

INTRODUCTION

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The story of how and why Charles Peirce came to present a series of lectures on his idea of pragmatism at Harvard University in 1903 has its start in certain unhappy events the year before. In 1902 he had hoped he would obtain the funds he needed to spend his time over the next several years at work on the preparation and publication of a number of “memoirs” that collectively would have set out his conception of “*a unitary system of logic in all its parts*” (L 75).

On 12 April 1902, Peirce wrote a letter to the president of the newly formed Carnegie Institution of Washington in answer to a “circular letter” from its executive committee that invited “any contribution . . . toward a conception of the work of the Institution” (L 75). He proposed that the institution should study “the science of the Laws of Development of Science.” And this science, he continued, “must be an offshoot of logic and must rest on a sound general theory of logic.” He then offered his own services in pursuit of this study and pronounced his readiness “to accept some assistance from the Carnegie Institution to do so.” Indeed, he concluded, “I ask for that assistance.” Three months later he formally submitted a lengthy “application for aid from the Carnegie Institution” in support of his “scientific work” on the “theory of the methods of science”—that is, on “the science of logic.” He asked that the institution provide him with five hundred books of his choice and funds in an amount sufficient to support him and his wife over a period of five or six years.

Before Peirce sent out either his answer to the “circular letter” or his July application, he had asked a number of his friends and associates to send recommendations to the Carnegie Institution that it aid him in his work on logic. William James, then a professor of philosophy at Harvard University, sent a letter to the “chairman” of the institution on March 21. In it, he represented Peirce to be “a man of genius in the purest sense of the word,” indeed a man “in the very front rank of American thinkers,” whose “Logic when published will unquestionably (in spite of certain prob-

able obvious oddities) be recognized all over the world as an epoch-making work" (L 75). James claimed, ambiguously, that he, "for example," owed more to Peirce's ideas "than to those of anyone but [Josiah] Royce." It should be noted that James regularly supposed that the difference between his ideas and Peirce's had to be a result of a number of eccentricities in Peirce's turn of mind. He would then conclude that one could rightly and safely ignore these few aberrant ideas. These differences would hold a definite place in Peirce's mind in the period that followed. James recalled in his letter that "Peirce has proved unable (some malignant witch having cast a spell upon him in his cradle, no doubt) to make more than the barest living, and now, as I understand it, with this *Magnus Opus* on his mind, has no regularly remunerative support." Therefore, he concluded, the Carnegie Institution, "ignoring all personal questions, and regarding only the interests of originality in Science," should "consider Mr. Peirce's case as one for favorable treatment." He assured the institution that he could think of no "more appropriate case for help."

Josiah Royce, then also a professor of philosophy at Harvard, wrote a letter to the president of the Carnegie Institution on Peirce's behalf, a few days after James had written his. Royce's letter exhibits a familiarity with, and an understanding of, the project that Peirce proposed to carry out, with the aid of Carnegie funds, that is absent from the letter James had sent. Peirce's "methods of work," Royce explained, which unite the "exactness of a mathematician with the speculative ingenuity of a really great philosopher," hold the "promise [of] very great results" in the areas of the "study of the methods of science and the comparative study of the types of concepts which have been developed in the various sciences" (L 75).¹ And, he continued, what Peirce "has already done" in his work on "the Algebra of Logic, on the Logic of Relatives, and on the theory of the Categories" has resulted in "quite a revolution in the study of exact Logic." He concluded:

From the point of view of the interests of Logic, of Philosophy in general, and of all students of general science, I am therefore sure that Mr. Peirce's researches in the mentioned fields are thoroughly worthy of whatever endowment is necessary to secure the effective revision, the final preparation, and the publication, of his still incomplete work in Logic, whether it be printed as one whole, or in separate memoirs. . . . It will be a great loss to the world if those of his researches which have not yet been put into final shape, do not receive the finishing touches, and are not published.

Royce's reference to the publication of Peirce's work in the form of a series of "memoirs" anticipated one of Peirce's own suggestions to the Carnegie Institution in his July 15 application.

Royce in his letter, like James in his, called the attention of the Carnegie Institution to Peirce's extreme "need of assistance." Peirce, he told them, "is now obliged to earn a living by various literary and other tasks that do not contribute to science." The result, he believed, is that Peirce "lives more or less from hand to mouth, and probably has no savings." And, since Peirce is "past sixty years of age," it is not to be expected that "his powers [can] indefinitely continue to respond to the calls made upon him." Royce ended his letter with the hope that Peirce would receive the aid he needed so that "his later results will not be lost to the world."

The executive committee of the Carnegie Institution decided on 26 November 1902 to "defer action" on Peirce's case "for the present." Peirce rightly understood this postponement to be effectively a denial of his application. In a letter he wrote William James on December 1, he stated that, in his interpretation, the executive committee's "wording" amounted to "a refusal of all assistance" (HLWJ). He admitted to James the violence of his reaction: "I had not thought just that possible; I see now that I had not, by the shock it gives me." He reported nonetheless that he felt considerable "relief from the painful tension" of his wait on the Carnegie committee's decision. But, he bitterly told James, he also felt himself to be "condemned" to do his work "in a world where nobody can understand" the force of his need to do the very work that "God" had evidently placed him in this life to do.

