Member of the German nation'? We are not saying that it is impossible to give an acceptable definition in this case, on the contrary, we still believe that the way to learn new, unfamiliar terms is covered much better by Dummett's criterion than by Peirce's one. However, we argue that, just as in Peirce's case of listing predicates, it would be insufficient to get such an idea of the concept in the sense that it would be the result of a perceptual judgment. To show this, it will suffice to return to our example.

Namely, although it seems plausible that the descriptive condition for introducing the term 'Man' into a dictionary that did not have it until then would be that it is a two-legged, and the evaluative one that it is a rational creature, the problem is that the concept of two-legged creature is in our case still largely coextensive with the concept of humanity, but it will not be so in the case of our perceiver. Hence it follows that by adopting the predicate 'Two-legged creature' he will adopt one of the phenomenal features of humanity that is in this case aptly highlighted in the sign itself, but that actually makes us who teach it attribute the content to it that we would not otherwise attribute, more precisely, to, misled by the character of the sign, substantially narrow its domain.

In other words, we believe that 'two-leggedness', understood as one of the phenomenal features of humanity would be not only a partial and insufficient determinant of the concept 'Man', but above all a partial and insufficient determinant of the concept 'Two-legged creature'. The primary reason for this is that the definition of an object as a sample of a class of two-legged creatures actually hides a series of tacit assumptions that only thanks to the iconicity of the sign have something to do with the fact that it walks on two legs, while in reality they primarily concern understanding of its place in the evolutionary chain, implying a whole network of views that, in the case of forming the judgment 'This is a two-legged creature', would be evaluative in character.

## V

Therefore, just as with introducing the term 'Man' into a language that did not have it until then, when introducing the term 'Two-legged creature' we would also come across the distinction between descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning which in these two cases would not nearly be coextensive. It follows that it would be at the very least unclear how a learned concept could impose itself as we assume that perceptual judgments impose themselves if every new definition introduces a new concept that requires definition and so on *ad infinitum*.

However, if this is evidence that Dummett's strategy is useless for the goals we have set – because how can we benefit from it if, for the purpose of forming a perceptual judgment, we cannot determine which are descriptive and which ones evaluative aspects of its meaning, that is, if determining them would always lead us to new distinctions – the question is then what is the difference between his and Peirce's strategy, or why do we give

preference to Dummett's given the fact that in both cases we are faced with virtually infinite set of predicates?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> It seems that in this case we might be able, with the help of Dummett's strategy, to reach a point where the regress of justification ends and it would be the point in which we would replace the term 'two-legged creature' with the term 'biped' as something that, using Russell's terminology but in a different sense, would be 'quite simple and could not be further analysed'. However, apart from the fact that bipedalism is not a unique feature of human species, we should also not think that by introducing this term we would come to something that is independent of any theoretical assumptions, or that this term is simple in the sense that it does not have descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning. This brings us to a point that, unfortunately, we cannot address in more detail but we believe it to be extremely important. Namely, we can say that, according to Peirce's semiotics, the sign 'Man' would figure as a symbol of a class, while 'Rationality' would be its index. The term 'Two-legged creature', because of its similarity to the signified would in that case be an icon. However, the question is what kind of similarity is it? We see here a potentially fruitful point of merging Peirce's semiotics and structuralist approaches in linguistics and anthropology in which linguistic phenomena are observed not only at the level of terms, but also at the level of morphemes and phonemes where there is a strong tendency to treat them as phenomena whose architectonics belongs to the realm of the unconscious. Thus, the morphology itself of the sign 'bipedalism' would represent descriptive aspects of the meaning, that is, it would be telling that not any sign could be used for the phenomenal aspect of two-leggedness, but precisely the sign that proves the thesis that linguistic sign is not entirely arbitrary, or that it is "arbitrary a priori, but ceases to be arbitrary a posteriori" (Levi-Strauss 1963: 91). It follows that the evaluative aspect of the meaning in this case would imply separate knowledge of the meaning of terms 'Bi' and 'Pedalism'. However, since the arbitrariness of the sign is more pronounced at this level, we would need to know all those associative sequences that these terms evoke (which would be nothing but knowledge of an entire language), which, however, we could not possibly expect from our hypothetical perceiver. In other words, we want to say something that is too often ignored in philosophy, that the phonetic body of which a term is made up is by no means a negligible aspect of what it is, that is, in the philosophy of language these terms are generally used interchangeably so it is irrelevant if one has the form 'Man' and the other 'Quoche' as long as their content is same. However, just as it is not insignificant that we call a certain object 'Man' and not 'Two-legged creature', it is also not insignificant, though in a slightly different sense, that someone calls something 'Quoche', that is, even in the symbol itself



