

Peirce's Early Rereadings of his Illustrations: the Case of the 1885 Royce Review¹

Primeiras Releituras de Peirce de suas Ilustrações: o caso da Resenha de 1885 de Royce

Mathias Girel

Maitre de conférences/Directeur des études
Département de Philosophie
École Normale Supérieure – Paris/ France
mathias.girel@ens.fr

Abstract: Interpretations of Peirce's development after 1898 often mix three kinds of arguments: one argument about *belief*, one argument about *philosophy and practice*, and one argument about the *causal role of James's writings on Peirce's development*. I shall focus here on the last two points: theory and practice and the alleged role of James. James's role in Peirce's development is somewhat overestimated and one can doubt Peirce's worries about the dogmatic use of the scientific method and of philosophy in morals are conditioned by James's writings only. Peirce's re-readings and refinements of his *Illustrations* started no later than the early 1880s, at a time when James was not as central a reference as it became after 1900 for the philosophic stage. To support that claim, I wish to focus here on one particular point: the distrust towards those who try to "mingle" philosophy and practice is by no means a new theme in the 1890s. One of the most telling examples of such a claim is the 1885 review of Royce's *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, some thirteen years before the quarrel over pragmatism started.

Key words: Peirce. James. Royce. Doubt. Belief. Practice. Conduct. Justification. Non-Cognitivism.

Resumo: Interpretações do desenvolvimento de Peirce após 1898 comumente misturam três tipos de argumentos: um argumento sobre a crença, um argumento sobre filosofia e prática e um argumento sobre o papel causal dos escritos de James sobre o desenvolvimento de Peirce. Focalizarei aqui os últimos dois pontos: teoria e prática e o suposto papel de James. O papel de James no desenvolvimento de Peirce é de um tanto superestimado e pode-se duvidar que as preocupações de Peirce sobre o uso dogmático do método científico e da filosofia em moralidade são condicionados somente pelos escritos de James. As releituras e refinamentos de Peirce de suas Ilustrações não começaram antes do começo dos anos 1880, na época em que James não era uma referência central como se tornaria depois de 1900 no cenário filosófico. Para sustentar essa afirmação, desejo focalizar aqui um ponto particular: a desconfiança para com aqueles para quem "combinar" teoria e prática é um novo tema nos anos 1890. Um dos exemplos mais mencionados a respeito disso é a resenha de 1885 de O Aspecto Religioso da Filosofia, cerca de treze anos antes da queixa sobre o pragmatismo começar.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia americana clássica. Pragmatismo clássico. Pragmaticismo. Max H. Fisch. Charles S. Peirce.

¹ I am very grateful to Professor Ibri and all the scholars and staff involved in the *12th Conference on Pragmatism* at PUC-SP, Sao Paulo, for having provided such a stimulating opportunity to write this paper and such a congenial atmosphere for the Conference. I am also very grateful to André de Tienne for his very useful comments on my presentation and to Mark Migotti for helpful suggestions. References to Peirce's Works follow the standard reference system, CP stands for the *Collected Papers*, W for the *Writings*. Other editions will all be found in the reference list.

Introduction

The development of Peirce's philosophy is still a perplexing question. When one peruses his texts just before and after 1900, especially those which concern pragmatism, two evolutions and an apparent cause can be noted.

- 1) The first evolution involves the notion of *belief*, which is the core of Peirce's 1878 *Illustrations*, and which seems to raise serious doubts in 1898 and 1903².
- 2) The second evolution involves *practice*, and the relation of theory to practice, some commentators thinking that there is a growing tension between these two realms³.
- 3) The apparent or alleged cause of this twofold evolution, and of this tension, would be the use that James had made of Peirce's theses, in *The Will to believe* (1897) and, more importantly, in *Philosophical conceptions and practical results* (1898): it is implicit if one reads the 1898 Cambridge Lectures on *Reasoning and the Logic of Things*⁴, it is explicitly set forth by Peirce in the "Pragmatism" entry for Baldwin's *Dictionary*.

Three arguments are mixed here: one argument about *belief*, one argument about *philosophy and practice*, and one argument about the *causal role of James's writings on Peirce's development*. Each one of them would deserve a full thesis, and has indeed been the subject-matter of many inquiries.

Having spent much time elsewhere on the development of Peirce's ideas about belief⁵, I shall focus here on the last two points: theory and practice and the alleged role of James. I share with Murphey the idea that James's role in Peirce's development is somewhat overestimated (and accordingly that the development of Peirce's philosophy has strong internal constraints), and I do not think that Peirce's doubts about the dogmatic use of the scientific method and of philosophy in morals are conditioned by James's writings only. Peirce's re-readings and refinements of his *Illustrations* start no later than the early 1880s, at a time when James is not as central a reference as it became after 1900 for the philosophic stage.