A few years before, Peirce had remarked on the presence, in "history and life," of "three classes of men" (CP 1.43). To members of the first class, whose interest is the "qualities of feelings," nature is aesthetically presented in the form of a "picture." Such men, Peirce noted, "create art." To members of the second class, whose interest is the exercise of "power," nature is practically presented in the shape of a business "opportunity." Such men create wealth. And, to members of the third class, whose interest is "nothing . . . but reason," nature is rationally presented in the form of a "cosmos, so admirable, that to penetrate to its ways seems to them the only thing that makes life worth living." Such men create science. Peirce clearly perceived that he fit only in this last class, the class of the "natural scientific men," those with a "passion to learn," and "the only men that have any real success in scientific research." What he faced with his Carnegie application then turned out to be the difficulty very often faced when a member of one class tries to persuade members of another class that what, in his experience, "makes life worth living," is worthy of the support of these others.

Despite what Peirce believed to be the defeat of his Carnegie application, he assured James, in his December 1 letter, that he would "keep right on doing the work as well as adverse circumstances will permit." These circumstances included "a dwindling wood-pile," a "furnace out of order,"

and a “meagre food” supply. To alleviate these conditions and to permit the work to be done, Peirce informed James that he would, in the “meantime,” readily “accept any employment whatever in which [he] could give satisfaction.” One such possible employment, he suggested, “would be that of a professor of logic at Columbia [University] or elsewhere.” He then set out a number of conditions that any such future employment would have to meet:

I should wish to teach what I know and can prove to be true and not what I know and can prove is not true. I cannot teach that sound reasoning depends on what the logic books are mostly full of, nor that that matter is true, nor that sound reasoning has anything to gain by being worked as an algebraical calculus. Exactitude is necessary; but it is not the exactitude of a machine. I should teach a large class about ten or a dozen practical maxims and how to use them.

But, he then declared, he would not teach most students any but a “vague idea” of the science of logic. “The methodetic whose foundation is the scientific theory of logic is useful to everybody,” he reminded James, “but there are only a few for whom it is well to examine that foundation.” Only one student in a thousand, it seems, would not suffer a worse “mental health” as a result of such “fundamental inquiries.”

Once he had laid out these restrictions on his possible employment, he then undiplomatically advised James, his possible intermediary in his contact with possible employers, that what James termed “pragmatism” happened to be in need of “some modification.” Peirce believed that he could “satisfy” James that pragmatism “can receive no sound support from psychology,” such as James had laboriously endeavored to provide, and that both “the logical basis and proof” of pragmatism and “its relation to the categories” (Firstness: quality; Secondness: reaction; Thirdness: representation) “have first to be made clear before it can be accurately applied except in very simple ways” (HLWJ). He then concluded with the statement that he could address these matters no further in this letter. But his series of lectures on pragmatism, delivered at Harvard the next year (1903), turned out to be an elaboration on these same corrections of the version of pragmatism that James had so famously set forth.

On November 29, three days after the executive committee of the Carnegie Institution had determined it would put off its ultimate verdict in the matter of Peirce’s application, and one day after the secretary of the institution had sent Peirce a notice of the delay, Marcus Baker, its assistant secretary, also sent Peirce a letter. He represented the action of the com-

mittee more literally, and thereupon more positively, than Peirce did in his letter to James. The executive committee, he reported, had “met and awarded certain grants” and had “many more” applications, like Peirce’s, “still pending” (L 75). He insisted that he could “only guess” what the committee would finally decide in the case of Peirce’s “proposition about the Logic.” He then said that he could “not guess what the decision will be” but that he hoped that his own communication with the secretary, evidently on the side of Peirce’s “proposition,” would “hasten a decision.” It seems likely that this note helped persuade Peirce that he should have his friends contact the Carnegie Institution in one last attempt to win its aid in support of his work. Letters to the institution were then sent on Peirce’s behalf by many prominent individuals: John Dewey, then director of the School of Education at the University of Chicago; G. Stanley Hall, professor of psychology and president of Clark University; George S. Fullerton, professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania; James E. Creighton, professor of logic and metaphysics at Cornell University; Dickinson S. Miller, instructor of philosophy at Harvard University; Wilmon Henry Sheldon, professor of philosophy at Columbia University; John Trowbridge, professor of physics at Harvard; Edward C. Pickering, director of the Harvard Observatory; Percival Lowell, director of the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona; William E. Story, professor of mathematics at Clark; Henry Cabot Lodge, United States senator; Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States; Peirce’s brothers: James Mill Peirce, a Harvard professor of mathematics, and Herbert Henry Davis Peirce, assistant secretary in the State Department of the United States; and several others.

The executive committee of the Carnegie Institution finally put an end to the matter when it approved a resolution on 12 May 1903. It stated that the institution would not fund any work on the “preparation” of any “treatise on logic” but would instead limit its aid to those at “work in the fields of the natural sciences” (L 75). The committee evidently would not believe, or could not understand, Peirce’s claim that “logic is the science which . . . is the very key stone in the arch of scientific truth” (L 75).