Although the distinction between descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning has no reality – which is a truth reflected, *inter alia*, in the fact that we cannot come across something like this, an artificially produced, non-conservative extension of language – properly understood, it has a certain value for us as evidenced by examples such as when a subject has only a partial understanding of a term, or rather, when he thinks he understands it but the fact of the matter is that, due to various sociolects of the language, he does not really understand it. Something similar to this would be in the case of the term 'Two-legged creature', which we and our hypothetical perceiver would comprehend differently in the sense that he would not mean everything that we mean by this term, so we could rightly say that he does not understand it. However, one should not think that the reason for this is that he understands only some of its aspects, but that he does not understand all those aspects that we understand, that is, the aspects that he understands are always and only descriptive aspects. On the other hand, what we mean by the term 'Two-legged creature' should in no way be understood as a norm that our perceiver, unable to adopt evaluative aspects of the meaning of this term too, has failed to achieve.

In other words, if we assume that the term in question is the result of a perceptual judgment, we believe that the whole content covered by it also belongs to descriptive aspects, but they do not appear as a condition for its formation – as implied by the view in which it is regarded as the result of an abductive argument – but as a consequence of disharmony in communication. However, since it is clear that the character of this disharmony will vary from context to context, it also means that it cannot be determined *a priori*, as Dummett and

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there is a connection with the signified that may not be existential, but at one level of mediation it is certainly important for the overall perceptual (interpretative) apparatus of the subject. Since this apparatus implies an understanding of an entire language, it seems that the above mediation belongs to the realm of the unconscious – just as it is emphasized in certain disciplines – but there is no room here for discussing this issue in more detail.

philosophers of ordinary language tried to do which are descriptive aspects of the meaning of a term and which ones evaluative, but it will, somewhat generally speaking, depend on the context of communication where the only norm would be the efficiency of communication, that is, its loss as a sign that they are present.

Therefore, in order to be as precise as possible, we could say that descriptive aspects of the meaning concern the *percipuum*, while the evaluative ones belong to the *percept*. However, although they are both integral components of the perceptual judgment,<sup>7</sup> they still do not have reality in themselves, but will be formed only when there is a break in communication and when we have no other choice but to evaluate our knowledge. In short, *percept* and *percipuum* will appear only then, and together with them the difference between descriptive and evaluative aspects of the meaning where the former will belong to the *percipuum*, and the latter to the *percept*.

This is the reason why Dummett's strategy is important for us because instead of the idea that the content is supposed to be inscribed in objects by the act of perception, it leads us to what we understand in contact with some of them, and since everything we understand would belong to descriptive aspects, it is also clear which ones would be evaluative aspects. In a word, evaluative aspects would be all those that, due to the various content that we inscribe in it make the path to efficient use of a term blocked.<sup>8</sup> However, it seems that we

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<sup>7</sup> Although Peirce's view includes various and sometimes inconsistent interpretations of *percept* and *percipuum*, when he speaks of *percipuum* he mostly refers to it as "percept immediately interpreted in the perceptual judgment" (CP 7.643).

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, one should not think that evaluative aspects belong to the realm of unconscious, hidden, and descriptive ones, on the other hand, to the conscious, transparent, etc., but that the whole perceptual judgment or more precisely, the process whereby we form the *percipuum* belongs to the realm of the unconscious, which will become conscious, or be divided into *percept* and *percipuum* only if there is a need for it, in other words

have not yet completely solved the problem of infinite regress, because it seems that, at least within his own interpretative repertoire a subject could always single out those predicates that constitute the content of a perceptual judgment; on the other hand, the fact that the conclusion reached in this way would be non-conclusive, or that there is a virtually indefinite number of predicates that fall under one concept could be compared to the infinite regress we had in Dummett's case.

In other words, it seems that one can still ask questions such as 'Are there predicates that would be necessary to form a perceptual judgment and which ones are they?' and 'Can we assume that some concepts can function as percipiuums while this does not apply to others?', etc. However, we believe that we have shown that to ask such questions would be the result of a fundamentally wrong view.

In fact, their relevance, as well as the relevance of the problem of infinite regress of justification can be very easily neutralized and in practice they are neutralized precisely by the fact that Peirce pointed out – that a perceptual judgment 'imposes itself on us by a process we cannot control' which necessarily disqualifies any listing of predicates such as the one in the case of abductive inference as a way of its formation. In a word, it seems that such listing would in fact always be just an explication of an interpretative apparatus, or that in cases that would require it, it would not be an abduction but, in our opinion, a *detection*. However, this

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whenever, to paraphrase Peirce, the road to understanding is blocked, which unblocks the road to inquiry. On the other hand, in favour of the affinity between this and Dummett's general view that does not regard the meaning of a sentence in terms of its truth value, but "in terms of the conditions under which it is verified" (Misak 1995: 119), since these conditions vary from case to case they could be compared with *evaluative* aspects of the meaning as we interpret them, or both in understanding of an object and a term, "in a capacity to recognize whatever is counted as verifying it (but not perceiving it, A/N)" (Dummett 1976: 110-111).

does not mean that we reject abduction as a redundant concept, but that we give it a more specific definition.

