Review article

Peirce the contrite fallibilist, convinced pragmaticist, and critical commonsensist*

VINCENT M. COLAPIETRO

The most fundamental oppositions determining Peirce's scientific *Persona*

> All determination is by negation; we can first recognize any character only by putting an object which possesses it into comparison with an object which possesses it not. (*CP* 5.294)

The handle by which a thinker is picked up by a later time does not necessarily reflect either the exigencies of that time or the virtues of that thinker. The mistaken notions of past thinkers might be appropriated to serve current illusions. For example, C. S. Peirce's *early* notion of unlimited semiosis has, according to T. L. Short, been appropriated by Umberto Eco and others to serve hermetic semiotics, the position that 'the distinction between fact and fiction, if it can be drawn at all, is drawn arbitrarily' (1994: 234). In some of his most influential early papers, Peirce maintained that every sign refers to its object only through interpreting a prior sign of that same object and is itself meaningful only through being interpreted by a subsequent sign (Short 1994). This is itself interpreted by many today to mean that signs can only refer to other signs. But, as Short (1981) and, before him, George Gentry (1952) have convincingly argued, Peirce abandoned this notion in favor of habit: the open-ended process of semiosis, which is supposed by hermeticists to underwrite their views that 'signs can only denote other signs' (Short 1994: 234) and that the very notion of an extra-semiotic reality is unintelligible, is replaced by habit. Habits, taken as the ultimate logical interpretants of semiosis, can mark closures of semiosis. Even if such closures are in principle provisional, they are nonetheless real. They are instances not of arrested development, much less the result of a tyrannical impulse

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to police spontaneous developments; they are rather what constitutes, at a given time, the height of development. Hence, such habits point *beyond* the open-ended play of signs. They (along with indexical signs and other fully semeiotic notions) point *to* an important respect in which signs come to terms with an extra-semiotic world. They do so by suggesting an immanent *telos* — the attunement of habits, those of sign-using agents on the one side and those of objects themselves on the other. Even though hermetic semiotics fails or refuses to recognize that such semiotically achieved attunements are best explained by realism, it is not completely devoid of significance: 'it both exemplifies and is a symptom of the narcissism that currently infects the academy' (Short 1994: 257) and presumably the wider culture.

Thus, the handle by which a thinker is picked up today might not speak well for either that thinker or the tendencies of our time. But, in contemporary appropriations of historical figures, we might also discern the dexterity of our time as well as the 'tenability' of that thinker. The handle by which C. S. Peirce is most likely to be picked up in our time is semeiotic (Fisch 1986).[1] This is by no means a case of picking up a tool by the wrong end. Late in his life he confessed in a letter to Lady Victoria Welby that 'from the day when at the age of 12 or 13 I took up, in my elder brother's room[,] a copy of Whateley's "*Logic*" ... it has never been in my power to study anything ... except as a study of semeiotic ...' (Hardwick 1977: 85–86). But in this confession it is clear that, for Peirce, the function no less than the origin of his passionate interest in semiotic inquiry is linked to logic. Even if he re-envisioned logic as a general theory of signs, he investigated signs principally from the distinctive perspective of the experimentalist. As he noted in another context, he, like every other 'master in any department of experimental science, has had his mind moulded by his life in the laboratory to a degree that is little suspected' (*CP* 5.411). Hence, 'his disposition is to think of everything just as everything is thought of in the laboratory, that is, as a question of experimentation' (*CP* 5.411). The pragmatic maxim is, minimally, the explication of a defining disposition of the experimentalist mind: it elevates to the level of an explicit principle of conduct what ordinarily operates at the level of effective habituation. To have one's mind molded in the laboratory is to think habitually of objects in terms of their conceivable experiential effects and practical bearings, taking both experiential and practical in a very broad sense. So taken, experiential pertains to what the actual course of one's personal involvements, willy-nilly, forces on one's thematic attention and (of even greater significance) makes of one's habitual tendencies; in turn, practical means that which is apt to affect conduct (*CP* 8.322).

It is also clear in the missive to Lady Welby quoted above and, indeed, in countless other texts that the immediate audience to whom Peirce addressed his work was made up principally, if not exclusively, of inquirers with an experimentalist cast of mind. Given the historically emerging status of science as a distinct profession (Haskell 1983), and also given Peirce's own efforts to win for himself a standing in the *professional* community of scientific investigators (Houser 1986; Brent 1993), his thoroughgoing identification with the experimentalist mind could only be achieved by forcefully — almost violently — distancing himself from several other culturally authoritative traditions. Above all, the three traditions from which he strenuously sought to dissociate himself were those of *modern metaphysics* and, to the extent that such metaphysics was synonymous with philosophy, from philosophy itself; *literary culture*; and finally the *theological discourse* of deracinated intellectuals whose utterances were far removed from the everyday confessional practices of any living community (Colapietro 1992a). That Peirce himself was in some respects a metaphysician, a *litterateur*, and a theologian indicates, of course, the complexity of the issue at hand.[2]

For the scientist in Peirce's sense, nature 'is a cosmos, so admirable, that to penetrate to its ways seems to them the only thing that makes life worth living' (*CP* 1.43; cf. Hardwick 1977: 86). Science is here best understood not as systematic knowledge (*CP* 6.428) but as the ongoing work of passionate inquirers united by, above all else, 'an impulse to penetrate into the reason of things' (*CP* 1.44). As a class of people, these inquirers are to be distinguished sharply from at least two other classes: first, individuals for whom the cultivation of refined feelings makes life worth living, especially when such cultivation is linked to the contemplation or, more actively, the construction of exquisite forms (aesthetes and artists); and, second, individuals for whom the acquisition and exercise of power renders existence meaningful.[3] In contrast to both stands the scientist. 'For men of the first class, nature is a picture; for men of the second class, it is an opportunity; for men of the third class, it is a cosmos' (*CP* 1.43), an unimaginably vast and complex totality which, nonetheless, merits the name of cosmos (i.e., order). It is a realm in which laws — truly *general* patterns of action and reaction — are operative and discoverable. Despite the extent to which chance pervades nature, and also despite the extent to which most (perhaps all) discernible instances of order and sources of intelligibility are themselves mutable and (on a cosmological scale) precarious, nature *is* a cosmos.

