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“As a rule it is with our being reduced to a minimum that we live; most of our faculties lie dormant because they can rely upon Habit, which knows what there is to be done and has no need of their services.” (Marcel Proust (1981 [1919]), “Within a Budding Grove – Place-Names: the Place,” Vol. 1, *Remembrance of Things Past*, p. 706). “Thirddness pours in upon us through every avenue of sense.” (C. S. Peirce, “The Nature of Meaning,” 7 May 1903, EP2: 211).

1. Retroduction

- 1 In the beginning was the guess, and in the end there is *habit*; two edges of a living continuum. To begin is to take a guess, while simultaneously being supported in this play of abductive inference by culture and human interests (*habits*, or perhaps what some call “pertinences”) that have had, and continue to have, influence as a “living idea,” a mediated presentation on the guessing process tied and pulled along to a world from which it sways from similar weaves.¹ Welcome to Thirddness. And this is the work of *retroduction*; “spontaneous conjectures of instinctive reason,” as Peirce would say. We start somewhere, with *something*, but that is always in the sum-of-things (*summa rerum*).

[...] it must be confessed that *if we knew* that the impulse to prefer one hypothesis to another really were analogous to the instincts of birds and wasps, it would be foolish not to give play, within the bounds of reason; especially, since we must entertain some hypothesis, or else forgo all further knowledge than that which we have already gained by that very means. (Peirce, “The Neglected Argument for the Reality of God” (1908), EP2: 443-4, original emphasis; see also EP2: 217-21)

- 2 By stating “that which we have already gained by that very means,” we have a guess-in-knowledge as accumulated “historical truth,” to which the later Peirce (in 1913), equates

with “faith in common-sense and in instinct.”² Such is the nature of retroduction. It is “the deliberate yielding of ourselves to that *force majeure*, – an early surrender at discretion, due to our foreseeing that we must, whatever we do, be borne down by that power, at last [...] a surrender to the insistence of an idea [...] irresistible [...] imperative.”³ Synechistic pertinence.

- 3 And what insistent idea may that be? In this case it is the relation of Eco to some variety of pragmatism.⁴ Peirce plays into this heavily, as do the roots and fruits, and indefinability of Pragmatism, mentioned in sections 1 and 2. Eco's connection to pragmatism will, as it has already, open the flood gates to waves of *ologi's* and *isti's*,⁵ as happens in most retroductive inquiries; geology, evolution, and explanatory sciences (as Peirce saw it). Each one “theaters of controversy,” of exquisite staging, scores, scenic talents, histories, and hybrid iterations. Yet, the most *hy-bri[d]vidi* of them all is philosophical and cultural scholarship, if not philosophical *commedia*, and now perhaps even the Eco-sophical. Many claim to be *ricostruzionisti*, masterfully deflecting objections as to whether or not they can be held to certain proposed notions if questioned as *ologo*, when, at best, they were merely proposing a reading as *ista*.⁶ In this case it was Eco's *ista ricostruzionista* (with a chef's dash of *ologo*) reading of “iconismo primario” that gives rise to questions regarding this Peircean reassessment as we shall see in section 2. Section 3 will change tone and open up to a darker voice, and a few issues in Eco's writing (or not) on the “comic,” particularly his essays “Pirandello *Ridens*,” and “The Comic and the Rule.”

2. Who's: Wright, Green, Peirce

- 4 As the nursery to the birth of American pragmatism, old Cambridge, in the early 1870s, had “The Metaphysical Club.” Therein, but dramatically narrowed down for the purpose of this brief study, we find Chauncey Wright (1830-1875), and Nicholas St. John Green (1830-1876). Some believe that Green championed and extended Bain's definition of belief in a legal and practical level, and can be considered an uncle of pragmatism. Of course, in the middle of all this there was Peirce who preached his principle, calling it “Pragmatism.”⁷ It was in this nursery that Wright, the other (more bizarre) uncle of pragmatism, most likely discussed what he called a “Philosophy of Habit.” This was, in his eyes, initially to supplement utilitarianism, so actions more closely serve the real ends of nature, and the economy of life, as “*quantity in worth, dignity, or rank*.”⁸ Utility was thus a principle that we regard as a standard, internally considered, in Wright's words, by “how steadily we can think under strong feeling, or how strongly we can feel with clear thoughts.”⁹ Notice the already budding grove of synechism. We can imagine the conversations where Wright, Green, and Peirce, would exchange on these considerations, and where Wright, as Peirce mentioned, acted as the “boxing-master whom we, – I, particularly, – used to face to be severely pummeled.”¹⁰ Boxing masters are the ‘damndest of rationalists,’ as James once described Wright to G. H. Palmer. For Wright, more of an empiricist and critical nihilist, habit was not about the common effectiveness of motives in proportion to everyday usefulness or reasonableness, but as reliant on just, natural inclinations, that he referred to as ‘fixed habit,’ “an integrant part of a system of dispositions which, as superintending, so far as it goes, the whole of the conditions of human life, and leading to the conservation of the whole, itself included, is what we call *conscience* [...]”¹¹ Peirce expresses a similar thought in noting that “intellectual power is nothing but the facility in taking habits and in following them in cases essentially

analogous to, but in non-essentials widely remote from, the normal cases of connections of feelings under which those habits were formed.”¹² Further, and even closer to Wright’s general views, Peirce stated that “the pragmaticist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent come more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*, which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*” [or “concrete reasonableness” as he later stated] (Peirce CP5: 433; original emphasis). Echoes of Wright’s cosmic weather and “counter-movements” (see Wright 1971a: 177, 74).

- 5 The influence of Wright is clear, especially his view where “nothing justifies the development of abstract principles in science but their utility in enlarging our concrete knowledge of nature [...] [as] working ideas – finders, not merely summaries of truth” (Wright 1971: 56). Or further, “we do not inquire what course has led to successful answers in science, but what motives have prompted pertinent questions” (Wright 1971: 48), and that the “questions of philosophy proper are human desires and fears and aspirations – human emotions – taking an intellectual form” (Wright 1971: 50). One can easily notice Peirce ironing out his positions with the ghost of Wright in his article “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” (1878), as the “essence of belief is the establishment of [a rule of actions, or, say for short] a habit,”¹³ carried further into his later 1895 “Of Reasoning in General,” and again in the 1905 piece, “What Pragmatism Is,” and his 1907 “Pragmatism.” It is in his sixth Harvard lecture from May 7, 1903, entitled “The Nature of Meaning” that we see how close to Wright he came:

This Faculty [Insight] is at the same time of the general nature of Instinct, resembling the instinct of animals in its so far surpassing the general powers of our reason and for its directing us as if we are in possession of facts that are entirely beyond the reach of our senses. It resembles instinct too in its small liability to error; for though it is wrong oftener than right, yet the relative frequency with which it is right is on the whole the most wonderful thing in our constitution. (Peirce, EP2: 217-8)

