Rhetoric revisited, methodeutic re-imagined

Retórica revisitada, metodêutica reimaginada

Vincent Colapietro*
colapietrovm@gmail.com

Abstract: The author contextualizes C. S. Peirce's exploration of rhetoric and methodeutic in reference to the inevitably incomplete work of a *radical experimentalist* such as Peirce. He tries to show how even in the inaugural stage of semeiotic inquiry "rhetorical" considerations are not entirely absent. Moreover, he attends to some of the most important moments when Peirce re-visited the topic of rhetoric. Finally, he muses about both how Peirce re-imagined rhetoric as methodeutic and how we might ourselves re-imagine yet other possibilities. The essay is written as an invitation to join Peirce's efforts as co-inquirers, providing near its conclusion a series of "notes" or suggestions for how to carry Peirce's project forward.

Keywords: Developmental teleology. Emergence. Experimentation. Fallibilism. Habits and habituation. Topics. Uberty. Welby (Victoria Lady Welby).

Resumo: *O autor contextualiza a exploração da retórica e da metodêutica de C. S. Peirce em referência ao trabalho inevitavelmente incompleto de um* experimentalista radical *como Peirce. Ele tenta mostrar como mesmo no estágio inaugural do inquérito semiótico, considerações "retóricas" não estão totalmente ausentes. Além do mais, ele atende a alguns dos momentos mais importantes no qual Peirce revisitou o tema da retórica. Finalmente, ele pondera sobre como Peirce reimaginou a retórica como metodêutica e como nós mesmos poderíamos reimaginar até outras possibilidades. Este artigo está escrito como um convite para nos juntar aos esforços de Peirce como coinvestigadores, fornecendo próximo à sua conclusão, uma série de "anotações" ou sugestões de como podemos conduzir adiante o projeto de Peirce.*

Palavras-chave: *Experimentação. Falibilismo. Hábitos e habituação. Surgimento. Tema. Teleologia evolucionista. Uberdade. Welby (Victoria Lady Welby).*

> *"Peirce's philosophy is above all a philosophy of the incomplete, of growth, and of development."*
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> **Isabel Stearns (1952)**

1 Introduction

Throughout his life, C. S. Peirce revisited the topic[1] of rhetoric a number of times. One important moment was when he wrote a review of

* Professor at The Center for the Humanities, University of Rhode Island (URI), Kingston, Rhode Island, & Liberal Arts Research Professor Emeritus, Philosophy & African American Studies, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, USA.

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1 Throughout this paper I will be playing on the theme of *topos* and, then, principally in three senses. First, *topoi* are sites of investigations, hence they are directly related to Peirce's principal preoccupation (the strictly *heuristic* function of our human practices, the extent to which these practices themselves are sites for deepening or in some other respect our understanding of how things work). Second, the sense of the word given to it by Aristotle (the art of dialectical, as distinct from demonstrative, reason concerned with the invention or discovery of arguments, i.e., the marshalling and presentation of evidence in the context of inherently controversial affairs). Third, the later sense in which topics emerged as a part of rhetoric, a sense intimately related to Giambattista Vico's *scienza nuova* (FISCH, 1986, Chapter 11 ["Vico and Pragmatism"]) and subsequent developments in rhetorical theory (cf. MEYER, 1994, 1989).

T. Clifford Allbutt's *Notes on the Composition of Scientific Papers* (1904) (CN 3:179-181). Here Peirce asserts, "rhetoric ought to be the doctrine of the adaptation of the forms of expression of a writing to the accomplishment of its purpose" (CN 3:180; cf. EP 2:326). Whatever the medium, the governing aim ought to be "the rhetorical virtue of perspicuity" (EP 2:326): extrapolating from what Peirce asserts here and elsewhere, our forms of expression ought to render perspicuous both how the means serve the end and how the end demands just these means. As the editors of volume 2 of *The Essential Peirce* note, he wrote "Ideas, Stray or Stolen, about Scientific Writing"[2] "after he had published a negative review of a book by T. C. Allbutt on scientific writing" (EP 2:325). While Allbutt had botched the job, his book pointed to an important topic, indeed, an especially important one from Peirce's perspective. So, Peirce tried his hand at this task. What is (among other things) noteworthy is that he did so under the rubric of rhetoric. At a time when he appeared to be moving away from identifying the third branch of his semeiotic as rhetoric (if he had not already made the shift), he reverts to an earlier term of identification. This might suggest that his intellectual development was not linear but more zig-zag in character and, in turn, this character might reveal something fundamental about the cast of his mind, also the character of his endeavors. It is my strong suspicion that this is the case.

Just as Peirce revisited the topic of rhetoric, time and again, we ought to revisit his periodic engagements with this inherently fascinating topic. Here, in any event, is my most recent attempt to survey this "broad terrain" (EP 2:325; COLAPIETRO, 2007). I will not say anything conclusive about the extent to which he re-imagined speculative rhetoric *as* methodeutic (SANTAELLA, 1999; BERGMAN; GAVA, 2018), but I hope to illuminate aspects of possible ways of reconceiving the relationship between rhetoric and methodeutic. In my judgment, the increasing emergence of methodeutic in Peirce's mature thought does not amount to a total eclipse of rhetoric; nor can the scope of rhetoric be reduced to the concerns of methodeutic.[3] For the most part, however, I want to sketch the context in which an unresolved but creative tension informed and animated Peirce's efforts to re-imagine rhetoric as methodeutic, also a development exemplifying the "achievement of ambivalence" (SEGAL, 1992, 1997). In psychoanalytic terms, Peirce *achieved* ambivalence regarding rhetoric. In contrast, he never fully resolved a tension at the heart of his semeiotic. This is admittedly a complex story, but it is (I am convinced) not only a plausible but also an illuminating one. Given the cast of Peirce's mind, a zig-zag course of intellectual development is precisely what we should expect. He was devoted above all else to *finding things out* (CP 1.11) and he was convinced that the only way to do so was by trying ideas out, ideas never being anything more than conjectures, that is, guesses.

2   The cast of Peirce's mind, the character of his endeavors

To a far greater degree than many of his readers appreciate, Peirce was a radical experimentalist. He was devoted to *trying out* ideas (cf. DEWEY, [1929] 1988, Chapter 4)[4] and then refining or rejecting them in light of the experimental consequences of his indefatigable efforts.[5] His most certain conclusions were

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2   What the editors wrote regarding this essay is virtually as true today as in 1998: "Although brief, this paper provides a vivid snapshot of a broad terrain That still contains virgin territory for semioticians and language theorists" (EP 2:325).

3   In this I take myself to be closely allied to Mats Bergman (2009). Though it might appear to be so, neither he is nor I am opposed to the case Lucia Santaella (1999) or James Liszka (2000) make for methodeutic.

4   This chapter is entitled "The Play of Ideas." Though the ideas are developed without reference to Peirce, they capture more than the spirit of Dewey's predecessor's ideas and, indeed, the inherently playful dimension of the pragmatist orientation. At one point early in his instruction in his Lectures of Pragmatism of his categories, Peirce announces: "I ought to apologize for introducing such buffoonery into serious lectures. I do so because I seriously believe that a bit of fun helps thought and tends to keep it pragmatical" (EP 2:161).

5   The very structure of the early "cognition-series" in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* ("Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," "Further Consequences of Four Incapacities," and "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities"), taken as a unit, is the derivation of consequences from conjectures regarding the nature, functions, and forms of cognition, and then the testing of those conjectures in light of these consequences. Though somewhat implicit, the testing is principally done in the light of *experimental consequences*. This does not seem to be as widely appreciated as it ought to be.

nothing more than corrigible claims (see, e.g., CP 1.10; EP 2:462),[6] his most carefully crafted terms were in principle provisional, even if he often used them without modification for decades.

