

## The Real Issue Between Nominalism and Realism, Peirce and Berkeley Reconsidered<sup>1</sup>

Standard interpretations identify the nominalist-realist debate with the question: Are universals *real*? Peirce too puts the debate in these terms.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I will show that in spite of that, this is not what Peirce thinks the debate is about. The real issue is not that nominalists and realists answer the question whether universals are real differently, but that both sides have a different conception of reality; and this the question does not touch. On the contrary, it takes for granted that both parties mean the same thing when they use the term “real.”

The recognition that the real issue between nominalism and realism is a disagreement on what is meant by the word “real,” is, I think, the main insight of Peirce’s 1871 Berkeley review; an insight he regards as a breakthrough which remains with him for the rest of his life.<sup>3</sup> Peirce further believes that the nominalist’s conception of reality which relates our cognitions to an incognizable, external world is untenable, leaving realism as the only option. As I will show, much of Peirce’s criticism of the nominalists’ conception of reality is preceded by Berkeley’s criticism of materialism. Berkeley too concludes that only one option is left, but his is a quite different one, spiritualism: “there is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives” (*Principles* I, §7).<sup>4</sup> According to Peirce, this solution is still deeply nominalistic. An interesting question that then emerges is why Peirce became a realist, whereas Berkeley remained a nominalist.

In his 1871 review of the *Works* of Berkeley, Peirce makes the question “What is meant with the term *real*?” the key to the nominalist-realist controversy. As he formulates it: “We have only to stop

and consider a moment what was meant by the word *real*, when the whole issue soon becomes apparent” (W 2.467, 1871). Peirce is careful to avoid the objection that he changes the subject matter. Much of the Berkeley review is spent in showing that his interpretation of the controversy is according to historical facts: “[a] careful examination of the works of the Schoolmen will show that the distinction between these two views of the real . . . is what really occasions their disagreement on the question concerning universals” (W 2.471, 1871). It is, Peirce argues, primarily a lack of knowledge of the work of the Schoolmen that is responsible for both the emergence of modern nominalism, and for the misrepresentation of what is really at stake.

In his analysis of the term “real” Peirce aims to remain close to common sense. Reflection upon the objects of our knowledge shows that they fall into two groups:

... figments, dreams, etc., on the one hand, and realities on the other. The former are those which exist [read *are*] only inasmuch as you or I or some man imagines them [‘imagines’ is too narrow]; the latter are those which have an existence [read ‘*being*’] independent of your mind or mine or that of any number of persons. (W 2.467, 1871)<sup>5</sup>

Peirce later calls this “Scotus’s conception of Reality.”<sup>6</sup> Although some interpreters seem to think that this conception of reality is characteristic of Peirce’s realism, Peirce believes that until here nominalists and realists agree. It is when trying to answer the question what exactly counts as independent of the mind that nominalists and realists part ways. The nominalist interprets this independence in terms of outward constraints upon which the mind has no control; the realist, in turn, interprets this independence as conclusions the mind cannot but accept (as for example in a deductively valid argument), and concludes from this that reality is that which true propositions speak about.

### I.

The first answer to the question what counts as independent of

the mind, the one Peirce rejects, begins with the common sense observation that our opinions are constrained. From this it is concluded: “[that] there is something which influences our thoughts, and is not created by them” (W 2.468, 1871). This answer grants that the only thing we are directly aware of is our thoughts, but adds to this that there must be at the same time something *distinct* from those thoughts, which is the efficient cause of at least part of our thoughts, as is revealed in the constraints that are set upon them. This leaves us with the following picture. There are things without the mind causing sensations. These sensations, in turn, influence our thought. Now because these so called “things” are situated outside of the mind, they are independent of how we think of them, and therefore they are real. Peirce goes even a step further by saying they are “the real” (*id.*); thus suggesting that all reality there is for the nominalist is what is external to the mind. It is not clear, however, whether the nominalist is indeed *forced*, on his own terms, to take this latter more radical step; if not, Peirce’s radical distinction between nominalism and realism might turn out to be a false dichotomy. There are, for instance, distinct signs in the work of Locke, who is quoted by Peirce almost as the paradigmatic nominalist (W 2.476, 1871), that he takes a view of reality which encompasses *both* the nominalist’s view of reality, *and* something that come remarkably close to the realist’s view.<sup>7</sup> Let us, however, first assume that the nominalist is indeed committed to the view that what is external to the mind is the *only* form of reality and examine afterwards what happens when this assumption is relaxed.

