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Peirce and the Image

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Résumé de l'article

À la façon de Rosalind Krauss dans son article de 1986, "*Notes on the Index*", je souhaite de nouveau souligner l'importance du statut indiciaire dans les oeuvres d'art tout en examinant comment la conception peircéenne de l'esthétique, sa théorie du signe et sa phénoménologie peuvent nous être utiles pour étudier l'art contemporain. L'idée d'oeuvre d'art qui émerge de la lecture de Peirce n'est pas fondée sur la représentation d'un objet du monde; elle relève plutôt d'un mode de présentation de l'expérience et plus spécialement d'un sentiment. Définie comme une forme complexe d'icône, une hypoicône, l'oeuvre d'art ne se limite aucunement à sa représentation mimétique. Elle vise plutôt à ré-interpréter notre monde et notre subjectivité au-delà de toute préoccupation de manière à nous retourner au *présent* : présentité et premièreté. Les considérations tardives de Peirce sur le phénomène et la phanéroscopie nous permettent de saisir l'oeuvre d'art comme à la fois faisant partie de notre expérience et donnant sens à celle-ci : l'oeuvre d'art met en scène le signe à la frontière de la possibilité et de l'existence.

Peirce : Re-Staging the Sign in the Work of Art[1]

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> "Art brings vehement confirmation. At the heart of form lies a sadness, a trace of loss. More complexly : form has left a "rent" in the potential of non-being..." - Steiner 2002 : 33

1. From Aesthetic Argument to Quality

> [...] – the Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem, – for every fine argument is a poem and a symphony, – just as every true poem is a sound argument. But let us compare it [the Universe] rather with a painting, – with an impressionist seashore piece, – then every Quality in a premiss is one of elementary particles of the painting; they are all meant to go together to make up the intended Quality that belongs to the whole as whole. That total effect is beyond our ken; but we can appreciate in some measure the resultant Quality of parts of the whole, – which Qualities results from the combinations of elementary Qualities that belong to the premisses (EP2 : 194).

In his fourth lecture on pragmatism given at Harvard (1903), Peirce introduces the concept of the reality of firstness by drawing an analogy between the universe and a work of art, most probably a seascape by Monet, and in the course of this discussion he draws our attention to one of the essential paradoxes of a work of Art : the work of art has the sound reasonableness of an argument, a symbol, Thirdness, and yet as a whole, it exhibits a singularity of quality that is 'beyond our ken'. The painting is paint, the spots and trails of colour, legacy to the artist's brush and palette knife, distributed across the canvas that somehow passes into the condition of our experience of the sea. Immediately Peirce has

drawn our attention away from the problems associated with pictorial representation as the mimesis of our visual world and concentrated on the qualities of our experience in our engagement with a work of art, qualities that cannot be reduced to intellectual concepts.

Aesthetic theory of the 20th and 21st centuries can be characterised by a desire for the work of art to exceed representation; not only to reveal that which is unseen but to somehow access that which is described as the 'beyond', the 'between' or that which is 'in excess of' representation. The work of art is asked to suture the 'gap' between sign and object when signification is conceived of as a substitution for the object entailing the insurmountable loss of the thing.[2] Peirce's general theory of signs as a theory of relations focusses on the ground of the relation between sign and object that is not confined to a linguistic model. It is a theory that places the material signs of a work of art on a continuum with its symbolic and narrative meaning.

In writing about aesthetic enjoyment as a feeling, the representational function of the work of art changes from a demand to represent the world of objects to the representation of feeling :

> [...] a feeling that one can comprehend, a reasonable feeling. I do not succeed in saying exactly what it is, but it is a consciousness belonging to the category of Representation though representing something in the Category of Quality of Feeling (EP2 : 190).

Lest we conclude that aesthetic feeling is entirely to do with experience within reason, in the fifth lecture on pragmatism Peirce broadens aesthetic experience to encompass qualities that are not normally considered beautiful :

> If that quality be such to nauseate us, to scare us, or otherwise to disturb us to the point of throwing us out of the mood of esthetic enjoyment, out of the mood of simply contemplating the embodiment of the quality, [...] then the object remains nonetheless esthetically good... (EP2 : 201).

It is an account of aesthetic experience that fits well with the contemporary distaste for the pretty as the petty, an aesthetic that can embrace the sublime, horror and the dissembled self of psychoanalysis and postmodernism. An aesthetic that concurs with George Steiner's definition of a great work of art as that which *presents the non-representable*, and as he writes in *Grammars of Creation* (2002), explicitly deals with the myth of origin :

> Art brings vehement confirmation. At the heart of form lies a sadness, a trace of loss. A carving is the death of stone. More complexly : form has left a "rent" in the potential of non-being, it has diminished the reservoir of what might have been (truer, more exhaustive of its means). Concomitantly, in ways most difficult to articulate, major art and literature, music most readily, convey to us vestiges of the unformed, of the innocence of their source and material. [...] There is the threat of deconstruction, but also the intimation of a great calm, of a tide whose return will cleanse matter of the separation,

> of the violence [...] inherent in making (*ibid.* : 33).

Daring to take the risk of defining a great work of art, Steiner does not take us away from the work of art into the realm of the ineffable, or define creation as a point of origin in some mythical past, but points to the work of art as the here-and-now condition of coming into being. This 'trace of loss' is located not in the loss of objects in the world, or the thing, but loss of that experience prior to the appearance of the object and the sign : *loss of potential*.

Arguing against abstract notions of Being, Peirce presents us with presentness as the quality of experience through the eye of the artist and the sensibility of the poet – the concrete and the particular :

> Go out under the blue dome of heaven and look at what is present as it appears to the artist's eye. The poetic mood approaches the state in which the present appears as it is present. Is poetry so abstract and colorless? The present is just what it is regardless of the absent, regardless of past and future. It is such as it is, utterly ignoring anything else. [...] Imagine, if you please, a consciousness in which there is no comparison, no relation, no recognized multiplicity (since parts would be other than the whole), no change, no imagination of any modification of what is positively there, no reflexion – nothing but a simple positive character. Such a consciousness might be just an odour, say a smell of attar; or it might be one infinite dead ache; it might be the hearing of a piercing eternal whistle. In short, any simple and positive quality of feeling would be something which our description fits that it is such as it is quite regardless of anything else. [...] The first category, then, is Quality of Feeling, or whatever is such as it is positively and regardless of aught else (EP2 : 149-150).[3]

This quotation sets an expectation for the function of a work of art and a possible agenda for the artist. Of course the work of art is a complex signifying structure, a kind of symbol, a Thirdness, created in relation to other works of art, and as an existent object in our material world it signifies through its Secondness. Crucially, however, as an encounter with a viewer, the work of art is experienced as *presentation* signifying qualities of experience that are non-conceptualised : Firsts.

1. 1 Presentness, the Thing Itself and the Index

"Firstness is what is present to the artist's eye" (CP 5.44).

"The First is the source of all spontaneity, freshness and freedom" (CP 1.418).

In 1913 Duchamp mounted a bicycle wheel on a painted wooden stool, inscribed his name and brought it into the gallery :

> [...] when I put a bicycle wheel on a stool, the fork down, there was no idea of a "readymade", or anything else. It was just a distraction. I didn't have any special reason to do it, or any intention of showing it, or describing anything (D'Harnoncourt & McShine 1989 : 270).