- 6 Peirce never abandoned this view. In one of his last writings, from September-October 1913, we hear again about “human intellectual instincts,” and how Peirce “select[s] the appellation ‘instinct’ in order to profess [his] belief that the reasoning-power is related to human nature very much as the wonderful instincts of ants, wasps, etc., are related to their several natures” (Peirce EP2: 464). It would be difficult indeed to get closer than this to pragmatism’s “instinctive attraction to living facts” (Peirce CP5: 44).
- 7 In 1873 (after the breaking up of the Metaphysical Club), Wright was knee-deep in working on the article “Evolution of Self Consciousness.” He points out how the term “rational” (or “scientific”) is “knowledge [that] comes from reflecting on what we know in the common-sense, or semi-instinctive forms, or making what we know a field of renewed research, observation, and analysis.” This does not neatly divide the minds of humans and non-human animals, but only, as he writes, “divides the knowledge produced by outward attention from that which is further produced by reflective attention.” This amounts to how, in humans, images act as signs to govern lines of thought, reasoning, and research, whereas “with reference to the more vivid outward signs, they are, in the animal mind, merged in the things signified, like stars in the light of the sun” (Wright 1971: 207, 209).¹⁴ In his 1913 unpublished piece, Peirce is also clear about his synechistic view, contra Bacon’s despair that “Nature far exceeds the subtlety of the human mind.” This is explained with an example from an experience he had with the then Professor of Greek at Harvard, E. A. Sophocles, who, as Peirce stated, “was a curious observer of many

other things than the habits of aorist infinitives.” For Peirce the colligation of one fact to another related fact has a person combine these as a surprising third fact, and there, “though [Peirce] say[s] that is it by *instinct* that he draws the inference [retroduction], [he] nevertheless admits that he may be very much mistaken [negative realism?], just as such animals as dogs and ants are sometimes betrayed by their instincts [...] yet the instincts of more intelligent mammals, birds, and insects, sometimes undergo modification under new experience” (Peirce, EP2: 467; original emphasis). And here Peirce recounts the story of the toad that lost one eye, was near starvation due to missing his prey, but regained (retooled) his aim, after a few weeks. Notice again the echoes of Wright:

Command of signs, and, indeed, all the volitional or active powers of animals, including attention in perception, place it in relation to outward things in marked contrast with its passive relations of sensation and inattentive or passive perception. The distinctness, or prominence, in consciousness given by an animal's attention to its perceptions, and the greater energy given by its intentions or purposes on its outward movements cannot fail to afford a ground of discrimination between these as causes, both of inwards and outward events, and those outward causes which are not directly under such control, but form an independent system, or several distinct systems of causes. This would give rise to a form of self-consciousness more immediate and simple than the intellectual one, and is apparently realized in dumb animals. (Wright, “Evolution of Self-Consciousness,” 1971: 224)

- 8 Peirce maintains his view on instinct (clearly against species solipsism) throughout his intellectual development, and from his 1898 lecture “Philosophy and the Conduct of Life” we read, “thus reason, for all the frills it customarily wears, in vital cases, comes down upon its marrow-bones to beg the succor of instinct” (EP2: 32). Wright's position is written all over this. In the same lecture he pushes it further by adding how reasons are “excuses which unconscious instinct invents to satisfy the teasing ‘why’s’ of the *ego*.” Much later (in the autumn of 1913) we find Peirce returning to this view, where “Reason is a sort of instinct,” and laments that we have been blind to the “just authority of instinct” (EP2 472; original emphasis). In-between these dates, and from a letter from 1908 to Lady Welby, we find how Icons, when referred to interpretants are “Suggestives” “assuring their interpretants by ‘Instinct’” (EP2: 481).¹⁵

- 9 Somewhere within this tangle one can again take up and press Eco's idea of “primary iconism.” The Peircean use of the term “assuring” (very Third indeed), in this instance would serve as a way to clarify what Eco mistakenly believes is a *primum*, under the idea of “primary iconism,” but is instead, in the semblance of a moment, a history (or habit) of “pertinences” rolled into one.¹⁶ This history of pertinent recognition is the very recursiveness of “degenerate” Thirdness.¹⁷

The most degenerate Thirdness is where we conceive a mere Quality of Feeling, or Firstness, to represent itself to itself as Representation. Such, for example would be Pure Self-Consciousness, which might be roughly described as a mere feeling that has a dark instinct of being a germ of thought. This sounds nonsensical, I grant. Yet something can be done toward rendering it comprehensible. (Peirce, EP2: 161)

- 10 Any personal experiential habitus is already *sub specie vinculum* to degenerate Thirdness. What we gather from the letters of Wright, which would have made up many discussion topics, is that the intuitive and non-intuitive boils down to an issue of logic, not psychology, and more precisely that “cognitions which cannot be analyzed by introspection are called intuitions [or] data, axioms, [and] premises of logical processes

[...] but no amount of introspection can analyze a cognition down to the bare, unrelated data of senses [...] this would be to dissolve all of the links which bind sensuous impression to consciousness [...]” (Wright 1971: 128). Here is Wright against any primary iconism, molar, molecular, or for the expressed purposes of an interpretive kick in the pants. Similarly, no amount of pertinence, and no amount of “pertinentizzazione di un soggetto interpretante che ritaglia un piano enciclopedico di pertinenza”¹⁸ can begin a series, due to pertinence (or levels of pertinence) being always-already a tremor from within a concrete historical series from which, even subsumed under a personal aspect, is *Likeness* experientialized, or as Peirce would have it, the “*capacity* for experience” (EP2: 8, original emphasis; CP1: 307). Pertinence, like belief, is a ready-made cluster of belief-formations, where a person does not act on one belief, or one pertinence.