² "I hold that what is properly and usually called belief, that is, the adoption of a proposition as a [*ktéma es aei*] to use the energetic phrase of Doctor Carus, has no place in science at all. We believe the proposition we are ready to act upon. Full belief is willingness to act upon the proposition in vital crises, opinion is willingness to act upon it in relatively insignificant affairs. But pure science has nothing at all to do with action. The propositions it accepts, it merely writes in the list of premisses it proposes to use. Nothing is vital for science; nothing can be." (PEIRCE, 1998, vol. 2, p. 33). See, for a first survey, Hookway (1997), Misak (2002) and Migotti (2005). Migotti makes several important points here and argues for a contextual difference between beliefs occurring in science and full beliefs acted upon in vital crisis; this argument leads him to claim "that the position Peirce argued for in the spring of 1898 is, pace Hookway, typical rather than anomalous, and moreover, pace Misak, true and interesting. What Peirce has recognized, to state the main point very roughly, is that the role of belief in genuine inquiry and the life of science is radically different from its role in action and practical decision generally and vitally important action and practical decision in particular." (MIGOTTI, 2005, p. 45). Migotti argues thus strongly, on this point, against the "evolution" thesis.

³ See former note ("pure science has nothing at all to do with action").

⁴ James gave his 1898 Californian address after Peirce's Cambridge Lectures.

⁵ GIREL, M. *Croyance et conduite dans le pragmatisme. Facettes de la croyance dans la théorie de l'enquête de Peirce et dans sa critique des pragmatistes*. PhD. Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2007, 763 p.

To support that claim, I wish to focus here on one particular point: the distrust towards those who try to “mingle” philosophy and practice is by no means a new theme in the 1890s. One of the most telling examples of such a claim is the 1885 review of Royce’s *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, some thirteen years before the quarrel over pragmatism started⁶.

1. Theory, practice and James

Before I enter into the details of Peirce’s criticism, let me first substantiate the tension between theory and practice I was referring to in my introduction.

1. Peirce’s 1898 lectures on *Reasoning and the Logic of Things* have often been read as if Peirce there recanted the pragmatic arguments of his 1878 *Illustrations of the logic of science*, or at least as a transition, as if they were expressing serious doubts about Peirce’s earlier pragmatism. Murphey has stressed that, around 1898, Peirce was led into a difficult situation: he could not publicly disown the doctrine James was celebrating louder and louder but neither could he embrace it anymore. Murphey traces this uneasiness back to the very doubts Peirce himself was entertaining about his own early doctrines in the 1890s, when he developed his metaphysics and his cosmology⁷. It is equally a prominent feature of Apel’s reading that there is a turn in 1898, which leads him to claim that ‘Philosophy and the Conduct of Life’ shows “how strange some of Peirce’s early ideas had since become to him.”⁸ Finally, Christopher Hookway, commenting on the 1898 rebuttal of “full belief” in science, has noted that the apparent sharp distinction between theory and practice in 1898 appears to “conflict with some distinctively ‘Peircean’ doctrines from the 1860s and 1870s.”⁹ If such a conflict shows up, does it occur only in the late 1890s?

2. *The apparent cause.* It has also been submitted that the tensions in the 1898 lectures should be read, at least in part, as a response to James’s theses, as advanced in his 1897 *The Will to Believe*, and in particular to the ethical strain in James’s thought. It is the very idea that philosophy could endorse any edifying role that seems outlandish to Peirce and that he diagnoses as a “Greek tendency” in philosophy:

The Greeks expected philosophy to affect life -- not by any slow process of percolation of forms [...] but forthwith in the person and soul of the philosopher himself, rendering him different from ordinary men in his views of right conduct.¹⁰

Is that a genuinely Jamesean insight? To be sure, that *might* be the case: when Peirce objects to the confusion between “philosophy” and “the conduct of life”, or again between “philosophy” and “detached ideas about vital matters”, he of course refers to the very terms of James’s invitation. James, wary of technical details, had asked him not a systematic account but “detached ideas” or abstract topics but “matters of vital importance”. Of course, this context explains in part the tone of the first lecture, when Peirce stands as “an Aristotelian and a scientific man, condemning with the whole strength of conviction the Hellenic tendency to

⁶ PEIRCE, W5, pp. 221-234.

