

This paper is an English translation of chapter 9 of the first full-length biography of Ch. S. Peirce in Russian, “Charles Sanders Peirce: An Introduction to the Intellectual History of America” (“Чарльз Сандерс Пирс: введение в интеллектуальную историю Америки”), published in Moscow in March 2009 by *Territorija buduschego* Publishing House. Published at <http://www.helsinki.fi/science/commens/papers.html> with kind permission of the editors of *Territorija buduschego*.

## IN THE NET OF ABDUCTIONS<sup>i</sup>

(On Juliette Peirce’s Identity)

VITALY KIRYUSHCHENKO

Department of Humanities

State University – Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia

[kiryushchenko@mail.ru](mailto:kiryushchenko@mail.ru)

**Abstract:** In spite of all the industrious efforts Peirce scholars have made so far, Peirce's biography still retains a number of gaps, among which the problem of identity of Peirce's second wife, Juliette Froissy, stands out most significantly. It is all the more important that, as some scholars suggest, the discovery of any reliable facts about Juliette could provide an explanation to some of the decisions Peirce had made, which irrevocably changed the course of his life, as well as his theory.

By courtesy of Professor Dr. Nathan Houser and the Peirce Edition Project, the writer of the present paper was granted access to the archive materials containing the Max H. Fisch – Maurice Auger correspondence and Victor Lenzen's notes on Juliette. The paper aims at arranging the dispersed data obtained from these and other sources into a set of several distinct versions, which curiously refer to each other and collectively impose a certain order on some major abductions concerning Juliette's identity.

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Not long before Peirce set off for his fifth trip to Europe in April, 1883, he wrote a letter to Julius Hilgard, the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, which said:

I wish to marry a French lady, Madame Pourtalai, who has been in this country for a good while being detained here by the bad state of her health. Her condition of health has now become almost desperate, her financial affairs are going wrong and demand her presence, she will not consent to being married here unless I will go to France to have the ceremony repeated, and for all these imperative reasons she *must* go and I must go with her.<sup>1</sup>

As the marriage certificate indicates, Peirce's second wife was Juliette Annette Froissy, 26 years old, born in France, the daughter of Auguste Froissy and Rose Eyem. The certificate also states that at the moment of entering into marriage, Juliette was a widow, her former husband's name being de Pourtalai.

The marriage was announced not long before the departure, in New York city, just two days after the formal divorce of Peirce and Harriet Melusina Fay. The haste looks even more suspicious given the fact that it cost Peirce his position at the Johns Hopkins university and thus frustrated his plans to pursue an academic career. Moreover, upon Peirce's return from Europe, another trouble was awaiting him: his career in the Coast Survey was also coming to an end, as by the early 90s, after Peirce's father's death and the decline of the Lazzaroni group, the Survey was gradually losing its authority as a purely research enterprise. Five years later, in May, 1888, Charles and Juliette bought a house in Milford, Pike county, Pennsylvania, where Charles spent most of his last 26 years. The Milford mansion became a sort of voluntary exile for both Charles and Juliette; there Peirce wrote most of his currently known works on the history of science, as well as on ethics, pragmatism, semiotics, and cosmology.

When asked about Juliette's past, in most cases Peirce would either tell stories unsupported by any direct evidence,<sup>2</sup> or say something to the effect that he would stoop to anything not to reveal the mystery of his wife's true identity. True, in a number of his letters he does give scattered details and hints on Juliette's past, as well as a few more or less full accounts – which sound more like awkward melodramas.<sup>3</sup> And really, despite all the efforts of archive and field research, the only veritable fact of Juliette's biography, apart from those directly connected with the life of Charles and those known from the Peirces' family correspondence

or from *Milford Dispatch* articles, is the date of her death, October 4, 1934. Meanwhile, the seven years between starting his work at the Hopkins and moving to Milford are obviously the peak of Peirce's biography. Besides, many of the versions curiously overlap. Taking into consideration all these facts, we can assume that it might be more than possible that despite the seeming disappearance of reality behind numerous mystifications around Juliette's life, the very nature of these mystifications, as well as the geography and the list of names they generate, all that taken together does tell us something about the relationship of Charles and Juliette and does create an imprint (even if a negative one) of her personality.

In any case, it is evident that no fiction can be absolute: it inevitably incorporates some odds of reality. Weaving a thick veil of fictional stories and facts around Juliette, Peirce, like once Don Quixote, could not but realize that fictional stories are good only as far as they resemble the truth, even if remotely. Neither deliberate falsification nor true scholarly contempt towards any pre-experimental distinction between the real and the unreal, can allow the subject of speech to remain, in Michel Foucault's terms, an absolute "hero of the Identical". The range of similarities is not infinite, alas.

However, an invented world aims for closedness, as otherwise it would be impossible to believe in it. On the other hand, this closedness is not only the means of, but also a necessary prerequisite for creating fiction. This point has been hard to argue with since the time of Aristotle's "Poetics". But for the same reasons, any historian or biographer is doomed to repeat the destiny of Borges' Averroes, who could probably have learnt by heart Aristotle's "Poetics" and even understood all that it says about theatre, but nevertheless never learnt what "theatre" means. And it is fair, as the reality of any given life presupposes a set of finite facts and experiences, the external semantics of which is not something obvious. In other words, they represent motivational unities, *habita*, which can be used or interpreted, but in which, as Wittgenstein would have said, there is nothing left to *understand*. Thus, inevitably leaving a certain part of biography to fiction, all that we gain in exchange, as Gordon Comstock, one of Orwell's characters, put it, is a number of keyholes through which we see something only because we do not see all the rest.