The end of any chance of aid from the Carnegie Institution left Peirce in a destitute condition. He had written William James, in the midst of the process of application, on 12 June 1902, what his reaction would have to be if he finally received no aid:

If the Carnegie Institution will do nothing, my duty will be to continue to endeavor to do the work I seem to have been put into the world to do; and when the moment arrives at which there

seems to be no rational hope of making my life useful, my duty, as I see it, will be to treat my life just as I would an aching tooth that there was no hope of making useful. I will have it out. I am not going to act harshly; but it looks as if it were coming to that, and when it does, I wish my friends to know that what I do I do from long deliberated conviction. (HLWJ)

Such sentiments echoed desperate declamations that James had uttered in his own life and had to have had a definite effect. Several months before the Carnegie committee finally announced its resolution not to fund any work on logic, Peirce's included, James initiated the steps that would very soon result in Peirce's 1903 Harvard lectures on pragmatism.

On 27 February 1903, Peirce's brother, James Mill Peirce, then a professor of mathematics at Harvard, sent a note to William James, from his home on Kirkland Place in Cambridge:

I have a line from Charles begging to have a Lowell course arranged for him for next winter. . . . I have not mentioned Lawrence Lowell's offer of a course to [Charles] yet. The reason I have not is that I wished not to cause a conflict with the Carnegie proposition. . . . I did, however, in writing to [Charles] say that Mr. Lowell would probably offer him a course. Lowell's offer was of six or eight lectures. He would not wish to offer more than eight, I think. Nor do I think it would do to ask for an advance of money, greatly as Charles needs it. That must be arranged in some other way, and such a sum as \$600 (which [Charles] speaks of to me) would be quite out of the question from any source, I fear. It is not surprising that [Charles] is out of patience with the eternal postponement of action by the Carnegie Committee. I fear that not much can be hoped for in that quarter. The evil prevails, as usually happens. The Lowell Lectures remain. If they were only to come on this spring, we might take breath. Do you think a collection of Charles's book notices [that is, his book reviews] could have any sale or could find a publisher? (L 681)²

The next day, February 28, William James (evidently in consideration of the idea in James Mill Peirce's note that a course of lectures in the spring that would provide Charles Peirce with \$600 would permit them a respite from his importunities) proposed, in a letter to the president of Harvard University, Charles William Eliot, that the Harvard Corporation should engage Peirce to come to the university and present "half a dozen lectures" on philosophy and logic (HUA).³ James had, he reminded Eliot, put forth

the same idea "some 5 years ago" when he had asked the corporation if it would "appoint" Peirce to deliver "a short course of lectures on Logic," on the condition that James could privately raise the needed money. The corporation had then declined, but Peirce's "lectures were given at Mrs. Bull's in Brattle Street, and were a great success, so far as arousing strong interest in advanced men went."⁴ James then told Eliot what Peirce needed and what his lectures would offer:

Peirce wants to devote the rest of his life to the writing of a logic which will undeniably (although in some points excentric [sic]) be a great book. Meanwhile, he has apparently *no* means. I am willing to help financially again, and venture (since the Corporation has partly changed its composition) to renew my old question. My class in [philosophy] 3 has this year been dosed with some of Peirce's ideas at second hand, and is (I know) full of curiosity to hear his voice. . . . He is one of our 3 or 4 first American philosophers, and it seems to me that his genius is deserving of some official recognition. Half a dozen lectures, at 100 dollars a piece, would seem to me about right.⁵

James concluded his letter with the statement that the Harvard Corporation should "change its earlier mind" and approve an engagement with Peirce to deliver this series of lectures. The corporation, in under two weeks, did approve the plan that James had proposed: Peirce would present six lectures under the auspices of the university; he would receive six hundred dollars in payment; and James would have to raise the money from private sources.⁶

On 13 March 1903, James informed Peirce in a letter that the Harvard Corporation had voted its sanction of Peirce's presentation of a lecture series. President Eliot had told James "to communicate the appointment" (HLWJ). James related the conditions: six lectures (Peirce could lecture on any topic he chose and could name the lectures with any titles he liked) and "a remuneration of 600 dollars." He assured Peirce that the fifty or so students he had had in his philosophy 3 course were "well primed with 'pragmatism' and 'tychism' and would be glad to hear of them from [Peirce] direct." But if Peirce chose to lecture on "synechism," he would, James believed, "have virgin soil" with these students. James advised Peirce that he could, if he preferred, merely "repeat" his "former lectures, or certain ones of them," or he could, if he chose, "stick to logic proper." But James reminded Peirce that he, because he had such a "bad head for logic and mathematics," would definitely be "most interested" in what he believed to be Peirce's "more concrete evolutionary and metaphysical

ideas." When James talked to Peirce, he admitted his own philosophical deficiencies; when he talked to others, he complained of Peirce's philosophical peculiarities. He seems not to have noticed the irony of his statement in this same letter that "whatever [Peirce] may say, on whatever subject, [he] will be sure to catch and excite the best sort of man, and to pass over the heads of others."

