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*Peirce's Post-Jamesian Pragmatism*¹

Abstract. It is commonly supposed that the pragmatisms of Peirce and James are fundamentally opposed; this view is supported by the fact that in 1905 Peirce deliberately chose a new name for his original doctrine. Yet Peirce and James were not only life-long friends but to a surprising extent were life-long collaborators. It is true that their approaches to philosophy were very different, reflecting their distinct personalities, with James exhibiting a pluralistic and humanistic style as opposed to Peirce the analyst and formalist. James was a popular philosopher and Peirce a philosopher for philosophers. But they followed each other's work, corresponded about philosophical problems, and deeply influenced each other. Peirce never completely renounced James's broader pragmatism and tried hard to find common ground, even to some extent reshaping his own views to accommodate James's.

Anyone who has looked into the origins of pragmatism knows the story of William James's famous August 26, 1898 lecture to the Berkeley Philosophical Union in which he publically introduced pragmatism by name for the first time and acknowledged Charles Peirce as its father. James's talk set the philosophical world abuzz and prodded Peirce to take up his pen to write about pragmatism again after many years of silence². How Peirce's pragmatism unfolded after James's talk is my main subject but I will first briefly characterize Peirce's friendship with James and will remark on the present-day resurgence of pragmatism.

Peirce and James met in 1861 when they were fellow students at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School. James was 19 years old. Peirce, who had already taken a bachelor's degree from Harvard, was 22. They soon became good friends. During the early years of their friendship, Peirce was the dominant figure; not only was he older, but he already had a reputation for genius and he seemed well on his way to a stellar career as a physical scientist, while also being well regarded in Cambridge for his knowledge of logic and the history and philosophy of science. James, on the other hand, had abandoned his aspiration to become an artist when he entered the Lawrence Scientific School with a view to becoming a doctor of medicine, and for much of the decade that followed he remained unsettled over his career choice and frequently suffered from severe depression. There is some anecdotal evidence

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²James's lecture, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results", was printed in the *University of California Chronicle*, September 1898, pp. 287–310, and was widely circulated as a separate pamphlet. It was reprinted, with some omissions, in James (1904). For a discussion of the response engendered by James's paper see Fisch (1977).

that it was Peirce who persuaded James to give up medicine and to take up psychology³. It is true, at least, that James publicly acknowledged Peirce's early influence on his career and was even once reported to have said to his students that he owed "everything" to Peirce (Rukeyser 1942, p. 378).

During their middle years, after James began teaching at Harvard in 1872 and until the mid-1880's when Peirce's career began to unravel, it seemed that both men were destined for notable success. After the meetings of the famous Cambridge Metaphysical Club, which met sometimes in Peirce's study and sometimes in James's, their lives diverged. Peirce went to Washington, D.C. as the assistant in charge of gravity determinations for the United States Coast Survey⁴ and he frequently traveled to sites in North America and Europe to conduct scientific experiments. From 1879 to 1884 he lived in Baltimore where he taught logic part-time at the new Johns Hopkins University while also continuing to work for the Coast Survey. Peirce had already achieved international renown for his work in geodesy and in logic. James, too, traveled to Europe during those years but he made his home in Cambridge and continued at Harvard, where in 1874 he established the first psychology laboratory in the United States. In 1880, James was appointed to Harvard's philosophy department and after that taught both philosophy and psychology. On his travels he met leading European psychologists and philosophers, including Carl Stumpf, Ernst Mach, and Wilhelm Wundt. James was a charismatic man who, unlike Peirce, made friends easily; his renown and influence quickly spread.

After Peirce lost his appointment at Johns Hopkins in 1884, and later his assistantship in the Coast Survey, James became the dominant figure in their friendship, writing letters of recommendation for academic appointments for Peirce, procuring lectures for him, and finally even establishing a small but crucial privately funded pension for him. Two of the most important series of lectures of Peirce's career, his Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898 and his Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism of 1903, were arranged for by James. Not only did these lectures provide rare public venues for Peirce's mature philosophy, they also provided critically needed income. Peirce's brother, James Mills, wrote to James that the 1903 Harvard Lectures helped save Peirce from ruin (EP2: xxiv)⁵. On the day following the conclusion of the Harvard Lectures, Peirce added "Santiago" as his second middle name, apparently to honor James for his faithful support.

As a matter of human interest, these connections between Peirce and James are engaging, and it is intriguing that there are still many mysteries and hidden chapters in the story of their friendship. I think one of the most obscure facets of the Peirce-James story is how and to what extent they influenced each other intellectually. What did they learn from each other and how did they help shape each other's key ideas? How much did they collaborate? There are no widely accepted answers to these questions and it is doubtful if there ever will be any definitive answers because surviving documentary evidence is scant and can be interpreted, and has been interpreted, in conflicting ways. Notwithstanding their long

³Juliette Peirce to Gifford Pinchot, 4 September 1934, quoted in Ketner (1998), pp. 275–276.

⁴In 1878 the United States Coast Survey was renamed the United States Coast & Geodetic Survey.

⁵References to Peirce's writings will be made following standard practice. References to the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (8 vols., Harvard University Press, 1931–58) are given in decimal notation: for example, (1.444) refers to vol. 1, paragraph 444. References to the *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition* (Indiana University Press, 1982–) give volume and page numbers: for example, W8: 205 refers to vol. 8, p. 205. References to *The Essential Peirce* (2 vols., Indiana University Press, 1992, 1998) give volume and page numbers: for example, EP2:200 refers to vol. 2, p. 200. References to Peirce's manuscripts are given according to the Robin Catalogue of the Peirce Papers in the Houghton Library at Harvard University (*Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, University of Massachusetts Press, 1967).

friendship, there has been a tendency among historians of ideas to downplay their influence on each other. Students of Peirce and James usually seem more inclined to flesh out their disagreements than their agreements, perhaps especially when it comes to their pragmatisms. The story of Peirce renaming his pragmatism with the less agreeable name, pragmatism, is well known, and it is usually said that Peirce took this step to distance himself from James (and from others who were in the James camp). While there is certainly some truth to this, I believe there was an interesting interplay of ideas at work in the development of Peirce's and James's late pragmatisms just as there had been in the early Metaphysical Club days. In particular, I believe that Peirce's late pragmatism, while distinct from James's in important ways, bears evidence of James's influence—at least it becomes more Jamesian in certain respects. The reference in my title to Peirce's post-Jamesian pragmatism is to what is usually called Peirce's late pragmatism—the pragmatism that emerged after James's landmark 1898 Berkeley lecture.

I should point out that I am not only concerned with history but also with issues about pragmatism that bear on philosophy today. It is widely acknowledged, even by those who do not welcome it, that pragmatism is on the rise. I do welcome it, but I know that from its earliest days pragmatism has had its detractors, and that is as true today as it was a hundred years ago. But whether we like it or not, pragmatism can no longer be dismissed as of only historical interest. This is evident from the large number of recent articles and books about pragmatism as well as from the fact that a number of journals and centers have sprung up in recent years to advance pragmatism studies. Of special note is the increasing number of international conferences on pragmatism which attests not only to the present-day interest in pragmatism but also to the fact that no matter how American it might have been in its origins, pragmatism belongs to the world.