No statement by Peirce is more revealing of his intellectual character than the simple yet profound one, "I try again" (MS 339).[7] What he identified as his "Peirce-everence" or "Peirce-istence" (BRENT, 1998, p. 16) is evident in this self-disclosure. His *modus operandi* was to begin anew, to think afresh, to go over the same ground from a novel angle, time and again. Especially in his categoriology (FREEMAN, 1934) and semeiotic, we witness this propensity. His experiments regarding how to conceptualize the most general concepts (also simply how to name the categories) as well as how to define sign in his most comprehensive sense extend far beyond terminology: they time and again aimed at the heart of the matter. However much his authorial persona might occasionally appear to be that of a deeply confident theorist, this is misleading. He tended, to some degree and in some respects, genuinely to doubt his most certain conclusions. These were neither "paper doubts" nor rhetorical poses. They were, to repeat, *genuine* doubts.[8] Such doubt underscores the pathos of a largely solitary inquirer thoroughly committed to a communitarian ideal of experimental inquiry. Regarding the most secure conclusions of this solitary investigator, his confession[9] is not only noteworthy but worth quoting at length:

> For my part, although I have had sundry universal propositions concerning Signs under anxious advisement for many years, *I have never been able to satisfy myself as to a single one of them*. (N.B. Having made this explicit avowal it will be needless for me to express my doubts again.) This is not because I have any definite reason for hesitation, but simply that having been unable to urge my argument upon any mind but my cautious self, I cannot help having a vague question whether a fresh intelligence, uncramped by long dwelling on the same questions, might not start objections that have escaped my own fagged understanding on account of their very obviousness. […] I think it most likely that my doubts about all universal predications concerning signs are mostly quite gratuitous, but still my having no second person to whom to appeal as to the reasonableness of my doubts prevents their being laid to rest. (EP 2:462; emphasis added).

No science is the singular achievement of a solitary inquirer.[10] It is a communal endeavor. It is also an *in*terminable project.[11] Insofar as Peirce in his exploration of semiosis labored alone, he knew his

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6   "Only once, as far as I can remember, in all my lifetime have I experienced the pleasure of praise." But the praise was meant as criticism: "a critic said of me that I did not seem to be *absolutely sure of my own conclusions*" (CP 1.10)! What was intended as a critique was received by Peirce, the radical experimentalist and thus thoroughgoing fallibilist, as the highest praise.

7   As Gallie notes, "in Peirce's favour […] his more original and impressive contributions *were* carried through—conceived, applied, criticized, reformulated again and again and continually deepened—over a period of nearly fifty years, entirely without the stimulus of popular recognition and reward. (Even his work in symbolic logic—a field in which he was recognized as an expert by his contemporaries—could not be adequately appreciated until many years after his death.) If Peirce did fail to utilize his own brilliant gifts and opportunities, it was certainly not from want of *trying*" (1952, p. 40; emphasis added). Peirce not only tried, time and again, to carry through his projects but he also succeeded in some measure in doing so. The very nature of most of his endeavors however did not admit of definitive closure or unsurpassable accomplishment.

8   Peirce asserts, "skepticism about the reality of things—provided it be genuine and sincere and not a sham [not "make-believe" and idle]—is a healthy and growing stage of mental development" (CP 8.43). "The pragmatist knows," Peirce adds elsewhere, "that doubt is an art which has to be acquired with difficulty; and his genuine doubts will go much further than those of any Cartesian. What he does not doubt, about ordinary matters of everybody's life, he is apt to find that [no well matured [and sane] man [or woman] doubts" (CP 6.498).

9   It is worth stressing, if only as an aside in a footnote, that Peirce was disposed to use the expression "contrite fallibilism" (CP 1.14; emphasis added). In the prospectus for a grand work, *The Principles of Philosophy; or, Logic Physics, and Psychics, considered as a unity in the Light of the Nineteenth Century*, he stressed: "Both logically and dynamically the whole doctrine [being put forth in this work] develops out of the *desire to know*, or philosophia, which carries with it the confession that we do not know already" (CP 8.282).

10   "I do not call the solitary studies of a single man," Peirce asserts, "a science. It is only when a group of men, more or less in intercommunication, are aiding and stimulating one another by their understanding of a particular group of studies as outsiders cannot understand them, that I call their life a science. It is not necessary that they should all be at work upon the same problem, or that all should be fully acquainted with all that it is needful for another of them to know; but their studies must be so closely allied that any one of them could take up the problem of any other after some months of special preparation and that each should understand pretty minutely what it is that each one's of the others work consists in; so that any two of them meeting together shall be thoroughly conversant with each other's ideas and the language he talks and should feel each other to be brethren. In particular, one thing which commonly unites them is their common skill, unpossessed by outsiders, in the use of certain instruments, and their common skill in performing certain kinds of work" (MS 1334, 1905).

11   "Science is [Peirce asserts] incomplete; it is *essentially* incomplete, since what we mean by science is the sum of human activity at any epoch in the path of discovery; and were [*per impossible* for humans at least] everything found out, this activity must cease" (CN 1:156).

semeiotic could be at best the promise of a science or doctrine of signs, not the reality of such a discipline. The pathos of this realization is revealed in a letter to Victoria Lady Welby when he wrote: after noting that her "*significs* appears to be limited to the study of the relations of Signs to their Interpretants" while his semeiotic never loses sight of Signs "in their relation to their Objects" (in a word never loses sight of "the *Truth* of Signs"), he counsels for an inclusive unified approach "in the present state of the subject." "If we were to separate it [the study of signs] into two,—then, we should be in imminent danger of erecting two groups of one member each!" His attachment to triads is disclosed in what he immediately adds: "Whereas, if you and I stick together, we are, at least, two of us. I remember in my college days that the Statutes of Harvard defined a 'group' as *three* persons or more convening together. We shall have to try to convince one of the linguists to our more fundamental study" (CP 8.378), then and only then would a "group" (or community) of inquirers be minimally constituted.

In general, Peirce maintained that: "there are three things to which we can never hope to attain by reasoning, namely, absolute certainty, absolute exactitude, [and] absolute universality" (CP 1.141). With respect to his contribution to the study of signs, Peirce was at his most cautious quick to qualify the scope of his generalizations as "quasi-necessary" or "quasi-universal" (see, e.g., CP 2.227). The operation of precissive abstraction on which the inquirer of seemingly significant phenomena, ones in which more than brute reaction but intelligible relationships, were present, was in particular "eminently fallible, and therefore in one sense by no means necessary" (CP 2.227). What is true of universality, is also true of generality. The game of Gottcha ("I've gottcha [got you]—I've caught you in a fatal error"), at the heart of which is the abiding challenge to produce a devastating counterexample, both has its place *and* its danger. Its place cannot be gainsaid: the interpreter has at every turn a right to test the range of reference or accuracy of representation implied in any claim put forth. Its danger is especially imminent when the task in question is that of instituting a novel field of experimental inquiry. On the one hand, any utterer, *on Peirce's own account*, grants to the hearer or reader the right to provide an exemplification of the term about which a claim is being made ("All humans are mortal", e.g., grants to the interpreter to select any example of human and if the example shows the claim to be false then the utterer would, in most cases, seem required to withdraw or disclaim it). On the other hand, the institution of a field of inquiry such as semeiotic, at least in its promissory phase, might require a less than severely stringent application of what would otherwise be a completely unassailable principle of reason investigation.[12]

Counterexamples are critical at every turn, but their clever deployment at the groping phases of initial exploration can prove to be prematurely fatal. The dictum *not* to block the road of inquiry extends to the inaugural phase of a merely promising endeavor. The *harm* of allowing wooly-headed "inquirers" to flourish needs to be considered in reference to the *promise* of instituting (or opening) a potentially fruitful field of indefinite fecundity. On the one side, an author such as Roger Scruton would shut down the study of signs before it barely commences (his rhetorical question is designed to stop the intrepid in their tracks: How could there be a science of structures as diverse as buttons and clouds? (SCRUTON, 1980; DEELY, 2002, p. 18-19), while on the other Umberto Eco would champion the endeavor to carry on in the face of *ridicule*. Scruton would contend, in good Lockean fashion, that he is merely removing rubbish from the road so genuine inquirers are no impeded by such foolish irrelevances. Eco would counter that one person's rubbish might be another's treasure and we ought not to decide in a peremptorily manner against the individual who sees preciousness where the other only sees pretense and vacuity.