Of the artists, the litterateurs are most likely to exert an unhealthy influence on philosophical inquiry, for they and philosophers share the same medium — language. Their uses of language ordinarily do not

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facilitate inquiry (*CP* 5.413); hence, when philosophical terms fall into literary clutches, they have to be either rescued or abandoned (see, e.g., *CP* 5.414). Of the philosophers, those who are carrying on the speculative projects of the modern metaphysicians are most likely to exert such an influence. Theologians and seminary-trained philosophers are also likely to block the path of inquiry, for they deflect attention from investigation to edification: they are 'inflamed with a desire to amend the lives of themselves and others, a spirit no doubt more important than the love of science, for men in average situations, but radically unfitting them for the task of scientific investigation' (*CP* 1.620). Peirce went so far as to claim in 1898 that 'the present infantile condition of philosophy — for as long as earnest and industrious students of it are able to come to agreement upon scarce a single principle, I do not see how it can be considered as otherwise than in its infancy — is due to the fact that during this century it has chiefly been pursued by men who have not been nurtured in dissecting-rooms and other laboratories ... but who have on the contrary come from theological seminaries ...'. To wrest the work of inquiry from the clutches of metaphysicians, litterateurs, and theologians was crucial for the establishment, fully taking shape around the middle of the last century, of *science as a profession*. What Lionel Trilling says about Sigmund Freud might, with some qualification, be said of Peirce:

> [B]y the middle of the nineteenth century the separation between science and literature becomes complete, and an antagonism develops [or intensifies] between them, and while it is indeed true that Freud based his scientific interests on the humanities, he is, above all else, a scientist. He was reared in the ethos of the nineteenth-century physical sciences which was as rigorous and as jealous as a professional ethos can possibly be, and he found in that ethos the heroism which we always looked for in men, in groups, and in himself. (1955: 14–15)

One might quarrel with Trilling's claim that Freud's own scientific interests were based on the humanities rather than, say, medicine; more to our purpose, however, one must guard against suggesting that Peirce's scientific interests were rooted in the humanities. But Peirce's commitment to 'the ethos of the nineteenth-century physical sciences' was even deeper than Freud's.

Peirce's interests were primarily cosmological and methodological in a very broad sense: he was, above all else, concerned to sketch a theory of the cosmos and, beyond this, to identify the most effective methods for investigating the natural world. Of these two concerns, the methodological tended to eclipse the cosmological. His quest of quest — his inquiry into the conditions of the success of inquiry — tended to absorb more

of his attention than substantive questions arising in any specific field of experimental inquiry. This should not be taken to mean that he ignored other areas of inquiry (e.g., the psychology or linguistics); nor should it be taken to mean that in the context of one inquiry he did not discover principles and procedures immensely useful for executing work in other arenas of investigation. In fact, he undertook investigations in numerous fields, though (again) primarily with an eye to what *heuristically* might be learned (what might be learned about how best *to conduct* an inquiry); also, his discoveries have a fecundity and reach which even he himself could not adequately appreciate.

In addition to his opposition to literary authors, modern metaphysicians, and edifying theologians, Peirce's scientific *persona* took determinate shape through several other oppositions, though ones within scientific culture itself. The *utilitarian* self-understanding of science championed by, e.g., Karl Pearson and the *psychologistic* underwriting of science were tendencies to which Peirce mounted consistent and strenuous opposition. Finally, he was — again within the ethos of science (indeed, in the name of science) — opposed to positivism and nominalism, even though (1) he described his own doctrine of pragmaticism as a 'prope-positivism' (*CP* 5.423) and (2) he maintained that one ought to begin with nominalism and to renounce it (as it were) inch by inch.

Even though the scientific manner of fixing beliefs is rooted in our biological circumstances (this manner having distinctive evolutionary advantages), science in its proper sense is not reducible to the biological strategies of a precarious but clever species. At times, Peirce does not hesitate to affirm that: 'Our physical science, whatever extravagant historicists might say, seems to have sprung up uncaused except by man's intelligence and nature's intelligibility' (*CP* 2.13). Reductivist accounts of scientific inquiry, even ones offered by scientists themselves (say, evolutionary biologists or physiological psychologists), do not tell the whole story. In the end, Peirce's concern was not with vitally important topics but with cosmically vital Ideas, Ideas vibrantly alive among scientific inquirers and, beyond this, in the evolving cosmos itself.

Peirce did admit that: 'Among vitally important truths there is one which I verily believe ... to be solely supremely important. It is that vitally important facts are of all truths the veriest trifles. For the only vitally important matter is *my* concern, business, and duty — or yours' (*CP* 1.673). So it is '[n]ot in the contemplation of "topics of vital importance" but in those universal things with which philosophy deals, the "factors of the universe", that we are to find our highest occupation' (*CP* 1.673). These universal things are what I mean by cosmically vital Ideas. The heroic ideal of self-effacement and self-denial, supposed by Peirce to

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be demanded by science, allowed him, at once, to recognize his own individual insignificance ('Our deepest sentiment pronounces the verdict of our own insignificance' [*CP* 1.673]) and nonetheless to live a meaningful life ('the very first command that is laid upon you, your quite highest business and duty, becomes ... to recognize a higher business than your business ... a generalized conception of duty which completes your personality by melting it into the neighboring parts of the universal cosmos').

For part of his life, Peirce sought fame and wealth; he seems to have self-consciously *fashioned himself* as a Dandy (Brent 1993; Corrington 1992, 1993, 1994). Thus, whether his espousal of the ideal articulated in 1898 and quoted above was simply the compensatory illusion of a broken life or was truly the transfiguring truth at the center of a transfigured existence cannot be easily determined. What is beyond doubt is that, after a series of worldly and professional failures (cf. Ketner 1983), Peirce self-consciously re-fashioned himself as a scientific *persona*. Unlike the scientific *persona* of his youthful self (a *persona* intimately connected to his attempts to strike the pose of the Dandy), this one he crafted not for the sake of projecting an alluring intellectual prowess but for the sake of penetrating the evolving intelligibility of the empirical world. This mature scientific *persona* took its determinate shape through his opposition to both rival cultural figures and certain tendencies within the scientific world (most notably, nominalism, utilitarianism or practicalism, positivism, and psychologism). The work of this inquirer took *its* determinate shape through a life-long study of reasoning, of how to conduct the business of discovering truth.

Throughout his life, Peirce turned to mapping in fine detail the ever-growing domain of scientific investigation. He was convinced that such cartography could serve inquiry; it could provide crucial insights into just how, at a particular historical juncture, objective inquiry might best be conducted. Thus, while it is illuminating to identify the various positions defended by Peirce (pragmaticism, synechism, tychism, agapism, theism, critical commonsensism, scholastic realism, etc.), it is also illuminating to interpret Peirce's investigations in reference to his own classification of the sciences (i.e., his map of the domain of inquiry). It is customary in introducing Peirce to focus on these doctrines, but not to stress the centrality of this classification as a way of appreciating Peirce's own undertakings.

Situating Peirce's semeiotic in his architectonic

> By an architectonic I understand the art of constructing systems. (Kant 1929 [1781]: 653)

> The universally and justly lauded parallel which Kant draws between a philosophical doctrine and a piece of architecture has excellencies which the beginner in philosophy might easily overlook ... (*CP* 1.176)