Among those who have written about the resurgence of pragmatism, some go so far as to say that it could become the dominant philosophical approach of 21st century⁶. One such scholar is Richard Bernstein, whose work stands out because of his confidence in the continuing, even in part still untapped, relevance of the classical pragmatists, especially Peirce, James, and Dewey. Bernstein is adamant that Peirce is the father of pragmatism but he dismisses the usual claim that pragmatism was born in 1877-78 in the pages of the *Popular Science Monthly* where Peirce introduced his famous pragmatic maxim, or in the earlier private meetings of the Metaphysical Club. Bernstein argues that pragmatism was really born in 1868 in the pages of Peirce's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* papers, in which Peirce argued that all thought is in signs and where he made a strong case against intuitive cognition⁷. James, still in Medical School at Harvard in 1868, found Peirce's papers to be "exceedingly bold" and "subtle" but also, at that time, "incomprehensible", and he claimed that Peirce's attempt at elucidating them for him privately hadn't helped much; neverthe-

⁶See, for example, Margolis (2002) and (2010). Margolis, whose recent writings have focused on the key role he thinks a third wave of pragmatism will play in reunifying philosophy across national boundaries, admires both James and Peirce for their original, even radical, ideas, though he singles out John Dewey as having made the greatest contribution to classical pragmatism. Margolis seems inclined to view what he calls the second wave of pragmatism, initiated and energized by the writings and debates of Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam, as a decided advance over classical pragmatism which it appropriately eclipsed (Margolis 2002, p. 12). Accordingly, he applauds the resolution of neopragmatist Robert Brandom, Rorty's student, to look for inspiration in Kant and Hegel instead of in the classical pragmatists. In fact it seems that, increasingly, Hegel has become the focal point of Margolis's philosophical outlook and it is not entirely clear why he thinks that the coming philosophy should be thought of as the third wave of pragmatism instead of as a fusion of pragmatism with analytical and continental schools of thought.

⁷See Bernstein (2010), especially chap. 1, for an excellent account of Peirce's anti-Cartesian program that laid the groundwork for his pragmatism.

less, he said he found them “strangely” interesting (Richardson 2006, p. 95). But if Peirce got the pragmatism ball rolling, as it were, it was soon picked up by others. Bernstein readily acknowledges the massive contributions of James and Dewey and he argues that there has been a more-or-less continuous development of pragmatism since its beginning with the upshot that pragmatic themes have come to dominate contemporary philosophy. Bernstein thinks that Putnam, Rorty, and Jürgen Habermas have been the key players in shaping pragmatism in recent years (Bernstein 2010, p. xi). (As an aside, I think we all know that John Dewey was the key player in extending pragmatism’s first wave beyond the lifetimes of Peirce and James but that is a story for another time).

Unlike Bernstein, some promoters of pragmatism downplay, or even deny, the continuing relevance of the classical pragmatists⁸. I believe that is partly the result of differences of opinion about what pragmatism is. We know, for example, that in some circles pragmatism is regarded as a methodology and in other circles as an epistemology. Some focus on the social and political ramifications of pragmatist thought. Many, including Bernstein, identify pragmatism with a distinctive assemblage of attitudes and ideas—a characteristic ethos. That is why Bernstein can hold that the birth of pragmatism properly began in 1868 with Peirce’s “radical critique” of Cartesianism and not with the 1878 publication of his pragmatic maxim (Bernstein 2010, pp. ix & 35). It is well known that as early as 1908, only ten years after James’s Berkeley lecture, Arthur Lovejoy identified thirteen different varieties of pragmatism, and nearly everyone supposes that now, more than a hundred years later, a great many more could be added. Certainly what pragmatism is, is a serious question, but it cannot be treated thoroughly here and, besides, as I have pointed out elsewhere⁹, one does not have to know exactly what pragmatism is in order to be a pragmatist philosopher just as one does not have to know clearly what analytic philosophy is or what continental philosophy is to be an analytic or a continental philosopher. Nevertheless, it will help if we stake out a position, even if only provisionally, and toward that end it will be useful to take a hint from Tom Burke, who has been trying to sort out contemporary conceptions of pragmatism and to establish some norms for the legitimate use of the name¹⁰.

Contrary to Bernstein’s claim that the importance of Peirce’s maxim has been exaggerated (Bernstein 2010, p. 35), Burke argues that along with a characteristic normative conception of belief, it “is the key to understanding what pragmatism is” (Burke 2010, p. 2), but that there are two interestingly different ways to utilize the maxim: a semantic approach which gives an operationalist account of meaning and “emphasizes interactions with objects falling under a given concept” and an inferentialist approach which “emphasizes repercussions of beliefs upon other beliefs and, respectively, upon one’s subsequent conduct—requiring a functional, inferential-role account of word meaning”(Burke, forthcoming). According to Burke, Peirce held the semantic approach and James the inferentialist approach. Burke points out that in recent times (at least since Rorty brought pragmatism back into vogue) the inferentialist approach, deriving from James, has become dominant to the point of having nearly eclipsed the operationalist orientation of Peirce. Robert Brandom, once Rorty’s student, is probably now the leading proponent of inferentialism and his work has become the main entry point for philosophers from the analytic tradition who want to find out about pragmatism (although I must enter the caveat that Brandom’s inferentialism is not a simple matter and is not equivalent to any of its antecedents). Burke notes that little attention has been given to developing an authentic Peirce-inspired pragmatist semantics focusing

⁸Joseph Margolis exhibits this tendency and it is surely true of Robert Brandom.

⁹See, for example, Houser (2003).

¹⁰See Burke (2010) and, especially, his forthcoming book, *On What Pragmatism Was*.

on actions and sensible effects to replace the standard empiricist semantics that focuses on “things and sets.” He believes that the almost unanimous embrace of inferentialism has seriously weakened pragmatism which should be a two-pronged approach incorporating both operationalist and inferentialist stances¹¹.

I think Burke somewhat exaggerates the extent to which Peirce and James held exclusive views¹². It may be acceptable to regard James's approach to pragmatism as principally inferentialist, since his concessions to Peirce's more operationalist renderings of his maxim seem somewhat pro forma. As Burke says, for James, Peirce's maxim “is more than just a methodological maxim” and among the consequences James seems most eager to consider are a conception's effects on our overall store of beliefs (Burke 2010)¹³. This does seem to put James in the inferentialist camp. But to limit Peirce to the semantic, or operationalist, approach seems mistaken—even though it is by no means a mistake to count him in the operationalist camp. It is well-known that Peirce's maxim was first published in “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” the second of his famous 1877–78 set of pragmatism papers¹⁴. In its original form it went as follows: “Consider what effects, which 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” (EP1: 132). Among the illustrations Peirce gave for using his maxim were his clarifications of “hard” as the character of something that can withstand being scratched by most substances without scoring, and of “weight” or “heavy” as characteristic of something that, “in the absence of opposing force, will fall” (EP1: 133). What we mean by these conceptions consists exclusively in what we would expect to experience in certain kinds of interactions with the objects conceived of. Years later, when Peirce returned to his maxim, he said that “if one can define accurately all the conceivable experimental phenomena which the affirmation or denial of a concept could imply, one will have therein a complete definition of the concept, and *there is absolutely nothing more in it*” (EP2: 332), and, in illustration, he said that by “lithium” we mean a mineral with specific observable characteristics which, if subjected to procedures described in textbooks of chemistry, will yield distinctive observable results. Peirce went into considerable detail in “prescribing what [one must] *do* in order to gain a perceptual acquaintance with the object of the word” *lithium* (EP2: 286) and indeed, as Burke points out, this is clearly an operationalist account of meaning. Harvard physicist, Percy W. Bridgman, is credited with developing the idea of operational meaning, which he defined as follows: “we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations [...] the true meaning of a term is to be found by observing what a man does with it, not what he says about it” (Bridgman 1927, pp. 5–7). It is easy to see why Burke describes Peirce's approach as operationalist; others have noticed this as well. Dewey's friend and collaborator, Arthur Bentley, more than once pointed out to Bridgman that he was following a path laid down by Peirce¹⁵.