On March 16, Peirce received the letter that James had sent him with the word on his appointment by the university to deliver a series of lectures. He "instantly" drafted and mailed off his own letter in reply (HLWJ). He thanked James and admitted that "nothing could be so gratifying" under the circumstances. He then immediately set to work and explained what the character of the lectures would have to be. At the outset, he determined that he could not properly compact "a course on Logic" into only six lectures. Students in such a course would have to have "ample illustrations" that would "exhibit the application of the logic" in "the history of the sciences" and in each separate science. Logic, Peirce submitted, "is the matter of a liberal education." He seems likely to have intended this somewhat ironic statement, that his six lectures would not constitute an entire "course on logic," to be one that would meet the fear that James had expressed that his own "bad head for logic" would not let him duly appreciate a lecture series on the topic. What Peirce decided, then, is that he should limit the range of his lectures to a consideration of the "single subject of pragmatism." But this "pragmatism," he went on to tell James, is, in the manner that he understood it, "one of the propositions of logic," and not, in the manner of the interpretation that James had put on it, a matter of psychology. Peirce could already tell James, in his March 16 reply, what topics he would discuss in the six lectures: the "foundation, definition and limitation" of pragmatism, as well as its "application to philosophy, to the sciences, and to the conduct of life."⁸

The fact that Peirce could immediately provide James with a concise and accurate statement of the theme of the lectures he would present would seem to be evidence of his claim, in his March 16 letter, that he had "little to do to produce the lectures" other than "to abridge greatly" a manuscript that he "already" had—that is, to "compress it to about one fourth of its bulk." But no such manuscript has been found in Peirce's papers, or is likely to have been available to be compressed by him at the time. The manuscripts of his drafts of the lectures seem rather to have been the result of an extraordinary outburst of philosophical creativity that he sustained over the period of the lecture series. While he left it to James to "fix the dates" of the lectures, he told him that he would "prefer to have about an uninterrupted week of hard work for each lecture." He also indicated that he would want to have "say ten days" before he would have to

present the first lecture. But he had not remembered, when he wrote this, that he had to be in Washington, D. C., from April 21 to April 24 to attend a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, of which he was a member. He sent James a letter the next day, March 17, with this information, and stated his readiness to present the lectures two days a week, if it were considered "very desirable" (HLWJ). But "it would be better," he reminded James, if he had a week to work on each one. He specifically proposed that he present the first lecture on the very next Monday, March 23, and one each Monday after then, until April 27.

James answered Peirce's letters of March 16 and 17 with a letter he sent out on Thursday, March 19. He informed Peirce that, in conformance with the "suggestions" in Peirce's two letters, he had proceeded to have the *Harvard University Calendar* publish, the next day, a "general description of the course" that he had "copied" from Peirce's March 16 letter, and an announcement that Peirce would offer the first lecture in the series on Monday, March 23, at 8:00 P.M. in Room 11 of Sever Hall (HUA).⁹ James omitted to tell Peirce, in his letter, the specific title he had conferred on the course of lectures: *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking*. He said merely that he "rejoice[d]" that the topic Peirce had selected "is 'pragmatism'." Peirce had told James, in his March 16 letter, that he would "leave it" to him "to announce the subject of the lectures." The title that James formulated and announced is evidently his translation, into his own terms, of Peirce's statement that the "single subject" of his lectures would be "pragmatism" understood as "one of the propositions of logic." A proposition of logic is turned into a principle and method of right thinking. James typically obscured, in this manner, the difference between his and Peirce's interpretations of pragmatism. Peirce tried to set out this difference in precise terms; James tried to cover it over. Right thinking might include logic but it might also include James's explanation of thinking in terms of the processes of psychology and, ultimately, physiology. The title that Peirce put on these lectures, in his manuscripts, is simply *Lectures on Pragmatism*.

On March 20, Peirce, still in his home in Milford, Pennsylvania, received a telegram from James. It informed him that the day of the lectures had been switched from Mondays to Thursdays. The first lecture then would have to be delivered on March 26. Peirce arrived in Boston on a train at 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 25, and went to James's house on Irving Street in Cambridge. He moved into nearby Felton Hall, when his wife, Juliette, arrived in town on Sunday, March 29. James told Peirce in his March 19 letter that he would like to introduce him to the audiences at the lectures and provide him with any other assistance he could, but would likely miss the second lecture because he suffered from a "bad state of

nervous fatigue and may have to run away.” He did invite a number of his students and others to a reception at his house after the first lecture to meet with Peirce.

The *Harvard Crimson* announced, in an article on Peirce’s lecture series in its March 26 edition, that Peirce would, in his first lecture, offer a “definition” of pragmatism and “an explanation of its terms” (HUA). The *Crimson* piece offered its own definition of pragmatism: a “system of philosophy, first so named by Mr. Peirce, which views philosophical questions primarily from the standpoint of their practical bearing upon life.” James is likely to have authored the *Crimson*’s definition; if he did, it provides further evidence of his inclination to obscure the difference between his and Peirce’s ideas. The definition is not one that would fit Peirce’s idea that pragmatism is “one of the propositions of logic,” or his interest in the application of pragmatism in philosophy and the natural sciences, as well as in the “conduct of life.”

