Charles Sanders Peirce was an American pragmatist whose notions of, and about community, inform not only his reformulation of ‘science’ and ontology but also the complex theory of continuity (synechism) that structures his pragmatism. Peirce's realism is examined through his theorizing of community and synechism, and an assessment of his attempt to reconcile Kant's idealism with British empiricism. One consequence of this reconciliation is a theory of truth that posits both the singleness of truth (a characteristic presumed by Hermann von Helmholtz and William Hamilton), and truth's infinite deferral in the light of the fallible modes of human perception and reasoning. Envisioning fallibilism as occurring always within and between communities of inquiry, Peirce develops the famous pragmatic supposition that truth is that which no one has a reason to disbelieve. The discussion of Peirce's realism includes his theory of generals and its resonance with Helmholtz's theory of the reality of natural laws; for both thinkers, the reality of a law (or general) differs from individual (and equally real) instances of that law, with the difference residing in Peirce's synechism, where Helmholtz attributes the reality of natural laws to the overarching action of causality.
European roots of the movement in a search for what makes pragmatism uniquely American. She argues that the inextricably American character of the pragmatism of such figures as Charles Sanders Peirce and William James lies in its often-understated affirmation of America as a uniquely religious country with a God-given mission, and as populated by God-fearing citizens. By looking at European and British thinkers whom the pragmatists read, Hamner examines how pragmatism's notions of self, nation, and morality were formed in reaction to the work of these thinkers. She finds that the pervasive religiosity of nineteenth-century American public language underlies Peirce's and James's resistance to aspects of the philosophy and science of their non-American colleagues. This religiosity, Hamner shows, is linked strongly to the continuing rhetorical power of American Puritanism. Claims made for and about Puritanism were advanced throughout the nineteenth century as rallying cries for specific political, social, and individual changes. It was in this religiously and politically charged environment that Peirce and James received and reinterpreted non-American voices. Hamner traces the development of pragmatism by analyzing the concepts of consciousness, causality, will, and belief in two German thinkers (Hermann von Helmholtz and Wilhelm Wundt) and two Scottish thinkers (William Hamilton and Alexander Bain), and by examining how their ideas were appropriated by Peirce and James. The book is arranged in three main parts: Evolution of German psychology; Evolution of Scottish psychology; and Pragmatic reception of European psychology.

Charles S. Peirce
Torjus Midtgarden

in Categories of Being: Essays on Metaphysics and Logic

Published in print: 2012 Published Online: September 2012
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199890576.003.0009
Item type: chapter

This chapter considers Charles S. Peirce's architectonic plan for constructing philosophical systems and how it bears on his view of the relation between logic and metaphysics. The chapter asks whether Peirce can be said to belong to the modeltheoretical tradition, as Jaakko Hintikka has proposed, rather than to the tradition viewing logical language as a universal medium. Several facts seem to contradict a positive answer: firstly, Peirce developed sign typological distinctions assumed to be valid across natural languages and across the distinction between natural and formal languages. Secondly, the mature Peirce assumed a universal domain of objects to which all propositions refer. The author investigates how Peirce's architectonic plan establishes a
unilateral dependence of metaphysics on logic. The chapter considers Peirce's semiotical analysis and how it motivates an ontological theory of facts. The chapter shows that the distinction discussed is not well suited to capture Peirce's understanding of the relation between logic and metaphysics.

Conclusions
M. Gail Hamner
in American Pragmatism: A Religious Genealogy
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

The chapters in part III of the book (on the American pragmatists Charles Sanders Peirce and William James) began with psychological concepts and ended with discussions of self, God, and nation, but this chapter inverts the direction of analysis, and offers a close reading of lectures written almost contemporaneously by James and Peirce. First, James's Puritan image of self, God, and nation is clarified, and then it is argued how these visions arise out of and/or parallel to James's understandings of consciousness, causality, will, and belief. Having established that Jamesian pragmatism delineates a strong version of the myth of the American self, the chapter concludes with a reading of Peirce that demonstrates how his pragmatism offers an alternate version of this myth. Peirce stands as the operative unthought of James; his views on self and nation engage the Puritan imagery as surely as those of James, but with less triumphalism and more humility. Perhaps the recent renewed interest in Peirce's complicated vision of the world can be attributed, at least in part, to precisely this sobriety and to the alternative genealogy he offers of the self and its relations to community and the cosmos.