⁷ MURPHEY, 1961, Ch. VII *passim*. The Peirce Project scientific edition has considerably changed our approach to Peirce’s middle years : we know that the *Guess at the riddle* was written some five years before the date provided in CP. See HOOKWAY (2000), Introduction, *passim*, for some consequences on Peirce’s « philosophical picture ».

⁸ APEL, 1981, p. 218 n.6. Apel’s book was published before a scientific edition of the 1898 Cambridge lectures became available.

⁹ HOOKWAY, 2000, p. 22.

¹⁰ PEIRCE, 1998, vol. 2, p. 28.

mingle philosophy and practice.”¹¹ It might certainly have come as a surprise to James’s students.

It is also tempting to think that Peirce is struggling against the vision James gives of the philosophic stance and of its relationship to the ethical stance, in the *Will to believe*, in particular when James boldly claims: “In the total game of life we stake our persons all the while; and if in its theoretic part our persons will help us to a conclusion, surely we should also stake them there, however inarticulate they may be.”¹²

Peirce is also quite explicit in Baldwin’s *Dictionary*, when he mentions the alleged origins of his doubts about pragmatism: “In 1896 William James published his *Will to Believe*, and later his *Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results*, which pushed this method [the pragmatist maxim] to such extremes as must tend to give us pause.”¹³

What were those extremes? They are again practice-related: “The doctrine appears to assume that the end of man is action -- a stoical axiom which, to the present writer at the age of sixty, does not recommend itself so forcibly as it did at thirty.”¹⁴

If this is a way to confess that maybe James was in some ways faithful to earlier peircean insights¹⁵ and that, maybe, at the age of sixty, one does not endorse the same philosophy as at the age of thirty, it also implies that James’s use of Peirce’s ideas led Peirce to draw a stronger distinction between theory and practice. It tends to give weight to the causal role I was referring to in the introduction.

2. An American Plato: The 1885 review

Here comes into the picture Peirce’s 1885 review of *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*¹⁶.

A first point deserves our attention, in view of the extract of the *Cambridge Lectures* we have just quoted: the actual title for the Royce review is “An American Plato” and one should bear in mind that that nickname recurs fifteen years later, again about Royce (“our American Plato”¹⁷). It is thus, at the face of it, a more obvious reference than James when one looks for representatives of the “Hellenic tendency” that Peirce is considering in 1898¹⁸.

But there is more to it, which calls for a little unpacking. There are excellent readings of the Peirce-Royce relationship in general¹⁹. The emphasis has been laid either on the theory of non-descriptive reference as a response to Royce’s challenge in his argument from error²⁰,

¹¹ PEIRCE, 1998, vol. 2, p. 29.

¹² JAMES, 1897, p. 94.

¹³ CP, 5.3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See for example 5.398 (=W3, 263): “The essence of belief is the establishment of a habit; and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise. If beliefs do not differ in this respect, if they appease the same doubt by producing the same rule of action, then no mere differences in the manner of consciousness of them can make them different beliefs, any more than playing a tune in different keys is playing different tunes.”

¹⁶ ROYCE, p. 1885. My copy of that book is the 16th reprint (1913).

¹⁷ CP 8.109 (c. 1900).

¹⁸ PEIRCE *et al.* 1975, 2, 161 (1897), which is a review of Hyde and an acute critique of the ‘meridian of Chatauqua’, for similar arguments.

¹⁹ OPPENHEIM (1997), OPPENHEIM (1998), OPPENHEIM (2005).

²⁰ HOOKWAY, 2000.

or on Royce's later notion of "internal meaning" as an interesting version of pragmatism²¹, but in general they have not been concerned primarily with the topic of the present paper.

The 1885 review is of course important, as far as Peirce's reference theory—and hence the significance of his realism—is concerned. But this discussion takes place in the first part of the review, when Peirce confronts the "Argument from error"²². He addresses Royce's argument that one must assume an absolute and all-inclusive mind to account for the mere possibility of error, i.e. to explain that we even could refer to something about which we have wrong beliefs, so that it would make sense to say they are wrong *about it*. Peirce deems that it is a direct criticism of his own account of truth and reality in the *Illustrations*, especially when he wrote that "the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real." Christopher Hookway, in his *Themes from Peirce*, has given an outstanding reading of Peirce's reply to Royce's argument. Hookway argues that it was the occasion for a major claim by Peirce—that "reference to external things is primarily indexical and demonstrative"²³ and not *descriptive*. Peirce's reply involved thus a theory indexical reference, showing that we could be in cognitive contact with something and still have wrong beliefs about *it*. It is striking that, simultaneously to this reply to Royce, the same chapter had a somewhat similar effect on William James. James Conant, for instance, has emphasized the role of this work in James's development²⁴ and has claimed that radical empiricism could be read as a response to this Roycean challenge. James himself depicts in a vivid way the questions philosophers give the world from time to time, which have an intolerable way "with them of *sticking*, in spite of all one can do"²⁵ and duly credits Royce for his new "*gadfly*" [*sic.*]. Royce's problem, his legacy to philosophy, does not concern 'matter', 'substance' and 'cause', the classical problems for empiricists, but *reference*:

