

# PEIRCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2001

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS

Volume 4, No. 1

## A CENTURY OF LIFE HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAUL WEISS

Paul Weiss, one of the great American philosophers of the twentieth century, celebrated his 100th birthday on 19 May. Peirceans worldwide are indebted to Paul for the crucial role he played in the 1930s in editing Peirce's writings for the Harvard edition. The *Collected Papers* inaugurated Peirce scholarship, standing as the historical foundation for Peirce studies.

Weiss has been remarkably effective as a teacher and writer. He never caved in to the twentieth-century prejudice against speculative and systematic philosophy and, with the demise of that prejudice, he enters the twenty-first century (and his own second century) with renewed purpose. One of his greatest achievements, *Being and Other Realities*, appeared in 1995 (Open Court); and *Emphatics*, the first of a projected four-book series, was published in 2000 by Vanderbilt University Press. Earlier this year, Weiss finished the second book of that series, *Surrogates*, and he is currently at work on the third, *Adjuncts*.

On 19 May Paul woke up to a substantial article in the *Washington Post* about his life and career. The lengthy article by Philip Kennicott, "The Emphatic Philosopher," was the front-page lead in the Style section. Nathan Houser and Albert Lewis represented the Peirce Edition Project at Weiss's birthday celebration in Washington, D.C.; other Peirceans on hand included Joseph Brent and Kenneth Ketner.

We are proud to be linked with this American sage by our common interest in Peirce's writings and through his service as an advisor to the Peirce Edition Project. In case any of our readers wish to memorialize the completion of Paul's first century, we have learned that his two favorite charities are Legal Services for the Elderly, Suite 1700, 130 W 42, NYC 10036 (Paul's son, Jonathan, is the director); and Henry Street Settlement, 265 Henry Street, NYC 10002 (HSS sponsored a visit to the country for Paul when he was a young city-bound boy).



Paul Weiss, in his Washington, D.C. apartment, 12 Aug. 2000

## SHORT APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF BOARD AS ROBERTS STEPS DOWN

After seven years as PEP's Chairman of the Board of Advisors, Don D. Roberts has stepped down to pursue some personal initiatives at his new home on Vancouver Island, where he recently retired with his wife, Beverly Kent.

Roberts has served the Edition in numerous ways since its inception, and his leadership as board chairman saw PEP through a crucial period of rebuilding. The editors salute Roberts for his service and are grateful that he has agreed to continue serving as a member of the board's Executive Committee.

In March, Dean Herman Saatkamp Jr. appointed Thomas L. Short as the new Chairman of the Board. Many readers of this newsletter will know of Short through his papers on Peirce's semiotics and pragmatism—especially on the teleological currents of Peirce's pragmatic thought. Perhaps this bodes well for those who have urged the editors to keep an eye on desirable outcomes. Short takes over just as PEP is about to launch a five-year endowment campaign to secure the completion of the Critical Edition and to support the establishment of a permanent Peirce research center based on PEP's accumulated resources.

The Peirce Society will hold a joint reception with the Santayana Society on 28 December at the meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in Atlanta. Readers who attend the reception will have an opportunity to meet Short and talk with him about PEP. Anyone wishing to communicate with him in the interim may address correspondence to the Peirce Project.



*Many thanks and best wishes to Don Roberts, outgoing board chairman*

## NEH NEWS

Just as we were wrapping up this issue of the newsletter, we learned that President Bush had nominated Italian Renaissance art expert Bruce Cole to replace William R. Ferris as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Cole, Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts at Indiana University, is a specialist in art history and is well-known for his commitment to the traditions of Western culture. He served under Lynne Cheney as a member of the NEH Council. If the U.S. Congress confirms him, Cole will assume the leadership of NEH in November.

Also of note: NEH has offered to fund PEP for another two years (for details see the director's report on the back page). For a complete listing of this year's NEH Collaborative Research awardees, go to <http://www.neh.gov/grants/awards/Collab2001.html>.

## PROBING THE COMMUNAL MIND

The Peirce Project depends on specialists from many fields for help in preparing our critical texts and editorial annotations. Although the heaviest burden falls on our regular contributing editors and advisors, we hope that through the newsletter we can extend the scope of communal involvement. In this issue we feature the answer to a question posed in the previous issue, as well as a continuing “mystery.” If you can shed more light on our unanswered question, please reply in writing or by e-mail to Associate Editor André De Tienne at [adetienn@iupui.edu](mailto:adetienn@iupui.edu).

### Question Answered:

**Poem Deciphered.** Shortly after the previous issue of the newsletter (3.2) appeared, we received an answer to question 17, which asked readers to help us decipher a coded poem. The solution came from Peirce’s own grandnephew, Jeremy Peirce, to whom we express our gratitude. (Upon learning who had deciphered the encryption, executive board member Arthur Burks remarked, “I suppose it runs in the genes.”)

The key to Peirce’s code is that each letter of the alphabet was assigned both a vowel-based cipher and a consonant cipher, according to the table below.

Plain text	Vowel cipher	Consonant cipher	Plain text	Vowel cipher	Consonant cipher
A	A	B	M	I	P
B	AL	C	N	IL	PH
C	AY	CH	O	IW	PS
D	AR	D	P	OL	S
E	AU	F	R	OR	SH
F	ER	G	S	OY	SK
G	E	GH	T	O	SM
H	EY	H	U	OW	SN
I	EL	J	V	UL	SP
K	IR	M	W	UR	ST
L	IE	N	Y	UO	TH

The text Peirce ciphered consists of the first two couplets of a famous three-couplet hymn by statesman and writer Joseph Addison (1672–1719). The hymn, “The Spacious Firmament on High,” was probably composed in 1712, the year of its publication, under the title “Ode,” in the *Spectator* (London: J. and R. Tonson). This hymn is said to have taken its inspiration from the first four verses of Psalm 19; it became very popular when Charles Wesley (1707–88) published it in his hymnal. It was later set to the music of F. J. Haydn’s oratorio *The Creation*. In his rendition, Peirce got seven words wrong (“ethereal” for “etherial” in line 2, “starry” for “spangled” and “spangled” for “shining” in line 3, “in” for “to” in line 7, “recounts” for “repeats” in line 12, “while” for “whilst” in line 13, “turn” for “roll” in line 15), which may indicate that he encoded the poem from memory. The three alternative readings we gave in the footnote to question 17 (“oys-mashoy,” “skolshaubar,” and “siwnau”) turn out to be the correct

ones. In addition, the third word of line 4 in the ciphered poem ought to read “iwshelghelphan” instead of “iwshelghelphau” (thus yielding the word “original” instead of “origine”; our misreading), while in line 15 “smeyth” ought to have been “smey-auth” (Peirce’s error). Here are the first two couplets of the “Ode”:

