

Charles Peirce as Postmodern Philosopher

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By definition, "logic of postmodernism" would appear to be a contradiction in terms: philosophic postmodernism emerged as a critique of attempts to found philosophy on some principle of reasoning and to found reasoning on some formal guidelines for how we ought to think. Nonetheless, there are two reasons why Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) ought to be labeled the logician of postmodernism — the philosopher who, more than any other, etched out the normative guidelines for postmodern thinking. The first reason is that Peirce attempted to accomplish the impossible, or at least the contradictory. He launched his philosophic career with a logical critique of "Cartesianism" — his label for the modernist attempt to found philosophy on some formal principles of reasoning. He then attempted to replace the principles of Cartesian reasoning with a set of anti-modernist principles that proved themselves to be as modernist as their contraries. The second reason for giving Peirce his label is that his failures to accomplish the impossible engendered in him something he was unable to achieve wilfully: a habit of self-critical yet self-affirming thinking that was neither modernist nor anti-modernist but, rather, a disciplined variety of postmodern thinking. In his later years, Peirce began to sketch out the principles of philosophic postmodernism by describing features of his own emergent habit of thinking. This sketching comes close enough to what I would label a logic of postmodernism — where the method of logic is as postmodern as the thinking it describes.

As you may have surmised already, I do not believe Peirce's postmodernism is something one can study straight-on. His postmodernism was not a position or a place, but a process, of which his modernist struggles were an essential part. We must then begin our study with Peirce's early modernism and then move forward, to see how his mature thought emerged as a way of completing and correcting his modernist project. After offering a few comments on Peirce's comparably complex life, I will therefore begin by reviewing Peirce's early critique of

philosophic modernism. His own modernism is displayed in this technical critique — which means, dear reader, that you will be confronted immediately with some rhetorical irony as well as with a strong dose of logical and epistemological argumentation. Relief will come slowly, as I then examine selected features of the habit of thinking which emerged from out of the contradictory tendencies in Peirce's early work. Making a postmodern move in my own method of analysis, I will adopt Peirce's habit of thinking as a prototype for postmodern philosophy — suggesting that the norms of postmodern thinking must be embedded in the intellectual drama of certain ways of living. In conclusion, I will reinterpret the claims of Peirce's mature philosophy as descriptions of selected features of his postmodern thinking. Among the topics considered will be Peirce's claims about the self-correcting character of pragmatic reasoning; about the reality of chance, brute force and love as principles of cosmic evolution; and about the communal context of philosophic inquiry.

A few prefatory words, then, about some of the complexities of Peirce's life. First, the theological complexities. The dominant influence in Peirce's early life was his father, the eminent Harvard mathematician Benjamin Peirce. Benjamin was a devout Unitarian who, in the words of Peirce biographer Joseph Brent, “taught mathematics as a kind of religious worship.”¹ Charles retained from his father's teaching a profound conviction that we live in God's creation and that, through this creation, we have immediate contact with God, or, as Peirce phrased it at age 24 to a philosophical audience, with reality itself:

When the conclusion of our age comes, and skepticism and materialism have done their perfect work, we shall have a far greater faith than ever before. For then man will see God's wisdom and mercy not only in every event of his own life, but in that of the gorilla, the lion, the fish, the polyp, the tree, the crystal, the grain of dust, the atom.²

On the other hand, Benjamin did not engender in Charles the need to participate, in a disciplined fashion, in any particular hermeneutical or ecclesiastical system. Thus Charles wrote, near the end of his life:

I abominate the unitarians myself, because all through my boyhood

I heard in our unitarian family nothing but angry squabbles between Calvinists and Unitarians, and though the later were less absurd than the former, I thought their church was based on mere denial and when I grew up I joined the Episcopal church, without believing anything but the general essence and spirit of it. *That* I did and do profoundly believe.³

Peirce's love of irony and his tendency simultaneously to affirm and to deny, or at least to criticize, are displayed as well in these excerpts from his entry into the Harvard Class-Book of 1860:

1839 September 10. Tuesday. Born....

1844 Fell Violently in love with Miss W. and commenced my education....

1847 Began to be most seriously and hopelessly in love. Sought to drown my care by taking up the subject of Chemistry — an antidote which long experience enables me to recommend as sovereign....

1850 Wrote a 'History of Chemistry.'...

1853 Set up for a fast man and became a bad schoolboy....

1856 SOPHOMORE. Gave up the idea of being a fast man and undertook the pursuit of pleasure.

1857 JUNIOR. Gave up the pursuit of pleasure and undertook to enjoy life.

1858 SENIOR. Gave up enjoying life and exclaimed 'Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!'

1859 Wondered what I would do in life.

Appointed Aid on the Coast Survey. Went to Main and then to Louisiana.⁴

Peirce did not have the reputation of being disciplined in his personal life. In his wife's words, "All life from boyhood it seems as though everything conspired to spoil him with indulgence." One of the results was an uneven employment record.

Peirce's first expertise was in chemistry. In 1863 he graduated from the Lawrence Scientific School with a B.S. *summa cum laude* in Chemistry, and he continued throughout his life to call himself a chemist. Until the 1890s, however, his gainful employment was with the Coast and Geodetic Survey, for whom he served as administrator and conducted gravimetric and other basic research. At the same time, through all these years, Peirce's central intellectual foci were logic and philosophy, and his first interest was to teach these fields in the university. Peirce made major contributions to numerous subfields in the logic and philosophy of science, in formal and mathematical logic, in topology, in semiotics, in linguistics and in epistemology; he was most widely recognized as the founder of pragmatism. Nevertheless, contentious and undisciplined as he was, he was unable to procure a permanent teaching position.⁵

Even William James, perhaps Peirce's truest friend and admirer, was unable to convince Harvard administrators that this, one of the greatest American philosophers, merited a place on their faculty. James did succeed, however, in securing Peirce's scholarly reputation as the founder of pragmatism. In an 1898 address to the Philosophical Union at the University of California, James said,

I will seek to define with you merely what seems to be the most likely direction in which to start upon the trail of truth. Years ago this direction was given to me by an American philosopher whose home is in the East, and whose published words, few as they are and scattered in periodicals, are not fit expression of his powers. I refer to Mr. Charles S. Peirce, with whose very existence as a philosopher I dare say many of you are unacquainted. He is one of the most original of contemporary thinkers; and the principle of practicalism — or pragmatism, as he called it, when I first heard him enunciate it at Cambridge in the early '70's — is the clue or compass by following which I find myself more and more confirmed in believing we may keep our feet upon the proper trail.⁶

In the early 1870's, Peirce and James discussed pragmatism in a Metaphysical Club that met in Cambridge, Massachusetts for about a decade.⁷ Peirce laid the foundations for his pragmatism several years earlier with his first published critique of modernism.

I. The Critique of Modernism: Peirce's Anti-Cartesianism

In a series of papers published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* in 1867-68,⁸ Peirce sought to uncover the fundamental error that misled modern philosophers since Descartes into fearing they had to discover the foundation of all reasoning and then into believing they had found it. Peirce believed that this search for foundations reasserted platonic idealism in a new, subjective key, leading the philosophers of modernity into a war with the everyday. He believed that, from Descartes on, they rightfully objected to the ecclesiastic elitism of their scholastic progenitors, but then wrongfully replaced it with an elitism of their own — preferring genius over hoary learning, mathematical imagination over saintliness, the systematizing capacities of a few individual reasoners over the organic life of a community of inquirers. Peirce did not object to the need to refashion ecclesial authority, or to the benefits of genius, imagination, and system. But he argued that these are gifts to be offered in the service of everyday life and everyday community, rather than as alternatives. Without idealizing the everyday and without calling for any atavistic returns to "a time when," he came as critic of the modern intellectual rather than of ordinary life. He called for the most sophisticated development of intellectual life, but in the service of a master who valued such a life only for its contributions to our worldly existence, or at least for its potential contributions to how we will ultimately exist in this world. Later, we may name this master "God," but not in a way that is overly influenced by classical-modern spiritualism or spirit-body dualism. For now, it is best to keep this master unnamed and to take note only of the effect of Peirce's references to it. This effect is to correct what Peirce considered the hubris of modern conceptions of the self.

According to Peirce, modern philosophy tended to encourage the egoism he saw manifested in the idolatries of his age: individualism (displayed, for example, in his scholarly peers' vainglorious defense of unverified and even untestable pet theories), economic materialism (the adoration of Mammon), social Darwinism (the anti-gospel of a societal survival of the

fittest), and — his most general term of opprobrium — "nominalism." In fact, he took nominalism to underlie all the other negative tendencies of modernism.

In the great medieval controversies, the realists (such as Duns Scotus) believed that our ideas of universals correspond to something real, while the nominalists (such as William of Ockham) did not, claiming, instead, that only individual entities were real and that universals were merely names (nomen) we used to talk about collections of individuals. For many modern philosophers, this controversy seemed an empty and interminable dispute. According to Peirce, however, modernists belittled the dispute only because they had long since opted for the nominalist position, which they treated as if it were self-evident. In other words, he treated the medieval debate as if it were still raging, albeit in different terms, and as if "nominalism" referred to the epistemological doctrine that underlay all the other tendencies of modernism ("the nominalistic *Weltanschauung* has become incorporated into what I will venture to call the very flesh and blood of the average modern mind"⁹). Labeling himself a "scholastic realist," Peirce then set out to resuscitate Scotus' doctrine as his weapon against modernism. Playing the game of philosophic debate, he confronted modern philosophy in its own terms, offering logical, epistemological and empirical arguments against the claims of modern nominalism. Peirce's most convincing arguments were pragmatic ones, however. Undercutting the terms of philosophic debate, these did not neatly fit into the theater of scholastic disputation, and Peirce did not offer them explicitly for another ten years.

In his 1867-68 papers, Peirce offered what I will call his non-pragmatic argumentation. His argument was based on the premise that nominalists question the reality of universals because, assuming that we acquire our universal beliefs on the authority of parents, teachers, ecclesial leaders and so on, they question the validity of such authority. Rather than trust such authorities, nominalists rely on immediate human judgments — perceptions, sensations, intuitions — which, they believe, offer us knowledge of individual entities, but not of any universals. Trusting immediate over learned knowledge, nominalists therefore tend to favor individuality over sociality, insight and genius over wisdom, and autonomy over relationship. Peirce concluded

that nominalist systems stand or fall on the strength of their explanations of how, in fact, we have immediate knowledge of the real world. He offered his non-pragmatic argumentation as a critique of such explanations.

According to Peirce, Descartes' intuitionism provided the prototype for modernist attempts to account for our capacity to know the world immediately. It was what Descartes considered the Archimedean point upon which to ground the modern project of philosophy.¹⁰ Peirce defined intuitionism as the claim that we have cognitions of objects outside of consciousness and uninfluenced by previous cognitions, and that we know, intuitively, that we have such knowledge independently of the influence of any previous knowledge. Peirce argued that "there is no evidence that we have this faculty [of knowing that we have intuitions uninfluenced by previous cognitions]; except that we seem to *feel* that we have it."¹¹ Were this feeling to serve as our Archimedean point, then it would itself have to deliver information about its authority as well as about whatever it is about. The very simplicity of feeling, however, precludes its fulfilling such a dual function. For Peirce, the claim *that* a feeling or an intuition is authoritative must therefore belong to subsequent interpretation, and not to the feeling or intuition itself.