“Man’s highest developments are social”
Gesche Linde
in The Varieties of Transcendence
Published in print: 2016 Published Online: September 2016
DOI: 10.5422/fordham/9780823267576.003.0010
Item type: chapter

This chapter explores some of the semiotic presuppositions and implications of Charles Sanders Peirce's philosophy of religion from
the perspective of his semiotic final draft of 1905. More specifically, it examines religion in the individual and the relation between religion and community within the context of semiotics. It considers Peirce's concept of perception, whereby he claims that perception is the semiotic process that leads from a percept to a perceptual judgment, thereby imbuing sensual immediateness with semantic value, and that it is perception through which religion originates in the individual. It also discusses the way that the perception thesis offers Peirce manifold explanatory force to come to terms with religion as well as Peirce's claim that religious experience has an intrinsically social character. Finally, it highlights the intrinsic epistemological problems of the perception thesis and introduces Peirce's concept of abduction as a means of solving these problems.

Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity
Hilary Putnam

in Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities

Putnam engages with moral objectivity and the question of ethical truth in this paper, in which he combats the idea that there is no intellectual structure worth taking seriously to the arguments of American pragmatists such as Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. As a countercurrent to contemporary analytic philosophy, Putnam interprets and builds on the work of Dewey so as to yield the conclusion that there can be a rational basis for adopting ethical positions and that democratic processes are necessary constituents of social rationality.

Hermann von Helmholtz
M. Gail Hamner

in American Pragmatism: A Religious Genealogy

This chapter and the next deals with the texts of two German thinkers who were widely read by Charles Sanders Peirce and William James – the German psychologists Hermann von Helmholtz and Wilhelm Wundt. They clarify the connections and differences between America
and Europe, and specify the connections between science and philosophy in ways that intersect with the Puritan questions of identity, ethics, and politics. The work of von Helmholtz (with which that of Peirce has some parallels) evinces an understanding of science and natural law that was only partially accepted by the pragmatists, their criticism pivoting on a refusal to understand scientific inquiry as being constitutively devoid of purposiveness (final causality). The focus here is on particular concepts employed by both pragmatism and its continental interlocutors before going on (in the last two chapters) to consider how the Americans transformed them. Of particular importance, as far as Helmholtz is concerned, is the concept of causality: first, an analysis is made of Helmholtz's theory of causation and his conviction that the theory reconciles German transcendentalism and British empiricism; and second, it is demonstrated how Helmholtz's ‘physical sign theory’ (Zeichentheorie) places his reflections on causality in a semiotic frame.

Why Theorize and Can You Learn to Do It?
Richard Swedberg

in The Art of Social Theory

Published in print: 2014  Published Online: October 2017  Publisher: Princeton University Press  DOI: 10.23943/princeton/9780691155227.003.0001

This introductory chapter begins with a description of a crime solved in the summer of 1879 to shed some light on the importance of theory in social science. The victim of the crime, and also the person who solved it, was philosopher and scientist Charles S. Peirce. In a letter to his friend, he described what had happened as an instance of the “theory why it is so that people so often guess right.” Guessing, in Peirce's view, plays a crucial role in scientific research. It is precisely through guessing that the most important part of the scientific analysis is produced—namely, the explanation. The term that Peirce most often used in his work for the guess of a hypothesis is abduction. Human beings, as he saw it, are endowed by nature with a capacity to come up with explanations. They have a “faculty of guessing,” without which science would not be possible in the first place.
The most successful idealistic response to Darwin occurred in Cambridge, Massachusetts and, soon thereafter, at Harvard University. At first promoted by a group of amateurs in ‘the Metaphysical Club’, this version of idealism was called pragmatism, and its first champion was Charles Peirce. Pragmatism defined the mental as a form of behaviour, allowed for a religious dimension to exist, and (for Peirce) looked to the practice of natural scientists and logicians for the paradigms of knowledge.