With that single gesture Duchamp raised the found object to the condi-

tion of art, changing its signification from the accidental and functional to the aesthetic. Shunning the vast edifice of representation based on mimetic resemblance, the *iconic* relation between the visual sign and objects in the world, and releasing beauty from the social conventions of good taste, Duchamp *presented the thing itself* as the work of art. Duchamp's radical move prefigures the social dislocation of war-torn Europe, the catastrophic break in the homogeneity and persistence of social continuum in its thirdness : "By the third, I mean the medium or connecting bond between the absolute first and last. [...] Continuity represents Thirdness almost to perfection. Every process comes under that head..." (CP 1.337).

This transgression of an ordinary object entering into the aesthetic domain of the gallery was experienced by the viewer as a *shock*, the shock of resistance that fits Peirce's definition of Secondness : "The genuine second suffers and yet resists, like dead matter, whose existence consists in its inertia. ... an occurrence is something whose existence consists in our knocking up against it" (CP 1.358).

It is a break with aesthetic laws and conventions that opens the viewer to the experience of the work of art as unknown or unknowable, as a radical Other, a kind of First :

> The first must therefore be present an immediate, so as not to be second to a representation. [...] What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own existence - that is first, present, immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it (CP 1.357).

Following in the 20th century tradition of Duchamp the US artist Agnes Denes planted and harvested a two-acre wheat field on a disused lot in sight of the Statue of Liberty, downtown New York : *Wheatfield-A Confrontation* (1982). In 1996 she planted *Tree Mountain-A Living Time Capsule* in Finland, a massive earth-sculpture of trees that will take hundreds of years to mature. Both works confront the viewer not only with a symbol or overall narrative but with a radical experience of the *thing* dislocated from any preconception.

UK artist Cornelia Parker's installation at the Serpentine Gallery, '*The Maybe*' (1995), featured the film actress Tilda Swinton playing herself, asleep. For seven consecutive days, eight hours a day, she lay motionless, eyes closed, in a raised, glass casket. The installation also included thirty-five other cases that contained objects of significance including : the rosary used by Napoleon; the rug and cushion from Freud's couch; the half-smoked cigar dropped by Winston Churchill; Turner's travelling watercolour kit; Charles Dickens' quill and Charles Babbage's brain preserved in formaldehyde. The significance of the work depends on the presentation of the thing itself ; the thing that acts as the sign of attachment : through a chain of contiguity, like an apostolic succes-

sion, we are brought in touch with someone of historical importance.

'*Cold Dark Matter : An Exploded View*', Tate Gallery (1991) is an installation that consists of a garden shed and its contents, blown up for the artist by the British army, and the resulting fragments suspended around a lightbulb (fig.1). Another installation, '*Colder Darker Matter*' (1997), is similarly constructed from the charred remains of a wooden church in San Antonio, Texas, that was struck by lightning. Parker asked the minister if she could take some of the charred wood as charcoal to make drawings : as she says, all she is doing is presenting the charcoal. And in that presentation, the drawing, the symbol created with charcoal, she makes tangible the event : the drawing signifies as an index of fire.

Figure 1 - *Cold Dark Matter : An Exploded View*, 1991. © Cornelia Parker. Permission given by artist through Frith St. Gallery, London.

In the tradition of avant-garde filmmaker Stan Brakhage's '*Mothlight*' (1963), which involved sticking the wings of dead moths onto film and then making a direct contact print, '*Skin Film*' 2003 (fig.2) by UK artist Emma Hart was created by transferring the outer layer of her own skin onto clear 16mm film leader using sellotape. It is important to Hart, however, that there are no prints of this film : the indexical chain of negative and positive is not extended and the viewer has to literally look through the artist's skin.

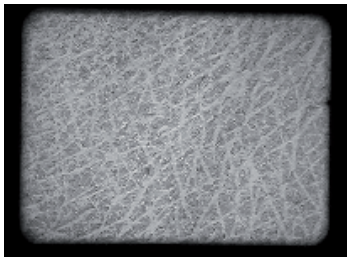

Figure 2 - Still from *Skin Film*, 2003. © Emma Hart. Permission given by artist.

The arguments around the importance of the *indexical* status of the photograph, as opposed to its iconical status, are familiar and have been well rehearsed from Bazin's concept of the photograph as the cast of the thing, to Barthes, and Damisch onwards. As Peirce wrote in 1895 (CP 2.281) the iconicity of the photograph is forced by its indexicality.

In *Camera Lucida* Roland Barthes (1984) gives a moving account of finding the photograph of his deceased mother as a *temporal hallucination*, crossing the ravine of time defined through causality, founded on the fact that the negative stands as a direct causal connection to the object, his mother (1984 : 115). The photograph functions as the indexical sign that guarantees existence, evoking the melancholia of a lost past.

It would appear, then, that with the advent of digital technology the indexical signification of the photograph is no longer significant as a document of a past event. For all common usage, however, it makes no difference to the ID card or the passport, our pictures of those we love, and the holiday snaps that act as our souvenirs. As Barthes writes, there is a curious literalism about the photograph :

> "Look, this is my brother; this is me as a child," etc.; the Photograph is never anything but an antiphon of "Look," "See," "Here it is"; it points a finger at certain vis-à-vis, and cannot escape this pure deictic language (1984 : 5).

Whether the photograph is analogue and dependent upon a chemical molecular reaction, or, the response of light sensitive cells recorded as digital information and subjected to mathematical compressions, the photograph still functions as a *degenerate index* focusing our attention on *this* as opposed to *that* (EP2 : 163-64, 171-72). The degenerate index points to things, singles out the haeccity of things, through secondness – a pointing finger, the letters of a geometrical figure that operate to refer to the world as if they were proper pronouns. The index, genuine or degenerate, seizes our attention and forces us, with the robustness of Secondness, to pay attention to something :

> What the sign virtually has to do in order to indicate its object – and make it its – all it has to do is just to seize its interpreter's eyes and forcibly turn them upon the object meant : it is what a knock at the door does, or an alarm or other bell, or a whistle, a cannon-shot, etc. It is pure physiological compulsion; nothing else (EP2 : 380).

The panoply of modes of indexical signification reach their apogee in a work like Duchamp's canvas *Tu M'* (1918), discussed by Krauss (1986). It is a self-conscious work that plays with variations on the index : genuine indexes, the trace of the author's hand, his signature and the photograph are opposed to the painting of a shadow and the painting of a pointing index finger, which as a degenerate index signifies the linguistic shifter involved in the fantasy of self-presence.

Contemporary digital media and internet artists are working with that which Lev Manovich (2001) describes as an augmented indexical

connection, though Manovich stresses that the role of animation in digital effects now makes cinema a part of the genre of painting. The desire for existential signification and presentness in this complex realm of genuine and degenerate indexes remains an aim for the work of art.

Susan Collins webcast picture *Fenlandia* (2004) shows a complex digital-image recorded in the flat landscape of the Fens, south-east England (fig.3).

Figure 3 - *Fenlandia,* 2004. © Susan Collins. Permission given by artist.