On March 31, five days after Peirce’s first lecture, on pragmatism and the normative sciences, James rancorously avouched a number of derisive comments on the lecture and on Peirce’s character in a letter he sent to Dickinson S. Miller, then a Harvard instructor in philosophy and psychology (and someone who had sent a letter in support of Peirce’s application to the Carnegie Institution). James told Miller that he considered Peirce’s lecture to have turned out to be a “great disappointment” (HLWJ). Peirce had not declared what James believed he should have declared—that is, what he would have declared—and what he might have vainly believed he could dispose Peirce to declare with his more psychologistic formulation of the title of the lecture course. Peirce, James said it seemed to him, had “rather woefully ‘gone off’ in the past 5 years.” He gratuitously and, it seems, spitefully voiced his “doubt” that Peirce had “any very distinct idea of where” his interpretation of pragmatism happened to be “coming out.” Peirce’s pragmatism had “gone off” and “come out” in these Harvard lectures with an undismissible representation of the difference between his interpretation of the doctrine and James’s.

But James would not tell Miller what specifically he found blame-worthy in the *content* of Peirce’s lecture. He instead berated the *form* of the discussion after the lecture because, he claimed, it “degenerated into an interminable dialog” between Peirce and a member of the audience on the “nature of mathematical reasoning,” with “each replying to the last sentences of the other and so drifting along without a plan.” James’s estimate of this “dialog” is not really reliable inasmuch as it came from his admittedly “bad head” in the area of “logic and mathematics.” He confessed his “fear” to Miller that the audience at Peirce’s lectures would “fall off a good deal,” but emphatically claimed that *he*, nevertheless, had done

his “duty.” James then indulged in an acrimonious assault on Peirce’s character and work in a succession of insults and lies that surely must have left Miller dumbfounded:

Damn your half-successes, your imperfect geniuses. I’m tired of making allowances for them and propping them up. As Alice [Howe Gibbens James, William James’s wife] says, Peirce has never *constrained* himself in his life. Selfish, conceited, affected, a monster of desultory intellect, he has become now a seedy, almost sordid, old man, without even any intellectual residuum from his work that can be called a finished construction, only “suggestions,” and begging old age.

The deeply systematic character of Peirce’s 1903 Harvard lectures, like many of his other works, utterly refuted the lie that he had produced only a number of “desultory” if ingenious “suggestions” in the areas of logic and philosophy but had erected no “finished construction.” The currency of this lie, then and today, is due in no small measure to James’s incognizant and antipathetic reception of Peirce’s ideas. James could see a number of Peirce’s suggestive “trees” but he had no mind to see his systematic “forest.” The truculence of his assault on Peirce’s personality and philosophy in his letter to Miller is a measure of the frustration he must have felt when he heard Peirce declare an interpretation of pragmatism that he could barely understand, if only because it systematically contradicted his own. Peirce’s unconstrained penchant to declare publicly what he had determined to be philosophically true, no matter whose feathers it might ruffle and no matter what interests it might contravene, had to have seemed, in James’s mind, after he had put his own reputation on the line in Peirce’s interest, to be a selfish conceit and affectation.

A number of James’s Harvard associates, students and friends, in Peirce’s audience as well as James, would likely have perceived that Peirce, the “founder of pragmatism” in James’s own phrase, had presented a formulation of pragmatism that utterly opposed the interpretation that James had widely professed. But James could not rebut the philosophic content of Peirce’s lecture, merely its form—that is, the fact that Peirce had publicly declared the difference between his and James’s ideas, and in a form that James, and others with his turn of mind, would find abstruse. James cautioned Miller at the close of his letter not to betray what he had told him: “Only don’t let on to any one all that I have said about Peirce!”

Peirce delivered the second lecture in the series on April 2. The *Harvard University Calendar* announced that the title of the lecture would be “Phenomenology; or, The Doctrine of Categories.” The *Harvard Crimson*

promised that, "in connection with the subject, . . . Mr. Peirce will discuss the elementary constituents of thought." James was not in attendance at the lecture; he had traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, where he went to recuperate from his "nervous fatigue" and a case of tonsillitis.

James mentioned Peirce's lectures in a letter he sent from Asheville on April 8 to F. C. S. Schiller, a British pragmatist and a professor of philosophy at Oxford University:

Charles Peirce is now giving six public lectures on "pragmatism" at Harvard, which I managed to get up for his benefit, pecuniary and professional. He is a hopeless crank and failure in many ways, but a really extraordinary intellect.¹⁰

He assured Schiller that he knew of no other "mind," besides Peirce's, with "so many different kinds of spotty intensity or vigor."

The Harvard *Calendar* issued the information that Peirce, in his third lecture on April 9, would talk on "The Application of the Category of Pragmatism." A statement in smaller letters beneath the announcement exhibited Peirce's impatience with participants in the course who had not come to the second lecture: "Those who were unable to attend the second lecture had better procure the MS. of that lecture from Mr. Peirce, 34 Felton Hall, before attending the third lecture." The *Crimson* article on the third lecture mentioned the same title but also provided an explanation:

The lecture will consist almost wholly of a defense of all three categories discussed in the last lecture. These categories, or largest classes into which objects of knowledge can be systematically arranged, are sensation, perception and thought. One or more of these categories are defended by the different schools of metaphysics and Mr. Peirce defends all three.

The *Crimson* concluded with a statement similar to the one in the *Calendar*: "As this third lecture depends greatly upon the second lecture, all who missed the second lecture would do well to get the manuscript of it at 34 Felton Hall before attending the lecture tonight." Peirce clearly became the source of the announcements of his lectures in these Harvard publications once he arrived in Cambridge.

