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Peirce's Haecceitism

I. Introduction

Peirce's haecceitism is central to his theories of indexical reference, secondness and individuals. In particular, "haecceitism" is Peirce's theory of individuation, and "haecceity" is the indescribable, unqualitative and indefinite "hereness and nowness" of an individual.

Around 1890, Peirce found it necessary to support explicitly a doctrine of haecceitism similar to Scotus' notion of "haecceitas."¹ Although it was during his "*Monist* Period (1891-1914)"² that haecceitism was most clearly articulated, an implicit acceptance of haecceitism is present in his writings as early as 1885. Despite discussing and defending haecceitism both explicitly and implicitly for the last thirty years of his life, it has not received the attention in the secondary literature that it warrants.

This discussion will begin with a look at Scotus' notion of haecceitas and then proceed to consider Peirce's motivations for the late introduction of haecceitism into his philosophical system. Thereafter, Peirce's haecceitism will be presented in an extensive, although not exhaustive account. Finally, given the recent surge of interest in haecceitism among contemporary metaphysicians and philosophers of language, specifically in regard to questions concerning the metaphysics of modality, the relevance of Peirce's haecceitism to contemporary theories of haecceitism will be considered. This essay aims not only to provide a positive contribution to the extant studies on Peirce's haecceitism, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to present contemporary discussions of haecceitism another chapter to take into account, thereby extending the range of Peirce's relevance.

II. The Scotistic Notion of Haecceitas

The notion of haecceitas was introduced by the medieval theo-

logian and philosopher, John Duns Scotus, "Doctor Subtilis" (ca. 1266-1308).³ Given that Peirce "derived the greatest advantage from a deeply pondering perusal of some of the works of medieval thinkers" after his study of Kant (1.560),⁴ his first formal acquaintance with Scotus' haecceitas was probably sometime around 1867-68.⁵ In fact, he does not mention Scotus in any of his lectures before 1867, nor is there any evident Scotistic influence in the writings of 1865 and 1866.⁶

Peirce highly regarded and was strongly influenced by the work of Scotus (1.6). For example, in Chapter 6 of the "Grand Logic" of 1893, Peirce praised Scotus as "one of the greatest metaphysicians of all time, whose ideas are well worth careful study, and are remarkable for their subtlety, and their profound consideration of all aspects of the questions [of philosophy]" (4.28). He even expressed disappointment for the fact that "no considerable Scotistic school of thought is now extant" (N3:174). Still,

it must not be supposed that that which I find to admire in Scotus lies upon the surface. Anything more terribly metaphysical cannot be imagined. He is always discussing some question which means nothing in this world. And his arguments appear to be exclusively little texts of Aristotle, or of some other authority, wrested completely from the meaning they originally bore. It is only by the most determined study that one can discover any sense in it; and even then there is but a grain of wheat to a bushel of chaff. (MS 1000:02)

Nevertheless, the profound influence of Scotus' work on Peirce is indubitable,⁷ and one such "grain of wheat" that Peirce found is Scotus' principle of individuation with its account of haecceitas—one of Scotus' major contributions to philosophy.

During the early fourteenth century, an intense debate concerning the ontological status of universals took place. This debate was based on a rejection of the Platonistic account of universals. Whereas Platonists had argued that universal natures exist inde-

pendently of both the mind and of the particulars whose natures they are, fourteenth century "moderate" realists, like Scotus, took the Aristotelian view that the nature of a thing cannot exist independently of it and agreed that natures must be somehow *common* to particulars in reality.⁸ They argued that this common nature must really exist as a metaphysical constituent of the things whose natures they are, yet noticed that this view raises difficulties. Prominent among these difficulties is the problem of distinguishing one particular from another. That is to say, because any given genus or species can have more than one particular as a constituent of it, particulars must have more than only common natures as their metaphysical constituents, for if they did have only common natures as their metaphysical constituents, then it would be difficult to distinguish one particular from another. The resolution of this difficulty was to be found in the postulation of a principle of individuation that will allow for distinctions among particulars. The question now was what is the best principle of individuation. Negation? Existence? Quantity? Matter?⁹

One of the basic principles of Scotus' metaphysics was that the individual is the only existing thing.¹⁰ This principle was not new with Scotus; it was one of the fundamental principles of Scholastic pluralism. For Scotus, metaphysics involved the investigation of the plentiful ontological status of individual things, for the rich being of individual things makes up one extensive hierarchy with God at its summit.¹¹ Scotus held that something must be done to the common nature¹² of the individual in order to make it universal or to make it singular, for it is not by itself either way. Nevertheless, singularity and universality do not determine the common nature further in the intellectual or quidditive order. That is to say, they do not add anything to the being of the individual and do not bring it to a higher position in the vast hierarchy of things, rather they are "modes" of the common nature of individual things that do not change the content of the nature. According to Scotus, the common nature is indifferent to existence (*esse*), although it has its own quidditive being, or essential being.¹³

Whereas in itself the common nature has the ability to be in many things, or "community," it is not by itself able to be *predicated* of many. To be predicable of many, or universal, the common nature has to be thought, for it is the *concept* that is universal, not the nature in itself. In short, the principle of universalization of the common nature is the mind.¹⁴ On the other hand, Scotus' principle of *individuation* of natures is haecceitas.

Scotus argues that the common nature is not singular all by itself, viz., it is not by itself a "this,"¹⁵ nor is individuation of the common nature accomplished by negation, existence, quantity, or matter.¹⁶ In the individual, the common nature is "contracted" by the haecceitas, such that the haecceity differentiates the individual. Contraction is the method whereby the common nature is converted into an individual with numerical unity. Haecceitas in a real existent thing contracts the common nature to an individual mode of existence.

