Selected Bibliography on the Theory of Categories of Charles S. Peirce

Main Publications


Part I. The philosophical background of the rise of Pragmatism in the thought of Charles Sanders Peirce. 1. Peirce and the contemporary function of Pragmatism; 2. The problem of an introduction to Peirce's work as a whole: the four periods of the development of his thought 14; 3. The first period: Peirce and the Tradition, or, from the critique of knowledge to the critique of meaning 19; 4. The second period: The genesis of meaning-critical Pragmatism (1871-78);

Part II. Peirce's development from Pragmatism to Pragmaticism.

6. The later Peirce: the last two periods in the development of his thought 80; 6. Peirce's late conception of his system 84; 7. The third period: From Pragmatism to the metaphysics of Evolution (ca. 1885-98) 134; 8. The fourth period: From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism (ca. 1898-1914) 158; 9. Conclusion: Peirce and the future of the philosophy of science 191;

Notes 197; Bibliography 249; Index 251-253.

"We can derive a division of the development of Peirce's philosophy into four periods from the above characterization of the development of his thought. These four periods are also distinctly discernible in the history of his publications: a series of essays in a particular journal is found in the middle of each. In addition, the four periods correspond to the decisive turns of events in Peirce's life.

The first period (from 1855 to 1871) embraces Peirce's early years, from the beginning of his study of Kant, undertaken when he was sixteen years old, to the temporary conclusion of his critical study of the philosophical tradition. Besides a series of five essays on formal logic and the doctrine of the categories in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* in 1867, publications falling into this period include three essays on the theory of cognition in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* in 1868-69 and the Berkeley review in the *North American Review* in 1871, where the pragmatic maxim for making meanings clear is anticipated. I have chosen to unite this first period under the heading "From the Critique of Knowledge to the Critique of Meaning."

The second period (from 1871 to 1883) encompasses the time of Peirce's public success, from the founding of the Metaphysical Club in Cambridge to the tragic turn of his life, which is signified by his dismissal from his teaching post at Johns Hopkins University." Numerous geodetic and astronomic investigations, expeditions, and participation in congresses in the service of the United States Coast Survey, and the Photometric Researches at the Harvard Observatory, fall into this period, as well as the series of six "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" in Popular Science Monthly in 1877-78. The first two articles in this series, "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," are considered the birth certificates of "Pragmatism." The fruits of Peirce's teaching at Johns Hopkins from '179 to 1883 appeared in 1883 in the volume *Studies in Logic*, which contains works by Peirce and his students of mathematical logic." This period may be termed the classic epoch of the development of Pragmatism and "American philosophy." The third period (from 1883 to 1893 or 1902) spans the time in which Peirce -- particularly after moving to Milford, Pennsylvania -- worked alone on studies in logic and metaphysics.
and, circa 1901-2, achieved the final architectonic of his philosophical system. The central philosophical publication of this period is the series of six essays on metaphysics in *The Monist* between 1891 and 1893, in which the aspects of evolutionary cosmology, "Tychism," "Synechism," and "Agapism," are presented. During this period Peirce also made repeated attempts to put a large philosophical work up for subscription, all of which failed (the last attempt was his application to the Carnegie Foundation, which was unsuccessful because his work dealt with "logic" and not with "natural science"). As a result, Peirce was forced after his discharge from the Coast Survey in 1891 to earn his income through miscellaneous work for journals and dictionaries.

The fourth period (from 1898 or 1902 to 1914) embraces the time in which Pragmatism was discussed internationally, following William James's "California Address," which gave Peirce a last chance to win an audience for his philosophy. This period ends in 1914 with the death of the philosopher, who had been supported by a fund from his friends since 1906 and who had suffered from cancer since 1909. At the center of this period stand, first, the difficult but significant ("architectonic") Harvard lectures of 1903 on Pragmatism, in which Peirce made the first attempt to connect all aspects of his "system" of 1901-2 with the concept of Pragmatism, and second, the series of three essays on Pragmatism in *The Monist* in 1905-6, as well as numerous additions to this series that remained unpublished in his lifetime. Here Peirce attained the completion of his conception of Pragmatism." pp. 17-18 (Notes omitted).