Both the *Calendar* and the *Crimson* reported that the title of Peirce's fourth lecture on April 16 would be "The Seven Systems of Metaphysics." Hugo Münsterberg, the chair of the Harvard philosophy department and a professor of psychology, invited Peirce to his house on Ware Street the next day to participate in "a most informal social evening" at the monthly

assembly of the "members of our Philosophical Seminary." He asked Peirce, "Will you not give us the pleasure and do us the honor to join our little company?" He assured Peirce that he should "come most informally—no evening dress" and that "we shall be delighted to have you with us." Peirce is likely to have attended. The university went into a recess in the week from April 19 to April 26. Peirce went to Washington, D. C., in the middle of the week to be at a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences.

Neither the *Calendar* nor the *Crimson* could announce a title of Peirce's fifth lecture on April 30; he had not provided them with one. But the *Crimson* did report that Peirce would enter in the lecture into an examination of the normative sciences "which are generally considered to be logic, ethics, and aesthetics." And, it continued, "from an explanation of the relation of these three, Mr. Peirce will proceed to a discussion of 'truth' and that which we imply by the 'meaning' of anything" (HUA).

On the next Wednesday, May 6, the day before Peirce would offer his sixth and last lecture in the series, James sent him a letter from his summer house on Chocorua Lake in New Hampshire where he had, in his words, "succeeded in flying away" from Cambridge the day before. He told Peirce that he had not come to see him in the last days before he left Cambridge because he had had to do a considerable amount of work on Ph.D. examinations and he did not expect to return "until the evening of the 14th when more Ph.D. business begins" (HLWJ). James stated that he was "sorry" he would not hear Peirce's last lecture and that he hoped Peirce felt "satisfied with the result" of the series. He consoled Peirce with the observation that "*big* audiences can never be expected in such subjects," but he believed that Peirce "'drew' *well*, all things considered." Peirce should, it seemed to James, find his satisfaction not in the quality of his lectures but in the quantity of his audience.

Peirce delivered his sixth lecture on May 7. The *Calendar* in its May 1 edition had no title available yet to put in its announcement, but the *Crimson* article on the day of the lecture could report that Peirce would talk on "The Nature of Meaning." Sometime in the period before this lecture, Peirce decided that he should offer a seventh lecture in the series. The *Calendar* printed an announcement in its May 8 edition that Peirce would deliver a seventh and "Concluding Lecture" on May 14. Peirce had to have submitted this information to the editor of the *Calendar* no later than 10 A.M. the day before. The *Crimson* reported that Peirce would offer another lecture in the series on pragmatism in its May 9 issue. On May 13 the *Harvard Bulletin* affirmed that Peirce had "decided to give a supplementary lecture to his recent series" (HUA). It explained that "Mr. Peirce will give the summary of his previous lectures and will put in clearer light the

relation of the views maintained to the general doctrine of pragmatism.” The *Bulletin* also announced in the same article that Peirce would offer yet another lecture, but this time not under the auspices of the department of philosophy:

By invitation of the Division of Mathematics Mr. Peirce will speak in Sever 8 next Friday at 8 o'clock on "Multitude and Continuity." The lecture will deal with "Number" and "Continuous Quantity," and reference will be made to Cantor and other writers on these subjects. This lecture is specially intended for students in philosophy and mathematics, but will be open to the public.

The *Crimson* advertised the lecture on mathematics in its May 15 issue, but stated that it would be offered under the auspices of the philosophy department:

Mr. Charles Peirce [Harvard class of] '59 will give a lecture under the auspices of the Department of Philosophy on "Conceptions of Mathematical Multitude and Continuity" this evening at 8 o'clock in Sever 8. The lecture will be open to the public but will be especially interesting to students of philosophy for whom it is primarily intended.

Both the divisions of philosophy and mathematics may have sponsored the May 15 lecture, or the *Crimson* article may have been a correction of the information in the *Bulletin*. Peirce wrote "To students of Philosophy" on the title page of his manuscript of the lecture on "Multitude and Continuity" (MS 316a). And he similarly limited his salutation in the first sentence of the lecture: "I address you as students of philosophy."

Peirce delivered one lecture on one day, his seventh and last lecture in the series on pragmatism on May 14, and another lecture on the very next day, May 15, on some mathematical ideas that, he believed, further contributed to the proof of pragmatism. He mentioned the lecture on mathematics in his seventh lecture on pragmatism. He said that, in an explanation of the relations between different doctrines of induction, he would have to "anticipate a little" the concepts that he planned to "further explain" the next day in his lecture "on multitude and continuity" (MS 315). He then entered into an analysis of the "sophism" of Achilles and the tortoise. His manuscript of the May 15 lecture comes to a halt in the middle of page 14, after he has recounted some of the recent developments in mathematics as well as his own contributions, and initiated an explanation of his system of "existential graphs." The manuscript also includes his

criticism of those professors of philosophy who have exhibited no interest in mathematics:

Mathematicians always have been the very best reasoners in the world; while metaphysicians always have been the very worst. Therein is reason enough why students of philosophy should not neglect mathematics. But during the last thirty years, there has been an extraordinary mathematical development of the general doctrine of multitude (including, of course, infinity) and of continuity. Philosophers would fall short of their well earned reputation as dunces if they paid much attention to this until it begins to ring in their ears from all quarters. But you would not have come here tonight unless you were philosophers rather in the etymological sense of the word than according to the wont of those [who] profess logic and metaphysics—unless you were philosophers of the school of Royce rather than of the school of Hamilton. (MS 316a)

He could as well have said, rather than the school of James.