There are indeed various ways of blocking the road of inquiry. One might set firmly in place an extremely narrow-minded paradigm of scientific rigor and, with the advantage of holding an exalted position in a prestigious institution, exert a stranglehold on a discipline for decades. I would argue that

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12   In "Evolutionary Love," Peirce suggests: "It is not by dealing out cold justice to the circle of my ideas that I can make them grow, but by cherishing and tending them as I would the flowers in my garden" (CP 6.289; EP 1:354).

this is precisely what B. F. Skinner did in the case of psychology and Noam Chomsky did in that of linguistics. (I am inclined to think this also about various branches of the "dismal science" but I am not sufficiently familiar with this discipline to make this claim.) Neither psychology nor linguistics has fully recovered from the heuristic captivity exerted by the disciplinary dominance of an excessively reductive paradigm, put and held in place by an "idol of the theatre" (a misplaced ideal of scientific rigor). If rigor demands the banishment of mind and consciousness from the field of psychology, so much the worse for—*not* mind and consciousness, also not scientific rigor, but what can only appear to most people decades later and what appeared in the early decades of the twentieth century to some people an unduly restrictive ideal of psychological rigor. One might say either "So much the worse for mind" *or* "So much the worse for psychology," more precisely, for psychology re-imagined as a discipline so focused on outward action that mental phenomena fall outside of the scope of this "science." The intriguing paradigm of transformational grammar became for linguists, especially in the U.S., more than a working hypothesis: it became a foundational dogma of disciplinary faith. What is potentially still one of the most exciting fields of human inquiry has languished, reduced on one side to the remnants of a vanquished army who do not appear to be able to accept their defeat and on the other largely trivial explorations of a highly technical character. A linguist such as Roman Jakobson would not be able to breath in an ambience such as this. His interest in poetics and recourse to theory would be invitations to ridicule by his scientific colleagues, who likely would not acknowledge him as a brethren (RANSDELL, 1980).

In the concluding decades of the nineteenth and the opening ones of the twentieth century, Peirce, aware of the dangers of blocking the road of inquiry, was nonetheless resolutely committed to instituting a novel field of experimental inquiry. As Peirce observes, "humbug is always harmful in philosophy" (CP 2.196). But, whatever else others might think, he could never convince himself that the study of signs, or, better, semeiotic was an instance of humbug.[13]

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Devoting oneself to the task of discovery entails courting the possibility of error. So, Peirce writes of *risking* a definition of a sign: "I am now prepared to *risk* an attempt at defining a sign – since in scientific inquiry, as in other enterprises, the maxim holds, *Nothing hazard, nothing gain*" (EP 2:410, emphasis added). The substance of this risk is that, in its most general sense,

> […] a sign is anything, of whatever mode of being, which mediates between an object and an interpretant; since it is both determined by its object *relatively to the interpretant*, and determines the interpretant *in reference to the object*, in such wise as to cause [in a rather unique sense] the interpretant to be determined by the object through the mediation of this 'sign' (EP 2:410)[14] […] of the first useful steps toward a science, etc. (EP 2:482; emphasis added).

Nothing is at any point guaranteed, especially in the inaugural phase of any human endeavor. Even a highly successful human undertaking, stretching across decades or even centuries, might eventually meet insurmountable obstacles or succumb to an inherent (but unnoticed) defect, causing that endeavor

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13   The same is true of his devotion to articulating his doctrine of categories, especially in terms of the recursive function of triadic forms. "I was long ago (1867) led, after three or four years' study, to throw all ideas into the three classes of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. This sort of notion is as distasteful to me as to anybody; and, for years, I endeavored to pooh-pooh and refute it; but it long ago conquered me completely" (CP 8.328). He remained convinced that, whenever competent inquirers disagree, genuine doubt is present. So he could never completely convince himself of the validity of his undertaking or abandon that undertaking, with respect to both his semeiotic and doctrine of categories.

14   "It seems to me," Peirce wrote in a letter to Lady Welby, "one of the first useful steps toward [instituting] s science of semeiotic […] or the cenoscopic science of signs, must be the accurate definition, or logical analysis, of the concepts of the science [beginning with the concept of the sign itself]. I define a *Sign* as anything which on the one hand is so determined by an Object and on the other hand so determines an idea in a person's mind that this latter determination, which I term the *Interpretant* of the Sign, is thereby mediately determined by that object" (EP 2:482). For a truly general theory of signs, however, the construal of the interpretant as "an idea in a person's mind" is far too narrow. It is "a sop to Cerberus": "My insertion of 'upon a person' [or 'in a person's mind'] is a sop ton Cerberus, because I despair of making my own [much] broader conception understood" (EP 2:478). In truth, he did not completely despair of rendering his extremely broad conception of the interpretant comprehensible, for he persisted by removing such sops from many of his formulations.

to implode. For some, institutional religion would illustrate such a possibility (while for others, such as William James, religious faith of one form or another, is destined to be a permanent chapter in human history). Indeed, nothing ventured, nothing gained. This is one of the maxims by which Peirce, as an inquirer, lit his steps along uncertain paths, in its light, paths now luminous, now twilight, now dark as ink.

In our heuristic undertakings, the dread of humbug ought not to be allowed to eclipse entirely the promise of fecundity. If we are to err, it is very often better to err on the side of generosity than that of militant exclusion or preemptory rejection. Dumping rubbish in the road of inquiry is a sin against reason flowing from *the* sin, not loving the pursuit of truth above all else. The vanity nurtured by the facile command of rhetorical resources is unquestionably responsible for much humbug (BLACK, 1983; HUME, 2015), especially when this facility with words strews our path with rubbish. "It is," as William James noted, "a chronic humbug of philosophy to prove everything" (PERRY, 1935, p. 484).[15] But as finite, fallible beings we for the most part do not know what will prove fruitful or true or efficacious in the fullness of time. Those who presume too arrogantly, hence too peremptorily, to know what will prove fruitful going forward are, in Peirce's judgment, *doctrinaires*.[16] Though speaking of life generally, Henry James' words are apposite here: "I think I don't regret a single 'excess' of my responsive youth – I only regret, in my chilled age, certain occasions and possibilities I didn't embrace." More directly pertinent to questions of inquiry, however, there is his claim: "No theory is kind to us that cheats us of seeing" (*Letters*).

The promise of seeing more than have yet observed or even envisaged is not one to be cavalierly slighted. If we take both the words of Peirce to be instructive and his life to be exemplary, then the promise is to be taken with the utmost seriously. The promise, even if only a mere promise, of instituting a "cenoscopic attack […] in the spirit of twentieth-century science" was, in particular, one he *deliberately* judged to be worthy of holding firm. The promise of a friend's visit can, for all its uncertainty, give one's days hope and one's efforts an aim (e.g., one does any number of things specifically aimed at the fulfillment of this promise, if indeed it ever comes). Peirce's indefatigable trials, his heuristic risks, his virtual "compulsion" to "try again" and yet again, disclose a character in thrall of a promise. He knew in his personal life all too well how love can flee and, on the basis of this analogy, he suspected that love could also flee in his intellectual life. He is quite explicit about this: "Many man has cherished for years […] some vague shadow of an idea, too meaningless to be positively false; he has, nevertheless, passionately loved it" (EP 1:127). This love does not guarantee that the object of his love is anything more than a chimera, for it might quickly vanish one day and leave that person desolate, having wasted his life on something utterly ephemeral (however solid and real it felt in the inaugural and even subsequent phases of his passionate embrace of this cherished idea). Such a passage as this reveals both that Peirce was aware of this possibility in general and far from oblivious that his own passionate nature disposed him to such devastating disillusionment. It is hardly trivial to suggest that for him it was better to have loved and lost rather than to have never loved at all. In inquiry, (as we have already noted) "as in other enterprises, the maxim holds, *Nothing hazard, nothing gain*" (EP 2:410, author's emphasis). Such maxims are never more than rules of thumb, that is, they are not unassailable rules of a precisely determinate scope. My inclination is to think of the pragmatic maxim in this way. This of course does not strip this maxim or "rule" of its value; it rather helps us to appreciate the kind of value the *maxim* of pragmatism possesses. To grant it too much precision or specificity is to make of it more than it is (indeed, more than what, I suspect, it *was* for Peirce himself). *If* the art of discovery is reducible to rules, these rules are almost certainly not algorithms but maxims in the invincibly rough-and-ready sense in which the dicta of the experienced carpenter or the experienced mechanic serve as "rules."