- 11 Eco’s reference to Giorgio Prodi’s “Signs and Codes of Immunology” (1988), well as Prodi (1977), is a tempting by-path to revisit, and to entertain some type of Wright-Darwin connection, but, alas, Wright, with Bacon, would say they are no more than “anticipations of the mind.”¹⁹ Let us recall a cornerstone in Peirce’s architectonic: “Thirdness pours in upon us through every avenue of sense.” (EP2: 211).²⁰ Yet even to this, Wright’s harsh rebuttal can be heard: “It is possible that laws exist absolutely universal, binding fate and infinite power as well as speech and the intelligible use of words; but it is not possible that the analytic process of any finite intellect should discover what particular laws these are.” (Wright 1971: 229).²¹ Peirce did not forget this lesson, and took it with him as a shield against the unknowable, and medusian “thing-in-itself.” With this in mind, what sense does Eco’s citation from *De docta ignorantia*, II, ii, of Nicola Cusano even amount to, if not a couched nod to the tough critical skeptico-nihilism of Chauncey Wright? (See Eco, “La soglia e l’infinito,” 2007: 172. See also Fabbrichesi 2017: 321.) Perhaps Cusano’s citation is best re-written as, “The infinite Form can only be received in a burst of laughter.”
- 12 Before moving on to section 2, let us return for a moment more to Old Cambridge, and recall Peirce’s debt to Nicholas St. John Green. Green was a “skillful lawyer and a learned one [with] his extraordinary power of disrobing warm and breathing truth of the draperies of long worn out formulas was what attracted attention to him everywhere.”²² And further, Peirce saw in Green “an overflowing spirit of good-fellowship, and a Rabelaisian humor, without the Rabelaisian cynicism.”²³ That is some praise coming from Peirce. I believe that Eco would have welcomed, and deserved, the same description, and praise.²⁴ As was mentioned earlier, Green championed and extended, as Peirce saw it, Bain’s definition of belief, viz., “that upon which a man is prepared to act,” from a legal anti-formalist position, along with his anti-nominalist approach to causes (proximate or remote). In all this, Green can be considered an uncle of pragmatism, if Bain’s definition (whether Green indeed had him in mind), was its grandfather. From his legal training, teaching, and practice, Green was an example of how purpose, and following through on purposes, are the basis and means of world-making-meaning rooted in outcomes of the actions involving belief. I agree with Menand (2001: 225), that Green was more influenced by, and was probably citing (as he did in his Notes, and Reviews) the works of Judge James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-1894), and in particular, *A General View of the Criminal Law in England* (1863) in his statements on belief. Nevertheless, Green’s position as a legal scholar and widely cultured teacher made way for an understanding of how laws (and legal practices) are products (results) of social practices, setting Green on the front lines of the scission between legal formalism and legal realism.²⁵

- 13 It would not be difficult to image the discussions between Green, Peirce, Wright, (and Holmes), upon the statements that “the desire to act and the desire to act successfully are ultimate facts in human nature,” and that “without belief men cannot act,” and that “belief is [not a passive reception of external facts] but an active habit involving an exertion of will.”²⁶ Closer textual evidence can be gleaned from Green’s articles, and notes and reviews from 1869 to 1876, and we can continue to imagine how similar problems and positions could have been brought up in discussions at The Metaphysical Club, (their last meeting held sometime in mid-late November 1872).
- 14 In his review, “Power of the Will Over Conduct” Green states: “There is always a tendency to act out an idea. [...] This tendency is something distinct from, and something often acting in opposition to the will. It acts with a strength proportioned to the vividness of the idea [and] a multitude is enough to show that the tendency, in spite of reason or the will to act out an idea, is not an exception but a universal rule.” (Green 1933: 168). In the review, “The Maxim that a Man is presumed to Intend the Natural Consequences of his Acts,” Green gives a few examples where this maxim, considered a presumption of fact for the jury to consider, was clarified and supported as such by James Fitzjames Stephen, who Green cites from *General View of the Criminal Law of England*:
- Proof that a man’s body has gone through a set of motions usually caused by a certain state of mind raises a presumption that they were so caused in the particular case at issue [...] because it recognizes the fact that every action consists as such of inward feelings and outwards motions, the motions forming the evidence of the feelings [...] the way in which, in fact, he did move is the only trustworthy evidence on the subject, and consequently is the evidence to which alone (in all common cases), the jury ought to direct their attention. (Green 1933: 192)
- 15 There are other examples of Green’s clear-headedness, his view of the practical service of judgments, and, as Peirce, noted, his “extraordinary power of disrobing warm and breathing truth of the draperies of long worn out formulas,” the most notable being his article, “Proximate and Remote Causes” (Green 1933: 1-17), where we read:
- Nothing more imperils the correctness of a train of reasoning than the use of metaphor [...] the phrase “chain of causation,” which is a phrase in frequent use when this maxim is under discussion, embodies a dangerous metaphor [...] causes are pictured as following one upon the other in time, as the links of a chain follow one upon the other in space. There is nothing in nature which corresponds to this. Such an idea is a pure fabrication of the mind. (Green 1933: 11)
- 16 Wright would have agreed. He similarly questioned the usage of the term “belief,” stating that, “what is called ‘belief,’ as to what it is, as well as to what are the true grounds or cause of it, would, if the meanings of the word were better discriminated in common usage, be settled by the lexicographer; for it is really an ambiguous term” (Wright 1971: 249). Even more, “reverence, or the want of it, has quite as much influence on men’s beliefs, or professions of belief, as proofs and disproofs have” (Wright 1971a: 206). Peirce was also working out these problems which, in 1886, he called the “associational determinations of belief,” and how daily life is full of these, and how it is best to allow these “inferences” (unconscious, preconscious) their day and not engage them by some “hypochondriac logic.”²⁷

3. What's: Primarily, Iconically, Peirce

- 17 Three texts by Eco will be mentioned in this section; *Lector in Fabula* (1979: 27-49), *Kant and the Platypus* ([1997] 2000: 99-122), and “La soglia e l’infinito” (Eco in Paolucci, 2007: 145-76). Peirce’s statement, “Thirdness pours in upon us through every avenue of sense” (EP2: 211), will once again serve as a stern recursive sign-post. In *Kant and the Platypus*, where he took up reinterpreting Peirce’s iconism, Eco sways under the sublime firmament of Parmenides’ rendition of “Being,” (that should have been placed under “The questioning of the poets” section 1.7), because Eco did not account for the legislative roots, aim, and language of Parmenides’ poem, or the Eleatic legislator’s particular way of figuring limits to signs (and naming) un-becoming for the public truth of just-Being. Parmenides’ does not emulate due to a negative ontology, nor does he present an abstraction, but rather a quality of feeling, as Peirce would see it; and there, “nothing is truer than true poetry” (EP2: 193, see also 194). Parmenides’ fragments were written in a style so they could have been recited, as were Charondas’, or sung as were Zaleucus’ laws. Solon also put his lawmaking tenants in poetic form. Add to this that “The first has nothing to do with the One of Parmenides [...] nor any other unities that are talked about in philosophy; for these are really unities of totality, and so imply plurality” (Peirce W5: 304). Back to Thirdness we come, and to where “Law is the revealing of being” (Plato, *Minos* 317b).²⁸
- 18 Somewhat like Peirce’s shift in 1885, Eco’s shift in 1997 was (back, or forwards) to speculative philosophy proper. Peirce, due in part to his encounter and review of Royce’s *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*,²⁹ and Eco due to recalibrating his past works and positions regarding the cognitive, semiotic, forms of narration, the unclassifiable, the encyclopedia, reference, negotiation, Peirce, and his encounters with the figures and fierce debates on iconism. In a way, this was Eco presenting his work as a conceptual platypus flying in the face of easy schematizing (though aiming at one), due to his use, critique, and composition of an enormous range of figures and themes in the history of philosophy, without forgetting how it all re(as)sembles a story.
- 19 In *Kant and the Platypus*, Eco is wrestling with Peirce, as a veritable Jacob. Eco states his position against Pericean synechism by how we could ever “aspire to a thought that is so complex (but organic at the same time) that it can explain the complexity (and the organicity) of the world of our experience, or natural world [...] [and in this case] the thought presumes to proceed by *given* rules (and *found* in the making of the thought itself) that for some reason are the same (still unknown, however) as those of the ‘natural’ world that it thinks” (Eco 1985: 334-5, original emphasis; see also Eco 2000: 120-2, 255-6). In Peirce we find a rebuttal that goes beyond spilling black ink:
- Let the clean blackboard be a sort of diagram of the original vague potentiality [...] I draw a chalk line on the board. This discontinuity is one of these brute acts by which alone the original vagueness could have made a step towards definiteness. There is a certain element of continuity in this line. Where did this continuity come from? It is nothing but the original continuity of the blackboard which makes everything upon it continuous. (Peirce, CP6: 203)
- 20 Here we catch the difference between Eco’s negative realism, otherwise called contractual realism, minimal realism, or temperate realism, (depending at what miraculous stage of interpretation one finds themselves), and Peirce’s “process realism,” or where realism and synechism are bounded and object of semiotic investigations.³⁰