How *can* a thought refer to, intend, or signify any particular reality outside of itself?²⁶

Royce's solution, involving an "infinite and all-inclusive mind",²⁷ seemed at that time inescapable to James: "we are inclined, he said, to think him right, and to suspect that his idealistic escape from the quandary may be the best one for us all to take."²⁸ James continued to wrestle with this question for at least eight years²⁹.

²¹ ANDERSON (2005), gives very valuable insights but does not address the second part of Peirce's 1885 review. A full discussion of Peirce and Royce's mature logical positions should certainly start with section IV of Scott L. Pratt's excellent 2007 paper ("New continents': The logical system of Josiah Royce", PRATT (2007)), and his analysis of Royce's notion of « modes of action ». On the development of Royce's pragmatism, see Mahowald, Mary Briody. *An Idealistic Pragmatism. The Development of the Pragmatic Element in the Philosophy of Josiah Royce*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972. Since the present paper was delivered and submitted, Scott Pratt's paper on Royce, Peirce and Error, given during the same session, has just been published in the last issue of *Cognitio*.

²² Peirce seems to think that Royce's introduction of "Thrasymachus" is a way to refer to him, but reading *Religious Aspect*, 426-27, it is not so obvious.

²³ HOOKWAY (2000), 108.

²⁴ CONANT (1997).

²⁵ JAMES (1987), 385 (1885).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 387.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 386.

²⁹ Even though T.L.S. Sprigge, for example, has clearly shown that "The Function of Cognition" (1885) represents a first attempt to overcome it. See SPRIGGE (1997), 135.

There is thus no question that Royce's book was a powerful incentive for a serious rereading, by Peirce, of his own *Illustrations*. To take only one short additional example, the discussion over reference is also the occasion to face the most common objections raised against Peirce's idea of a "convergence" of inquirers, in particular the claim that his theory could involve skeptical consequences:

--- Peirce makes it clear here that the consensus does not occur at the end of times: we have already reached it on many points³⁰. The only proviso is that it might be fallible (as Hookway phrases it: the skeptic is someone who thinks that *all* our ideas might be wrong, a fallibilist is someone who thinks that *any* of them can be wrong).

--- Peirce makes it clear here that the consensus is not impossible. Someone who thinks that a consensus is not possible either thinks that the question is meaningless, or is advancing a dogmatic claim about the progress of science, and some examples like Comte's prophecy that we would never know the composition of distant stars, just before the discovery of spectroscopy, are in order here³¹.

Royce's book has thus certainly played a pivotal role in the development of the philosophy of two major pragmatists, in the construction of James's philosophy, and in the clarification of Peirce's philosophy—it gives the substance of a re-reading of the earlier account of reality—and it certainly is a bitter regret that Peirce's review was rejected by the *Popular Science Monthly*.

3. Royce's "hypochondriac pursuit"

But the second part of the review is more important still for our inquiry, even though it is frequently overlooked. It deals with the *ethical* dimension of Royce's project: it questions both parts of the book, "The Search for a Moral Ideal" and "The Search for a Religious Truth." The objections Peirce offers here are not directed at some particular or technical point of the book, but at the *method* itself (as he puts it, "these titles seem to me to point, at the outset, to a fault of method"³²).

What was the method indeed? A few precisions are in order and we can be helped by the very subtitle of Royce's book, "*A Critique of the bases of Conduct and of Faith*": in addition to the obvious Kantian background of the idea of a *Critique*, it involves two notions that invite to a cross-reading of Peirce and Royce, those of "conduct" and "faith". The *relationship* between these two notions is clear from the outset; they are both part of what Royce means by "religion": "A religion must teach some moral code, must in some way inspire a strong feeling of devotion to that code, and in so doing must show that something in the nature of things that answers to the code or that serves to reinforce the feeling."³³

Religion involves something that is believed ("faith"), something that is done or to be done (some piece of "conduct"), and, also, an ontological or metaphysical claim about the nature of things. The status of this last claim, which involves philosophy proper, is for his technical details the object of the difficult last chapters, and in particular of the already mentioned Chapter XI, "The possibility of error".