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"The issue of realism in its most general form concerns the question whether and how we know whatever it is that we call reality. In this form, the issue of realism touches upon virtually every area of contemporary philosophical discussion. And because the question regarding the possibility of knowing reality has traditionally been linked to the problem of truth, clearly the problem of truth is and remains a burning question.

More specifically, the relevance of the problem of truth is related to two painful dilemmas that face anyone who raises a philosophical question. The first dilemma concerns the status of knowledge and may be stated as follows: Either, whatever it is that knows is different from whatever it is that is known, or whatever it is that knows is not different from whatever it is that is known. If the knower differs from the known, the question arises how the knower can possibly have access to the known. In this form, the dilemma may be called the dilemma of dualism, provided it be understood that the dilemma does not...
limit itself to the Cartesian duality of matter and mind. Whatever one's conception of the knower and of the known may be, one is faced with the question of the relationship between the two. The second dilemma may be called the dilemma of evolution. Indeed, if we do accept the concept of evolution, then: either whatever it is that we call reality is part of an ongoing process of change, or nothing changes. If everything changes, what can it possibly mean to say that we have real knowledge? If nothing really changes, what possible meaning can be given to the term 'evolution'? The two dilemma's have an immediate impact on the question of truth, since, so we are told, real knowledge is knowledge of the truth. In this respect, the philosophy of C. S. Peirce (1837-1914), who both held an explicitly philosophical theory of evolution and a theory of truth may provide us with interesting insights. The immediate purpose of this paper is to trace the evolution of Peirce's conception of truth within the perspective of his conception of Logic. It will be shown that, although there is every indication that this conception was born from his keen awareness of the two dilemma's stated above, he paradoxically failed to see that his theory implied the impossibility of a meaningful conception of truth." pp. 241-242


Two volumes


Abstract: "According to C. S. Peirce, every proposition consists of two signs, 1) a subject, an indexical sign which "indicates" some object or objects (the objects of the proposition), and 2) a predicate, an iconic sign whose function is to represent the object (or objects) indicated by the subject. This paper analyzes the ways in which the subject of a proposition indicates its object or objects in simple (atomic) propositions, their truth-functional compounds, quantified propositions, and modal propositions, and discusses Peirce's view of the objects of fictional discourse."


Contents: Preface IX; Note on references XI; Introduction 1; Part One. Peirce's project: the pursuit of truth; I. Logic, mind and reality: early thoughts 13; II. Truth and the aims of inquiry 41; III. Categories 80; IV. Assertion and interpretation: the theory of signs 118; Conclusion to Part One 145; Part Two. Knowledge and reality 149; V. Perceptions and the outward clash 151; VI. Mathematical reasoning and the a priori 181; VII. The growth of knowledge: induction and abduction 208; VIII. Pragmatism 234; IX. Evolutionary cosmology and objective idealism 262; Motes 289; References 292; Index 297-301.


With the assistance of Arthur Franklin Stewart and Claude V. Bridges


Contents: Preface IX-XI; 1. The discipline of Semeiotic 1; 2. Semeiotic grammar 18; 3. Critical logic 53; 4. Universal rhetoric 78; Notes 109; References 140; Index 147-151.


Abstract: "The paper argues that Peirce's theory of signs was an attempt to replace the medieval theory of language as perfected by Locke. Peirce rejects the distinction between simple and complex ideas, and holds that every (mental or linguistic) sign refers to its object by virtue of another sign it implies, viz its interpretant. The paper explains how the resulting theory implies a rejection of analyticity and the doctrine of the determinacy of thought. It is suggested that the theory assumes the intentionality of signs and, contrary to Peirce's intentions, does not explain intentionality."


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Reprinted by Hackett, 1993 with a new preface and a new appendix with footnotes keyed to the manuscript classifications by Max Fisch.


