

THE RELEVANCE OF SECONDNESS TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE DIALOGICAL SELF

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ABSTRACT. The semiotic self has been defined as a continuous process of meaning generation whereby multiple particular identities are integrated through an internal dialogue which evolves along time. Thought is construed as an internal conversation of the self of the present which stands for the self of the past to address the self of a future moment, in a similar way as it addresses others. We present an exploratory qualitative research aimed at observing an enactment of the internal conversation of ten participants at a workshop of psychodrama. The procedure is based on the empty chair technique created by J. L. Moreno. Participants were placed in a situation of strong personal doubt in order to stimulate reflective thought. The analysis focuses on the interaction of different inner voices, and it applies Peirce's phenomenological categories. The consciousness of a resistance (the category of *Secondness*) constitutes the self and is logically related to the emergence of distinct multiple identities. As a conclusion, we argue that the capacity to tolerate self-contradiction fosters the semiotic development of the self as an interpretive agency.

Keywords: meaning, internal-dialogue, self-contradiction, self semiotic, self dialogical.

Wiley (1994) construes the semiotic self as a three pronoun me-I-you dialogical model. This model is discussed in the inaugural issue of the *International Journal for Dialogical Science*, which opens with an article on pragmatism and the dialogical self (Wiley 2006). In it he proposes pragmatic semiotic as a theory of inner speech, which is debated by two articles in that issue (Colapietro (2006) and Lysaker (2006)). Both acknowledge the relevance of pragmatism as a contribution for the study of the dialogical self, in spite of some reservations to Wiley's take. Colapietro manifests concern about his opposing intersubjective and private meanings, as a return to dualism, which American pragmatists have historically tried to overcome. Regarding the dialogical self model, Hermans (2000, p. 802) asserts the need to avoid the dualism entailed by the "exclusive opposition" of the intra-psychological and the inter-psychological. Lysaker (2006) mentions two flaws of Wiley's self model: 1) it

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overemphasizes the cognitive aspect of self-awareness; 2) it does not account adequately for the spontaneous, vague stream of feelings. Lysaker argues that Wiley's triadic model brings an interesting perspective: the correspondence of the pronouns with the self in the past-present-future moments "brings a multi-dimensional temporality into the heart of the dialogical self" (p. 42). For Lysaker, the I pronoun occupies a central position, which overemphasizes cognitive control, whereas in emotionally charged situations, our awareness can be more adequately depicted as "passenger" than as "driver" (p. 43).

Ours is an attempt to contribute to the discussion of the flaws of the ubiquitous dualistic bent, which sunders apart that which is posited as a continuum by triadic semiotic, the theory developed by C. S. Peirce (1839-1914). We hope to do so by making explicit and developing the phenomenological theory underlying Wiley's *I-me-you* model of internal conversation. Thus we can study the experience of dialogical thought by using the triadic semiotic model as our main analytical tool. For that aim, we carried out a theoretically informed empirical research to collect data, to which triadic analysis was applied. The phenomenological foundation whose categories corresponds to three modes of the experience of the self is introduced but not sufficiently developed in Wiley's (1994) model of internal conversation. By highlighting its phenomenological dimension, triadic analysis may be used to study the three positions of the semiotic self along the time axis without thereby granting the *I* pronoun a central position. We carried out a theoretically informed empirical research, so as to apply the triadic analysis to our data. Precisely, Peircean phenomenological analysis is based on a triadic logic that proposes itself as an alternative to "the axe of dualism (which leaves) as its ultimate elements, unrelated chunks of being" (CP 7.570).¹

Based on Colapietro's (1989) study of Peirce's conception of the self, and on Wiley's (1994) semiotic/sociological reworking of it, we try to build on the implications of a triadic, dialogical self for the psychological study of human identity. The temporal conception of the self in Wiley's (1994) model results from a developmental conception of the triadic sign. The account of the three positions me-I-you in temporal terms – Past-Present-Future –corresponds to the three logical components of the triadic sign: Object-Representamen-Interpretant, which, in turn, are based on Peirce's three universal categories of Secondness-Firstness-Thirdness, which serve to analyze every possible form of experience, be it perceptual, imaginary or cognitive. There is a possible contribution of the pragmatic semiotic tradition to psychological studies which depends on the phenomenological categories. Although the pronouns me-I-you are a useful device to describe the three dialogical positions, they do not match the actual use of these pronouns in ordinary speech. That is why our take does not deal with the actual

¹ We follow the convention of quoting Peirce with the notation "CP [x.xxx]", referred to volume and paragraph in *The Collected papers of Charles S. Peirce* (1936-58).

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use of those pronouns, but with the three universal categories of experience. In fact, the latter justify the juxtaposition of Wiley's model of internal conversation with the triadic sign model. This shift of emphasis may help overcome the flaws of the model which were pointed out usefully by Lysaker and Colapietro.

The semiotic approach shares crucial aspects with Hermans & Kempen's (1993) dialogical self. One of them is the goal to explain plurality as well as multiplicity. Among the multiple positions, the dialogical model postulates a "metaposition" as an account of "inclusive opposition of unity and multiplicity" (Hermans 2000, p. 802). Dialogical multiplicity is distinct from "dysfunctional fragmentation" (Hermans, 2000). The semiotic self is an evolving process which has the same kind of logical unity as the natural development of meaning, and thereby of human cognition. Such multiplicity, does not stop the self from functioning as an "overarching identity" (Colapietro, 1990), as the product of consistency along time. Its relevance to psychology lies in that internal multiplicity does not jeopardize the notion of an integral self. Andacht & Michel (2005, p. 57) have proposed that Wiley's (1994) "multiple particular identities" correspond semiotically to "dynamical interpretants", which Peirce defines as "whatever interpretation any mind actually makes of a sign" (CP 8.315). The self as both an overarching identity and an evolving sign functions as a source of human autonomy and self-control. Valsiner (2002) proposes that semiotic mediation is related to the capacity of synthesis which brings about "the auto-regulatory function of the dialogical self" (p. 262). This is compatible with the Peircean phenomenological category of Thirdness, which accounts for all kinds of law-like, general, predictable behavior.

Wiley's (1994, p. 12) construes the overarching self in contradistinction to our historical identities; the former is a universal semiotic capacity, while the multiple particular identities are the concrete contents of the interpretive process. Our own hypothesis is that the dialogical functioning of thought presupposes an experience of self-contradiction which leads to the emergence of distinct identities and the overarching self process develops as a logical synthesis through the generation of further interpretants.

This article consists of two parts. In the first, we discuss some of the theoretical implications of the triadic semiotic perspective for the study of the self. In the second part, there is an empirical, qualitative study of the internal conversation. For this dimension of the process, we turn to Moreno's (1964) psychodramatic techniques. Our aim is to ground the semiotic discussion on the empirical data of the observed internal conversation.

Part I –The phenomenological categories and their relevance for the study of the self

1a. The self in Peirce’s semiotic theory according to Colapietro

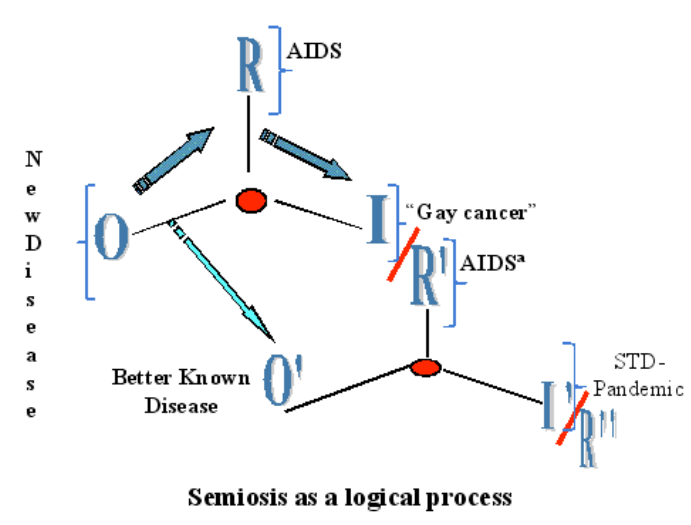
Peirce’s writings on the self construed as a sign were first organized in a book-length study by Colapietro (1989), who appraised and brought together the many references to the self which are disseminated throughout the logician’s writings. The semiotic conception of the self derives from Peirce’s anti-intuitionist take, according to which introspection is a kind of logical inference. Although a person can be immediately conscious of his or her feelings, the attribution of such feelings to an ego requires to reason, which is an inferential process. Whence, for semiotic theory there is no undivided, self-contained subject. The self is the upshot of an interpretive negotiation of a subject with the external world. Introspection conceived as an inference means that all thought is mediated, and thus a semiotic process. For pragmatism, the self is inextricably tied to sign functioning, whereof concrete thoughts are the observable, resulting phenomena. Self-consciousness is not a static, given element reached by Cartesian introspection, but the subject’s ongoing production “by virtue of its being a sentient, active, communicative and cognitive organism (Colapietro, 1989 p.70). Colapietro argues that such an approach to the self has not been adequately appreciated historically, because it was not considered in a “developmental perspective” (Colapietro, 1989, p. 61). An advantage of defining the self as a sign process for psychological studies is that the self/sign can be approached as a developmental process. Being human entails becoming a self, something which is never entirely accomplished. This semiotic process is guided by ideals. Thus, our identity is not the direct product of human will. Autonomy is achievable, though, through the influence of such ideals, because self-critical control is involved in this developmental process

1b. Peirce’s phenomenological categories and the self as a developing sign.