³⁰ W5, 226.

³¹ Cf. CP 1.138. I cannot embark into the many misunderstandings Peirce had to face, as far as his convergence theory is concerned, see REYNOLDS (2002).

³² W5, 229.

³³ ROYCE (1885), 3-4.

Royce's agenda is clear: the aim is to "criticize" ("as skeptically as may be"³⁴), the foundations of conduct and faith. The goal is to find a rational justification for them. The first two dimensions of religion, "conduct" and "faith", are both open to criticism; *i.e.* one can inquire into their foundations, their "bases". One can criticize an action; one can also criticize a belief. Such an inquiry and such a critique were a major part of Royce's project. Peirce acknowledges that point and for that reason thinks that Royce's book is misguided from the beginning.

The misunderstanding concerns first the business of philosophy itself: for Peirce — already in 1885— the philosopher has no role to play in moral education, and his business is certainly not to provide "foundations" for morals. It is definitely not his responsibility to introduce to, or comfort in, the moral standpoint someone who could not live in the moral realm: "The pursuit of a conscience if one hasn't one already, or of a religion, which is the subjective basis of conscience, seems to me an aimless and hypochondriac pursuit."³⁵

Hypochondria —as Peirce uses that term, meaning logical hypochondria— involves excessive self-criticism, and certainly both too much diffidence against morals, and too much confidence towards our theories, if theories are meant to provide a cure for that initial uneasiness. Peirce's claim is that the possession of a "conscience" has something to do with *experience*, not with theory or with a theoretical foundation, so that Royce's inquiry would be radically ill-founded: "If a man finds himself under no sense of obligation, let him congratulate himself. For such a man to hanker after a bondage to conscience, is as if a man with a good digestion should cast about for a regimen of food."³⁶

Peirce assumes thus, already at that time, that there is a sharp distinction between the logical and the ethical. A principle of morals (or of religion) is neither an axiom nor a postulate.

We are now in a good position to make use of the short summary we gave about Peirce, Royce and indexical reference. Royce's ethical 'mistake' has metaphysical grounds indeed, insofar as it relies on the same metaphysical 'mistake' he made about reference: "Every Christian will tell him that he makes the mistake of viewing that as a theory or speculation which is really a spiritual experience; -- another example of his neglect of the volitional element."³⁷

Earlier in the review, Peirce had accused Royce of neglecting, as the Hegelians had done, the "outward clash" in his theory about reference. He makes the same point here, in the moral realm: we don't adopt a moral code or a religion, we already *live* moral and spiritual experiences —or not. Right or wrong are not elements in a true theory about morals. A Wittgensteinian would say that they inhabit "forms of life", Peirce says here that they are connected with "rules of living" and "real impulse[s]":

And now Dr. Royce proposes that this person shall ask himself the question, what validity or truth is there in the distinction of right and wrong. To me, it plainly appears that such a person, if he have a clear head, will at once reply, right and wrong are nothing to me except so far as they are connected with certain rules of living by which I am enabled to satisfy a real impulse which works in my heart; and this impulse is the

³⁴ ROYCE (1885), 13.

³⁵ W5, 229. The vocabulary of "hypochondria" appears elsewhere, for instance when Peirce wishes to emphasize the excesses of self-criticism in logic (See 7.448, 7.458, *Grand Logic*).

³⁶ W5, 229.

³⁷ W5, 232

love of my neighbor elevated into a love of an ideal and divine humanity which I identify with the providence that governs the world.³⁸

There is clearly a non-cognitivist approach to ethics here, and already some of the main arguments of the 1898 Lectures, which is a telling argument against any reading claiming that there is a dramatic change in the 1890s: “A conscience, too, is not a theorem or a piece of information which may be acquired by reading a book; it must be bred in a man from infancy or it will be a poor imitation of the genuine article”³⁹.

So, according to Peirce, Royce’s first mistake concerns the task of philosophy and the nature of moral dispositions.