> The webcams are programmed to record images a pixel a second, so that a whole image is built up of individual pixels collected over 21.33 hours. Each image has been collected from top to bottom and left to right in horizontal bands continuously. The work explores the relationship between landscape, time and technology. It encodes the landscape over time, with different tonal horizontal bands recording fluctuations in light and movement throughout the day and with broad bands of black depicting nighttime. Stray pixels appear in the image where a bird, person, car or other unidentifiable object may have passed in front of the webcam as the pixel was captured.[4]

The conventions of landscape representation are strained through opening up the pictorial moment to a twenty-four hour record of changing light. It is an extreme example of how Peirce thinks of the photograph as a composite of time : "Even what is called an 'instantaneous photograph', taken with a camera, is a composite of intervals of exposure more numerous by far than the sands of the sea" (EP2 : 21). Occasionally Collins has caught herself in the transmission as a small cluster of pixels, or an individual pixel of a different colour, that function as an indexical form of self-portrait far removed from mimetic resemblance.

Works of art that are based on live internet connection play on the here-and-now genuine index of duration. Thomson and Craighead's *Short Films About Flying* (2001) plays on the existential effect of the index (fig. 4a & 4b) :

Figure 4a & 4b - *Short Films About Flying,* 2001. © Thomson and Craighead. Permission given by artists.

> *Short Films About Flying* is a networked installation by Jon Thomson & Alison Craighead in which an open edition of unique cinematic works are automatically generated in the gallery, and in real-time from existing data found on the world-wide web. Each 'movie' (replete with opening titles and end credits) combines a live video feed from Logan Airport in Boston with randomly loaded net radio sourced from elsewhere in the world. As this relatively good quality video stream is taken from an existing commercial website where its visitors are able to remote control the camera, each 'movie' is 'shot' and 'paced' by its own (albeit unsuspecting) camera person.
>
> Additionally, text grabbed from a variety of on-line message boards is periodically inserted, appearing like cinematic inter-titles when viewed in combination with all the other components. The result is a coherent yet evocative combination of elements that produce an endlessly mutating edition of low-tech mini-movies that we call, Template Cinema.[5]

At the heart of this filmic parody is the index of the event, the here-and-now, that evokes a particular existential anxiety as the work was coincidentally made close to 9.11.'01. Their other on-line works also play with how the evanescent world of the virtual can evoke experiences that are tangible and palpable.

Employing a different strategy, Fanny Aboulker (fig.5) has set herself the task of writing by hand the numbers one to six million, as a memorial to those who died in the Shoah :

Figure 5 - *Six Million.* © Fanny Aboulker. Permission given by artist.

> I think six million is a number so big we cannot comprehend it. In materializing those six million I want each of those people to be remembered one by one. [...] I chose to write the numbers in blue ink to remind us of the tattoos, writing on lined paper as if they were part of an accountancy form...
>
> I feel there is a point where horror is beyond representation, so I haven't even tried to represent. Sometime, suggestion is stronger than description and simpler things can have more impact. This is my way of remembering and make sure everyone else does.[6]

Writing for two to three hours every day constitutes a performance work : the original sheets of numbers have been exhibited and the documentation of these sheets is to be found on-line. The degenerate index, the number that points to the death of a particular individual, is reinforced in its existential significance by the genuine index, Aboulker's trace of her hand.

2.1 Interpretants : The Work of Art and the Self

> [...] although I am still a perfect ignoramus in esthetics, I venture to think that the esthetic state of mind is purest when perfectly naïve without any critical pronouncement, and that the esthetic critic founds his judgments upon the result of throwing himself back into such a pure naïve state, – and the best critic is the man who has trained himself to do this most perfectly... (EP2 : 189).
>
> It is not to be supposed that upon every presentation of a sign capable of producing a logical interpretant, such interpretant is actually produced. The occasion may either be too early or too late. If it is too early, the semiosis will not be carried so far, the other interpretants sufficing for the rude functions for which the sign is used. On the other hand, the occasion will come too late if the interpreter be already familiar with the logical interpretant, since then it will be recalled to his mind by a process which affords no hint of how it was originally produced (EP2 : 414).

Here again Peirce concentrates on the primacy of experience as opposed to a reiteration of the given status quo of aesthetic judgement. In this second quotation, from his lecture on Pragmatism (1907), a discussion about the function of the logical interpretant in the development of scientific hypotheses, Peirce points out how the logical interpretant is dependent upon the context. To recap, Peirce's triadic concept of the sign, sign-object-interpretant, necessarily includes the interpretant as the effect of the sign, (corresponding to the categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness) : the emotional, energetic and logical interpretants (CP 2.228; 5.475; 5.482) :

> [...] there is something which the sign in its significant function essentially determines in its interpreter. I term it the "interpretant" of the sign. In all cases, it includes feelings; for there must, at least, be a sense of comprehending the meaning of the sign. If it includes more than mere feeling, it must evoke some kind of effort. It may include something besides, which, for the present, may vaguely be called "thought". I term these three kinds of interpretant the "emotional", the "energetic" and the "logical" interpre-

tants (EP2 : 409).

Perhaps we could define a radical work of art precisely as that which evokes no immediate logical interpretant : we don't know what to think about a radically new work of art. We are forced to adopt a naïve state of mind and encouraged to stay with the primary interpretants – emotional interpretants, our feelings, and energetic interpretants, our physiological responses. This is not to argue against 'reasonable feeling' and the flow of semiosis towards what Peirce calls the final interpretant (CP 5.491), in this case the aesthetic aim of the *summum bonum*, but to pay full attention to the flow itself, *i.e.,* suspending aesthetic judgement, the logical interpretant, in favour of the aesthetic experience. In this way we do not jump to a hasty conclusion about the meaning of a work of art with reference to its tradition but allow our complex bodily aesthetic experience to contribute to a new definition of the good.[7]

The above reading of Peirce gives us an understanding of the *meaning* of a work of art as the formation of a range of interpretants. In our engagement with a work of art we are involved in a semiotic process of interpretant formation, the flow of semiosis. As De Tienne in his paper "Le signe en personne chez Peirce, avec échos wittgensteiniens" points out : "Peirce gives us many reasons to think that the notion of person is primarily and intrinsically semiotic, a composition made of and kneaded by signs" (2012 : 30, je traduis).

Freud, in his early writings on aphasia, in1891, and amidst his correspondence with Fließ in 1895 and1896, (Freud 1954) proposed semiotic accounts of the psyche using graphic representations of systems of signs that refer both to mental and physical neuronal processes. Signs of perception and memory are 'written down' as *pictures* and *traces* that form the systems of memory. Freud describes a directional movement to successive re-writing and re-ordering of signs as they become translated into the logic of speech and gain consciousness. A failure of translation is Freud's first definition of repression, the form of negation that characterises the complex system of knowing and *not*-knowing that constitutes the *un*-conscious.

Re-reading Freud through Peirce, this movement from pictures and traces towards speech is akin to Peirce's account of symbol formation : 'Symbols grow. They come into being by development out of other signs, particularly from icons, or from mixed signs partaking of the nature of icons and symbols' (CP 2.302).

Freud's 1895 theory of perceptual judgement involves successive acts of comparison between the signs of perception and the signs of memory to identify a *constant* and differentiate the *variable*, which amounts to a subject-predicate organisation of perception. As Freud postulates that these signs refer also to the neuronal networks, the constant and variable are reflected in the energy state of neurones. It is a theory de-

rived from the work of Wilhelm Jerusalem's *Die Urtheilsfunction* (1895) anchoring these acts of comparison between mental images not only to the neuronal structure but also to the "internal movements of the body" (Freud 1954 : 120).