Abstract: "Peirce has a theory of proper names which likens proper names to common nouns and assigns to them the function of picking out the internal objects of our thought. The univocity of reference is not explained by the semantical role of organising thought contents but is achieved by their "use". Peirce's view of proper names is compared with H. N. Castaneda's restricted variable/retrieval theory of proper names. A Sameness Principle for objects of thought and signs is introduced. The Meinongian thesis that there are objects which have neither existence nor being is a mere consequence of the functional meaning of all expressions which are purely referential."


"This paper examines sources for Peirce's ideas on medieval logic. Several stages in the development of semeiotic are reviewed and related to the medieval trivium. Semeiotic is understood as the theory of signs including formal grammar (study of the significations of signs), logic (study of the interpretants of signs). Medieval concepts of signification ("significatio"), supposition ("suppositio"), and inference ("consequentia") are introduced and related to Peirce's work."


Contents: Part I. The elements of Phenomenology. Foreword VII; I. The beginnings of Phenomenology - Introductory 1; II. The birth of Phenomenology (1867-1868) 19; III. The same subject concluded 53; Part II. IV: Phenomenology and Nature (1867-1904) 59; V: Phaneroscopy: the description of the phaneron 77; Appendix 103; Bibliography 105, Index 107-109.

From the Foreword: "To trace the development of Peirce's phenomenology from a doctrine of Categories to the ground on which philosophy and science rest is the purpose of this book. Although parallels with Husserl's thought are inevitable, it has seemed proper to this writer to emphasize the growth of Peirce's own ideas and the scientific-philosophical background out of which they emerged. Thus Peirce's most original contributions, viz., a set of universal categories appearing in thought, nature and experience, the method of their discovery, and Phaneroscopy, the science that describes the phaneron, or the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, are shown in the context of a single, evolving body of thought - a comprehensive philosophy shaped by Peirce's lifelong interest in logic, the sciences, ethics, aesthetics and metaphysics."


Abstract: "Resisting any sort of hierarchy between thought and expression, which usually leads to supremacy of thought, sometimes of expression, as will be shown, Peirce proposes a theory that strongly asserts absolute identity of thought and signs and seems to be the very cue towards the determination of the meaning of his own view of pragmatism."


"Writing that "no sign of a thing or kind of thing . . . can arise except in a proposition; and no logical operation upon a proposition can result in anything but a proposition; so that non-propositional signs can only exist as constituents of propositions" (4.583; cf. 4.56, 4.551), (1) Peirce seems to define, after Bentham, (2) a principle of contextuality (similar to Frege's) which tends to see the proposition, if not as the "measure" (to use C. Chauviré's expression (3)), at least as the horizon of any sign. This proves the importance, for the logician, of the elucidation of the concept of proposition, especially if one remembers that, for Peirce, logic principally seeks to describe the behavior of what he calls "scientific intelligence" (2.227), that is to say, a type of intelligence incapable of intuition and which has no other means of operating except inferentially (cf. 2.444, n.1) and therefore propositionally. (4) In the context of a pragmatist philosophy of knowledge defining the meaning of a sign by its practical effects (cf. 5.402), one can expect to find, in the articulation of saying and doing, one of the essential features of any proposition. That is what we should like to attempt to verify in this study in which, after distinguishing proposition as "saying" and assertion as "doing" and characterizing the latter, we shall try to outline some consequences of a theory of assertion conceived as that towards which any proposition tends." p. 257

(1) The decimal notation n.m will refer to paragraph m of volume n of *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Peirce 1931-35 and 1958); NEM, X, p. y in which X represents the volume and y the page will refer to Eisele's edition of *The New Elements of Mathematics by C. S. Peirce* (Peirce 1956); MS x in which x refers to the number of the manuscript will refer to Robin's edition of manuscripts in Harvard Houghton Library.

(2) Bentham *Works*, 1843, vol. VIII, p. 188.


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