Peirce argued that a more reasonable interpretation of the empirical evidence is that whatever *appears* to us to be an immediate intuition is itself the product of previous cognitions. He suggested we consider, for example,

the perception of two dimensions of space. This appears to be an immediate intuition. But if we were to *see* immediately an extended surface, our retinas must be spread out in an extended surface. Instead of that, the retina consists of innumerable needles pointing toward the light, and whose distances from one another are decidedly greater than the *minimum visible*. Suppose each of those nerve-points conveys the sensation of a little colored surface. Still, what we immediately see must even then be, not a continuous surface, but a collection of spots. Who could discover this by mere intuition? But all the analogies of the nervous system are against the supposition that the excitation of a single

nerve cell can produce an idea as complicated as that of space, however small. If the excitation of no one of these nerve points can immediately convey the impression of space, the excitation of all cannot do so.... [H]ence, the sum of these impressions is a necessary condition of any perception produced by the excitation of all...¹²

As additional examples, he suggested we consider the way our visual field is uninterrupted by the blind spot which appears in the middle of the retina; the way we hear pitch independently of the aural impressions which contribute to it; or the way we perceive the duration of time: "That the course of time should be immediately felt is obviously impossible. For, in that case, there must be an element of this feeling at each instant. But in an instant there is no duration and hence no immediate feeling of duration."¹³ (Peirce's later arguments were consistent with the claims of Bergson, James, Husserl, Whitehead, and Heidegger that the feeling of duration is itself a duration. At this point, however, Peirce's accomplishment was merely critical. Having displayed the inadequacies of intuitionism, he tended to replace it with a conversely dogmatic logicism: the claim that, if we are to have any certainty, then the way we interpret cognitions must be guided by indubitable modes of reasoning, rather than by infallible modes of intuition.) Peirce adduced comparable evidences against the various corollaries of intuitionism, such as the claims that we have intuitive self-consciousness (even Kant knew that children lacked this)¹⁴ and a power of introspection (we lack an intuitive faculty of identifying elements of consciousness as "inner" or "outer") and, finally, a power to think without signs. Peirce concluded that "every thought is a sign," and, because signs are general, that "generals must therefore have a real existence."¹⁵ At this stage in his thinking, in other words, Peirce linked his critique of intuitionism with a reassertion of realism. He believed that, if there are no primary intuitions, then there must, at least, be primary modes of interpreting intuitions — what he would later call indubitable habits of belief, whose generality he would later identify with the generality of real signs or symbols.¹⁶

In sum, Peirce believed he had offered a critique of, and an alternative to, the nominalist foundation of modern philosophy. Having argued that intuitionism is ungrounded, he believed he had both removed the intellectual supports of modern individualism and offered good reasons in

support of its contrary: a kind of socialism and, underlying it, a kind of cognitivism. This latter is the claim that, if our knowledge is not about objects outside of consciousness, then it must be about previous knowledge.

In offering his cognitivist conclusions, however, Peirce reasserted a fundamental element of the nominalist argumentation he had sought to refute. In appearance, Peirce's cognitivism offered an alternative to the nominalists' subjectivism or self-reference. Having shown that intuitions are merely private, he concluded that non-private knowledge must be non-intuitional. Having defined intuitions as cognitions that refer directly to objects outside of consciousness, he concluded that non-intuitions are cognitions that refer only to other cognitions. But how, then, do cognitions refer to objects? Did Peirce not replace intuitionism with a "vicious conceptualism": a system of cognitions that refers only to itself the way each intuition refers only to itself? In the next stage of his work, Peirce introduced a mode of inquiry in terms of which he could identify the logical assumptions he had shared, in 1867, with the nominalists. While they offered contrary arguments, both the nominalists and he made use of the same method of argumentation, and the fallacy of modernist thinking lay in this *method*, not merely in the claims to which the method was applied. As we will see, Peirce called this the *a priori* method of thinking. For now, we may note that one of its leading principles is the law of excluded middle ("a" or "not a"). Both Peirce and the nominalists assumed that epistemological inquiry could be divided between mutually exclusive alternatives, in this case between the logical contraries "intuitionism" and "non-intuitionism." Following this method of reasoning, if intuitionism is false then its contrary must be true; in Peirce's argument, if intuitionism is false, then cognitivism is true, defined as non-intuitionism. Such a contrary represents a mere logical possibility, however, established on merely *a priori* grounds. We would have reason to expect that cognitivism, so defined, has as little to do with actual experience as intuitionism, so defined. Peirce's task, in the next stage of his work, was to search for an epistemological option that was neither intuitionist nor non-intuitionist, but rather some third something: intuitionism's logical contradictory, rather than its contrary.

I. The Critique of Modernism: Peirce's Early Pragmatism

In what would become his most famous series of papers, the "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" of 1877-78,¹⁷ Peirce developed a methodological critique of modernism. While Peirce's first arguments against intuitionism were epistemological and empirical, he now offered a critique of Descartes' method of argument itself: if Descartes' claim was not based on the facts of reason and experience, then it must have been based on something else. Rather than responding to nominalistic claims on their own terms, Peirce reduced them to their governing methods, or "guiding principles," and then evaluated them within a new taxonomy of what he called the "methods of fixing belief."¹⁸ Laying the groundwork for his emergent pragmatism, he said: before worrying out the details of nominalistic claims, let us not suppose that every claim we hear is meaningful within the terms we bring to it or even within the terms it purports to bring to us. Let us first ask: out of what environment of inquiry does it come to us?

Peirce nurtured this question through several years of spirited discussions in the Cambridge Metaphysical Club in which James first heard his ideas about pragmatism. In the Club, an informal group of lawyers (Nicholas St. John Green and at times Oliver Wendell Holmes and Joseph Warner), scientists (Chauncey Wright, Peirce himself), psychologists (James) and philosophers of religion and science (Francis Abbot and John Fiske) debated questions of morality, science, and religion after Darwin. Green introduced Peirce to the theories of Alexander Bain, the English psychologist, in particular the theory that "belief is 'that upon which a ... [person] is prepared to act.'"¹⁹ Peirce was struck by this notion and expanded it into the theory of doubt and belief on which he based his taxonomy of methods of fixing belief:

Our beliefs guide our desires and shape our actions.... The feeling of believing is a more or less sure indication of their being established in our nature some habit which will determine our actions.... Doubt is an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle

to free ourselves and pass into a state of belief, while the latter is a calm and satisfactory state which we do not wish to avoid, or to change to a belief in anything else....

The irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term this struggle *Inquiry*, though it must be admitted that this is sometimes not a very apt designation....

The irritation of doubt is the only immediate motive for the struggle to attain belief.... With the doubt ..., the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt it ends. Hence the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion.²⁰

On the basis of this theory, Peirce identified four prototypical methods of fixing belief in response to doubt, of which the third one underlies Cartesian intuitionism. Peirce said that the *method of tenacity* is simply "taking as an answer to a question any we may fancy, and constantly reiterating it to ourselves, dwelling on all which may conduce to that belief, and learning to turn with contempt and hatred from anything that might disturb it."²¹ Of course, this approach cannot hold its ground for very long in social practice. A primary method for fixing belief in the community is, instead, that of *authority*: to "let an institution be created which shall have for its object to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people, to reiterate them perpetually, and to teach them to the young; having at the same time power to prevent contrary doctrines from being taught, advocated or expressed." Peirce explained that, while this method has underwritten the development of strong, "priest-ridden states," it fails wherever citizens "possess a wider sort of social feeling." Observing the relativity of their inherited doctrines among the community of nations, these citizens suffer doubts about what they have learned on the basis of authority alone. They "further perceive that such doubts as these must exist in their minds with reference to every belief which seems to be determined by the caprice either of themselves or of those who originated the popular opinions." To settle these doubts, they appeal to a method of authoritative tenacity Peirce dubbed the "*a priori method*."

According to Peirce, the *a priori* method has, until now, been the darling of modern western philosophic tradition: it was anticipated by Plato and favored by Ockham, Descartes,

Leibniz, even Kant and Hegel.²² Proponents of this method say: "let the action of natural preferences be unimpeded and, under their influence let men, conversing together and regarding matters in different lights, gradually develop beliefs in harmony with natural causes." Let them, in other words, believe what appears to be consistent with what *they* take to be their natural dispositions. According to Peirce, Descartes' approach boils down to this method alone. Having, like the enlightened citizens, lost faith in the mere authority of scholastic tradition, Descartes turned, instead, to the authority of his own deepest inclinations, which seemed to lead him, irresistibly, to the beliefs that he did not doubt that he doubted, that he had an idea of a perfect Being who is perfect necessarily, and that that Being could not be a deceiver. In other words, if Descartes maintained his intuitionism independently of the empirical evidence, it is because he replaced scholastic authority with a new form of dogmatism. As restated in Susan Haack's very helpful formulation, Peirce believed that Descartes quieted his overgeneralized doubts (his "unwarranted skepticism") with an overstated certainty (an "unwarranted dogmatism").²³ Peirce argued that this method fails the way the method of authority failed: those who do not happen to share a given dogma will discover that dogmas, in general, may be relative to particular dispositions. Relativism does not, however, quiet our doubts.

This brings us to the turning point in Peirce's early pragmatism. By identifying the fallacy of modernism with *a priorism* in general rather than only with the intuitionist variety of *a priorism*, Peirce opened himself to his own criticism. He could now disclaim the cognitivism of his 1867-8 papers as another variety of *a priorism*, and he could replace it with something else. But with what? I do not believe that, deep down, he was yet certain, because *a priorism* remained as close to his heart as it was to Descartes', and, however much he saw its errors, he did not yet see very clearly how to avoid them. Thus, as I will explain in a moment, he argued strongly on behalf of *science*, defined in a new way. But his arguments for a new science tended to reinforce the dogmatic habits of modernism as much as they introduced postmodern paradigms. His pragmatism seemed to offer a method for undoing dogmatic habits, but, not yet fully realizing its force, he tended to promote pragmatism as if it were another, better way of

completing the modernist quest for *a priori* certainty. What else could he do? I believe the solution lay in his looking more carefully within, to discern precisely which of his tendencies encouraged his *a priorism* and which of them encouraged his pragmatism. If the solution did indeed lie within, then it took Peirce some thirty years to develop the epistemological tools he needed to get to know himself. For it was not until 1905 that Peirce made a clear break with his philosophic modernism.

Rather than lead you through all the ins and outs of Peirce's years of precise and yet equivocal argumentation, allow me to substitute a tally sheet of where, in his early pragmatism, his thinking led back to elements of modernism and where it pointed forward. The distinction between the backward and forward elements of Peirce's thinking will introduce a distinction to be made later between his modernism and postmodernism.

(1) *On the subject of science as a better method of fixing belief:*

Peirce's thinking led *forward* toward the view that, within its historical context, modernism is a sign of the failures of scholastic science and of the need for a new paradigm for conducting empirical inquiry. This means that modernists doubt the capacity of the Aristotelian-Church system to account for new discoveries in the natural world. To overcome the *a priorism* that they have asserted in place of scholastic authority, these modernists need, instead, to locate a method "by which our beliefs may be determined by nothing human, but by some external permanency — by something upon which our thinking has no effect." They are searching, in other words, for a new paradigm of science, based on the realist hypothesis that "there are Real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them; ... [which] Reals affect our senses according to regular, [knowable] laws," the investigation of which would lead anyone with sufficient experience and reason to true conclusions. This science would not proceed from induction to theory building (the intuitionist model), nor from theory to inferences deduced from it (the authoritarian model), but from hypothesis-making to the inductions through which they would be tested. Induction would be a way of calculating the probability that inquirers would experience the world in ways their hypotheses would lead them to expect.

Hypothesis-making would be a way of generating expectations about portions of experience that remain as yet incompletely considered in the traditions of science inherited by modernity. These expectations would remain, at the same time, consistent with those presuppositions of scientific tradition which remain unquestioned. The clearest prototype for this way of conducting science is to be found in the emergent practice of laboratory experimentalism. We have yet to identify the analogues of laboratory experimentalism within the varieties of empirical inquiry.

Peirce's thinking led *backward* toward the dogmatic view that this theory of science is not merely a corrective for modernism within the scholastic context of its complaints, but is, rather, the best possible model of how to conduct the enterprise of knowing. In this view, experimentalism is the answer to a series of foundational questions, among them, "If we offer hypotheses to extend knowledge beyond its present limits, on what are our hypotheses fundamentally grounded? How do we delimit the range of possibilities we might imagine?" Among the foundational answers Peirce offered are this one: "we have the good fortune of guessing correctly more often than chance would allow, because the human mind 'is strongly adapted to the comprehension of the world.'" (Peirce's foundational question is based on the modernist's assumption that, whenever we doubt or extend ourselves beyond the limits of traditional knowledge, we find ourselves stripped of normal, linguistic resources and left to confront nature itself, in the raw. We must then identify our ultimate source of knowledge: a plenum of pure possibility or else our own instincts and sensations in their pre-linguistic purity. In his answer — in this case, that our minds are adapted to the world — Peirce transformed an intriguing theory of evolutionary adaptation into the unnecessarily foundational claim that, when all else fails, our own instincts will display to us the fundamental laws of nature.²⁴ From the perspective of Peirce's postmodernism, the question need not arise in the first place, since our doubts leave intact a host of epistemic supports for inquiry, whose ultimate sources we cannot clearly identify.)

(2) *On the subject of how modernists should transform their dogmatisms into patterns of inquiry that may settle their doubts:*

Peirce introduced his pragmatism, formally, as a maxim about how we can make our ideas clear:

Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.²⁵

This pragmatic maxim meant different things, however, in Peirce's forward and backward thinking.