This finds its parallel in Peirce's early Kantian organisation of experience. In writing on 'Man's Glassy Essence', Peirce refers to his early conclusion that : "[...] a person is nothing but a symbol involving a general idea..." (EP2 : 350). As De Tienne (2002 : 205-206) points out, the principle agent of unification of representations shifts from an act of *judgement* in 1865 (W1 : 167), to the function of the *interpretant* in "On a New List of Categories" (EP1 : 6). Accordingly, the sense of unity of ourselves as persons emerges through the formation of an interpretant of our feelings, emotions and thoughts. Crucially this marks the appearance of the ego as a *logical effect*.

There is a problem in Freud's account of perceptual judgement that is reflected Peirce's theory of perception and may be teased apart by Peirce's theory. In a letter to Fließ dated 6.12.1896 (1954 : 174) Freud draws a graphic schema of the psyche differentiating between neurones engaged in perception that *do not bear a trace* and neurones which change state as signs of perception. I find this distinction of interest in relation to Peirce's theory of perception, in particular the distinction between the *percept* as the apprehension of something, an aspect of the flow of experience (the phaneron), which is not yet named, and the percept entailed by the acts of perceptual judgement that he calls the *percipuum* (CP 7.643).[8]

Our engagement with a work of art can reveal the fragility of the symbolic sense of self and ego. In paying attention to the emotional and energetic interpretants in our engagement with a work of art, so we may also need to pay attention to our selves as a process of semiosis that refuses to stabilise around a logical interpretant.

It is a position echoed by the early psychoanalyst Sigmund Bernfeld's (1932) "science of traces" that must be reconstructed and by J. Laplanche's (1982) conception of psychoanalysis as a process of detranslation, a return to the first registration of signs of our experience before they were ordered by the logic of interpretation, or a retrieval of non-translatable signs, signs which find their resonance in the repetitions of trauma.

That lack of stability is inherent in Freud's description of the ego as it develops in relation to an 'other', a Neighbour, through acts of comparison between perceptions of the other and memories of : "quite similar visual impressions of his own body" (1954 : 393-94). It is this discussion by Freud that underpins the post-Freudian Jacques Lacan's 1936 concept of the 'mirror phase', the developmental phase when the infant forms specular identifications with the Gestalt in the mirror, a point of jubilation underpinning our primary narcissism and the ideal

ego (1977 : 1-8). It is also the stage of awareness of our positioning as subjects in the familial and gendered social order, the imposition of group ego ideals and symbolic identifications. Lacan is clear that the mirror phase is not only developmental but also logical : it underpins the semiotic account of the self. The mirror phase as the relation and antagonism between these two structures of identification has been useful to a succession of visual and film theorists in explicating the viewer's identification with the screen – Teresa de Lauretis, Kaja Silverman, Jacqueline Rose, Parveen Adams.

At the kernel of Lacan's mirror phase is the importance of the image of the other based on Roger Caillois' work on mimicry and camouflage. Contemporary neuroscientist Giaccomo Rizzollati discovered that when a monkey saw another monkey reaching for a food reward the watching monkey exhibited the same neuronal response as if it was also in reality reaching for the banana. These monkey-see-monkey-do neurones are called "*mirror neurones*" (Rose 2006 : 166, 219). The logic at the heart of the mirror is a tussle between iconic reflection and an indexical sense of otherness. As Vilnyar Ramachndran writes, mirror-neurones underpin the liminality of that porous boundary between self and other : "Stick your tongue out next time you see a new-born-baby and the baby will stick its tongue out, mimicking your behaviour, instantly dissolving the boundary, the arbitrary barrier between self and other".[9]

In 1935, the psychoanalyst Paul Schilder working on the phenomenon of phantom limbs drew a distinction between the body-image and our internal postural model of the body. Whereas our body-image develops via the image of the other, the postural model is an internal mapping of our body based on resistance to other and the physical reality of our world. This can be compared to the current work by neuroscientists who have identified regions of the brain on the basis of Wilder Penfield's map pings (Ramachandran 2005 : 25-27).

As John Muller points out in *Beyond the Psychoanalytic Dyad* (1996), the symbiotic affirmation between mother and infant formed through *iconic reflection* has to be broken by recognition of *indexical otherness*. Muller initially draws from the clinical work of Colwyn Trevarthen who cites robust examples of the early infant's capacity for mimicry and the importance of this iconicity to emotional development and communication (Muller 1996 : 46-47). In this context, weaning the action of turning away, appears as an index of negation, whereas weaning, the action of turning away are *indexes of negation*, whereas saying "no" is an instantiation of the *symbol of negation.* These acts of refusal break the iconic mimetic chain by introducing a dynamic object. This generates a range of responses in the infant, including on the one hand a return to fantasy and wish fulfilment (immediate interpretants) and, on the other hand, an acknowledgement of mother as 'other' (dynamical interpretants).

Certain works of art foreground the complexity of self by drawing the

viewer right into the heart of the transitive 'I-you' relation, by bringing into play the mirror function through the image of the other, and our response as the index of resistance.

The self-portrait (fig.6) by the surrealist artist and writer Claude Cahun, 1928, draws the viewer into the narcissistic play between self and reflection in the mirror (Leperlier 1992). The theme of narcissism runs as a subject matter throughout her *oeuvre*. Here, the gaze is not returned directly from the mirror but is deliberately deflected, as if there is a call from outside the logic of self-reflection, an awareness of otherness that breaks the illusion. The Cahun self-portrait (1929), was reproduced for the journal *Bifur*, no.5, 1930, with the title '*Frontière Humaine*' (fig.7). It raises the question of the boundary between the human and the other as non-human. The head is shaven and distorted through manipulation of the negative. Head and shoulders end in blackness : the body is not anchored in material space and the symbolic referent points of gender are not given. Of the same period, another self-portrait (1928) shows Cahun in an uncomfortable reversed posture (fig.8). I cannot help but echo the twist in the spine through that play of iconic reflection that finds its real effects in my indexical response. The emotional interpretants may find expression as laughter, horror, discomfort, fear and shock : the shock not of novelty but that which displaces the comfortable symbolic structure of the self; the shock that may manifest as energetic interpretants – a shiver or a drop in body temperature, an involuntary turning away.

From Left to Right : Figure 6 - Claude Cahun, *Self-Portrait*, 1928. © Jersey Museums Service; Figure 7 - Claude Cahun, *Frontière Humaine*, 1929. Repr. in *Bifur*, no. 5, 1930. © Jersey Museums Service; and Figure 8 - Claude Cahun, *Self-Portrait Twisted Body*, 1929. © Jersey Museums Service

To recap, our mimetic iconic response to the image of the other, or our mirror reflection, give rise to emotional and energetic interpretants – indexes of the body that include feelings, involuntary motor-responses and bodily sensations. These interpretants form our aesthetic experience

of the work of art and inform our critical interpretation. Suspension of logical interpretants allows a further process of semiosis : namely, a semiotic account of re-visioning.

3.1 Hypoicon and the Work of Art, Thirdness and Metaphor

Peirce's view of the work of art embeds its iconicity within a complex signifying process, for as Peirce writes in the *Syllabus* (1903), a pure icon has no existence :

> But most strictly speaking, even an idea, except in the sense of a possibility, or Firstness, cannot be an Icon. A possibility alone is an Icon purely by virtue of its quality; and its object can only be a Firstness. But a sign may be *iconic*, that is, may represent its object mainly by its similarity, no matter what its mode of being. If a substantive be wanted, an iconic Representamen may be termed a *hypoicon*. Any material image, as a painting, is largely conventional in its mode of representation; but in itself, without legend or label, it may be called a hypoicon (EP2 : 273-274).