Haecceitas is not a thing (a *res*) which is combined with the common nature as two things are combined to form a third thing, because it cannot exist separately and that which it is combined with cannot exist separately from it. Haecceitas does not add anything to the character of Socrates, for Socrates is not a man and a "this." Haecceitas is the principle by which Socrates is the unique individual that he is—it is a principle of differentiation. The individual difference is a special kind of thing termed haecceitas or "thisness," i.e., the haecceitas of Socrates is "Socratesness," and not "Socrates."¹⁷

Between an individual's haecceitas and its nature, there is a "formal distinction,"¹⁸ viz., a formal distinction which "refers to the objective 'formalitates' which are realized in one and the same individual substance independently of any intellectual act" and not a "real distinction"¹⁹ like the distinction between matter and form.²⁰ A real distinction would imply that haecceitas and essence are two different entities, whereas Scotus contends haecceitas and essence are not separable, viz., they are merely formally distinct.²¹ Their relationship is such that not "even the divine power can

separate physically the 'Socratesness' of Socrates and the human nature of Socrates.²² Socrates' human nature (his humanity) and his haecceity (his "Socratesness") are not two things, but two realities which are formally distinct, and have numerical unity.²³ Scotus' formal distinction can be defined as "a distinction from the nature of the thing occurring between two or more really identical formalities, of which one, before the operation of the intellect, is conceivable without the others though inseparable from them even by divine power."²⁴ For Scotus, formal distinction explains the validity of our universal conceptions of individuals.

Haecceitas or "ultima realitas entis" or "entitas singularis vel individualis,"²⁵ is the final or ultimate reality of the being which is matter or form or the composite thing.²⁶ In effect, haecceitas is the last perfection of a thing—a perfection that is necessary for a thing's concrete existence.²⁷ Haecceitas restricts the specific form, matter or composite thing and completes it by sealing the being as "this" being,²⁸ yet it does not confer any further qualitative determination.²⁹

What haecceitas actually is for Scotus is not easily understood, for it is neither form, nor matter, nor the composite thing, and yet it is at the very heart of his philosophy. A major difference among medieval philosophers such as Aquinas, Ockham and Scotus, is "where you want your great mystery": for Scotus it is haecceity or individuality.³⁰ Haecceitas is known to God and can be known by man in the future life, where his intellect is not so dependent upon sense perception. Full knowledge of the haecceitas of all things, although impossible for us in our present condition, is equivalent to full knowledge of all reality.³¹ In our present condition we are unable to grasp a thing's haecceitas, even though we know things in their concrete existence, and therefore as individuals.³² The requirement of haecceitas is a logical one, for in practice we do not differentiate individual persons or objects because we know their respective thisness, or here-ness and now-ness, but because of such accidental differences as being in different places at the same time, or having different colored hair or eyes.³³

It is logically contradictory for Socrates' haecceitas to be the same as Parmenides' haecceitas, for "Socratesness" is differentiable from and not the same as "Parmenidesness."

III. *The Road to Haecceitism*

While in the early 1890's, Peirce began to defend explicitly a notion of haecceity similar to that of Scotus, the acceptance of haecceities is implicit in his work as early as 1885. Before discussing this, the use of the word "defend" should be explained for haecceitism is a questionable notion to many, and Peirce was not a stranger to such doubts.

In a letter dated April 7, 1897 to E. Schröder, Peirce comments on Schröder's difficulties with his notion of haecceity.

You say "Your notion of 'hecceities' does not a[t] first sight commend itself to my mind; and I have not yet overcome its delirious effect." Very just! I have always maintained, and I think always shall maintain, the wholesomeness of what we call Occam's razor³⁴ . . . meaning that in explaining a given phenomenon we should refuse to admit any kind of element not already admitted by us until it becomes manifest that without such [an] element the phenomenon cannot be explained. This is not distinctively nominalistic doctrine but is an indispensable condition to the rational coherence of philosophy. What distinguishes the nominalist is that he does *not* admit certain elements. The realist, if he is a sound thinker, must once have occupied the same position. By no means would I approve the ways of thinking of a man who did not hesitate long to admit my hecceities. (MS L392:2)

Given that Peirce claims that he would not approve of our ways of thinking *if we did not question the postulation of haecceity*, it is important to examine the reasons why Peirce believes that the postulation of haecceity is necessary. Schröder's comment is important because it shows that Peirce was well aware that haecceit-

ism is a surprising, if not shocking, thesis to some. On the basis of ontological economy alone, the postulation of haecceities can be seriously challenged. This section will discuss the developments that led to Peirce's acceptance of haecceitism, for Peirce was not always a haecceitist.

Around 1885, just after leaving Johns Hopkins, Peirce's writings begin to suggest the acceptance of haecceitism to explain the nature of existent things. These writings in particular are a review of Josiah Royce's *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (MS 1369) and "One, Two, Three: Fundamental Categories of Thought and of Nature" (MS 901). In general, the formative period of Peirce's haecceitism is the interval 1885 through 1889, and the aforementioned writings are the earliest from this period. Although Peirce surely learned of Scotus' haecceitas over twenty years earlier, the term haecceity or haecceity³⁵ is, for the most part, only to be found in his writings *after* 1889. The sole exception is his review of Porter's *Human Intellect* for the *Nation* in 1869 wherein he displays an excellent knowledge of Scotus' haecceitas.³⁶ What can this be attributed to?

The key is to be found in Peirce's reformulation of the categories around 1885, and his growing acceptance of haecceitism in the formative period of 1885 through 1889. Thus, to understand Peirce's acceptance of haecceitism, it is necessary to explain some of the main developments in his theory of categories.