15   Though arguably Peirce was to some extent prone to do just this, he for the most part avoided this form of humbug. For example, his critical commonsensisn can be read as a doctrine making clear the somewhat narrow limits of demonstrable truth.

16   As he uses the word, a *doctrinaire* is the woman or "man who is willing to accept theories as absolutely true. All the difficulties into which metaphysicians contrive to snarl themselves up are traceable to just that doctrinaire disposition" (CP 7.105).

The game of twenty questions in a way proves that the logic of abduction might be carried out more or less well; there are foolish and expert ways of framing one's initial guesses and, on the basis of the answers to those first guesses, deliberately or wisely going forward. The "logic" of abduction reveals itself in this game as a deliberately controlled process of potentially fruitful conjectures. For example, one ought to frame one's initial guesses, couched in the form of questions, as broadly as possible (e.g., one ought to start with "Living or dead?" or "Male or female?" or "Historical or mythological?") and, on the basis of the answers to this conjectures, one ought to go in certain directions rather than other ones (e.g., one ought to if the reply to "Are you a mythological creature?" is "Yes", then one ought to ask those questions allowing one to ascertain the mythological tradition where the creature is to be found—this does not mean asking immediately, "Are you a creature to be found in *Greek* mythology?", this being too specific at this point in the process, but rather a much more general question). Anything which can be done more or less well, though the determination of what is an apt or "intelligent" move in this endeavor is hardly anything to be rendered with exact precision or deductive certainty, conforms to a logic and it is the first task of deliberative rationality to discover the method, the set of procedures by which the ends at least implicit in the endeavor can be attained or approximated.

The virtues of the "logician" in Peirce's sense include a sense of the musicality of thought, an extremely nuanced sensitivity to the tones, and trajectories of the most subtle relationships. This is, on the part of the reasoner precisely as a reasoner, a *felt* sense of the unfolding movement of a complex process in which various elements combine to form harmonies and, moreover, the very presence of dissonance can be made to serve to the delicate achievement of the highest forms of harmonious integration. Too little has been made of the musical metaphors Peirce in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" uses to describe both the character and the upshot of thought (CP 5.395; EP 1:128-129). Of course, it is commonplace to note the kinship between mathematical and musical sensitivity (to take but one example, Albert Einstein played the violin skillfully). Might there not be an analogous relationship between music *and* logic, especially as Peirce re-imagined the latter? The delicate sensitivity to purely formal relationships is no small part of musical *and* logical acuity, so it seems reasonable, to me at least, to imagine such sensitivity in the one field is somewhat akin to that in the other field.[17] Formal expressions and explicit codifications (scores, notation, equations, and formulae) in both areas of endeavor have proven for us at this stage to be indispensable, but nothing can completely supplant a *feel* for the activity, a delicate nuanced sensitivity to the promptings, pressures, and possibilities inherent in a wide range of relevant "performances" (e.g., holding a note, transitioning from one part of a musical piece to another, etc.). At bottom, performance and performativity are primordial, all else is derivative. This is a view which I take to be implied in the pragmatists insistence on the *primacy of practice*. The irreducibility of performance to a definite set of formal rules is part of what the primacy of practice, properly understood (WALLACE, 2009), pragmatically means. There might be a logic of discovery, but if I am correct in what I am stressing here this art is not reducible to a set of rules (CP 5.410; EP 1:141),[18] especially if such rules are taken to be algorithms. This is not to disparage the importance or power of such explicitly formalizable rules, only to stress the inherent – thus, invincible – limitations of precise and precisely expressible rules (Dreyfus). A norm-governed process need not be a strictly rule-governed one, let along a formally rule-dictated process. On such points, Peirce is much closer to Michael Polanyi (see especially Robert Innis on this affinity) and Pierre Bourdieu than he is to a strict formalist who desires fully to reduce

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17 Peirce insisted, I am *in* but not *of* the world of formal logic (MS 1334). If he held this to be true of symbolic logic, how much truer must it be regarding the nature of his engagement in other fields of inquiry.

18 Recall these sentences from the concluding paragraph of "How to Make Our Ideas Clear": "It is certainly important to know how to make our ideas clear, but they may be ever so clear without being true. How to make them so, we have next to study. How to give birth to those vital and procreative ideas which multiply into a thousand forms and diffuse themselves everywhere, advancing civilization and making the dignity of man, is an art not yet reduced to rules, but of the secret of which the history of science affords some hints" (CP 5.410; also, in EP 1:141). Whether this art can be reduced to a set of rules and what the nature of these rules is are of course very important questions. Also, please note at how in this relatively early easy Peirce gestures toward the third branch of logic, the one concerned with giving "birth to vital and procreative ideas."

the messiness of our human practices to the crystalline logic of *regulae* (cf. WITTGENSTEIN, #107). The rules for the direction of the mind in the mind's pursuit of truth are self-instituted directives and procedures of a certain character, most of them of an irreducibly vague character (the greatest precision inevitably allowing for some degree of vagueness, occasionally a very high degree) (BROCK, 1979).

When we move from *grammatica speculativa*, through *logica*, to *rhetorica speculativa*, we move from the more formalizable branches of logic to the least formalizable one.[19] The third branch of Peircean logic is the maieutic branch *par excellence* (cf. RANSDELL, 2000). For it is not only the branch devoted to the task of ascertaining "the laws by which in every scientific intelligence one sign gives birth to another, and especially one thought brings forth [from the womb of semiosis] another" (CP 2.229), but also the branch itself most directly engaged in the very process of bringing forth, more dramatically than elsewhere, new ideas and novel procedures, the promise of previously unimagined fields of inquiry and heuristic paradigms of explanation.

The most basic rhetorical situation (cf. BITZER, 1968)[20] is the one in which a quasi-mind assumes the role of an utterer and another such mind (though possibly the very same mind at a different time) assumes the role of interpreter, including possibly the role of critic. The *rhetorical* conception of sign is one in which theorists do *not* abstract from such functions as framing a proposition, making an assertion, or marshalling evidence (i.e., trying to substantiate or validate a conclusion), whereas the purely grammatical conception of a sign attains its utter generality precisely by abstracting from the rhetorical features of semiosis. The extent to which the grammatical sense of sign is, at least, implicitly an essentially rhetorical sign is however not a question to be begged (cf. BERGMAN, 2009, p. 3-5, 7). My own inclination, though others should be warned that this inclination is that of a resolute anti-formalist (see, e.g., COLAPIETRO, 2000), is to interpret even the grammatical sense of sign or semiosis as an instance of a *rhetorical performative* (a resource or means by which some rhetorical performance can be undertaken), however implicit. For our purpose, on this occasion, however, all we need to grant is that, at the culminating stage of *rhetorica speculativa* (not necessarily at the inaugural phase of *grammatical speculativa*), the purely formal, abstract conceptions of sign and of semiosis are *in*adequate: "rhetorical evidence" (to use Ernst Schröder's expression) is of unavoidable relevance (see also BERGMAN, 2009, p. 66, p. 137-138). In *rhetorica*, "evidence" concerning speaker and listener, indeed, the very framework in which one mind (or at least quasi-mind) addresses another and, in turn, the addressee or interpreter turns around and assumes the role of the utterer (moreover, the interchange of roles being indefinitely extended) needs explicitly to be taken into account. While semiosis in its most rudimentary form does not presuppose mind or consciousness, "intelligent consciousness [and, arguably, embodied forms of an expressive mind] must enter the series" (CP 2.303), the series in which one interpretant becomes a sign, and that sign generates an interpretant, indefinitely.