To claim that the self is a sign within the triadic perspective entails to claim that it has the same generative nature of all “semiosis” or sign action (CP 5.484), namely, to determine a further sign of itself or interpretant. Given its semiotic nature, the interpretant recursively generates further signs of itself, in a potentially endless series. The corollary of construing the self as a sign is that it is destined to produce increasingly complex signs of itself. Any possible meaning arises as part of a process of growing complexity (CP 2.302). For Ransdell (1989), Peirce’s semiotic is not focused on isolated signs, but on a continuum within a sign-generating process. Semiosis is a sign-producing “disposition” (Ransdell, 1989); it does not denote a concrete unit, no matter how powerful the meaning of a particular sign may be, but a kind of logical “productive power”, one which involves an end-state towards which every sign gravitates. In brief, “the mere presence of a sign calls forth the presence of another” (Santaella 2004, p.132). That is why the starting point to understand Peircean dialogism

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is sign action or semiosis. Far from denying the importance of an embodied, concrete sign, as an actual component of the semiosis process, emphasis on the logical disposition brings out the process-like nature of meaning. As an historical example, we may bring in a cause célèbre, the sign ‘AIDS’. Back in 1981, the world received in awe and fear the first news of a bizarre epidemics, one which displaced the sign ‘cancer’ as the most dreaded threat against life. The original interpretant (meaning) of AIDS was inextricable from a specific sexual orientation, thus the sign became a stigma for those who were associated with that orientation, a key aspect of their identity.² Negative and unfair as this particular sign interpretation was for its victims, what becomes clear is the evolution, the steady change produced today the meaning of ‘globalized pandemia’, which I what the sign ‘AIDS’ means for most people, at present. The semiotic journey from a reductionistic ‘homosexual illness’ meaning, to the present upshot of scientific research, namely, a disease which heeds not gender or sexual orientation, illustrates well the relevance of both concrete historical interpretants – the prejudice of the eighties in the 20th century – as well as the logical process of semiosis which has produced an entirely different sense of the sign ‘AIDS’ today, one which will, no doubt, keep on changing.



The interpretation process of which the self is the developmental result is akin to the logical circuit whereby a sign or representamen comes to stand for its object, so as to generate an interpretant of itself, i.e., a more developed sign of the object that the sign also purports to represent. The triadic signification relation is not linear, because it does not consist of the juxtaposition of dyadic relations, such as that of

² The homophobic slur “gay cancer” to refer to AIDS in those days was a common interpretant of this disease, intended as an insult against its victims, who were thus construed as deservedly responsible for their dreaded fate.

“signifier/signified”, which characterizes Saussurean semiology. Being a tri-relative process, the determination of the sign by the object occurs so that the former may determine a further sign of itself, namely, the interpretant, which is thus indirectly determined by the object to convey its meaning, and directly determined by the mediating sign. In the example discussed above, and in the corresponding diagram, one can observe that the disease as a biological fact can only reach public opinion through some kind of discourse. The sign may produce a scientific or a racist meaning upshot, which is its interpretant; this depends on a number of socio-cultural and historical variables which affect the interpreter.

To sum up, the notion of ‘semiotic process’ is to be distinguished from the hegemonic sign conception, which is a single, fixed material or reified entity. In triadic semiotic, each concrete sign only serves to furnish the perceptual material which can be grasped by interpreters, and which may be indefinitely reproduced in all forms of media. The three components of semiosis, representamen, object and interpretant, are in close ontological correspondence with the three universal categories of experience, Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. The Kantian phenomenological categories of experience were reduced by Peirce to only three universal ones (CP 1.525). Peirce’s pragmatism is the product of a thorough revision of Kant’s and Hegel’s philosophy. Part of the aim is to bring out the importance of objective external reality, the Kantian Ding an sich, not as an inaccessible ultimate reality, but as an actual influence in the process of meaning generation. There is a tri-relative influence of logical sign components that correspond to the three phenomenological categories of experience: the immediacy of an absolute quality of feeling (Firstness), a physical resistance (Secondness), and general concepts (Thirdness). As a phenomenon of Firstness, feelings/qualities are considered apart from any relationship, i.e., not embodied in any existent thing. This is “the mode of being which consists in the subject’s being what it is regardless of aught else” (CP 1.21), which accounts for the “unlimited and uncontrolled variety and multiplicity” (CP 1.302). We attain the monadic mode of experience by the analytical operation of “prescission” (CP 2.364) or abstraction from any material embodiment. The category of Secondness corresponds to the factual dimension of the sign process, which involves a dyadic physical opposition of the sensation of effort and resistance, which results in a “two-sided consciousness of an ego and a non-ego” (CP 8.330). Categorical Thirdness accounts for the intelligibility of experience, which involves generality and regularity, in our sign-mediated understanding of the world. The law-like meaning produced by semiosis associates a qualitative aspect of the sign, its Firstness, with a contextual one, its Secondness. The relation of representation results from the “tri-relative” (CP 5.484) cooperation of the three constituent elements: the sign as Firstness, its object as embodied Secondness, and the rule-like interpretant of Thirdness. Thus, the qualitative presentation of a semiotic, represented object is presupposed by the relation of representation, which also presupposes a material embodiment.

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The ideas of feeling, originality, spontaneity and possibility pertain to Firstness; the ideas of action/reaction and effort/resistance to Secondness; Thirdness is best described by the ideas of generality, law, evolution, representation, and mediation (Santaella, 1999). Since the three categories involve “that of which we are aware in feeling, volition and cognition” (CP 1.332), they help us analyze our psychological experience — imagination, body sensations and thought – which is tantamount to “cognition in all its various forms” (Lysaker, 2006, p. 41). Applied to the study of the self, they encompass three modes of experience: a) the immediateness of a feeling quality of the nascent self in the fleeting present moment; b) the dyadic relation of a previous feeling with which we identify ourselves (Ego), when it gets to be in opposition to a new feeling that comes from a stimulus, which arises in spite of our will (Non-Ego); and c) the mode of conscious cognition, since “any mentality involves Thirdness” (CP 8.332), when the physical sensation is somehow translated cognitively:

Imagine yourself to be seated alone at night in the basket of a balloon, far above earth, calmly enjoying the absolute calm and stillness. Suddenly the piercing shriek of a steam-whistle breaks upon you, and continues for a good while. The impression of stillness was an idea of Firstness, a quality of feeling. The piercing whistle does not allow you to think or do anything but suffer. So that too is absolutely simple. Another Firstness. But the breaking of the silence by the noise was an experience. The person in his inertness identifies himself with the precedent state of feeling, and the new feeling which comes in spite of him is the non-ego. He has a two-sided consciousness of an ego and a non-ego. That consciousness of the action of a new feeling in destroying the old feeling is what I call an experience. Experience generally is what the course of life has compelled me to think. (...) Secondness consists in one thing acting upon another, -- brute action. I say brute, because so far as the idea of any law or reason comes in, Thirdness comes in. (CP 8.330)

1c. Sign interpretation and the dialogical condition of thought

All thought is sign mediated for Peirce; the dialogical condition of thought is not “merely a fact of human Psychology, but a necessity of Logic” (CP 4.551). For anything to be interpreted two logical positions are required, that of an utterer and of an interpreter; these roles which are not necessarily taken by two different persons. Even in solitude “... thinking comes always in the form of a dialogue -a dialogue between different phases of the ego (...) that the thought should have some possible expression for some possible interpreter, is the very being of its being” (CP 4.6). The two distinct logical positions are unified (“welded”, CP 4.551) in the sign.

The intersubjective situation is one in which the main purport of every utterance of a speaker is to elicit some future utterance; the latter is bound to arise as a response and fulfillment of the former. This regular, law-like operation is what Peirce calls a

‘would-be’ and it explains the working of symbols, which is another way of naming the category of Thirdness. Every sign is destined to reproduce locally the general dialogical situation by engendering a more developed version of itself, namely, the interpretant sign. Such is the meaning of the determining sign, just as the response which we aim to elicit in a dialogue is the meaning of one’s own utterance. It is there, where the other one who responds is, and not here, in my own speech act, that the true purport of my dialogical intervention is to be sought. For instance, the meaning of a gesture as a sign of friendship is to be found in the expected smile or equivalent expression of the other person who is being smiled at.