The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim.  
Th’unwearied sun, from day to day,  
Does his Creator’s power display;  
And publishes to every land  
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
And nightly to the listening earth  
Repeats the story of her birth:  
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
And all the planets in their turn,  
Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

### Question Unanswered:

**The Kirchheis Saga Continues.** Two times now we have put in the newsletter a question about the “famous” German philosopher Kirchheis. We had found two references by Peirce to Kirchheis. In his lecture on burlesque (R 1564), Peirce opened by writing: “My lecture will furnish a strict logical analysis of burlesque, and lay the foundations for the metaphysics of the subject, in a manner which I think must be met by the advocates of the theory of Kirchheis.” The reference suggests a certain familiarity with the theory of Kirchheis, possibly secondhand, and Peirce’s belief that there are advocates of this theory.

The second mention of the name “Kirchheis” is found in Peirce’s 1891 letter to the editor of the *Nation* (Ketner & Cook I:115–17) in support of F. E. Abbot, whose *Ways Out of Agnosticism* had been ferociously attacked by Royce. In his letter, Peirce noted that “philosophers of the highest standing” had spoken highly of Abbot’s work, and he gave three examples, one of whom was Kirchheiss (the second “s” may have been added by the editors of the *Nation*). Abbot himself was unfamiliar with Kirchheis’s praise of his work, as he asked in the letter in which he thanked Peirce for coming to his defense, “Will you kindly give me the reference to Kirchheiss’s mention of my work? I have not seen it.” We have not found any reply from Peirce, and extensive searches through library catalogs and biographical dictionaries, using all likely variations on the name, have not led anywhere.

Since the last newsletter, however, the quest for the celebrated Kirchheis has been propelled to new heights with the discovery of a third mention of his name. This discovery was made by Mathias Girel (Université Paris–I), who spent four weeks at the Peirce Project doing research for his dissertation. In a long and remarkably detailed footnote that follows a discussion of an argument for the immortality of the soul in Plato, Peirce wrote the following: “I hardly need say that the argument is known in Germany as the Kirchheis-Plato theory, owing to its having been

## PROBING THE COMMUNAL MIND

first placed upon a scientific footing by J. H. Kirchheis in his great work *Die thierische Sterbenbestimmungen physiologisch-ästhetisch entwickelt*." Peirce continued with a detailed but bizarre description of this work (retaining his German spelling):

This book is in two volumes, of which the first (Leipzig: 1867, pp. 516) consisting of *Theil I*, *Theil I bis*, and a portion of *Theil II*, treats of nerve-physiology; *Theil I* being devoted to histology, *Theil I bis* to the history of the doctrine of immortality in its nerve-physiological relations, and *Theil II* to the physiology of esthetics. The second volume has two *Abtheilungen*. It may be mentioned, as a slight indication of the thoroughness with which the work is carried out that in the Register to the first and smaller of the *Abtheilungen* of Vol. II, the name of Christ occupies more than a column, although this index only refers to places where the different names occur incidentally. Most of the references to Christ are to dates. *Abtheilung I* of Band II (Tübingen: 1878, pp. 107) treats of the psychology of ethics from a physiological point of view. *Abtheilung II* of Band II (Leipzig: 1901) begins by completing *Theil II* of the entire work. This, however, only occupies the first 772 pages, treating of the physiological esthetics of ethics. *Theil III*, which would have been more speculative, is omitted for the sake of brevity; so that the work is brought to a close with p. 1584 of this *Abtheilung*, except for an *Anhang* of 2210 pages. *Theil IV* and the *Anhang* are simply devoted to summing up the proof. The price of the whole in paper is 42 Marks. These details are given because the book is strictly indispensable to everybody who has any species of interest in the subject of the argument.

A truly remarkable description of what must be an exceptional work. Our first inclination was that this must be a spoof on German scholarly works, especially since no trace of the book has been found, and the appendix is three pages longer than the work it is supposed to summarize. The publication dates are also suspicious, as they roughly correspond with important moments in Peirce's own intellectual life. So, perhaps it is all a spoof and there was no Kirchheis.

What counts against such an interpretation is that the *Minute Logic*, where the footnote appeared, was clearly intended as a serious work, and Plato's immortality argument is followed by a serious discussion of how to evaluate such an argument (albeit without any further reference to Kirchheis). Moreover, Peirce's mention of Kirchheis in the Abbot-Royce affair can hardly be called a spoof. If Kirchheis was indeed an invention of Peirce, he would have been seriously distorting the facts.

Another breakthrough in the Kirchheis saga came from *Die Deutsche Bibliothek* in Leipzig. No Kirchheis was found, but a likely candidate surfaced whom Peirce might have had in mind instead, namely, Julius Hermann Kirchmann (1802–84). We know that Peirce knew of Kirchmann, since at one point he asked his brother to bring back from Germany a copy of Kirchmann's *Philosophie des Wissens*. Kirchmann was an extremely prolific writer and founding editor of the *Philosophische Bibliothek* who, amongst other things, wrote extensive commentaries on Plato. One possible scenario is that when writing the Abbot letter, Peirce incorrectly remembered "Kirchmann" as "Kirchheis" and that the name "Kirchheis" continued to exist as an inside joke. Peirce's use of it in the lecture on burlesque might be the first occasion for this. So far, however, the evidence is still thin. We have not managed to obtain Kirchmann's books to determine whether he said anything about Abbot.

