

Love and Logic of Identity in Peirce and Welby

The theory of personal identity as conceived by Peirce is developed across at least three fundamental stages: 1) in his writings from the years 1867-1868 published in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and characterized by its semiotic interpretation of human consciousness: "whenever we think, we have present to the consciousness some feeling, image, conception, or other representation which serves as a sign" (CP 5.314); 2), five articles published in the journal *The Monist* as beginning from 1891. Peirce here introduces his doctrines of tychism, synechism and agapism, his evolutionary cosmology while continuing his work in this context on his theory of the human person; and 3) his more recent writings on pragmatism which unite the developments of his cosmology and his theory of semiotics.

Peirce opposes the concepts of "personality", "personal self", "individual self" which theorize a finite self to the concept of self in communion with other selves. The finite self or "personal self" is an "illusory phenomenon", but to the extent that human beings are egotistical they believe they can live and flourish separately from others, from the human community they in fact belong to. And to the extent that they believe this, they are creating the conditions for such illusory forms of isolation. In reality, self can never be wholly divided or separated from the other. As Peirce teaches, human existence completely isolated from the other is not possible nor is isolatedness a guarantee of the uniqueness or singularity of a single individual person, of self's specificity, of its otherness with respect to the otherness of others. To be a self involves being a possible member of a community, so that what counts and should be theorized is not "my" experience but "ours" (cf. CP 5.402 n.2). In any case, of great interest is how Peirce associates the social and communitary character of the self with such values as the self's uniqueness, singularity, signifying otherness. The capacity for signifying on one's own account beyond and apart from references to anything else is theorized with recourse to the category of firstness. This implies that self's uniqueness, its irreducibility to a referent, is unveiled and developed in the relationship with the other.

A fundamental role is attributed to the body in the development of consciousness to the point that in a Peircean semiotic perspective consciousness is incarnated consciousness. The body is a condition for the full development of consciousness and, therefore, of the human person as a sign or symbol. Peirce establishes a relationship between the man-symbol and the word-symbol to the end of avoiding oversimplification from a symbolic viewpoint—self is not a thing (CP 7.591)—while at the same time underlining the materiality or corporeity of signs.

Such an approach to subjectivity not only concerns the intellectual sphere but also the ethic and the affective. And in his discussion in semiotic terms not only of the functioning and development of cognition and will but also of emotion, desire, feeling, Peirce states that "there is no reason for supposing a power of introspection; and consequently, the only way of investigating a psychological question is by inference from external facts" (CP 5.249). As she states in her unpublished manuscripts (available in the Archives at York University Library, Special Collections, Ontario, Canada) dedicated to the problem of *Subjectivity*, Victoria Welby, too, is strongly critical of the concept of introspection and its implications for the construction of human identity as theorized and practiced in her time (cf., for example, *I and Self*, Nov. 23rd. 1907, Box *Subjectivity*). In Peirce's view a fundamental aspect of the interpersonal relationship is one's sympathy for the other, one's sentiment for the other, the condition of feeling for one another, of being in communion with the other while at the same time maintaining one's own specificity or singularity as a unique individual. According to Peirce, sentimentalism is the "doctrine that great respect should be paid to the natural judgements of the sensible heart" (CP 6.292), and is strictly related to Peirce's interrelational and intersubjective approach to self and knowledge. And particularly interesting is

the importance he places on such values for the successful development of scientific research, whose consequences are drawn out with his "agapistic theory of evolution" (CP 6.295).

In a paper entitled "Evolutionary Love", 1893 (the last of a series of five published in the journal *The Monist*, and now included in the volume *Chance, Love and Logic*, 1923) Peirce distinguishes between three distinct but strictly interrelated modes of development regulating evolution in the cosmos: tychastic evolution or "tychasm", a term used to indicate development regulated by the action of *chance*, "evolution by fortuitous variation", says Peirce; anancastic evolution or "anancasm" which is dominated by the effect of *necessity*, in the words of Peirce "evolution by mechanical necessity"; and agapastic evolution or "agapasm" which is orientated by the law of *love*, that is "evolution by creative love". The name of the doctrines that elect these three evolutionary modes as their object of analysis are respectively "tychasticism", "anancasticism" and "agapasticism"; while at a lower level of discourse the terms "tychism", "anancism" and "agapism" name "the mere propositions that absolute chance, mechanical necessity, and the law of love are severally operative in the cosmos" (CP 6.302). Evoking the language of geometry, Peirce describes tychasm and anancasm as "degenerate forms of agapasm", in other words the latter englobes the former two as its degenerate cases (cf. CP, 6.303).