Peirce first published his categories in a paper of 1867 entitled "On a New List of Categories." The main argument of the paper was a logical analysis of cognition and judgment through which Peirce attempts to derive some abstract, universal conceptions or categories. These categories are universal in the sense that they are sufficient to classify any object of thought or experience, and also in the sense that they may be understood by anyone capable of reflecting on and forming judgments about experience.

His argument in the "New List" was strongly influenced by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and Peirce begins the paper with an acknowledgment of this influence: "This paper is based upon

the theory already established, that the function of conceptions is to reduce the manifold of sensuous impressions to unity, and that the validity of a conception consists in the impossibility of reducing the content of consciousness to unity without the introduction of it" (W2, 29). Peirce's argument then proceeds roughly as follows: the universal conception of "the present in general" or "IT in general" is nearest to sense and is called a "conception," because it is universal. This conception is "the pure denotative power of the mind" and "as an act of *attention* has no connotation at all." "IT in general" is "rendered in philosophical language by the word 'substance' in one of its meanings." Furthermore, "the unity to which the understanding reduces impressions is the unity of a proposition." "This unity consists in the connection of the predicate with the subject; and, therefore, that which is implied in the copula, or the conception of *being*, is that which completes the work of reducing the manifold to unity." For example, take the proposition "The stove is black." In this proposition "the stove is the *substance*, from which its blackness has not been differentiated." Moreover, "the *is*, while it leaves the substance just as it was seen, explains its confusedness, by the application to it of *blackness* as a predicate." Thus, at the beginning and end of every conception is *substance* and *being*, wherein *substance* is inapplicable to the predicate of the proposition, and *being* is inapplicable to the subject of the proposition (W2, 49-50).

Furthermore, while "substance" and "being" are two absolutely basic conceptions, or categories, in the "New List," there are also three "intermediate" categories which "may be termed accidents" (W2, 55). The first "intermediate" category, "quality," is that which the predicate of the proposition expresses.

A proposition always has, besides a term to express the substance, another to express the quality of that substance; and the function of the conception of being is to unite the quality to the substance. Quality, therefore, in its very widest sense, is the first conception in order in passing from being to substance. (W2, 52)

The second category, "relation," arises from the fact that empirical psychology has established that we can know a quality only by means of its similarity to or contrast with another. Abstraction requires that "a thing is referred to a correlate, if this term may be used in a wider sense than usual" (W2, 53).

The third, and "last conception in order passing from being to substance" (W2, 54) is "representation" which is necessitated by the fact that every proposition implies reference to an interpretant. "[T]he reference to an interpretant arises upon the holding together of diverse impressions, and therefore it does not join a conception to substance, as the other two references do, but unites directly the manifold of the substance itself" (W2, 54). Thus, Peirce's categories of 1867 consisted of the absolutely basic conceptions of "substance" and "being," and the "intermediate" categories of quality, relation, and representation.³⁷

In "One, Two, Three" (c.1885), Peirce proposed a modified list of categories. By the 1890's, Peirce had two quite different methods for arriving at virtually the same intermediate categories of 1867, although by this time the "absolutely basic" conceptions of "substance" and "being" had long since been omitted from his explicit list of categories.³⁸ The first method of deriving the categories is by means of the positive science of Phenomenology in which the categories are brought out from whatever seems or appears; the second method elicits the categories "from an inductive examination of the methods and tentative conclusions of the positive special sciences."³⁹

Although the categories of 1885 and later are substantially the same three "intermediate" categories of 1867, Peirce shifts emphasis in describing these categories. This is most noticeable in the category of "relation."⁴⁰ Although Peirce does not explain why he adopted different methods of deriving the categories, and a shift in the emphasis of the categories per se, there has been speculation on the matter. For example, Savan contends that "a comparison of the deductive and Kantian approach to the '60's with the observational emphasis of Phenomenology renders it a

likely hypothesis that it is the logical and empirical difficulties of the early derivation which led him to search for a more empirical approach to the categories,"⁴¹ while Muphey argues that there were two major reasons for this revision: (1) the discovery of quantification; and (2) the desire to escape from the subjectivism in which the collapse of his theory of reality left him.⁴²

Whatever the actual motivation for Peirce's revision of the categories was, surely the reasons stated by Savan and Murphy form a crucial part of that explanation. After 1884, the categories are presented as three sorts of logical relations: monadic, dyadic and triadic. They have the virtue and advantage of generality, for all possible logical relations including the sign relation are asserted to belong to one of the three sorts of logical relations. Also, the revised categories can accommodate all possible cognitions, for every predicate of a proposition is classified by the schema.⁴³ All things and every experience contains elements from each of the three categories, although at any time one category may dominate.

The categories of the revised list could be called "quality," "reaction," and "mediation," "[b]ut for scientific terms, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, are to be preferred as being entirely new words without any false associations whatever" (4.3). In their formal aspect, these categories only pertain to the logical classification of relations, whereas in their material aspect, they deal directly with the classification of experience (1.452). Peirce's phenomenology indicates that all phenomena or experience whatsoever possess three modes of being or aspects, specifiable under these categories.

Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, positively and without reference to anything else. It is considered a possibility, potentiality, or quality and is "perfectly simple and without parts; everything has its quality" (1.531). Firstness is "exemplified in every quality of a total feeling," and is "within itself, without any elements or relations" (4.157). It is the indecomposable, irreducible and indescribable, monadic aspect of a phenomenon (1.424).