An implication of this first answer to the question where the real is to be found, an implication that according to Peirce will turn out to be deadly, is that our knowledge of this external realm reaches no further than the recognition that it must exist; we have no means whatsoever of knowing *what* it is (cf. Locke, *Essay* II.xiii.3). What is present to the mind is something like a veil of ideas, spun by the individual itself, and causally sustained by incognizable outward forces. These outward forces, moreover, are not only the cause of our cognitions, they are also their (ultimate) reference. Locke’s simple ideas,

and his complex ideas of substances are good examples of this.

If we clear this first view of reality from the beliefs usually associated with it, it appears to be in essence a hypothesis; that is, it argues from the consequence (that our cognitions are constrained) to the antecedent (that there must be something external, causing those constraints). Now, the only justification for such a hypothesis is that it explains the facts. A question that therefore needs to be addressed is whether the presupposition that reality is what is external to the mind, does indeed fulfill an explanatory function. As will be seen further down, both Berkeley and Peirce will deny that it does.

If we take this view of reality, Peirce concludes: “it is clear that the nominalistic answer must be given to the question concerning universals” (W 2.468, 1871).<sup>8</sup> Universals are a creation of the mind, construed from singular sense impressions which are caused by an external power that remains itself outside of our reach. What determines the reduction of a group of sense impressions under one denominator, then, is not something pertaining primarily to the external realities that cause the impressions, but the fact that the receiving mind stands indifferently toward either of those sensations (*id.*). This is exactly the conclusion Locke draws.<sup>9</sup>

It is not necessary, however, for the adherents of this first view, for which Peirce now reserves the term “nominalism,” to hold that only particulars are real and universals are not. Should they, though, accept that some universals are real, then, given their conception of reality, they are committed to situating them outside the mind. Peirce refers to one such option as: “that strange union of nominalism with Platonism, which has repeatedly appeared in history, and has been such a stumbling-block to the historians of philosophy” (W 2.464, 1871). However, if the main objection Berkeley and Peirce raise against nominalism—that it makes reality incognizable—is correct, the nominalist who accepts the reality of universals will soon find himself in a very uncomfortable predicament. It is one thing to say that sensations are caused by external, incognizable ‘somethings;’ it is something altogether different, to maintain that on top of this there are so called ‘universals’ that hold between them. This introduces univer-

sals as incognizable 'relationships' between incognizables that somehow get represented in our thoughts. Such a strong view, one might reply, reflects either extraordinary metaphysical powers, or a mere failure to take seriously enough the consequences of declaring something incognizable.

The second answer to the question what counts as independent, stays far from the spatial metaphor that guides and possibly disfigures the first. Instead of taking reality to be something that constrains our thinking from the outside, it takes the real to be the object of a true judgment; a judgment, Peirce argues, which the mind is obliged to make when all the facts are known and the particularities of the individual minds involved are filtered out. Peirce illustrates this process with the example of a blind and a deaf man who both witness a murder. Even though their sensory inputs differ, Peirce claims: "their final conclusions, the thought the remotest from sense, will be identical and free from the one-sidedness of their idiosyncrasies" (W 2.468, 1871). Extrapolating on this example, Peirce claims that: "to every question [there is] a true answer, a final conclusion, to which the opinion of every man is constantly gravitating" (W 2.469, 1871). Error and ignorance may indefinitely *postpone* the moment in which this answer is reached, but *cannot modify or change it*. In this sense the final opinion is independent of the mind.<sup>10</sup> It is that toward which the mind is constantly gravitating, although particular idiosyncrasies may send a particular mind or a group of minds indefinitely in the wrong direction.<sup>11</sup> Given our definition of reality, then, as that what is independent of the mind, everything represented in this final opinion is real, and nothing else. As Peirce formulates it in 1868:

a realist is simply one who knows no more recondite reality than that which is represented in a true representation. Since, therefore, the word "man" is true of something, that which "man" means is real. The nominalist must admit that man is truly applicable to something; but he believes that there is beneath this a thing in itself, an incognizable reality. (W 2.239)<sup>12</sup>

According to this second answer we arrive at a true judgment, not, like in the first, by relating it to extra-mental objects that somehow produced it, but by an indefinitely long investigation, using methods that survived that same investigation. Adherents of this second view of reality, which Peirce calls “realism,” will be strongly inclined to give a positive answer to the question whether universals are real, since universals enter all judgments and those of them that are true are taken to represent reality (W 2.470, 1871).<sup>13</sup>