C. S. Peirce was, of course, much more than an investigator of signs,[4] though he was in this capacity both (to some extent) *less* than what his own vision of semeiotic demanded and *more* than what he took himself to have accomplished. It is, accordingly, important to situate his general doctrine of signs within his architectonic conception of philosophy. (In effect, this means situating his semeiotic in his classification of the sciences, for his architectonic vision of philosophical investigation is embedded in this classification.) It is also crucial to discern the limiting bias more or less pervading his semeiotic investigations and, despite the pressures of this bias to compromise the ideal of utmost generality, to appreciate the full measure of Peirce's actual accomplishment, one he himself sometimes underestimated. Insofar as he envisioned a truly inclusive theory of signs — a theory in which the modes of meaning in their possibly irreducible variety are identified, described, and explained — his own work was somewhat limited, for its principal focus was a specific range of semiotic phenomena. However, insofar as his work (despite this focus) provides the resources for articulating a truly comprehensive account of signs, it is *more* than that of a backwoodsman who has done barely more than clear the field (*CP* 5.488). For the readers of this journal, I am presuming that neither elaboration nor defense is required for the claim that Peirce was, in the field of semeiotic, *more* than such a backwoodsman; however, I suppose that it is necessary to specify a limiting bias at the heart of Peirce's semeiotic inquiries. Because of the pervasive influence of this bias, and because of the tendency of Peirce's expositors either to ignore or to minimize this bias, it needs to be discussed here in some detail. Paradoxically, the work of Joel Weinsheimer, Lucia Santaella, Floyd Merrell, John Sheriff and others might easily invite us to overlook the extent to which Peirce himself did not develop an explicitly semiotic approach to literature. That their efforts to reconstruct a Peircean semeiotic of literature are required clearly points to a lacuna in the Peircean texts; but that they find ready to hand the resources for developing this might mislead us in supposing that such an approach to literature is more or less already there in Peirce's actual writings. (Something similar might be said of William Pencak's efforts to reconstruct an explicitly semiotic approach to history.) This lacuna reflects the focus of Peirce's concern. 'Literature is', according to Jonathan Culler, 'the most interesting case of semiosis for a variety of

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reasons' (1981: 35). One important reason is that 'Literature forces one to face the problem of the indeterminacy of meaning, which is a central if paradoxical property of semiotic systems'. Science is, *for Peirce*, the most interesting case of semiosis, since it not only forces us to confront the indeterminacy of meaning but also demands us to identify ways in which semantic indeterminacy in its two most basic forms (vagueness and generality) can be overcome. Beyond this, it demands us to identify ways in which doxastic uncertainty can also be overcome and methodological controversies can be resolved. In other words, meaning, truth, validity, and fecundity need to be semeiotically explained, if semeiotic is to push beyond the bare recognition of fundamental problems and to suggest resolution to these thorny issues.

Peirce himself offered invaluable clues for how to investigate *sub specie semioticae* countless fields, both ones which had attained actual status as recognizable branches of human inquiry (e.g., psychology) and ones which might possibly attain such status (Kent 1987). Moreover, Peirce traced out in minute detail numerous implications of his universal categories and, on the basis of these elaborations, also traced out in minute detail the aspects of semiosis (or sign-action). But, for the most part, his efforts to analyze the nature and to classify the forms of semiosis were self-consciously conceived as part of his work as a scientist; such analyses and classifications were heuristic, intended to guide and goad inquiry, immediately, into semiosis itself and, ultimately, into whatever range of phenomena might evolve into the formal object of objective investigation. That is, Peirce's general theory of signs was deliberately designed by him as an integral part of a project having as its overarching goal the disclosure of objective truth. It was designed to facilitate the work of inquiry; put alternatively, is *essentially* a heuristic doctrine in which substantive conclusions have methodological implications.

Some scholars argue that Immanuel Kant's third and final critique, the *Critique of Judgment*, provides the key to understanding his architectonic (and let us not forget that Peirce borrowed from Kant the conception of philosophical investigation as an architectonic undertaking). For them, the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Judgment* can only be properly understood in reference to the *Critique of Judgment*. Regarding Peirce's theory of signs, I am proposing something analogous. In the triad of disciplines constituting logic re-envisioned as semeiotic, the first two branches are ultimately subordinated to the third — namely, speculative grammar and critic are ultimately subordinated to what Peirce called, alternatively, speculative rhetoric or methodeutic. If this is correct, then the third and culminating branch of logic (speculative rhetoric or methodeutic) provides the perspective from which the other two branches (speculative grammar and critic) ultimately need to be explained.

But, in order to make this clear, I need to discuss the details of Peirce's classification of the sciences. We find, at the heart of Peirce's architectonic *philosophical* project,[5] normative science: phenomenology flows into the normative sciences of logic, ethics, and esthetics, while metaphysics and ultimately idioscopy (i.e., the special sciences) flow from these normative sciences. Taken together, these three orders of inquiry (*CP* 1.238) — phenomenology, normative science, and metaphysics — make up philosophy. But philosophy itself is at the heart of this elaborate classification of scientific endeavors, for it is an integrated cluster of investigations flowing *from* mathematics (Hull 1994) and flowing *into* idioscopy. It comes between mathematics and idioscopy in such a way as to facilitate connections between what might otherwise be utterly disparate undertakings.

At the highest level of generality, then, we find the various branches of mathematical investigation. These branches are antecedent to philosophy; in a heuristic sense, they flow into it. Phenomenology is, however, that branch of philosophy directly adjacent to mathematics; it is also the one most constitutionally similar to mathematics. At the lowest levels of generality, we find the special sciences (those investigations which Peirce subsumes under the rubric of idioscopy). These branches are subsequent to philosophy; again, in a heuristic sense, they flow from it. Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy directly adjacent, at various points, to the special sciences. Accordingly, philosophy envisioned as an integrated set of distinguishable investigations is at neither the highest nor the lowest level of generality. It borrows principles, processes, and practices from the purely formal operations of mathematical reason (Hull 1994) and, in turn, it loans principles, insights, and classifications to the substantive investigations of idioscopic investigators.

Just as philosophy itself is a triad of disciplines (phenomenology, normative science, metaphysics), so, too, is normative science. Just as philosophy is at the heart of a vast array of historically disparate but (from Peirce's perspective) potentially interconnected investigations, so normative science is at the heart of philosophy itself. At the heart of the heart (i.e., at the center of philosophy itself), then, we find the normative sciences. Of the three normative sciences, the one to which Peirce devoted the greatest attention was, of course, logic. In fact, he was given to identifying himself as a logician. This self-identification reveals as much as any other his own self-understanding. But logic is neither the central nor the culminating normative science. Ethics occupies the central position, whereas esthetics marks the culminating point. Upon this reading

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of Peirce's architectonic, an explicitly normative understanding of deliberative agency (in a word, ethics) resides at the innermost center. The attainment and refinement of such agency depends on the cultivation of intrinsically warranted ideals and objectives; in turn, the cultivation of such ideals and ends demands an ongoing critique of our actual ideals and the specific procedures by which we honor, through concrete service, these animating ideals. 'If conduct is to be thoroughly deliberate', Peirce contends, 'the ideal must be a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of hetero-criticisms; and the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*' (*CP* 1.574).

The specific form of deliberative agency to which Peirce devoted his greatest attention is the kind of agency exercised by inquirers in the course of their inquiries. In other words, the scientific investigator is, from Peirce's viewpoint, an (if not *the*) exemplar of deliberative agency. Deliberative agents are habituated actors who modify the patterns of their engagement as a result of self-critically executed deliberations. Virtually all agents are more or less deliberative; the harshness of experience demands, at least, a minimum of reflection. Some agents, however, impose upon themselves the *task* of deliberation. For them, reflection upon the motives, manner, and outcomes of their comportment is not undertaken in a sporadic and begrudging fashion; deliberation is itself deliberately executed. As Peirce puts it, 'deliberate conduct is self-controlled conduct' (*CP* 5.443); as we might say here, deliberately conducted deliberations are self-controlled exercises in self-control. 'Now control may itself be controlled, criticism itself subjected to criticism; and ideally [or in principle] there is no obvious limit to the sequence' (*CP* 5.443). But, in practice, there are more or less definite limits to our recursive exercises of either control or criticism (Savan 1987–1988).