- 21 Would this be close enough to the Eco's *hard core of being* (*zoccolo duro dell'essere*), or to the endless wrapping of hard-wired (cable-optic) *lines of resistance* (*"linee di tendenza"*), best translated as "lines of tendencies"?³¹ If so, then Eco is set back to explain how, in fact, this heterogeneity can be traced, or de-marcated, if there is not some form of isomorphism, or mutual influence.³² This issue can be further developed by returning to the idea of *habit* in Peirce, and how Eco leaves it nearly untouched, by a rather Proustian-like "momentary intermission of Habit." This is this perhaps due to Eco previously having "put something of [himself] everywhere, everything is fertile, everything is dangerous, and [he] can make discoveries no less precious than in Pascal's *Pensées* in an advertisement for soap."³³ Or is it rather, because it is "well known that you can make Peirce say anything you want according to how you approach him" (Eco 2000: 399 n.26)?³⁴ If that is the case, so much then for the limits of interpretation, or gesturing about when a given interpretation is blatantly wrong, aberrant, or untenable, and farewell to the hope of any internal textual coherence. What then will Peirce's text not allow, and what could even be invalidated as false? Of course, if Eco is rewriting Peirce as a *ricostruizionista*, and is picking through some of the actual phases, textual histories, and history within which the works of Peirce navigated, he is varying Peirce, spirit, letter, and philological knots, and approaches the threshold of a novel. Somewhat like a Baudolino, Peirce is abandoned to a perpetual renovation and restoration of his beloved Arisbe. Then, just about *anything goes*. In the end, Eco grew a habit of reinterpreting Peirce, a "heavy curtain of habit,"³⁵ (another strike against any primary iconism), and this is what we must deal with, whether or not it shrouded or revealed the reality of Peirce's surrounding world. What we have is Eco's production of possible worlds of his own expectations and interpretative cooperation, reminding us more of his work on the fable. Perhaps this is how Peirce's texts lends the reader a way to be managed in their anticipatory interpretative hopes, and incorporates them at a discursive level, playing in turn to a world as/in a story.³⁶
- 22 The production of a habit is through an interpretant. That is clear, and accepted by Eco, but that should signal (how final, or not, is debatable), that the possibility of guessing is met "by qualitative standards, [themselves] habitually constructed over time, based on the ethical (Secondness) and, in turn, the esthetic (Firstness)" (Tschaepé 2014: 124). This is supported by the assessment of Gilmore (2006: 318) regarding the primacy of Peirce's aesthetics, which was what Peirce called "the secret of pragmatism" (CP5: 132, 1903). The secret of pragmatism involves the idea that logic, as well as ethics, ultimately depends on aesthetics. That means that we think ultimately by feeling. "We feel by a unity before we understand it." (CP5: 132).³⁷ Coming up against Eco's admiration for Peirce's work of perpetual interpretation (or revisable interpretations), we do find how he desires Peirce to speak. "What I shall do is try to say how I think Peirce should be read (or reconstructed, if you will); in other words I shall try to make him say what I wish he had said, because only in that case will I manage to understand what he meant to say." (Eco 2000: 99).³⁸ In Eco's renditions, like so many *trompe l'œil*, there are perhaps some areas where we can believe we are looking through the expertly painted window, but it can never be painted as reflecting our own shadowy image looking through and back. At least there is something in front of us, and that we can, at times, be mistaken.³⁹ Eco is in an incessant battle in finding coordinates for Peirce's terms due to the tension between the unreachable encyclopedic model, and the more economical under-certain-aspects model of how an Immediate Object focuses the Dynamic Object (see Eco 1979: 38-40). It would then appear that the state of Peirce's writings (articles, lectures, letters, notes, and

drafts), were in themselves a ready-made intermediate hermeneutical space. There is no overarching Peircean text, only elaborate segments, mostly rethinking, rewritings, and re-expositions. This would then call for the historian within Eco's early work to rise again, and similarly (with a touch of philology), as he did with the work of Aquinas's aesthetics, do with Peirce's texts; that is, have him placed in his own time, considered as a representative of his period, and how his ideas are seen as part of a problematic peculiar to that period (see Eco 1988: vii-viii, and Marenbon 2017: 78-9). But that would be too much the work of an "ologo."