These, then, are the two views of reality that lie behind nominalism and realism. These two different views of reality are closely connected with how one would answer the question whether universals are real. It appears that the nominalist assumes that the *only* way in which something can be independent of the mind is by being *external* to it. With this it posits reality completely outside of the mind. This comes at a certain cost. Reality becomes incognizable, and it is not clear whether the nominalist can give a satisfactory account of how such incognizable reality can be the cause of our cognitions. Both Berkeley and Peirce deny that he can, and it is to this that most of their arguments are directed. In the remainder of this paper I will discuss some of these arguments, and point at the alternatives they present. It will turn out that much of the groundwork can be found in Berkeley’s *Principles*.

## II.

Berkeley is the first to see that something is seriously wrong with the approach Peirce is later to call nominalism. Berkeley’s main target is Locke, who also seems to be a direct target of Peirce. In his scant discussion of Locke in the 1871 review, Peirce writes: “nominalism arises from taking that view of reality which regards whatever is in thought as caused by something in sense, and whatever is in sense as caused by something without the mind. But everybody knows that this is the character of Locke’s philosophy.” (W 2.476, 1871).<sup>14</sup> Although neither Berkeley nor Peirce does full justice to Locke, their reception of Locke is a valuable starting point for exposing the main defects of nominalism. Moreover, the fact that Berkeley attacks mate-

rialism and Peirce nominalism, is no real obstacle for comparing the two, since materialism and nominalism are closely connected. Berkeley takes the materialist to hold the nominalistic view of reality, and *in addition* that such qualities as extension, figure, and motion are actually present in external things. In the Berkeley review, Peirce calls materialism one of the “daughters of nominalism” (W 2.486, 1871).<sup>15</sup> Finally, although Berkeley, despite his fierce critique of materialism, fails to escape nominalism, his arguments are equally destructive for the latter. It is to these that I will turn now.

According to Berkeley, an approach like Locke’s, which he calls materialist, is incoherent, because it assumes a relationship be it one of resemblance, support, or efficient causation between the objects of our cognition on the one hand, and something not a cognition on the other. To relate two objects in thought, even if the relationship is a mere efficient causality, conceiving them both is necessary. Berkeley further argues that we cannot conceive what we cannot cognize. If we cannot conceive what we cannot cognize, than we cannot relate the incognizable to the cognized (or the cognizable), making the statement of the nominalists, that external incognizables constrain our thought, an empty or meaningless claim. As I will show, Peirce makes a similar point.

Berkeley’s view that we cannot conceive what we cannot cognize is firmly grounded in the Cartesian doctrine that to know something is to have a clear and distinct perception of it; a view Berkeley holds as self-evident. The nominalist gets his external objects through abstraction, that is by distinguishing: “the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived?” (*Principles* I, §5). According to Berkeley, such abstraction is illegitimate, since abstraction can extend no further than to conceive separately such objects, “[as] may really exist or be actually perceived asunder” (*id.*); for example when one thinks of the trunk of a human body without the limbs. One cannot, however, abstract all the perceptual qualities of an object, since during the process of abstracting, one is perceiving the object all along.

Now, if we cannot conceive these outward objects, then it is im-

possible to relate them to things which we can conceive. The nominalist, in contrast, blindly assumes that the same terms used to relate thoughts with one another can be used *without any change in meaning*, to relate our thoughts with incognizable entities. Such an assumption, Berkeley argues, is both unfounded and wrong. Terms like “supported by,” “extended,” “outside of,” etc., are derived from the realm of ideas, and it is to this that they apply. After referring to the materialists’ belief that extension is a primary quality, and that “[incognizable] matter is the *substratum* that supports it,” Berkeley notes keenly: “It is evident *support* cannot here be taken in its usual or literal sense, as when we say that pillars support a building” (*Principles* I, §16). From this Berkeley concludes that where the nominalist claims that our thoughts are *supported* by something incognizable, or that the incognizable *exists outside of* the mind, or that it is *extended*, those words “cannot be understood in the common sense” (*ibid.*, §17). Instead they must be taken in some special sense, “but what that is they do not explain” (*id.*). It must be noted, however, that just from the fact that something has never been explained, or that nobody has yet been able to comprehend it, it does not follow that it is inexplicable, or incomprehensible. Hence the above argument, although clearly unfavorable to the nominalist by putting the burden of proof firmly on his shoulders, is not conclusive.