Secondness is an idea of fact, struggle or "hereness and nowness." It is the shock of reaction between ego and non-ego, whose very essence is its "thisness." Although it is considered an actuality or existent, the term that best characterizes secondness is "fact," viz., secondness comprises the actual facts. Peirce claims, "[w]e feel facts resist our will," this being the reason why "facts are proverbially called brutal" (1.419). A fact is dyadially structured (1.435), and the dyadicism of secondness is most evident in the element of struggle (1.322). There is no element of generality in secondness, no reference to thirdness. "Secondness is without law or reason" (1.427). "A second is strictly speaking just when and where it takes place, and has no other being; and, therefore, different secondnesses, strictly speaking, have in themselves no quality in common" (1.532). The factual character of secondness consists in pure individuality, excluding both generality (universality) and possibility. Secondness (like firstness) is an irreducible characteristic of phenomenon.

Finally, unlike secondness and firstness which are merely experienced and non-cognitive and incapable of being known, thirdness is cognition, viz., it is the mode of being of that which is such as it is in bringing firstness and secondness into relation with each other. Thirdness is the category of connection and mediation between firstness and secondness, but is not reducible to either of them. Thirdness may be characterized by the terms meaning, representation, mediation, and thought, although is best considered as both generality or universality and law: notions which are necessary for thirdness.

The category of "relation" from the "New List" included the concept of denotation and an object that itself was never immediately known. Objects were known only through their properties, such that the Identity of Indiscernibles holds true of them. Thus, consider the proposition "This is black." In 1867, Peirce understood this proposition to be always ambiguous, unless the properties of "this" were revealed or the object was given. The demonstrative "this" in the proposition referred to an object in the

extensional domain of the *preceding* sign, thus the object to which "this" referred is only the one for which the preceding sign stood. By the early categories, the proposition "This is black" was an incomplete sign. Furthermore, if objects are only known through property possession, then the Identity of Indiscernables is capable of leaving objects without a unique identity. The discovery of quantification changed this,⁴⁴ allowing Peirce to reconsider the category "relation."

Around 1885, Peirce discovered the theory of quantification, and thus altered his theories of denotation and the object that were proposed in the 1867 "New List." He now claimed that the demonstrative "this" is a sign that refers directly to an *existent* individual. The second "intermediate" category of the "New List," "relation," was substantially revised to conform with the category of secondness. Objects are now denotable by the non-qualitative and non-descriptive demonstratives "this" and "that"—words which are signs that awaken and direct the attention.

A sign which denotes a thing by forcing it upon the attention is called an *index*. An index does not describe the qualities of its object. An object, in so far as it is denoted by an index, having *thisness*, and distinguishing itself from other things by its continuous identity and forcefulness, but not by any distinguishing characters, may be called a *haecceity*. (3.434)

Thus, it is the haecceity, "thisness," or "here-ness and now-ness" (1.405; 8.266) of objects, which is denoted by terms such as "this," "that," "here," and "now," that enables the objects to be unambiguously distinguishable. These terms are to be regarded as indexicals or indicators that serve a purely denotative function, although they do not denote any properties or qualities of objects. Consequently, one can infer the important role Peirce's haecceitism has in his theory of semiotics and better understand how and why Peirce's revision of the categories incorporated haecceitism.

The use of the term "thisness" by Peirce can be found no earlier than c.1895,⁴⁵ although the influence of the concept of thisness, as well as haecceity, is noticeable in his writings as early as 1885. As stated earlier, it is difficult to determine precisely what led Peirce to utilize the concept of haecceity. It is almost certain, given Peirce's knowledge of and respect for the work of Scotus, that when he saw the need to propose a non-descriptive and non-qualitative principle of individuation, he would turn to Scotus' haecceitas in formulating the category secondness. "*Hic et nunc* is the phrase perpetually in the mouth of Duns Scotus, who first elucidated individual existence" (1.458).

In fact, Peirce explicitly points out that Scotus' haecceitas (*hic et nunc*) is much the same as his category of secondness.

Duns Scotus said it [that which all things have that makes them individual] is a peculiar element, a blind insistency, by which the nature crowds its way into a place in the world. This is the *haecceity*. It is much the same as Secondness. (MS 1000:02)

It is important to note here that Peirce realizes his notion of haecceity is *not identical* with Scotus' notion of haecceitas. Differences are quite clear, but then again, so are the similarities. Commentators have been quick to pick up on this fact, and have been led to a variety of interpretations as to the nature of the relation between Scotus' haecceitas and Peirce's haecceity. The various interpretations can be generalized into two camps: those who claim "it corresponds in nature and function with Scotus' haecceitas"⁴⁶ and those who claim that "it does not correspond."⁴⁷ The crux of these generalizations is that while the similarities and differences between Scotus and Peirce with regard to haecceitism are recognized by all the commentators, the determination as to whether Scotus' and Peirce's haecceitism correspond or not is a matter of interpretation.

IV. Peirce's Haecceitism

In Section III, Peirce's doctrines of indexical reference, secondness, and individuals, have all been at least mentioned. This gives a hint of the interrelatedness of these doctrines not only with Peirce's haecceitism, but also with each other. Although a discussion of each of these doctrines would increase our understanding of Peirce's haecceitism, it would also extend the scope of this article well beyond a manageable limit. In view of this, and the fact that it would be impossible to discuss Peirce's haecceitism without referring to these doctrines, they will be presented in the ensuing discussion in a less than complete manner and only when necessary.

