

issues worthy of further investigation, such as Franklin's distrust of "democracy," a distrust shared by other founding fathers. As we witness today a media manipulated popular electorate and poll-driven politicians determining public policies, a strong case can be made for the distrust of democracy. On the question of slavery Franklin's record is better than that of most of his American contemporaries. It is good to know that from 1787 until his death in 1790 Franklin was the president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

In the concluding chapter Campbell returns to the theme of his book—that Franklin is best interpreted as a representative of American pragmatism. Long before pragmatism's time Jefferson had dubbed Franklin "the father of American philosophy." Since Jefferson's time philosophy for philosophers in America has become exclusively academic, although all are protected by an umbrella of public philosophy to which Franklin's contribution is second to none. Thus Franklin has never been forgotten inside or outside academe. The vast controversial literature on him results from his perennial American contemporaneity. Campbell's "recovery" of Franklin as a pragmatist is an excellent addition to this literature.

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Pierce-Arrow

Susan Howe

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xiii + 144 pp.

Nothing is truer than true poetry, Peirce writes in a fragment on pragmatism, warning scientists that artists are "much finer and more accurate observers than they are, except of the special minutiae that the scientific man is looking for" (CP 1.315, 1910).¹ With *Pierce-Arrow*, the latest book of the American poet Susan Howe, Peirce's own philosophy is now looked at through the eyes of a poet. Howe looks at Peirce's work from a radically new perspective, taking his manuscript pages as poems, or even as drawings.² Unfortunately, apart from opening up this new perspective, Howe's book is disappointing.

Pierce Arrow consists of three parts. The first part, "Arisbe," is an essay on Peirce's life. The two other parts are collections of poems entitled "Rückenfigur" and, with a clever and appropriate twist on the famous book by Thorstein Veblen (once a student of Peirce), "The Leisure of the Theory Class." In addition, the book contains several photographic reproductions of manuscript pages. The majority of them are Peirce's (10), and some of them are Swinburne's (5).

In "Arisbe" Howe portrays Peirce's life and work in a form that most resem-

bles an American quilt. Many themes are loosely patched together, accompanied by fragments from Peirce's manuscripts, the *Iliad*,³ *The Milford Dispatch*, the index of Ketner's *Glassy Essence*,⁴ and other sources. As a source of information it should be approached only with the greatest caution — her account has too many mistakes, and they are hardly 'special minutiae.' Just take page eight: Peirce was not a lecturer in logic and literature at Johns Hopkins, but only in logic; he was not the first meteorologist to use a wavelength of light as a unit of measure, but the first metrologist; and his quincunical world map is not a projection of *two* spheres, but of only one, namely the earth. There are also problems with chronology. For instance, Peirce did not decide to work for the *Century Dictionary* to compensate for a sudden loss of income after his forced resignation from the Coast Survey (p.18). In fact, he had then just completed his work for the dictionary.⁵

Worth noting is Howe's hostility toward editors; a hostility she expresses several times throughout the "Arisbe" text, and which she grounds in the view that the editor's intervention destroys the firstness of the original document (p. 14).⁶ This is no doubt correct, but her conclusion that because of that Peirce's work is "unpublishable in print form" (p. 22) does not follow.⁷ At this point Howe seems to be blinded by the narrowness of her perspective. True, a facsimile edition is sometimes the only way to do justice to a particular work or author, but this is hardly the case for Peirce.⁸ Not only were the vast majority of his manuscripts intended for printed publication, but, more important, what Peirce aims to bring across to the reader has little or nothing to do with the flow of his handwriting, or with doodles or unconnected calculations on verso or scrap pages.⁹ Howe's failed romanticism for the original document is, to use Peirce's terminology, not just hopelessly nominalistic, it blocks the road of inquiry. By spending too much time on the physical characteristics of the manuscript page one risks losing sight of what Peirce intended to say. Of course, sometimes doodles may be significant (see for instance the fascinating drawing on p. 31), and calculations and other marks on the page may reveal important clues for determining the date or genealogy of the text, or of the state of mind in which it was written (see, for instance, the ecstatic handwriting in MS 949).

Howe's consistent aversion to editors, however, reveals some interesting parallels between the ways the literary remains of Peirce and Emily Dickinson have been treated. The manuscripts of both are kept at Harvard and they were both first published by Harvard University Press. One only wished Howe said more about this. And despite the similarities, there are also differences. As opposed to Peirce, Dickinson did not intend her poems for printed publication, but rather conceived them as individual works of art.