Peirce's thinking led *forward* to the view that the pragmatic maxim was directed specifically to modernists, offering them advice we might paraphrase this way: "You present as dogmas certain clear and distinct ideas about the world. Instead, you ought to ask yourselves either of two questions, both of which will give you the same answer. Ask from what practice of inquiry you have abstracted the ideas through which you present your dogmas. Or ask from what complex of observable behaviors you have abstracted your description of the objects signified by your dogmas. You will find that the practice of inquiry and the complex of observable behaviors are inseparable one from the other and that your dogmas are merely shorthand ways of drawing our attention to both of these. To overcome your dogmatism, go out now and tell us how the dogmas relate back to the practices and the complexes, what you specifically want to tell us about them, and what we have left to learn." Consider, for example, the nominalist dogma that we know only particulars. Applying the pragmatic maxim, nominalists might say that, in response to doubts about their inherited traditions of knowledge, they identified "universals" with the unreliable claims of their forebears and "particulars" with whatever judgments of experience they could make themselves, without relying on such claims. In other words, offering the dogma was a way of expressing their disappointment with both their forebear's claims and their forebear's insistence that these claims be accepted on authority. We might imagine that, if pressed, nominalists might agree to abandon their own universal claim about particulars, in exchange for a policy of testing and, if necessary, revising those traditional claims that they had specific reasons to doubt.

Peirce's thinking led *backwards* to the view that pragmatism provided an epistemological alternative to Cartesian intuitionism. In this view, modernist dogmatism arises out of the errant assumption that knowing a thing clearly is simply a matter of getting our ideas about it in order, as if there corresponded to everything in the world some single set of ideas that represented truly what it really is. The way to correct this assumption is to replace it with the pragmatic assumption that knowing a thing means being able to anticipate how it would act or appear in given circumstances. When we claim to know something, we mean knowing in this second sense. The pragmatic maxim thus tells us what we do when we claim to know something. (The problem with this version of pragmatism is that it adopts what it calls the modernist assumption of knowledge in the very process of attempting to refute it. This version places pragmatic and modernist claims side by side, as if they were two competing views of the way humans actually know things, of which one view were true and one false. This is, however, to adopt the modernist assumption that knowing something — in this case, human knowledge— clearly is to represent it as it really is. A corollary problem with this version of pragmatism is that it offers modernism a rebuttal rather than a remedy: rather than offer modernists a way of discovering the truths within or behind their claims, it suggests they abandon these claims in favor of some others.)

(3) *Finally, then, to return to the subject of Peirce's critique of modernist conceptions of the self.*²⁶ Peirce's pragmatism generated the metaphysical claim that the "soul" of anything, human or extra-human, is its tendency to act in certain ways in certain circumstances. Peirce put this claim to the service of his different ways of thinking.

His thinking led *backwards* to the view that the modernist conception of the self is simply erroneous, built on a failed logic and an empty metaphysics and contributing to unethical conduct. This erroneous conception is that the human self is an incorporeal substance, ultimately unknowable, self-contained and ultimately self-referring; that it is the subject of all perceptions and cogitations; that it asserts itself, over against the material substance to which it is attached, over against the world, and over against other selves. According to this view of Peirce's, such a conception is false because it is incompatible with a pragmatic conception of the human soul. As

a complex of tendencies to act, the soul must be corporeal (as well as incorporeal), knowable, relational, and other-referring; it must mediate between subjects and objects of knowing, among other selves and the world. The modernist self appears only as the negation of the actual life of such a soul. "The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation."²⁷

Peirce's thinking led *forward* to the view that the modernist conception of self was an assertion of loneliness and distress, of complaint and of the need for truth and love, of the plenitude of possibility as well as of the fearsomeness of infinity. In this view of Peirce's, the modernist self is, indeed, an abstraction and thus an incomplete sign. But it is the sort of sign that calls for a redeeming love: the compassionate interpretation that would relink the sign to the community of interpretation in which it displayed its full meaning. Unlike Job's sorry comforters, the compassionate interpreter would not suppose that the process of relinking was an obvious affair. To relink the sign to its context of meaning would be to reintroduce the self to its community of practice, in which it would find its particular history and a more open future. Because, however, the self is a sign of inadequacies in that very community, such a reintroduction would come only through great effort, involving the reformation of community as well as the transformation of self. In the process, the community would itself appear as a self, or as an individuated part of a wider society, and its wider society would appear this way, as well. The emergent, postmodern understanding of the modern self would relink conceptions of self to conceptions of the human soul as a center of ways of acting. This relinking would not be merely a conceptual affair, but a matter of real work.

III. From Modern Pragmatism to Postmodern Pragmatism

In the 1877-78 "Illustrations of the Logic of Science," Peirce first offered his pragmatism to the world. In a series of articles published in *The Monist* in 1905, he threatened to take his pragmatism back. He claimed that, in the intervening years, the scholarly world had

misrepresented what pragmatism really means, forcing him, at this time, to re-explain and, in fact, rename it. Speaking of himself, he wrote

His word 'pragmatism' has gained general recognition in a generalized sense that seems to argue power of growth and vitality. The famed psychologist, James, first took it up, seeing that his 'radical empiricism' substantially answered to the writer's definition of pragmatism, albeit with a certain difference in the point of view. Next, the admirably clear and brilliant thinker, Mr. Ferdinand C.S. Schiller, casting about for a more attractive name for the 'anthropomorphism' of his *Riddle of the Sphinx*, lit ... upon the same designation 'pragmatism'..... So far all went happily. But at present, the word begins to be met with occasionally in the literary journals, where it gets abused in the merciless way that words have to expect when they fall into literary clutches. Sometimes the manners of the British have effloresced in scolding at the word as ill-chosen — ill-chosen, that is, to express some meaning that it was rather designed to exclude. So then, the writer, finding his bantling 'pragmatism' so promoted, feels that it is time to kiss his child good-bye and relinquish it to its higher destiny; while to serve the precise purpose of expressing the original definition, he begs to announce the birth of the word '**pragmaticism**,' which is ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers.²⁸

We might take Peirce's protestations with a little grain of salt. As Peirce averred in a footnote, he had never previously made popular use of the term "pragmatism" in writing. In his 1907 lecture "What Pragmatism Means," James recalled that Peirce's principle of pragmatism

lay entirely unnoticed by any one for twenty years, until I, in an address before Professor Howison's Philosophical Union at the University of California,²⁹ brought it forward again and made a special application of it to religion.³⁰ By that date the times seemed ripe for its reception. The word 'pragmatism' spread, and at present it fairly spots the pages of the philosophic journals.³¹

While grateful for the publicity, and generally pleased by James' work, Peirce found James' pragmatism itself too "nominalistic" for his purposes. As John E. Smith writes, "James, with his

incipient nominalism, was always hesitant about allowing concepts to have any other than a representational meaning or a surrogate function."³² Peirce's pragmatism was thus a response to James as well as to the "literary circles." But on what was this response based? Peirce claimed that he was returning to his "original definition." However, as I have suggested earlier, Peirce spent many years taking up his original definition in a modernist, as well as a postmodernist, way. Peirce's misinterpreters were led by the modernist (or "backward") tendency in Peirce's own writings. This all means that pragmatism was Peirce's way of kissing good-bye to the child of his own modernism, of which the nominalisms of his interpreters were mere reflections.

I do not belabor these autobiographical points as a matter of mere scholarly erudition, but, rather, to suggest that the principles of Peirce's postmodernism are principles of critical self-reflection, of which Peirce's own self-corrections are prototypical. We will take "pragmatism" to be a general label for the way Peirce sought to recover what, in our terms, was postmodern in his earlier studies of pragmatism and to elide what was not. Returning to the distinctions I made between what was *forward* and what was *backward* looking in Peirce's pragmatism, we may then relabel pragmatism a re-statement of the principles displayed in his forward-looking thinking. I mentioned three areas of forward thinking on Peirce's part. These areas may be viewed as various expressions of a single tendency of thinking, of which we may discern the following aspects, or sub-tendencies. (The order of presentation here is arbitrary. On this occasion, I am portraying postmodern thinking as a reflection on the way modernist thinking responds to problems in premodern "practice," which means premodern patterns of thinking-and-acting. Each of the aspects I describe represents what I am picturing to be stages or moments in this process of reflection. I am obviously asking for a little trust at this point, because I have not yet displayed the criteria I used to distinguish forward from backward, or postmodern from modern tendencies. I am trying to display the criteria in use, before labeling them abstractly. Once you get through this, you will see what I was doing and will then have the freedom to evaluate it.)

The first aspect is the **negative or critical character** of Peirce's forward thinking, which began with the discovery of a problem in modernist thinking. Peirce's postmodern thinking began

as way of responding to problems, rather than as a way of generating ideas for their own sake. Its occasion was not wonder or curiosity or assertion, but rather the intrusion of something insistent and unpleasant: a kind of suffering. It was therefore an activity whose subject matter lay behind it, as the as yet unknown source of the discomforts which moved it forward.

A second aspect is the **reflexive character** of Peirce's forward thinking, which was a way of recollecting the source of discomfort out of which it arose. The negativity of Peirce's postmodernism was thus merely a reflection of the negativity of modernity. Modernist thinking *expresses* this negativity, while postmodernist thinking identifies it *as* negative: identifying the discomforts of modernity as symptoms of disruptions in modernity's antecedent traditions of practice. From this perspective, postmodernist thinking is modernist thinking reflecting on itself, its origins and its future. Peirce's later writings on *self-control* and on *semiotics* displayed his attentiveness to the phenomenon of reflexivity.³³ Reflection is an activity of *self-control*, and *semiotics* displays its logic: interpreting negative thinking as the *sign* of some antecedent problem — as *object* — and of some consequent response — as what Peirce called the *interpretant* of a sign. (On self-control, Peirce wrote that "'the term 'reasoning' ought to be confined to such fixation of one belief by another as is reasonable, deliberate, self-controlled"³⁴; and, "the pragmatist does not make the *summon bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody [real generals, which are general conditional propositions as to the future]..., which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*. In its higher stages, evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control.... "³⁵)

A third aspect is the contribution Peirce's forward thinking made to **solving whatever problem** stimulated it. Peirce's postmodernist thinking was a *performative activity*, which embodied its purposes in the way it actually responded to the discomforts of modernity. Its reflexivity was thus not an end in itself, but a moment in an extended process of referring the complaints of modernity back to the antecedent practices to which they refer and then forward to

the reformation of practice to which it contributes. While prompted by suffering, Peirce's postmodernism was thus animated by hope.

A fourth aspect is the **reaffirmation** implicit in Peirce's forward thinking. If his postmodernism reflected the negativity of modernity, it also exhibited the relationship of modernity to its antecedent practices, which Peirce identified with the practices of scholastic philosophy and science. Peirce considered these practices to be the sources of both the problems of modernity *and* the capacity of modernity to solve those problems. He said the best way to understand this duality is to conceive of there being two levels of regularity within the practices. On one level, the practices apply to context-specific ways of acting and are thus highly informative, but subject more readily to change, since they must be responsive to the variable character of their contexts. All practices of which we are conscious belong to this first level. The second level is inhabited by all those practices of which we are not ordinarily conscious: what he would later call the original, common-sense beliefs which we share with members of our species, or perhaps with culture-specific sub-groups of the species. These practices are indubitable for all practical purposes and therefore appear to be neither context-specific nor informative. Nevertheless, we must conceive of these practices as providing the rules that inform our reflections on the first-level practices.

Note that Peirce conceived of these levels of practice in a relational way: the second level were indubitable only relative to our experiences of the world. He meant that, if modernists have doubts about antecedent practices, then these are, by definition, doubts about first-level practices,³⁶ offered with respect to the rules of judgment and doubt provided by second-level practices.³⁷ He believed that his pragmatism belonged to and exhibited the rules of modernity's second-level practices: for that reason, in fact, both he and James considered pragmatism "a new name for an old way of thinking." Applying to scholastic thinking the same reflexivity he applied to modernist thinking, Peirce was prepared to identify this old way of thinking with the deeper level of the scholastics' own inherited practices. The ground of Peirce's hope lay therefore in his

reaffirming the ancient or, ultimately, primeval roots of modern practices, as exhibited in chronologically successive contexts of critical thinking.³⁸

A fifth aspect is the **fallibilistic character** of Peirce's forward thinking. Invoking the terminology of the Scotch common-sense realists,³⁹ Peirce called his reaffirmation of our indubitable beliefs his "common-sensism." He added, however, that the common-sense realists erred in imagining that the second-level practices were indubitable in any and all circumstances: "one thing the Scotch failed to recognize is that the original beliefs only remain indubitable in their application to affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life."⁴⁰ For example, he wrote that while we act on the belief that there are only three dimensions, "it is ... quite open to reasonable doubt whether the motions of electrons are confined to three dimensions, although it is good methodetic to presume that they are until some evidence to the contrary is forthcoming."⁴¹ Peirce named his position *critical* common-sensism. All practices are potentially corrigible. "Not only is our knowledge thus limited in scope, but it is even more important that we should thoroughly realize that the very best of what we, humanly speaking, know [we know] only in an uncertain and inexact way."⁴² The negativity of modernity was a sign of this uncertainty and, thus, of postmodernity's need to reform a first level of practices, as guided by a second level of practices. Peirce recognized both that the second level was potentially corrigible ("Indubitability,' for Peirce, did not mean 'absolute certainty.' Rather, it meant 'freedom from genuine doubt.'⁴³) and that this potentiality did not preclude its functioning, now, as the condition of our knowing the real. As we will discuss later, he believed that the fallibility of human knowledge is, rather, a sign of the indefinite character of the real itself.