Peirce's first use of the term haecceity occurs in a work of 1890 entitled "A Guess at the Riddle."⁴⁸

Most systems of philosophy maintain certain facts or principles as ultimate. In truth, any fact is in one sense ultimate—that is to say, in its isolated aggressive stubbornness and individual reality. What Scotus calls the haecceities of things, the hereness and nowness of them, are indeed ultimate. . . . Indeterminacy. . . or pure firstness, and haecceity, or pure secondness, are facts not calling for and not capable of explanation. Indeterminacy affords us nothing to ask a question about; haecceity is the 'ultima ratio,' the brutal fact that will not be questioned. (1.405)

As "pure secondness," haecceity is

not a conception, nor is it a peculiar quality. It is an experience. It comes out most fully in the shock of reaction between the ego and non-ego. It is there the double consciousness of effort and resistance. That is something which cannot properly be conceived. For to conceive it is to generalize it; and to generalize it is to miss altogether the *hereness* and *nowness* which is its essence. (8.266)

That is to say, secondness can be thought of as a kind of bi-polar experience described by a diversity of terms by Peirce: compulsion, struggle, brute actions, limitation, interruption, constraint, intrusion, conflict, resistance, etc.. Each of these terms emphasizes the dyadic and experiential character of secondness. "Hecceity," "thisness," "hereness and nowness," "*hic et nunc*," etc., is that which is present in secondness, but must not be thought of as that which *defines* secondness. It is important now to note that haecceity is the *material aspect* of secondness.

These bi-polar experiences provide an experiential basis for Peirce's characterization of haecceity as the "ultima ratio" and "brutal fact that will not be questioned." As a "brutal fact," "hecceity" is not a conception or quality, but is irrational.

Those who experience its effects perceive and know it in that action; and just that constitutes its very being. It is not in perceiving its qualities that they know it, but in hefting its insistency then and there, which Duns calls its *haecceitas*. (6.318)

Thus, for Peirce, not only is haecceity only known through experience, its very being is determined through experience.

Scotus' haecceitas carried the existence quantifier, and such is the case for Peirce. Existence, for Peirce, is the totality of that which is actual, and "whatever exists is individual, since existence (not reality) and individuality are essentially the same thing" (3.613). "[T]he essence of actual existence is reaction" and it is this "reaction which confers actual existence upon the substances" (MS 942:28). He argues that individuals are discovered in our will-independent reaction with them. Individuals are "brute facts" concerning the nature of what exists, and although there are individuals, it is impossible to prove this: it is something that we must simply discover through experience.⁴⁹

An individual, for Peirce, is something which reacts, viz., "it does react against some things, and is of such a nature that it

might react, or have reacted, against my will" (3.613). Individuals, as well as existence, are *per se* unintelligible (3.613). Furthermore, "[e]xistence, though brought about by dyadism, or opposition, as its proper determination, yet, when brought about, lies *abstractly and in itself considered*, within itself" (1.461). Existence is experienced as the brute, irrational insistency or secondness of individuals. As *fact*, secondness "fights its way into existence; for it exists by virtue of the oppositions which it involves" (1.432). Moreover, what is experienced as an individual is a kind of bipolar experience, i.e., shock, rather than an entity *per se*.

Peirce's theory of individuals is rich and complex, and an understanding of it sheds light on some of the more significant revisions that Peirce made after 1884. It must be mentioned that prior to the mid-1880's, viz., before recognizing a need for quantifiers and other indices, Peirce denied the existence of individuals and claimed that all being was general.⁵⁰ After the mid-1880's Peirce both affirmed the existence of individuals,⁵¹ and claimed that universals (generals) and individuals (particulars) have different modes of being. He repeatedly emphasized that secondness and thirdness are the respective modes of being of individuals or particulars, and universals or generals.

The *thisness* of the accident of the world of existence is positively repugnant to generality. It is so because of its intrinsic duality; and if you call it *individual* you are forgetting one term of the pair. For example, a *this* is an object; but it only is so, by virtue of being in reaction with a subject. . . . *Thisness* is reaction. . . . Every reaction is antigeneral. It is *this* act. It is act, not power. Secondness not firstness. (MS 942:16-17)

Furthermore, there are different kinds of existence for Peirce. For example, "[t]here is the existence of physical actions, there is the existence of physical volitions, there is the existence of all time, there is the existence of the present, there is the existence of

material things, there is the existence of the creations of one of Shakespeare's plays, and, for aught we know, there may be another creation with a space and time of its own in which things may exist" (1.433). Thus, existence is not limited to the physical, psychological, or otherwise, rather existence consists in anything "having a place among the total collection of such a universe" (1.433). Each of these different kinds of existence is to be understood as an example of haecceity. In general, haecceity for Peirce can be understood as that which renders existence and individuality upon objects: whenever there is haecceity, there is individuality, existence and thinghood. The presence of haecceity is not an affirmation of the existence of the haecceity as *per se* any thing, but is rather the affirmation of non-ego, otherness, reaction, opposition, and struggle.

In the famous Baldwin's *Dictionary* entry for "individual," Peirce claims that

everything whose identity consists in a continuity of reactions will be a single logical individual. Thus any portion of space, so far as it can be regarded as reacting, is for logic a single individual; its spatial extension is no objection. . . . As for the principle of indiscernibles, if two individual things are exactly alike in all other respects, they must. . . differ in their spatial relations, since space is nothing but the intuitional presentation of the conditions of reaction, or of some of them. (3.613).

From this entry, it should be clear that there is an important (and interesting) relationship between space, individuals, secondness and haecceity for Peirce. Let us reflect on this for a moment.

Although space, "in so far as it is a continuum, is a mere law,—a mere Thirdness" (7.488), it must be something more than a mere thirdness, contends Peirce: it must be capable of being individuated. "[A]ny portion of space, so far as it can be regarded as reacting" is capable of individuation. Individuals are distributed in

space such that there is nothing that logically prevents two things from being exactly alike in all other respects. Even if two things are alike in all other respects, they are still discerned as differentiable, by their respective spatial relations, or *haecceity*.