We want to thank the following scholars who have sent us suggestions regarding the Kirchheis mystery: Fred Davidson (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Michael Hoffmann (Universität Bielefeld), Ivor Grattan-Guinness (Middlesex University), and Klaus Hentschel (University of Göttingen), who suggested it might be a misspelling for Gustav Robert Kirchhoff.

### INDIANAPOLIS PEIRCE SEMINAR

The Indianapolis Peirce Seminar, a new initiative at the Peirce Edition Project, has been instituted to give visiting scholars an opportunity to present their work or talk about their research. The seminars have been well attended and have generated lively discussions. Topics have ranged from graphical ways of representing Peirce's different classifications of signs, to the alleged circularity of Peirce's proof of pragmatism, to a long discussion on how to conceptualize the very first stages in Peirce's evolutionary cosmology.

The first seminar was given by Helmut Pape (University of Hannover) on 14 October 1999 in the back room of the Peirce Edition Project, surrounded by hanging manuscripts. The title of Pape's presentation was "The Ontology of Emergent Time: Peirce in 1898."

Since then, eight more seminars have been held. Floyd Merrell (Purdue University) gave a presentation on fractal space, the pragmatic maxim, and abduction. Paul Forster (University of Ottawa) took a stand against the accusation that Peirce's defense of the pragmatic maxim is circular because it makes use of results of the special sciences. Instead, Forster argued that Peirce aimed to ground the maxim in logic, and he presented a (re)construction of what he believed Peirce's argument to be. Priscila Farias (University of São Paulo) presented the research that she and João

Queiroz have done on ways to diagram Peirce's 10, 28, and 66 classes of signs, which revealed interesting common patterns shared by the three classifications. Christopher Hookway (University of Sheffield) discussed and criticized Putnam's reading of the pragmatist conception of truth. Carl Hausman (emeritus Penn

*Continued at bottom of page 10*



Carl Hausman at the Indianapolis Peirce Seminar, 12 Oct. 2000

## IN THE WORKS

### “SCIENTIFIC FALLIBILISM”: PEIRCE’S FORGOTTEN LECTURE OF 1893

Everyone is at least minimally interested in a few philosophical problems, such as those concerning the soul and the afterlife. The Middle Ages provided people with fully satisfying answers to these problems, while regarding as most difficult and occult all questions dealing with the natural mysteries of heat, light, elasticity, planetary motions, and the like. A thousand years or so later, the perception has been reversed: modern science has been very successful at explaining nature’s mechanisms, while it provides no answers to the old philosophical questions. But modern science at least has taught philosophy a most important lesson: how to cultivate the spirit of inquiry.

Such is, in summary, the preamble that opens an exciting lecture on the philosophy of science and nature that Peirce appears to have written in the summer of 1893. It has been only recently, in December 2000, that the full text of this lecture has emerged from the Peirce papers. Not that it had been ignored in the past, since significant portions of it had been published in the *Collected Papers*,<sup>1</sup> and since a number of scholars (CP editors, Max H. Fisch, Carolyn Eisele, Kenneth L. Ketner, PEP editors) had already much pondered and wondered about the occasion that prompted Peirce to write the lecture. But the full extent of the text had never been reconstituted. Titled “Fallibilism, Continuity, and Evolution” by the CP editors and then by Richard Robin in his *Catalogue*, the paragraphs in CP 1.141–75 reproduce, with some deletions, the principal content of R 955.<sup>2</sup> The CP editors recognized that these pages were part of a lecture (the internal evidence leaves no doubt), and dated them c. 1897, on the basis of terminological connections with some of the Cambridge lectures of 1897–98. Fisch at some point speculated that the lecture could have been one Peirce gave on 21 May 1892 before the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University, but, as Ralph Barton Perry had already speculated earlier,<sup>3</sup> and as confirmed in Peirce’s letter of 24 May 1892 to Paul Carus, it was a version of his paper on “The Law of Mind” that Peirce had read there instead. Ketner, in 1992, theorized that R 955 was a talk Peirce reportedly gave at Royce’s home or Royce’s seminar later in May 1892, but a letter from Dickinson Miller to Fisch revealed that the “talk” was actually an informal conversation between Peirce and Royce in the latter’s office (with Miller as one of the silent witnesses), in which Royce had the lion’s share. What lecture, then, was R 955 a part of?

That R 955 was only a part of a lecture was clear enough since Peirce timed its delivery by indicating intervals of five minutes at the top of every three to four pages throughout most of the document. Given that the first recorded time is “35” while the last is “70” (with fourteen more pages to go), R 955 turns out to be the second half of a very long lecture, the whole reading of which would have taken Peirce an hour and a half. Where were the pages Peirce intended to read during the first thirty-five minutes, however? Diligent research led us to find them for the most part in R 860, titled by Robin “Nominalism, Realism, and the Logic of Modern Science.” Three pages of it were published in CP 6.492–93 under the title “Knowledge of God,” and were dated c. 1896 by the CP editors. The initial “5” minute mark shows up on the third sheet and minute “25” on the fifteenth sheet, with seven more pages to go. A related set of pages, bearing the telling “30” minute mark, was subsequently found in R 589. They constitute clearly the missing transition between R 860 and R 955. The text of R 860 was heavily altered by Peirce with a pen dipped in ink different from that of the main text (brown instead of black). This may indicate that R 860 was composed at some earlier time in 1893, and then recycled for

use in the full lecture, since portions of R 955 are also in brown ink. As a whole, the entire document has a complex compositional history. A number of paragraphs were heavily altered and then deleted to be rewritten on fresh isolated sheets that ended up scattered in other folders. Page R 860: 18, where the transition to the second part begins, is followed by no less than seven competing sequences of pages. The paragraphs of CP 6.492–93 are part of the first sequence, while those of CP 1.141–46 constitute the first half of the sixth sequence, which means that the *Collected Papers* does not provide the most mature version of some parts of the text.