1d. The semiotic approach to thought and the pragmatic tradition

Peirce's dialogical conception of thought has been fruitfully compared with Mead's (1913, p. 377) “inner forum” notion by Wiley (1994). Peirce's claim that “a person is not absolutely an individual. (since) His thoughts are what he is ‘saying to himself’, that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time” (CP 4.421) is a critique of the traditional, monological and insulated conception of the human self. The internal dialogue is made up by the self of the present, which addresses the self of the future as if it were another person, a you. Mead's own conception of a dialogue between two phases of the self is akin to the kind of relation a person maintains with others. The intellectual kinship of Mead and Peirce is probably due to the influence of Dewey, who was a student of Peirce at Johns Hopkins in 1882, and a mentor of Mead, whom he hired in 1891. The difference between the two dialogical models lies in their distinct emphasis on the directionality of the thinking process along time. While Peirce focuses on the orientation of thought to a future interpretation, Mead (1913: p. 374) stresses the process whereby a subject turns to “the moment passed”, in order to capture the self as an object represented by the me. The latter is based on James's (1890, Ch X) assertion on the impossibility of direct self-knowledge in the present moment, due to the continuity of consciousness or ‘sciousness’.

Another distinction that Mead (1913) introduces in his socially-oriented proposal is that self-awareness is gained by the apprehension of the self through its role-based interaction with others:

The self acts with reference to others and is immediately conscious of the objects about it. In memory it also reintegrates the self acting as well as the others acted upon. But besides these contents, the action with reference to the others calls out responses in the individual himself – there is then another ‘me’ criticizing, approving, and suggesting, and consciously planning, i.e., the reflective self. (Mead, 1913, p. 376)

Mead's and James' account of the I comes close to Peirce's description of the evanescent present moment, of Firstness. People are only the site of a fleeting, impossible to verbalize, quality of feeling; this dimension of experience stands apart from any sort of actual emotion and, a fortiori, of the consciousness thereof. If you ask yourself "what is the content of the present instant, (your) question always comes too late" (CP 1.310). The me in Mead describes the self as it appears in consciousness, as an objective component. The I-me relation can be compared to Peirce's relation of thought with the semiotic object, the interaction of an Ego with an external non-Ego, and it pertains to Secondness.

Based on the complementarity of Peirce's and Mead's dialogical theories along the time axis, Wiley (1994) proposed a triadic model which brings together Peirce's I-you systemic directionality with Mead's I-me proposal; this becomes a reflexive triadialogue, which involves the three personal pronouns: me-I-you. The I-self of the present is logically determined by the me-self of the past, as it addresses the you-self, which will come to being in the future.

1e. Self and identity in a triadic/dialogical approach

In the construal of a tri-relative internal conversation, the *I* or sign corresponds to Peirce's (CP 8.330) phenomenological category of Firstness (a possible feeling or sheer quality); the *me* or semiotic object relates to Secondness (the clash of experience which involves only two elements), and the *you* or interpretant is accounted for by Thirdness (the growth of reasonableness as a synthesis which brings about law-like generality, for instance, the personality).

From this preliminary account, it follows that for Wiley (1994), the *self* construed as a triadic structure which involves the three personal pronouns is not to be reduced to the *I* pronoun, nor to any of the two other instances which constitute the inner conversation. Thus the *self* is the dispositional property of an interpretive process which has particular identities as its upshot, and which is inseparable from the time axis along which it evolves. This hypothesis takes the *self* to be a universal capacity that manifests itself through the generation of particular meanings. Thus, it is to be distinguished from the multiple, particular identities (Wiley 1994, p. 12), which are the contents of the general interpretive process. The self has the same kind of logical unity as the development of meaning in language, and, *a fortiori*, of human cognition; the self is an agent of consistency, and a kind of "overarching identity" (Colapietro, 1990, p. 192). This metaphor points out the logical continuity, which implies the integration of the particular and the multiple into a synthetic unity, one which entails a continuous growth of complexity. Peirce conceives of identity in logical terms: it "consists in the consistency" (CP 5.315) of a person's actions and thoughts along time. The relevance of establishing two levels of generality in the distinction of self and identity is that the

latter is subordinate to the former. The self operates as a historical matrix made up of social and family role dynamics.

If a person mistakes one particular identity, whether it be a social or psychological trait, no matter how important it may be, for the unique reality of her or his self, then the reflexive *I-you-me* process is severely distorted. This semiotic dysfunction resembles Winnicott's false-self (Wiley, 1994, p. 38). For us, the inner dialogue of voices entails an internal opposition and, eventually, a negotiated acceptance; if there be enough tolerance for the coexistence of a plurality of particular identities. The reality of this multiplicity helps us avoid the life-impoverishing taking over by one single identity, which thereby hinders the evolving totality of the self as a living process.

1f. Internal opposition and the category of Secondness in dialogical science

In opposition to the Cartesian conception, a dialogical view of thought is necessarily associated with an internal division. As Hermans (1999) states, although the self in dialogue with itself is necessarily divided, it is not fragmented. We believe that the internal division results from the operation of Secondness. This category explains dyadic interaction as a constraint to subjective will, an opposition that accounts for the effect of alterity (altersense), of otherness in all human experience. This is described by Peirce as an idea of "not", which acts as the very pivot of thought (CP 1.324). The reaction to the impact of an "outward clash" (CP 5.244) generates an interpreting sign at a future moment. Thus, the dyadic opposition is integrated in the synthesis of a concept, a symbol that completes the triadic representation, all of which has a public, intersubjective character:

From the perspective of semiotic, we are always already in the midst of others as well as of meaning; indeed otherness and meaning are given together in our experience of ourselves as beings embedded in a network of relations – more specifically, enmeshed in the 'semiotic web'. (Colapietro 1989, p. 28)

Semiotic theory distinguishes three modes of consciousness, in connection with the three categories: "primisense, altersense and medisense". In the mode of consciousness in which the outer world emerges as being external, in contradistinction to us as sentient beings, we find intertwined the notions of alterity and otherness, which are used to account for ego and the world (Non-Ego), as two elements pitted against each other:

Altersense is the consciousness of a directly present other or second, withstanding us. (...) [It] is consciousness of otherness or secondness; medisense is the consciousness of means or thirdness. (...) [Altersense] has two modes, Sensation and Will. (CP 7.551)

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When we study the internal dialogue, the dialogical opponent is part of the intra-psychological realm but it manifests the resistance of something which is external to the subject. Peirce defines externality as a relation of opposition, when he states that something objectively external is not perceived by us as external in the same way as an hallucination is: it is “immediately known as external (...) in the sense of being present regardless of the perceiver’s will or wish (that is why it is a) conative externality” (CP 5.462). Thus resistance is the expression of otherness, and it signifies something real which “insists in forcing its way to recognition as something other than the mind’s creation” (CP 2.341). For dialogical interaction to take place, it is necessary that the subjective aspect of interpretation be susceptible to the influence of something external to it. If we overemphasize the subjectivity in meaning construction, we risk creating an unsolvable gap between the participants of the dialogical relation. That is why Peirce (CP 8.81) criticized a dualistic account of the human self in James’s *The Principles of Psychology*, of which he quoted the following passage: “No thought even comes into direct sight of a thought in another personal consciousness than its own. Absolute insulation, irreducible pluralism, is the law”. Peirce argues that James mistakes thoughts for “feeling-qualities”, which are not intelligible, not even to the one who experiences them. Feelings are had, but not known. To become intelligible, they must be embodied and generalized in a symbol; it is only in this guise that self and the others are able to interpret them.

For James (1963/1906, p. 109), to represent the real entails altering its true nature, and thereby causing a deviation from the real. An objection to this point is made by Hausman (1993, p.77), when he points out that the relational kind of system created by the process of our thought-signs does not jeopardize the independent being of reality: “Merely to be in relation does not require (the object) being wholly relative to, much less consumed by thought”. Constructionism tends to minimize the influence of external reality in sign mediation. The triadic perspective proposes that our only access to outward reality and to our own self is through signs, which operate in the intersubjective realm. A corollary of this introduction of Secondness in dialogical science is to construe alterity as a component of thought. The underlying assumption is that reality strives to reveal itself such as it is, in a gradual, fallible process through the intervention of signs. Now the problem is how to understand the exact sense in which an intersubjective process occurs in what was traditionally deemed to be the subjective, solitary, private realm of the self.

1g. The influence of the external realm in the intra-psychological domain

The pragmatist view of consciousness entails the possibility of an interpretive access to outer reality, which differs from both idealism and positivism. Peirce describes a double-sided consciousness which is the product of a resistance that brings about a

sensation of “clash” between two elements, which corresponds with Kant’s inner and outer senses.