- 23 Eco's "La soglia e l'infinito" (Paolucci, 2007: 145-76), shows us something of what Peirce believed was an example (a segment in this case) of the long-run (or sufficient investigation) of a community of investigators. This is exemplified in how Eco was in an earnest dialogue with Paolucci's measured and just criticism of the rendition of primary iconism.⁴⁰ Added to this dialogue we also find Eco's use of the work of Fumagalli (1995) on Peirce's intuitionist turn after 1885, and the more recent encounter and discussion had with Achille Varzi on issues of *de dicto* and *de re* boundaries conditions. Each of these dialogue scenes, and one should also add Mameli (1997), come under, and are fitted into, Eco's own clarifications of his "Rilettura di Peirce," (translated heavy-handedly as "Peirce Reinterpreted") in *Kant and the Platypus* (2000: 99-122). It is best to think of Eco's encounter as a "rereading." That would be a more appropriate *de re* type of tracing of boundary conditions, seeing how potentially indebted he had been to Peirce. Eco moves on the field of scholarship, viz., *ologi*, *isti*, and *ricostruzionisti*, leave him in the same *de re* boundary condition with Peirce's texts, to which Eco seeks to free himself as a captive *ologo*, and to reemploy (in act) Peircean themes (primary iconism), under his fully developed, and pertinence-fixed "cognitive bias." We can answer Paolucci's question, "*Com'è possibile essere peirciani ed echiani allo stesso tempo?*"⁴¹ ("How is it possible to be peircians and echians at the same time?") in the negative: we can't, and why bother? On Eco's own reading, Peirce, "una persona di senno," had his own pertinence-fix cognitive bias, or what Peirce would call "voluntary habits." His cosmology was a major one. That was where intelligibility is a structure of the universe, and where "there is something in nature to which the human reason is analogous" (EP2: 193), which is how the "ultimate intellectual interpretants must be some kind of mental effects of the signs they interpret" (EP2: 431). He also had his logic, mathematics, the logic of history, and historical investigations. Peirce explains this clearly in his 1907 "Pragmatism" manuscript, under "Variant 2" (EP2: 421-33, see also 549-50 n49).
- 24 By what surrounding reality (Peirce's surrounding world) would Eco then have the ability to act upon if the habit produced retains none of the reality (textually speaking) due to making Peirce say what Eco wished he had said? What stops would habit have, what *lines of resistance* (tendencies), what *dynamical object* could there be, and what final interpretant exist? With Rabelais, we must admit that "*privatio praesupponit habitum*" ("lack presupposes a previous habit"). One must then await a reasonable Peircean encyclopedia (and history), and one in which Eco's previous interpretive sign-paths will also be part and parcel. But on pain of betraying Eco's view of the encyclopedia, that by its very nature as situated knowledge needs to remain local to circumstances and instances, how would a Maximal Encyclopedia fair in light of Peirce's extraordinary span of texts, rewritings, and letters that make up his semio-cosmological philosophy system? No doubt an Eco-inspired novel awaits, where theory and narration, the *said* and the *shown* become the place of truth. Until then whither an Eco-Peircean pragmatism, due to how "ideas

tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. In this spreading they lose intensity [...] but gain generality and become welded with other ideas.” (CP6: 104, and 301). What would count as our percept in this case, and what would, in Peirce’s words, “prescribe what you are to do in order to gain a perceptual acquaintance with the object of the world” (CP2: 330)?

4. I Don't Know: the Comic

- 25 In pure play (or “musement”), one could draw a similarity between the comic character Henry Russell, and his final practical joke played on his relatives in the British film *Laughter in Paradise* (Zampi 1951, 93 mins.), and Eco’s response (now ghost of a distant author) to Donald Phillip Verene:

At a certain point I gave up and decided (with comical resolution) not to write [a book on the comic] in expectation that after my death there would appear several doctoral dissertations on what the unwritten work of mine would have been like. (Verene, if he has nothing better to do, would make an excellent candidate for that undertaking ...). (Eco 2017: 179)⁴²

- 26 I extend this similarity not only to the issue of Eco and the comic, (and his “critical mission of parody”), but to what he has left us to ponder from his vast encyclopedia, now part of Peirce’s homogeneously connected three Universes.⁴³ With an irascible indexical gesture, Eco has us look again at something, rethink, rework, and *do* (perhaps contrary to some of our own entrenched habits and character traits), and in the end, we come out having learned, (picked up habits of conduct⁴⁴), transforming our lives a bit, learning how to laugh at our own all-too-serious hunt for truth, and becoming more playful, so “*to make truth laugh*.”⁴⁵
- 27 But for this to happen, as joyous as it could be, is a sure-fire way to muddy the claims of primary iconism as advanced, defended, and elaborated by Eco, and to question if *Firstness* can even figure any *something* at all, except as the tone of its own laughter that is another irascible indexicality of the darkness of the pure dream of chance. While this might sound to be under the influence of Bataille, with a touch of Cioran, it prepares us for encountering Pirandello; that contortionist of human interactions and habits.
- 28 In “Pirandello *Ridens*,” originally a conference paper delivered in 1968, (Eco 1994: 163-73), we are shown how this child of Sicily is actually supremely humorless, shielding his own humor, or smirks, from his land’s Medusian stare. This is partly due to an island that twists the comic and humor from the forge of Hephaestian tragedy, if not from a ripe provincialism. The laughter from Pirandello’s plays (and stories) are merely the sounds of how spirit is gasping for air from the smoke and ashes of its own making. Perhaps this can be linked to the “suspension of the suspension of disbelief” that Eco mentions, that acts as perpetual doubt, undermining any code, and plunging humor into the dark corner of sarcasm, ridicule, and the caricature of habit. This can be a sticking point to a pragmatic account of a semiotics of humor. There is a failure, and disregard of pragmatic competence in Pirandello’s non-theory theory of humor, and that is reflected in the failure of any deep cooperation as soon as a cultural grid is even faintly established. The failure of creating something out of the knotted Pirandellian world is that it does not (or refuses to) acknowledge that any original expectation has not been fulfilled, because the original itself was a fake. The *ur-joke* is on it.⁴⁶ In Pirandello’s Sicily, there is no patience with a resolved habit (Thirdness) that is less than death. And so, there is no Cratylism

between truth and its laughter, yet their folk etymology labors constantly, yet fruitlessly, for an iconic remodeling of language, landscape, and world.⁴⁷ Could this be one aspect of why Eco became resolved that a complete and theoretical definition of humor is best left alone? If the intent of Dorflès to analyze the “mechanisms underlying every kind of humor” failed, Eco was not one to blindly follow suit.⁴⁸ Or is it because the process of “detachment” or “alienation” is just too entrenched within Pirandello, that there is a lack of that *something* to be detached from? Put in a Peircean way (but against two of his “Four Incapacities”), “Pirandello *Ridens*” begins to uncover how the absolutely in-cognizable (detachment in detachment, or meta-*ostranenie*) feigns an intuitive grasp of what it posits as already lost.⁴⁹ Perhaps this meta-detachment comes within the comic to *reproduce* what “knocks at the portal of my soul and stands there in the doorway,”⁵⁰ but more often times than not, our understanding ends up being greeted by a “strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing.”⁵¹ In humor there is a threshold, but no liminal, and this is how humor frequently passes beyond the comic, due to the lack of a standard of measure with sympathy that has only the sky as a limit to its cruelty. It is clear that Pirandello’s laughter (or smirk), contrary to Eco’s open and giving “maieutic of possibles” (*maieuta dei possibili*), is apocalyptic, thus suspending any and all dialectical play between order and adventure and remaining a maieutic of impossibilities.⁵²