¹¹One must not suppose that this two-pronged approach is merely a joining of forces of empiricism with rationalism—James, of course, would be chagrined to think he might be thought to be a rationalist. The extent to which Burke's arguments will prove convincing remains to be seen since his ideas have only been sketched in papers and talks and his book on the subject has not yet appeared.

¹²Hookway, however, argues that the pragmatisms of Peirce and James are quite distinct because they held very different views about the purpose of pragmatism (Hookway 1997, pp. 145–165).

¹³Burke develops this fully in his forthcoming *On What Pragmatism Was*.

¹⁴It was preceded by “The Fixation of Belief”, which Peirce intended to be the first part of a two-part article. Both of these pragmatism papers were part of a larger work, “Illustrations of the Logic of Science” (Peirce 1877–1878).

¹⁵For example: Bentley to Bridgman, 3 February 1950, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

But does this mean that Peirce could not also have been in some significant respect an inferentialist? Brandom, in his engaging “Tales of the Mighty Dead”, seems to deny it (Brandom 2002, p. 32), but one can’t help doubting that Brandom has read Peirce with care. Even a careful reading of Peirce’s maxim reveals an emphasis on the conceptual groundedness of pragmatic meaning: our *conception* of an object involves our *conception* of effects which might *conceivably* have practical bearings. *Meaning* concerns the relation of objects to experiential consequences, to be sure, but it does so only in the context of a network of conceptions or beliefs. If we dig deeper and look backward to Peirce’s 1868 *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* papers, and regard them as the original manifesto for pragmatism, as Bernstein recommends, and as I quite agree we should, then it is apparent that Peirce held an inferentialist theory of cognition¹⁶. In his recent book, *The Pragmatic Turn*, Bernstein points out that in these early 1868 papers Peirce attacked Descartes’ claim that there are two distinct kinds of knowledge, direct and indirect or, in other words, immediate and inferential (Bernstein 2010, p. 39). Peirce questioned whether there really is immediate cognition, which he called intuition, and concluded that there is no good reason to assume that there is. Peirce’s famous declaration that all thought is in signs, something I will say more about in a moment, amounted to a denial that we have intuitive knowledge and a claim that all knowledge requires inferential processing. Now it might be objected that this is not enough to count Peirce an inferentialist according to the current understanding of inferentialism and I concede that there is merit in this objection. But Bernstein strongly disagrees with Brandom’s assessment of the American Pragmatic Tradition as belonging outside the inferentialist camp and he notes, specifically, that Brandom “fails to recognize that Peirce’s pragmatism is a normative pragmatism that is based upon an inferential semantics” (Bernstein 2010, p. 103)¹⁷. To what extent Peirce explicitly thought of his 1877–78 pragmatism in the context of his 1868 inferentialist framework is difficult to say but the fact that he was so careful to emphasize that his maxim was concerned with conceptions and conceivability leads one to believe that he could hardly have missed the link between his pragmatism and his 1868 sign theory of cognition. Peirce’s semiotic theory of mind was always the background theory for his pragmatism, but it would be many more years before he would make this link explicit.

In light of these considerations, I believe that Burke’s claim that Peirce was primarily a semantic operationalist and James an inferentialist is misleading because at least Peirce employed both approaches, but that does not weaken Burke’s central point that an adequate conception of pragmatism should accord with both operationalist and inferentialist readings of the pragmatic maxim. Furthermore, even though Burke’s two-pronged approach does not cleanly demarcate the pragmatisms of Peirce and James, he may still be correct in thinking that the most complete and satisfactory account of original pragmatism is a synthesis of

¹⁶Bernstein remarked on the importance of these early papers in his 1988 presidential address to the American Philosophical Association where he claimed that there is no important argument in the present-day anti-foundationalist arsenal that Peirce had not anticipated (Bernstein 1989).

¹⁷See also Bernstein (2010), pp. 226–227, n.12. In a recent article on Brandom and Peirce, Cathy Legg carefully examined Peirce’s 1868 anti-intuitionism and compared it with Brandom’s inferentialism. Legg concluded that in some respects Peirce had succeeded in formulating a clearer and more thoroughgoing inferentialism than Brandom’s (Legg 2008, p. 105). We must be careful, though, not to attribute too radical an inferentialism to Peirce and to remember his antipathy to rationalism (for example, see 1.631). Legg notes that an important precursor to the debate over inferentialism was played out in the 19th century in the great intuition debate between John Stuart Mill and Sir William Hamilton, and their followers. The Mill-Hamilton debate concerned whether, or to what extent, we have intuitive, or unmediated, knowledge; Hamilton was for and Mill was against intuitions. (See Legg (2008), pp. 111–113. Note that she references Smyth (1997) as her source for the Mill-Hamilton debate.) Peirce’s 1868 arguments against intuitive cognition grew out of the Mill-Hamilton debate.

Peirce's and James's views¹⁸. But more interesting, I think, is that Burke's conception of a two-pronged pragmatism points to the very factor which, over time, led Peirce to explicitly reformulate his pragmatism in semiotic terms. That is what I will turn to now and then I'll briefly consider the role William James may have played in moving Peirce to a richer conception of pragmatism.

The factor I have in mind is the dual reference implicit in every sign and, therefore, in every concept of intellectual purport. Every sign fundamentally consists of a temporally based triadic relation in which it, the sign, mediates between its object and its interpretant and therefore may be said to refer to both. The key to intelligence and the acquisition of knowledge is semiosis, or sign action, whereby interpretants are determined indirectly by their referent objects through the mediation of the operative sign¹⁹. Peirce's denial of intuition was partly based on his argument that interpretants cannot arise directly from their objects, dyadically, without mediation. All of these ideas Peirce had developed by 1868. But notwithstanding the inferentialism implied by Peirce's denial of intuitive knowledge, made stronger by his anticipation of inferential role semantics (Bernstein 2010, pp. 103–104), his early classification of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols focused on the relation of signs to their objects without explicit reference to interpretants. His more-or-less exclusive attention to the sign-object relation does suggest that Peirce's focus of concern, even in 1868, was mainly semantic, which is consistent with Burke's interpretation of Peirce's early pragmatism.

Beginning in the mid-1880's, Peirce turned his attention to his scientific metaphysics, especially his theory of categories, and his realism became progressively more robust. Previously he had ascribed reality only to relations and generals (belonging to his category of thirdness) but he came to ascribe reality also to actions and reactions of existents (belonging to his category of secondness) and, finally, to the realm of feeling and possibles (belonging to his category of firstness). These changes expanded Peirce's ontology and enriched his theory of signs by increasing the range of possible semiosis. Peirce eventually came to see that feelings and actions, as well as conceptions, could be proper correlates of sign relations, either as objects or as interpretants.