Tychasm shares a disposition for reproductive creation with agapasm, "the forms preserved being those that use the spontaneity conferred on them in such wise as to be drawn into harmony with their original". This as Peirce continues "only shows that just as love cannot have a contrary, but must embrace what is most opposed to it, as a degenerate case of it, so tychasm is a kind of agapasm". Differently from tychastic evolution, which proceeds by exclusion, in genuine agapasm advance takes place by virtue of a "positive sympathy", says Peirce, that is, by virtue of attraction or affinity among the "created", let us read "interpretants", "springing from continuity of mind" (or synechism) (cf. CP 6. 304), in other words, from open-ended interpretive processes constituting the semiotic material of the universe. The concept of continuity involves that of regularity. As emerges from her own philosophy of the signifying processes permeating the entire universe, Welby too believes that development is beaten out and articulated in a structure and, furthermore, that continuity presupposes relational logic grounded in otherness, a sort of dia-logic. The overall orientation of anancasm is regulated by "an intrinsic affinity for the good", says Peirce, and from this viewpoint it is similar to the agapastic type of advance. But as close to agapasm as it may come, anancasm lacks in a determinant factor for evolution, that is, the factor of "freedom" that instead characterizes creative love and subtends tychism (cf. CP 6.305).

Understood as development by virtue of the forces of affinity and sympathy and referring to one of Peirce's most important tripartitions of the sign, we could say that agapasm is strongly *iconic* (the other two terms correlated with the icon are notoriously the *index* and the *symbol*). Agapastic evolution alludes to evolution regulated by the law of love, creative and altruistic love, as Welby would say, love oriented toward others; though foreseeing the action of chance and necessity as well, in agapastic evolution the forces of attraction, affinity and freedom prevail and, therefore, iconicity in the relationship among interpretants in the continuous (synechetic) flow of unlimited semiosis.

On her part, Welby too identifies three principal modes in the development of the universe: the "planetary", the "solar" and the "cosmic" which indicate three levels of increasing complexity and signifying power according to the model proposed by her meaning triad with its tripartition into "sense", "meaning" and "significance" (cf. Welby 1893, 1896, 1983). The universe develops and is amplified through the generation/interpretation of signs in a continuously expanding network as signs and senses multiply. In such a context evolutionary development is not only achieved by describing objective facts, the effectual, that is, what effectively happens in the external world,

among the created, but beyond this by hypothesizing future developments, possible or simply imaginative worlds, by accepting the challenge of the "play of musement" (a concept taken from Peirce and developed particularly by Thomas A. Sebeok) as the various planes of existence, sign activity and discourse interweave.

In another series of unpublished manuscripts written at the beginning of the twentieth century, Welby elaborates her original concept of *mother-sense*, subsequently replaced by the term *primal sense* and its variant *primary sense* (Box 28, *Subject File 24*). This concept plays a central role in the processes of signification and interpretation as she conceives them and, therefore, in the construction of worldviews. Welby distinguishes between "sense" and therefore "mother-sense", on one hand, and "intellect" and therefore "father-reason", on the other. And with this distinction it is her intention to indicate the general difference between two main modes—that in fact cut across sexual differences—in the generation/interpretation of sense, hypothetically isolatable at the level of theory but strictly interrelated in praxis or sense producing practices ("sense" being here understood in a broad sense as inclusive of "meaning" and "significance").

Mother-sense is the generating source of sense and of the capacity for criticism, says Welby; it is subtended by the logic of otherness and as such corresponds to the capacity for knowing in a broad and creative sense through sentiment, perception, intuition, and cognitive leaps; thinking of Peirce, we could say that it is the idea intuited before it is possessed or before it possesses us. As the capacity for knowledge, which we may also intend in the Peircean sense of *agapic or sympathetic comprehension and recognition*, or in the Bakhtinian sense of *answering comprehension*, mother-sense belongs to the human race in its totality, "an inheritance common to humanity", says Welby, without being limited to a particular sexual gender, the female, even though on a socio-historical level the woman may emerge as its main guardian and disseminator given the course of events in the development of culture and society.

With the term "intellect" as understood by Welby we are on the side of inferential processes of the inductive and deductive type, that is, where the logic of identity dominates over alterity. With "mother-sense" we are on the side of signifying processes dominated by alterity and, with reference to Peirce's renown classification of signs into symbol, index and icon, by the iconic dimension; mother-sense, or "racial sense", as Welby also calls it, alludes to the creative and generative forces of sense resulting from the capacity to associate things which would seem distant from each other but which in reality are attracted to one another, and, therefore, from the capacity for analogy and homology; from the viewpoint of argumentation "mother-sense" rests on the side of logical procedures of the abductive type insofar as they are regulated by the values of otherness, creativity, dialogicality, freedom and desire. Furthermore, "mother-sense" includes "father-sense" (even if latently), while the contrary is not true. For this reason both mother-sense and intellect need to be recovered in their original condition—both on a philogenetic and ontogenetic level—of dialectic and dialogic interrelation.