29 What happens when we turn to Eco’s “The Comic and the Rule”? This is another text on the comic that emerged from a symposium presentation. The comic jeopardizes the rule (s) because there can be no examination or confirmation of the nature of the rule as there is in tragedy. This is another version of “don’t ask confirmation from the author!” A spectator would say: “do not teach me my joy, or laughter, especially when I am not sure of the dimensions caught-up in my laughter.”⁵³ To do so would also be to overturn a semiotic rule by asking the comedic author, and posit a rule-above that can be grasped besides the effects it produces (fallible or infallible hilarity included). This would also strain the pragmatic competence to reproduce a code for the effects that would mix comedic sense from an array of aspects (social, textual, perceptual, etc.), without defining a ground upon which the mixing occurs. At best, the comic is the haunting of tychism’s quiet synechistic homology. At worst, the comic displays *something* in which the work of interpretation has come to an end; a vengeful agapistic nihilism. In either case we have a most fragile liaison that we guardedly carry forwards, and back, between natural world and posited world, and where the “as if” clings to its hope of commensurability even when it is *as fd* as can be.⁵⁴ The comic plays devilishly with a fathomless bisociation: the constitutive and the regulative, real-ideal. Comedy’s very staging feigns both.

30 “The Comic and the Rule” leaves us with a surprise. It was an “opening of the door” in the experiential “humorous mechanism of symposia” (and let us admit, scholarship itself). This is where we can hear Eco’s actual sense of humor, and his profound lesson for us all.

⁵⁵ From his vast experiences through many decades, venues, fields, friendships, and mentoring, we see how these arenas, where tentative and slow meekly measured transgressions poised as would-be rules, become the undoing of any unquestioned lofty rule, and thus where comic timing reveals the spaces where the what that is *le propre de l’homme* belongs: somewhere between chorus-less tragedy and medieval farce. Behold the *commedia* of philosophy. Yet, as a warning, and in the words of Eco’s beloved Peirce, just months before his death, we hear: “I also realize that in these times and as long as I shall live, it is those who know the least and who can least continue [to be] patient who are able to decide how matters shall be conducted.” (EP2: 475).

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NOTES

1. On the issue of guessing see the following works of C. S. Peirce: R 692.29, EP1: 287, EP2: 25, 108, 217, 443-4, CP1: 118, CP5.47, 173, 586, 591, and 603-4. On Peirce's use of "living idea," or a law that governs mental phenomena, and "general idea [as] the *mark* of habit," (original emphasis) see CP6: 152, CP7: 498, and CP6: 141, and CP5: 181 on the abductive suggestion. See also Gilmore (2006: 314-5, 318).

2. Peirce EP2: 446. If one follows through with this citation there is a close parallel, as we shall see, with Chauncey Wright's investigative positions. Peirce continues, "This brings him, for testing the hypothesis, to taking his stand upon Pragmaticism, which implies faith in common-sense and in instinct, thought only as they issue from the cupel-furnace of measured criticism. [The Neglected Argument] is the First Stage of a scientific inquiry, resulting in a hypothesis of the very highest Plausibility, whose ultimate test must lie in its value in the self-controlled growth of man's conduct of life." Peirce's reflections on history (a lacuna in Eco's appropriation) needs revisiting. See Miller 1971, and Esposito 1983.

3. See Peirce, "The First Rule of Logic," EP2: 46-7. Here too we see how in 1898, Peirce was, in ways, carrying on Chauncey Wright's examples of the philosophy of education and pedagogy that Peirce actually experienced face-to-face in discussions, questions, and exchanges in Cambridge as part of The Metaphysical Club. For a brief foray into Wright on education see Privitello (2005: 627-49). See also Eisele (1964: 51-75) on Peirce's philosophy of education, with emphasis on mathematics.

4. For a clear, brief, and historical framing of Eco's position in Italian pragmatism see Maddalena (2014: 11-2).

5. On the mention of "*ologi*" and "*isti*" see Eco's "La soglia e l'infinito," in Paolucci (2007: 147).

6. Could one level a similar criticism to Eco, that Eco once leveled against Croce, that is, being "a past master at dismissing problems by defining them as pseudo problems"? In this case the terms of criticism are much more refined, as Eco masterfully displayed in "La soglia e l'infinito." See also Eco (1994: 163).

7. See Peirce, "The Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (EP2: 448) for his description of the event.

8. Wright (1971a: 287; original emphasis).

9. Wright (1971a: 224).

10. Peirce (EP2: 399). Though Peirce held Wright in high regard, he seemed to have favored Green's approach, and used Wright, "that acute but shallow fellow," "as a whetstone of wits," Perry (1964: 292).