Peirce also expanded his semiotic theory in other ways. The early simple account of the fundamental sign relation as a triadic relation between an object, sign, and interpretant grew into a more complex account involving two kinds of objects, one immediate (the object as the sign represents it) and one dynamic (the external object that determines the sign), and three kinds of interpretants, one immediate (the interpretant as represented by the sign), one dynamic (the actual effect produced by the sign), and a final interpretant (the habit that exhausts the function of the sign). Until 1903 the only division of signs Peirce employed was the famous icon, index, symbol division²⁰ which marks how signs are related to the objects they represent, either by virtue of similarity, existential connection, or convention. But from 1903 on he considered the sign relation from many new angles and worked out new divisions. First he added a division to account for the different ways signs can be interpreted from the standpoint of his categories—either as signs of possibility, fact, or reason. This is

¹⁸Morton White made the suggestion that Peirce's operational treatment of meaning, expressed in statements of the form "if operation O [...] then experience E will result," can be used by James as well "if acceptance of belief of a statement is admissible as an operation, and satisfaction is admissible as an experience" (Flower and Murphey, 1977, p. 676).

¹⁹Peirce's preferred spelling of "semiosis" and "semiotic" was "sêmeiosis" and "sêmeiotic". For this paper I'll follow the common practice of spelling these words without the extra e.

²⁰Sometimes he used different names.

the rhemes, dicisigns, arguments division²¹. Then he added a division to account for what signs are in themselves, or materially—either qualities, existents, or laws²². This is the qualisigns, sinsigns, legisigns division. From these three divisions, Peirce worked out ten classes of signs. Eventually he added seven more divisions yielding, altogether, sixty-six classes of signs (but he still thought there was room for improvement).

The final division of signs in Peirce's extended system distinguished signs according to the nature of the assurance they afforded their interpreters. Abducent signs afford assurance by instinct or, we might say, by an evolved attunement to nature. Induents afford assurance by experience. Deduents afford assurance by form. All three types of assurance correspond to types of inference (abduction, induction, or deduction) confirming that in Peirce's opinion all semiosis, and therefore all cognition, is inferential²³.

There is much more in Peirce's semiotic that has relevance for the evolution of his pragmatism but I'll only mention one further matter: its partition into three branches. The dual reference of signs to objects and interpretants is the key to how Peirce divides up his study of signs. The first branch, speculative grammar, deals mainly with syntax and is concerned with signs *per se*, focusing on the necessary and sufficient conditions for signhood or on what is requisite for representation of any kind. The second branch, speculative critic, deals with the relations of signs to the objects they represent. Its focus is on semantic questions such as reference, truth conditions, and validity. The third branch is speculative rhetoric, which deals with the relations of signs to their users (or to their interpretants). In his one article on rhetoric, Peirce wrote that "the most essential business" of speculative rhetoric "is to ascertain by logical analysis, greatly facilitated by the development of the other branches of [semiotic], what are the indispensable conditions of a sign's acting to determine another sign nearly equivalent to itself" (EP2: 328). The focus of this branch is on the pragmatic and rhetorical aspects of semiosis²⁴.

The point of my digression on Peirce's semiotic was to elaborate on Tom Burke's recommendation that pragmatism should be explicated in both an operationalist framework and an inferentialist framework and how this two-pronged approach points to the factor that led Peirce to reformulate his pragmatism in semiotic terms. That factor was the dual reference of every conception and the need for multiple frameworks for fully explicating meaning. Burke fused Peirce's operationalist reading of his pragmatic maxim with James's inferentialist reading to gain a sufficiently complex framework for pragmatism. What I am suggesting is that the dual framework Burke advocates can be found in Peirce alone if we take his full semiotic as a general background theory for his pragmatism. Peirce does this explicitly in 1907 in his famous Manuscript 318 (EP2: 398–433) in which he unites his pragmatism with his semiotic in an attempt to explain his pragmatism and to produce a proof of its adequacy for explicating meaning²⁵.

Burke recommends that attention should be given to "developing a Peirce-inspired pragmatist semantics focusing on actions and sensible effects to replace the standard empi-

²¹For this division, too, he sometimes used different names. See "Sundry Logical Conceptions" (EP2: Sel. 20).

²²See "Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations" (EP2: Sel. 21).

²³By 1906, he had come to hold the view that without a shared understanding of the right sort a sign could not "fulfill its function" and there could be no communication between utterer and interpreter (EP2: 478).

²⁴Peirce's use of the word "speculative" was intended to associate his three branches of semiotic with the medieval trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—but he used different names and never quite settled on a preferred set.

²⁵See also Peirce's 1905 paper, "Issues of Pragmaticism" (EP2: sel. 25), where he began developing a semiotic account of his pragmatism.

ricist semantics that focuses on ‘things and sets.’” I have no quarrel with that. However, it seems to me that one could with equal earnestness argue that Peirce’s mature semiotic forms the framework for a pragmatist inferentialist semantics that also needs attention—above all, it should be formalized²⁶. Even more interesting is the possibility of a hybrid semantics (a pluralist semantics or, simply, a robust semantics) that explicates the meaning of expressions (or signs of any kind) on a basis that takes account of both their inferential relations and use and their representative relations to objects or referents of various kinds. This may be what Burke is aiming toward with his “two-pronged approach” and it may also be what Peirce was trying to achieve with his mature realist semiotic²⁷.

So far, I have given a very abbreviated and spotty account of Peirce’s pragmatism emphasizing the semiotic underpinnings of its mature form. It is well known that it was not until after James’s Berkeley lecture in August 1898 that Peirce returned to pragmatism after a hiatus of twenty years. It is true that in the early 1880’s he had used his original pragmatism articles as texts for some of his Johns Hopkins courses and had continued to be guided by his maxim, but he did not take up pragmatism again as an explicit topic of study until after James caught the interest of the philosophic world in what it took to be a fresh idea, and publicly gave Peirce the credit. Some commentators think that, in crediting Peirce, who in 1898 was seriously down on his luck, James was doing him a favor, hoping to help raise his stock²⁸. This is supported by the fact that only a few months after James gave his lecture, he wrote to Peirce asking if he had received copies of the lecture “wherein I flourished the flag of your principle of Pragmatism?” Whatever James’s purpose, the groundswell of interest in pragmatism that followed did create opportunities for Peirce, and pragmatism became the focus for much of his writing during the final years of his life. Murray Murphey has pointed out that simply by naming Peirce as the inventor of pragmatism, James compelled him “to decide where he stood not only on pragmatism itself but on a wide range of associated questions. The results”, Murphey wrote, “were a sweeping revision of [his] architectonic, the introduction of phenomenology and normative science, an extension of [his] theology, and a complete revision of [his] theory of cognition” (Murphey 1961, pp. 358–359). All of these results would inform Peirce’s mature pragmatism. Late in 1902 Peirce wrote to James about how his view of pragmatism was changing and how the “true nature of pragmatism” cannot be understood without framing it within the context of his categories and the corresponding normative sciences. He said that only four years earlier, when he gave his 1898 Cambridge Conferences Lectures, he “had not really got to the bottom of it or seen the unity of the whole thing”²⁹. Eventually, as I have emphasized, it was in the context of his most advanced theory of signs that Peirce tried to bring his late pragmatism into unity with the rest of his system of ideas. The result was a pragmatism quite distinct from James’s and certainly more sophisticated technically. Nevertheless, I believe that Peirce’s engagement with James’s ideas was a major factor in the growth of his pragmatism. This is what I will turn to now.