Even so, the open-ended character of deliberative critiques (a character revealed in the omnipresent possibility that, in some circumstances, control may be exercised on previously uncontrolled exertions or hitherto uncriticized modes of criticism may themselves be subjected to criticism) is crucially important for comprehending the Peircean vision of deliberative agency. As Peirce explicitly notes, 'it is by the indefinite replication of self-control on self-control that the *vir* is begotten, and by action, through thought, he grows an esthetic ideal ...' (*CP* 5.402, n3). What Peirce is calling here the *vir*, I am designating as deliberative agency or the sufficiently mature deliberative agent. It is, and significantly so, in a manuscript on pragmaticism that he describes the *vir* as emerging from an open-ended process of self-control being exercised on self-control (cf. *CP* 5.533). It is imperative to appreciate that, for Peirce, pragmaticism

is of a piece with the deliberative agency so manifest in ordinary life as well as disciplined inquiries. In his own words, 'the theory of Pragmaticism was originally based, as anybody will see who examines the papers of November 1877 and January 1878 [i.e., 'The fixation of belief' and 'How to make our ideas clear', respectively], upon a study of that experience of the phenomena of self-control which is common to all grown [or somewhat mature] men and women; and it seems evident that to some extent, at least, it must always be so based' (*CP* 5.442). It is based upon 'common-sense observations concerning the workings of the mind, observations well-known even if little noticed, to all grown men and women, that are of sound minds' (*CP* 5.485). What such observations reveal is that human agents can exercise an effective though limited (sometimes severely limited) degree of self-control over the formation of their habits; they also reveal that 'a process of [imaginative] self-preparation will tend to impart to action (when the occasion for it shall arise) one fixed character, which is indicated and perhaps roughly measured by the absence (or slightness) of the feeling of self-reproach, which subsequent reflection will induce' (*CP* 5.418). In sum, the deliberate modification of habits is possible and the imaginative rehearsal of possibilities is an indispensable means for modifying our habits, for realizing this possibility (cf. Dewey 1983 [1922]).

What especially needs to be appreciated is that, for Peirce, 'it is to conceptions of deliberate conduct that Pragmaticism would trace the intellectual purport of symbols' (*CP* 5.442). If we take seriously Peirce's self-characterization as 'a convinced Pragmaticist in Semeiotic' (Hardwick 1977: 78), then we must take seriously (1) the extent to which not signs in general but intellectual signs constitute the principal foci of Peirce's semeiotic investigations; and (2) the extent to which these investigations are undertaken from a normative perspective, the standpoint of a deliberative agent implicated in an evolved and evolving set of practices (ones subsumable under the heading of objective or scientific inquiry). The doctrine of pragmatism is, at bottom, a semeiotic doctrine. But, as conducted by Peirce, the investigation of signs is a pragmaticist project. One of the texts in which this fact most dramatically manifests itself is 'Prolegomena to an apology for pragmaticism'. This essay is the third in a series of papers published in *The Monist* during the opening years of the present century. In fact, these three papers along with countless unpublished manuscripts from this same period provide ample evidence for my claim that, as conducted by Peirce, the investigation of signs is a thoroughly pragmaticist undertaking. For it is in these writings that Peirce in his analysis of semiosis most decisively moves beyond the second level of clarity (the level of abstract definition) to the third level (that of

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pragmatic clarification). For example, in 'Prolegomena to an apology for pragmaticism', he explains the triad of Seme, Pheme, and Delome (roughly, Term, Proposition, and Argument) in terms of their conceivable practical effects (*CP* 4.538). A *Seme* is defined, pragmatically, as 'anything which serves for any purpose as a substitute for an object of which it is, in some sense, a representative or Sign'; a *Rheme* is a sign intended to have or simply having 'some sort of compulsive effect on the Interpreter of it'; finally, the *Delome* is 'a Sign which has the Form of tending to act upon the Interpreter through his own self-control, representing a process of change in thoughts or signs, as if to induce this change in the Interpreter' (*CP* 4.538). These are not abstract definitions but pragmatic clarifications of fundamental semeiotic notions. Herein we observe Peirce the convinced Pragmaticist in Semeiotic *at work*.

In general, the pragmaticist 'holds that the Immediate Interpretant of all thought proper is Conduct' (*CP* 4.539). In contrast, the *ultimate* logical interpretant is a habit or, more precisely, a habit-change. While the immediate interpretant is conduct, it is not necessarily nor (given a certain level of cognitive development) ordinarily conduct of a direct, outward kind; rather it tends to be of an imaginary, inward character. 'To say that conduct is deliberate implies that each action, or each important action, is reviewed by the actor and that his judgment is passed upon it, as to whether he wishes his future conduct to be like that or not' (*CP* 1.574). To describe agency as deliberative implies that the habits constitutive of such a review of the actor's conduct are deeply ingrained. For individuals in whom such habits are deeply rooted, their ideal is the kind of conduct which attracts them upon review (*CP* 1.571).

A mark of this is that the process of deliberation is, for the deliberative agent of sufficient maturity, inherently delightful or, at least, intrinsically satisfying (even when it requires the confession [*CP* 1.14] of ignorance or mistakes). Just as just persons delight in the payment of their debts (the delight taken in the exercise of this virtue being a sign of the fullness of its possession), so deliberative agents find deeply satisfying the task of deliberation itself (this satisfaction also being a sign of their character). What is obviously of instrumental value — the process of deliberation — is not solely of such value, at least for the mature agent.

The theme of maturity merits emphasis here, especially because it has been largely ignored by Peirce scholars. Its importance is brought into focus by recalling that: 'In general, the good is the attractive — not to everybody, but *to the sufficiently matured agent*; and the evil is the repulsive to the same' (*CP* 5.552; emphasis added). The regulative ideal of the infinite community of disinterested investigators is an ideal espoused by such agents. It is the bootstrap by which they pull themselves

up from whatever debilitating forms of immaturity mar their character. It is the means by which they goad themselves in attaining ever wider and deeper experience, maturity being principally a function of broad and deep experience reflectively appropriated. But, properly speaking, ideals lure and attract rather than goad or compel (Raposa 1989; Corrington 1993); agents goad themselves in light of the norms and ideals to which they *devote* themselves. (For Peirce on our devotion to norms and ideals, see *CP* 1.587–588.)