While space and time evolve from secondness as a framework required for existence and individuals, space and time do not produce secondness.⁵² Peirce contends that space is necessary only because objects can have identical properties, and yet still remain distinct, viz., space is necessitated by *haecceitism*. Individuals are extended in space, each having unique relations. Space allows for things to have identical properties. In effect, Peirce is denying that spatio-temporal coordinates have a qualitative nature, and is in fact claiming that *haecceity* is that "element of existence which, not merely by the likeness between its different apparitions, but by an inward force of identity, manifesting itself in the continuity of its apparition throughout time and space, is distinct from everything else" (3.460).⁵³

The *haecceity* of each object is not dependent on any property that the object may bear. Also, *haecceity* does not and can never possess qualities *per se*—not even a quality in which its individuality and uniqueness can be said to consist—for if it did possess such a quality, it would still fall prey to the Identity of Indiscernables.

In regard to the question of whether *haecceity* is internal or external, Peirce contends that

[w]e are conscious of hitting or of getting hit, of meeting with a *fact*. But whether the activity is within or without we know only by secondary signs and not by our original faculty of recognizing fact. (1.366)

One must subject the activity to "various tests in order to ascertain whether it be of internal or of external provenance" (6.333). Although *haecceity* renders existence and individuality to the activity, it does not *necessarily* indicate the internality or externality

of the activity. This can only be determined by subjecting the activity to the "Tests of Externality" (6.334). Haecceity is perceived and not inferred, whereas externality is inferred from tests and not perceived.

It has been noted that Peirce's revised second category, secondness, which is directly present in all awareness, instead of being known only through interpretants (as was the "New List's" relation), brings him closer to a Kantian position. With the existence quantifier taken as basic, Peirce's position is similar to Kant's wherein existence is that which must be given in intuition, not concepts, and the copula of the proposition is being. Existence is given a prominent position as distinct from being and reality.⁵⁴

Of existence and reality, Peirce claims that "*reality* means a certain kind of non-dependence upon thought. . .while *existence* means reaction with the environment. . .and accordingly the two meanings. . .are not the same" (5.503). In fact, "*reality* and *existence* are two different things" (6.348).

By positing haecceity as an experience that is non-conceptual, Peirce reveals that not only does experience contain events which are non-qualitative, but experience cannot be entirely reduced to a series of qualities. That is to say, if each and every thing qua thing has haecceity, then it is impossible for it to lose its identity through the abstraction of its properties, for haecceity is not a property, and as such is not abstractable from a thing.

It is interesting to mention Peirce's response to a possible objection to the non-qualitative character of haecceity. The objection might be stated as follows: Why is it necessary that the experience of haecceity is always non-descriptive and non-qualitative, for is it not possible that it could be otherwise? That is to say, what eliminates the possibility of haecceity conferring a qualitative and/or descriptive experience?

For Peirce, because the "facts" are characterized by particularity, they are completely determinate in regard to whether they are in the possession of qualities. Moreover, the principles of contradiction and excluded middle are applicable only to what is indi-

vidual, viz., "the individual is determinate in regard to every possibility, or quality, either as possessing it or as not possessing it" (1.434). Thus, given that the principles of contradiction and excluded middle hold for haecceity, the qualitative experience of haecceity is impossible.

A major difference between Scotus and Peirce on haecceity is found in Peirce's rejection of Scotus' notion of "contraction," where contraction was the process whereby the common nature was converted into an individual possessing numerical unity. For Scotus, haecceitas in a real existent thing contracts the common nature to an individual mode of existence. In reference to this doctrine, Peirce writes that

Even Duns Scotus is too nominalistic when he says that universals are contracted to the mode of individuality in singulars, meaning, as he does, by singulars, ordinary existing things. The pragmatist cannot admit that. (8.208)

Peirce rejected contraction as a process of individuation because his phenomenology prohibits secondness from being reduced to firstness, and thirdness from being reduced to either firstness or secondness. For Peirce, thirdness cannot be reduced or contracted to secondness—the common nature is not contracted. But in doing this, Peirce is not denying the importance of individuals or haecceity: he is merely denying "reductionism" of the categories. Also, he does not deny individuals or haecceity, for without individuals and haecceity there would be neither secondness nor perception, and without perception Peirce's epistemology would be untenable.⁵⁵ Although Peirce denies Scotus' contraction and employs haecceitism of a different type, this does not detract from the correspondence between Peirce's and Scotus' haecceitism—a correspondence, which although not one-to-one, can be noticed from the similarities in Sections II and IV. The impact and influence of Scotus' haecceitas on Peirce's haecceitism seems undeniable.

Finally, Peirce considered a logician's "showing for the first

time that some element, however vaguely characterized, is an element that must be recognizable as distinct from others" as original work in logic of the "first and highest grade" (MS 816:4). He notes that Scotus' haecceitas is an example of such work, and follows Scotus by claiming that a haecceity is an element recognizable as "distinct from everything else" (3.460). Furthermore, in Peirce's exact logic, individuals can only be distinct from one another in three ways: first, by being haecceities; second, by having *per se* different qualities; and third, by being in one-to-one correspondence to individuals that are distinct from one another in one of the first two ways (3.568). Basically, haecceities are always distinct in Peirce's exact logic. From the praise Peirce has for Scotus' haecceitas, as well as the central role haecceity plays in his own overall philosophy, it is clear that Peirce set the highest importance on haecceitism.