This most mature version consists of a reconstructed sequence of sixty-seven pages, reassembled from five Robin manuscripts (S104, 860, 855, 1574, and 955).<sup>4</sup>

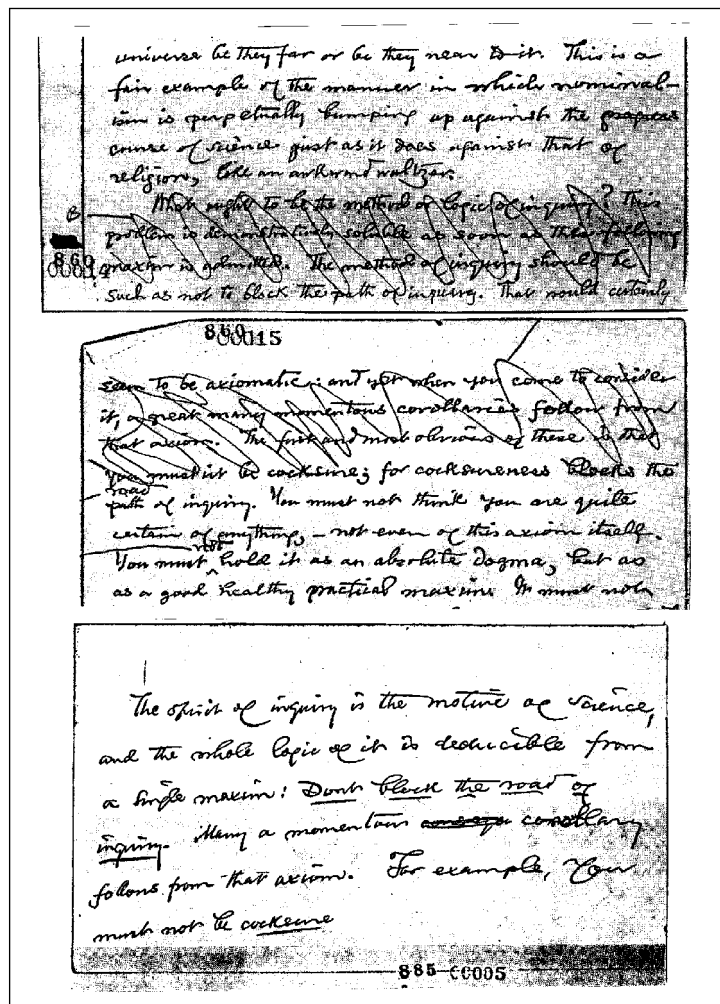


Fig. 1 shows how Peirce deleted the bottom of R 860:14 and the top of R 860:15, and then rewrote the transition between the two pages on a fresh sheet, which later got separated, and was retrieved in R 885:5.

# IN THE WORKS

The text of the second part (R 955) was written at two different times, as shown by the two distinct handwriting qualities (one with regular strokes, the other more emphatic) found in its different sections. Such a *mélange* confirms Peirce's practice of recycling older texts into new ones. Two sections of the text, one in each "hand," discuss the principle of continuity, and Peirce's timing indicates that they were to be read in succession. The lecture also has two different endings, one in the regular hand and thus composed earlier,<sup>5</sup> and the other in the emphatic hand<sup>6</sup>; the latter, although unfinished, was clearly intended to replace the former. Neither is timed (the "70" minute mark occurs earlier), and the first one, though superseded by the second, provides a much richer ending to the

lecture as it not only discusses Darwinian evolution (where the second stops), but also Lamarckian and mechanical evolutions, and then proceeds to talk about spontaneity, law, matter as mind, habit-taking in the universe, personality, synechism, faith, love, telepathy, afterlife, and the immortality of the soul. Given its deep interest, this alternative ending will be published separately in W9.

What evidence do we have for dating ["Scientific Fallibilism"] (as we have decided to name the full lecture) summer 1893 instead of c. 1896 or c. 1897? First, the physical evidence. The handwriting is consistent with 1892-93 documents, a time when Peirce's script abandons some of the looseness and roundedness characteristic of his 1886-90 writings to become slightly more angular and compact (a tendency that will increase until the end of the 1890s). The different papers used (Peerless Record watermark, or 7 7/8" x 9 3/4" paper size) match other documents of the period. We have also found a Century Club letterhead sheet containing an approximate outline of the first part of the lecture, the back of which is inscribed with the roughly penciled date "1893 June 17."<sup>7</sup>

Second, the textual evidence. The fourth sheet in R 860 contains the deleted sentence "A most flagrant offender is a German writer whose book has just been translated, Dr. Ernst Mach." Thomas J. McCormack's translation of Mach's book,<sup>8</sup> to which Peirce heavily contributed, was published by the Open Court after 28 June 1893, the date of the translator's preface. Unless Peirce's statement was anticipatory, R 860 could thus be

dated July or August 1893. One of Peirce's leitmotifs throughout the lecture is his attack against the "cocksureness" of infallibilists and his defense of fallibilism. Such concerns, and terminology, surface elsewhere in 1893: in Peirce's 9 April letter to Carus criticizing the latter for his "homiletic writing to the *Open Court*"; in Peirce's third "Critic of Arguments" paper,<sup>9</sup> received by Carus on 4 May (a misunderstanding prevented its publication in the *Open Court*); in Peirce's "Reply to the Necessitarians" (a long riposte to Carus's criticisms), which appeared in the *Monist* in July and on which Peirce had toiled during the winter; in his "What is Christian Faith?" published in the *Open Court*, also in July; in his *Nation* review, published in early August, of George M. Gould's *The Meaning and Method of Life: A Search for Religion in Biology*; and in his proposed table of contents for his multivolume work *The Principles of Philosophy*, composed in December.

What could have been the occasion for this lecture? The extant correspondence is silent on the matter. There is no trace of any particular invitation made to Peirce in 1893 to deliver such a lecture, and no trace of anyone commenting on its performance. Peirce certainly expected to deliver it, since he took great pains to ready it for oral presentation. But since his timing stops at minute seventy, while the text goes on for another twenty minutes' worth without coming to a definite end, it may also be that the projected lecture was canceled shortly before its scheduled presentation. Another possibility, though less likely, is that Peirce wanted simply to add a philosophical lecture to a collection of lectures he was ready to give at a moment's notice. By the end of 1892, he had already advertised for three such lectures, one on Pythagoras, one on the Constellations, and a fictional work initially titled "Thessalian Topography" (to appear in W8). In June 1893, though to no avail, Peirce asked his friend John Fiske to suggest a good lecture bureau with a capable manager. Following *Nation* editor W. P. Garrison's advice, Peirce also applied in July for a lectureship to the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, but was turned down because there was no vacancy. A few weeks later he persuaded his brother James Mills to intercede with Daniel C.