11. Wright (1971a: 288; original emphasis). See how Peirce develops this in "Pragmatism," July-August 1907, EP2: 431n49, and in EP2: 448.
12. Peirce SW 152, "The Architecture of Theories" (1891).
13. Peirce SW 121.
14. See also Wright (1971: 211-2), and Wright (1866: 264). For a recent, albeit brief take on this relationship between Wright and Peirce on signs, see Parravicini (2009: 270-1), and Parravicini (2012: 195-8).
15. See also Peirce's "Qualitative Logic" of 1886 where "unconscious and uncontrolled reasonings [...] often truer than if they were regulated [...] [show] the usual superiority of instinct over reason, and of practice over theory" (W5: 327).
16. See Eco (2000: 161), Eco (2012: 98), and Eco (2017: 48) for his use of "pertinence" from Luis Prieto (1975), and "affordance" from Gibson (1979).
17. See Eco (2007: 160-1, 172, 176 n.12), and Paolucci (2007: 35-7). But here we may heed the sentiments of Wright who in his final known letter from September 1, 1875, felt that "written words are rivets and chains by which our freedom is fettered, our mood pinioned, and our Protean lives set in false, because fixed posture [...]" Wright (1971a: 355). Here we can also place Peirce's 1910 statement, in agreement with Papini, that pragmatism "cannot [or should not] be defined" (CP6: 490).
18. "Pertinence-zation of an interpretant subject that samples an encyclopedic delineation of pertinence." See Paolucci (2007: 36-37), and Eco in Paolucci (2007: 160, 172).
19. See Eco (2000: 108-9), and Wright, "The Genesis of Species" (1971: 131-2, 135-6).
20. In his fifth lecture at Harvard, 30 April 1903, Peirce first stated how "Generality, Thirdness, pours in upon us in our very perceptual judgments, and all reasoning [...]" (EP2: 207).
21. Thirty-four years after Wright's death, Peirce censured James for "look[ing] up to far too much" to Wright "who probably entrapped you in his notion that in some part of the universe one and one perhaps does not make two [...]" (Perry 1964: 292).
22. Peirce (EP2: 399). See also Frank (1954) for an excellent, and very detailed study on Green's influence on Peirce, and Holmes.
23. Peirce (W3: 210).
24. On the issue of laughter in Eco (to which I will turn to in section 3), see Paolucci (2017a: 138-65, esp. 159-65).
25. See Giovanni Tuzet (2011) for a fascinating study on legal judgment as a model for philosophical analysis, as well as Kellogg (2013) for upshots from the influence of Peirce (and perhaps Green) on O. W. Holmes Jr.
26. These citation are from James Fitzjames Stephen's *A General View of the Criminal Law* (1863: 242).
27. Peirce (W5: 327-8). For a later definition of "belief" see Peirce (EP2: 12).
28. Even though Eco (2000: 20) believes that most intimately, and initially, "being is not a philosophical problem." This should have been further elaborated when discussing Parmenides' poem.
29. Peirce's encounter and review of Royce's text (that prodded him to his major views in *Guess at the Riddle*), was followed by his encounter and review with R. Perrin's *Religion of Philosophy*, T. K. Abbott's translation of Kant's *Introduction to Logic*, John Fiske's *The Idea of God*, as well as Clifford's *Common Sense in the Exact Sciences*, where Peirce even cited F. E. Abbot's yet unpublished *Scientific Theism* (a major influence on the riddle, sphinx, and guessing writ cosmologically). With all this, Peirce was no doubt inspired again to take up his place in high philosophy. See Peirce (W5: xxxvi-xxxvii, 221-34, 254-6, 257, 258-9, and 260-1). See also Fisch (1986: 235-8).
30. For the term "process realism" I am indebted to Sandra Rosenthal's excellent article "Meaning as Habit: Some Systematic Implications of Peirce's Pragmatism," *The Monist*, 65, 2, "The Relevance of Charles Peirce," April, 1982: 230-45. On the issue of *ground*, and leaving black ink for

a blackboard [chalkboard] see Eco (2000: 61, 64-5, 99-106, 113). The blackboard [chalkboard] is “percept”-like, attending-motivation, not a sterile backdrop.

31. See Eco (2012: 106-9) and Eco (2000: 50, 54). I imagine that Eco would have enjoyed his closeness to Green (and Holmes). In Green he would have approved that “all things in nature, all things external, all idea, all sensations, all emotions, shade into each other by imperceptible degrees. No absolute lines can be drawn. Things are separated from one another by a debatable ground.” Green (1933: 166-7). In “Di un Realismo Negativo” Eco is close to this legal-pragmatist view in his mentions of limits, and of how “il nostro linguaggio sfuma nel silenzio [di fronte] alla morte,” and how “la scienza [deve] rivedere persino l’idea di leggi che parevano definitivamente adeguare la natura dell’universo.” All to say that “noi elaboriamo leggi proprio come risposta a questa scoperta di limiti, che siano questi limiti non sappiamo dire con certezza, se non appunto che sono dei ‘gesti di rifiuto’ [...]” (Eco 2012: 106, 109). Holmes would add: “Legal, like natural divisions, however clear in their general outline, will be found on exact scrutiny to end in a penumbra or debatable land. This is the region of the jury, and only cases falling on this doubtful border are likely to be carried far in court.” (Holmes [1881] 1991: 127). Eco is thus closer to Green (and Holmes) than to Peirce, when it comes to his variety of pragmatism. This is due to the work of narration as to *what is the case* aspect in legal proceedings, which when expertly supported by precedent cases, laws, and facts, (and rhetoric) indeed rises to a many times frightful, and sometimes relief of an *ordo et connexio rerum idem est ac ordo et connexio idearum*. In another life, Eco would have been a marvelous lawyer of eristic Ersatz.

32. The recent work of Claudio Paolucci (2017: 251-77), “Eco, Peirce, and the Anxiety of Influence: The Most Kantian of Thinkers” is crucial to unpack for a measured and valid critique of Eco’s use and abuse of Peirce, as is his most recent text, *Umberto Eco: Tra Ordine e Avventura*, Paolucci (2017a: see esp., 34-6, and 191-214). See also Paolucci (2007: 31-7). Another rich example to be studied, and that gives a way to link primary iconism and negative realism (even in Eco’s own eyes), is Rosella Fabbrichesi’s excellent chapter: “Eco, Peirce, and Iconism: A Philosophical Inquiry” (2017: 305-24). Something I noticed in Fabbrichesi’s admirable study (see 2017: 308, 308n9, and 322n9), for which I will blame William James first all, is a misuse of the terms the “*that*” and the “*what*” to explain how primary likeness could ever be between them [a relation!]. These terms are not James’ distinction, but an example of how his facile re-appropriations tend to muck-up stricter theory. As he once transmogrified the term “pragmatism,” lifted Wright’s use of “cosmic weather” as internal weather in *The Will to Believe*, and here we have an example of his freebooting from F. H. Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality* ([1893] 1969), where in much stricter terms, and in a long and compelling argument (beyond the scope of this present study), there would be no intelligible reconstruction without discrepancy of the feeling from the felt, the subject from the universe (or Absolute), and hence, no way to defend or explain Eco’s examples, without actually yielding to the stronger ontological hypothesis, or to Bradley’s strain of pragmatism, or better, of a Schelling-Peirce cosmogenesis. William James did it again; he remains one of the most charming of all philosophical bricoleurs. On the many letters between James and F. H. Bradley, see Bradley (1999, and 1999a). While James mentioned C. S. Peirce to Bradley on Jan. 3, 1898, (1999: 165), there is no mention of Peirce in the Bradley Papers. I speak here as an “*ologo*.”

33. Proust, “The Fugitive,” (1981 3: 553-4).

34. In 1914, a few months before his death, Peirce wrote “first [...] I have never published a complete volume of my own, but only detached articles; second, that I have never published anything except to record my observations of facts, or to present reasonings that I had long and critically considered; and third, that I have never put forth anything in my own name unless it was either quite new, as far as I was aware, or else have new reason for believing what others had denied” (Peirce “An Essay towards Reasoning in Security and Uberty,” EP2: 469).

