

'Secondness' (pub. 09.01.13-19:43). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-csps-lowell-lectures-1903-2nd-part-3rd-draught-lecture-iii-2>.

---

**Term:** Secondness

**Quote:** As to Secondness, I have said that our only direct knowledge of it is in willing and in the experience of a perception. It is in willing that the Secondness comes out most strongly. But it is not pure Secondness. For, in the first place, he who wills has a purpose; and that idea of purpose makes the act appear as a *means* to an end. Now the word *means* is almost an exact synonym to the word *third*. It certainly involves Thirdness. Moreover, he who wills is conscious of doing so, in the sense of *representing* to himself that he does so. But representation is precisely genuine Thirdness. You must conceive an instantaneous consciousness that is instantly and totally forgotten and an effort without purpose. It is a hopeless undertaking to try to realize what consciousness would be without the element of representation. It would be like unexpectedly hearing a great explosion of nitroglycerine before one had recovered oneself and merely had the sense of the breaking off of the quiet. Perhaps it might not be far from what ordinary common sense conceives to take place when one billiard ball caroms on another. One ball "acts" on the other; that is, it makes an exertion *minus* the element of representation. We may say with some approach to accuracy that the general Firstness of all true Secondness is *existence*, though this term more particularly applies to Secondness in so far as it is an element of the reacting first and second. If we mean Secondness as it is an element of the occurrence, the Firstness of it is *actuality*. But actuality and existence are words expressing the same idea in different applications. Secondness, strictly speaking, is just when and where it takes place, and has no other being; and therefore different Secondnesses, strictly speaking, have in themselves no quality in common.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *CSP's Lowell Lectures of 1903. 2nd Part of 3rd Draught of Lecture III*. MS [R] 465.

**References:** CP 1.532

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-csps-lowell-lectures-1903-2nd-part-3rd-draught-lecture-iii-2>