A sixth aspect is the role of **creativity and imagination** in Peirce's forward thinking. Peirce sought to reform first-level practices by reaffirming the reformatory guidance offered by second-level practices. To doubt the authority of one practice — for example, obedience to the church or to the Aristotelian syllogistic— we rely on the authority of more fundamental standards of behavior or of reasoning. Peirce argued, however, that these deeper practices are not informative in themselves. They reveal themselves only *in actu* and, that means, only relative to

the tasks we ask them to perform. On one level, this means that we would, following Kant, attempt to discover the fundamental practices by asking what all our other practices must presuppose. This also means, however, that our presuppositions would only be as revealing as our practices; our inquiry would be limited by the kinds of practice we know how to practice. We might expect the pragmatist to answer, "But the limit of knowledge is simply that: the limit of action!" Without officially departing from the disciplines of his pragmatism, Peirce stretched this answer to its limits by adding words that I will paraphrase, less formally, in this way: "Then again, the limit of action is the limit of *conceivable* action. In this sense, we know how to practice whatever we can conceive of practicing, and we discover more about our presuppositions the more we expand our capacities to conceive of what we *might* do on this earth, even if what we might do remains a way of reforming what we already do."

Peirce invented the term *abductive reasoning* to refer to the inquiry we undertake to generate hypotheses about how we might reform what we already do. He believed this mode of reasoning was a power as well as a skill that could be improved by practice and by discipline. And he believed that, by improving our capacity to imagine new possibilities, we deepened our capacity to display our fundamental beliefs. Of course, abductive reasoning generates mere hypotheses. Peirce argued that, to separate the fundamental from the fanciful, we had to test our hypotheses' usefulness in actually reforming our practices and, thus, resolving the real doubts and problems that stimulated our inquiry in the first place. To test them, he suggested we employ what he called the methods of deductive reasoning (to indicate precisely how, if successful, the hypotheses *would* contribute to the reform of antecedent practices) and inductive reasoning (to evaluate their success in actual practice).⁴⁴

We have, then, a collection of six aspects of Peirce's actual practice of forward thinking, which was negative, reflexive, devoted to problem-solving, affirming of original beliefs, fallibilistic, and creative. What does this tell us? If we were modernists, we might ask, "What does philosophy have to learn from descriptions of a particular person's style of thinking? If this

person were creator of our world, we might take these to be descriptions of our god's essential attributes and see in these attributes the limits toward which the activities of this world might tend. But Peirce is no god, and the most we can see in these descriptions are the attributes of his own creative activity, his own world. We learn very little about *our* various worlds, or about any world we might share." If we were relativistic sorts of postmodernists, we might admire the beauty, or the power, or the curiosity of this person's style of thinking, all the while treating with some condescension his apparent belief that his critique of modernity told us something positive about a world we shared. We would see in his style of thinking only a style of thinking, acceptable and even attractive as long as it abandoned its claim to be any more than that. In the context of this book, however, we bring to the study of Peirce's thinking the perspectives of a nonrelativistic postmodernism. This means we are predisposed to accept his claim that, after the critique of modernist intuitionism and substantialism, philosophy may still have something to say about the world we share or, to reinvoke scholastic terminology, something to say about "the real." This critique means, however, that we do not expect philosophy to talk about the real the same way it did previously. In this essay, we consider the claim that Peirce displayed a new way of talking about the real. But, up to this point, all we have before us are descriptions of his postmodern manner of thinking. What do these descriptions tell us about the real?

I hesitate to trot out the "principles of Peirce's postmodernism" as an answer to this question, because I do not want to give the impression that these principles were the kinds of propositions dogmatic metaphysicians offered before Kant and, then again, among the romantic responses to Kant. Peirce's critique of Cartesianism meant that he could no longer portray himself as having arrived at certain propositions whose subjects designated reality and whose predicates designated reality's essential characters. He rejected the notion that we know reality by arriving at propositions that mirror it. His postmodern thinking implied, instead, that we know reality by imitating it in our own activity: the way a theologian would say we know God by imitating God, or the way Jesus said "follow me and leave self behind." That is, "leave behind the *ego cogito*, whose abstractions do not imitate God or God's creation, and follow me, instead,

with your *whole being*." Our descriptions of Peirce's forward thinking are not adequate representations of his whole being, but, within the limits of a philosophic study like this, they are meant at least to symbolize it. In Whitehead's terms, they represent *prehensions* of reality within the context of Peirce's work. In what we are about to learn are Peirce's terms, they represent the *interpretants* of reality within Peirce's work. This means that they belong "merely" to Peirce's life, but also that Peirce's life, like any life displayed in its wholeness, really tells us about the reality it interprets. Like all lives displayed in their wholeness, Peirce's life was more than Peirce's. If we take it up into our lives, in their wholeness, then it implicates our lives as well.

It takes an indefinitely long time to display the wholeness of a life, and, in philosophic conversation, we ask to get to the bottom of a life in a very short time. Even in its postmodern form, philosophic conversation is therefore somewhat abusive. Nevertheless, we know that, on pages like these, we are simply trying to offer brief glimpses of processes that continue to run deeply even as we describe them. We know that these glimpses do not display the realities of which they are glimpses until we have fleshed them out within our own lives. We know, then, that there is no single, privileged way in which they display their realities. Yet, we also trust that, in taking these glimpses off as we do into our various lives, we also share in some activity that is one despite the irreducible multiplicity of its appearances. The glimpses we presume to offer are offered, therefore, merely as attempts to share with one another our firm sense and our fallible understanding of the oneness that binds us together: the oneness of a process that is symbolized for us in the ways we find to identify what we share with another human life.

In the following section, I attempt to identify what we might share with Peirce's life by posing certain questions of his life that may be of interest to us in the context of this volume. Of course, Peirce is not here to answer, but our interest need not, at any rate, be merely in what Peirce would literally have said. What he literally wrote were answers to questions posed by his contemporaries, and these are not necessarily questions we are asking now. We may, instead, take the risk of imagining Peirce's responding to questions he may not have asked in the way we are asking them. We would thereby elicit answers that belong, at once, to our lives (for we posed

the questions), to the life about which we are asking (displayed through Peirce's writing), and to the specific context we are considering. For the present discussion, I will define these triply-limited and triply-relational answers as *the principles of a life*. This will be my way of introducing *principles* into our discussion without fearing that I have led you to associate these principles with dogmatic propositions. I will, then, present the principles of Peirce's postmodernism as *the answers I imagine the forward-thinking Peirce would have offered to a series of questions of interest to us as nonrelativistic postmodernists*.

III The Principles of Peirce's Postmodernism

We begin with three preliminary questions, the answers to which constitute a first principle of postmodernism, or a principle about principles. The first question is: if, in its wholeness, any human life tells us about the reality it interprets, why would we want to learn about other lives? The answer is that every life tells us about the real, but in a finite way, which means that learning about other lives is a way to expand the limits of our own finitude and learn about reality more fully. The second question is: why would we learn more from Peirce's life than from another life? The answer is that a reflective life is one that asks questions about itself and, therefore, generates answers. Living his life in a particularly reflective way, Peirce generated a particularly informative array of answers. These answers may function as *principles of life* for those who may ask similar questions. The third question is: why would these function as principles of postmodern living in particular? According to the perspective I have adopted in this essay, the answer is that the questions Peirce asked of himself were principally questions about the burdens of his own modernist thinking. The greatest of these burdens was the gulf he sensed between his modernist thinking and the needs of everyday life, including *his* everyday life. The principles of postmodern living are ways of living in response to, hopefully as a remedy to, one's own modernism.

The primary questions we will ask the postmodern Peirce to answer are: what kind of activity is your postmodernist thinking? What does it tell us about? And, to whom does it tell this? His imagined answers will represent the principles of Peirce's postmodernism.

A. What kind of activity is Peirce's postmodern thinking?

Principle A1: It is a Semiotic Activity.

I have structured this essay so far according to Peirce's most powerful principle: that postmodern thinking is a way of interpreting the meaning of modernist thinking. Peirce's most powerful instrument for articulating the process of interpretation was *semiotics*, or the science of signs. He called the process of sign interpretation *semiosis*,⁴⁵ meaning "an action, or influence, which is, or involves a coöperation of *three* subjects, such as a sign, its object and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs."⁴⁶ He would say that, in the process of interpretation, we interpret some entity as a *sign* which refers to its *object*, or meaning, with respect to some *interpretant*, or mode of interpretation for which the sign displays that meaning. Semiosis is thus always a relational activity involving three entities. Before considering how Peirce's postmodern thinking may appear as a process of sign interpretation, allow me to explain somewhat more technically how Peirce identified the three elements of semiosis in general.

Peirce said that his semiotics presupposed two formal sciences. The first was *mathematics*, by which he meant not merely various theories of quantity, but also what others may call formal logic: "the study of what is true of hypothetical states of things."⁴⁷ We might call this the disciplined study of creative imagination: a process of diagramming, or drawing pictures of, the elemental rules the imagination suggests to itself when left fully to its own devices. For example, a thinker may take a blank page, then draw a dot on it, then a line and a dot, then a line connecting two dots, and so on. What unseen rule guides the thinker's drawing? Peirce discovered that, giving his imagination a free voice, he was not satisfied to draw any single diagram, but was moved to construct another diagram and another: "one finds that the diagram

itself, in its individuality, is not what the reasoning is concerned with.... In passing [rather,] from one diagram to the other, the [reasoner]... will be supposed to *see* something, which will present this little difficulty for the theory of vision, that it is of a *general nature*.⁴⁸ This *seeing* is a way of conceiving the rule whose urgings led the reasoner to draw the individual diagrams. Of course, the seeing is itself a kind of diagramming, which means the process can continue on and on. Peirce found that the minimal elements of any such diagramming are three: the initial act of drawing something, the repetition or iteration of the act, and the activity of linking the repetitions together.⁴⁹ The simplest way to diagram the act of diagramming would, then, be to distinguish between what Peirce called the *monadic* character of a simple act, the *dyadic* character of a repetition (one act plus one act) and the *triadic* character of the act of linkage (one plus one plus the linkage or relation).

The second science presupposed by semiotics was *phenomenology*,⁵⁰ which "treats of the universal Qualities of Phenomena,"⁵¹ or of "the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind."⁵² Put crudely, the phenomenologists' job is to see how much sense they can make of our experiences by supposing that the elemental characters of mathematical reasoning, or of imagination, will appear again as the most general qualities of all phenomena. Peirce thus identified the three categories of experience as Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. He labeled "Firsts" all phenomena that display merely monadic or simple qualities, such as simple states of consciousness, like the feeling of redness. He labeled "Seconds" all phenomena that display dyadic qualities, such as divided states of consciousness, in which something inner is opposed to something outer. An example of the latter is the shock of surprise, which signals the interruption of one state by something other. He labeled "Thirds" all phenomena that display triadic qualities: these are all phenomena of mediation, relationality or representation. Signs are paradigmatic Thirds.

Within his phenomenology, Peirce defined a sign as something that stands *for* something (its object) *to* the idea that it produces or modifies (its *interpretant*).⁵³ Once again, the key to Peirce's semiotic is his conception of the tri-relationality of the sign. A sign is obviously not a

sign just by itself, but it is also not a sign if considered merely in relation to its object: as if a sign (*signe* for de Saussure) had a meaning (*signifié*) in general — some privileged partner out there in the universe to which it was connected independently of some third something, some mediator. For Peirce such a two-part relation would be an instance of mere Secondness, such as the rude shock of an unexpected encounter — a real event, but one as yet without any meaning. In fact, we may consider the reduction of signification to dyadic relations an emblem of modernist nominalism: an emblem of the belief that our concepts are records of merely chance or brute encounters. This belief implies that we can make whatever use we wish of such records, but that we cannot expect them to guide us. A genuine sign is, instead, a sign that has its meaning *with respect to* its interpretant. This means that meaning is not simply projected out into empty space, but is offered to some being for some reason. Meaning is an aspect of relationship. A sign relates beings together.