We become aware of ourself in becoming aware of the not-self. The waking state is a consciousness of reaction; and as the consciousness itself is two-sided, so it has also two varieties; namely, action, where our modification of other things is more prominent than their reaction on us, and perception, where their effect on us is overwhelmingly greater than our effect on them. (...) The idea of other, of not, becomes a very pivot of thought. To this element I give the name of Secondness. (CP 1.324)

Secondness consists of relations of existents in the world. However, in semiosis, externalities manifest themselves not only through the exertion of a blind compulsion, but also by becoming a constraint which acts as a logical determination to representation in human consciousness. The dispositional nature of the self is what makes of the brutal irruption of sheer facts of Secondness already a virtual purport of Thirdness. Secondness is lived as brute opposition to our subjective will, as a form of resistance, which, willy-nilly, alterity brings about:

What I call volition is the consciousness of the discharge of nerve-cells, either into the muscles, etc., or into other nerve-cells; it does not involve the sense of time (i.e. not of a continuum) but it does involve the sense of action and reaction, resistance, externality, otherness, pair-edness. (CP 8.41)

Any duality involves the presence of a second subject, one that appears to the self as objective (Ego/Non-ego relation). As such, it exerts a limiting influence on dispositional semiosis. Without such a restraint, interpretation would be a free for all, chaotic affair: anything could mean just about anything. At its most basic level, the dyadic impact of otherness on the self may be described as a compulsive “hefting (of) its insistency” (CP 6.318). The semiotic object in the triad (representamen/object/interpretant) is what manifests Secondness in the sign; it is that which resists, which embodies “self-willedness” (CP 7.488). It is important to acknowledge the objective dimension of meaning for dialogical science, because it explains the influence of alterity in our understanding of the world and of our selves.

When Peirce writes that “the sense of externality in perception consists in a sense of powerlessness before the overwhelming force of perception” (CP 1.334), this is a semiotic explanation of the experience of alterity, without which psychological development would not take place, or would be very different from what we know it to be. This is the coming to terms with the hard, limits of the real. The following is Peirce’s illustration of the developmental account of the human self as an intersubjective sign, in a constitutive dialogue with alterity:

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A child hears it said that the stove is hot. But it is not, he says; and, indeed, that central body is not touching it, and only what that touches is hot or cold. But he touches it, and finds the testimony confirmed in a striking way. Thus, he becomes aware of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a self in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness. (CP 5.233)

There is an interesting affinity between this example of child psychology and similar accounts in the writings of “the great Wundt” (CP 5.505), whom Peirce admired and hailed as the founding father of experimental psychology. This attitude is confirmed by the several allusions to the work of the German scientist that can be found in the *Collected Papers*. However, a noteworthy difference between Wundt’s reflections on the dawning of self-consciousness in the child, in relationship to stimuli of pain and pleasure, is that, for Peirce, the self emerges as the product of an experience (e.g. touching the hot stove), but also of a semiotic process: the self is a logical upshot, it comes about inferentially, not too differently from the conclusion of a syllogism, whereby we human beings are able to learn from our errors. In the following passage, there is both an acknowledgment of the virtues of the pioneering work of Wundt, and an attempt to import his physiological ideas to his own theoretical framework:

Endeavoring to sum up the results of this elaborate investigation so far as they concern psychology (...), we may say that Wundt finds that the function of our thinking-organ lies in its regulation of motor reactions. Now this is neither more nor less than the substance of pragmatism in the dress of physiology. The original definition of pragmatism put it into this form of maxim: ‘Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings you conceive the object of your conception to have. Then, your conception of those effects is THE WHOLE of your conception of the object.’ What is that than to say that the sole function of thought is to regulate motor reactions? (CP 8.201 – capitals in the original)

Now, while introspection is theoretically associated with an insulated, self-contained subject, the self as a product of an inference is associated with an internal dialogue. This conception of thought reveals a “divided subject to semiotic analysis” (Colapietro, 1980, p. 93). The person as a thinking being “can distinguish in [him or herself] distinct parts that are, in essence, different roles in an ongoing dialogue” (p.93). According to Colapietro, the appropriate perspective is that of “a dramatic inner world” (p.117). Wiley (1994) uses the terms “positions, participants, poles, agencies, voices or roles in the conversation” (p.57) to designate distinct dialogical units. Regardless of the term chosen to denote the parts that constitute the self, the common element of dialogical conceptions is that the notion of the self lacks internal homogeneity, it is intrinsically multiple. For Peirce, if dialogical thought is to take place, an internal opponent – in the Socratic sense of the term – is necessary (CP 5.497).

Another way of understanding the relevance of Secondness is to consider the phenomenon that Hermans (1999, p. 497) describes as “*intrasubjective disagreement*”. This is an internal relation of the self as subject *I* with the self as an external object (*me*), since in the position of a dialogical opponent the self manifests resistance, “conative externality” (CP 5.462), or “self-willedness” (CP 7.488).

1h. Inquiry and self-contradiction

As thought is a semiotic process which, as such, aims at revealing aspects of the world, and as the *self* is one of them, it follows that self-knowledge is not different from other kinds of knowledge. Peircean semiotic as a dialectical process owes much to the Socratic tradition. Every process of scientific inquiry, argues Ransdell (2000), insofar as it is a public, self-critical advancement in our understanding of the world, requires that those involved in it go through the kind of experience known as *aporia*:

The Socratic *aporia* is not merely a contradiction but a self-contradiction, which actually precludes refutation where it occurs, since in refutation the refuted element drops out, whereas the *aporia* depends on it not dropping out, but maintaining itself in opposition to what supposedly refutes it. (Ransdell, 2000, para. 13)

A feeling of self-contradiction is normally uncomfortable, because a person finds her/ himself in the odd situation of asserting two contradictory elements at once. Although it is never an easy state, it must be tolerated, if one is to explore the world and eventually discover a solution, a way out of the horns of a dilemma. Therefore, *aporia* involves the awareness of an impasse in reflexive thought, but one which is necessary to commit ourselves to the sustained effort of searching for more information about the familiar though always incompletely known external environment, and thus not make a premature decision. An authentic dialogue requires the coexistence of disagreeing voices, that is, an *aporetic* state of mind. Tolerance of self-contradiction relies on our previously acquired confidence that this conflict will be solved in the future. Only through this uneasy *via dolorosa* may we embark in authentic inquiry. If *aporia* is experienced as too frustrating, the person might not remain fully committed to the search of truthful knowledge and, instead, turn to “lying, misdirection, evasion, waffling, fudging, and other forms of deliberate or tolerated misrepresentation” (Ransdell, 2000, para. 24). We assume that the capacity to tolerate an *aporetic* state is at once beneficial for the development of knowledge of the world, and for the healthy development of the *self*. On the one hand, misrepresentation is the consequence of a lack of the adequate psychological balance to cope with the “idea of a not” (CP 1.324), which entails a limit to illusory human omnipotence. On the other hand, misrepresentation constitutes a stumbling block in the purposive process of development of the *self*, since knowledge and self-knowledge are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, we propose the hypothesis that the psychological capacity to tolerate

self-contradiction favors the semiotic development of the *self*. We will now try to confirm it, by the report of an empirical study.

To sum up, we are proposing the application of the triadic categories of pragmatic semiotic to study the dialogical self, so as to be able to analyze the subjective experience, the constraint of an external realm, and the conceptual synthesis. *Ex hypothesi* such a constraint is translated in the intra-psychological realm as a division between the present Ego and a dialogical opponent, which is an instance of Secondness. Just as an *aporia* motivates scientific inquiry of the outer world, in the inner realm, it is the engine of self-interpretation, which triggers the generation of further interpretants to overcome the self-contradiction through conceptual Thirdness. If the idea of *not* is a pivot of thought, then the dialogical opponent embodies an identity which operates as a pivot of the self-interpretive process. The empirical study which we now introduce was made in order to observe the semiotic functioning of the internal conversation. We have modified Wiley's method in two aspects: a) the instrument for the data collection was not the registration of sleep-talk, but a collection of the externalization of thought by means of a psychodramatic instrument. Thus we could gather longer and more articulate data. b) the analysis took into account the use of personal pronouns, but it laid analytical emphasis on the phenomenological categories to understand the semiotic functioning of the three phases of the self: past/present/future.

Part II—Empirical study: the internal conversation observed through psychodramatic techniques.

We propose the use of psychodrama techniques to study the internal conversation and to provide an empirical illustration of the semiotic self model presented in Part I. Psychodramatic methods have been previously used in dialogical science. Verhofstadt-Denève (2003) applied the psychodramatic “social atom method” to study the experience of dialectical oppositions as an attempt to integrate emotions, cognitions, language, and action, within an affective spatial context. In the same line, Neimeyer (2006) proposes psychodrama as a tool that can be useful for enacting narratives and dialogical process. Psychodrama furnishes techniques for the externalization of the inner world and of dialogical internal role-dynamics (psychodramatic roles). An obvious limitation of the chosen method consists in the difficulty for the observed thinkers to behave naturally in a non-natural setting. To compensate for this, psychodrama furnishes warming-up techniques, which are usually accepted by participants, since they are associated with theatrical activity or with playful everyday life as-if situations. Thus in a somehow paradoxical way, the artificiality can be overcome.