V. *The Contemporary Relevance of Peirce's Haecceitism*

Today, articles against haecceitism are just as frequent as articles defending haecceitism. The haecceitist thesis of the thisness of individuals provides and should continue to provide contemporary metaphysicians with important and relevant grounds for polemic. The later half of the twentieth century has had a surge of interest in questions concerning haecceity, with philosophers such as Roderick Chisholm, David Lewis, David Kaplan, Alvin Plantinga, *et al.*, developing and debating haecceitism. This section will look briefly at one of the main contemporary views as to what types of problems any theory of haecceity must accommodate, and then ask whether Peirce's haecceitism could be relevant to them.

David Kaplan in "How to Russell a Frege-Church" claims that haecceitism is the "doctrine that holds that it does make sense to ask—without reference to common attributes and behavior" the following three questions:

- (K1) Is *this* the same individual in another possible world?

- (K2) Can individuals be extended in logical space (i.e. through possible worlds) in much the way we commonly regard them as being extended in physical space and time?
- (K3) Does a common "thisness" underlie extreme dissimilarity or does a distinct thisness underlie great resemblance?

Kaplan contends that by means of haecceitism it is possible to speak meaningfully of "a thing itself—without reference either explicit, implicit, vague, or precise to individuating concepts (other than being *this* thing), defining qualities, essential attributes, or any other of the paraphernalia that enable us to distinguish one thing from another."⁵⁶ Does it make sense according to Peirce's haecceitism to ask these questions? I think the answer is yes.

In late 1896, Peirce invented an ingenious family of logical diagrams, or systems, which he came to call the "Existential Graphs."⁵⁷ Peirce's existential graphs consist of three systems: "Alpha" corresponds to the classical propositional calculus, viz., it deals with the logic of propositions; "Beta" corresponds to quantification theory, viz., it deals with the logic of quantification; and "Gamma" corresponds to logical relations in general. Although the Alpha and Beta systems are developed so as to treat the actual existent world, "Peirce had no intention limiting his logical work to the 'actual existent world.'"⁵⁸

Peirce's Gamma system of existential graphs is essentially a modal system. Gamma, unlike Alpha and Beta which only used one sheet of assertion (formulas written on the sheet of assertion are true in that universe), utilized a *book* of sheets of assertion. Each of the sheets in the Gamma system's book represents a possible world, and one of the sheets is the actual existent world. According to Zeman, "[t]hat which is *possible* is too important a part of the real for Peirce to ignore; indeed, his desire to account for the logic of the possible may well be a chief motivation leading him

to adopt the existential graphs as the format for his logic"—the Gamma system was Peirce's attempt at dealing with the logic of possible worlds: modal logic.⁵⁹

Although Peirce did not fully succeed in articulating the logistcs of Gamma, others did. Eventually, Peirce's Gamma system of existential graphs was shown to obtain the semantics for modal logic S4 and S5⁶⁰, and later shown to obtain the lower system T.⁶¹

The point of introducing Peirce's existential graphs, and emphasizing the developments in the Gamma system, is to show that Peirce has a sufficiently rich modal logic to accomodate K1 and K2 and was concerned with logical space and possible worlds. Issues in the metaphysics of modality that arise from questions K1 and K2, can be addressed by an appeal to modal logic and Peirce's haecceitism. But K3 is a question that could be asked by Peirce without an appeal to his system of modal logic, for it can be addressed by observing the nature of haecceity. Although it makes sense to ask these three questions in Peirce's system, it is another question altogether as to how Peirce would answer them.⁶²

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NOTES

1. Fisch (1967), p. 195, Almeder (1980), p. 172.
2. Fisch (1967), p. 192.
3. Copleston, p. 199.
4. This number refers to the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, volumes (1-6) edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 1931-35; volumes (7-8) edited by Arthur Burks, 1958, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press). The number preceding the '.' refers to the volume number, and the number succeeding it refers to the paragraph number, i.e., '(1.10)' refers to Volume One, paragraph 10 of the *Collected Papers*, *op. cit.*
5. Fisch (1971), p. 228, and Boler, p. 152. These dates nicely correspond with Peirce's purchase of a large part of his impressive collec-

tion of Scotus' works in 1867 (cf. Fisch (1952), p. 52).

6. Michael (1976a), p. 47.

7. There are a number of extant studies on Peirce and Scotus that develop this point in greater detail. Among them are Almeder (1973 & 1980), Boler, Goodwin, Haas, McKeon, and Moore (1952 & 1964).

8. Two points might be added here: (1) the "Platonistic" view that universal natures exist independently of particulars was a view that virtually no one in the Middle Ages supported; (2) "moderate realism" goes back at least to Boethius in the 5th-6th century. I thank Professor Spade for pointing these out to me.

9. Adams (1982), p. 411.

10. The material on John Duns Scotus' metaphysics in this section is to a great extent based on Paul Vincent Spade's *A Survey of Medieval Philosophy*, chapters 57-59, unless otherwise noted.

11. De Wulf (1926), p. 72.

12. The "common nature" (*natura communis*) will sometimes simply be referred to as "natures."

13. Spade (1985), Chapter 57, pp. 17-18.

14. Spade, Chapter 57, pp. 17-18.

15. "de se hoc"

16. Scotus rejects each of these as principles of individuation in his *Oxford Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (or simply the *Ordinatio*), Book II, distinction 3, questions 1-5, and provides his own theory in question 6. Although it would be superfluous to outline why and how Scotus rejects each of these principles of individuation, it is interesting here to note Scotus' rejection of the Thomistic thesis that prime matter is the principle of individuation. He criticizes St. Thomas for maintaining this thesis because prime matter is of itself indeterminate and indistinct, and therefore cannot be the primary reason of distinction and diversity. Copleston summarizes Scotus' criticism of Aquinas as follows: "if matter is the principle of individuation, it follows that in the case of substantial change the two substances, that corrupted and that generated, are precisely the same substance, since matter is the same, even though the forms are different." "St. Thomas's theory seems to imply that quantity is an accident and a substance cannot be individuated by an accident" (Copleston, 239). Whereas Aquinas asks the questions "What makes a thing an individual?" and "What contracts the specific common nature to the individual?," and gives different answers to both of them, Scotus tends to merge them, thus indicating a crucial difference between Scotus and Aquinas on the use of the term individual (Harris, pp. 15-16). But Spade thinks that while Scotus is *primarily* concerned with the latter question, in answering it, he may also be answering the former

(Spade, Chapter 58, p. 1).