Technically speaking, Peirce classified phenomenology as the first sub-science of philosophy. He said the business of philosophy "is to find out all that can be found out from those universal experiences which confront every [person] in every waking hour."⁵⁴ As a pragmatist, he added that we seek to find these things out in order to solve the problems that arise in everyday experience. Within this inquiry, phenomenology sketches out the elemental qualities of everyday experience. What he called the "normative sciences" — aesthetics, ethics and logic — identify the rules of reasoning and practice we adopt in making assertions about everyday experience and, thus, in solving the problems that confront us. Metaphysics, finally, articulates a vision of the entire universe of mind and matter that we would inhabit if those rules of reasoning and practice were rules of being itself. Within this scheme, Peirce came to classify semiotics as his language of logic.⁵⁵ It is a particularly integrative language, which enables us both to perceive the elements of experience that delimit the activity of reasoning and to imagine the rules of being that issue from it.

For the semiotician, reasoning is itself a process of semiosis, the elements of which are all the possible kinds of relationship that can connect sign to sign, sign to object, sign to

interpretant, object to interpretant, sign to object to interpretant and so on. For example, Peirce said a sign can refer to its object in any of three ways. An *icon* is a sign that refers to its object "by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses ... whether any such object actually exists or not." An example is a painting, which depicts its object only by virtue of the oil, brush, canvas and imagination of the painter. An *index* is a sign that refers to its object "by virtue of really being affected by that object," as well as by sharing some quality in common with the object. An example is a weather-vane, which is actually moved by the wind whose directionality it both shares and depicts. A *symbol* is a sign that refers to its object "by virtue of a law ... which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object...." Not only is the symbol itself "a general type, or law ... but the object to which it refers is [also] of a general nature."⁵⁶ Examples of symbols are linguistic terms or predicates, propositions and arguments, all of which are partial embodiments of genuine or triadic processes of semiosis.⁵⁷

Terms, such as "scholastic thinking," or predicates, such as "—— is an index of problems in scholastic thinking," symbolize the iconic or monadic character of a process of semiosis. Propositions, such as "Modernist thinking is an index of problems in scholastic thinking," symbolize the indexical or dyadic character of a process of semiosis. Such arguments as the following one symbolize the symbolic or triadic character of a process of semiosis:

Modernist thinking is a way of criticizing the inadequacies of traditions of practice in general.

Problems in scholastic thinking may give rise to criticisms of the inadequacies of traditions of practice in general.

Modernist thinking may be an index of problems in scholastic thinking.

Such arguments, finally, presuppose the formal and material *leading principles* that enable us to reason from their premises to their conclusions. In this case, among the formal principles is the rule of abduction or hypothesis-making, which enables us to say "If A is B, and C can be signified by B, then maybe A is a sign of C." Among the material principles are theories of postmodern thinking — Peirce's theory, for example, which was a tendency of thinking that

provided a context of interpretation, or interpretant, with respect to which modernist thinking appeared as a *sign* whose *meaning* was that something is wrong with the practices out of which modernist thinking emerged. Peirce diagrammed this tendency in the process of reflecting on his own modernist thinking. His pragmatism emerged when he said, in effect, "Aha! My own merely critical thinking was an indexical *sign* that displays its *meaning* when I locate the *interpretant* that allows me to reform my pre-critical practices in ways hinted at in that sign. My postmodern thinking is this interpretant." The first element of Peirce's postmodern thinking that we have considered is his semiotics, in terms of which he abstracted the elemental or formal elements of his discovery, as if to say: "As a modernist, I understood my claims as signs that referred to their objects generally, apart from any particular context of meaning. Now I understand these claims as signs that deliver their meanings *to* the particular process of interpretation I am now articulating."

Principle A2: Peirce's Postmodern Thinking is a Method of Habit-Change.

Using the language of Peirce's semiotics, we can identify the formal properties of his postmodern thinking, viewed as an interpretive process and as part of the interpretive processes that link together his modernist criticism and his pre-critical practices. However, the formality of semiotics might tempt us to overlook the bodily dimension of thinking. And studying the coherence of an interpretive process might tempt us to overlook the transformational character of postmodern thinking. The bodily dimension and transformational character of Peirce's postmodernism are displayed more fully in terms of his *theory of habit-change*.

In their Metaphysical Club sessions of the 1870s, Peirce and James paid a great deal of attention to Alexander Bain's psychological studies of human habits of reasoning. In his *Principles of Psychology*, James wrote that

When we look at living creatures from an outward point of view, one of the first things that strike us is that they are bundles of habits.... The habits to which there is an innate

tendency are called instincts; some of those due to education would by most persons be called acts of reason.⁵⁸

He added that "the moment one tries to define what habit is, one is led to the fundamental properties of matter.

The laws of Nature are nothing but the immutable habits which the different elemental sorts of matter follow in their actions and reactions upon each other. In the organic world, however, the habits are more variable than this.... Organic matter, especially nervous tissue, seems endowed with a very extraordinary degree of plasticity, [meaning, 'the possession of a structure weak enough to yield to an influence, but strong enough not to yield all at once'].... We may without hesitation lay down as our first proposition the following, that *the phenomena of habit in living beings are due to the plasticity of the organic materials of which their bodies are composed.*⁵⁹

In the same year that James published his *Psychology*, Peirce located the riddle of existence in this plasticity. He called it the capacity of protoplasm to feel (and thus "to take on ideas"), to respond to stimuli (and thus "to react" or be moved), to allow feelings to spread (and thus "to generalize" or "to grow"), *to form habits* (and thus to acquire rules of behavior) and to forget or lose excitability (and thus to "to select" certain rules of behavior and let others ones go).⁶⁰ In these writings, Peirce devoted most of his attention to the phenomenon of habit-taking, or of acquiring the capacity to act in a certain way under certain circumstances.⁶¹ We learn about the world, he said, not simply by forming ideas in response to stimuli, but by forming habits of responding to the world. This means, he concluded, that the Cartesian and Platonic picture-theory of knowledge is inadequate: the world is not something we can depict in the way we organize our ideas, but only something whose processual character we can embody, and in that sense imitate, in the ways we act.⁶² In these terms, a way of thinking is a habit of thinking. If the world is viewed as a great sign, then a habit of thinking is what Peirce called the logical, or ultimate, *interpretant* of that sign. This means that we display the *meaning* of the world in the capacities we acquire to act in response to the world.

But what if our habits of thinking prove faulty? In his writings on pragmatism, Peirce directed his attention to the phenomenon of *habit-change*, or the modification of a person's tendencies toward action. Among the sources of habit-change, he listed "experiences forced upon" the mind; acts of will or "muscular effort"; and "efforts of the imagination," which are ways of imagining how we might act in the future.⁶³ Peirce was most interested in the latter: those "experimentations in the inner world" which enable us to test out our habits of action without muscular effort, to examine and criticize the likely results of our efforts and, then, to recommend to ourselves alternative ways of acting. He claimed that, by repeating such recommendations to ourselves, we may be able to alter our habits of action as well as we could through physical exercise.⁶⁴

Peirce made these claims at the same time that he was framing his pragmatism: as if he had abstracted his theory of habit-change from his own activity of changing his merely modernist habits of thinking into postmodern ones. We might then redescribe Peirce's postmodern thinking as a method of habit-change — in particular, as a way of transforming his modernist habit of criticism into a habit of reforming precritical habits of action in response to modernist criticism. In this redescription, we would not characterize postmodern thinking as a mere habit, but, rather, as an activity of *habit-change*. Like modernist thinking, it is a critical activity; unlike it, it is a critique of mere criticism, and, thus, a reaffirmation — a *reforming* reaffirmation. From the attention Peirce paid to the various sources of habit-change, we may infer, furthermore, that Peirce understood his postmodern turn to be the result of his thought experiments more than of some transforming encounter or of some spontaneous act of will. This would mean that Peirce's postmodernism was, in sum, a reforming reaffirmation of his precritical habits of action; stimulated by his imaginative reflections on how his modernist criticisms actually influenced the ways he might act in the world.

Principle A3: Peirce's Postmodern Thinking is an Activity of Pragmatic Inquiry

If we were to review the principles we have considered so far in terms of Peirce's phenomenology, we might say that Principle A1 displays the Firstness of Peirce's postmodern thinking, its formal coherence, while Principle A2 displays its Secondness, its capacity to transform actual behavior. We might then look for Principle A3 to display the Thirdness of Peirce's postmodernism, or the actual and coherent process of inquiry according to which Peirce sought to transform precritical practices into reformed or postcritical practices. This is the process of pragmatic inquiry *per se*.

As Peirce argued in 1878 and continued to argue in his mature work, pragmatic inquiry begins with real doubt: in John Dewey's helpful terms, it emerges out of a "problematic situation."⁶⁵ Peirce emphasized the *reality* of this doubt to distinguish his critical common-sensism from Descartes' attempt to launch inquiry out of the academic exercise of feigning doubts. "Do you call it *doubting*," he asked," to write down on a piece of paper that you doubt? If so, doubt has nothing to do with any serious business."⁶⁶ Peirce explained that the danger of adopting what he dubbed "paper doubts" was that, in pretending to doubt what we trust (the philosophic modernist's way of "crying wolf!"), we fall into the habit of mistrusting the very principles of reasoning we need to resolve the problems that actually confront us. On the basis of his theories of signs and of habits, he argued that *real* doubt, on the other hand, is the most reliable index of our immediate contact with reality. We may summarize his argument as follows.

If our habits of thought-and-practice are ultimate interpretants of the world as a vast symbol, then we know the world intimately only through these habits. Unlike the "sense impressions" described by the nominalistic empiricists, however, these habits are not simply forced upon us through our encounters with the world. The world is, indeed, what we actually encounter through the senses, but Peirce's critique of nominalism means that we do not *know* what we encounter simply by sensing it. Our "knowledge" of the world is the way we have learned to act successfully in it, where "success" is judged by the degree to which our interactions with the world display the effects we expect them to display. But when and how do we evaluate

this success? Every time I look at a tree, do I ask myself, "Is that the way I expected it would look?" First of all, "seeing" is not the right metaphor to invoke here, because the knowledge we are discussing concerns our encountering the *realities* of things and not merely their appearances. Peirce argued early on in his work that we have acquired our conception of "reality" from scholastic usage, where *realitas* referred to the *forcible* character of the world: its insistence on being something whether I like it or not or, in Peirce's pragmatic terminology, the *difference* it makes for the way I live in the world. When I look at a tree, I do not usually ask myself what difference the tree makes in how I live; this means I am not usually interested in knowing about the tree's reality. But what if a tree falls on my house? Or what if I need its lumber to warm my house and cook my food? Or what if we discover that the life-sustaining character of our atmosphere depends on the tree's health? Or what, finally, if I discover that the kind of creature I happen to be is one that lives well only in the company of trees? In all these cases, the tree makes a great difference in how I live. And in all these cases, I say I know the tree when my interactions with it do not surprise me. When they do surprise me, I say I want to inquire further, to find out what's there. According to Peirce, my surprise is a sign that the ways I have learned to interact with the tree are inadequate: for example, that cutting down every tree for fuel is not what I wanted to do, or that assuming that this specimen belongs to the genus *Acer* was not what I wanted to assume. According to Peirce, finally, my lack of surprise is a sign that, at this moment, the tree and I share a settled relationship. A settled relationship is one I am not concerned to examine further, which suggests that, for me, my lack of surprise would not be a sign at all, because it would be something about which I would not find myself thinking.