Let me, therefore, like Berkeley himself, tackle the issue in addition from a different angle. Suppose we grant the nominalist the possibility of incognizables, what happens then?<sup>16</sup> If it is possible that they exist, then, naturally, it is possible to presuppose that they exist, even if we have no means whatsoever to get to know them. A strong argument for accepting such an hypothesis would be that it is necessary for explaining the things we know.<sup>17</sup> A denial of this can take two forms. First its necessity can be denied, leaving us with a weaker, but possibly still useful hypothesis. Secondly, it can be denied that it explains anything to begin with. I begin with the second, since if its usefulness is denied, the issue of necessity loses most if not all of its ground, since the only option remaining is that of a useless necessary hypothesis.

Berkeley denies that the hypothesis explains anything on the ground that: "if there were external bodies, it is impossible we should ever come to know it; and if there were not, we might have the very same reasons to think there were that we have now" (*Principles* I, §20). Hence, even when we allow the possibility of incognizables, "we cannot give any reason why one should believe it, *nor assign any use to it*" (*ibid.*, §22; emphasis added). As a matter of fact, the hypothesis is not merely useless, it also generates "a great many inexplicable difficulties" (*Principles* I, §133), and is therefore better avoided, if possible.

What remains, then, is the issue of necessity. The strongest argument against the necessity of the materialist hypothesis is the presentation of a viable alternative. Berkeley believes he found such an alternative in his spiritualism. The ideas of which I am not the author—and which are therefore independent of my mind—originate not in an incognizable substratum, as Locke thought, but in another mind. Reality, though independent of my mind and of any particular group of finite minds, is *not* independent of mind per se. This is Berkeley's idealism.

This alternative remains, despite Berkeley's criticism of incognizable matter, nominalist at bottom. The same Cartesian influence that triggered Berkeley's critique of materialism, keeps him firmly within the nominalist camp. It makes him take for granted that what constrains our thoughts must be something external.<sup>18</sup> What Berkeley therefore accuses the materialists of, is not that they accept objects that are external to the mind, but that they make those objects so different from our ideas that they thus become inconceivable. In contrast, Berkeley takes reality to be what is perceived, making it thus by definition conceivable. To avoid the disagreeable result that this makes reality dependent upon the individual's act of perception (by implying that existing objects disappear as soon as nobody sees them), reality is not simply what is perceived by the individual, or by a particular group of minds, but what is perceived by God. The danger of this approach, however, is that it situates reality again outside our reach. Even though reality is now by definition conceivable, it

remains utterly unknowable unless we either have a direct and independent access to the mind of God, or can distinguish intuitively which ideas are imprinted upon our mind by God and which are fictions of our fancy. The first option goes too far even for a bishop; the second, the one Berkeley embraces himself (*Principles* I, §30), is fiercely criticized by Peirce in his 1868 cognition series. It is to this that we turn now.

### III.

In his 1868 *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* series, Peirce takes a line of argument parallel to Berkeley's. Like Berkeley, Peirce notes that to make our cognitions dependent on an incognizable reality is untenable, that it cannot even be held as a hypothesis, and points to alternatives. Nevertheless, there are also important differences: Peirce holds a different view of what counts as inconceivable, denies that we can know anything by intuition, and has a much more critical attitude toward Cartesianism.<sup>19</sup>

The basic thesis of the nominalist is that certain cognitions, more specifically, sensations, are not determined by previous cognitions. The belief that there are cognitions that are not determined by previous ones—sensations, but also intuitions—is the main target of the 1868 cognition series. In fact the first paper “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man” can be read as directed entirely at the last question: “Whether there is any cognition not determined by a previous cognition?” a question that is answered negatively. In this the recognition that the incognizable is inconceivable (the answer to question six) forms an important step. In the same paper Peirce denies that we can distinguish by infallible intuition which ideas are determined by other cognitions—the fictions of our fancy being among them—and which are not (CP 5.214, 1868). As we saw, the latter include for Berkeley the ideas that are directly imprinted upon our mind by God. If Peirce's argument against intuition as a basis for knowledge holds, and he gives a long list of empirical evidence in support of it, reality will be as inaccessible for Berkeley as *substratum* is for Locke (*Essay*, II.xxiii.1), making him as much a

nominalist as Locke is. In sum, it is Berkeley's reliance on intuition that allows him to remain a nominalist.