17. Spade points out that although Scotus' haecceitas looks like the recent notion of a "bare particular," it is not the same for it is not a subject of predication, it does not *underlie* anything, and does not *exemplify* anything. Once again, the haecceity of Socrates is "Socratesness," and not "Socrates" for Scotus.

18. "distinctio formalis a parte rei"

19. "distinctio realis"

20. De Wulf, p. 74.

21. Copleston, p. 240.

22. Copleston, p. 235.

23. Spade, Chapter 58, p. 8.

24. Grajewski, p. 93.

25. Although Duns Scotus did not use the term "haecceitas" for the principle of individuation in the Oxford Commentary, it is so used in the *Reportata Parisiensia*, II: 12, 5, nos. 1, 8, 13, 14 and in the *Quaestiones in libros Metaphysicorum*, 7, 13, nos. 9 and 26 (Copleston, 240).

26. cf. Duns Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, 2, 3, 6, no. 15.

27. Bettoni, p. 121-122.

28. Copleston, p. 240.

29. Copleston, p. 240.

30. Spade, Chapter 58, p. 9.

31. Bettoni, p. 122.

32. Bettoni, p. 122.

33. Copleston, p. 235.

34. "(the maxim Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem)"

35. These are the English forms of the Latin term "haecceitas."

36. The following is a chronological ordering of Peirce's references to "haecceity" or "hecceity":

Date	Source
1869	N1:23 (also W2:273)
c. 1889	<i>The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia</i>
c. 1890	1.405
1894	N2:75 (also MS 1396 (draft))
1895	1.341
1896	2.341, 3.434, 3.438, 3.453
c. 1896	MS 521
c. (1896-1898)	MS 1000
1897	3.460, 3.461, 3.462, 3.475, 3.479, 3.480, 3.500,

	3.535, 3.543, L392
1899	N2:207 (also L159.110 & MS 1417 (draft), MS 154 (also NEM3:464)
1901	3.612
1902	MS 581
1904	N3:174 (also L159.266 & MS1482 (draft))
1905 or 1906	MS 816
1908	6.318

37. The preceding exposition of the "New List" was intended only to give the reader a general sense of Peirce's categories of 1867, nothing more. Peirce proceeded to philosophically develop the "New List" in three papers he wrote for the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* in 1868. Each of the categories in the "New List" can be derived from Peirce's sign relation—a point that was not developed in the exposition. Indicative of this derivation is Peirce's following listing of the categories:

- BEING
 - Quality (reference to a ground)
 - Relation (reference to a correlate)
 - Representation (reference to an interpretant)
- SUBSTANCE (W2, 54).

- 38. Thompson (1963), p. 29.
- 39. Savan, p. 185.
- 40. Savan, p. 185.
- 41. Savan, p. 192.
- 42. Murphey, p. 319.
- 43. Murphey, p. 303.
- 44. See Murphey, p. 309.
- 45. The following is a chronological ordering of Peirce's references to "thisness":

Date	Source
c. 1895	1.341*
1896	1.497, 3.434*
1897	3.460*
1897-1898	MS 942
c. 1898	7.488

'' indicates that the "thisness" was used in conjunction with "haecceity" in the noted passage. It is interesting to note the relative scarcity of references to "thisness" without being accompanied by the term "haecceity."

46. Some proponents of this view are Goodwin (1961), Goudge (1950), and Moore (1952 & 1964).
47. Some proponents of this view are McKeon (1952), Haas (1964), and Almeder (1980).
48. Stating that "A Guess at the Riddle" is "a work of 1890" is not entirely accurate, for the "Guess at the Riddle" *project* was worked on by Peirce from around 1886 through 1890. These dates put it well within the bounds of the "formative" period of Peirce's haecceitism, as well as at the beginning of Peirce's full acceptance of haecceitism. It should be noted that Peirce wrote the definition of "haecceity" for the *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* around this time also (c.1889).
49. Michael (1976b), p. 327.
50. Hookway, p. 167 and (5.349).
51. Although commentators such as Riley and Michael (1976b) present convincing arguments that verify that this is the case, it is only fair to note that this interpretation is not unanimous. Some commentators, such as Weiss and Almeder (1980), claim that there are no individuals for Peirce, whereas others, such as Bolter and Bernstein, argue that Peirce had no clear theory of individuals.
52. Ross, p. 58.
53. Note that "Space is nothing but the intuitional presentation of the conditions of reaction," a framework, resembles Kant's view of Space in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.
54. Savan, p. 193.
55. Riley, p. 146.
56. Kaplan, p. 723.
57. Roberts, p. 109 & Zeman (1973), p. 129.
58. Zeman (1973), p. 129.
59. Zeman (1973), p. 129.
60. Zeman (1964).
61. Butterworth.
62. I am grateful to Hector-Neri Castañeda, Karen Hanson and Romaine Clark for reading and commenting on various drafts of this paper; to Paul Spade for wisdom on Scotus; to the Peirce Edition Project for the use of manuscript material; to Max H. Fisch for sharing his research with me; and to Nathan Houser for his generous assistance and support.

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