Peirce goes on to give a relational account of the hypoicon as a first that also signifies through all three categories :

> Those which partake of simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are *images*; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are *diagrams*; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are *metaphors* (EP2 : 274).

As metaphor, that is the thirdness derived from parallelism, the work of art derives its force as a signifying second, which opens up our contemplation of image as first firstness : "It is the Firstness that truly belongs to the Thirdness in its achievement of Secondness" (Haley 1988 : 57). The ontology of Peirce's account of image is then separable from the material properties of the work of art, returning us to his account of aesthetic quality and presentness, as cited above (EP2 : 149-150, 190, 201).

Metaphor according to Peirce is a parallelism of discrete terms. Parallelism is used by Aristotle's *Poetics* to define metaphor as a collapsed simile developed by those who observe a likeness between things. In *The Art of Rhetoric*, however, Aristotle draws a radical distinction between simile and metaphor : metaphor should surprise the reader through its liveliness : "Most witticisms are also produced through metaphor and an additional illusion; for what the hearer hears becomes clearer to him through its being the opposite to what he thought, and the mind seems to say, 'How true, and I was wrong'" (1991 : 239). Simile does not say outright that "this" *is* "that", and therefore the hearer is less interested in the idea.

Metaphor should exceed its iconic basis, 'likeness'. Metaphor's most important function is to force identification between particulars, "'this' is 'that'" : colliding two haeccities, yoking together two separate indexes and forcing them into an iconic relation.[10] It is this shock of Secondness

that characterises the radical force of metaphor : the shock of lightening that Breton used to define a good metaphor.

Meret Oppenheim's, 1936, "*Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers*", (Burckhardt & Curiger 1996 : Pl.17) juxtaposes the fur glove and the hand made of wood (fig.9). Although the glove made of fur is not unfamiliar, Oppenheim creates a strangeness because the viewer is left to create a parallelism, to find a thirdness that reconciles these separate indexes into a whole, the hypoicon. As Peirce says, there is a quality of totality about the good work of art that reaches "beyond our ken" (EP2 : 194). This work disturbs the boundary of the body, and like Cahun's "*Frontière Humaine*", questions the security of our symbolic self.

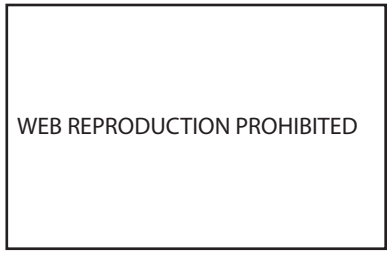

Figure 9 - Meret Oppenheim, *Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers,* 1936. ©DACS

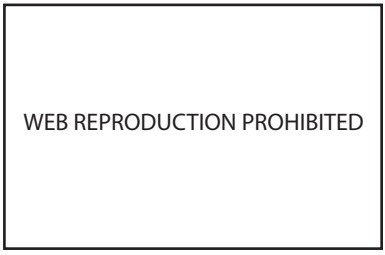

Figure 10 - Meret Hoppenheim, *My Nurse,* 1936. © DACS

Metaphor is emphatically not a symbol : a symbol obeys a law-like regularity whereas metaphor produces radically new meaning irreconcilable to the logical mind. Metaphor is uniquely transgressive of categories, as Paul Ricoeur describes in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977) metaphor is an event disrupting the immediate context. Metaphor is estranged from our normal construction of reality, pointing to the unknown First of Firstness, image, with possibly disturbing consequence.

Oppenheim's 1936 "*My Nurse*" (Burckhardt & Curiger 1996 : Pl.16) also disturbs the boundary of the human body (fig.10). The shoes, presented as the thing itself metonymic of the body, are re-figured as a leg

of lamb served on a dinner plate. The title, "*My Nurse*", adds a narrative to our interpretation of the work. The strength of Oppenheim's work lies not only in the extreme disparity of the metaphoric elements but, as above, but equally in her ability to find a hypoiconic structure that appears to reconcile the irreconcilable. The viewer is drawn into experiencing the work through an iconic resonance with a body-image that becomes tangible through the physicality of our interpretants.

Contemporary artist Helen Sear literally sandwiches together two separate negative portraits of the same person leaving a small gap between the negatives, and prints them together : two indices collided into a hypoicon (fig.11). The power of the photograph resides in the indeterminacy of reference. The individual is poised on the verge of disappearance into light and darkness – a quality of strangeness impossible to verbalise, that approaches the condition of Peirce's First of Firstness, the image.

Figure 11 - *2XDH,* 2001. ©Helen Sear. Permission given by artist.

This photographic process is exactly how Freud introduces the concept of condensation as one of the rhetorical processes of constructing the rebus of dreams in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (SE IV : 282-84). Condensation is compared to the superimposition of two photographic plates. This is the same semiotic structure as identification applied to a parallelism created between two people (SE IV : 319-20) and identification as earlier defined in the 'I-you' relation, which characterises the formation of the ego. Our fictive ego is a therefore a hypoicon of terms, an assemblage of residual identifications. In our engagement with these works by Oppeneheim and Sear we re-learn that we are not stable symbolic subjects, subjects of the law, but hypoicons, quick to unravel under pressure, as if we were all as diverse as the characters of a tragedy or comedy by Shakespeare.

These works point to the fragility of our haeccity; how frail is our unique existence, critically distinct from our neighbouring other and the Other of total alterity : the index of existence, as the index of negation, always at stake :

> The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by

> ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man,
>
> "...proud man,
>
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
>
> His glassy essence."' (CP 5.317)

4.1 Hypoicon and the Work of Art, Secondness and Diagram

> A diagram, indeed, so far as it has a general signification, is not a pure icon; but in the middle of our reasonings we forget that abstractness in great measure, and the diagram is for us the very thing. So in contemplating a painting, there is a moment when we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction of the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream, – not any particular existence, and yet not general. At that moment we are contemplating an *icon* (EP1 : 226).

Compare this statement by Peirce of 1885 from ("On the Algebra of Logic : A Contribution to the Philosophy of Notation"), with how contemporary philosopher Gilles Deleuze describes the work of art as a kind of encounter with its particular ontology : "As a spectator I experience the sensation *only by entering the painting*, by reaching the *unity* of *sensing and the sensed*" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994 : 35).

Francis Bacon : The Logic of Sensation (Deleuze 2003) presents an exposition of Francis Bacon's portraits predicated on the semiotics of Peirce and Henri Bergson's metaphysics of the image. Deleuze opposes the figure as icon, to the diagram, the diagram here defined as that which supports a-signifying traits – traces of gesture, paint – indexes that signify haptic experience. This trace of the tangible belongs to the nervous system, to flesh as opposed to intellect. Bacon, Deleuze writes, pursues a strange project as a portrait painter, namely to dismantle the face and re-discover the head. These are traits that are non-mimetic and yet allow us, nonetheless, to identify the thing.