I am aware that to select one source of influence from a complex network of factors can be misleading but James is a special case. He and Peirce had a long history of critiquing

²⁶Perhaps we could say that in some respects Peirce already achieved a quasi-formalization of his semiotic. Peirce’s Existential Graphs might be made to contribute to this formalization, or perhaps they can provide an alternative framework for an inferentialist semantics.

²⁷For systematic accounts of Peirce’s mature semiotics see Liszka (1996) and Short (2007).

²⁸See, for example, Murphey (1961), p. 358 and the introduction to Menand (1997).

²⁹Peirce to James, 25 Nov. 1902, James Papers, Houghton Library.

each other's ideas, sometimes quite sharply but always respectfully³⁰. A lot of James's influence took the form of confronting Peirce with ideas that were in some ways compelling but, at the same time, disturbing. Many of the issues that Peirce and James debated concerned perception: whether there are first sensations, whether we have direct perception of spatial extension, whether perception involves unconscious inference, and so on. Peirce and James had long-running disagreements about these and other issues. It is well-known that James's conception of pragmatism also disturbed Peirce although perhaps less than is usually supposed. It is true that there were elements of James's pragmatism that Peirce wanted to distance himself from—he wrote to James in March 1904 that he and Schiller carried pragmatism too far, but he admitted that “The humanistic element of pragmatism is very true and important and impressive”. Peirce's principal objection was that he doubted that James's pragmatism could be proved. In 1905, when Peirce announced that he had taken the name “pragmaticism” for his original form of pragmatism he explained that “[t]he original view appears [...] to be a more compact and unitary conception than the others. But its capital merit [...] is that it more readily connects itself with a critical proof of its truth” (EP2: 335). Peirce spent a lot of time between 1902 and 1908 constructing proofs of pragmaticism. But that Peirce never dissociated himself from pragmatism in the broader sense is clear from a letter he wrote to Mario Calderoni soon after the name change: “I proposed that the word ‘pragmatism’ should hereafter be used somewhat loosely to signify affiliation with Schiller, James, Dewey, Royce, and *the rest of us*, while the particular doctrine which I invented the word to denote [...] should be called ‘pragmaticism.’ The extra syllable will indicate the narrower meaning” (8.205-206)³¹. By 1907 Peirce frequently reverted to using the name “pragmatism”—possibly because he had begun to think of pragmatism in broader terms.

To convey some sense of the interplay of ideas between Peirce and James that helped shape Peirce's late pragmatism, I'll run briefly through some examples in chronological order. In 1887, while Peirce was working on his “A Guess at the Riddle”, his first self-proclaimed architectonic treatment of philosophy (W6: 166–210), James's “The Perception of Space” appeared in four parts in successive issues of *Mind* (James 1887). In his article, James objected strongly to the idea of Helmholtz (and Wundt) that “space consciousness” is the result of unconscious inference and he made a case for direct perception of space based on “first optical sensations” (James 1887, pp. 545–546). A year earlier, in his “The Perception of Time”, he incorporated E. R. Clay's idea of “the specious present” and argued that our “cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth” and said that in this respect our perception of time is analogous with our perception of space: “the original experience of both space and time is always of something already given as a unit [...]” (James 1886). But Peirce was a great admirer of Helmholtz and agreed with his so-called “empiristic” view that perception involves unconscious inference. Peirce and his student, Joseph Jastrow, had not long before published the results of an important study they had conducted which supported the conclusion that perceptual judgments can be influenced by sensations too faint to be consciously detectable (Peirce & Jastrow, 1885). He wrote to James in October 1887 and raised a muted criticism in support of the Helmholtz account of perception: “I fancy that all which is present to consciousness is sensation & nothing assignable is a first sensation”³². Nevertheless, he assured James that he had learned much from

³⁰This was not always understood by others. See my remarks in Houser (2010.2) concerning Peirce's review of James's *Principles*.

³¹My emphasis. See, also, Houser (2010.3).

³²Peirce to James, 27 Oct. 1887, James Papers, Houghton Library.

his work. From that time on, questions about consciousness and perception would be prominent in of Peirce's thought and in the development of his pragmatism. It is difficult to say how much James's papers on time and space immediately influenced Peirce but when James's *Principles of Psychology* appeared three years later there is no doubt about its impact on him.

James's twelve-hundred page *Principles* was a landmark work, destined to become the most influential text in the history of American psychology. James worked on his book for over a decade and it was published in September 1890 to wide acclaim—although there were a few cautious dissenters. Wilhelm Wundt is known to have proclaimed that “It is literature [...] it is beautiful, but it is not psychology” (Blumenthal, 1970, p. 238). Peirce was one of only five colleagues James acknowledged in his preface for their intellectual companionship. When *Principles* appeared, Peirce had begun work on his first series of articles for *The Monist*, the five papers that would set out his systematic evolutionary philosophy anticipated in his “Guess at the Riddle”, and he had been working through a number of issues that James addressed in articles that became chapters of *Principles*—for example, that consciousness is not a property of a mere mechanism but is a state of nerve matter, that “ultimate facts” are illogical, and that feelings spread³³. Peirce was under enormous pressure to complete a report on gravity for the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey and his definitions for the *Century Dictionary*, but he hurriedly composed a review of James's *Principles* for *The Nation*. It was a pretty harsh review, critical of James's method and of his reasoning, which Peirce characterized as circular and virtually self-refuting (W8: 239). Peirce focused especially on James's claim that the reasoning in perception is “above-board” and there is no need for intermediary unconscious ideas (James 1890, II, p. 111). According to Peirce, James failed to understand that what was meant by “unconscious inference” was only that “the reasoner is not conscious of making an inference.” More generally, Peirce claimed that James's methodology was “materialistic to the core” in supposing that once psychology “has ascertained the empirical correlation of the various sorts of thought and feeling with definite conditions of the brain”, it can go no farther. Peirce thought this put James in league with the mechanistic philosophers he opposed (W8: xlix). But Peirce was not wholly negative; he made a point of saying that the “directness and sharpness” of his objections should be “understood as a tribute of respect” and he wrote that James's *Principles* was “the most important contribution [...] made to the subject for many years.”

Peirce's *Nation* review, critical though it was, was the beginning of an engagement with James's *Principles* that continued for at least another seven years. In March 1892 Peirce wrote a brief notice of James's abridged edition, taking him to task for his easy acceptance of “unexamined assumptions.” But two months later in his “The Law of Mind”, the third paper of Peirce's first *Monist* Series, one can see that he had been earnestly confronting ideas from James's *Principles*. Although Peirce expressed his doubt that “we have a feeling of bigness” he admitted that James might be right in holding that we do (W8: 148). A few weeks later in “Man's Glassy Essence”, in his discussion of habit formation, Peirce brought up James's idea that habits are related to the plasticity of the materials in which they inhere. Peirce did not fully endorse James's account, but his lengthy discussion of elasticity and habit indicates that James's ideas were having an impact on the course of his thought (W8: 178). Habit formation would become a critical issue for Peirce's metaphysics and for his late pragmatism. In January 1894 Peirce wrote to tell James how much he liked his distinc-

³³To compare Peirce's work with James's, see, for example, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, pp. 588ff. Note that much of “The Stream of Thought” had been published in *Mind* in 1884 under the title “On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology” (James 1884).

tion between the “substantive and transitive parts of the train of thought” and that there was nothing in his psychology which served his own purposes better. Typically, Peirce criticized James for his terminology and suggested that he choose more appropriate “*psychological terms*” leaving “grammar-words for *logic*”³⁴. But by this time, Peirce had already made use of James’s distinction in the second article of his 1892 *Critic of Arguments* series in a discussion about how to represent logical thought diagrammatically (3.424), and he would use it again in his 1893 “Reply to the Necessitarians” (6.595), and in his 1901 article on “Relatives” for *Baldwin’s Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, where he noted that “almost every great step in mathematical reasoning derives its importance from the fact that it involves an abstraction [whereby] the transitory elements of thought [...] are made substantive elements” (3.642).