The Peircean ideal of deliberative agency, as it has been presented thus far, might all too easily suggest a Promethean humanism. For Peirce, however, humanism was, along with nominalism, a mostly unfortunate inheritance from the late medieval and Renaissance periods of Western history (see, e.g., *CP* 1.17–18). Rather than celebrating this trajectory toward humanity's self-deification, Peirce defended a more or less traditional theism. Sufficiently mature agents need the courage and humility to recognize their severely limited capacities; they perhaps also need formal and, indeed, constant checks against their tendency, in effect, to deify either their individual selves (*CP* 6.181) or the community in and through which they define themselves. At the center of a life devoted to cultivating, not abstractly but in some field of disciplined endeavor, the habits of deliberative agency, one finds not a will to dominate but a willingness to surrender to that which is inherently *adorable* (though this word has been so thoroughly degraded that its use here is quixotic — an attempt to redeem that which is forever lost). Whatever word we use, we need some way of designating 'the esthetic ideal, that which we *all* love and adore' (*CP* 8.262). As Peirce put it in a letter to William James, we need also to recognize that 'the altogether admirable [and adorable], has, *as ideal*, necessarily a mode of being to be called living' (*CP* 8.262). He identified this ideal with the divine and even went so far as to claim that 'the human mind and the human heart have a filiation to God'. He confessed that this was for him 'the most comfortable doctrine. At least I find it most wonderfully so *every day in contemplating all my misdeeds and shortcomings*' (emphasis added). But it was comforting precisely because it was challenging, precisely because it demanded reviewing daily the misdeeds and shortcomings of a self all too inclined to allow vitally important concerns to eclipse cosmically vital Ideas — and Ideals. The extent to which Peirce's contrite falliblism (*CP* 1.14) is more than a prudential safeguard against precipitous judgment — the extent to which it expresses a religious orientation — merits consideration. So do the series of surrenders by which infantile actors unable to satisfy their own tyrannical needs are transformed into mature agents willing to devote their lives to ideals which, in word and deed, are continuously desecrated.

Identifying the religious dimension in Peirce's thought

> The scientific man is deeply impressed with the majesty of truth, as something reasonable or intelligible which is bound sooner or later to force itself upon every mind. [It is, in fact, 'that to which, sooner or later, every knee must bow' (*CP* 8.136).] It is not too much to say that he worships the divine majesty of the power of reasonableness behind the fact. From that sentiment springs his urgent desire to further the discovery of truth. (*CP* 8.136, n3)

In *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*, a work which 'is still regarded by many as the best text on Peirce' (Corrington 1993: 220), Murray G. Murphey states that the 'religious spirit was always present in Peirce's work, whether overtly expressed or not, and was an important factor in determining the nature of his philosophy' (1961: 16). The work of John E. Smith, Vincent Potter, Donna Orange, Peter Ochs, Douglas Anderson, Michael Raposa, and more recently Robert Corrington is extremely helpful for discerning the degree and ways in which a religious sensibility and (to a lesser extent) its formal expression inform Peirce's philosophical texts. Without detailed reference to their work but, nonetheless, with deep indebtedness to these scholars, let me discuss more fully here a topic already broached — the religious spirit pervading the Peircean texts.

As implied at the conclusion of the previous section, the higher levels of maturity are attained not by the exercise of a narrow prudence but as the consequence of a personal transformation (what might be seen as a conversion experience). At the lower levels, a begrudging, calculating, and thus inconstant recognition of reality (of something other than our wishes and desires) marks an advance over an infantile megalomania (or megalomaniacal immaturity).

> Facts are hard things which do not consist in my thinking so and so, but stand unmoved by whatever you or I or any man or generations of men may opine about them. It is those facts that I want to know, so that I may avoid disappointments and disasters. Since they are bound to press upon me at last, let me know them as soon as possible, and prepare for them. This is, in the last analysis, my whole motive in reasoning ... . Whether such reasoning is agreeable to my intellectual impulses is a matter of no consequences. I do not reason for the sake of my delight in reasoning, but solely to avoid disappointment and surprise. (*CP* 2.173)

But, in truth, this does not describe the highest level of deliberative reflection, nor what in the last analysis actually prompted Peirce himself

both to refine his *logica utens* and to formulate a *logica docens*. One of the places in which he most clearly identifies this level is in his review of Ernst Mach's *The Science of Mechanics*. There he notes that:

> The proposition that all our knowledge rests upon and represents experience is nowadays accepted by sensualists and their opponents alike, the latter taking 'experience', in its ultimate sense, for whatever is forced upon our minds, willy-nilly, in the course of our intellectual history. To major force [majeure force] we can only submit, and it is idle to dispute the reality of such things as food, money, beds, shoes, friends, enemies, sunshine etc. But the anti-sensualists, or perhaps the most advanced of them, say that, having once surrendered to the power of nature, and having allowed the futile ego in some measure to dissolve, man at once finds himself in synectic union with the circumambiant non-ego, and partakes in its triumphs. On the simple condition of obedience to the laws of nature, he can satisfy many of his selfish desires; a further surrender will bring him the higher delight of realizing to some extent his ideas; a still further surrender confers upon him the function of cooperating with nature and the course of things to grow new ideas and institutions. Almost anybody will admit there is truth in this: the question is how fundamental that truth may be. (*CN* 1: 188–189)

Submitting to the majeure force of experience might be an ignoble, conniving act, a way of placating a harsh, arbitrary tyrant; or it may be a noble, transformative undertaking, a way of learning from a no doubt harsh but nonetheless sustaining power. At the heart of experience, as understood by Peirce, is a sense of compulsion, of something forcefully — indeed, (to use his own word) brutally — bearing down upon the self. 'Such a sense of compulsion, of a struggle between something within and something without, accompanies every experience whatever' (*CP* 2.22). This sense of being compelled and of resisting the forces of compulsion is definitive of experience: 'How else can I distinguish between an experience and a play of fancy of extreme vividness, than by the sense of compulsion in the former case? And how can there be compulsion without resistance?' (*CP* 2.22). But there is more to human experience than this brute compulsion and its consequent resistance: Instead of simply having something forced upon my attention *ab extra*, in complete violation of my rational integrity, 'I feel rather a sort of sympathy with nature which makes me sure that the continuity or the generality *is there*, somewhat as I felt sure I understood the particular state of mind of my mare at the time I was putting her up' (*CP* 2.22; emphasis added). The felt sympathy of the Logos inherent in the natural world is, for Peirce, a defining feature of religious consciousness. 'To believe in a god at all, is not that to believe that man's reason is allied to the originating principle of the universe?' (*CP* 2.24). The Logos to which humanity is allied has the status of the

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Absolute, a reality to which all else is relative and, moreover, which is inherently unconditioned but is itself a ubiquitous condition of all else. In each individual person, religion 'is a sort of sentiment, or obscure perception, a deep recognition of a something in the circumambiant All, which, if he strives to express it, will clothe itself in forms more or less extravagant, more or less accidental [e.g., King or Father], but ever acknowledging the first and the last, the A and Ω, as well as relation to that Absolute of the individual's self, as a relative being' (*CP* 6.428).

Peirce's personal religious faith is best conceived in reference to this series of self-surrenders through which the vainglorious self is transfigured into a humble servant of living ideals (Hardwick 1977: 86). The vainglorious self is the self blind to the actual suffering of others and the *adorable* character of the ideals to which it appeals when in a position of weakness and from which it so often withdraws its loyalty when in a position of power. Hence, two defining features of the vainglorious self ('the futile ego') are insensitivity (or callousness) and hypocrisy. Peirce's writings on religion are often closely connected to what he calls *contrite* fallibilism. But in these writings such fallibilism moves *from* being simply a methodological doctrine (if it, indeed, ever was simply such a doctrine for Peirce) *to* an existential orientation in which the self struggles to come to terms with its finitude, fallibility, and fallenness.

