

Record in the Commens Bibliography. Retrieved from http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal_article/alexander-victoria-2013-creativity-self-referential-mistaking-not, 22.02.2024.

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- Type:** Article in Journal
- Author:** Alexander, Victoria
- Title:** Creativity: Self-Referential Mistaking, Not Negating
- Year:** 2013
- Journal:** Biosemiotics
- Volume:** 6
- Issue:** 2
- Pages:** 253-272
- Keywords:** Biopoiesis, Semiotic object, Intentional object, Emergent object, Self-reference, Misinterpretation, T. L. Short, Emergent novelty, Jeffrey Goldstein, Sign triad, Dynamical Object, Immediate Object, Scientific biosemiosis, Cartesian dualism
- Abstract:** In C. S. Peirce, as well as in the work of many biosemioticians, the semiotic object is sometimes described as a physical “object” with material properties and sometimes described as an “ideal object” or mental representation. I argue that to the extent that we can avoid these types of characterizations we will have a more scientific definition of sign use and will be able to better integrate the various fields that interact with biosemiotics. In an effort to end Cartesian dualism in semiotics, which has been the main obstacle to a scientific biosemiotics, I present an argument that the “semiotic object” is always ultimately the objective of self-affirmation (of habits, physical or mental) and/or self-preservation. Therefore, I propose a new model for the sign triad: response-sign-objective. With this new model it is clear, as I will show, that self-mistaking (not self-negation as others have proposed) makes learning, creativity and purposeful action possible via signs. I define an “interpretation” as a response to something as if it were a sign, but whose semiotic objective does not, in fact, exist. If the response-as-interpretation turns out to be beneficial for the system after all, there is biopoiesis. When the response is not “interpretive,” but self-confirming in the usual way, there is biosemiosis. While the conditions conducive to fruitful misinterpretation (e.g., accidental similarity of non-signs to signs and/or contiguity of non-signs to self-sustaining processes) might be artificially enhanced, according to this theory, the outcomes would be, by nature, more or less uncontrollable and unpredictable. Nevertheless, biosemiotics could be instrumental in the manipulation and/or artificial creation of purposeful systems insofar as it can describe a formula for the conditions under which new objectives and novel purposeful behavior may emerge,

however unpredictably.

ISSN: 1875-1350

DOI: 10.1007/s12304-012-9158-0

Language: English