Peirce continued to study James’s *Principles*. There is a notebook from about 1897 in which Peirce recorded forty-six questions and comments relating to volume one³⁵. It appears that Peirce was using what he found engaging in James’s ideas about consciousness, abstraction, and habit to work out a more satisfactory taxonomy of consciousness and to hone his categories and his theory of inference. Mathias Girel, who has made a close and excellent study of Peirce’s grapplings with James’s ideas, points to Peirce’s “Questions” as typical of his treatment of James’s *Principles*: Peirce would acknowledge interesting insights on James’s part but would then try to provide the “conceptual tools” necessary for fully grasping “the phenomenon” under consideration (Girel 2003, p. 179). It is hard not to think of Wittgenstein when reflecting on Peirce’s long engagement with James’s *Principles*. Wittgenstein, too, was strangely attracted to James’s work—it has become part of our philosophical lore that for some time James’s *Principles* was the only book to be found on Wittgenstein’s bookshelves in Cambridge³⁶. Richard Gale muses that “One gets the feeling that Wittgenstein wrote his *Philosophical Investigations* with an open copy of *The Principles of Psychology* before him [...]” (Gale 1999, p. 165). But, like Peirce, Wittgenstein generally used ideas from *The Principles* to illustrate interesting problems which he believed James had treated inadequately and even once remarked: “How needed is the work of philosophy is shown by James’s psychology” (Hilmy 1987, p. 196–197). Peirce, too, seemed to think that what James’s psychology needed most was sound philosophy. One wonders if, when in late 1893 Peirce announced his plan for a twelve-volume opus on *The Principles of Philosophy*, his idea was to produce a philosophy for James’s psychology.

James’s next major work, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, appeared early in 1897. James dedicated this book “To my old friend, Charles Sanders Peirce, to whose philosophic comradeship in old times and to whose writings in more recent years I owe more incitement and help than I can express or repay.” Peirce was moved and wrote James a reflective letter expressing his appreciation (“it was a truly sweet thing, my dear William”) and then pointed out some ways his thinking had been affected by his experience of “the world of misery” which had been disclosed to him in recent years. Although rating “higher than ever the individual deed as the only real meaning there is [in] the Concept”, he now saw “more sharply [...] that it is not the mere arbitrary force in the

³⁴Peirce to James, 1 January 1894, James Papers, Houghton Library. Peirce tried more than once to convince James to replace “substantive” and “transitive” with “sessile” and “volatile” or, better yet, with “pteroentic” and “apteroentic” with a nod to the “winged” and “unwinged” words of Homer.

³⁵This notebook, or some of the questions in it, could have been written earlier, perhaps as early as 1894. See Girel (2003), pp. 178–189, for an excellent account and discussion of Peirce’s questions and answers and their relation to Peirce’s ongoing philosophical work. Many of Peirce’s questions and comments referred to Chapter VIII, “The relations of Minds to Other Things” and Chapter IX, “The Stream of Thought”.

³⁶See Goodman (2007), especially p. 61.

deed but the life it gives to the idea that is valuable"³⁷. Peirce praised James's opening essay, "The Will to Believe", for its style and lucidity, but expressed reservations about the main idea: "our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced" (James 1897, pp. 1–2). A key point made by James was that "our non-intellectual nature" influences our convictions. "Our passional nature", he wrote, "not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds." Hilary Putnam has called this essay James's "opening gun in the war for [his] own 'Pragmatism'" (Putnam 1992, p. 56).

Peirce's response came the following year in his Cambridge Conferences Lectures, entitled "Reasoning and the Logic of Things", and arranged for by James to help Peirce through his difficult times. Peirce's initial plan was to treat the logic of events, but James strongly discouraged him from anything too formal: "Now be a good boy and think a more popular plan out", he wrote to Peirce. "You are teeming with ideas—and the lectures need not [...] form a continuous whole. Separate topics of a vitally important character would do perfectly well" (Peirce 1992.2, p. 25). Peirce replied that he would accept all of James's conditions, but he could not help retorting that the "neglect of logic in Cambridge is plainly absolute". Of course Peirce could not restrain himself from putting some logic into his lectures, and, as is well known, he used the occasion to present a new theory of the continuum. But, overall, these lectures were quite accessible and were in large part directed at James and his ideas. Peirce began with a warning that given the "uncertain condition of philosophy [...] any practical applications of it to Religion and Conduct [are] exceedingly dangerous" (Peirce 1992.2, p. 108). He went on to make his much debated distinction between matters of vital importance and matters concerning the general advancement of knowledge, a distinction which has been interpreted as creating a great Peircean divide between applied and pure science³⁸, and he advanced the idea that the *will to learn* is a prerequisite for actually learning—a counterpoint to James's *will to believe*. But, disagreements aside, it is notable that Peirce was working in intellectual territory also occupied by James and was responding to many of his ideas. It is especially noteworthy that from at least this time on, the role of instinct, or sentiment, as a co-participant with reason in the acquisition of knowledge became a key concern for Peirce, and it would not be long until he came to regard ethics and esthetics as normative prerequisites for logic.

Peirce's Cambridge Conferences lectures were a great success. James wrote to Paul Carus that though they were "abstruse in parts", they were "popular and inspiring, and the whole thing leaving you with a sense that you had just been in the place where ideas are manufactured", and he told Juliette Peirce that "everyone [spoke] of [your husband's lectures] with the greatest admiration"; James mentioned in particular that Josiah Royce was "extraordinarily full of appreciation" (Peirce 1992.2, p. 36). From that time on, Royce's writings "began to drift toward Peirce's ideas" and only five months later James gave his famous lecture at Berkeley where he introduced pragmatism by name. Ketner and Putnam speculate that "these events in the careers of James and Royce, and in the career of pragmatism itself [...] were influenced by Peirce's performance" in Cambridge (Peirce 1992.2, p. 36).

I have already described some of the aftermath of James's Berkeley lecture. Though it should now be clear that there were a number of factors already at work drawing Peirce

³⁷Peirce to James, 13 March 1897, James Papers, Houghton Library.