The other flaw in Royce’s argument —and this is why Peirce thinks it is a problem of *method*— is to think that doubt comes first and that belief must be won over and against that initial doubt, so much so that, in front of any moral dilemma, morals and moral beliefs should be *founded*. It is to Peirce’s eyes totally illusory to adopt provisionally a feigned skepticism to pretend discovering a faith that was already there from the outset: “*Reasons concern the man who is coming to believe, not the man who believes already.*”⁴⁰

That for Royce beliefs are clearly things for which justifications, and even moral justifications, are asked, and that Peirce’s argument aims at the core of Royce’s ethics, is made clearer by a shorter and earlier piece of the same period, where Royce gives a striking formulation of his approach to belief. I will shortly consider this paper, which sums up arguments that are scattered in the book, leaving aside here the question of an evolution in Royce’s thought between 1882 and 1885. Royce emphasizes the role of the agent in the adoption of beliefs, and argues for an equivalent of the ethics of belief, in a short 1882 paper entitled *How Beliefs are made*⁴¹. He objects there to the idea that beliefs are merely passive and “found” in us. Knowledge is by no means a passive matter,⁴² the cognitive and the ethical realms overlap⁴³. Royce’s concern is to show that man is responsible for his beliefs as well as for his conduct:

... The formation of a creed is a part of conduct. [...] one is at all times reacting upon what experience puts into [one’s] mind, so as to build for [one]self what mere experience could never give. If this is true, then it follows that we are in duty bound to direct this natural process in the way that seems to us morally best.⁴⁴

³⁸ W5, 231.

³⁹ W5, 229.

⁴⁰ W5, 230, *italics mine*. The quote follows like this: “It has often been remarked that metaphysics is an imitation of mathematics; and it may be added that the philosophic doubt is an imitation of the absurd procedure of elementary geometry, which begins by giving worthless demonstrations of propositions nobody ever questions.”

⁴¹ First published in *The Californian* for February 1882, retrieved in ROYCE (1920, 345-363 (1882)). See OPPENHEIM (2005), 80 and 449, n. 40, following CLENDENNING (1999), 106, on Royce’s possible influence on the Jamesian notion of the “Will to believe”. See CLENDENNING (1999), 127, to the effect that this paper provided part of the substance of the first three chapters of the second book of *The Religious Aspect*.

⁴² ROYCE (1920), 347.

⁴³ See HAACK (1997) for a typology of these kinds of overlaps.

⁴⁴ ROYCE (1920), 347.

This is exactly what Royce undertakes to do, showing the role of attention in perception. He has an interesting thought experiment about what it feels like, not to be a bat for sure, but to live in Carlyle's world⁴⁵.

Such a moral emphasis about our doxastic states gives certainly, to Peirce's eyes, too much to our responsibility. *It also gives too much, as it were, to belief itself*. Peirce, when he reads Royce and when he re-reads his earlier papers, claims unambiguously that a shared and ultra-stable state of assent is no proof by itself.

I take it thus that, in his 1885 Royce review, Peirce two things in the same breath: first, he criticizes Royce's view of reference, which is central in the Argument from Error; second, he shows that his own 1877-78 views on the convergence of inquirers should not be understood the way Royce describes Thrasymachus' argument:

... Be that as it may, the idea that the mere reaction of assent and doubt, the mere play of thought, the heat-lightning of the brain, is going to settle anything in this real world to which we appertain, -- such an idea only shows again how the Hegelians overlook the facts of volitional action and reaction in the development of thought. I find myself in a world of forces which act upon me, and *it is they and not the logical transformations of my thought which determine what I shall ultimately believe*.⁴⁶

Peirce is here making clear that his earlier claims about the settlement of belief in the community of inquirers by the scientific method must be read within the framework of his tri-categorical realism, the same realism his nearly contemporary *Guess at the Riddle* will be sketching and refining. His criticism is by the same token a rereading of his earlier papers, but this is not a refutation. As he puts it elsewhere: "It is true that we do generally reason correctly by nature. But that is an accident; the true conclusion would remain true if we had no impulse to accept it; and the false one would remain false, though we could not resist the tendency to believe in it."⁴⁷

This last text was neither written in 1898 nor after 1900. It occurs in one of the first paragraphs of *The Fixation of Belief*, in 1877, even before the exposition of the different methods for "fixing" belief. It was part of the picture from the start and the Royce review was only a further occasion to drive this argument home.

Conclusions

I shall offer here three directions of conclusion, concerning the continuity of Peirce's thought, concerning the scholarship of pragmatism, and concerning conduct.

1) There seems thus to be no exaggeration in saying that, when all is said and done, Royce is as much, maybe more, a target as James himself, in the criticism of those who mix philosophy and the "conduct of life". This does not mean that all the strains of the 1898 arguments are already here: for example, very little is said here about the fact that theories are of little help in a vital crisis, in the same way as probabilities are of little help when we are dealing with the "single case"; little is said also about the differences of reasoning in science and in ethics. Still, the 1898 lectures rely on a continuity of arguments, about the task of philosophy and

⁴⁵ "Change the book you are reading, and your whole notion of the universe suffers some momentary change also. Think this week in the fashion of Carlyle, attending to things as he brings them to your attention, and human life in fact, the whole world of being as you thought of it last week, when you were following some other guide becomes momentarily clouded." (*The Californian*, Jan 1882, 126, ROYCE (1920), 315).