This is the problem that is posed by the quotation from Peirce above : the painting has a peculiar state of existence : "[...] not any particular existence, and yet not general. At that moment we are contemplating an *icon*" (EP1 : 226). The material painting functions, as Deleuze writes, to signify the haptic, to draw us in through the diagram, not to contemplate the iconic mimetic resemblance of a face, but as Peirce points out, to gain awareness of the pure icon, the First of Firstness, as ontologically distinct from the pictorial icon that is iconic of an object.

In an attempt to apprehend the *image* Deleuze focuses our attention on the material and abstract relations of the painting :

> It is in the triptychs that colours become light, and that light divides itself into colours. In them, one discovers rhythm as the essence of painting. [...] Rhythms are the only characters, the only Figures. (2003 : xv)

The essence of the painting is the tension between the figure (iconic representation of the object) and the diagram, defined through rhythm; rhythm as relations of periodicity and interruption. Deleuze draws an equivalence between the material relations of the painting and the force that unifies our different sensory states – the visual, aural and haptic; rhythm as an objective order detached from the personal : "This ground, this rhythmic unity of the senses, can be discovered only by going beyond the organism. The phenomenological hypothesis is perhaps insufficient because it merely invokes the lived body" (Deleuze 2003 : 44). For the work of art, as defined by Deleuze & Guattari, is : "[...] *a bloc of sensations, that is to say a compound of percepts and affects*. [...] Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man..." (1994 : 164).

Peirce writes that the qualities of feeling as Firsts, the primary definition of aesthetic experience as feeling, are independent of mind and change (CP 1.305-6). And in Freud we find an objective impersonal definition of rhythm as that which governs the processes of mind-body. In "The Mystic Writing Pad" (1925), Freud writes about the drive of translation, from perception towards consciousness being not continuous, but rather acting in pulses : "I further had a suspicion that this discontinuous method of functioning of the system Pcpt.-Cs. lies at the bottom of the origin of the concept of time" (SE XIX : 231).[11]

Central to Freud's pulse, rhythm, periodicity and vacillation, is the play of variation and invariance. It is not an absolute metrical *symbol*, but an interplay in which an *iconic* relation of similarity is interrupted by difference, that is, by the *index*. Freud used the analogy with music throughout his writings.[12] Theodore Reik, in "Concerning Tact, Time, and Rhythm" (1936), points out that Freud's use of the word 'Takt', in interpretation, refers not to being tactful but to the musical term. The exact moment of interpretation depends on the analyst being unconsciously in step with the rhythm of the analysand's unconscious processes and thus one step ahead. Reik points out the many musical references throughout Freud's conceptualisation; for example the comparison between *Durcharbeitung* and *Durchführung*, the working out and working over or through that takes place between the introduction and conclusion of a sonata, and the 'tempo' of the psychoanalytic process as opposed to duration or time.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud writes of the dualistic rhythm of the drives, Eros and Thanatos :

> It is as though the life of the organism moved with a vacillating rhythm. One group of instincts rushes forward so as to reach the final aim of life as swiftly as possible; but when a particular stage in the advance has been reached, the other group jerks back to a certain point to make a fresh start and so prolong the journey. (SE XVIII 40-41)

Peirce, quotes Josiah Royce on how rhythm throws light on consciousness as a continuum :

> [...] while the successive presentations of the rhythm form a sort of stream of events, each one of which gradually dies out of mind as the new event occurs. In consciousness there is no such thing as an indivisible present moment (CP 8.291).

DADA filmmakers Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter made abstract scroll paintings and silent films that aspired to the condition of music, taking their reference to rhythm from the philosophy of Henri Bergson. At the heart of new mathematics, according to Bergson, is movement in the genesis of geometrical shapes; as space stands for matter, so time stands for life or spirit; the direction of life is upwards and that of matter downwards : "What is real is the continual *change of* form : *form is only a snapshot view of a transition*" (1998 : 318-19).

Hans Richter's *Rhythmus* (1921), is a purely abstract film in which squares of black and white appear to open and close and move in relation to one another, playing with ambiguities of space, shifting one behind the other, reversing relations of figure and ground and allowing the plane of graphic presentation to shift from the plane of the screen to an experience of depth. The dynamism of the process draws the viewer into a rhythmical notation involving change from light to dark, breath and pulse, until the experience of silence becomes audible. The film is not an iconic representation of an object but opens up an experience that can best be described through Peirce's definition of image as first firstness : an image graphed through time as rhythm. *Image* is not then a pictorial sign but the experience of the rhythmic relation, which is aural and haptic, evoked through the visual.

Similarly the contemporary UK artist Louisa Fairclough makes moving image digital works that open up the field of the figurative to the haptic experience of rhythm. "*Steppe*" (1999), documents one of the many transcontinental journeys that Fairclough has made alone on her bicycle (fig.12) : "*Steppe* was filmed from the level of the handlebars, the video uses a fragment from a six-week bicycle journey attempting to reach the Aral Sea.

Figure 12- Still from *Steppe*, 1999. Louisa Fairclough. ©Permission given by artist.

Stretching a one-second pan to a thirteen-minute shimmering horizon, it oscillates forwards then backwards through twenty five frames".[13]

The field of landscape disappears into a screen that, through the oscillation of time, sets up a new rhythm. Occasionally, as in the work of Collins cited above, the human figure will appear caught in the layers of editing. There is a point at which this rhythm ceases to be. To quote again from Deleuze's *The Logic of Sensation* :

> We can seek the unity of rhythm only at the point where rhythm itself plunges into chaos, into the night, at the point where differences of level are perpetually and violently mixed (2003 : 44).

This plunge into 'the chaos of night' returns us to that question of origin : where rhythm is the pulse of semiotic processes and the work of art is hinged on those acts of disappearance and appearance. Where the drive to be, to exist, is opposed to death and our return to inorganic matter. Where the sign has to differentiate from the 'nothingness' that is 'everything'.

As opposed to the person identified through argument, thought, and the logical interpretant, Peirce offers another, more tenuous, analogue for the separateness of personhood :

> A person is, in truth, like a cluster of stars, which appears to be one star when viewed with the naked eye, but which scanned with the telescope of scientific psychology is found on the one hand, to be multiple within itself, and on the other hand to have no absolute demarcation from a neighbouring condensation (R 403 ISP 2-3 [De Tienne 2012 : 212]).

5.1 Firstness and Image : The Phaneron

> Phaneroscopy is the description of the phaneron; and by the phaneron I mean the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not (CP 1.284).

The word phaneron is derived from the Greek for all that is manifest in its entirety, as opposed to all that which can be observed in the external world.[14] In a later paper, "The Basis of Pragmaticism in Phaneroscopy" (1906), Peirce writes of the phaneron not in terms of representation of the real but as a phenomenological account of semblance, seemingness. The phaneron consists of indecomposable elements :

> [...] I mean by it something which not only is elementary, since it seems so, and seeming is the only constituent of the Phaneron has, as such, but is moreover incapable of being separated by logical analysis into parts, whether they be substantial, essential, relative, or any other kind of parts. Thus, a cow inattentively regarded may perhaps be an element of the Phaneron; but whether it can be so or not, it is certain that it can be analyzed logically into many parts of different kinds that are not in it as a constituent of the Phaneron, since they were not in mind in the same way as the cow was, nor in any way in which the cow, as an appearance in the Phaneron, could be

said to be formed of these parts (EP2 : 362).