Pragmatists have a tendency to argue that "if belief ain't broke, don't fix it" — in other words, that we must assume our beliefs are true if we have no reason to doubt them. If we follow this maxim, however, how can we distinguish between true beliefs and potentially false yet untested ones, or between knowing truly and knowing nothing? Peirce's response was embedded in his philosophic practice but not clearly explicated. It was that the only way to know whether or not our habits correspond to the world is to *act* on them and, then, to feel reassured that the

habits that work as we expect them to are *reliable* sources of knowledge and to *know* that the habits that fail to work as expected are unreliable and must be reformed. Peirce would then affirm Socrates' maxim, but in this modified way: the *unlived* and thus unexamined life is not worth living. For we cannot examine habits we have not enacted, and it is up to the world and not ourselves to declare that our habits need re-examination. The first Peircean maxim is, therefore, "Engage the world actively and without prejudgment!" The second maxim is, "Examine thoroughly whatever you have reason to doubt!" The third is, "Find within the habits you have no reason to doubt the principles that will guide you in reforming those you must doubt!" Trusting these deeper habits is what Peirce called *common-sensism*. Trusting that experience might one day call even these habits into question is what Peirce called *fallibilism*. Fallibilism is not skepticism as much as it is modesty: trusting that, as powerful as is our capacity to know the world, our capacity to grow and learn more is even greater.

For the postmodernist, modernist thinking is an index of real doubt, even if it is misinterpreted by those who display it. Misinterpreting it, modernists cannot get on with the work of the second stage of pragmatic inquiry, which is to identify and examine in detail the habits of action whose inadequacies gave rise to this doubt in the first place. This is empirical inquiry, understood pragmatically. The pragmatic inquirer is, first, a historian, who examines the biographical-social-cultural contexts of modernist doubts in order to offer reasonable hypotheses about the sorts of habits that may have informed modernists' lives. The inquirer is, secondly, a transcendental critic of a Kantian sort, who asks what a modernist must have presupposed about the world in order to have offered such and such a claim and such and such a criticism. This search for presuppositions was Peirce's critical common-sensism: manifested here as an activity of recovering the foundations of belief that underlie and are often covered-over by modernist criticisms and, thus, of distinguishing just what needs to be criticized from what needs to be reaffirmed in order to respond constructively to this criticism. Linking together historical and critical research, the inquirer offers reasonable hypotheses about how the modernist's claims indicate precisely what was wrong with which inherited habits of action.

The third stage of pragmatic inquiry is to recommend ways of reforming those inherited habits of action, to respond to modernist concerns without abandoning the precritical habits out of which they emerge. The work of this stage is constructive and realistic imagination. It is to imagine new ways of acting, within the contexts of inherited beliefs and habits and as constrained by the demands of problem solving. Peirce believed the constructive imagination was guided by a logic of discovery he termed *abduction*. He said the ultimate norms guiding our discoveries may be revealed through a process of "musement," or the free play of imagination as it contemplates the orders of existence.⁶⁷ This is, in fact, the same sort of play informing the mathematical imagination that, Peirce said, underlay his phenomenology.⁶⁸ Freely played, the imagination gives uninhibited expression to the fundamental categories of our existence — Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness — in the contemplation of which inquirers may construct norms for reforming our habits of action. The product of abduction is of practical import, because it offers possibilities that might really be enacted within our contexts of action: possibilities of real habit-change, enabling us to comprehend the world as it now displays itself. For Peirce, philosophy itself is the prototypical activity of constructively re-imagining the fundamental norms of action.

I move now from the question of what Peirce's postmodern thinking is to the question of what it tells us.

B. What does Peirce's Postmodern Thinking Tell us About?

Principle B1: Postmodern Thinking Tells Us about the Real

This principle brings us the reward for all our preparatory work: Peirce's claim that, *without* abandoning our modern habits of criticism and our fallibilism (and therefore reverting to *pre* modernism), we may have direct knowledge of reality. Call it a postmodern *permission*. We no longer *must maintain* what Richard Bernstein has labeled "the Cartesian anxiety." We have, indeed, discovered that our inherited traditions of belief and practice are fallible, but this discovery is not grounds for abandoning all those traditions, nor for feeling guilty whenever we

suspect that, beneath all our critical training, we still have faith and trust in our capacities to know more than we admit we know. For Peirce, this suspicion — which he labeled our "cheerful hope" — is no merely subjective feeling, but an irrepressible index of our actual relationship to the real. Faith in this sense is no infantile wish for security, but the primary manifestation of our being in relationship to something other than ourselves and greater than ourselves, and that relationship *is* knowledge. Peirce did not read Hebrew, but the ancient Israelite term for "knowledge" — *yidiah* — may convey Peirce's claim better than any of the terms he used. For the Biblical authors, "to know" is "to have intercourse with" — with the world, with one's spouse, with God. That is, it is to enter into intimate relationship with these others, retaining one's own identity while recognizing that, in one's own being, one is not alone, but with others. To have this faith-knowledge means to recognize that, as in an argument with a lover, our errors, doubts and struggles for understanding are all aspects of our relationship to a reality that remains with us even in our moments of uncertainty.

Modern philosophers make much of the distinction between epistemology and ontology. For the postmodern Peirce, these modes of inquiry are distinguishable but not clearly distinct. Seen as a semiotic activity, the process of human knowing is not self-contained but intimately related to the processes that it interprets and the processes that interpret it. To refer to "being" is to refer to the generalizable characters of all processes with which human knowledge is potentially in relationship. To refer to "reality" is, following Peirce's adaptation of scholastic usage, to refer to that which lies outside of the knower but remains in relationship with him or her — in Peirce's terms, that "which has such and such characters, whether anybody thinks it to have those characters or not"⁶⁹ *and* that which *makes a difference* in how we think, which means in how we will act.

Contrary to what he claimed, Peirce's realism is not exactly a "scholastic realism."⁷⁰ It is, rather, what we might call a pragmatic, critical, or postmodern realism — that which remains of scholastic realism once it is made to answer the criticisms of it that are implicit in modernist thinking. For example, the postmodern realist will claim, against modern nominalists, that we

can encounter and accurately describe real generality in the world —that our generalizations about the world are not merely expressive of our own desires and interests. However, this is not the generality of abstract possibility we customarily attribute to platonic forms or essences. It is, instead, the generality of reasonable predictions, which is vague in its definition and probabilistic in its reference.⁷¹ In Peirce's words, the purposes to which semiotic thinking refers are predictions about what *would* happen if certain conditions of experience were met. Peirce's strongest response to modern nominalism is that, as a sign of what is wrong with aspects of scholastic thinking, modernist thinking itself displays the generality of a reasonable prediction: if we were to emend scholastic thinking in such and such a way, then it would not warrant such and such a modernist objection.

The ontological implication of Peirce's postmodern thinking is, then, that human knowledge is the symbolic mode of intercourse between the processes that, from our perspective, we say take place "out there" and the processes that we say take place "in here" — the processes of human activity in the world. From the perspective of "in here," it is helpful to refer to this intercourse as a semiotic activity: viewing our thoughts as symbols of reality and viewing our efforts to connect thoughts to actions as ways of correcting and perfecting the clarity of these symbols. From the perspective of "out there," it is helpful to refer to this intercourse as a relationship among three kinds of habits: "things" as habits of worldly action, our "practices" as habits of action in the world, and "thinking" as an activity of habit-change, through which the two forms of habit adjust their relations, one to the other. From these perspectives, pragmatic inquiry represents a worldly activity as much as it does a human one. As an expression of modernist practices of critical thinking, it displays to us the merely human contexts of our knowledge of reality: we do not know reality independently of the ways in which we practice our knowledge. As an expression of the postmodernist re-evaluation of modernist thinking, it reminds us that we have no reason to assume that reality could be known in any other way than this: that reality is that which, while calling attention to itself forcibly, is known fallibilistically, contextually, and relationally. As knowers, we are, in other words, part of the reality we know. In the words of the

theologian Abraham Heschel, as knowers, each of us discovers that "I am that which is not mine."⁷²

Principle B2: Postmodern Thinking Displays the Realities of Chance, Force, and Love as Principles of Evolution

Pragmatic realism is, thus, the principle that the elemental or indubitable characters of our own habits of thinking are also characters of the reality with which we are in relationship. The principle reflects an evolutionary conception of the adaptation of mind and world: "It seems incontestable ... that the mind of man is strongly adapted to the comprehension of the world."⁷³ It is ultimately "evolution" which "made man's mind to be so constructed"⁷⁴ (although Peirce wavered on the question of whether or not natural selection was a sufficient explanation of the remarkable accuracy of our insights into Nature.⁷⁵) The upshot is that the elemental characters of our thinking are trustworthy interpretants of the reality of this world, or that, until we are shown otherwise, we will interact successfully with the world when our habits of action display these characters. As we have seen, Peirce discovered that he could reduce the characters of his postmodern habit of thinking to three elemental categories, which he labeled Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. He then found he had no reason not to assume that these categories correspond to the three elemental properties of the reality with which he was in relationship.⁷⁶

In a series of *Monist* articles in 1892-93, Peirce claimed that the cosmos evolves in three ways: according to fortuitous variation (*tychastic* evolution), according to mechanical necessity (*anancastic* evolution), and according to creative love (*agapastic* evolution). He said "the mere propositions that absolute chance, mechanical necessity and the law of love are severally operative in the cosmos may receive the names of *tychism*, *anancism*, and *agapism*."⁷⁷ I find it convenient to use the latter three terms to refer to the three principles according to which Peirce attributed Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness to the experiential universe.

According to Peirce's principle of *tychism*, Firstness is a sign of the objective reality of *chance*, or spontaneity, in the experiential universe:

By thus admitting pure spontaneity or life as a character of the universe, acting always and everywhere though restrained within narrow bounds by law, producing infinitesimal departures from law continually, and great ones within infinite infrequency, I account for all the variety and diversity of the universe, in the only sense in which the really *sui generis* and new can be said to be accounted for.⁷⁸

This *tychistic* principle is based on the point, made earlier, that the laws of nature are really habits: "the so-called immutable laws of nature ... are not ultimate, but are the expression and indeed the outcome of tendencies, associations and habits which spread and grow."⁷⁹

According to Peirce's principle of *anancism*, *Secondness* is a sign of the objective reality of brute force in the world — the direct impress of reality. *Secondness* displays the dyadic dimension of reality — of action/reaction, inner/outer, will and resistance— which serves as the primary index of actual existence, as opposed to essence, or merely possible being.

According to Peirce's principle of *agapism*, *Thirdness* is a sign of the objective reality of love in the universe: the power of ideas to attract and draw together otherwise independent or opposing actions, giving rise to communities of being whose emergence represents the end of evolutionary growth. As articulated within the vocabulary of semiotics, the attractive power of ideas is the power of symbols to elicit meaning with respect to their interpretants. In these terms, the cosmic power of love is displayed in the reality of semiosis, understood now as a cosmic process whose end is the generation of communities of interpretation. These are communities of being, with respect to which the universe is what Peirce called "a vast representamen, a great symbol of God's purpose, working out its conclusions in living realities."⁸⁰

Peirce's metaphysics was unabashedly anthropomorphic:

I hold ... that [humanity] is so completely hemmed in by the bounds of [its] possible practical experience, [its] mind so restricted to being the instrument of [its] needs, that [it] cannot, in the least, *mean* anything that transcends those limits.⁸¹

'Anthropomorphic' is what pretty much all conceptions are at bottom.... It is well to remember that every single truth of science is due to the affinity of the human soul to the soul of the universe, imperfect as that affinity no doubt is.⁸²

Consequently, Peirce's conceiving the universe as a vast symbol meant that, observing how humans create and interpret symbols, he also conceived of this symbol as the creation of a cosmic symbol-maker — God. God is therefore known to us as the author of that process of semiosis of which any understanding we have of the universe is a symbol, and of which the multifarious processes of reality are interpretants. God as creator is therefore God as symbolizer, and we do not say "God has created the world," but "God is now creating it."⁸³ God is here and here and here, as source of this vast symbol whose meanings we discover anew now, and now and now.

As Michael Raposa has shown in *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, Peirce's metaphysics is thus a metaphysical theology. Because the rules of reasoning on which it is based are semiotic, rather than propositional or logocentric rules, Raposa reterms it a "theosemiotics."⁸⁴

Theosemiotics is the way we conceive of God's symbol-creating activity by analogy with humanity's symbol-creating activity, which Peirce called abductive reasoning. Within Peirce's pragmatic theory of inquiry, abduction is a way of generating hypotheses about how to reform inherited habits of action. Reasoning anthropomorphically, we may then consider God's creativity to be reformatory: the creation of new ways of being out of old ways, rather than out of "nothing." If so, the symbols God creates would be symbols of new worlds, rather than icons of old ones. These symbols would have meaning for us in the way they direct us to reinterpret our worlds of experience, rather than in the way they imitate an antecedent reality.⁸⁵ The ultimate interpretants of God's symbol-making would therefore be forms of habit-change, rather than mere forms (*eide*) or the pictures we may have of God and of God's creation.