His opposition to the attempts by some scientists in his own day — in the name of science — to discredit traditional religion as a set of confessional practices (practices by which vainglorious individuals might be transformed into humble servants) was as thoroughgoing as his opposition to seminary-trained philosophers. In the end, his defense of the practices of experimental investigation is explicitly linked to his defense of certain confessional religions; and the defenses of both are explicitly linked to the question of God's reality. In fact, the *meaning* of that question is inseparable from ascertaining the conditions for, on the one hand, the success of scientific investigation and, on the other, the achievement of personal autonomy (or self-control). After asserting that the discoveries of science provide 'proof conclusive that, though we cannot think any thought of God's, we can catch a fragment of His Thought', Peirce goes on to suggest that:

> Now such being the pragmaticist's answer to the question what he means by the word 'God', the question whether there really *is* such a being is the question whether all physical science is merely the figment — the arbitrary figment — of the students of nature, and further whether the *one* lesson the Gautama Boodha, Confucius, Socrates, and all who from any point of view have had their ways of conduct determined [or transfigured] by meditation upon the physico-psychical universe, be only their arbitrary notion or be the Truth behind the appearances which the frivolous man does not think of; and whether the superhuman courage which such contemplation has conferred upon priests who go to pass their lives with lepers and refuse all offers of rescue is mere silly fanaticism, the passion of a baby [the illusion of an infantile consciousness], or whether it is strength derived from the power of the truth. (*CP* 6.502)

The meaning of God's reality must, for the pragmaticist, be linked to some conceivable practical consequences and bearings; for the pragmaticist Peirce, these consequences and bearings pertain to, at one level, self-corrective investigation and, at a higher level, heroic self-sacrifice. In what strikes me as a thoroughly pragmaticist conception of God, J. N. Findlay suggests that, whatever else the name *God* might mean, it must mean an adequate object of worship — a being fully worthy of such responses as reverence, awe, fidelity, etc. The Logos immanent in nature and possibly indicative of a transcendent Power was, for Peirce, just such an object.

Indeed, scientific inquiry itself was for him a form of religious worship. One sometimes gets the impression that it was the most authentic form of such worship. But this is a misleading impression, for Peirce's own ingenuous participation in traditional forms of religious worship can be documented (see, e.g., Orange 1984: 45–46). Of far greater significance is that a religious sensibility pervades his philosophical texts, giving a depth of meaning to what should be understood by his 'contrite fallibilism'. While he was not at all shy in acknowledging the presence of such a sensibility in his thought, he viewed himself primarily as a scientist and logician. As a scientist, he was committed to executing some specific form of objective inquiry; as a logician, he was committed to understanding the various forms and, beyond these, a generalized (or idealized) form of objective investigation. Logic, then, is re-envisioned by Peirce as a normative theory of objective inquiry. 'A deliberate logical faculty … has in man to take their place; and the sole function of this logical deliberation is to grind off the arbitrary and the individualistic character of thought' (*CP* 1.178). This faculty requires cultivation. Such cultivation is, part and parcel, of maturing into deliberative agents, for 'reasoning is only a special kind of controlled conduct …' (*CP* 1.610). These points lead directly into what most distinguishes Peirce's approach to philosophy. He is, after all, someone who exclaimed in a letter to a friend that 'philosophy is either a science or is balderdash' (Perry 1935, 2: 438). If philosophical reflection fails to attain the status of objective inquiry, it will be worse than useless; it will be pernicious. And if litterateurs, theologians, and others have their way, philosophy will forever be obstructed from attaining that status.

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Highlighting the distinctive angle of Peirce's vision

> Each man has his own peculiar character. It enters into all he does. It is in his consciousness and not a mere mechanical trick ... it enters into all his cognition .... It is therefore the man's philosophy, his way of regarding things; not a philosophy of the head alone — but one which pervades the whole man. (*CP* 7.595)

Peirce's principal concern was to investigate, as an integral part of normative science, signs in the service of a distinctive form of intelligence. He identified this form as 'scientific intelligence' and defined it as 'an intelligence capable of learning from experience' (*CP* 5.227). The signs most directly in the service of such intelligence are themselves identified by Peirce as 'intellectual concepts' and defined as 'those upon the structure of which, arguments concerning objective fact may hinge' (*CP* 5.467). According to him, intellectual concepts are 'the only sign-burdens that are properly denominated "concepts"'; they 'essentially carry some implication concerning *the general behaviour* either of some conscious being or of some inanimate object, and so convey more, not merely than any feeling, but more, too, than any existential fact ...' (*CP* 5.467; emphasis added). What more intellectual concepts convey is emphatically noted by Peirce: 'the "would-acts", "would-dos" of habitual [or general] behavior'. Hence, for the defining purpose of objective inquiry, 'the *total* meaning of the predication of an intellectual concept is contained in the affirmation that ... the subject of the predication would behave in a certain general way ...'. Predication is, in effect, prediction: it is an attempt to indicate how an agent or thing would act in some more or less definite range of circumstances. But the differential perspective of the theoretical inquirer committed, above all else, to discovering objective truth is, in Peirce's investigation of signs, the controlling perspective (cf. Smith 1961, 1978).

The capacity to construct reliable arguments concerning objective fact is, hence, but another way of speaking about scientific intelligence. The capacity to learn from experience depends, at bottom, on the interplay of three other capacities: the capacity to draw necessary inferences, to explain puzzling phenomena, and to test the hypothesis purporting to explain such phenomena.

Peirce was acutely aware that there is more to life than science (*CP* 5.537); he was also sufficiently aware that there is more to the general theory of signs than the specific kinds of signs upon which he, given his

overarching concern to craft a methodeutic of objective investigation (cf. Fisch 1986), devoted the overwhelming bulk of his critical attention. But some students of Peirce miss the extent to which his investigation of signs is controlled and, in some respects, skewed by this concern. Other students of his work miss the extent to which Peirce's thought drives beyond the confines of his omnipresent concern to frame heuristic schemes yoked firmly to objective investigation. On the one hand, what Peirce says about signs he says from a highly selective perspective; on the other, what he says from this perspective explodes the limits of his own inquiries.

The work of T. L. Short, Joseph Ransdell, Christopher Hookway, Carl Hausman, Susan Haack, Thomas Olshewsky, and Cheryl Misak is immensely helpful in grasping both the main thrust and the detailed elaboration of Peirce's indefatigable efforts to define, in pragmatic (rather than transcendental) fashion, the conditions for the possibility of objective inquiry. In contrast, the work of Floyd Merrell, Peter Ochs, Michael Raposa, Roberta Kevelson, Robert Corrington and (more problematically) Joseph Margolis is helpful for suggesting ways of reading Peirce against himself, of tracing trajectories at once inherent in Peirce's own texts and yet disruptive of his dominant concerns and defining allegiances (e.g., physical *sciences, traditional* theism, *conservative* politics).

The first group of scholars is strongly disposed to call in Peirce as 'an expert witness' in behalf of objective inquiry. While the individuals in the second group (with the exception of Margolis) stress the importance of the dynamical object and other factors insuring the possibility of conducting objective investigations, they are not nearly as concerned to ally themselves with Peirce the scientific inquirer as they are interested in joining Peirce the speculative thinker. They draw their inspiration not so much from even Peirce the normative scientist as the categoreal theorist, that daring thinker who not only elaborated in the most abstract form a set of recursive categories (Savan 1987–1988; Esposito 1980; Shapiro 1983) but also applied in the most painstaking manner this categoreal scheme to substantive investigations in various fields, from physics and physiology to history and theology.