James returned to Cambridge from his house in New Hampshire late in the day on May 14. He may have arrived on campus in time to hear Peirce's seventh lecture at 8:00 P.M. but he would not have expected Peirce to have scheduled it. He included no mention of the seventh lecture or the May 15 lecture on mathematics in a letter he sent out on May 15 to Mrs. Jacobi:

On my return from a journey last night, I find your letter. I thought I had written to you that the lectures were assured. They have now been given, to a good audience, and have done C. S. P. a lot of good. Next [academic] year he has some Lowell lectures in Boston, but I fear no great result from the Carnegie direction, and after all who can wonder, he being the strange and unruly being that he is. Men who use no self-restraint, end by becoming beggars! I thank you for your share in the help.¹¹

James's stay in the country had not rehabilitated his own sense of restraint or his spirit of magnanimity. On May 18, almost a week after the fact, Peirce's brother Herbert sent him the notice of the Carnegie executive committee's resolution not to fund any work on logic, his included.

Sometime after James's return to Cambridge in the middle of May, Peirce loaned him copies (most likely, his manuscripts) of two of the lectures he had not attended: the second lecture and either the sixth or the

seventh. He evidently told James that he would like to have the entire lecture series published. James returned the two lectures on June 5 in the mail from New Hampshire to Peirce's home in Milford, Pennsylvania. He said in a separate letter he sent Peirce that he believed the two lectures to be "wonderful things":

I have read the Second one twice—but so original, and your categories are so unusual to other minds, that although I recognize the region of thought and the profundity and reality of the level on which you move, I do not yet assimilate the various theses in the sense of being able to make a use of them for my own purposes. I may get to it later; but at present event 1st, 2nd & 3rdness are outside my own sphere of practically applying things, and I am not sure even whether I apprehend them as you mean them to be apprehended. I get, throughout your whole business, only the sense of something dazzling and imminent in the way of truth. This is very likely partly due to my mind being so non-mathematical and to my slight interest in logic. (HLWJ)

James believed that most members of Peirce's audience had to have shared his "complaint" that the lectures were not sufficiently accessible to the minds of "auditors" with but little knowledge of mathematics and logic. He hoped, he said, that Peirce would not attempt to have these lectures published in the same form that he had presented them:

They need too much mediation by more illustration, at which you are excellent (non-mathematical ones if possible), and by a good deal of interstitial expansion and comparison with other modes of thought.

He insisted that Peirce should revise the lectures with an "ignoramus in view as [the] auditor":

As things stand, it is only highly skilled technicians and professionals who will sniff the rare perfume of your thought and, *after you are dead*, trace things back to your genius. You ought to gain a bigger audience *when living*.

James advised Peirce that he could not "start with too low an idea" of the "intelligence" of his audience: "Look at me, as one!" he said.

Peirce answered James's letter on June 8. He admitted that his Harvard audience had not been sufficiently "fit" to understand the "pure the-

ory” he had offered them in the field of logic. The audience had really needed “logical training—lessons, not lectures” (HLWJ). But Peirce had arrived at another interpretation of James’s letter and a different idea of the intelligibility of his Harvard lectures when, in October 1904, he remembered the affair in a letter to Christine Ladd-Franklin, then a lecturer in logic and psychology at Johns Hopkins University and one of his former students:

In the spring of 1903 I was invited, by the influence of James, Royce and Munsterberg to give a course of lectures in Harvard University on Pragmatism. I had intended to print them; but James said he could not understand them himself and could not recommend their being printed. I do not myself think there is any difficulty in understanding them, but all modern psychologists are so soaked with sensationalism that they can not understand anything that does not mean that, and mistranslate into the ideas of [Wilhelm] Wundt whatever one says about logic. . . . How can I, to whom nothing seems so thoroughly real as generals, and who regard Truth and Justice as *literally* the most powerful powers in the world, expect to be understood by the thoroughgoing Wundtian?¹²

Peirce had already perceived that the difference between his and James’s ideas on pragmatism would have to be confronted, before the Harvard lectures became an issue. When he heard that he would deliver a series of lectures at Harvard, he immediately decided that he would set out the difference and elaborate his doctrine that pragmatism is a “proposition of logic” and not the function of human psychology that James believed it to be. His seven lectures clearly delineate the difference between his logical realism and James’s psychological nominalism. But James adopted the position that he could not understand Peirce’s lectures, not really because he lacked the knowledge of logic and mathematics needed to understand them, but because the ideas that Peirce wanted to present, criticisms of James’s ideas, could not, James believed in vain, be presented in an intelligible discourse. James, therefore, successfully prevented the publication of Peirce’s 1903 Harvard lectures on pragmatism in his and Peirce’s lifetime.