We see, therefore, the theosemiotic significance of Peirce's postmodern thinking. As a form of habit-change, this thinking qualifies as a potential interpretant of God's symbol-making activity. To imitate God is not to make claims about what the world is, but to change one's actions in a way that represents the way God changes this world. Postmodern thinking is modern

thinking that has reclaimed its transformational power by reclaiming its theological, or theosemiotic, ground.

C. To Whom was Peirce's Postmodern Thinking Addressed?

Principle C1: It was addressed to the Suffering Self

At the outset of this essay, we noted that Peirce first offered his pragmatism as a critique of modernist conceptions of selfhood. Still working from within modernist habits of thinking, Peirce criticized as simply false the modernist conception of the self as an incorporeal substance, ultimately unknowable, self-contained and ultimately self-referring. As stated earlier, he argued that the self, considered as a separate existence, "is only a negation."⁸⁶ As a postmodernist, however, Peirce came close to acknowledging that, behind his earlier protestations, lay a persistently modernist conception of his own selfhood. Veiling his own loneliness and distress, his complaint and his need for truth and love, he had sought to secure for himself an existence separate from the modernist selfhood he criticized. As postmodernist, Peirce no longer required this separateness. He could confess his own modernity without despairing of it, because he had acquired the resources to redeem that modernity rather than abandon it. The early twentieth-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig clarified this confessional dimension of postmodernism in his major work, *The Star of Redemption*.⁸⁷ As interpreted by Robert Gibbs, Rosenzweig understood the Biblical injunction "You shall love the Lord your God..." as a prototype of the imperative that makes human relationship possible: "love me!" "Only this command is the speech of love. Why? Because the speech of the lover must itself love."⁸⁸ In speaking the words "love me," the lover calls for a response from the beloved, calling the beloved out of his or her separateness. To respond to the call to love is, however, first to acknowledge that one was indeed separate: in need of love, but not yet called to acknowledge the need. This acknowledgment is confession:

For Rosenzweig this confession is itself the process of atonement [*Versöhnung*], which the soul undertakes in the presence of the lover's love. I can only come to terms with my

own false self-reliance, my own illusion of completeness without love, in the presence of my lover's demand to love. And as I speak my way through this process of accepting my past as mine, as myself, even including the self that has heard the command to love, I recognize the past is not being held against me.⁸⁹

As postmodernist, Peirce could love himself and thus recognize that his past, as modernist, was not being held against him. This is to confess the inadequacy of his self's separateness, while acknowledging, with compassion, the suffering signified by that separateness.

Interpreted this way, Peirce's postmodern thinking was addressed to the suffering self of his modernity. It was addressed to it the way a symbol is addressed to its interpretant, which means both that Peirce's thinking had *meaning with respect to* this suffering self *and* that his thinking *performed something with respect to it*. In Rosenzweig's terms, the performance was to offer it the command of love and, thus, to bring it to confess its separateness and to accept responsibility for responding to the other with whom it is in relationship. In Peirce's terms,

The Christian religion, if it has anything distinctive ... is distinguished from other religions by its precept about the Way of Life.... Now what is this way of life? Again I appeal to the universal Christian conscience to testify that it is simply love. As far as it is contracted to a rule of ethics, it is: Love God, and love your neighbor.... The belief in the law of love is the Christian faith.⁹⁰

Principle C2: Peirce's Postmodern Thinking is addressed to an Antecedent and to A Prospective Community of Inquirers

As a redeeming word, Peirce's postmodern thinking offered the modernist self permission to acknowledge its relatedness to others. In Peirce's words, "The Gospel of Christ says that progress comes from every individual merging his individuality in sympathy with his neighbors."⁹¹ As a directive for undertaking corrective, pragmatic inquiry, Peirce's thinking offered the modernist self a procedure for reclaiming its relatedness and thus joining with its neighbor. The first step of this procedure is for the self to relate the narrative history of its suffering: that it belonged to an antecedent community of practitioners, that it grew dissatisfied

with this community, that its dissatisfaction bred its self-isolation, and that its practices of dogmatic inquiry have veiled its history and thus reinforced its self-isolation. The self must confess its identity: "I am a modernist." The second step is for the self, now embodied as a modernist, to acknowledge her identity as a past member of that antecedent community. The modernist must declare this complex identity: "I have entered modernity as a scholastic, or a Catholic, or a Jew, or whatever I was when I left the community in anger." The third step is for this "modernist who once was..." to recognize that, while that community belongs only to the past, other communities may emerge from it, reformed through the kind of criticism she would offer. Rather than fear community, she may reclaim her criticism as part of the process of communal life and growth. The fourth step is for this "modernist who will belong again..." to locate those who would listen to her criticisms and join with her in the process of communal reformation. These may also be former members of her antecedent community: members now of what would become reformed scholastic, or reformed Catholic, or reformed Jewish, communities.

Peirce's postmodern thinking appears to be addressed, in particular, to a modernist in this fourth stage of corrective inquiry. I imagine that, not yet re-integrated into the reforming community for which she is searching; this modernist would first try to identify the attributes this community *would* have if she were to find it. Peirce's pragmaticist inquiry may then be re-interpreted as an abductive inquiry, whose purpose was to generate reasonable hypothesis about what these attributes would be.⁹² Grounded in his mathematics of triadic relations,⁹³ Peirce's phenomenology suggested that such a community would be characterized by its Thirdness, or its mediational capacity. Peirce's discovery that symbols are paradigmatic Thirds suggests that the paradigmatic activity of a community may be interpretation. The community would offer its individual members interpretants (contexts of interpretation, for example, values, beliefs, narratives) with respect to which the world, as a vast symbol, has meaning. Individual members of the community would then be inter-related by way of these interpretants; the members would find their commonality in the common meanings these interpretants assigned to the world. Strictly within the terms of Peirce's semiotics, however, the community might appear to be *too*

coherent a phenomenon, perhaps impervious to reform. Peirce's theory of habit-change suggested that the interpretation of symbols is a transformational, rather than a merely constitutive, activity — that is, that it establishes meaning by transforming prior meanings rather than by generating meaning *ex nihilo*. According to this theory, the concept of community displays different modalities, and we should be wary of reducing the concept to any one modality.

From the perspective of semiotics as a phenomenological and classificatory science, community appears in its Firstness as an inter-woven collection of interpretants and, thus, of possible meanings. From the perspective of Peirce's theory of habit-change as a form of normative science, members of a community emerge as individuals when they suffer — that is, when their experiences of failed expectation breed doubts about communally secured meanings. From this perspective, community first appears in its Secondness, as an arena of oppositions between a dis-integrated collection of dissatisfied individuals and what appears to them to be a mechanically or artificially collected block of out-moded signs. According to the pragmatist, modernists tend to view community, exclusively, in either its Firstness or Secondness: describing community, in the former case, as an unachievably ideal state of epistemological and social integration; or, in the latter case, as the all-too-real source of the authoritarianism that restricts the free expression of the human spirit. Peirce's theory of habit-change, however, provides a perspective from which to view community in its Thirdness as well. This is to view community as the process through which individuals, stimulated by their doubts, undertake the cooperative, pragmatic inquiry through which imperfect communities of the past are transformed into the more perfect communities of the future. From this perspective, community is what Peirce called a community of inquiry, the reformed and reforming community of scientists. According to Peirce's pragmatic theory of inquiry, these scientists draw their principles of inquiry from out of the heritage of the communities they serve as both reformers and critics. To uncover these principles they must, ultimately, imitate the process of divine creativity itself. Otherwise put, pragmatic inquiry was, for Peirce, the ultimate interpretant of God's creative activity, and the community of pragmatic scientists constituted the reformed church.

Principle C3: Peirce's Postmodern Thinking is addressed to the Universal Church of Pragmatic Scientists

Peirce never tested his elaborate hypothesis about what the attributes of a reformed community *might be*, because he never located the reformed community to which he, in particular belonged. For my own way of thinking, this means that, while he jumped ahead to a fifth step of pragmatic inquiry, Peirce failed to complete the fourth step. Others may argue that Peirce did complete the fourth step, because his own reformed community was either the community of pragmatic philosophers or, more broadly considered, the community of pragmatically minded scientists. I hesitate to accept this argument, because it is not apparent to me that any identifiable community of scientists or philosophers inherits the mantle of what Peirce took to be the Christian church. I remain undecided on the question, however, and will, in closing, respect Peirce's own explicit claim. This claim may belong to a fifth step in pragmatic inquiry,⁹⁴ in which, already located in her reformed community, the modernist *cum* postmodernist interprets the principles of community to be principles that integrate individual communities as well as individual persons. She seeks to find her place in a universal church, conceived as a community of communities.⁹⁵ In Raposa's words, "It is the scientific community, after all, its members devoted to the discovery of 'God's truth,' that Peirce selected as the model for the Christian Church."⁹⁶ In Peirce's words:

Man's highest developments are social; and religion, though it begins in a seminal individual inspiration, only comes to full flower in a great church coextensive with a civilization. This is true of every religion, but supereminently so of the religion of love. Its ideal is that the whole world shall be united in the bond of a common love of God accomplished by each man's loving his neighbor. Without a church, the religion of love can have but a rudimentary existence; and a narrow, little exclusive church is almost worse than none. A great catholic church is wanted.

The invisible church does now embrace all Christendom. Every man who has been brought up in the bosom of Christian civilization does really believe in some form of the principle of love, whether he is aware of doing so, or not.

.... Let us endeavor, then, with all our might to draw together the whole body of believers in the law of love into sympathetic unity of consciousness....

To those who for the present are excluded from the churches, and who, in the passionate intensity of their religious desire, are talking of setting up a church for the scientifically educated, a man of my stripe must say, Wait if you can; it will be but a few years longer; but if you cannot wait, why then Godspeed! Only do not, in your turn, go and draw lines so as to exclude such as believe a little less — or, still worse, to exclude such as believe a little more — than yourselves....

A religious civilization is a somewhat idle affair unless it be sworn in as a regiment of that great army that takes life in hand, with all its delights, in grimmest fight to put down the principle of self-seeking, and to make the principle of love triumphant. It has something more serious to think about than the phraseology of the articles of war. Fall into the ranks then; follow your colonel. Keep your one purpose steadily and alone in view, and you may promise yourself the attainment of your sole desire, which is to hasten the chariot wheels of redeeming love!⁹⁷

¹. Joseph Brent, *A Study of the Life of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA (May, 1960), 31. This is the best source of biographical information on Peirce. I have also drawn on Max Fisch, "Introduction," *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, I 1857-1866*, eds. Max Fisch et. al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), xv-xxxv; and on Murray Murphey, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), *passim*..

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- ² "The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization" (1863), cited in *Charles S. Peirce: Selected Writings (Values in a Universe of Change,)* ed. Philip Wiener (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 13f.
- ³ C.S. Peirce to Smith, July 25, 1908, Scientific Correspondence. Cited in Murray Murphey, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*, 15.
- ⁴ Charles Peirce, "My Life written for the Class Book," in *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, I 1857-1866*, 1-3.
- ⁵ He was invited to give several lecture series at Harvard: the prestigious Lowell Lectures in 1866, when he was only twenty-five; a series of lectures on logic in 1869-70; a series on pragmatism in 1903; and another Lowell series in 1903. He held one significant position as Lecturer in Logic at the Johns Hopkins University, between 1879 and 1884.
- ⁶ "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," *University of California Chronicle* (Berkeley: Sept. 1988), repr. in William James, *The Writings of William James*, ed. John J. McDermott (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 347-48.
- ⁷ See Max Fisch's account, "Was There a Metaphysical Club in Cambridge?" *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, Second Series*, eds. Edward Moore and Richard Robin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964) 3-32.
- ⁸ "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2(1868):103-114; and "Consequences of Four Incapacities," *JSP* 2 (1868): 140-157; in *CP* 5.213-357.
- ⁹ "Lectures on Pragmatism," 1903: in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934-35, Vol. 5, Par 61. Future references to this collection will be to *CP* followed by volume and paragraph number.
- ¹⁰ "Archimedes sought only a firm and immovable point in order to move the entire earth from one place to another. Surely great things are to be hoped for if I am lucky enough to find at least one thing that is certain and indubitable" (René Descartes, "Second Meditation," in *Discourse on*

Method and Meditations on First Philosophy, trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980), 61.

¹¹ "Questions..." *CP* 5.214.

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.223

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.223

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 5.227, citing Kant's *Werke*, vii (2), 11.

¹⁵ "Consequences..." in *CP*, 5.312

¹⁶ Peirce overcame his earlier dogmatic logicism by arguing for a "critical" common-sensism: the doctrine that our reasoning is guided by habits of belief that are functionally indubitable but that remain subject to future criticism.

