

Genuine Secondness

1887-1888 | A Guess at the Riddle | W 6:171; CP 1.358; EP 1:248-249

Just as the first is not absolutely first if thought along with a second, so likewise to think the second in its perfection we must banish every third. But we need not, and must not, banish the idea of the first from the second; on the contrary, the second is precisely that which cannot be without the first. It meets us in such facts as another, relation, compulsion, effect, dependence, independence, negation, occurrence, reality, result. A thing cannot be other, negative, or independent, without a first to or of which it shall be other, negative, or independent. Still, this is not a very deep kind of secondness; for the first might in these cases be destroyed yet leave the real character of the second absolutely unchanged. When the second suffers some change from the action of the first, and is dependent upon it, the secondness is more genuine. But the dependence must not go so far that the second is a mere accident or incident of the first; otherwise the secondness again degenerates. The genuine second suffers and yet resists, like dead matter, whose existence consists in its inertia.

1903 | CSP's Lowell Lectures of 1903. 2nd Part of 3rd Draught of Lecture III | CP 1.535

Now we found the genuine and degenerate forms of Secondness by considering the full ideas of first and second. Then the genuine Secondness was found to be reaction, where first and second are both true seconds and the Secondness is something distinct from them, while in degenerate Secondness, or mere reference, the first is a mere first never attaining full Secondness.

1905 | Letters to Mario Calderoni | MS [R] L67:32-34

A genuine Secundarity affects the very mode of being of the Second. An effort cannot occur at all without a resistance. A father is not a father if his son dies, and has not that mode of being that he had when his son lived. A man who is taller than another is not really taller unless the shorter man exists. But that Secundarity which consists in one man's having a stature of 6 feet and another man's having a stature of 5 feet is a degenerate Secundarity, since each would be just what he is if the other were not there, and would be Second in the same way to a merely possible but non-existent man. The genuine Secundarity divides again into a more and a less genuine kind. Being "taller" is a genuine Secundarity. Yet, after all, it is merely what is essentially involved in two distinct facts each relating to a single individual. It might be said to be degenerately genuine as compared with the Secundarity of two brothers; for this cannot be resolved into two facts involving only the two individuals. Still, it is not so genuine as the Secundarity of Cain's Killing Abel; since after all their brotherhood resulted from the two facts that Cain was the son of Adam and Eve and that Abel was son of Adam and Eve. The killing cannot be resolved into two separate facts. Still, even this Secundarity, is not so genuine as that of effort and resistance, since Cain would have been Cain just the same even if he had not killed Abel.