³⁸For some discussion of Peirce's treatment of this distinction see Houser (2010.4), pp. 2–5.

back to pragmatism, there is no doubt that James's lecture made Peirce's return imperative. By November 1900, Peirce had begun reformulating his understanding of pragmatism for an entry in Baldwin's *Dictionary*³⁹. In his entry, published the following year, Peirce noted that in his *Will to Believe* and his Berkeley lecture, James pushed pragmatism "to such extremes as must then to give us pause. [He] appears to assume that the end of man is action" but, on the contrary, Peirce wrote, "action wants an end, and that [...] end must be something of a general description." Consequently, Peirce said, "the spirit of the [pragmatic] maxim [...] would direct us towards something different from practical facts, namely, to general ideas, as the true interpreters of our thought." Thus "the meaning of [a] concept does not lie in any individual reactions at all, but in the manner in which those reactions contribute to the development of concrete reasonableness".

Peirce's correspondence with James during this period indicates the direction his pragmatism was taking. On 12 June 1902 he asked James to help him with a point of psychology: "what passes in consciousness, especially what emotional and irrational states of feeling, in the course of forming a new belief?" Peirce then took up pragmatism directly: "Pragmatism is correct doctrine only insofar as it is recognized that irrational action is the mere husk of ideas. The brute element exists and must not be explained away as Hegel seeks to do. But the end of thought is action only insofar as the end of action is another thought. Far better [to] abandon the word [*thought*] and talk of representation & then *define* what kind of representation it is that constitutes consciousness". I mentioned earlier Peirce's November 1902 letter in which he told James that the "true nature of pragmatism" cannot be understood without framing it within the context of his categories and the corresponding normative sciences⁴⁰. A few days after that, he wrote again to let James know that his proposal for a grant from the Carnegie Institution had been turned down and that he was once again in dire straits. He then told James that, given time, "I think I could satisfy you that your view of pragmatism requires some modification, that it is the logical basis and proof of it [...] and its relation to the categories that have first to be made clear before it can be accurately applied except in very simple ways"⁴¹.

Once again, James came to Peirce's rescue in his hour of need. He arranged for Peirce to come to Cambridge to give another course of lectures and, for his topic, Peirce chose pragmatism. Peirce was immensely grateful and wrote to James: "You are of all my friends the one who illustrates *pragmatism* in its most needful forms. You are a jewel of pragmatism"⁴². In his seven Harvard lectures, beginning on 26 March 1903 and concluding on 17 May, Peirce wanted to put his mark on pragmatism by building a proof that would draw together most of the strands of his rather rapidly evolving philosophy⁴³. The utility of the pragmatic maxim does not constitute a proof, he said; for that pragmatism must pass through the fire of drastic analysis. Peirce built his case for pragmatism on a new theory of perception, grounded in his theory of categories and on results from phenomenology, esthetics, and ethics. He argued that there is a realm of reality associated with each category and that the reality of thirdness is necessary to explain a mode of influence on external facts that

³⁹Peirce to James, 10 November 1900, James Papers, Houghton Library.

⁴⁰Peirce to James, 25 Nov. 1902, James Papers, Houghton Library.

⁴¹Peirce to James, 1 Dec. 1902, James Papers, Houghton Library. Peirce remarked to James that pragmatism "can receive no sound support from psychology".

⁴²Peirce to James, 10 March 1903, James Papers, Houghton Library.

⁴³See Hookway (2005) and (2008) and Turrissi's introduction to Peirce (1997) for discussions of Peirce's attempt to prove pragmatism in his Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism. Hookway, especially, in these papers and in ongoing work is building a case for a 1903 proof, and for subsequent proofs, that is generally consistent with but significantly different than the proofs I sketched in Houser (1998).

cannot be explained by mechanical action alone. He argued that pragmatism is a logical, or semiotic, thesis concerning the meaning of a particular kind of symbol, the proposition, and explained that propositions are signs that must refer to their objects in two ways: indexically, by means of subjects, and iconically, by means of predicates⁴⁴. The crucial element of Peirce's argument, from the standpoint of his realism, involved the connection between propositional thought and perception. To preserve his realism, Peirce distinguished percepts, which are not propositional, from perceptual judgments, which are, and which are, furthermore, the "first premisses" of all our reasonings. The process by which perceptual judgments arise from percepts became a key factor in Peirce's case. But *if* perceptual judgments are the starting points for all intellectual development, then we must be able to perceive generality. Peirce next argued that abduction shades into perception, so that pragmatism may be regarded as the logic of abduction, and, finally, he isolated three key points: (1) that nothing is in the intellect that is not first in the senses, (2) that perceptual judgments contain general elements, and (3) that abductive inference shades into perceptual judgment without any sharp line of demarcation between them. Pragmatism, Peirce argued, follows from these propositions⁴⁵.

Peirce had succeeded in marshalling much of his growing system of philosophy in support of his increasingly rich conception of pragmatism and even had made headway toward merging his pragmatism with his developing semiotic, but his lectures were complicated and difficult to grasp. James described them as "flashes of brilliant light relieved against Cimmerian darkness!" He urged Peirce to carry the same line of thought forward to his third course of Lowell Lectures scheduled for the end of 1903 but to confine himself to fewer points and to make one of them abduction (Fisch 1986, p. 365). In his Lowell Lectures Peirce again attempted to prove his pragmatism but he spent a lot of time developing his system of signs and his Existential Graphs. Max Fisch reported that when Peirce looked back at his Lowell Lectures two years after giving them, what stood out for him was bringing the normative sciences to bear on pragmatism. Peirce wrote that: "[I]t seems to me strange that we had to wait until 1903 for any pragmatist to assert that logic ought to be based upon ethics. Perhaps some one of us had said it before; but I only know that it was then said in [my] course of lectures before the Lowell Institute in Boston, and was maintained on the ground that reasoning is thought subjected to self-control, and that the whole operation of logical self-control takes precisely the same quite complicated course which everybody ought to acknowledge is that of effective ethical self-control"⁴⁶.

Now, in the interests of bringing this paper to a conclusion, I'll move quickly through just a few more examples of Peirce's evolving pragmatism and conclude with some further thoughts about James's influence. I have already mentioned Peirce's 1905 paper, "What Pragmatism Is", in which he announced the new name, pragmaticism, for his narrower variant of pragmatism. That paper was the first article of a series on pragmatism that he had agreed to write for *The Monist*. Peirce decided he would use the opportunity to finally get his proof of pragmatism (now pragmaticism) into print. In this first article Peirce made the

⁴⁴Propositions as described here are a class of signs that Peirce would later call dicent symbols. T. L. Short argues that in another, and for him, preferred, sense, propositions are hypostatic abstractions "from a set of (in some respect equivalent) replications (actual or possible) of diverse dicent symbols" and not really signs at all (Short 2007, p. 245). See Peirce's third 1903 Harvard Lecture (EP2: 160–178), for a discussion of the meaning of "proposition" in the context of his argument for pragmatism.

⁴⁵This sketch of Peirce's 1903 proof is taken from Houser (1998), pp. xxv–xxvi. See pp. xxxiv–xxxv for a different rendering of Peirce's 1903 proof. For some elaboration of Peirce's view of the role of propositional judgment in perception see Houser (2005) and (2007).