Though there might not be two Peirces (the tough-minded naturalist and the tender-minded transcendentalist), there are two markedly different tendencies among contemporary Peirce scholars — namely, the tendency to focus, in effect, on the architect of an elaborate methodeutic (a normative account of objective investigation, what Peirce himself often called his quest of quests) and the tendency to exploit in an unabashedly speculative way the fecundity of the Peircean categories. Those in whom the former tendency is most marked — e.g., Short and Haack — are

highly skeptical of the uses to which Peirce is being put by those of an unabashedly speculative cast; in contrast, those in whom the latter tendency is most pronounced — e.g., Corrington — are deeply resistant to clipping Peirce's metaphysical wings. In my judgment, the community of Peirce scholars benefits from the presence of thinkers exhibiting such deeply different tendencies.

This is especially true since these tendencies are exhibited by scholars not simply interested in getting Peirce right but also committed to pushing inquiry in the directions he opened and doing philosophy in the manner he exemplified. As I will stress again later, the hermeneutical differences are not dissociable from philosophical divergences. Overwhelmingly, Peirce's interpreters are *philosophers* who have joined him as co-inquirers; fidelity to the actual texts is dear, but fidelity to the animating purposes of this paradigmatic inquirer is even dearer to these 'interpreters'. That they identify these purposes somewhat differently leads them to champion somewhat different causes and to celebrate appreciably different Peirces. What joins these rival interpreters is that, if it is important to get Peirce right, it is because Peirce himself was right about so many things of far-reaching philosophical significance. Hence, their various attempts to introduce Peirce are, at bottom, invitations to doing philosophy in a distinctive way. A word or two more ought, however, to be said about the issue of introducing Peirce.

Ways of introducing Peirce

There are, of course, various ways of effectively introducing Peirce, each of which has advantages as well as disadvantages. Two approaches especially recommend themselves — the systematic and the chronological. *One* way of systematically introducing Peirce would be in terms of his own architectonic vision of philosophical inquiry. In contrast, one could introduce this philosopher in terms of the chronological development of his philosophical views. The principal disadvantage of the former approach is that Peirce's architectonic system is so elaborate that it is likely to overwhelm a person trying to make Peirce's acquaintance; in contrast, the chief drawbacks of the latter approach are that, in general, it tends to presuppose (rather than engender) an interest in the thinker being so introduced and, moreover, that it tends to highlight the development, rather than the tenability or validity, of the thinker's procedures and positions. Even so, both approaches can be effectively used to introduce Peirce or, for that matter, any other philosopher.

Yet another approach would try to convey something of the contours of both the architectonic and the development. This is, in fact, Murphey's approach, for whom an adequate understanding of Peirce's architectonic demands a detailed chronology of the revisions that Peirce was driven to make in his system. It is also what, in his own way, Joseph Esposito (1980) does in *Evolutionary Metaphysics: The Development of Peirce's Theory of Categories*. So, too, it is what Robert Corrington does in the volume under review, *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce*. Corrington conveys a sense of the development of Peirce's thought by explicating various *series* of articles (e.g., in chapter 1 the series in *Popular Science Monthly* entitled 'Illustrations of the logic of science', in chapter 2 the early series of three articles in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and in chapter 4 *The Monist* series published between 1891–1893). He conveys a sense of the substantive import of Peirce's philosophical reflections by highlighting both the principal doctrines as pragmaticism, synechism, etc., and the complex interconnections among these doctrines. Finally, he conveys something of the power and deficiencies of these reflections — the power by tracing trajectories Peirce himself did not, the deficiencies indicating what Peirce resisted exploring.

Of course, much depends upon the audience to whom an introduction is addressed. It might be undergraduates with very little philosophical training or it might be scholars deeply read in philosophy but unfamiliar with Peirce.

A strong Misreading of the Peircean project

Given Corrington's strenuous efforts to enlist Peirce in the cause of ecstatic naturalism, i.e., given his attempt to portray Peirce as a precursor to an ontology championed by Corrington in such other works as *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (1992) and *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (1994), it is imperative to stress just how orthodox is Corrington's interpretation of Peirce's philosophy. While these efforts are perhaps the most controversial aspect of this provocative study, the painstaking care with which Peirce's architectonic approach to philosophical inquiry is delineated is an undeniable feature of this study. Though there are more than a few places where I am inclined to question the logic of presentation: e.g., why does the author wait until chapter 3 to present what he himself calls, in the title of a section, 'The three primal categories', or why does he present the 'Illustrations of the logic of science' — 'The fixation of belief', 'How to make our ideas clear', etc. — before the earlier series from the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*? There are no doubt

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good reasons for these choices (the felt coherence of the exposition attests to this), but an *explicit* rationale might have been desirable.

An Introduction to C. S. Peirce is, first and foremost, the work of a philosophical theologian whose deep indebtedness to such diverse thinkers as Martin Heidegger, Paul Tillich, Julia Kristeva, Carl Jung, and Justus Buchler informs in subtle and obvious ways the manner in which Peirce is being introduced here. The concluding pages of the introduction ('Peirce's melancholy') and the conclusion ('Peircean prospects') are places where this is especially evident; so, too, are parts of the later chapters.

That this is the work of a philosophical theologian, a scholar conversant with a wide range of philosophical texts from diverse traditions *and* also one committed to refashioning a viable conception of the divine, means that certain features of Peirce's thought get highlighted here, features which ordinarily are either ignored or downplayed (see, e.g., Hookway 1985 or even Hausman 1993). Hence chapter four is devoted to 'The evolving God and the heart of nature'.

As an expository account of Peirce's principal philosophical doctrines, this is an engaging and nuanced (thus, challenging) study. As an imaginative development of certain more or less inchoate tendencies in the Peircean texts, it is an undertaking far more difficult to assess. As a development of these tendencies, *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce* is, more than anything else, an essay in theosemiotic and in an ontology of nature. It is truly an *essay* — an attempt to focus upon the 'process by and through which the [human] self becomes attuned to the traces of the divine sign maker in the world' (Corrington 1993: 206); it also endeavors to interpret the ontological difference between 'Being' (*das Sein*) and 'beings' (*das seiende*) in terms of 'nature naturing' (*natura naturans*) and 'nature natured' (*natura naturata*). While the theosemiotic is closely linked to the notion of interpretive musement developed in 'A neglected argument for the reality of God', the re-interpretation of the ontological difference and its correlation with this theosemiotic are less clearly rooted in Peirce's own texts. Along with Corrington's psychological interpretation of Peirce's *melancholia* (pp. 21–24), his emphasis on Peirce the theosemiotician and his portrayal of Peirce as 'a precursor of ecstatic naturalist' (p. 24) are almost certainly the most controversial aspects of this insightful study.