2a. Compatibility between psychodrama and pragmatism

Psychodrama was created by Jacob Levy Moreno (1889-1974) and role theory is its theoretical pillar. The Viennese psychiatrist, in a way that is akin to Mead, assumes that the self emerges from roles. Moreno's theory and method are the consequences of his application of dramatic techniques to his clinical work. There is a compatibility between psychodrama and pragmatism which was perceived by Moreno (1964, p. i-v), when he proposed his method as a possible complement for Mead's sociological theorization on internalized role relations. Let us recall that Mead's own pragmatic approach is part of the semiotic self model. Moreno (1964, p. 31) also acknowledged Peirce's decisive influence on a key concept of his role theory, namely, the notion of spontaneity, which explains the possibility of a person's being capable of responding adequately to new situations and of giving new responses to old situations.

We used psychodramatic techniques to observe the internal dialogue. We were interested to find out: 1) if the theoretical introduction of the phenomenological category of Secondness contributes to the understanding of internal dialogical opposition; 2) if the triadic structure of the sign can be applied to study the interaction of multiple identities that participate in the internal conversation; and 3) if the considerable risk of fragmenting the *self* can be avoided.

Our expectations were that the activity of thinking about a personal doubt of the participants would trigger verbal and non-verbal manifestations of their internal dialogue. We believe that such a state was not created by the experimental situation, i.e., by our observation of it, since the dramatization unfolded from already existing doubts, in the lives of those participants.

The analysis of the empirical material was based on Wiley's model of the internal conversation constituted by the pronouns *I-me-you*, which correspond to the three phases of the self, namely, *present-past-future*. However, for heuristic purposes instead of using the pronouns, we used the three phenomenological categories of Firstness – which corresponds to the I – of Secondness – which corresponds to the me – and Thirdness – which corresponds to the you. A state of logical self-contradiction or *aporia* ensues, when a person finds him or herself holding two contradictory propositions at once. We aim to describe how this kind of internal dialogical opposition is compatible with the developmental unity of the self as an overarching entity.

2b. Method

The design chosen was a qualitative study which resorted to two different methodological approaches, namely, psychodrama applied to data collection, and phenomenological semiotic applied to the analytical part of our research.

Participants. Twenty undergraduate students of both sexes, ages 20 to 25 from the Institute of Psychology of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul -, Porto Alegre, Brazil were invited to participate in two psychodrama workshops. The

workshops were made with the sole purpose of exploring and analyzing the points mentioned above in relation to the internal conversation. The participants were not known to have any pre-existing psychological condition.

Instruments. The data were obtained by using an instrument that combines two dramatic exercises drawn from the psychodramatic methodology: a) the classical empty chair technique (Moreno, 1964, p. xiii), and b) a technique proposed by Blatner (1995) called the multiple-aspects-of-the-self approach. We furnish first a brief description of the techniques and then, a description of the actual procedures to show how the techniques were combined and adapted to the present research.

a) Empty chair technique:³ Chairs are used to represent significant others or internal characters. This technique is generally used in a one-to-one therapeutic context. The protagonist enacts a dialogue by role-reversing with each psychodramatic character, which is performed by sitting alternatively on the chairs set on stage.

b) Multiple-aspects-of-the self: it involves working with different aspects of the person's inner realm and having those components engage in a dialogue with each other.

Procedures. The two above-mentioned dramatic exercises were combined to adapt them for research purposes. We followed the following dramatic steps in order to observe the process of the internal conversation:

Warming up – The researcher asked the participants to think about three actual personal situations of doubt, which involved a really difficult decision-taking. Then the participants chose one and wrote on a piece of paper some advantages and disadvantages involved in the considered alternatives. The researcher explained at that point that the objective of the exercise was to explore how we think about some issue, and thus she made clear that any issue whatsoever was equally interesting and valid for that exercise. The main aim of this clarification was that the participants understood the difference between the research setting and what this procedure was not, namely, a therapeutic procedure. This was crucial in order to avoid the unnecessary exposure of troubling personal issues. The participants were also told that the observation would focus on whether our thought process is monological or dialogical.

Dramatic Action – This exercise works by combining the following basic dramatic techniques: a) Soliloquy – the dramatic action starts with an externalization of the thinking activity involved in evaluating the alternatives among which the decision will be taken; b) Concretization – the different options involved in the decision-taking process are materialized by representing them on the stage by means of chairs. Although the participants generally use only two chairs, there must be at least six in the room, because the protagonist decides the actual number of chairs during the dramatization.

³ For a detailed description of techniques see <http://www.therapeuticspiral.org/references/pdterms.html>

Each time the protagonist sets up a chair, s/he sits on it to speak from that specific perspective; c) Role-reversal – if the protagonist assumes that a chair represents an oppositional voice, which still is a part of him or her self, then the soliloquy is expected to acquire the shape of a dialogue or inner debate. The dialogue is carried out by the motion of the protagonist from one chair to the other, as s/he follows the direction of his/her flow of thought; d) Closure – the protagonist is asked to give a name for the typifying element of each chair that s/he has set up on the stage. The participants are not required to come to any kind of decision. They are only asked to make the process of thought as explicit as possible, so that its natural flow could be explored.

Sharing – After the dramatization, the participants shared some personal situations evoked by the scenes staged by other group members.

2c. Analysis

The corpus for the analysis was everything the participants said, as they engaged in thinking aloud, as well as everything they did on the psychodramatic stage (e.g. movements, gestures), as they attempted to focus on a situation of their lives, in which they faced two or more alternatives with the aim of making a decision on some personal issue. The transcriptions were divided into units of meaning corresponding to the participants' movements that indicate a change of place from the standing position (soliloquy), to their sitting on a chair and also their motion from one chair to the other (dialogical development). Each unit was analyzed according to the three phenomenological categories of experience devised by Peirce described above.

The three categories were applied to describe how self-consciousness evolves as a self-interpretive process, when the participants were thinking about external alternatives, in relation to the orientation of their lives. The goal was to understand specifically how the self-interpretive process generates particular identities, which, from a semiotic perspective, may be construed as dynamic interpretants of the semiotic process. The main focus was the observation of how such identities interact dialogically and how internal diversity could be compatible with the evolving unity of the self. Given that all dramatizations presented a similar structure, the transcription analyzed below was only chosen for the present paper on account of its length and conciseness, which we thought could add clarity to our exposition. We will now illustrate the analysis by means of a full transcription of one dramatization, to allow for alternative interpretations of the data. The transcription was divided into five fragments.

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Transcription of the dramatization of the first participant: Peter⁴

Transcription	Moving of the chair Standing up Position	Analytical unities Soliloquy
<p><i>Now that I'm finishing my internship... I was in doubt whether I was going to do... if I was going to keep on getting up early in the morning... because I didn't want to lose the rhythm of my activity... and... uhhhm, well... it turned out that they're making an agreement because someone is giving up a scholarship uhhhm... ya know? And this person's going to propose my name to take up his place... Then, well... I was thinking... well... that uhhhm...while on the one hand, I was thinking that... [the participant sets up one chair on the stage, and then sits on it]⁵</i></p>		
<p>- <i>On the one hand I think that... on the one hand ... I... that this would mean ... to take some deserved vacations; I'd be able to sleep a bit...in the morning... I would sleep a little bit longer... to rest... (at that point he sets up a second chair, and sits on it).</i></p>	Chair 1	First Unit
<p>- <i>But on the other hand... I mean...well... if I were to stop... (laughter) you know?, I wouldn't be able to start all over again. I believe that I need to keep up a rhythm, that's important to me... I was kind of liking to keep the rhythm, getting up earlier in the morning, I was starting to enjoy my feeling pretty useful, ya know?... uhhhm...well</i></p>	Chair 2	Second unit
<p>- <i>But it might also happen that... if I started now with the scholarship I'd have to keep on at it, until August, next semester, and I'd risk to go with it until that period that has two internship requirements which would overlap and this would be a risk, I could lose my scholarship, and this wouldn't be very ethical of me, you know? I don't know how you call it...it wouldn't be right... my doing that to that person who's giving me that scholarship.</i></p>	Chair 1	Third unit
<p>- <i>But on the other hand, I believe that the person</i></p>	Chair 2	Fourth

⁴ An arbitrarily given name.

⁵ The introduction of a dash before one speaks is an indication of chair change, and therefore of place of who speaks.

<p><i>that grants the scholarships is very accessible...it's possible to talk to her, to explain the problem to her... to tell her that later on I won't be able to keep on being so committed with the scholarship... so I could discuss with her if there's a way to organize things so that I could work a little bit more at the beginning... and then a little bit less... the coming semester. There's also the problem that I did not finish my paper yet... it's due at the end of the semester...you must hand in some article, paper, you know?... for a congress... and I didn't do that yet... and that would be a good opportunity for me... not to mention the fact that I'm also... well uhghm, I want to have some more money to do other things that are important for me... to travel, it's possible to do that. So, here's what I ought to do: I think I should take the scholarship... 'cause I need it. I need it to stop worrying about what I'm worrying about now... so as not to lose my rhythm, for me to feel useful, which is a feeling I like.</i></p>	Unit	
<p>- <i>Still... on the other hand, I think that perhaps, from next year on, I won't be able to keep it up, to keep up the rhythm and that would mean my not being very fair, do you understand?...I mean... I mean towards that person who gave me the scholarship... Well, that's about it...</i></p>	Chair 1	Fifth unit
<p><i>[The researcher asks whether he could give a name for each one of those voices represented by the two chairs]</i></p> <p>- This one is Easygoing Peter. You know what I mean? <i>Easygoing</i> in the sense of relaxed... maybe too relaxed.</p> <p>- And here this one would be...uhghm... let's see.....Useful ...Worrisome Peter.</p>	Standing up position	Closing unit

During the soliloquy, the protagonist was not yet totally warmed up, so he did not feel totally at ease in the psychodramatic situation of thinking aloud, especially of doing it in the here and now of the present moment. Instead, he remembered a moment in the past, when the problem he was interested in solving came to his mind for the first time. Due to the use of the past tense, the analytical model cannot be applied to this

fragment. Our analytical work only started in the First Unit, because the use of the present tense allowed the researcher to use the analytical model of the internal conversation following the proper temporal sequence.