¹⁷ Published in the *Popular Science Monthly* 12-13(1877-78): in *CP* 5.358-410, 6.395-427, 2.619-693.

¹⁸ "The Fixation of Belief," in *CP* 5.358ff.

¹⁹ *CP*, 5.12. See Bain's *The Emotions and the Will* (New York: Longman's Green, 1875), Ch. 11.

²⁰ "Fixation," 5.371, 374, 375.

²¹ *Ibid.* 5.377. The citations to follow are from paragraphs 378-385.

²² As Peirce adds in an 1893 note to his article; see *CP* 5.382*n1*.

²³ Susan Haack, "Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community," in *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, ed. Eugene Freeman (La Salle, Illinois: The Hegeler Institute for The Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983), 254.

²⁴ I take this principle to be implicit in Peirce's 1878 answer to his own question of how induction works: or, more precisely, how we come to offer reasonable hypotheses about what we experience. He wrote, "It seems to be incontestable ... that the mind of man is strongly adapted to the comprehension of the world; at least, as far as this goes, that certain conceptions, highly important for such a comprehension, naturally arise in the mind.... How are we to explain this adaptation? The great utility and indispensableness of the conceptions of time, space and force, even to the lowest intelligence, are such as to suggest that they are the results of natural selection" ("Order of Nature," *Popular Science Monthly* 13(June 78): in *CP* 6.395-427: 6.417-18.

²⁵ "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (1878): 2286-302, *CP* 5.402.

²⁶ Cf. above, in the introductory paragraphs.

²⁷ "Consequences... "CP 5.317.

²⁸ "What Pragmatism is," *Monist* 15 (1905): 161-181, in *CP* 5.414. Emphasis added.

²⁹ "Philosophical Reflections and Practical Results" (see Note 3, above).

³⁰ In John McDermott's words, "this marked the beginning of the pragmatic movement" (from a note in his Annotated Bibliography of James's writings, appended to *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. McDermott [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977] 837).

³¹ William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, Lecture II, ed., Bruce Kuklick (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1981), 26.

³² John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 41. Smith refers the reader to James' account of concepts in William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy* (New York and London: Longman's, Green & Co.1911), Ch. 4-6.

³³ Peirce's preferred spelling for "semiotics" was *semeiotic*, but for this non-technical essay, I prefer to use a spelling more readers will recognize. Peirce's triadic semiotic is to be distinguished from that dyadic semiotic originated by Ferdinand de Saussure and now influencing much semiotic work on the Continent.

³⁴ *CP* 5.440: 1905.

³⁵ *CP* 5.432: 1905. On semiotics, see the discussion below, pp. 27ff.

³⁶ On one occasion, he labeled these first-level practices "B-reasonings" ("Why Study Logic?" 1902: in *CP* 2.189).

³⁷ He labeled these "A-reasonings" (*Ibid.*)

³⁸ As we will discuss later, one of the central principles of Peirce's pragmatism was that the sign of the deeper or second-level practices is their Indubitability. Peirce claimed that what we *mean* by "knowing reality" is equivalent to what we know of the world when our reasoning is guided by indubitable practices of reasoning, or what he also called indubitable beliefs. Peirce therefore

believed that, by reaffirming our capacity to identify fundamental practices, he was reaffirming our capacity to encounter reality directly.

³⁹ The school of Thomas Reid (d.1796), whose response to Hume's skepticism took what would become the non-Kantian route of affirming our "original beliefs." See Thomas Reid, *Works*, 2 vols. ed. Sir William Hamilton (Edinburgh: 1846-1863).

⁴⁰ "Issues of Pragmaticism," in *CP* 5.445.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "Methods for Attaining Truth" (1898), in *CP* 5. 587.

⁴³ Richard Robin, "Peirce's Doctrine of the Normative Sciences," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sander Peirce, Second Series*, ed. Edward Moore and Richard Robin, 272.

⁴⁴ See Peirce's logic of inquiry in "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," *Hibbert Journal* 7 (1908): 90-112; in *CP* 6.467ff.

⁴⁵ Peirce's preferred spelling was *semeiosis*. See note 24.

⁴⁶ "A Survey of Pragmaticism," 5.484.

⁴⁷ "The Simplest Mathematics," (1902), 4.233.

⁴⁸ "Lectures on Pragmatism," (1903), 5.148.

⁴⁹ He called these the activities of *colligation*, *iteration* and *erasure* (referring to the activity of *seeing* the general rule by attending to the general features of the repetitions and ignoring or erasing the other, non-general features). See *CP* 5.579 and elsewhere.

⁵⁰ Peirce classified phenomenology (which he came to call "phaneroscopy") as the first sub-science of *philosophy*. He said that philosophy "limits itself to so much of truth as can be inferred from common experience" ("An Outline Classification of the Sciences," in *CP* 1.184). Its second sub-science was "*normative science*," comprised of *aesthetics*, *ethics*, and *logic*. Its third sub-science was metaphysics.

⁵¹ "Lectures on Pragmatism," *CP* 5.122.

⁵² *CP* 1.284 (1905)

⁵³ See, e.g., 1.339 (c. 1895).

⁵⁴ "A Detailed Classification of the Sciences," *CP* 1.246 (1902).

⁵⁵ *CP* 2.227 (c. 1897).

⁵⁶ All three references are from *CP* 2.247-49 (1903).

⁵⁷ Peirce's semiotics is, of course, a vast enterprise to which the reader is here merely introduced. See Peirce's *Semiotic and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, ed. C. Hardwick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). For some recent introductory essays see John Deely, *Introducing Semiotic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Max Fisch, *Peirce, Semiotic, and Pragmatism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁵⁸ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, I (New York: Dover, 1950), 104.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 104-05.

⁶⁰ See "A Guess at the Riddle" (1890), *CP* 1.354ff. Peirce claimed that these capacities can be reduced to three, corresponding to the three categories of his phenomenology: the capacity to feel spontaneously (Firstness), the capacity to react to determining stimuli (Secondness), and the capacity to form habits (Thirdness). He viewed habit-formation as the physiological manifestation of the sign-taking capacity: habits are the ultimate interpretants of the world's signs.

⁶¹ Cf. "A Survey of Pragmaticism" (1906), *CP* 5.480.

⁶² I believe it would be more precise to say that the world is something with whose existence we can converse, *and* whose creation we can imitate, in the ways we act.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.478-81

⁶⁴ By way of illustration, he wrote:

I well remember when I was a boy, and my brother Herbert, now our minister at Christiania, was scarce more than a child, one day, as the whole family were at table, some spirit from a 'blazer,' or 'chafing dish,' dropped on the muslin dress of one of the ladies and was kindled; and how instantaneously he jumped up, and did the right thing, and how skillfully each motion was adapted to the purpose. I asked him afterward about it; and he told me that since Mrs. Longfellow's death, it was that he had often run over in imagination all the details of what ought to be done in such an emergency. It was a striking example of a real habit produced by exercises in the imagination. ("A Survey of Pragmaticism" [1906] *CP* 5.487n1).

⁶⁵ Peirce tended to use the terms "doubt" or "surprise," rather than the objective correlate of doubt, which, after John Dewey, I am labeling a "problem." In his 1878 papers, Peirce referred to the "doubt" that stimulates inquiry.

⁶⁶ "What Pragmatism Is" (1905), *CP* 5.416. Peirce continued, "But do not make believe [earlier in the paragraph, he wrote 'Dismiss make-believes.']; if pedantry has not eaten all the reality out of you, recognize, as you must, that there is much that you do not doubt in the least."

⁶⁷ See above, n. 13.

⁶⁸ See the discussion of mathematics, above, on "Principle A1" (semiotics).

⁶⁹ "What Pragmatism Is" (1905), *CP* 5.430, where Peirce cites Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, III, 91, Anm. 362.

⁷⁰ In *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, Michael Raposa writes that "while labeling himself as both a Scotist and a scholastic realist, ... Peirce clearly found the medieval systems to be in need of serious repair" (*Peirce Studies* 5 [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989],16). See also, Raposa, "Habits and Essences," *Transactions of the Charles S Peirce Society* XXV.3 (1989): 251-291; and John Boler, *Charles S. Peirce and Scholastic Realism* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1963).

⁷¹ Peirce wrote that a *general sign* "turns over to the interpreter the right to complete [its] determination as he pleases" (5.448nl [1906]). The general indicates the character of a merely possible individual, representing the synthesis of a multitude of subjects. On the other hand, a *vague sign* "reserves for some other possible sign or experience the function of completing the determination" (5.505). The vague denotes some of the characters of an *existent* individual, representing the synthesis of a multitude of predicates. To say that real generality is probabilistic in its reference means that the general signs that really refer to the world do not refer to discrete collections of objects, but to the probability that a certain collection would display certain characteristics. To say that real generality is vague in its definition means that general signs

display these characteristics in a manner that is relative to the interpretant to which they are displayed.

⁷² *Between God and Man*, ed. Fritz Rothschild (New York: Free Press, 1959), 61.

⁷³ "The Order of Nature" (1878), *CP* 6.417.

⁷⁴ "Pragmatism: The Normative Sciences" (1903), *CP* 5.28.

⁷⁵ See *CP* 6.419.

⁷⁶ His examination of reality with respect to these categories corresponded to Kant's verifying, through the deductions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the results of his Analytic.

⁷⁷ "Evolutionary Love" (1893), *CP* 6.302.

⁷⁸ "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined" *The Monist* 2 (1892), 321-337: *CP* 6.59.

⁷⁹ John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought*, 141.

⁸⁰ "The Reality of Thirdness," *Lectures on Pragmatism* (1903), *CP* 5.119.

⁸¹ "Consequences of Critical Common-Sensism" (1905), *CP* 5.536.

⁸² "The Universal Categories," *Lectures on Pragmatism*, *CP* 5.47.

⁸³ As suggested by the Biblical appellation for God: *ani eyeh asher eyeh*, "I will be there as I will be there" (Ex. 3.14). Interpreting this translation, rather than "I am what I am," Martin Buber wrote:

And the great narrator helps us to get out of our minds the meaning of "being" (*esse*) in the use of the word by repeating in accordance with Biblical style the word *ehyeh* in the sense of "being present" (*adesse*): he anticipates the "I will be" in question with the related "I will be with thee" (Ex. 3.12), and follows it with the related "I will be with thy mouth." Thus YHVH does not say that He exists absolutely or eternally, but — without pledging himself to any particular way revelation (" as I will be there"), by which He makes known that He will not be bound by any conjugation — that He wants to remain with His people, to go with them, to lead them. (Martin Buber, *The Prophet Faith*, trans. C. Witton-Davies [New York: Harper & Row, 1960], 28-29.)

⁸⁴ Michael Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, 142ff.

⁸⁵ Technically, these symbols display what Peirce called the irremediable *vagueness* of reality, meaning that a real thing does not simply possess a determinate character, but displays its characters relative to the other real things with which it is in relationship at a given time.

⁸⁶ *CP* 5.317.

⁸⁷ *The Star of Redemption*, trans. from German (*Der Stern Der Erlösung*) by William Halo (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

⁸⁸ From Chapter 3 of the unedited manuscript of Robert Gibbs' forthcoming book, *Correlations: Rosenzweig and Levinas*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 26. Rosenzweig wrote, in *The Star of Redemption*, 180:

"I have sinned." Thus speaks the soul and abolishes shame. By speaking thus, referring purely back into the past, it purifies the present from the weakness of the past. "I have sinned" means I was a sinner. With this acknowledgement of having sinned, however, the soul clears the way for the acknowledgement "I am a sinner." And this second acknowledgement is already the full admission of love.

⁹⁰ "A Religion of Science," *The Open Court* 7 (1893): 3559-60: in *CP* 6.441.

⁹¹ "Evolutionary Love," *CP* 6.294.

⁹² Technically speaking, this hypothesis-making, or abduction, would correspond to a transcendental analysis of the conditions of community re-formation.

⁹³ See above, near the end of Section I.

⁹⁴ Or, as suggested, Peirce may conflate the fourth and fifth steps.

⁹⁵ Even when informed by Peirce's principles of fallibilism and of pragmatic doubt, such a conception may prove to be a totalizing or dogmatic one, in that the "principle of community" operative here is an extension of one community's conception of its own principle of integration.

⁹⁶ Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, 99.

⁹⁷ "A Religion of Science," in *CP* 6.443-48. Is this language of war and of desire not the language of the "modernist who will belong again..." but has not yet located his reforming community?