Before drawing the parallels between Berkeley's and Peirce's criticisms it must be noted that though initially Peirce agreed with Berkeley's use of the term "inconceivable," it came to mean something different to him by 1868. For Berkeley something is inconceivable when we cannot form an image of it.<sup>20</sup> For Peirce, who by 1868 came to deny that we think in images altogether (W 2.233), such a view became self-refuting, since it would make even our very own thoughts inconceivable.<sup>21</sup> In fact he not only denies that we *think* in images, we do not even perceive them in sight (W 2.235f., 1868).

Despite this, Peirce's argument runs roughly parallel to Berkeley's. Peirce intends to show, like Berkeley before him, that we cannot get a conception of the incognizable through abstraction. With a direct reference to the latter, Peirce writes:

If I think 'white,' I will not go so far as Berkeley and say that I think of a person seeing, but I will say that what I think is of the nature of a cognition, and so of anything else which can be experienced. Consequently, the highest concept which can be reached by abstractions from judgments from experience—and therefore, the highest concept which can be reached at all—is the concept of something of the nature of a cognition. (W 2.208, 1868)

Peirce denies, however, that such a cognition is some sort of image.

After concluding that we cannot conceive what we cannot cognize, Berkeley inferred that if we want to say anything about such an incognizable realm, we cannot use any terms derived from our cognitions, unless we specify how they apply to incognizables. Peirce follows a similar strategy, but directs his arrows straight at the term "incognizable" itself. If the term "incognizable" means anything, Peirce argues, it means "other than cognizable." Now, the conception of "other than" can only arise: "by abstraction, from the various particular cognized others; consequently *other* must mean with us

*cognizable other*" (W 2.190, 1868). Hence that which is differentiated from the cognizable when we say "other than cognizable," must, since this "other" can only be a *cognizable* other, be itself something cognizable. At the same time, however, the concept "incognizable" is meant to deny that which is thus differentiated from the cognizable is itself cognizable. This makes the very concept "incognizable" self-contradictory (*id.*; see also W 2.208, 1868).

Though the weak point in this argument is the same as in Berkeley's (the fact that it is conceivable that some day someone might turn up with an acceptable interpretation of terms like "support" or "other than" when applied to incognizables) it has the advantage of consolidating the argument to only one of those terms, namely: "other than." What this shows is that the arguments of both Berkeley and Peirce seem to depend on their underlying beliefs regarding abstraction.<sup>22</sup>

Next Peirce discusses whether it is nevertheless helpful to accept incognizable causes as a hypothesis to explain the constraints set upon our thoughts. As I showed above, Berkeley argued that even if we grant such a hypothesis, it will not only turn out to be completely useless, it also raises additional problems that would not otherwise arise. Peirce goes a step further, and argues that to raise such a hypothesis is in itself self-contradictory. First he shows that we have no ground to assume that we can know by intuition that some cognitions are not determined by previous ones (W 2.193ff., 1868). In this way he rules out that a certain group of cognitions, either sensations or intuitions, can constitute a self-evident indication of external, incognizable constraints.

If we grant this, Peirce continues, the *only* way that remains in which we can know that a given cognition is not determined by a previous one, is "by hypothetic inference from observed facts" (W 2.175, 1868). However, as he adds immediately, to explain a cognition by referring to inconceivable incognizables, is nothing but a complex way of saying that a cognition cannot be explained. If this is so, Peirce concludes, then there is no justification whatever for admitting such a hypothesis, since: "the only possible justification for a

hypothesis is that it explains the facts, and to say that they are explained and at the same time to suppose them inexplicable is self-contradictory" (W 2.209, 1868; see also W 2.213, 1868). In other words, nominalism cannot even be held as a hypothesis. In addition, Peirce argues that holding such an hypothesis is not necessary; the most important of his arguments being the alternative Peirce develops himself: the realism described briefly in section I.