2c1. Analysis of First and Second Units

Our analytical decision to tackle the first two units – each one involving a specific chair motion/occupation – was motivated by our considering them as a set in which the dialogical element came out quite distinctly. The itinerary followed by the participant was to move from the first chair – which corresponds to the First Unit –to the second chair/unit, as the dilemmatic situation came to the surface in the guise of the adversative conjunction “but on the other hand”:

– *On the one hand I think that... on the one hand ... I... that this would mean ... to take some deserved vacations; I'd be able to sleep a bit...in the morning... I would sleep a little bit longer... to rest... (at that point he sets up a second chair, and sits on it). [FIRST UNIT]*

– *But on the other hand... I mean...well... if I were to stop... (laughter) you know?, I wouldn't be able to start all over again. I believe that I need to keep up a rhythm, that's important to me... I was kind of liking to keep the rhythm, getting up earlier in the morning, I was starting to like my feeling pretty useful, ya know?... uhhhm...well [SECOND UNIT]*

The two distinct units analyzed here show the way in which the protagonist faces the two opposite alternatives, and how this engenders a visible tension within him. As the upshot of this tension, he begins to express self-contradiction, that is, an irreconcilable split within his self, which comes about as he experiences the simultaneous and contrary attraction for both possible behaviors. At this point, he appears to be giving equal support to the two opposite alternatives. The lived contradiction is handled by making the first move from one chair to another, on the psychodramatic stage: *On the one hand I think ... But on the other hand... I mean... if.* Thus a reasonable ordering is found for these contradictory elements by separating them into two logical units.

There is at the beginning of both units a noticeable use of the *I* pronoun. The flow of speech of the first sentence is tentative, even halting. This attitudinal feature coincides with the emphatic presence of the first person pronoun. We interpret the hesitant mode of speech as a piece of evidence of an experience that is characteristic of the phenomenological category of Firstness. This is consistent with Wiley's model of internal conversation, because the *I* pronoun signals the present instant, the qualitative aspect of signs in their mode of sheer possibility, of logical vagueness, all compatible elements with Firstness. Hesitation could be construed as the vagueness of the *I* experience in the present, as the person faces the manifold of possibilities, the

unplanned spontaneity of a fleeting moment. This qualitative feeling is expressed in the phrase “liking to keep the rhythm” or “liking the usefulness” once we detach it from its actual possessor and from its conceptual formulation.

It is worth mentioning that some minutes later, there is a second use of the *I* pronoun in juxtaposition with the *me* pronoun. The sentence that was here translated as ‘my feeling pretty useful’ was expressed by the participant in Portuguese by means of a reflexive form of the pronoun ‘me’ (*me sentindo bastante útil*), which conveys a sense that is quite close to saying: *the feeling of my being pretty useful*. Typically this use of the pronoun *me* (in the original Portuguese) involves the consciousness of the past self, verbalized in the past tense, which leads us to another phenomenological category.

The category of Secondness corresponds to the already lived experience which is expressed in the following statement: *Eu estava gostando ...me sentindo bastante útil*, which denotes a dyadic relationship between the *I was starting to like*, on the one hand, and the *me (my) feeling pretty useful*, on the other. Thus the past tense in the expression *I was starting* could point to the vagueness that is beginning to become more definite, i.e., its determination has grown, as the self turns to a moment which is already past, one in which the self/me becomes more distinct, as it is being observed by the *I*. The present experience is elusive, and it can only be grasped when it is already past: *I was starting to like.... my feeling pretty useful*.

The use of the verb in the past tense, a past continuous tense, is expressive of the transition of consciousness from present to past, as it narrates the experience of trying to go back, to revisit a certain point in the line of time. In that case, the *I* stretches to the past, as consciousness is embodied in the *me* grammatical form.

The experience of two-sided resistance that is analyzed by categorial Secondness gradually emerged to visibility, in this participant’s case. Thus the use of the verb *to like* reveals an element of self-willedness in that sensation of usefulness that the participant associated with the pronoun *me*. Even if there is no clear, tangible opposition between the *I* and the *me* at this point, an experience of Secondness is manifested in the use of the verb *to like*. The fact that the self in the *I* position evaluates (*to like*) the *me* indicates the reaction to an objective attribute, a kind of obstinacy inherent in the *me* position of the self. In this particular case, it is an attitude of usefulness that is observed as being something external to the self, insofar as it is not the direct, controlled consequence of the exercise of the will. The *me* thus functions as a symptom of “something that forces its way to recognition as being something other than the mind’s creation” (CP 1.325). If the sensation of usefulness had been experienced as the sole creation of the subjective mind, that is, as an attribute of the self caused by the pure will of the subject or ego, the comment of liking that would have been redundant or obvious. We received the impression that the usefulness of the participant was

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experienced in a similar way as one can enjoy the fresh air of an evening, or a piece of music, i.e., as externalities.

An alternative hypothesis concerning the use of the past tense in “*eu estava gostando*” (*I was starting to like*) is to conceive of it as a consequence of the protagonist not being totally warmed-up for the observational situation of thought yet. If that were the case, he would be still evoking the (recent) previous moment of thought.

The usefulness as pure quality of consciousness is an instance of Firstness in the self/sign process. Once this feeling becomes embodied in the pronoun *me*, is perceived or sensed physically as an instance of Secondness. At that point, it has become something independent of the will of the ego, something, which can be observed by the thinker, at the present moment.

The pronoun *you* is not explicit here, so it can only be inferred, if we observe the critical evaluation of the *me* carried out by the *I*, which necessarily supposes some ideal notion in relation to which the *me* is conceived as useful (in opposition to the alternative of taking it easy, of letting go of things, in order to enjoy a deserved rest). Let us recall the definition of the category of Thirdness as “the mode of being which consists in the fact that future facts of Secondness will take on a determinate general character” (CP 1.26). In this respect, it is interesting that the participant overtly mentions his own need of sustaining a constant work rhythm, so that the tendency to become useful may develop:

– *But on the other hand... I mean...well... if I were to stop... (laughter) you know?, I wouldn't be able to start all over again. I believe that I need to keep up a rhythm, that's important to me... I was kind of liking to keep the rhythm, getting up earlier in the morning, I was starting to enjoy my feeling pretty useful, ya know?... uh-hm...well*

The tendency to being useful construed as a regular drive is a general element which can be shared with others as any other common, public concept, in the culture of the participant. This rule-like pattern is observed in the participant's act of evaluating and appreciating his own effort to keep up a sustained rhythm of work. Through the use of past continuous verbal forms – *I was kind of liking, getting-up earlier, (my) feeling pretty useful* – his speech conveys unfolding regularities in his quest for the hard-working identity. When the participant is sitting on one of the chairs, he makes his own the purpose of letting his *self* be oriented by the purpose of usefulness (See Figure 1).

Let us sum up this first part of the analysis. The psychodramatic scene was set up with two chairs, which represented the two conflicting alternatives: either to accept or to turn down a scholarship, in order to carry out an internship during the coming university semester. The burdensome juggling of the two alternatives resulted in the

participant’s most noteworthy attitude, that of heartily and successively supporting, at very short intervals, each one of the two options.

Figure 1: Triadic semiotic analysis of the feeling of usefulness.

I (present)= likable feeling quality	
Me (past) = the experience of the factual embodied self that keeps up a likable rhythm which is perceived in direct opposition to an aspect of the self that prefers to rest, to sleep a bit longer	You (future) = the directionality of the self. Future acts that would tend to take up the general character of usefulness in many different circumstances

2c2. Analysis of Third and Forth Units

While sitting again on Chair 1, the participant seriously envisaged the possibility of turning down the scholarship. His thought process was accompanied by a quality of fear because of the risk involved, were he to choose the option he had defended while he was sitting on Chair 2. Although the word ‘fear’ was not actually used, the protagonist did use twice the word ‘risk’, therefore a feeling of fear can be inferred or elicited from his actual utterances. His abrupt change of attitude was signaled by the adversative conjunction ‘but’, which introduced the opposite possibility, namely, to give up the hard work and to finally start enjoying his much longed for holidays, and slow down the rhythm of his student activity:

But it might also happen that... if I started now with the scholarship I'd have to keep on at it, until August, next semester, and I'd risk to go on with it until that period that has two internship requirements, which would overlap and ... this'd be a risk, I could lose my scholarship, and this wouldn't be very ethical of me, you know? I don't know how you call it...it wouldn't be right... my doing that to that person who's giving me that scholarship.