The Phaneron cannot be *represented*. As the above example shows : to analyse the cow is to throw the cow out – so to speak – of the phaneron. This problem is also articulated in Peirce's "On Phenomenology" (1903); the phenomenologist requires three faculties :

> The first and foremost is that rare faculty, the faculty of seeing what stares one in the face, just as it presents itself, unreplaced by any interpretation, unsophisticated by any allowance for this or for that supposed modifying circumstance. This is the faculty of the artist who sees for example the apparent colors of nature as they appear. When the ground is covered by snow on which the sun shines brightly except where shadows fall, if you ask any ordinary man what its color appears to be, he will tell you white, pure white, whiter in the sunlight, a little greyish in the shadow. But that is not what is before his eyes that he is describing; it is his theory of what ought to be seen. The artist will tell him that the shadows are not grey but a dull blue and that the snow in the sunshine is of a rich yellow. That artist's observational power is what is most wanted in the study of phenomenology (EP2 : 147).

Peirce goes on to write that the phenomenologist also requires the faculty of tenacity to adhere to the particularities of experience and the mathematician's faculty of generalisation. As the phaneron cannot be the object of representation it has to be projected as a presentation, its relations graphed through the existential graphs :

> The Phaneron being itself far too elusive for direct observation, there can be no better method of studying it than through the Diagram of it which the System of Existential Graphs puts at our disposition (MS 193 : 23).

The problematics of knowing the phaneron reflect the indivisibility of direct apprehension and *presentness*. This returns us to the earlier quote from Peirce cited above : "Go out under the blue dome of heaven and look at what is present as it appears to the artist's eye" (EP2 : 149). Although this may sound like another definition of Firstness, the phaneron has to be understood as the nascent state of all three metaphysical categories.

In the light of De Tienne's work on the phaneron as a pre-semiotic this later statement from Peirce (1910) becomes more intelligible :

> By Phaneroscopy I mean the study of whatever consciousness puts into one's Immediate and Complete possession. [...] For such direct object of Consciousness I venture to coin the term 'Prebits' (MS 645 : 3). [...] once I do become aware of the Prebit I am aware not aware not merely of a before a Sign of it, or Substitute for it, or any sort of proxy, vicar, attorney, succedaneum, dummy, or representative of it but to be put *facie ad faciem* before the Phaneron, the very Prebit itself (MS 645 : 5).

Crucially, this confrontation '*facie ad faciem*' before the phaneron constitutes the secondness of experience and the appearance of a *dyadic* relation.

Face-to face describes the shock of difference at the heart of an encounter with an 'other' : the split of ego and non-ego; a shock that

echoes Peirce's writings about the percept as bi-polar shock.

This split in the phaneron described as the appearance of 'self and other' reflects Peirce's early interest in Coleridge's *tuism* and his first formulation of the sign through the appearance of the relation *I/you/IT*.[15] It is this initial split of ego and non-ego that becomes the kernel of the triadic sign, signification and semiosis.

De Tienne (2000 : 135) refers to Peirce's discussion of the logic of continuity (1898), using the blackboard as analogy :

> Let the clean blackboard be a sort of diagram of the original vague potentiality [...] I draw a chalk line on the board... The whiteness is a Firstness – a springing up of something new. But the boundary between the black and white is neither black, nor white, nor neither, nor both. It is the pairedness of the two. It is for the white the active Secondness of the black; for the black the active Secondness of the white (CP 6.203).

Secondness as the reaction between black and white resides within the continuum of the surface of the blackboard. According to Peirce's cosmology, discontinuity has to be a feature of the phaneron – as the interplay of all three categories.

This transition from firstness to secondness, from possibility to existence, only becomes a semiotic sign with the formation of the interpretant. The sign that is distinct from the thirdness of the phaneron : "I cannot say that an undecomposable tertian element of the phaneron is always a sign : in however an extended sense I am decidedly inclined to think it is not so" (MS 284 : 58). Peirce goes on to describe the difficulty of defining the sign :

> Its essential characters are no doubt that it should have an object and an interpretant, or interpreting sign, but to convert that statement into a definition is not so easy. There is no doubt in my own mind that all our thinking is dialogic, that is, of the nature of an appeal from the self of the present moment to the self of further consideration, in which the interpretant of the thought is to be looked for (*ibid.*).

Following this discussion of the phaneron and the appearance of the sign, I want to look at the work of art, and revisit discussion of it as bringing into being signs which are differentiated from the phaneron and present the phaneron as image. We could think of the two-dimensional pictorial plane, or three-dimensional objects, or moving image on some kind of screen, as signifying not only as the plane of symbolic assertion or the vehicle of metaphor, but as the presentation of a diagram that graphs the phaneron. Peirce's late discussion of the status of the sign returns us to the formation of the interpretant within a dialogic experience that emerges from our *encounter* with a work of art.

Visual theory has drawn on psychoanalysis for theories of the preverbal, which coincide with pre-object relations, as categorically distinct from language. For example Julia Kristeva's theorisation of the pre-

logical organisation of speech, anchored in the rhythms of the mother's body, the chora, distinguished from verbal language by a thetic break (1984). This point of view is opposed by theorists such as the psychologist Colwyn Trevarthen, who has used Peirce's semiotics to stress the continuum between the *to-and-fro* of touch and the gaze between mother and child and the development of verbal language (1994). His arguments provides evidence for Freud's early speculations, between 1891 to 1895, on the continuum between signs of perception, action and imagination, and signs of speech.

Claude Cahun's 1930 *Aveux non avenus* (fig.13) presents the viewer with a complex photo-collage recycling Cahun's previous self-portraits and juxtaposing the fragmented body with other visual elements. The text of *Aveux non avenus* is a book-length assemblage of memoirs, poems, letters, fiction, dialogue and essays that address the fallacies of narcissism, narcissistic love objects, and the panoply of sexuality. The photo-collages, which introduce each chapter, present the different arguments of the text while also operating as complex self-portraits : the self-portrait as a hypoicon, a kind of metaphor of disparate elements held together by the frame of the page.

Figure 13 - Claude Cahun, *Aveux non Avenus*, 1930, Plate X. ©Copyright non-traceable.

In this particular plate X the dyadic relation of narcissism is interrupted by the oedipal figure : the triad of the family, the triadic flag bearing the text "La Sainte Famille". The letters 'œ' float in an ambiguous space as if the oedipal triangle has broken apart. In the centre of the collage a tree grows from the navel of a body lying horizontal. The tree bears strange fruits – an eye, mouth, ear and hand – the indexes of communication.

Freud, in two footnotes to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (SE IV) refers to the navel of the dream as the limit of interpretation, which is also,

paradoxically, infinite interpretation. Freud does not comment on his choice of image, but navel signifies birth, suggesting a rupturing parturition of the sign. In the curious topology of the psyche, birth and death of the sign can be signified by the same 'hole' in signification.

Cahun plays a highly self-conscious game with the emergence of signification and semiosis and the emergence of the self. Consider Cahun's collage as a presentation of the phaneron; the page, then, takes on the role of diagramming the phaneron and its relations. As I enter into the encounter with this work of art, I slip through the stages of symbol, metaphor, and representation into a realm of image and relations between the image that seeks a new interpretant. In the way that Peirce suggests, dialogic thinking open up an address : "from the self of the present moment to the self of further consideration, in which the interpretant of the thought is to be looked for" (MS. 284 : 58), I am seeking a new interpretant.