Notes

1. Peirce wrote on his copy of Royce’s letter that “Royce is the Greatest Metaphysician now living and one of the half dozen best logicians.”

2. Peirce delivered eight Lowell Lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston between November 23 and December 17. He published many book reviews in *The Nation* and other journals. See *A Comprehensive Bibliography of The Published Works of Charles Sanders Peirce with a Bibliography of Secondary Studies*, 2nd ed., edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner (Bowling Green, Ohio: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1986).

3. Harvard University Archives, Charles William Eliot Collection, William James to Charles William Eliot, 2 February 1903.

4. For a published edition of the Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898, see Charles Sanders Peirce, *Reasoning and the Logic of Things*, edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner, with an introduction by Kenneth Laine Ketner and Hilary Putnam (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

5. On the very day, February 28, that William James sent his letter to Eliot, with his plea that the Harvard Corporation should approve Peirce to offer a lecture series, he disparaged Peirce in a letter to his own brother, Henry James: "I am beset by a crowd of cranks (C. S. Peirce now again), but I suppose that that is inevitable as one grows old & prosperous oneself" (HLWJ). James's unseemly profession of injury and complacency is particularly vulgar.

6. The Harvard Corporation soon received the money it needed to pay Peirce. Its receipt of the six hundred dollars is recorded in the College Records of 30 March 1903:

Gifts for Lectures on Philosophy

Voted that the gift of one hundred dollars, received from Mr. James M. Barnard, towards the payment for six lectures on Philosophy to be given by Mr. Charles S. Peirce, to be gratefully accepted.

The same motion and vote is recorded in each of these cases:

Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi \$100

Mr. John T. Morse, Jr. \$150

Prof. A. Marquand \$ 25

Prof. William James \$175

Prof. E. C. Pickering \$ 50

See College Records, 30 March 1903, in the Harvard University Archives.

James had sent this letter to Dr. Jacobi:

The Corporation of Harvard has at last done the decent thing by Chas. Peirce, and authorized a course of six University Lectures by him, at six hundred dollars, the money to be supplied by me. Remembering the extremely practical help you gave five years ago, I venture to ask whether you think you may possibly help me out again. I hate to beg you for money and stand ready to make the whole good, if need be, but I think I am sure of about 150 dollars here, without going far, and I am writing to one other person in N. Y. Queer problem, C. S. P!

This letter is located in the Mary Putnam Jacobi Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

7. Philosophy 3 was said, in the 1903 Harvard University *Bulletin of Courses*, to be an intermediate course "For Undergraduates and Graduates"; the student

would enroll in this course between courses "primary for Undergraduates" and those "Primary for Graduates." The *Bulletin* offered this summary of the course:

The Philosophy of Nature, with especial reference to Man's place in Nature.—The Fundamental Conceptions of Science; the relation of Mind and Body; Evolution. Pearson's Grammar of Science; Ward's Naturalism and Agnosticism. Lectures and theses.

See the Harvard University *Bulletin of Courses*, 1903, in the Harvard University Archives.

8. Peirce clearly believed that the invitation he received to deliver a series of lectures at Harvard in the spring of 1903 had directly resulted from his troubles with his Carnegie application. He concluded, in a letter he sent to J. McKeen Cattell, one of his former students and then the chairman of the department of psychology at Columbia University, that the "inaction" of the Carnegie executive committee has secured him "friends from unexpected quarters":

President Eliot has invited me to deliver a course of lectures in Harvard University and I have also been invited to deliver lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston where I have already given two courses & other material help is promised, all of it due to the unwillingness of the [Carnegie] executive committee to help & I do not think the feeling has subsided.

This letter is located in The Library of Congress Manuscript Collection, Charles S. Peirce to J. McKeen Cattell, 19 December 1902.

9. The announcement in the *Harvard University Calendar*, Vol. XXII, No. 25, March 20, 1903, read, under "[MARCH] 23, MONDAY":

DIVISION OF PHILOSOPHY LECTURES:

Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking.

I. *Introduction.* Mr. CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE. Sever 11, 8 P.M. Open to the public. The "general description" of the lecture series, in the same number of the *Calendar*, read, under "NOTES":

The Division of Philosophy Lectures

The Division of Philosophy announces six lectures by MR. CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE, to be given in Sever 11, at 8 o'clock, on successive Monday evenings, beginning March 23d. The subject of the course will be: Pragmatism, as a principle and method of right thinking. The lectures will successively treat of its foundation, definition, and limitation, and of its applications to philosophy, to the sciences, and to the conduct of life. The lectures will be open to the public.

Sever Hall, designed by H. H. Richardson and built in 1880, is a red-brick building that stands on one side of Harvard Yard. It housed classrooms when Peirce delivered his 1903 lectures in Room 11, and still stands there today.

10. William James, *The Letters of William James*, ed. by his son, Henry James (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press [1920]; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1969), v. 2, p. 375.

11. Mary Putnam Jacobi Collection, Schlesinger Library, 15 May 1903, Radcliffe College.

12. Charles S. Peirce to Christine Ladd-Franklin, 20 October 1904, in Christine Ladd-Franklin, "Charles S. Peirce at the Johns Hopkins," *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, 13 (1916): 719–20.