The semiotic analysis of this unit is presented in Figure 2, which deals with the option of turning down the scholarship. This can be diagrammatically formulated as a semiotic triad in the following way:

Figure 2: The semiotic analysis for the option of turning down the scholarship

I (present) = vague feeling of risk (fear?)	
Me (past) = sensation of risk which arose from the wish to accept the scholarship opposed to the wish to take time to relax.	You (future) = an ethical attitude as a sought after general ideal type

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The opposition between the arguments developed during the thought process in Chair 1 and in Chair 2 became progressively more visible, as the two antithetical tendencies within the self manifested themselves. This happened through observable, repetitive acts of the protagonist, who went back and forth between the two chairs on the stage, in order to occupy them alternatively. Once again, the precise moment of the change of chair was signaled by the adversative conjunction ‘but’, which points out the clear development of a pattern.

Let us go now to this fourth unit of analysis:

But on the other hand, I believe that the person that grants the scholarships is very accessible...it's possible to talk to her, to explain the problem to her... to be able to tell her that later on I won't be able to keep on being so committed with the scholarship... so I could discuss with her if there's a way to organize things so that I could work a little bit more at the beginning... and then a little bit less... the coming semester.(...) So, here's what I ought to do: I think I should take the scholarship... 'cause I need it. I need it to stop worrying about what I'm worrying about now... so as not to lose my rhythm, for me to feel useful, which is a feeling I like.

This specific position represents the aspect of the participant's self which is willing to keep up the intense rhythm of his work, and it was verbally expressed by the verb *to do*, which was used several times in the fragment. In relation to this tendency, we believe we are in the presence of what Wiley (1994, p.55) describes as a “transitory visitor” in the internal conversation. The participant mentions this visitor thus: *I believe that the person that grants the scholarships is very accessible*. The function of the visitor is to contribute with a further argument to the plausibility of this ‘hard working’ identity that was being developed. The third element worth mentioning in this concern is the specification of a purpose by the participant: *so as not to lose my rhythm, for me to feel useful, which is a feeling that I like*.

This unit is a follow-up of the type of thought, which began in the first unit, that is, the semiotic process evolves along the direction of the general character expressed by the notion of “usefulness”. The implicit reference to the *you/self* in the future (*so as not to lose my rhythm*) characterizes the self as a purposive agent. Thus, something that was not explicit in the first unit was now formulated through the use of the Portuguese preposition “*para*” (*so as to*).

To understand the idea of a purpose as it is virtually embodied in an interpretant, it is useful to recall the following description of the triadic relation: “a sign that stands for something to the idea it produces or modifies” (CP 1.339). The sign is taken in that definition not in its broadest sense, which is that of a triadic unit, but in the more restricted one of the representamen, namely, the logical subject of the triad whose function is described as that of “the vehicle conveying into the mind something from

without” (id.). Then Peirce adds a further specification to that account of the semiotic triad: “That for which it stands is called its object; that which it conveys, its meaning and the idea to which it gives rise, its interpretant” (CP 1.339)

In the present case, the sign/representamen is the *I* aspect of the self; the object corresponds to the *me*/self, which was evoked by the participant as someone who was able to maintain a rhythm, to organize his work one thing first, then another; finally, the interpretant is the *You*/self, which the *I*/self addresses at a future moment, with the concrete aim of not being worried any longer. The overall purpose evinced in this part of the exercise was to keep on enjoying that feeling of being useful. The interpretant is then the desire or personal project of becoming a useful self. Peirce accounts for desire as an element which can never be conceived as a single moment, and thus does not correspond to a once only, specific situation, but denotes a general kind of behavior: “Now, observe that we seldom, probably never, desire a single individual thing. What we want is something that shall produce a certain pleasure of a certain kind. To speak of a single individual pleasure is to use words without meaning” (CP 1.341).

In relation to the temporary visitor, *the person who grants the scholarships*, it is interesting to observe that she was described as a person who shows an attitude which is consistent with this positively evaluated identity of the self: someone who is *very accessible* in the sense of being both available and understanding. This visitor was described by the participant as someone who is akin to the ideal identity that he was aiming at: lenient, understanding, in a word, one who would not offer much resistance to the option of taking it easy.

The observed role/counter role (Moreno, 1975, p. 8) relation of the self with this temporary visitor can be described as follows: the relation with someone who is able to cope with activities, who does not become overwhelmed or too worried. It is a complementary role in the positive sense, since it is that of someone who accepts a gradual development of the participant’s own kind of organization arrangement and rhythm, in another words, it is someone who is not over-demanding. This role relation could be characterized as one of supportive complementarity. We observe here that the evoking of the person who grants the scholarship depicts her as a role model, as an ideal that orients the self’s interpretive process. The identity embodied by that role seems to represent for the participant a compromise between the cherished usefulness, and a tolerable, not over stressing, and safer, rhythm of action.

2c3. Analysis of Fifth Unit

The manifestation of an internal opposition became at this point exceedingly clear. It is worth remarking that the protagonist was then sitting on Chair 1, that is, in the position where he had begun to talk about a feeling of risk, and of a *me*/self which was unable to cope with the activities, and to keep up a sustained, productive rhythm.

The following fragment is evidently a continuation of the discourse that started in the First Unit.

– *Still... on the other hand, I think that perhaps, from next year on, I won't be able to keep it up, to keep up the rhythm and that would mean my not being very fair, do you understand?... I mean... I mean towards that person who gave me the scholarship... Well, that's about it.*

The question *Do you understand?* was not, in fact, addressed to the *you/self* at a future moment, but to the external *you* of the researcher who was directing that psychodramatic exercise, as a simple and concrete way of checking whether she was following the general line of thought or not. According to our analysis, that does not mean either an interruption or a disruption of the participant's internal dialogue, because our semiotic theoretical framework conceives of the internal dialogue as not being different in kind from the typical dialogue which the self holds with another person.⁶ The term 'internal' does not denote a conception of thought as a phenomenon that is entirely locked up within the person, as if it were a completely private affair, but as a generally (not always) silent communicative process. Since all logical processes are dialogical in nature, there is no substantial or theoretical difference involved in the communicative relation of the self with internal or external others.

2c4. Analysis of the Closing Unit

The arrangement of having the participant sit in two alternative chairs not only meant that he was holding two different, opposite options of future action, but it also represented two different aspects of his self. The latter were experienced as contradictory, because one was capable of coping with a strong, sustained rhythm of work, while the other was unable to do so. As the exercise advanced, that situation became clearer, particularly in the participant's closing remarks, when he gave two different names to the two chairs, insofar as they were two distinct self-concepts. These can be legitimately described as two 'identities', since they serve to define and characterize two different, antagonistic, interpretive tendencies which coexist *aporetically* within his *self*, as it can be seen in the following, last fragment:

⁶ In order to rightly differentiate the two dialogical instances, talk to one's self and talk to an external individual, we apply Peirce's "pragmatic maxim" (CP 5. 394), namely, we draw the general consequences of one process and the other, and thus we conclude that we are facing two separate manifestations of a more general phenomenon. What really matters in things semiotic, is that the observed upshots of these concepts – inner dialogue and external dialogue be different, otherwise they would be just two ways for talking about the same thing, which is not the case here. When we wrote above that the unity of the self has logical consistency along time, this implies the functioning of an 'overarching identity' (Colapietro 1990) that maintains both kinds of dialogue, internal and external.

[The researcher asks whether he could give a name for each one of those voices represented by the two chairs]

- This one is **Easygoing Peter**. You know what I mean? *Easygoing in the sense of relaxed... maybe too relaxed.*

- And here this one would be...uhhhm... let's see... **Useful, Worrisome Peter**.

The triadic interpretive process that had been developing during the entire exercise generated as its (for the time being) final product two logical dynamical interpretants, the inner characters 'Easygoing Peter' (*maybe too relaxed*) and 'Useful Peter' (*worrisome*). Following Wiley (1994), we construe these two concrete, historical and partial logical products of the on-going interpretive process as two particular identities, because it helps us preserve as a distinct theoretical concept, that generality of the self. That closing statement was uttered as the participant took up a third spatial place, namely, a standing position. By then, it had become quite clear that the participant interpreted his own self in the same way as he interpreted other signs, or in the same way as others do. Thus, he expected the researcher to understand that sign of his in a similar way as he himself did (*do you know what I mean?*). Another consequence of this can be seen in the fact that he was able to even evaluate critically that particular identity of his (*maybe too relaxed*). This indicates the existence of two levels of hermeneutic generality, in the analytical sense proposed by Colapietro (1989, p. 66): one level is that of "the self as interpreting subject". This can be distinguished from "the self as interpreted object", namely, the self conceived of as an autonomous sign in the course of its natural development. An implication is that the self is a complex type of semiotic process, "one in which there is a ramification and also one in which the various branches of the process act on one another" (Peirce, MS 290 paraphrased in Colapietro, 1989, p. 66). Therefore, we have observed in those psychodrama exercises two ramifications of the semiotic process, which in this case generated two conflicting self-identities on one level. The higher level of hermeneutic generality is the self overarching interpretive process.