*Continued at bottom of page 11*

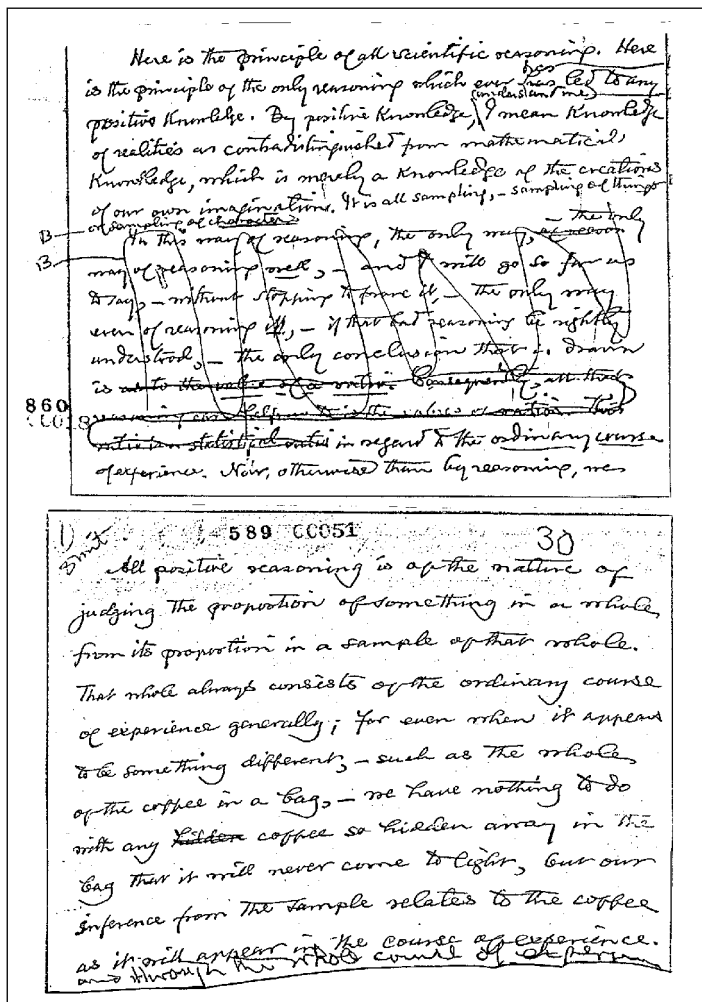


Fig. 2 shows the place in R 860:18 where Peirce decided to drop the rest of that text (deleting the bottom paragraph and interlining a transitional sentence at the end of the previous one) in order to move on to a rewritten second part of the lecture. R 589:51 begins the last of seven alternate sequences, and bears the "30" minute mark.

---

## BOOK NOTES

---

indeterminacy. Chapter 3 applies many of these Peircean concepts to identifying universalist tendencies present in a number of Latin American artistic and literary works. The last chapter shows how Peirce's philosophy is indispensable to understanding the contemporary world, and attacks postmodernism's pretension to have gotten rid of the illusions of universalization. Zalamea shows how such a claim harbors a logical fallacy, and opposes to it Peirce's "Einsteinian turn," that of having made it possible for universals to exist without absolutes.

---

### *The Peirce Seminar Papers: Essays in Semiotic Analysis, Vol. 3*

Michael Shapiro (ed.)  
Peter Lang, 1998, 123 pp.  
ISBN 0-8204-3142-7 (hardback), \$39.95

This is the Jakobson Centenary Volume in Shapiro's rich and illuminating series devoted to semiotics from a Peircean standpoint. Volume 3 includes papers by Shapiro, Edna Andrews, Paul Friedrich, Carol Hult, Roberta Kevelson, and T. L. Short. (Peirce is dealt with by Shapiro, Kevelson, and Short.) Shapiro opens the book by pointing out that among the debts linguists owe to Jakobson is the championing of Peirce as "a genuine and bold forerunner of structural linguistics." But Shapiro goes on to show that Jakobson

tended to treat Peirce as a historical figure, a forerunner, and not as a continuing source of fresh insight and untapped potential. Jakobson glimpsed Peirce's importance but never fully understood Peirce's semiotic enterprise. Short elaborates on this assessment in his contribution, "Jakobson's Problematic Appropriation of Peirce." Short's critique of Jakobson not only sharpens the differences in the views of these two important thinkers, but, in doing so, Short illuminates Peirce's semiotics from the standpoint of linguistics and, rather unexpectedly, illuminates Peirce's teleology. Peirceans will find Short's piece worth the price of the volume.

---

### *Reading Peirce Reading*

Richard A. Smyth  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.,  
1997, ix + 327 pp.  
ISBN 0-8476-8432-6 (cloth), \$89.00  
ISBN 0-8476-8433-4 (paper), \$28.95

In this interesting book, Smyth examines several of Peirce's most important early writings from the standpoint of what they reveal about Peirce's own reading of the history of philosophy. Smyth probes the first two articles of Peirce's 1868 *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* series and then the opening articles of Peirce's 1878 *Popular Science Monthly* series for what they

reveal about Peirce's reading of Mill, Kant, and Descartes, among others. His findings are illuminating. Smyth's work helps locate Peirce's philosophy within the evolution of modern thought but, more broadly, it sheds helpful light on the origins of pragmatism.

---

### *On Peirce*

Cornelis de Waal  
Wadsworth, 2001, 91 pp.  
ISBN 0-534-58376-8 (paper), \$14.95

If you have ever thought it would be helpful to have a compact treatment of Peirce that covers all the main points without the usual exciting but distracting sideshows, De Waal's *On Peirce* is the book you had in mind. It is organized after Peirce's own classification of the sciences and is divided into short, manageable sections that present concise but excellent summaries of Peirce's rich ideas. De Waal's aim is modest: "to make accessible the key elements of Peirce's thought and to bring them in relation to one another." He has succeeded admirably and has given us a very readable book that will surprise even longtime Peirce scholars with the clarity it brings to Peirce's full system of thought and with how well it positions readers to relate Peirce's ideas to contemporary issues. This book is perfect for the classroom.