⁴⁶ W5, 230, *italics mine*.

⁴⁷ W3, 244 (1877).

about the nature of moral dispositions: we have seen a variant of them here; I could have quoted in the same spirit from Peirce's 1880 talk on the State of Science in America⁴⁸ or from Peirce's later Notes on Scientific philosophy⁴⁹.

2) I mentioned in my title some "rereadings": I was referring to a common practice in Peirce. Such a rereading of the *Illustrations*, or at least of the pragmatist maxim, is present in almost all the major pragmatist texts after 1900. This "tradition", as we have seen, by no means begins after 1900. Shortly after the *Illustrations*, Peirce writes a preliminary for them on "Thought as Cerebration"⁵⁰, he also uses his 1878 texts in his Hopkins lectures⁵¹. In 1893, Peirce annotates his *Illustrations* when he works on the plan of *Search for a Method*, with important clarifications on what we mean by "action", by "purpose", by "sensible". They are part of the two other important book projects of the 1890s, *The Principles of Philosophy* and the *Grand Logic*. The 1885 review belongs to this tradition: Peirce criticizes an interpretation of his earlier claims about the convergence of inquirers, makes important clarifications on belief, on practice. I submit that the pragmatist scholarship should pay more attention to the texts Peirce wrote between 1878 and 1898⁵².

3) A third —and a bit longer— conclusion is both a disclaimer and an invitation to broaden the discussion. I have relied here on Peirce's criticism of Royce's arguments, and, within such a limited format, it does not do full justice to the richness of Royce's thought. I wished to share a feeling I had when preparing for this talk, the feeling that, already in the 1880s, Royce's account of practice contained elements that would fit nicely into Peirce's system. The notion of *conduct* already plays an important role in Royce's first writings, and, in the same way as in other writers, it "migrates", "moves", beyond the moral realm, it becomes a thicker concept. Royce is perfectly aware of this migration and acknowledges Spencer's example in the *Data of Ethics*⁵³ in his own *Tests of Right and Wrong*⁵⁴, where he is very close from pragmatism. The text begins with an analysis of knowledge, Royce emphasizing the expectative character of our judgments, which, in the same way as actions, always overlap on the future. Now, just after, Royce asks what the connections are between knowledge as activity and conduct, which involves an interesting characterization of conduct:

But if knowledge is activity, nobody would call simple knowledge a species of conduct. Conduct is activity directed towards an end. To form the idea of an end, a somewhat complex synthesis is necessary. (...) Conduct or action for an end is then, made possible, (1) through desires, (2) through judgments of expectation, (3) through judgments of possibility, (4) through the entirely unique moment of choice or

⁴⁸ See W4, 154 (« If you ask why our colleges have been in this state, the answer is very simple. It is that they have been in the hands of the clergy, who in all ages and in all countries have comprehend the nature of science -- with its single eye for truth --- as little as they have the worldly code of honour. » (sic.)). Compare with *Essential Peirce*, 2, 37 (1898).

⁴⁹ See 1.55 (1896) and HPPLS, 2, 119 and 1, 477.

⁵⁰ W4, 38-43.

⁵¹ See W4, 7 (May 1879) and W4, 476-77.

⁵² HOOKWAY (2000) is very illuminating on many points concerning this subject.

⁵³ ROYCE (1920, 206): "Observe that in all this we are not speaking of the evolution of conduct from the simple to the complex, but are only defining conduct according to its different grades. We are greatly aided, however, in this analytic work by the lucid discussions of Mr. Spencer's *Data of Ethics*."

⁵⁴ ROYCE (1920, 187-218 (1880)). This paper was published posthumously, but its arguments can be found on a larger scale in *The Religious Aspect*. See KEGLEY (2008), 178 n. 44, for the hypothesis that some parts of Royce (1885) offers a deepening of the ethical perspectives developed in that early text.

conquest of one desire over opposing ones, that moment, which we cannot further describe, and which we call by the name of Will.⁵⁵

Something is immediately striking: such an analysis is exactly what is missing in the 1878 *Illustrations*, where the approach to action and practice is somewhat “narrow”⁵⁶. It is implicitly required by Peirce’s early texts on the reference to future in thought, but it is not explicitly articulated. If one deals with conduct and not with isolated actions anymore, it is perfectly clear that the reduction to individual acts or sensible particulars is not a live option anymore. To describe a piece of conduct is not to describe something bound to the present moment alone, as Royce stresses:

The present moment is given. To act with reference to it alone, is not conduct at all. Conduct is first found when in the present we act with reference to at least one future moment, forming our expectation of what this moment may be through an act of acknowledgment of what some past moment was. And conduct increases in complexity and definiteness according as we act with reference to a more extended time, posit a greater past time as real, expect a greater future time as yet to come.⁵⁷

Peirce, reworking the notion of conduct after 1900, certainly does not « take up » Royce’s concept, but it is possible that he follows the same lines Royce was following around 1885⁵⁸.