At a certain point, we can observe or reconstruct the process by which semiosis evolved into mind. Minds do not explain semiosis; rather this process explains the emergence, functioning, and transformations of mind. As the result principally of consolidations and integrations of habits, sign-processes can in some circumstances, however rare, evolve into sign-users capable of exercising some degree of control over the *growth* of signs (in other words, they can display the emergent functions of "intelligent consciousness" or, more broadly, self-critical, self-controlled mind). With the emergence of

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19   It would be inaccurate to say we move from the most to the least, since the middle branch of logic (Critic) is the one admitting of the greatest degree of formalization. But even regarding formal or symbolic logic Peirce wanted to make clear that he was not an uncompromising or unqualified formalist (see especially MS 1334; also, COLAPIETRO, 2000). "The only thing that the rhetorical approach [to signs] necessitates," as Mats Bergman astutely notes, "is a healthy check on formalistic tendencies. That is, it acts as a reminder of the fact that even the most elegant and well-ordered semeiotic concepts, classifications, and theories are abstractions from sign use, and—not least—that they must also stand the pragmatic test of possible application to rhetorical studies" (BERGMAN, 2009, p. 66). This approach does not entail a reduction of logic to rhetoric, only an explicit treatment of the "rhetorical" dimensions of even the most apparently least rhetorical modes of expression, verbal or otherwise.

20   In the lead article to the inaugural issue of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Lloyd F. Bitzer adapted the Deweyan conception of situation to the field of rhetoric. This alone makes him part of the tradition of pragmatism. Ever since, rhetorical theorists have rung changes on his attempt to define such a situation. The foci of his attempt are: audience, purpose, and exigence.

such minds, questions of rhetoric become not only legitimate but also imperative.[21] Even prior to this emergence, the work of such minds, however unremarked, is inevitably present in crafting a purely formal definition of sign, by which a truly general theory of signs is instituted. The geometer abstracts purely intelligible forms from perceptible ones; so, too, the theorist of signs, in the context of *grammativa*, does something analogous. In the context of *rhetorica*, however, these purely intelligible forms are replanted in explicitly rhetorical situations,[22] starting with the most basic one (that of a dialogue or exchange[23] in which one mind addresses another and, then, the addressee turns around and addresses the mind who initially has uttered some sign or sequence of signs). A decisive step in the direction of the pragmatic perspective is taken only when at least one of the participants in such an exchange of signs is conceived as an agent possessing a range of habits, susceptible to doubt, and finally alterable in a variety of ways (e.g., the capacity to feel qualitative differences, to register brute shocks, and to be guided by leading principles of inference, thus to be logically compelled or simply prompted to assent to one belief on the basis of assent to other beliefs), above all, to be alterable in being able to shed old habits and acquire new ones. This form of alterability exhibits the habit of habit-taking: beyond possessing certain determinate dispositions, at least some beings display the disposition to alter their dispositions, the habit of habit-taking (NÖTH, 2016). This is, in Peirce's judgment, a necessary condition for rational agency (the capacity of self-control itself depends upon the plasticity of the organism,[24] its openness to self-alteration, control of the self being inseparable from the possibility of becoming other than oneself).

The relevance of this to rhetoric is that the *deliberate* use of signs can be the means by which dramatic alterations, not simply trivial ones, of an individual's esthetic sensibility, moral character, and logical mind are introduced, intensified, and further modified. *Persuasion* in a very broad sense is the process by which one or another of these alterations is accomplished (WHITEHEAD, 1961, p. 25, 42, 148, 160, 167, 187, 296; also, 166-169; also, BERNSTEIN, 1991). While the manner in which an indexical sign seizes and holds one's attention is inherently coercive, that in which either the icon or the symbol elicits and captures such attention tends to be in accord with the nature of our rationality. Even rational compulsion depends to some extent upon our identification with the norms and ideals of rational argumentation, so that it is not forced upon us *ab extra*. In general, persuasion names a process by which signs exert their influence on attention, sensibility, character, mind, and possibly much else – and they do so (to repeat) in accord with our rationality.

The focus of rhetoric (or, for that matter, methodeutic) is, for Peirce, the efficacy of signs, not least of all their ability to generate sequences of signs in the consciousness or mind of the addressees of these signs. In turn, this efficacy becomes most fully manifest when the signs generate emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants of *both* a noteworthy singularity (e.g., *this* feeling in response to *this* utterance, or this action to this call to arms, or this alteration of habit as a result of, say, the sincerity with which the implications of the signs are allowed to change nothing less than one's habits) *and* an efficacious

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21 In his *Introduction*, David Savan points out, the "most important point in the history of a sign or a set of signs is the point at which deliberate critical appraisal of the norms themselves [governing our use of signs] begins. It is at this point that thought comes of age and that mature science is born" (SAVAN, 1988, p. 63). It is not an exaggeration to say that the whole of Peirce's semeiotic was oriented to such "deliberate critical appraisal," even if the inaugural phase required a conception of semiosis encompassing unintended, anonymous processes such as fossilization or the evolutionary alteration of innate habits (i.e., processes far removed from deliberate or self-controlled conduct, including self-controlled thought).

22 This metaphor might be misleading since ascertaining the forms of semiosis, including the most rudimentary form imaginable (that which Peirce tries to capture in his highly "formal" and abstract definition – see, e.g., CP 8.343), can only be accomplished by attending to the formalizable features of sign *use* (cf. BERGMAN, 2007, p. 3, p. 66). Use is primary; formalization and codification is for the most part always derivative and thus secondary, though of use formulae and codes, rendered explicit, can facilitate sign use.

23 Peirce is quite explicit about this: "an ordinary conversation" is "a wonderfully perfect kind of sign-functioning" (EP 2:391). See EP 2:545, note 25, for what Peirce means by a "perfect sign."

24 "The conception of the Rational Mind," Peirce stresses, "as an Unmatured Instinctive Mind which takes another development precisely because of its childlike character is confirmed, not only by the prolonged childhood of men [and women], but also by the fact that all systems of rational performance have had instinct [or innate disposition] for their first germ" (CP 7.381). Our minds are *invincibly* immature or childlike. This more than anything else makes the indefinite or open-ended growth of rational consciousness possible (see, e.g., CP 1.615). Apart from being in "a state of incipiency, of growth," our rationality is atrophying or worse, dying (CP 1.615). Such incipiency entails fragility and precarity and, of course, uncertainty: "Uncertain tendencies, unstable states of equilibrium are conditions *sine qua non* for the manifestation of Mind" (CP 7.381).

unification (an effective integration of the emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants so that the *impact of signs* is observable at the level of feeling, action, and character, character being as Dewey suggested "the interpenetration of habits").[25] Stated more compactly, the efficacy of signs is evident in both their *noteworthy singularity* (*this* word roused *this* feeling) and *efficacious unification* (the different kinds of interpretants become dynamically integrated and, thereby, provide eloquent testimony to the persuasive efficacy of a specific deployment of signs). Rhetoric attends to such efficacy. Its own effectiveness resides as much as anywhere else in making known the "laws" by which signs can *persuade* agents— move them—emotionally, actively, and logically or rationally. Though not necessarily in its traditional sense, at least not exclusively in that sense, rhetoric even transfigured or re-imagined by Peirce concerns the *power of signs* to move us. When the power of signs is operating in and through its relationship to the object of those signs, when it is *the object itself*, albeit via the agency of signs, which exerts the influence on interpreters, that power is licit; whenever this power is operating apart or simply at an improper distance from its object, that power is illicit (RANSDELL, 1986). Properly understood, the traditional emphasis (even if *un*traditionally understood) on persuasion is not completely out of place.