In sum, nominalism and realism are two rival hypotheses that try to give an account of the constraints upon the mind. It is these constraints that are interesting for philosophers, not the products of our fancy. What characterizes the nominalist's answer to the question where the real is to be found is that it conflates independence of our thoughts with externality. As a result there is little option for the nominalist but to deny the reality of universals. It is to its underlying conception of reality that Peirce directs his arrows. Not only is it not the only content that can be given to the phrase "independent of our thoughts," but it also leads directly to the uncomfortable conclusion that all our knowledge is either a fiction or utterly inexplicable. A closer examination shows, moreover, that the nominalist's conception of reality is incoherent. In fact, the very phrase "the nominalist's *conception* of reality" turns out to be an oxymoron, since it implies that one conceives the inconceivable. The nominalist's definition of reality, though close to the intuitive beliefs of many, and without doubt a grammatically correct string of words, loses all its meaning when it is thought through. A question that emerged on the way, whether the controversy as portrayed by Peirce is not built upon a false dichotomy, is thereby solved. Although it is not clear from the beginning that one is indeed obliged to choose sides, the problems nominalism runs into are so severe that no help whatever can be expected from it. So any relaxation of the view that the nominalist is committed to accepting that what is external to the mind is the *only* form of reality, will result in a moderated view that would improve when the nominalist ingredient is thrown out. In other words, if the objections of Peirce and Berkeley hold, there is no room for such a moderated nominalism.

The above characterization of the controversy denies that realism is basically nominalism with a few additions. Both the characterization of nominalism as “the simpler doctrine,” and the opinion that the natural course of reasoning is to begin as a nominalist and to proceed gradually toward a more realist viewpoint (CP 4.1, 1898), might mislead one to such an interpretation. In contrast there is an important and irreducible qualitative difference between nominalism and realism, which makes them radically distinct. It is precisely this distinction, with an analysis of some of its consequences, which is the object of the 1871 Berkeley review.

This essay concentrated mainly on nominalism and what is wrong with it. Whether Peirce’s alternative, realism, is indeed a viable option, depends both upon the force of the arguments brought against nominalism, and on the arguments that speak in favor of realism independently of the critique of nominalism (such as internal consistency, explanatory value, etc.). However, merely the recognition that “independence of our thoughts” amounts to more, or something altogether different from “what is external to the mind,” by itself alone already opens the way to a serious investigation into reality, as opposed to a clinging to reductionism with an almost desperate tenacity.

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## NOTES

1. References to the work of Charles S. Peirce take the following format:

W [vol#].[page#] refers to *Writings of Charles S. Peirce, a Chronological Edition*, ed. Max Fisch et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-).

CP [vol#].[paragraph#] refers to *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 vols, ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur Burks (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1931-1958).

MS [*manuscript#*].[*page#*], refers to unpublished manuscripts as catalogued in Richard Robin, *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1967).

2. See e.g. W 2.467, 1871; CP 8.145, 1901; CP 8.153, 1901; CP 1.16, 1903; CP 1.27, 1903.

3. See e.g. CP 1.20, 1903; CP 8.258, 1904; MS 641.15, 1909.

4. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, part I, in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, volume 2, ed. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1979), further abbreviated as *Principles I*.

5. The remarks in square brackets are made by Peirce in MS 641.12, 1909.

6. MS 641.12, 1909.

7. At the end of the second book Locke writes: "by *real ideas*, I mean such as have a foundation in nature; such as have a conformity with the real being and existence of things, or with their archetypes. *Fantastical* or *chimerical*, I call such as have no foundation in nature, nor have any conformity with that reality of being to which they are tacitly referred, as to their archetypes" (*bk. II, ch. xxx, sect. 1*, in John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A. C. Fraser, New York: Dover Publications, 1959). Hence, as with Peirce, reality is first opposed to the phantastical and is *then* distinguished into two forms: conformity with the real being and existence of things, and conformity with their archetypes.

8. I interpret Peirce's use of the word "must" here not in the strong sense of "it is necessary that," but in the much weaker sense, meaning that the "nominalistic answer" is the most likely, or the most natural one to give. See also W 2.304f., 1869, with a reference to Berkeley.

9. Locke, *op. cit.*, *bk. III, ch. iii, sect. 6-13*.

10. When all the facts are known inductive and hypothetical arguments will be as imperative (and their conclusions as unavoidable) as deductive arguments are now.

11. In fact this is exactly what went wrong in the Middle Ages. The Schoolmen were striving for a final opinion: "Nothing is more striking in either of the great intellectual products of that age, than the complete absence of self-conceit on the part of the artist or philosopher" (W 2.465-6, 1871).