References

- ANDERSON, Douglas R. “Who’s Pragmatist: Royce and Peirce at the Turn of the Century”. In: *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 41, 3, p. 467-481, 2005.
- APEL, Karl Otto. *Charles S. Peirce: from pragmatism to pragmaticism*. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981.
- CLENDENNING, John. *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*. Rev. and expanded. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, The Vanderbilt library of American philosophy, 1999.
- CONANT, James. “The James/Royce Dispute and the Development of James’s ‘Solution’”. In: in: R. A. Putnam (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to William James*. New York, Cambridge Univ Press, p. 186-213, 1997.
- HAACK, SUSAN. The Ethics of Belief Reconsidered, in: L. E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Roderick M. Chisholm*, Chicago, Open Court, p. 129-144. . 1997.

⁵⁵ ROYCE, *Ibid.*, 204.

⁵⁶ CP 5.400, W3, 265 (1878): “To develop its meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves. Now, the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be. What the habit is depends on when and how it causes us to act. As for the when, every stimulus to action is derived from perception; as for the how, every purpose of action is to produce some sensible result.”

⁵⁷ Royce, *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁸ André de Tienne, in the discussion, provided interesting insights on Peirce, Royce and the shared idea of a community of interpretation. This is something I cannot expand much upon here, due to lack of space, but that will definitely be part of the finer-grained picture when I have a chance to come back to the present subject-matter.

HOOKWAY, CHRISTOPHER. Logical Principles and Philosophical Attitudes: Peirce's Response to James's Pragmatism, in: R. A. Putnam (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, New York, Cambridge University Press, p. 144-165. 1997.

_____. *Truth, Rationality, and Pragmatism : Themes from Peirce*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

JAMES, WILLIAM. *The will to believe and other essays in popular philosophy* New York: Longmans Green, 1897.

-----. *Essays, comments, and reviews*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Works. 1987.

KEGLEY, JACQUELYN ANN K. *Josiah Royce in focus*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, American philosophy. 2008.

MIGOTTI, MARK. The Key to Peirce's view of the Role of Belief in Scientific Inquiry, *Cognitio: Revista de Filosofia*, 6, 1, January-July, p. 43-55, 2005.

MISAK, CHERYL. C. S. Peirce on Vital Matters, *Cognitio*, 3, 64-82, 2002.

MURPHEY, MURRAY G. *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

OPPENHEIM, FRANK M. The Peirce-Royce Relationship, Part 1, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 11, 4, p. 256-279, 1997.

-----. The Peirce-Royce Relationship, Part Two, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 12, 1, p. 35-46, 1998.

-----. *Reverence for the Relations of Life : Re-imagining Pragmatism via Josiah Royce's Interactions with Peirce, James, and Dewey*, Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

PEIRCE, CHARLES S. et PEIRCE EDITION PROJECT. *The essential Peirce : selected philosophical writings*, Bloomington, Ind. London: Indiana University Press, 1998.

PEIRCE, CHARLES SANDERS, KETNER, KENNETH LAINE, et al. *Contributions to "The Nation"*, Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University, 1975.

PRATT, SCOTT L. 'New continents': The logical system of Josiah Royce, *History and Philosophy of Logic*, 28, 2, p. 133-150, 2007.

REYNOLDS, ANDREW. *Peirce's scientific metaphysics : the philosophy of chance, law, and evolution*, 1st, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, Vanderbilt library of American philosophy. 2002.

ROYCE, JOSIAH. *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. A Critique of the Bases of Conduct and of Faith*, Boston, New York: Houghton, Mifflin and company, 1885.

-----. *Fugitive essays*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920.

SPRIGGE, T. L. S. James, Aboutness, and his British Critics, in: *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, Putnam, Ruth Anna (ed), New York, Cambridge Univ Pr, 1997.

Endereço / Address

Mathias Girel
École Normale Supérieure
Département de philosophie
45, rue d'Ulm
75231 Paris cedex 05 France

Data de envio: 28-6-2010

Data de aprovação: 12-8-2010