Interestingly, notwithstanding the occasional facsimile reproductions, and notwithstanding her explicit aversion to editors, Howe proves herself to be an editor of the worst kind. Not only does she go more often than not against her own philosophy by transcribing Peirce's manuscripts instead of photographically

reproducing them, she also takes great liberties in those transcriptions, and liberally cuts Peirce's sentences into pieces to appropriate them for her poems.

Most of *Pierce-Arrow* consists of poems. Howe is an avant garde poet whose work is characterized by some as language poetry,¹¹ and by others as disjunctive poetics.¹² The poems in *Pierce-Arrow* lack the typographic complexities of her earlier work, but maintain their erratic syntax. Less respectfully, her work in *Pierce-Arrow* may be labeled cut-and-paste poetry. Here is an example from page 66:

A knot of us—Chauncey Wright
 Nicholas St. John Green Francis E.
 Abbot William James John Fiske
 Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Chase
 Joseph Bangs Warner among others
 gathered to discuss metaphysical
 questions force law fate Darwin—
 I remember how angry people were
 when a furniture dealer cut down
 elms to build a store Cambridge was
 a lovely old place at the time

Although no indication is given that this is text of Peirce, nearly all of it is taken straight from two manuscripts. The first seven lines are a stenographic rendition of a draft for CP 5.12 (1907), and the last four lines are taken literally from MS 1602 (1890).¹³

Being mere rows of isolated segments of sentences, Howe's poems feel like the game room of an eccentric millionaire where the walls are covered not with the traditional trophies (the gems of Peirce's writing), but with hooves, tails, teeth, plucks of hair, kidneys, and occasional droppings, which leave the visitor only the faintest of clues of what animals were shot. Context and authorial intention are destroyed as thoroughly as possible, and it is always unclear whose text one is reading. True poetry, or has Peirce's philosophy finally fallen victim to the "lawless rovers of the sea of literature" (CP 5.449, 1905)?

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NOTES

1. For Peirce's own attempts at poetry, see his "Tribute to a Door Mat," published on 10 February 1901 in the *New York Sun* (in "Poems Worth Reading," 3:3 of the last edition). Attributed to Peirce in a letter to Peirce by Edward S. Holden of 11 February 1901 (MS L 200). All references to Peirce's manuscripts are to Richard Robin, *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967.

2. In a lecture discussing part of her book Howe commented: "During this twenty minute time period, putting thought in motion to define art in a way that includes science, these manuscripts are free to be drawings even poems." Printed in Susan Howe, "Renunciation Is a P[ei]rcing Virtue," *Profession* (1998): 51–60.

3. The city Arisbe plays a minor role in the *Iliad*. André De Tienne, however, recently conjectured that Peirce so named the house to commemorate his love for Juliette, Arisbe being an anagram of the French "baiser" (to kiss). See "The Mystery of Arisbe," *Peirce Project Newsletter* 3 (1999): 11–12.

4. Kenneth Laine Ketner, *His Glassy Essence: An Autobiography of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998.

5. Not counting the work he did later for the 1909 two-volume Supplement.

6. Howe mistakenly uses "secondness" for firstness. Unfortunately but unwittingly she is right in that claim. The editors of the *Collected Papers* did change the secondness of the manuscripts, as they wrote on them and occasionally cut out diagrams.

7. Howe characterizes the *Writings of Charles Peirce: A Chronological Edition* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982–) as anti-antiquarian and non-academic (p. 14).

8. An example may be the work of William Blake who was besides a poet also a printmaker and painter. It appears that for Blake's work the best way to look at the pages is to see them as drawings. This would suggest a facsimile edition (electronic or otherwise) as the most appropriate way of reproducing his work. See in this context the editorial comments that accompany the William Blake Archive at <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/blake>.

9. Most of the doodles reproduced by Howe come from the fragment folder MS 1538: "Caricatures, Drawings, Pen Trials."

10. For Howe's comments on the way in which Dickinson's work has been treated, see especially her interview with Edward Foster for *Talisman*; reprinted in Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark; Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), pp. 155–181.

11. See Linda Reinfeld, *Language Poetry: Writing as Rescue* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), pp. 120–148.

12. See Peter Quarterman, *Disjunctive Poetics: From Gertrude Stein and Louis Zukofsky to Susan Howe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

13. Not only were both passages written at different times during Peirce's life, they refer also to different periods of his life. This makes the phrase "at the time" misleading. The first fragment concerns meetings of the Metaphysical Club in the early 1870s; the second fragment describes an event that took place around 1844, when Peirce was circa five years old.