Conclusions

We believe that our study can contribute to contemporary dialogical self theory by pointing to the analytical potential of the phenomenological categories of experience and to possible ways of its application. If self-awareness is conceived as being sign-mediated, then the passenger image (Lysaker 2006, p.43) can be construed as an instance of Firstness, and that of "the driver" as Thirdness, which integrates all categories cognitively, and helps us understand the "auto-regulatory functions" (Valsiner's, 2000). The triadic perspective is useful to approach a crucial issue for the

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dialogical self, and for psychology in general, namely, the characterization of internal multiplicity without fragmenting the self.

The outcome of dialogical thinking is the person's experiencing more than one distinct identity or inner character. The design of the psychodramatic exercise enabled the observation of that thinking experience. In our study, each participant's speeches showed a noticeable tendency to interpret the identities as inner characters (in the example discussed above, *easygoing Peter*, and *worrisome Peter*). Their voices emerged in permanent confrontation with an oppositional voice, which was experienced as a non-ego or *me*. A chair that was set up in an opposite position to the first chair concretized that voice. Insofar as it represented the self at a past moment (within the internal conversation), the *me* was experienced as something independent of the will of the *I* speaking in the present, i.e., as being a self-willed voice, a typical instance of the phenomenological category of Secondness. The obstinacy of an internal opponent functions as the dialogical fuel or semiotic power that keeps thought going. In the proposed exercise, the oppositional pivot of thought was physically manifested through the movement of the participants from one chair to the other. Every time this motion took place, it emerged in the participants' discourse as the conjunction 'but'.

This opposition did not come from the other persons in the room, but from the inner realm of the self; it emerged as a resistance which both blocked *and* empowered the smooth flow of the *I* by eliciting further arguments to override the obdurate 'but'. The dialectical upshot described as Socratic *aporia* in this paper is the dawning of an awareness determined by the emergence of different directionalities of thought. It introduces new, opposite ideas that were not conceived at first by the participant, until s/he occupied the other chair. Thus these contradictory ideas were confronted, as the first person *I* took up, alternatively, opposite points of view. The *I* speaking at turns from conflicting viewpoints characterized the first stages of thought. After some time, each perspective started to consolidate into a distinct voice that showed a sequential regularity (Thirdness), which culminated by the use of a name, i.e., a symbol. Therefore, this regularity enabled the participant to name (Thirdness) the unique qualitative elements (Firstness) of each voice, which served to tell apart distinct identities (Secondness).

In some cases, more than two chairs (voices) were used on the stage, but the additional chairs ended up being interpreted as supporting roles of the two main voices/chairs, which overtly featured characteristics of mutual incompatibility. They always ended up being interpreted as *two* opposed identities. The participant experienced the initial situation of doubt, which was aroused through the psychodramatic warming-up process, as a self-contradiction, i.e., as an *aporia*. Our choice of the notion of 'identity/ies' to designate each of the dialogically opposed voices, positions or roles of the participant who sat on each chair, received additional confirmation from the participants when they were able to name and describe them

without any trouble. After that semiotic act, these identities were recognized by the participants as more or less permanent aspects of the self which had emerged in those peculiar, experimental circumstances, but which were fully consistent with their previous life experience.

The exercise finished by showing how the time-bound development of thought inevitably leads to the setting up of distinct spatial positions, on account of the regularity of a dialectical mechanism which involves the return to a previously established argumentative point. Thus the creation of such communicational patterns tends to be construed as particular identities. What originated and evolved along the temporal dimension was, nevertheless, experienced by the participants as a space within them. In spite of the temporal dimension inherent in any interpretive process, the time-bound activity which is the self-interpretive process is lived as a spatial phenomenon, one in which the self functions as a framework, and the person's identities are lived as characters within it. Consequently, each of those identities can be accounted for as different interpretive tendencies of the self.

The disposition to tolerate self-contradiction was accepted and expressed by the participants, in spite of their acknowledging that the situation was uncomfortable, even hard to live with. Still, they were in no hurry to come to a pacifying resolution on the dramatic stage, when they were offered that possibility. They said that they still lacked the necessary information to solve adequately that complex issue. The participants' explanations converged by saying that they were not ready to end the conflict, at that particular moment, not on account of a personal limitation. To take a decision there and then would have been premature. Such comments tend to support the description of the *aporetic* state as a central element for furthering inquiry, be it scientific or personal. Not one participant manifested the need to indulge in evasive behavior. Yet we should not disregard the possibility of a certain bias introduced by the experimental setting.

Paradoxically as it may sound, self-contradiction seems to enhance the person's experiencing the self as a unit along time, since the dialogical coexistence of two identities favors the tacit distinction between self and identities as instances of two levels of generality. In the case discussed above, the *aporia* consisted in two opposed self-concepts, *relaxed* vs. *worrisome*, which made the participant wonder how to reach a decision that would involve a compromise solution, a more adequate response to the situation he faced. If the subject had not been able to tolerate the internal division, he would have made an arbitrary decision without being able to wait and to gather enough information to reach a negotiated solution. This would have forced him to identify the totality of his self with only one identity.

In the dramatizations that were made, there were some moments which required the participants to stand aside and take the role of observers of themselves. From that specific vantage point, they were to comment on the ongoing situation, in his or her

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own name. Although the protagonist had been engrossed in the dialogical situation, there was evidence that there remained an aspect of his or her self that was still capable of carrying out the task of self-observation, a position which could evaluate and comment on the identities involved in the discussion. Once the particular identities were named, the participants felt the need to find a third position – usually represented by their standing up – to speak in behalf of the person’s real name e.g., ‘Peter’. From that vantage point, the participants said to be aware that they were trying to come to terms with two partial aspects of the self, to orient the directionality of their lives. On such occasions, it became clear for the researcher that although the participants had taken different roles, they had never lost the capacity of self-observation. There was an interpretive agency of the self, even when the person spoke in each distinct role, from each chair on the stage. The self as an “overarching identity” seemed to be operative during the entire dramatization, but it only became evident, when the participants took some distance to comment on the situation.

In the specific case we discussed, had the participant not tolerated the self-contradiction or *aporia*, he would have adopted just one of the identities, e.g., that of *easygoing* or *relaxed*, and this would have led him to take that self-concept for the sole reality of the self. Such a decision would have produced a monological self, one that generates stereotyped behavior, because the self as a process is confused with a particular identity, and thus limits the possibilities of an adequate psychological development. In contrast, when participants took up the third, standing up position in the psychodramatic exercise, they were capable of exercising self-critical agency (*‘too relaxed’*), which manifested both self-control, and the search for better solutions, in the external realm.

Consequently, the present study shows that tolerance of a state of internal self-contradiction is a key ingredient to engage into an inquiry that serves both as an exploratory conduct in the real world, as well as a form of self-inquiry.

The relevance of applying the phenomenological category of Secondness to a dialogical study of the self lies in that it produces a better understanding of any kind of dyadic relation, and of the way in which the logical determination of external otherness – in the sense of constraint – acts obdurately upon the intra-psychological realm. When we use the term “external” as an attribute of otherness, we include in this phenomenon the influence of an inner voice or identity in conflict. Thus the externality of an element arises from the fact that there is nothing the subject can do, no opinion s/he may hold or defend, that can change its stubborn, determining influence.

Even if we take into account that this specific study relied on a demand of the researchers on the participants to focus on a psychological state of ambivalence, it still seems of general validity to understand how internal opposition takes place in our normal thought processes, and also in what sense it is a defining aspect of our dialogical

inner realm. The constraint of external reality is part of the thought process as an internalized dialogical opponent. If we base the study of the self on a sign model that posits that external reality is wholly independent of the sign, and therefore that meaning is ultimately arbitrary, as the semiological model of Saussure does, then it is very hard for a psychological theory to differentiate delusional thought, such as hallucinations, or the phenomena psychoanalysis describes as negation, from normal, routine-like thinking. In contrast, the triadic sign model of Peirce enables us to bring to the conception of thought and, thereby, to that of the self, the theorization on the kind of limits that objective external reality imposes on our internal subjective realm. While the participants of the workshops of psychodrama expressed their thoughts and endeavored to follow their dreams, as they indulged in the kind of “distant castle-building (whether in Spain or within one’s own moral training” (CP 6.458), their thinking kept stumbling against actual obstacles. The clash with alterity is not only a relation with physically external otherness, but also with its internalized effects in the process of thinking. In this relation with the other, the self emerges as a developing sign, and the regularities of the self-interpretive process lead to the emergence of particular identities. It is the capacity to tolerate self-contradiction that fosters a balanced semiotic development of the self as an interpretive agency.

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