To return to the demand that George Steiner makes of a great work of art : somehow the work of art asks us to engage with the material of its own origin, the emergence of its signifying status is found in this *face-to-face* encounter with the phaneron. That is the precision of secondness, existence, which seeks a new interpretant : the sign.

The work of art offers us a re-staging of the sign from an absolute nothingness, which as Peirce writes in 1898 is also possibility :

> We start, then, with nothing, pure zero. But this is not the nothing of negation. For not means other than, and other is merely a synonym of the ordinal numeral second. As such it implies a first; while the present pure zero is prior to every first. The nothing of negation is the nothing of death, which comes second to, or after, everything. But this pure zero is the nothing of not having been born. There is no individual thing, no compulsion, outward nor inward, no law. It is the germinal nothing, in which the whole universe is involved or foreshadowed. As such, it is absolutely undefined and unlimited possibility – boundless possibility. There is no compulsion and no law. It is boundless freedom (CP 6.217).

Notes

1. Thanks to the Leverhulme for a research fellowship in 2003, which enabled the research for this paper.
2. Essays edited by Penny Florence and Nicola Foster (2000) *Differential Aesthetics* set out to bring together writings by contemporary artists and theorists to consider a framework for aesthetics that encompasses material practice and its theorisation. Its remit is interdisciplinary, bringing together very different discursive, social and epistemological worlds, addressing key questions of aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement, including beauty and feminism. The last essay by Barb Bolt (p. 315-332) introduces the work of Peirce precisely replying to the criticism that signification necessarily entails the loss of the thing.
3. As we will see later in this paper, this definition of the indivisible character of experience resembles Peirce's description of the phaneron.
4. This textual description of *Fenlandia* is to be found on Susan Collins' website,

<http://www.susan-collins.net/fenlandia> with live image relay and an archive of previous images. The first camera was installed at the Anchor Inn, Sutton Gault in the area of Cambridgeshire known as Silicon Fen. It ran for 12 months from May 2004 until 14th May 2005. This was followed in 2005 by cameras at Cambourne Business Park, Cambridgeshire (also Silicon Fen) and at Greenham Common and Bracknell, Berkshire (Silicon Valley). For Silicon Glen (Glenlandia) a camera has been installed on the banks of Loch Faskally, Pitlochry, Perthshire and will continue until 2007.

5. <http://www..ucl.ac.uk/slade/slide/sfafdoc.html>
6. Fanny Aboulker : "When finished, this piece will be the numbers from zero to six million written on sheets of paper. Six million is the number of Jews killed during the Second World War or, anyway, the number everybody remembers. (Depending on counting methods,the figure ranges between five million one hundred and six million.) It will be finished on 7th February 2010 if I write 1500 numbers a day. This means that I will take more than eleven years to write down the number of people killed in a period of four years". <http://www.sixmillion.org/>
7. Peirce's views on the aesthetic aim as the *summum bonum* is discussed here by Martin Lefebvre in his excellent paper "Peirce's Esthetics : A Taste for Signs in Art" in this issue of *RS/SI*. My paper does not contradict the importance of the *summum bonum* and the admirable in itself : rather by concentrating on the implications of the emotional and energetic interpretants as intrinsic to the meaning of a work of art, the final interpretant, a new habit, may then contribute to a new definition of the *summum bonum*.
8. I will return to this distinction between the *percept* and the *percipuum*, in relation to Peirce's concept of the *phaneron*, in the last section of the paper.
9. Vilniyar Ramachandran's BBC Reith lectures of 2003 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith> focus on *mimicry* and the ability to mime complex actions as central to theories of communication and autism.
10. For essays, which address the iconicity and the heterodox of the metaphor, respectively please see Petrelli (2006) and Hausman (2006).
11. There is a very interesting discussion to be had here about the difference between our experience of duration and the function of our awareness of time, as a difference between the index and symbol of negation, which I am not able to develop here. See Laplanche (1999). Laplanche, like Bergson, postulates that the 'not-me' inert object self of the unconscious is a subject to the continuous experience of duration. Time, however, belongs to the activity of consciousness, which provides limits, limits of perception and excitation that define the individual as an entity in defence of the inert, matter of the world.
12. For an exposition of Freud's use of musical terms throughout his writings see Leader's (2000 : 88-119).
13. Further documentation of this and other works by Louisa Fairclough are available on her website <http://www.louisafairclough.com/gallery3.htm>
14. De Tienne (2000). I am indebted to André De Tienne for his discussion of the phaneron that took place at the PEP (2003) for this, and subsequent papers on the subject including (De Tienne 2004).
15. Peirce *Century Dictionary* entry for *tuism* (W1 : xxix). "I, IT, and THOU A Book giving Instruction in some of the Elements of Thought" (W1 : 45-46). "Modus of the IT" (W1 : 47-49). "The Natural History of Words", Jan. 1869 (MS 40). I/THOU/IT that continues to underpin the introduction of the "New List" of 1867 (EP1 : 6).
16. We may think of late Lacan's interest in topological forms for modelling the psyche, such as the moebius strip and the Klein bottle. For an extended use of topology addressing the problems of autism please see Burgoyne (2000).

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Abstract

In the tradition of Rosalind Krauss' essay "Notes on the Index" (1986) I want to re-posit the importance of the indexical status of the work of art and look at how Peirce's views of aesthetics, his theory of the sign, and his version of phenomenology, can be useful to our understanding of contemporary works of art. The work of art that emerges from reading Peirce is not a representation of an object in the world but a mode of presentation of experience and in particular feeling. Defined as a complex form of icon, a hypoicon, the work of art is not constrained to mimetic representation but engaged in actively re-interpreting our world and our sense of self, cutting through preconceptions by returning us to the present : presentness, and the possibilities of firstness. Peirce's late discussion on the study of phenomena, phaneroscopy, allows us to understand the work of art both as a part of our experience, and also as giving meaning to our experience : the work of art as a re-staging of the sign on the cusp between possibility and existence.

Keywords : Art; Meaning; Phaneron; Metaphor; Hypoicon; Psychoanalysis.

Résumé

À la façon de Rosalind Krauss dans son article de 1986, “Notes on the Index”, je souhaite de nouveau souligner l’importance du statut indiciaire dans les oeuvres d’art tout en examinant comment la conception peircéenne de l’esthétique, sa théorie du signe et sa phénoménologie peuvent nous être utiles pour étudier l’art contemporain. L’idée d’oeuvre d’art qui émerge de la lecture de Peirce n’est pas fondée sur la représentation d’un objet du monde; elle relève plutôt d’un mode de présentation de l’expérience et plus spécialement d’un sentiment. Définie comme une forme complexe d’icône, une hypoicône, l’oeuvre d’art ne se limite aucunement à sa représentation mimétique. Elle vise plutôt à ré-interpréter notre monde et notre subjectivité au-delà de toute préoccupation de manière à nous retourner au *présent* : présentité et premièreté. Les considérations tardives de Peirce sur le phénomène et la phanéroscopie nous permettent de saisir l’oeuvre d’art comme à la fois faisant partie de notre expérience et donnant sens à celle-ci : l’oeuvre d’art met en scène le signe à la frontière de la possibilité et de l’existence.

Mots-clés : *Art*; *Meaning*; *Phaneron*; *Metaphor*; *Hypoicon*; *Psychoanalysis*.

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