From this point forward, I will focus more or less exclusively on Peirce's semeiotic, with special attention being paid to the third and culminating branch of this immature "science" or doctrine (the branch of speculative rhetoric or methodeutic). In this theory of signs, we see him countless times abstracting and formalizing the most salient features of an open-ended process: these were the inaugural steps in his logical analyses (phenomenologico-logical analyses). The first steps of a journey are often quite distant—and indeed different from—later ones. In the case of Peirce's semeiotic, this is dramatically true (and the development of his thought about signs and other topics is, in truth, a drama). This is manifest in the attention he *deliberately* paid to what might be called the rhetorical dimensions of sign-processes and—practices, in particular, those processes and practices carried on by animals capable of attaining high levels of autonomous action (CP 5.511). What was worse than irrelevant in the inaugural phase of his heuristic institution of "a cooperative cenoscopic attack on the problems of nature, properties, and varieties of Signs, in the spirit of twentieth century science" (EP 2:462) turns out to be indispensable at the culminating phase of this Herculean undertaking. Subsequent steps however included situating and embodying those processes. Though it might be far from apparent, he never lost sight of the experimentalist as a "flesh-and-blood" agent (CP 5.424; EP 2:339).

On the one hand, he strenuously insisted: Logic reimagined as "*formal semiotic*" (cf. RANSDELL, 2002) requires a purely formal and utterly general definition of the sign "which no more refers to the human thought than does the definition of a line as the place which a particle occupies, part by part, during a lapse of time" (NEM 4:20). For certain rhetorical purposes, "a sop to Cerberus" might be needed. For the inaugural purpose of instituting a formal investigation of a fuzzily demarcated range of seemingly disparate phenomena (see, e.g., ALSTON, 1967; CLARKE, 1987; SCRUTON, 1980), however, such a sop would be worse than superfluous. It would be utterly misleading.

On the other hand, he readily conceded that not only "rhetorical evidence" was, *at some point*, permissible within such a formal discipline, but also the reference to mind, as an agency of self-acknowledgment (or self-avowal), self-criticism, and self-control, was no less permissible. In truth, the reference to mind is not just permissible: it is *requisite*. Without the reference to mind, semeiotic cannot fulfill its function. What is true of speculative grammar in its inaugural phase is not at all true of speculative rhetoric in its eventual transfiguration. An agent possessing habits and, in some situations, thrown into doubt is both the presupposition and, in an altered form, the outcome of Peirce's theory of signs.

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25 "Character is," as just noted in the body of the text, "the interpenetration of habits. If each habit existed in an insulated compartment and operating without effecting or being affected by others, character would not exist. That is, conduct would lack unity being only a juxtaposition of disconnected reactions to separate situations. But these environments overlap, since situations are continuous [they flow into one another] and those remote from one another contain like elements, a continuous modification of habits by one another is constantly going on. Character can be read through the medium of individual acts" (DEWEY, [1922] 1983, p. 29-30). This is in effect an exemplification of Peirce's synechism (or doctrine of continuity).

As a logician, C. S. Peirce revisited the *topos* of rhetoric numerous times (rhetoric being a field itself closely associated with the theme of *topos*, occasionally even identified as topics. In doing so, he re-imagined rhetoric as methodeutic, but did not seem entirely to abandon some of the central concerns of traditional rhetoric.)[26]

Peirce's interpreters have hardly ignored his efforts *as a logician* to come to terms with rhetoric, in both its historical development and possible transfiguration. Max H. Fisch, David Savan, John Michael Krois, John Lyne, Lucia Santaella, Winfried Nöth, Mats Bergman, and James Liszka are, in my judgment, among the most helpful contributors to this line of research. When he turned toward rhetoric (COLAPIETRO, 2007), it was far from a return to its past configuration. Rather it was a *transfiguration* of this discipline.

3   Notes for further investigations of the third branch of Peircean semeiotic, however identified

There is of course much more to be said about Peirce's engagement with rhetoric. I want to the devote the remainder of this essay to identifying what I take to be the most important considerations and questions. What follows are little more than notes assembled for the purpose of assisting co-inquirers in continuing to explore this vast terrain.

Given his antipathy to the Renaissance humanists, *given* their ridicule of the scholastic doctors and advocacy of rhetorical licentiousness, Peirce was entering the enemy's territory. While rhetoric was the culminating branch of the medieval trivium, the lion's share of attention during the Middle Ages was paid to logic, not rhetoric. "The humanists were," in Peirce's judgment, "weak thinkers. Some of them […] might have been trained to be strong thinkers; but they had no severe training in [logical] thought. All their energies went to writing a classical language and an artistic style of expression" (CP 1.18).

3.1 Ridicule in lieu of refutation

Peirce linked the title wave of nominalism in late medieval thought to the eventual ascendency of humanism. The scholastic realists were not refuted. They were ridiculed though the forms of ridicule deployed by the humanists amounted in some influential circles to a persuasive "argument" against the scholastic ethos. In general, the persuasive power of rhetorically deft ridicule of course should not be underestimated.

Think of contemporary politics. There is no more effective means of "refuting" one's opponents than hitting upon "ridiculous" memes (memorable forms of annihilative ridicule, whatever the truth or accuracy of the portrayals put forth). The rhetoric of ridicule however operates, often in subtle and undetected ways, in the contexts of pedagogy and research.[27]

3.2 A place of places

Topics is traditionally taken to be that branch of rhetoric concerned with invention and discovery. It provides heuristic principles and strategies for discovering or inventing new things to say, not least of all, new fields to explore. This includes crafting new modes of argumentation.

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26   See FISCH, 1986, Chapter 11.

27   In an interview with Giovanna Borradori, Hilary Putnam disclosed: "What happened to me, as to many other American philosophers, was that in graduate school one learned what not to like and what not to consider philosophy. We were trained to refute authors and texts. I think that it is a terrible thing, and that it should be stopped in all schools, movements and philosophy departments" (PUTNAM, 1994, p. 57). More often than not, however, historical figures and even entire movements were not refuted: they were simply ridiculed out of consideration. That is, ridicule functioned as refutation. It still does.

The word of course serves as the title of one of Aristotle's books, included in the *Organon*. Topics more generally might be described as that place in rhetoric where we gather together a wide range of *topoi* for the sake of discovery and invention. The intense focus on topics is today an important development in rhetoric. It is likely that Peirce's "rhetoric" and the theoretical innovations of contemporary rhetoricians will prove to me mutually illuminating.

3.3 Clarity and distinctness versus...?

Consider, once again, the conclusion of "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (1978): "It is certainly important to know how to make our ideas clear, but they may be [contra Descartes] ever so clear without being true. How to give birth to those vital and procreative ideas which multiply into a thousand forms and diffuse themselves everywhere, advancing civilization and making the dignity of man [humankind], is an art not yet reduced to rules, but the secret of which the history of science affords some hints" (EP 1:141). While Descartes made clarity and distinctness the criteria of truth (at least, the provisional criteria, since a benevolent God was ultimately required to secure the truth itself of these criteria), Peirce would never espouse such criteria. The reason is simple: clarity and distinctness cannot function as criteria. "The distinction between an idea *seeming* clear and really being so," Peirce wryly observes, "did not occur to him [Descartes]" (CP 5.391; also, in EP 1:125; cf. MACINTYRE, 2006, p. 9). *Individual* self-consciousness cannot "furnish us with our fundamental truths" (CP 5.391). Only the conscientious participants in a communal practice, at the heart of which is the exacting ethos of mutual accountability, provides us with effective criteria for distinguishing what seems to be true from what we, at this juncture, are entitled to count as true. What transpires within a solitary consciousness is, for this purpose, utterly insufficient. What takes place between an embodied, social agent and the perceptible "circumambient All"[28] (CP 6.429) alone suffices, but only if such agents are engaged in an ongoing dialogue governed by an uncompromising commitment to mutual accountability.

So, clarity and distinctness are in Peirce's judgment decidedly *not* the criteria of truth. What might we substitute for these Cartesian criteria? My proposal is that, for Peirce, the most relevant criteria are: Security and fecundity (or *uberty*)[29] in their unresolvable yet creative tension (see especially EP 2:463-474). Arguably, Peirce misreads his own pragmatism, laying too great stress on security, that is, too little on uberty.