Hence, one might suspect that, in several key places, what Corrington provides is not so much an introduction as a 'strong misreading' of a thinker who has generated in this interpreter 'an anxiety of influence'. Even though Corrington explicitly tries to distance himself from neopragmatism strategies of argumentation and interpretation, it might — ironically — appear that his own work exemplifies some of these very strategies. Corrington is aware of this possibility. Near the very end of this introduction, he notes in reference to Peirce's panpsychism what he notes in other connections as well, namely, that Peirce 'had not yet fathomed the inner momentum of his own categorial structures' (p. 216). He is sensitive to the possibility that his readers might think this claim unduly presumptuous, thus he immediately asks *before* his readers but *of* himself:

> Is this to say that we have some kind of privileged perspective, a form of *besser verstehen* (better understanding) in which we can claim to know more about an author's framework than the author could? Or is this reading a kind of deconstructive inversion of a categorial structure in which the absent dialogue partner is forced into a kind of reluctant appearance? (p. 216)

His response to these self-addressed questions is, in crucial respects, an echo of an assertion made in the preface: 'The understanding invoked here is more akin to *an emancipatory reenactment* in which a vast unthought insight is given the space within which to find its true measure' (p. 216). This assertion echoes an earlier claim:

> By stressing the correlation of semiotics and metaphysics, and by showing the underlying principles of an ecstatic naturalism, I hope to engage *in an act of emancipatory reenactment* in which Peirce is allowed to speak with a new voice. This can only be done if one honors the textual materials and allows *it* [sic] to speak. However, the traditional view of Peirce ... has made it difficult to hear what these texts are saying. (p. xii; again, emphasis added)

I do not take what Corrington calls here an emancipatory reenactment to be identical with, or even remotely analogous to, what Richard Rorty calls (following Harold Bloom) a 'strong misreading'. Anyone committed to such a strategy of 'reading', in Rorty's words, 'simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose. He makes the text refer to whatever is relevant to that purpose' (1982: 151). What Corrington is calling 'an emancipatory reenactment' is predicated on joining the purpose of the author, not appropriating texts for whatever purpose happens to suit the 'interpreter'. The model of strong misreading 'is not the curious collector of clever gadgets taking them apart to see what makes them work and carefully ignoring any extrinsic end they may have, but the psychoanalyst blithely interpreting a dream or a joke as a symptom of homicidal mania' (Rorty 1982: 151). In contrast, the model of emancipatory reenactment is that of strong misreading, of trying to join the purposes of the author while mindful of the omnipresent possibility of imposing one's own purposes on the texts not one's own.

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To repeat, that *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce* is the work of primarily a philosophical theologian with a fertile mind and an architectonic of his own means that the relevance of Peirce's philosophy to systematic theology is made a focal concern here. That the overarching hermeneutic objective is 'an emancipatory reenactment' of vast (largely) unexpressed insights means that Peirce is joined by Corrington as a co-inquirer, nudged and (some might think) shoved in directions in which Peirce might be reluctant to go. The hermeneutical and the philosophical tasks are, in the end, inseparable. To interpret faithfully any philosopher requires joining him as a co-investigator, imaginatively projecting ourselves into his project. In turn, to probe philosophically any issue almost always requires drawing upon the work of predecessors and contemporaries; this, in its turn, demands coming to terms with their work, interpreting their texts, assessing their objectives and ideals no less than their strategies and procedures. It might even be that our interpretive disagreements are, to some extent at least, always reflections of philosophical divergences. Hence, the role of expositor and that of philosophical co-inquirer are, in the final analysis, inseparable. To get Peirce right demands nothing less than identifying his various and, above all else, his deepest purposes; then imaginatively reenacting and (to the extent that he himself failed to follow out the momentum of his own thought) simply enacting those purposes; and, finally, assessing in critical dialogue with other knowledgeable interpreters the results of these endeavors. While Corrington does announce that his project of introducing Peirce is undertaken in the spirit of fallibilism (p. xii), the marks of that spirit — above all, a conscientious confrontation with rival interpretations — are too often absent. The momentum of his interpretive and philosophical reflections propels him, more often than not, toward a nuanced and elegant expression of his most basic insights, not toward dialectical engagement with rival interpreters. In an introduction of this sort, such engagement can be distracting, especially to a student coming to Peirce for the first time; hence, its absence here is in one respect justifiable.

Conclusion

The Peirce to whom I am most strongly drawn is the contrite fallibilist, the convinced pragmaticist in semeiotic (and other fields of inquiry), and the critical commonsensist. The Peirce to whom Robert S. Corrington is most deeply attracted is the categorial theorist, the speculative metaphysician, and the semeiotic innovator who provides vast conceptual resources for depth psychology as well as systematic theology. I, too, am drawn to these facets of Peirce (especially the categorial theorist and semeiotic innovator), but these attractions are linked to my reading of Peirce as fallibilist, pragmaticist, and commonsensist. Yet, for understanding just those aspects of Peirce which I most highly prize, *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce* is a welcome contribution to recent scholarship; especially as an aid for taking my fallibilism with the utmost seriousness — for exploring the ways in which my own philosophical and interpretive biases operate to deflect attention away from those aspects of Peirce which I find least congenial — this book is a good re-introduction to an ever challenging, ever elusive, genius.

Notes

1. In light of the previous paragraph, however, it might be objected that picking up Peirce the semeiotician does not guarantee picking up a tool by the right end. All that I mean here is that approaching Peirce as a semeiotician is, in general, required of anyone desiring to attain an interior understanding of what Peirce was about.
2. In the most recent edition of the *Peirce Project Newsletter* (1994), two notices bear directly on Peirce as litterateur and also as theologian. On page 2, we learn that: 'Robin MS 1562 contains two partial plays. One is Peirce's 1887 translation of the first act of *Medea*. ... The other (1562: 2–15) ... is an unidentified comedy ...'. The authorship of the latter is, however, not entirely clear, even though it is a manuscript in Peirce's hand. Still it reveals something about the range of Peirce's interests. So does the exchange of letters between Peirce and Paul Carus. The two letters reproduced on page 7 of the *Newsletter* indicate the distinctive manner in which Peirce approached religious questions.
3. In another place, however, Peirce contends that what the critical commonsensist 'adores, if he is a good pragmaticist, is power; not the shame power of brute force, which, even in its own specialty of spoiling things, secures such slight results; but the creative power of reasonableness ...' (*CP* 5.520). This implies the need to draw a distinction between two forms of power — shame and genuine. It should not be supposed that the second class of persons described in *CP* 1.43 — those devoted to the acquisition and exercise of power — are preoccupied with shame power; at the very least, they might be effective, even if unwitting, servants of genuine power. Such might be the cunning of reason(ableness).
4. This fact is captured in the subtitle of Robert Corrington's *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce: Philosopher, Semiotician, and Ecstatic Naturalist*. But the absence in the index to this work of the term *science* and its cognates suggests that neither the character of Peirce's investigation of signs nor his predominant self-image is taken with sufficient seriousness.
5. As should be evident, this *philosophical* project is part and parcel of an integrated set of *scientific* disciplines.

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Vincent M. Colapietro (b. 1950) is Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. His principal research interests include C. S. Peirce; classical American philosophy (Santayana, Royce, Mead, Lewis, but especially Peirce, James, and Dewey); theories of mind, consciousness, and rationality. Among his publications are *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (1989), 'The vanishing subject of contemporary discourse: A pragmatic response' (1990), 'Purpose, power, and agency' (1992), and *A Glossary of Semiotics* (1993).

E-mail address: colapietro@murray.fordham.edu