35. Proust (1981 3: 554).

36. See Eco (1979: 207, 40, 40n6, and 39), where he cites Peirce at length from CP2: 519, 520, and CP6: 401.
37. See Ibri (2016: 601). See also Anderson (1984: 466).
38. See Eco (2017: 96) where he calls for extrapolating a thinker's thought from his writing, and "extrapolating the things he did not say explicitly, but could not have failed to think."
39. To run with this all the way into the "unity of Infinite Thought," see Josiah Royce (1958 [1885]: 384-435), chapter XI, "The Possibility of Error."
40. For an engaging critique of Peirce's categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness (but beyond the present scope of this article) see Hartshorne (1964: 455-75, esp., 456-60).
41. See Paolucci (2007: 34). For an answer by Paolucci we have: "Il *lume naturale* di Peirce e la 'forza del falso' in Eco traccino il punto di distanza più grande tra semiotica di Peirce e quella di Eco [...]." Paolucci (2017a: 201).
42. I do not consider the film *Laughter is Paradise* to be an example of great comedy, though it is pleasant enough. It featured Audrey Hepburn's first professional appearance on film (43 seconds long), as well as the seasoned Alastair Sim. The parallels between the details of the character Henry Russell (the practical-joker), and Eco, go only as far as asking another to follow through on a task (after their demise), that for family members in the plot of the film pushed them outside of their sad entrenched natures, and once surprisingly successful, transformed, and looking forward to an other-worldly inheritance, are seen laughing at themselves (transformed once again, and even more deeply), when they realized the final prank was directed at their own very enlightened carnivalization.
43. See Peirce, "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" in (EP2: 435-8), and Letter to Lady Welby, 23 December 1908 in (EP2: 478-9).
44. This is where I see Eco's pragmatic legacy, that is, his working within what Peirce stated was "the only way to complete our knowledge of it [a living comprehension of the meaning of a concept] is to discover and recognize just what general habits of conduct a belief in the truth of the concept (of any conceivable subject, and under any conceivable circumstances) would reasonably develop [and] what habits would ultimately result from a sufficient consideration of such truth" (EP2: 448). Indeed, "the only assumption upon which [we] act rationally is the hope of success" (W2: 272). The rest, to this day, is mere transmogrification, and *pragmatischisms*.
45. Eco (1983: 491; original emphasis). See Eco (2017: 179) for his reply to Verene, and his mention of parody.
46. I am thinking here of the work of Hofstadter and Gabora in Attardo (1994: 226, 358), that speaks of how the *ur-joke* "embodied a 'local' logic [...] a distorted, playful logic, that does not hold outside of the world of the joke." But in Pirandello's Sicily, and his treatise on humor, this even strains to hold inside its very own world. Peirce can again help us understand a Pirandellian-Sicilian view of history where he writes: "If you complain to the Past that is wrong and unreasonable, it laughs. It does not care a snap of the finger for Reason." (CP2: 84).
47. See Attardo (1994: 154-5, 173) for this issue of folk etymology. See also Fabbrichesi (2017: 321n8).
48. See Dorfles (1968).
49. See Eco (1986: 277) where he states: "Humor then would be excessive in metalinguistic detachment." A Pirandellian tragi-comedy of errors in detachment can be seen in Andrea Camilleri's description of the fate of Pirandello's ashes. See "Camilleri e lo strano caso delle ceneri di Pirandello," Intervista di Angelo Melone, Ripresa di Maurizio Tafuro e Leonardo Meuti, Montaggio di Elena Rosiello, in RepTv, la Repubblica.it, 27 Giugno 2017.
50. Peirce (CP7: 619).
51. Kant, ([1790] 1952: 199; original emphasis), *The Critique of Judgment*, Book II. *Analytic of the Sublime*, § 54. This can be pushed into the direction of questioning any differences between legitimate/illegitimate interpretations if opened up to the multifarious niches of comedic styles

and examples where reader/listener and author/comedian are, so to speak, sliced from the same particular instance of public life, and thus of accepted reasonableness. This would be “critical reasonable” enough, it seems. See Eco (1986: 125-32).

52. See Paolucci (2017a: 144, 163). Another study awaits comparing Eco's view and use of laughter and the use and descriptions of laughter in Dostoevsky's psychological realist writings. Perhaps Eco's not writing a treatise on comedy can be compared to Dostoevsky's truncated work of a comic epic, of which we have only one episode entitled “Uncle's Dream.” One must turn to Dostoevsky's *Raw Youth* (*Podrostok*), to see how “a man can give himself away completely by his laughter, so that you suddenly learn all of his innermost secrets.” With that we must add a dash of Catullo: “*Risu inepto res ineptior nulla est*” (*Carmina*, XXXIX, 16). And so, doubt can only be substituted by laughter, if and only if the laughter is steeped from a profound immersion in nature and cultures, both as orders and adventures. The rest is the mere quivering, twitter-fingers, and the giggling of *i coglioni* (see Paolucci 2017a: 10-1).

53. This would be similar to what Koestler (1964: 36; original emphasis) believed was the presence of conflicting rules that “were merely implied in the texts,” but if we dare expose, or explain, or “make them explicit [we] have destroyed the story's comic effect.” This is what Eco refers to in “The Comic and the Rule” by the “social or intertextual ‘frame’ or scenario already known to the audience, you display the variation, without, however, making it explicit in discourse” (1986: 272).

54. Perhaps here we need to turn to Wittgenstein and imagine a book of philosophy that would be written entirely in the form of jokes, and ask: “why do we feel a grammatical joke to be *deep*? (And that is what the depth of philosophy is.)” Wittgenstein (1958: 47, § 111; original emphasis). Or are we back to an Eco-Kantian “transpose-ability” (*trasponibilità*), where we interpret the world (for those that think and see it a joke, or a laugh), *as if* it were, and thus find all the coherence of a world, and therein meld constitutive and regulative, blissfully ignorant of paying penalty and restitution, and thus of there being no “No,” because a laugh of this magnitude could never question its limits. See Paolucci (2017a: 204, 210-1).

55. This sense of humor is also heard in “La soglia e l'infinito,” (Eco in Paolucci, 2007: 175n.3, and 176n7 and n11), and comes through with joy, toughness, and reverence in Paolucci (2017a: 34-7, 221-4).

ABSTRACTS

This study is a three-part play of musement on a few details in the potentially infinite landscape of Umberto Eco's turn to, relations with, and adaptations of Pragmatism. This three-part guess was product of an abandoned first guess-attempt entitled: “Who's on First(ness)?” The present title ensued naturally, and with some laughter, in recalling and using the play on words and names made famous by Abbott and Costello. Section 1 will mention two uncles of American Pragmatism. Section 2 will engage in Eco's *ista ricostruzionista* (with a dash of *ologo*) reading of “iconismo primario” (primary iconism) that raises questions regarding his Peircean rereading and assessments. Section 3 will switch to a darker voice and touch upon a few issues in Eco's writing (or not) on the “comic,” particularly his essays “Pirandello *Ridens*,” and “The Comic and the Rule.”

AUTHOR

LUCIO PRIVITELLO

Stockton University

Lucio.Privitello[at]stockton.edu