Hence individual 'creativity,' which is error and ignorance more than anything else, is minimized: "The individual feels his own worthlessness in comparison with his task, and does not dare to introduce his vanity into the doing of it" (*id.*). But although their attitude was right, their method was wrong. They were the ages of faith, and faith Peirce notes euphemistically: "has its faults as a foundation for the intellectual character" (*id.*). See also "The Fixation of Belief" (W 3.242-57, 1878), and its precursory notes in "Practical Logic" (W 2.355, 1869-70). What seems to be the problem of modern times, is that the attitude is wrong, even though the methods are better.

12. That there is a shift in Peirce's view of what nominalism consists of, is illustrated in a draft of the quoted paper which is written earlier in the same year. Peirce there writes: "the real is the object of an absolutely true proposition," and characterizes it as nominalistic (W 2.175, 1868).

13. The same view is expressed in a draft of "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" (W 2.175, 1868); the printed version gives a different answer: "since no cognition of ours is absolutely determinate, generals must have a real existence" (W 2.239, 1868).

14. Earlier, when presenting the two different views of reality, Peirce describes nominalism in almost exactly the same words: "We have, it is true, nothing immediately present to us but our thoughts. Those thoughts, however, have been caused by sensations, and those sensations are constrained by something out of the mind" (W 2.468, 1871). In this passage there is no reference to Locke.

15. Berkeley's criticism, moreover, is wider than a refutation only of incognizable matter. In one of his notebooks he mentions things as an *anima mundi*, substantial forms, omniscient radical heat, plastic vertue, and a hylarchic principle (*Works*, vol. I, p. 76, entry 617). With respect to Berkeley's refutation of matter, at some places Peirce agrees with Berkeley (e.g. W 1.169, 1865 and W 1.348, 1866) whereas at other places he repudiates Berkeley's immaterialism (e.g. W 1.54, 1861).

16. Berkeley himself seems at times to make a stronger claim than this by admitting that they are in fact possible (*Principles* I, §18), something he denies elsewhere (e.g., *Principles* I, §3), and which is inconsistent with his view that *esse* is *percipi*, and with the view that nothing can be predicated of incognizables. There is no direct need, however, to make this stronger claim for

the point Berkeley wishes to make. Therefore I will limit myself to the claim that *even if* we were to grant the nominalists their inconceivables, this would not do them any good.

17. Berkeley's postulation of spirits, even though we cannot form an idea of them, is defended by him on the grounds that it is a necessary hypothesis (see *Principles I*, §81, 135).

18. See *Principles I*, §90.

19. For instance, where Berkeley introduces notions to explain the presence of inconceivable spirits (see also note 20), Peirce concludes that the mind is identical to its "phenomenal manifestation," which results in his doctrine of the man-sign (W 2.240). Besides this, the inner-outer dichotomy of the empiricists is replaced by the triadicy of the sign (W 2.223).

20. This statement does not do full justice to Berkeley, since he holds that besides ideas we have also so called "notions," for instance of spirits (*Principles I*, §27; 2nd. edition), and of relations (*Principles I*, 89; 2nd. edition). Berkeley, however, remains pretty vague about what such notions amount to, and they are brushed aside by Peirce almost as the debris of a "most brilliant, original, powerful, but not thoroughly disciplined mind" (W 2.481, 1871).

21. In 1857 Peirce defines the real in a very Berkeleyan fashion as: "a possible object of sensation" (W 1.18, 1857). And even as late as the fall of 1867, Peirce holds, with a direct reference to Berkeley, that things can be conceived only insofar as we can imagine them. Here "to imagine" seems to stand for "having an image," since Peirce writes at the same time: "To have a general notion appears to be, having a habit according to which a certain sort of images will arise on occasion" (W 2.5, 1867). Because of this, Peirce concludes, it is impossible to have a general notion of an inconceivable quality. It is worthy to notice that also the definition of reality of the 1871 Berkeley review still tends to equate having a conception of something with having an image of it; something Peirce later realizes and corrects. See note 5 above. Similarly, in 1878 Peirce still speaks of images passing rapidly through our consciousness (W 3.262).

22. In a draft of "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Men," Peirce presents a second, independent argument which means to show that the concept "cognizable" has no correlate. In that sense it differs from, for instance the concept "reality," which emerges necessarily with its counterpart, "the unreal" (W 2.239, 1868); or from the term "inside," which pre-

supposes that there is an “outside.” The argument (see W 2.175, 1868), though not its main conclusion, is omitted in the published version (see W 2.208, 1868).