---

## ANOTHER PEIRCE BOOK LOCATED: BOWEN'S *TREATISE ON LOGIC*

Nathan Houser, PEP director, and Albert Lewis, associate editor, recently visited *Collected Papers* editor Paul Weiss at his home in Washington, D.C. As Lewis was examining the centenarian philosopher's extensive personal library, he discovered an old logic book, Francis Bowen's *Treatise on Logic, or the Laws of Pure Thought, Comprising Both the Aristotelic and Hamiltonian Analyses of Logical Forms, and Some Chapters of Applied Logic* (Cambridge: Sever and Francis, 1864). Francis Bowen (1811–90) is no longer well-known today, but in his day, as Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity (1853–89), he was for several decades Harvard's principal philosophy professor. As such, he was one of Peirce's important

teachers, for whom the 20-year-old Charles seems to have nurtured a mixture of respect and contempt. In *The Rise of American Philosophy* (Yale University Press, 1977), p. 28, Bruce Kuklick tells us that as a historian of modern philosophy Bowen has had no superior at Harvard; that his writing was penetrating, deft, and witty; that he was a shrewd and able defender of the philosophic underpinnings of Unitarianism; that he left his mark on Chauncey Wright, Charles Peirce, and William James; and that the principal reason why Bowen fell into oblivion can be traced back to his rejection of Darwinism.

The first appearance of Bowen in Peirce's writings is found in an amusing marginal remark Peirce scribbled in his

tenth senior composition, an essay assigned by Bowen and titled "Analysis of Genius," due 19 March 1859 (W1: 25–30). In the course of the essay Peirce started using the word "faculty" in a special sense, and in order to remind his reader, Bowen, of this special sense throughout, he decided to "write the word in blue ink through the remainder of the forensic, to avoid introducing a general abuse of the term." At this point, no doubt well after he received the essay back, Peirce added an asterisk, to which the following marginal remark corresponded: "the fun of this consisted in the fact that Bowen was color blind." In another remark added to working notes for this composition Peirce wrote that De Morgan called Bowen an "obscure metaphysical

*Continued at top of page 11*

---

## RESEARCH CENTERS AND RESOURCES

---

Readers are invited to submit short descriptions (up to 250 words) of research facilities or resources that support research that relates to Peirce or his philosophy.

---

### THE UQAM PH.D. PROGRAM IN SEMIOTICS

The Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) is one of a very few universities that offer a Ph.D. program in semiotics proper. Implemented in 1979, the program provides teaching and research activities in most of the prominent fields of semiotics, with a strong emphasis on Peirce's thought. It is jointly administered by the departments of Literary Studies, Philosophy, Communication and Art History. As of today, sixty degrees have been awarded for dissertations on literature, philosophy, dramatic art, cinema, architecture and other fields considered from a semiotic point of view. One of its specific features is that it includes, in addition to more conventional courses, credited research activities which allow students actively to participate in current research bearing on contemporary trends in semiotics. The program has two formats: a longer version (120 credits) for students without an M.A. and a shorter one (90 credits) for those who have an M.A. in a relevant discipline. In addition to regular professors at UQAM, external resources are available, from other Canadian and non-Canadian universities (including IUPUI). The program will soon be implemented also at the State University of Bahia (UNEB, Salvador, Brazil). Dissertations may be written in English.

*For further information contact François Latraverse at [latraverse.francois@uqam.ca](mailto:latraverse.francois@uqam.ca).*

### THE PEIRCE–WITTGENSTEIN RESEARCH GROUP OF UQAM

The Peirce–Wittgenstein Research Group was formed quite spontaneously in 1996, when François Latraverse (its director) and some students realized, while discussing the development of semiotics, that a true comparison of Peirce and Wittgenstein was sorely needed. Since then, the group has brought together professors and students (mostly from the Ph.D. program in semiotics) whose objective is to analyze the thought of the two philosophers on the specific points where they shed light on each other, while trying to avoid a more polarized reading of one by the other. Through the years, more than a hundred meetings have taken place, on topics as varied as the relations between the role of the interpretant and “rule following,” ostensive definitions and indexicality, the notion of semiotic communities, the relations between

signs and the self, habit and language-games, and grammar and logic, to name but a few. The current academic year is devoted to a careful, step-by-step reading of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, which has *inter alia* established beyond reasonable doubt that a genuine triadic semiotic structure lies at the very heart of the book. Seven Ph.D. dissertations are actually related in some way or another to this bi-perspectival concern. An international conference was held in October 1999, bearing on some of the central topics of this comparison; the proceedings will soon be published at L'Harmattan, Paris.

*For further information contact François Latraverse at [latraverse.francois@uqam.ca](mailto:latraverse.francois@uqam.ca).*

### THE PRAGMATISM ARCHIVE

The Pragmatism Archive, located with the philosophy department at Oklahoma State University, houses a world-class collection of materials by and about pragmatists and other American philosophers. The Archive presently contains over one thousand books and more than twenty thousand photocopied essays and articles, and it continues to grow at a fast pace. The collection includes most of the published works of the major and minor pragmatists from Peirce to Putnam. But the Archive's greatest strength is its vast resources for studying the history of exegetical and critical work on pragmatism from its inception to the present. The Archive is accessible year-round to researchers for short- or long-term visits. Students completing theses or dissertations are especially welcome; the Archive does offer research grants for dissertation preparation. The Pragmatism Archive supports undergraduate and graduate courses in pragmatism and American philosophy for the B.A. and M.A. philosophy programs and the B.A. in American Studies at Oklahoma State University. The Pragmatism Archive also sponsors lectures and seminars given by visiting faculty working in American philosophy and American Studies. Details of the Archive's contents, resources, accessibility, and grants are online at [www.pragmatism.org/archive/index.htm](http://www.pragmatism.org/archive/index.htm).