Vitality inheres in the ideas—that is, in the signs—themselves. And their *inherent* vitality is nowhere more evident than in their procreative capacity. As I have argued in "How to Make Our Signs Clearer," knowing with absolute clarity, like knowing with absolute certainty, is out of the question.

Finally, can the task of facilitating the birth and growth of true ideas truly be "reduced to rules" or is the form of *techn*é (τέχνη) required of the inquirer one in large measure not reducible to rules?

3.4 Is there a logic of discovery?

If the business of facilitating the birth and growth of signs cannot be reduced to a set of rules, can it be properly identified as a part of logic? If it can, does this not imply that discovery can be simply the outcome of strict adherence to formal rules? And does not this fly in the face of the very history to which Peirce is, in the end, appealing "the secret of which [this art] the history of science affords

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28 Stated more simply, the dialogue between human inquirers and the natural world, inclusive of cultural phenomena, alone provides this basis. But these inquirers must be constituted as a community of self-critical experimentalists.

29 "I hope he [my Reader] will pause long enough to reflect that I can hardly be supposed to have selected the unusual word 'uberty' instead of 'fruitfulness' merely because it is spelled with half as many letters. Observations may be as *fruitful* as you will, but they cannot be said to be *gravid* with young minds in the sense in which reasoning may be, not because of the nature of the subject it considers, but because of the manner in which it is [ultimately] supported by ratiocinative instinct" (EP 2:472). Some observations are pregnant with possibilities and, as such, the term uberty.

some hints" (EP 1:141).[30] We appear then to be confronted with a dilemma. How ought we to respond to this dilemma?

Let us consider very carefully the context in which Peirce characterizes *rhetorica speculativa* as "the highest and most living branch of logic" (CP 2.333), i.e., the branch of logic in which signs are most manifestly—thus, most *dramatically*—signs (*i.e.*, when they are most themselves). Before doing so, however, let me stress three things. First, Peirce *appears* to have devoted the least attention to the branch of logic he accords the greatest importance. Second, he does so in the context of trying to clarify the nature of an assertion (see BELLUCCI; CHIFFI; PIETARINEN, 2021). Third, in his endeavor to clarify the nature of an assertion he approvingly refers to Ernst Schröder's conception of "*rhetorical* evidence" (emphasis in original).

3.5 The art (or *techné*) of rhetoric

One of Peirce's main concerns was to inaugurate, afresh, a normative science of fully deliberate conduct. Even so, the institution of this science entails a discipline of rationality. Regarding this discipline, nothing more is critical than the cultivation of a sensibility attuning us to the specific dynamism of signs in some distinctive domain. This involves primarily acquiring *a feel for a practice* (think here of those who unquestionably possess a feel for, say, a game or activity [Pierre Bourdieu's *Les sens practique* (1980)]). Rules—the explicit formulation and codification of a finite set of practical maxims or formalizable procedures—can serve both the acquisition and exercise of such a capacity. But they cannot take the place of a tacit, nuanced, alterable feel for the activity in question. The sensibility or temperament is *not* reducible to a set of rules, however much rules and maxims might assist in both the acquisition and the enactment of this temperament.

3.6 The strictly logical import of "rhetorical evidence"

What Ernst Schröder and, following him, Peirce meant by "*rhetorical* evidence" is as far removed from what is ordinarily meant by a merely "rhetorical argument" as anything could be. For what these two logicians meant was something having strictly logical force (a distinctive form of rational compulsion). I am disposed to think that Charles S. Peirce identifies speculative rhetoric as "the highest and liveliest branch of logic" *because* he judges this culminating phase of normative "logic," comprehensively conceived, to be the phase in which the efficacy, force, and power of signs are at the center of concern.

What are the two kinds of evidence? "In such an analysis of assertions [as Peirce undertook in his "Syllabus"] there are two kinds of reasoning which we have to employ" (CP 2.333). These are also the two kinds required for the analysis of the far more basic question, What is a sign? (see, e.g., CP 2.227). What I want to insure we consider carefully are the distinction between these two kinds of reasoning and, moreover, the link between reasoning and observation. The steps in a process or, better, operation) of reasoning need to be made manifest in observable or perceptible form. Of course, these steps might take place in quite different kinds of ratiocination. It should be noted that, in the sense intended by Peirce, ratiocination encompasses reasoning narrowly understood, imagination, and observation.

We must, Peirce suggests, appeal to "*rhetorical* evidence" in our attempt to ascertain the nature of an assertion. While such an appeal is necessary, it is not sufficient. For we must also carefully consider systematic linkages (or necessary—better, *quasi-necessary* [CP 2.227] inferences regarding what we are compelled to take must be a definitive characteristic of a given phenomenon). But, even regarding what we deduce from an exemplar and, then, generalize after a survey of a range of exemplars, "it is requisite to turn to the rhetorical evidence see whether or not they are verified by observation" (CP 2.333). That is, direct (yet mediated) observation of the phenomena appeals to "rhetorical evidence" *and* any implications

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deduced regarding the defining features of them also need to be tested in light of "rhetorical evidence." Anything we deduce from our observations needs itself to be observationally tested.

"In every assertion we may [must?] distinguish a speaker and a listener. The latter [the listener or addressee] […] need only have a problematic existence, as when during a shipwreck an account of the accident is sealed in a bottle and thrown upon the water" (CP 2.334). No one might ever read this message, hence that addressee is "problematical" (anything but guaranteed). But a possible addressee, however problematical, is essential to the structure of an assertion (please bear in mind a distinction and proposition or *dicisign* are distinct). The assertion is, on Peirce's account, what might be called an instance of *evidencing*: it provides evidence from someone to someone else.

3.7 Broadest generalization made possible by precissive abstraction & "rhetorical evidence"

The generalizations made on the basis of such phenomenological observations and rhetorical evidence are "quasi-necessary." It is as though (or *as if*) they are necessary, though strictly speaking they fall short of absolute necessity. The rare gift of the artist to discern what is manifest in experience or imagination ("what stares one in the face, just as it presents itself, unreplaced by any interpretation") is tied to the incomparable gift of the mathematician to generalize what is discerned (CP 5.42; EP 2 147-148).

The "generalizing power of the mathematician" allows us to produce "the abstract formula [or diagram] that comprehends the very essence of the feature under examination purified from all admixture of extraneous and irrelevant accompaniments" (EP 2:147-148).

3.8 *Commens*: the living union between utter (quasi-mind) and interpreter (another form of quasi-mind)

An utterer and interpreter—both having the status, hence the agency, of two quasi-minds—are conjoined in such a manner that the ineradicable unity implied by their being _commens_ and the interminable fissuring entailed by their being *mens* [an utterer and interpreter are conjoined in such a manner that] the complex interplay of coalescence and diremption makes consensus possible and the collapse of consensus inevitable.

3.9 The radical implications of shared signs

From a Cartesian perspective, it is utterly impossible for my mind to *be*, in some measure and manner, your mind. From a Peircean perspective, however, this is anything but impossible; in fact, it is necessary to grant this as more than a possibility. Insofar as you and I possess the same signs, at the level of practical familiarity alone, you are I are "of one mind." This does not preclude disagreement or opposition: rather it makes our divergences and disputes *meaningful*. "*Significant* disagreement presupposes," Bernstein wrote, "a common universe of discourse in which [women and] men can disagree" (1971, p. 1, emphasis added). This does not beg any question regarding incommensurability; it does however identify a condition governing disputes regarding this topic.

3.10 *Commens* at the level of familiarity

If you feel fear when a large, ferocious dog bares its teeth to us, growling in a tone commanding attention, and I too feel fear, prompting us both to stop and consider our options, we have on display in this example the most basic form of *commens* (at the heart of which are shared signs, not in their abstract, logical form, but in their concrete contextual significance—beginning with the emotional interpretant "immediately" generating a complex series of energetic interpretants, including the action of stopping, holding still, at least for a moment). Shared signs imply at the level of practice not only shared understanding but also

shared feelings (you and I both feel fear and, in the context to which I am referring, you have a felt sense of my fear and I have a felt sense of yours). The rough-and-ready familiarity we have regarding the perceptible sign of a canine growl, especially when emanating from which a large, unknown animal, is hardly a purely cognitive commonality: the familiarity encompasses shared affective responses.