Detecting “Absolute Chance”
Charles Peirce and Anna Katharine Green

This chapter examines pragmatism by focusing on two writers who rely on chance to conduct their investigations: Charles Sanders Peirce and Anna Katharine Green. It looks at Green's detective fiction (including The Woman in the Alcove) in relation to Peirce's account of his own sleuthing after a stolen watch (“Guessing”) and shows that both writers had difficulty reconciling a socializing conception of chance with narrative forms that are, by definition, highly teleological. The chapter first traces the development of Peirce's conception of absolute chance out of his earlier and more cautious claims about probability theory and pragmatic contingency, along with his gradual transition from pragmatism in the 1870s to a more traditional metaphysics later. It then considers Green's chance-saturated fiction which, like that of Peirce, encounters the problem of representing chance in a genre destined to demystify crime in the end. The chapter concludes by looking at a third detective writer interested in chance, Edgar Allan Poe.
How can sincere, well-meaning people unintentionally perpetuate discrimination based on race, sex, sexuality, or other socio-political factors? To address this question, this book engages a neglected dimension of Charles S. Peirce's philosophy—human embodiment—in order to highlight the compatibility between Peirce's ideas and contemporary work in social criticism. This compatibility, which has been neglected in both Peircean and social criticism scholarship, emerges when the body is fore-grounded among the affective dimensions of Peirce's philosophy (including feeling, emotion, belief, doubt, instinct, and habit). The book explains unintentional discrimination by situating Peircean affectivity within a post-Darwinian context, using the work of contemporary neuroscientist Antonio Damaso to facilitate this contextual move. Since children are vulnerable, naïve, and dependent upon their caretakers for survival, they must trust their caretaker's testimony about reality. This dependency, coupled with societal norms that reinforce historically dominant perspectives (such as being heterosexual, male, middle-class, and/or white), fosters the internalization of discriminatory habits that function non-consciously in adulthood. This book brings Peirce and social criticism into conversation. On the one hand, Peircean cognition, epistemology, phenomenology, and metaphysics dovetail with social critical insights into the inter-relationships among body and mind, emotion and reason, self and society. Moreover, Peirce's epistemological ideal of an infinitely inclusive community of inquiry into knowledge and reality implies a repudiation of exclusionary prejudice. On the other hand, work in feminism and race theory illustrates how the application of Peirce's infinitely inclusive communal ideal can be undermined by non-conscious habits of exclusion internalized in childhood by members belonging to historically dominant groups, such as the economically privileged, heterosexuals, men, and whites.

Interactions with Wright and Peirce
Albert E. Moyer

in A Scientist's Voice in American Culture: Simon Newcomb and the Rhetoric of Scientific Method
This chapter discusses Newcomb's interactions as a young man with Chauncey Wright and Charles Sanders Peirce. It is difficult to distinguish the influence on Newcomb of Comte, Darwin, and Mill from the influence of his colleague and friend, Chauncey Wright (1830–1875). The confusion results because Wright advocated elements from the outlooks of all three of the European thinkers. Charles Peirce once characterized Wright, for example, as being “one of the most acute of the followers of J. S. Mill.” The issue of influence is further complicated in that ideas did not always flow from the older and more experienced philosopher, Wright, to the unseasoned newcomer. Although never a match for Wright in philosophical breadth and subtlety, Newcomb contributed, at least on one occasion, to the developing ideas of the two men.

Coming Up with an Explanation
Richard Swedberg

in The Art of Social Theory

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princeton/9780691155227.003.0006

This chapter explores various ways of coming up with an explanation. These include Charles S. Peirce's notion of abduction, or his theory of how to come up with an explanation from the practical perspective of the scientist. Another is colligation, a term coined by William Whewell which means linking facts together in a new way when one makes a discovery. In Peirce's work, one can also find the term retroduction, a word which reminds that to explain a phenomenon means to look at what comes before the phenomenon. Hypothesis is another term that Peirce used in this context. It emphasizes that an abduction is just a suggestion for an explanation, and that the explanation has to be tested against facts before it can acquire scientific value. Finally, guessing indicates that the scientist does not know how to proceed when he or she is looking for an explanation, but must somehow do so anyway.

From Spaceship Earth To Google Ocean
Stefan Helmreich, Sophia Roosth, and Michele Friedner

in Sounding the Limits of Life: Essays in the Anthropology of Biology and Beyond

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: October 2017
Publisher: Princeton University Press
This chapter examines how digital media represent seawater, relying upon, but also making invisible, the built infrastructures—commercial, political, military—that have permitted the oceanic world to be described as something like a “global ocean” in the first place. Drawing on the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, it explores how Earth and its ocean, as they have been ported into the digital, have become a confusing mixture of different kinds of signs—the sorts Peirce would have called indexes, icons, and symbols. It considers a kindred image-object, Google Ocean, and how Google Earth politics is connected to it, as well as what sort of representation of the planetary sea is in the making in these digital days. It argues that Google Ocean is a mottled mash of icons, indexes, and symbols of the marine and maritime world as well as a simultaneously dystopian and utopian diagram of the sea.

Peirce’s British Connection
Vincent G. Potter

in Peirce's Philosophical Perspectives
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Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on Charles Sanders Peirce's sojourn in England in the 1870s. It also shows the influence on his work of three philosophers from the British Isles—John Duns Scotus, William Whewell, and Alexander Bain. These three were chosen not only because of their impact on Peirce's pragmatism, but also because their influence on him is less well known than that of John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume—Peirce's so-called “British Connection.” Even so, the chapter shows how Peirce is not simply a British philosopher who happened to grow up in the Colonies. His pragmatism has a distinctively American spirit about it. That spirit, put roughly, was that ideas, if they are to merit serious attention, must be practical.