Logic as intended by Welby is logic where the broader and generative dimension of sense, the original level, the primal level, mother-sense, racial sense, the "matrix" interweaves with rational, intellectual life in a relationship of dialectic interdependency and reciprocal enrichment. According to Welby, logic to classify as logic must always be associated with primal sense. And, indeed, one of the major goals of signification is to recover the relationship among signs of "answering comprehension", to say it with Bakhtin, or of "agapic or sympathetic comprehension", to say it with Peirce, and therefore of reciprocal empowering between primal sense and rational life. This relationship is necessary for a full development of critical sense and, therefore, of the maximum value, meaning and purport of experience in its totality. Welby's concept of logic may also be associated with Peirce's when the latter describes the great principle of logic in terms of "self-

surrender" while clarifying that this does not mean that self is to lay low for the sake of an ultimate triumph, and even though this may come about, it must not be the governing purpose of behavior (cf. *CP* 5.402, note 2).

In a letter to Peirce of January 21st. 1909, Welby significantly agrees with the former's observation that logic is the "ethics of the intellect", which supports our description of her position concerning what we may call the "ethics of criticism". Scientific rigor in reasoning, to be worthy of such a description must rise from agapastic logical procedures, from "primal sense", and, therefore, from the courage of admitting to the structural necessity—for the evolution of sign, subject and consciousness—of inexactitude, instability and crisis (cf. Welby/Peirce January 21st. 1909, in Hardwick 1977: 91)

In Welby's description and similarly to Peirce, the human being is a community of parts distinct from each other but not separate. Far from excluding each other these parts, or selves, are reciprocally dependent on each other, that is, they are founded on the logic of otherness and of unindifference among the differences which excludes the possibility of undifferentiated confusion among the parts, of leveling the other on self. As says Welby, to confound is to sacrifice distinction (*ibid.*). Therefore, to the extent that it represents an excess with respect to the sum of its parts, the I or "Ident", another neologism introduced by Welby in her unpublished manuscripts, is not the "individual" but the "unique" (cf. "I and self", June 1907). Here we may interpret what Welby understands by "unique"—which has nothing to do with the monadic separatism of Stirner's conception of the unique, of singularity—with the concept of "non relative otherness" as understood by Lévinas.

Love is directed to the concrete, and not to abstractions, to persons, one's neighbour not necessarily in a spatial sense, locally, but in the sense of affinity, a person "we live near [...] in life and feeling": love is a driving force where iconicity, abduction and creativity are clearly operative. Applying the lesson learnt from St. John, with Peirce we may infer that the mind and the cosmos develop through the power of love understood as orientation toward the other, as care for the other. And recalling his essay of 1892, "The Law of Mind", he reminds his readers that the type of evolution foreseen by synechism, the principle of continuity, is evolution through the agency of love whose prime characteristic, as we have already pointed out, is that it puts us into a position to recognize the germs of loveliness in the hateful and make it lovely (cf. *CP* 6.287-289).

Peirce polemically contrasts the "Gospel of Christ" according to which progress is achieved by virtue of a relationship of sympathy established among neighbours, with the "Gospel of greed" which he describes as the dominant tendency of the times consisting in the assertion of the individual and, therefore, of one's own individuality or egoistic identity over the other (cf. *CP* 6.294). Here we may draw a parallel between Peirce's critique of the supremacy of the individual and Welby's developed in terms of her analysis of the dynamics between I and self, and of her critique of the self's tendency to transform selfness into selfishness or selfism. Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), the idea of natural selection, the survival of the fittest, the struggle for existence are examples of the translation of this concept of the individual from nineteenth century political economy to the sciences of life, from economic development to the development of the living organism. On his part, Peirce chooses the agapastic theory of evolution and in fact considers his own strong attraction for this doctrine as possible proof of its truth (cf. *CP*, 6.295).

Recalling Henry James, Peirce distinguishes between self-love, love directed to another insofar as s/he is exactly like self, and creative love directed to what is completely different, even "hostile and negative" with respect to self, love directed to the other insofar as s/he is other. On this basis we could develop a typology of love passing from a high degree of identity to a high degree of alterity.

But truly creative love, as both Welby and Peirce teach us, is love regulated by the logic of otherness, love for the other, directed to the other insofar as s/he is other. We could claim that the logic of otherness is an agapastic logic and that otherness, dialogicality, love and abduction together constitute the generating nucleus of signs, sense and worlds that are real, possible, or only imaginary (cf. *CP* 6.287).

If we consider Peirce in the perspective proposed in this paper, and bearing in mind the titles of two volumes that collect his writings in Italian translation, *La semiotica cognitiva* and *Caso amore e logica*, we could maintain that to study Peirce today is to push beyond him considered in a cognitive perspective in the direction of what we propose to call *teleosemiotics*. This is the task we have presently set ourselves and in such a perspective certain aspects of Peirce's work, similarly to Welby's, can no longer be ignored.