3.11 Emergence of mind

While *mens* evolves out of semiosis (SAVAN, 1987-88; SHORT, 2007; SHAPIRO, 1983; COLAPIETRO, 1989), semiosis in turn evolves *into* forms of consciousness and mind exhibiting incredible complexity, in terms of both their inherent constitution and their constitutive relationships to what is other than consciousness or mind. Put more simply, the constitution of mind simultaneously or, at least, sequentially drives inward and outward (the centripetal and centrifugal drives in their complementarity are constitutive [R 290:36-37 (1905)]; CP 5.402n3; COLAPIETRO, 2014).

3.12 The pragmatic spiral

The movement of philosophy is manifestly not linear. It assumes the form of a spiral, more exactly, *an open-ended spiral.* The innermost "point" from which it spirals outward is not fixed (the spiral can "move" its origin to a point "before" what, at present, is identifiable as innermost). The outermost reaches toward which it ineluctably moves is also not fixed.

3.13 The love of invention and the re-invention (or transfiguration) of love

The movement of reason (or rational—i.e., self-controlled—mind) is identical to the movement of love. The explanation of this is simple: reason is at bottom a form of love. The relevance of this to rhetoric, especially (but not only) as Peirce re-imagined it, is this: rhetoric might itself be imagined as series of sites in which the operations and effects of love, in its various senses, are manifest. *The love of artful invention*, intricately tied to "scientific *Eros*" (CP 1.620), is unquestionably one of the most interesting and important of these sites (cf. BUCHLER, 1979). The scope and power of Peirce's (re)turn to rhetoric are revealed as much in providing invaluable resources for exploring this central *topos* as they are in illuminating other dimensions of other human undertakings, passions, and pursuits. The love of fame (cf. HUME, 1688), wealth, and prestige within some circle cannot but corrupt rhetoric, whereas the love of truth can rescue rhetoric from its historical disfigurements.

3.14 Integration and ramification (identification & differentiation)

In these sites, we witness the precarious integration and, then, inevitable fragmentation of our erotic investitures. If we are fortunate, we also experience a reconciliation with one or another nemesis (e.g., the reconciliation of philosophy and rhetoric, or poetics and hermeneutics [cf. RICOEUR, 1989], or the ethos of experimental inquiry and the sensibility of the artistic creator). This encompasses the achievement of ambivalence (SEGAL, 1992, 1997).

Where there is love, there is hate. Where is both, there is ambivalence. They are experientially conjoined in inevitable and unacknowledged ambivalences. The maturation of love requires the achievement of ambivalence, the work of acknowledging the extent and ways in which my sympathies and antipathies, loves and hates, are woven together.

3.15 The achievement of ambivalence

In Peirce's writings on rhetoric and related topics, what we can discern, I suggest, is nothing less than the achievement of ambivalence. Though psychoanalytic, this is not a reductive reading of his monumental

achievement. Though he could not have but inherited the Platonic antipathy toward the rhetoric of the Sophists, he (like Plato himself) worked toward a reclamation of rhetoric.

3.16   Peirce writings: a site of re-imagination and re-invention (in other words, a topos of topoi)

His writings are a site in which the emergence and evolution of purposes are coming to more explicit and critical consciousness. The cutting-edge of Peircean rhetoric, then, is a discourse in which the unsuspected irruption and convoluted development of purposes can be most readily seen. It is itself a *topos* in which, among the most important *topoi* we witness, the effort of a mind to claim possession of itself, to exert control over its own development, while in that very endeavor that mind is, time and again, *dispossessed* of its most assured inheritances (e.g., after Darwin, the fixed forms of Aristotle's ontology; after Einstein, the absolute forms of space and time so central to Newton's physics; after Freud, the very ideal of "reason," insufficiently aware of its own depths and superficiality, being "the master of its own house") (FREUD, 1966, p. 353).

On my reading, then, rhetoric (both rhetoric in general and rhetoric as re-imagined by Peirce's) does not primarily serve antecedently fixed purposes. Rather it assists historically emergent and emerging aims, often ones we are at present not adequately even in the position to identify univocally or simply well (COLAPIETRO, 2007). Speculative rhetoric, inclusive of methodeutic, is, on my account, the site in which Peirce is most truly Peirce, since it is the one in which his radical experimentalism is most dramatically on display. In his later years, the term *methodeutic* appears to have replaced *rhetoric*, however qualified, but this development needs to be critically assessed. There is, first of all, the question of fact and, then, the question of whether Peirce was wise to narrow the focus of his concern (i.e., a question of assessment or evaluation). Methodeutic as a replacement for rhetoric is one thing, methodeutic as an integral part of a more inclusive undertaking is quite another. There is also the possibility of methodeutic being focused on a dimension of *every* form of communication, insofar as any form in principle can assist or play a role in the advance of understanding (insofar as that form serves a *heuristic* function). The unresolved tension at the heart of Peirce's exploration of semiosis surfaces here, but also an achieved ambivalence toward rhetoric has becomes no less apparent.

3.17 Peircean rhetoric and development teleology

The inventiveness of rhetoric is hardly incidental. Rhetorical innovation and developmental teleology assist each other. Without such innovation, our purposes would be still-born. Without such teleology, our efforts would be so many exercises in *mere* cleverness. Concluding by breaking off with my purpose only at the end beginning to come clearly into view seems to be especially apposite. A cynical reader might take this to be an example of making a virtue out of a vice. But then it just might be a candid acknowledgment, an appropriate expression, of the irrepressibly "wild" character of developmental teleology. Aspects of "development" or emergence are unpredictable, likely in principle unforeseeable. What C. S. Peirce suspected about the harvest of his own ideas (CP 1.12) is almost certainly also true of the harvest of any other fertile mind or expansive epoch. In the face of the irrepressibly "wild" outpouring of our intellectual energy and the fruits generated by those exertions, the need for rhetoric, in various senses, is manifest. C. S. Peirce's efforts to revisit time and again the site of rhetoric—to try discovering anew a clearer and deeper sense of what is required for us in crafting perspicuous forms of expression in the entire range of our communicative practices—are ones inviting us to revisit his efforts in this regard. In his later years, he appears to have made methodeutic the culminating phase of his sign theory.

4 Final considerations

Working for the most part in increasing isolation, especially regarding the study of signs, he knew "the solitary study of a single person" could never constitute a science in *his* sense. But he persevered in the hope that others would become attracted to the arduous work of exploring these often seemingly disparate phenomena in the spirit of science. He tirelessly tried out new ideas, never completely satisfied with any of his substantive conclusions or, seemingly, his terminological proposals. He was indeed a radical experimentalist indefatigably given to heuristic innovation. This is dramatically true of his work in semeiotic and, regarding this field, it is most dramatically true of his waverings regarding the third branch of this evolving discipline. What we see here most clearly is "a philosophy of the incomplete," that is, "of growth." If the trajectories point in alternative directions, if the path of development is far from linear, but a series of zig-zag movements, we ought to be neither disappointed nor dismissive of Peirce. His work confronts us in the form of a program of research to be carried forward. The notes which I have assembled here are designed to suggest some of the ways in which this program might be carried forward. We either join him as a co-inquirer or we betray the spirit of his project.

List of Abbreviations**

The works of Charles S. Peirce are cited as follows:
Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce: volume (v) and paragraph (p) (CP v.p).
The essential Peirce: volume (v), page (p) (EP v:p).
Contributions to The Nation: volume (v), page (p) (CN v:p).
The new elements of mathematics: volume (v), page (p) (NEM v:p).
The Charles S. Peirce Papers, Microfilm Edition: followed by manuscript number (MS #).

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** Editor's Note: This list of abbreviations follows the rules described at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce_bibliography. Accessed on: 15 Oct. 2022.

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