Habit, Habit Change, and Conversion in C. S. Peirce
Roger A. Ward and Roger A. Ward

in Conversion in American Philosophy: Exploring the Practice of Transformation
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Publisher: Fordham University Press DOI: 10.5422/
Item type: chapter
This chapter begins by evaluating several avenues of connecting C. S. Peirce’s philosophical program and religious conversion. Next, it turns to an exposition of Peirce’s understanding of habit and habit change. This position of an ultimate habit change incorporates the conclusions of three essays in an argument for a holistic orientation of the thinker fully engaged in self-controlled inquiry. These include the change represented by personality and a belief in a personal creator in “The Law of Mind”; the argument for emulating agapistic inquiry in “Evolutionary Love”; and the belief and logical testing of the reality of God in “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God.” The chapter concludes with a criticism of Peirce’s habit change to a “super-order,” as he describes it, and examines several ways to advance Peirce’s approach to conversion.

The Relations between Logic and Philosophy, 1874–1931
Leila Haaparanta

in The Development of Modern Logic
Published in print: 2009 Published Online: September 2009 Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195137316.003.0025

This chapter gives a survey of the field of philosophy where (1) the philosophical foundations of modern logic were discussed and (2) where such themes of logic were discussed that were on the borderline between logic and other branches of the philosophical enterprise, such as metaphysics and epistemology. The contributions made by Gottlob Frege and Charles Peirce are included since their work in logic is closely related to and also strongly motivated by their philosophical views and interests. In addition, the chapter pays attention to a few philosophers to whom logic amounted to traditional Aristotelian logic and to those who commented on the nature of logic from a philosophical perspective without making any significant contribution to the development of formal logic.

Introduction
Lara Trout

in The Politics of Survival: Peirce, Affectivity, and Social Criticism
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: March 2011 Publisher: Fordham University Press
DOI: 10.5422/fso/9780823232956.003.0001
This introductory chapter explains the coverage of this book, which is about classical American pragmatic Charles S. Peirce's concept of unintentional racism. It focuses on the compatibility of Peirce's with contemporary social criticism. This book attempts to explain the condition of unintentional discrimination using the work of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. It also highlights how Peirce's infinitely inclusive communal ideal may be undermined by the habit of unintentional exclusion of historically dominant social groups.

A History of Philosophy in America
Bruce Kuklick

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Item type: book

I have been selective in my emphases rather than encyclopaedic and exhaustive. In focusing on American philosophy, the book makes implicit claims about thought and life related to a peculiar western polity and the US, by the nineteenth century. The study of the history of philosophy finally requires complex judgements of quality, which are both questionable and necessary. I have depicted student–teacher relations, conventions of argument, and constellations of problems that endure over generations; and the cultural setting and institutional connections that make up an enterprise of philosophy. I have described traditions of thought and the intentions of thinkers within a social matrix. The book divides naturally into three substantive parts: the first covers the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries, and focuses on religious disputation; the second, from 1865–1930 on pragmatism, an influential American contribution to western ideas; the third, from 1910–2000, on professional philosophy in America, more secular and institutionalized. The thinkers covered include Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Bushnell, Charles Peirce, Josiah Royce, William James, John Dewey, C.I. Lewis, Wilfrid Sellars, Thomas Kuhn, Richard Rorty. The most important theme of the book is the long circuitous march from a religious to a secular vision of the universe. A subsidiary theme concerns social and political philosophy, the crux of Ch. 2.
Demonstrates the resonance between Charles Sanders Peirce (the American pragmatist) and William Hamilton (a Scottish professor of logic and metaphysics), which can be outlined in three ways: first, both men present a philosophy that balances Kant's idealism with T.H. Reid's naturalism (Peirce calls this task a 'critical common-sensism'); second, they both discuss questions of faith in a manner that implies a transcendent or cosmological perspective; and third, they exhibit a focused interest in logic. However, the pragmatist always evinces slightly different priorities: while Hamilton remains a committed nominalist throughout his writings, Peirce attempts to reconcile Kant and British empiricism as part of his larger argument against nominalism; while Hamilton maintains a Calvinist trinitarianism, Peirce's musings on questions of faith direct him closer to Spinoza's panentheism; and finally, while Hamilton's logic remains an important but separate line of philosophical inquiry, Peirce develops a logic of relations that conjoins his interest in logic to his semiotic and phenomenology, and thus becomes a pervasive part of his philosophy. After giving a brief exposition of the main points of his philosophy, the discussion of Hamilton examines how relativity, conditionality, and free will inform his statements about causality, consciousness, belief, and action. Of greatest interest is how the concept of consciousness relates to the concept of belief, such that the former acts as the guarantor of the latter.