Namely, when we perceive, we assume that we have such an idea of the object that we do not need to think about it as well, otherwise it would be a sign that there is an obstacle in understanding (whether of the object or someone's interpretation of it, because in both cases we are faced with something that is unknown to us and we should discover what it is) which we cannot overcome in any other way but methodically, that is, with the help of a systematic approach that would be reflected in the attribution of predicates or detection as we call it. However, although it would have the structure of an abductive argument, it is important to note that this method would be closely related to Peirce's thesis that there is a "creative element in perceptual awareness, an interpretive creativity brought by the perceiver" (Rosenthal 2004: 193), and that reality "always swims in a continuum of uncertainty and of indeterminacy" (CP 1.171) which we eliminate primarily through various interpretative frameworks or, as Peirce calls them, 'bodies of settled beliefs' whereby we approach it, etc.

In other words, unlike abductive inference in the strict sense, which would recognize only logical (formal), this method would have to comply with strong epistemic (conceptual) constraints imposed by Peirce's views such as that "what is 'given' at the most fundamental level of perceptual awareness is in fact a 'taken' and incorporates both nature of the taking and the nature of what is taken" (Rosenthal 2004: 201) or, given its consequences, the most far-reaching of them all, that perceptual judgment is "absolutely beyond criticism" (CP 5.181). However, what is important here is that both would have an inferential structure, that is, a structure that Peirce attributed to abduction,<sup>9</sup> while this would by no means be the case

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<sup>9</sup> Therefore, since it would be abductive, this structure would also be non-conclusive. However, what should be noted here given the difference that we believe exists between them is that the above non-conclusiveness in

when it comes to perception. Namely, it might have some sort of *structure*, but this structure is not such that we could abstract the discrete elements of the process whereby we reach a perceptual judgment; in a word, that structure is not inferential.

## VI

Thus, that the result of a perceptual judgment is not the result of inference is evidenced by the fact that, if we have no idea what an object is, for us it will be a percept to which we will apply the method of detection; otherwise, the judgment about it in the form of percipuum would impose itself by a process we could not control, which would make any inference redundant. In other words, we hope that we succeeded in creating a fruitful synthesis of the two views where Dummett's method was useful to eliminate from Peirce's interpretation of perception the thesis that we consider superfluous and even inaccurate, which is the thesis that perceptual judgment has an inferential structure. On the other hand, the idea which we specifically argued for, that it imposes itself on us by a process we cannot control has enabled us to, in our opinion, give a more acceptable interpretation than the one offered by Dummett of which would be descriptive aspects of our linguistic practice and which ones evaluative, or more precisely, of harmony that would have to exist between them.

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these two cases would be different in character. Namely, while the first would concern the fact that no matter how many predicates we attribute to a concept we will not come to a conclusion that is necessarily true, in the second it would be a consequence of the fact that the conclusion we reached is not the result of (perceptual) judgment that is exempt from any criticism and therefore, conclusive. For more detailed information on the special, epistemic character of perceptual judgment see: Sandra Rosenthal, "Peirce's pragmatic account of perception: Issues and implications", *The Cambridge companion to Peirce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 193-213.

In a word, we hope that we managed to show that to understand perceptual judgment as a conclusion of an abductive argument would be an inadequate account of the way we reach it, because it would satisfy only evaluative conditions which implies that the act of perception did not actually occur. However, Peirce would not have been such a great philosopher had this fact remained completely unknown to him.

Namely, although he may have had second thoughts about the true nature of perceptual judgment, as we know and have seen to some extent, Peirce offered such a wealth of insights related both to it and abduction in general that our attempt is at best only an interpretation of his views. In this regard, this paper would be best understood as a step towards emphasizing the thesis that we believe to be extremely important because it paves the way for initiating the view that some theorists unjustly attributed to Bergson, which is, in fact, Peirce's view, that "every human mind is a locus of virtual experience" (Levi-Strauss 1991: 103). It is Peirce's thesis that perceptual judgment "has the peculiarity of not being abstractly thought, but actually seen", or that it is "virtual" (CP 8.66) which is a step that we could not have made before rejecting the thesis about its abductive structure.

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