*Contact the Pragmatism Archive Director, Dr. John Shook, Philosophy Department, 308 Hanner Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-5064. Phone: (405) 744-6090; e-mail: [jshook@pragmatism.org](mailto:jshook@pragmatism.org).*

---

*“Indianapolis Peirce Seminar” continued from page 3*

State), discussed the phenomenological and metaphysical functions of Peirce's categories. Tom Short gave a new interpretation of the “Fixation of Belief” paper in a lecture titled “Peirce's Assassins,” in which he responded to Cheryl Misak's

approach. Mathias Girel (Université Paris–I Panthéon–Sorbonne) gave the presentation “Belief and conduct: Peirce and the pragmatists,” in which he examined Peirce's reactions to how James, Royce, Schiller, and Dewey viewed his pragmatic

maxim. The most recent speaker, Justus Lentsch (University of Hannover), also discussed Peirce's pragmatic maxim in his lecture “Pragmatic Patterns in Peirce's Inferentialism: On Some Aspects of the Pragmatic Maxim.”

*“Another Peirce Book” continued from page 9*

writer” (R 1118: 3). This fun, however, took place before the appearance of the book mentioned above, a book which ought to retain our attention because, although it was published after he graduated from Harvard, Peirce was intimately acquainted with it.

Indeed, the copy discovered by Lewis on Weiss’s shelves appears originally to have belonged to Peirce’s younger brother Ben (Benjamin Mills Peirce, who died prematurely in 1870), who probably had to study Bowen’s textbook in his senior year at Harvard (1864). The inside front and back covers of the book are inscribed with Ben’s name, in ink and in pencil. The book otherwise contains a large number of penciled marginalia, all of which appear to be in Charles Peirce’s hand, not his brother’s. One of them, inscribed at the top of chapter 11 (on “Demonstrative Reasoning and Deductive Evidence”), says, “Mr. Bowen tells me today (Nov. 23, 1866) that the doctrine of this chapter is the only one to which he lays peculiar claim. C. S. P.” Presumably, therefore, Ben gave Charles his copy of the book, which Peirce read with great attention in 1866, and had occasion to talk about with Bowen himself.

Most of Peirce’s marginalia are quite critical of Bowen, challenging the accuracy of his knowledge of the history of logic

(especially medieval), blaming him for making too much of Hamilton, pointing out the insufficiency of a number of logical reasonings, and accusing Bowen of not understanding induction. The remarks are written spiritedly, just as one would expect of a confident young man proud that his own knowledge had begun to surpass that of his professor. In his seventh Lowell Lecture (October–November 1866), Peirce associated Bowen with other New Englanders “having a peculiar genius for philosophy,” such as Edwards, Channing, Parker, Bushnell, Emerson, James, and Abbot, a “list of names very creditable both individually and for the variety of minds they show” (W1: 455). Six years later, in an 1872 *Nation* review of educational textbooks, Peirce wrote less sympathetically that “the work of Professor Bowen, a convenient though not very intelligent compend of the logic of Hamilton, Thomson, etc., is nearly without value in educating the mind” (W3: 4). However that may be, Weiss’s copy is quite valuable in educating our mind about the young Peirce’s logical upbringing, and in making us aware that deeper study of Bowen’s teaching may reveal more about Peirce’s early philosophical development (for one thing, Bowen rejected Kant’s transcendentalism). Paul Weiss gave the book to Nathan Houser, who deposited it in the Max H. Fisch Library at the Peirce Edition Project.

*“Scientific Fallibilism” continued from page 5*

Gilman, the president of Johns Hopkins University, and to write him that Peirce was “very desirous of getting the chance of giving a course of lectures this autumn.” A reply, if there was one, would certainly have been negative. Peirce, at any rate, was seriously considering lecturing as a way to make a living.

Although we remain ignorant of the occasion that prompted Peirce to compose the lecture, an interesting remark buried under heavy deletions on the eleventh sheet of R 860 does at least suggest a lofty and surprising purpose. As part of his demonstration that nominalism continually bumps up violently on metaphysical grounds against science’s positive doctrines while realism offers room “for anything that science may find reason to conclude,” Peirce makes the point that Newton’s contention that time and space are real entities was the result of an inference founded on observed facts, one of them being absolute velocity of rotation. Foucault’s pendulum experiment proved that motion was not merely something relative, and consequently absolute motion, absolute space, and absolute time are real. Gauss and Riemann, Peirce continues, agreed that observation alone, and not metaphysical preconceptions, could ascertain the reality of absolute motion and decide whether two balls, propelled together in the same direction perpendicular to the line joining them, would tend to either approach toward or recede from each other. Peirce shared that belief, as testifies the following transcription of a deleted passage (ignoring its alterations): “But I have ascertained that there are several fundamental facts of physics which have hitherto baffled all explanations,—which are perfectly explained by supposing those balls to recede, and that this theory predicts another fact, hitherto unsuspected, which is found to be verified by observation. Other phenomena are predicted by the theory; and my object in giving these lectures is to collect the means to make the necessary experiments for testing the predictions.” Accordingly, the present lecture was to be the first of a series intended, at least initially, to bring Peirce the financial means not

only to prove experimentally the reality of absolute motion, absolute space, and absolute time, but also to vindicate realism over nominalism as the only philosophy capable of animating effectively the spirit of inquiry. With this program in mind, Peirce devoted the rest of the lecture to show how the nominalists’ cocksureness was sure to block the path of inquiry, while the realists’ non-skeptical fallibilism opened it, notably by contrasting the fallibilist and infallibilist representations of three of the leading conceptions of science—force, continuity, and evolution.