⁴⁶Fisch 1986, pp. 365–66; the quotation is from 5.533.

interesting point that “while the pragmaticist regards Thirdness as an essential ingredient of reality, it can only govern through action, and action cannot arise except in feeling. It is the dependence of Thirdness on action (Secondness) and feeling (Firstness) that distinguishes pragmatism from the absolute idealism of Hegel”. In the second article of the series, “Issues of Pragmaticism”, Peirce restated his maxim in semiotic terms but devoted most of the paper to a consideration of critical common-sensism and scholastic realism. He extended his realism to include “real vagues” and “real possibilities”, writing that “it is the reality of some possibilities that pragmatism is most concerned to insist upon”. Fisch described the pragmatism presented in this article as pragmatism “purged of the nominalistic dross of its original exposition”. In a third article that was never published, Peirce developed his phaneroscopy and his doctrine of the valency of concepts as a basis for his proof, but along the way he decided that his Existential Graphs would provide a better basis so for his third article he substituted an explication of his Graphs. That article, “Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism”, didn’t appear until October 1906 and it was the final installment—the series was never completed and Peirce’s proof based on his Existential Graphs was never published⁴⁷.

Peirce’s final extended exposition of pragmatism is the famous Manuscript 318, begun as a “letter to the editor” for the *Nation* but expanded into a lengthy article that also was never published during Peirce’s lifetime. There are many fragments and variants of this 1907 paper in which Peirce finally managed to fully explicate his pragmatism in a semiotic framework and to complete a proof based on that explication. His proof began with the premiss that every concept and every thought beyond immediate perception is a sign, and concluded with the proposition that a final logical interpretant must be of the nature of a habit. “But how”, Peirce asked, can a habit be described other “than by a description of the kind of action to which it gives rise, with the specification of the conditions and of the motive?” Peirce claimed that this is the very kernel of pragmatism which he expressed succinctly by saying that the “whole meaning of an intellectual predicate is that certain kinds of events would happen, once in so often, in the course of experience, under certain kinds of existential circumstances” (EP2: 402)⁴⁸.

The following year, 1908, Peirce wrote up his “Neglected Argument for the Reality of God” for *The Hibbert Journal*⁴⁹. For his argument, Peirce elaborated on why our “instinct” for guessing—Galileo’s *il lume naturale*—is so successful. At the end of his paper, Peirce made a connection with pragmatism (or pragmaticism, for he had gone back to using that name). Peirce concluded that “man, like any other animal, is gifted with power of understanding sufficient for the conduct of life. This brings him”, Peirce says, “for testing the hypothesis [that God is real], to taking a stand upon Pragmaticism, which implies faith in common-sense and in instinct, though only as they issue from the cupel-furnace of measured criticism” (EP2: 445–446). Peirce’s late use of pragmaticism in support of a religious hypothesis is strangely reminiscent of James’s original use of pragmatism in his Berkeley lecture.

In reflecting on the intellectual companionship of Peirce and James and on the influence James had on the course of Peirce’s thought, it is important to bear in mind their differen-

⁴⁷For recent work on Peirce’s attempt to use EG as a basis for a proof of pragmatism, see Pietarinen and Snellman (2006) and Pietarinen (2008).

⁴⁸See Houser (1998), xxxv–xxxvi, for some discussion of this proof.

⁴⁹In this paper (Peirce 1908), Peirce distinguished between an argument, “any process of thought reasonably tending to produce a definite belief”, and an argumentation, “an argument proceeding upon definitely formulated premisses” (EP2: 435).

ces. Hilary Putnam has pointed to “the enormous difference in their underlying metaphysical assumptions”, and more-or-less sums up these differences by pointing out that Peirce could not tolerate James’s nominalism and that James’s had no room in his philosophy for Peirce’s Thirdness (Putnam, 1997, p. 179). These are indeed fundamental disagreements. In his excellent article in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, Christopher Hookway gives a detailed account of how Peirce’s and James’s pragmatisms differ and why their differences, which run throughout their philosophies as a whole, stem from differing purposes (Hookway 1997, pp. 145–165). Although he doesn’t say it straightforwardly, it seems that Hookway believes that the very different characters of Peirce and James are reflected in their pragmatisms, and I think this too. Perhaps this is most evident in James’s anti-intellectualism and Peirce’s insistence that just about everything be viewed through the lens of logic. Their different characters might also be seen in James’s frequent nagging of Peirce to write for the common man and Peirce’s frustration over James’s indifference to formalisms and analysis. James tended to see things in broad outlines, almost as though he were trusting more to his feelings than his intellect. When he wrote to Peirce to say how much he had enjoyed his *Monist* article, “The Doctrine of Necessity Examined”, he said that he believed “in that sort of thing” himself but that even if he didn’t “it would be a blessed piece of radicalism” (W8: lxxx). James liked Peirce’s article for its general thrust regardless of its specifics. Peirce tended to read James with an analytical magnifier in hand, looking for faults.

But we must also remember that Peirce never completely renounced the broader Jamesian view of pragmatism and always believed there was some common ground that he shared with the Jamesian pragmatists. Peirce set out on a narrow path when he chose to limit his pragmatism, or pragmaticism, to that exclusive set of principles and ideas that could undergird and facilitate a proof of his maxim in an acceptable form. Clearly this was sound practice and it led Peirce to a refined architectonic philosophy that may one day be distinguished as one of the great intellectual achievements of humanity. As Peirce repeatedly remarked, his pragmaticism realigned pragmatism with its beginnings in the old Metaphysical Club. Louis Menand has pointed out that what the original pragmatists had in common was “an idea about ideas. They all believed that ideas [...] are tools [...] that people devise to cope with the world in which they find themselves” (Menand 2001, p. xi). This takes cognition to be a serious business, more or less a matter of survival. But, as Peirce taught in his Cambridge Conferences Lectures, we are not always in the survival mode, dealing with matters of vital importance. It is true that Peirce’s early pragmatism, based on his doubt/belief theory of inquiry (Peirce 1877–1878), accords with Menand’s characterization, while in its later form, Peirce’s pragmatism shifted more toward a focus on logical thought than on the conduct of life; but even from the beginning Peirce’s focus was on conceptual clarity and fidelity and his method tended toward formal analysis. Yet is it possible that, in the end, Peirce could not so staunchly resist the siren song of James’s less rigid pragmatism?

As his life drew toward its close, Peirce remarked that his pragmatism was useful for making reasoning more secure but that it “does not bestow a single smile upon beauty, upon moral virtue, or upon abstract truth;—the three things that alone raise Humanity above Animality” (EP2: 465). This was not a repudiation of his logical pragmatism, nor an embrace of James’s more humanistic pragmatism, but it is clearly an indication of the increased strength of Peirce’s aesthetic and humanistic interests. In his recent book on pragmatism, Bernstein refers to two of James’s essays which best express the deep ethical and humanistic underpinnings of his thought: “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings” and

“What Makes Life Worth Living?” (Bernstein 2010, p. 61). Both of those essays appeared in James’s 1899 book, *Talks to Teachers*. Late in 1910, after James’s death, Juliette Peirce wrote to Alice James that her husband “has not been the same since the loss of his earliest and best friend” and asked her if she would please send Charles a copy of James’s *Talks to Teachers*, which he had never read but now wanted to⁵⁰. Of course this does not prove that Peirce was gravitating to a more multifaceted pragmatism, but it is testament to the attraction Peirce continued to feel for James and his work and it is suggestive of a turn in Peirce’s thought toward more humanistic concerns. The friendship of Peirce and James, and their engagement with each other’s thought, is one of the great stories of classical American philosophy.

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⁵⁰Juliette Peirce to Alice James, 1 November 1910, Max H. Fisch Papers. The date written on the letter does not include the year but Fisch has guessed that it was written in 1910, about two months after James’s death.

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