*André De Tienne*

## NOTES

1. CP 6.492–93 and 1.141–75.
2. R followed by a number indicates a manuscript listed in Robin’s *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*.
3. *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2:413n. 23.
4. These sixty-seven pages are (using the ISP numbering; i.e., numbers Bates-stamped on an electroprint copy of the microfilm in 1974 by members of the Institute for Studies in Pragmatism): RS 104: 109; R 860: 2; R 885: 4; R 1574: 655; R 860: 3–6, 8, 7, 9–14; R 885: 5; R 860: 15–18; R 589: 11–14; R 955: 7, 9–11, 13–40, 43–52. This sequence has only one gap: one or two pages appear to be missing between R 860: 7 and 9, given that the textual transition between the two is somewhat questionable, and given that the “10” minute mark is inscribed on p. 7 while the “15” minute mark, deleted on p. 9, is restored on p. 10, leaving too short a page interval for a five-minute duration. The six alternative sequences that followed R 860: 18 before they were superseded are reconstructed as follows. First (original) sequence: R 860: 19–21, R 1573: 268 (= R 278: 107); second sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 8–9; third sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 4–7; fourth sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 3 (incomplete); fifth sequence: R 955: 57–58, R 890: 7; sixth sequence: R 955: 2–6, 12, R 865: 6–12.
5. R 955: 41–42, R 954: 7–16.
6. R 955: 40–52.
7. R 1347: 6. An outline of the second part of the lecture is found in R 1009: 32.
8. Ernst Mach, *The Science of Mechanics*, La Salle, IL: The Open Court Pub. Co., 1893.
9. R 590: 27–42.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

We can stop holding our collective breath once again: NEH has offered to fund the Peirce Edition for two more years beginning in November 2001 (continuing from our present grant). We have been awarded \$100,000 plus \$25,000 in matching funds. This will enable us to continue our production without interruption. We are grateful to NEH for this recognition and vote of confidence and we are thankful to everyone who has supported our work (and especially those of you, whoever you are, who served as referees for our NEH grant application).

I am also very glad to report that the William James and John Dewey letters editions were funded—a good sign for those of us interested in pragmatism and classical American philosophy. Another promising sign is the popular success of Louis Menand's new book, *The Metaphysical Club*. This is a book most readers of this newsletter will want to read—not as a work of original scholarship but as an engaging account of the birth of pragmatism. Peirce scholars will be unhappy with many of Menand's characterizations of Peirce and with his skewing of the history of pragmatism to favor a story that tends to minimize Peirce's role—see Susan Haack's review of Menand's *Pragmatism: A Reader (New Criterion, Nov. 1997, pp. 67–70)* for a good idea of what Peirceans will object to—but I think we should pump up our *ataraxia* and admit that Menand has done us a favor. However much we may disagree with the specifics, he has succeeded in bringing the story of the birth of pragmatism vividly into the public consciousness, and Peirce is one of the group of four (along with Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., William James, and John Dewey) which he claims did more than any other group to prepare the American mind for the modern world following the spiritual and intellectual disruption of the Civil War and the ensuing industrialization.

Menand had to go out on many thin limbs to write a book like this, and when specialists from different areas within American philosophy go seriously to work on his book, he'll find that some of those limbs won't hold him. In fact, I think it is fair to say that serious scholars will be quite distressed with the confusion Menand's chapter on "Pragmatisms" will inculcate in unsuspecting readers. Menand's dismissing of Peirce as a determinist, while praising James and Dewey for holding that "no conclusion is foregone" and for teaching that "every problem is amenable to the exercise of . . . intelligent action," is little short of a scandal (see Menand, p. 372). I suppose it is Peirce's conception of the movement of thought toward "concrete reasonableness" that leads Menand to tag Peirce as a determinist, but as Dewey pointed out in his essay on Peirce reprinted in *Chance, Love, and Logic*, concrete reasonableness consists of habits of action developed over lifetimes of experience in the world—if anything, this conception reveals Peirce's belief in progress and his optimism about our capacity to learn, notwithstanding the uncertainty we must always acknowledge. But despite its shortcomings, the book brings much-needed attention to the origins and founders of pragmatism, and Menand's skillfully written tale persuasively conveys the importance of this crucial episode in the development of American culture. I only hope that Peirce scholars will take this

opportunity to help educate the public about parts of Peirce misrepresented or neglected by Menand.

As this issue of the newsletter goes to press, our editing work is progressing apace, with W8 well on its way to completion by the end of the year and with good headway on W9 and W10. We expect to publish W9 in 2003 and W10 in 2004. As I mentioned in my last report, we are exploring with François Latraverse's group in Montreal and with Helmut Pape's group in Germany how to set up external centers to work on W7 (the *Century Dictionary* volume) and W20 (the 1903 Lowell Lectures volume). In April, Professor Latraverse spent a week at PEP with his students Benoît Favreault and Marc Guastavino, studying the *Century Dictionary* materials and learning about our methods; Professor Pape will visit PEP in June.

As reported on the front page of this issue, Don D. Roberts has retired from the chairmanship of PEP's Board of Advisors. Professor Roberts has been such a key participant in PEP's work over the years that we were much relieved when he agreed to continue as a member of the board's Executive Committee. We were further relieved when we learned from Dean Saatkamp that Thomas L. Short had agreed to follow Roberts as Chairman of the Board. I may occasionally relinquish this page, or part of it, to Chairman Short so he can communicate his thoughts and concerns to our readers. At present, he has turned his attention to PEP's need for an endowment to stabilize our production capacity and to ensure the continuation of a research center built around our accumulated resources. One other item of news concerning the Board of Advisors: Jim Van Evra, from the University of Waterloo, has been appointed to its membership. Professor Van Evra's specialty is the history of logic and science. We are delighted that he has agreed to serve.

I want to conclude my report for this issue by congratulating another of our board members, Paul Weiss, for completing his 100th year! (See front-page article.) He celebrated his birthday on 19 May with a party in Washington, D.C. What is so special about Professor Weiss is not *just* that he is 100 years old, but that he is beginning his 101st year writing the third book of a four-book series. What an inspiration to us all! We should remember that it was Weiss's work with Charles Hartshorne on the first six volumes of the Harvard edition of Peirce's writings that was the effective beginning of Peirce Studies. We Peirceans are in his debt.

*Nathan Houser*

*PEIRCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER, Volume 4, No. 1*

© 2001

Editor: Tara Morrall

The Newsletter is a publication of the Peirce Edition Project.

IUPUI

Cavanaugh Hall 545

425 University Boulevard

Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140

Telephone: (317) 274-2173

Fax: (317) 274-2170

E-mail: [cpeirce@iupui.edu](mailto:cpeirce@iupui.edu)

[www.iupui.edu/~peirce](http://www.iupui.edu/~peirce)