Meanwhile, the issues of creating, making up, or truthfully describing a certain object, are interweaved in Peirce's semiotics, too. The latter allows most fantastic transformations of the description-reality, or the "outer-inner" relation:

What distinguishes a man from a word? There is a distinction doubtless. ... It may be said that man is conscious, while a word is not. But consciousness is a very vague term. It may mean that emotion which accompanies the reflection that we have animal life. This is a consciousness which is dimmed when animal life is at its ebb in old age, or sleep, but which is not dimmed when the spiritual life is at its ebb; which is the more lively the better *animal* a man is, but which is not so, the better *man* he is. ... Again, consciousness is sometimes used to signify *I think*, or unity in thought; but this unity is nothing but consistency, or the recognition of it. Consistency belongs to every sign, so far as it is a sign; and therefore every sign, since it signifies primarily that it is a sign, signifies its own consistency. ...there is no element whatever of man's consciousness which has not something corresponding to it in the word; and the reason is obvious. It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an external sign, proves that man is an external sign. That is to say, the man and the external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words *homo* and *man* are identical. Thus my language is the sum total of myself...<sup>4</sup>

This truly Augustinian logical chain does not maintain that coherence of a story necessarily implies its truthfulness. On the contrary, without challenging the norms of basic common sense, it objects to the possibility of the purely internal and leaves hope that at least some of the suggested hypotheses, or, in Peirce's terms, abductions (in our case, those of Juliette's identity) must have an indication of the events and facts that really took place.<sup>ii</sup>

As regards the facts most hypotheses concerning Juliette are based on, they provide quite a patchy and contradictory picture. Alongside with the record in the marriage certificate,

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<sup>ii</sup> In this context, it is also a curious fact that this fragment from "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities", like many other fragments from Peirce's early Kant-inspired papers, contains a veiled reference to certain sections of Kant's 1<sup>st</sup> *Critique*. Here, the hint is unmistakably at the Kantian notion of "understanding" and, more specifically, at "The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection" – the section of 1<sup>st</sup> *Critique*, which serves as an important transition point from "Analytic of Principles" to "Transcendental Dialectics". This section is devoted to the ambiguousness of reflective concepts – those of the *inner* and the *outer*, of matter and form, of identity and difference, of agreement and opposition.

there is other abundant evidence, both direct and indirect, concerning Juliette's age, name, ancestors, place of birth, as well as possible reasons for concealing this information.

Thus, for example, in 1900, Juliette told a census taker that she was 48 years old. According to various statements made by Peirce, she arrived in the US from Europe in 1876 – 1878, at the age of 19. One of his journal records, dated January 6, 1914, not long before his death, mysteriously says: “Hodie uxor L anos nata est»<sup>iii</sup>. If that be true, Juliette must have been under 12 years old by the moment of their first meeting in, let us say, 1876.

As regards the name, Juliette used both Froissy and de Pourtalai/de Pourtalés in her correspondence at different times. In several letters, Peirce wrote that she arrived in the US “without a name”, which can be interpreted as a hint suggesting that all her names known at the time before their marriage are totally fictional by mutual consent. «I don't know what her name is or was, and have no suspicion or hint», wrote Peirce in September, 1909, in a drafted letter to William James which he never sent.<sup>5</sup> Walter Gassman, who was 13 years old in 1898 and whose parents moved to Milford approximately at the same time the Peirces did, remembers that he never heard Charles call his wife by her name, the preferred nickname being “Little Girl”. He also mentions that addressing Peirce she sometimes used the name Bopper (Papa, in Joseph Brent's interpretation, or Baba in Victor Lenzen's), which sounds quite odd for the XIX-th century US. Gassman also remembers that the Little Girl often visited their house and had long conversations with his mother, mostly about her childhood, allegedly spent in Austria with the Habsburgs, mentioning Franz-Joseph and Bismarck, on whose lap she liked to sit<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, whereas the second variant of the name is more or less possible and makes some sense and the first one is most probably a phonetic combination of the other two, the name “Baba” gives some support to the not too strong theory of Juliette's Russian ancestry.<sup>iv</sup>

### *Berts*

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<sup>iii</sup> «Today my wife turns 50» (Lat).

<sup>iv</sup> *Baba* – in Russian, vulgar word for “woman” used as a humiliating term in addressing to men.

Mrs. Philips, who lived for a while in the former Peirce's house after Juliette died, remembered that when Juliette was angry, she cursed in Russian, and that she could also understand the Polish language. Besides, as other interviews with former neighbors show, Juliette claimed to have a sister who married a Russian earl and disappeared in Russia during the revolution of 1917.

"The Russian version" finds some support, even though not too convincing, in the Peirces' family correspondence. In 1901, James Mills (or Jem) wrote to his younger brother Herbert:

...I have heard from Charlie that "Juliette decided" to accept an offer of \$7,000 for the Milford estate, including furniture and belongings, and that she will go abroad to live. I hope that she will not head for St. Petersburg and I don't think she will. ... After all, it may be that it will not be too high a price to pay for her absence, though I have been made to believe that she has made herself very necessary to Charlie and that he cannot live without her. ... The mystery of his obligation to her is beyond my understanding. But it may be that there is nothing to understand, except that he conceives that he has ruined her life and owes her every reparation.<sup>7</sup>

The letter does not make it clear whether this assumption was based on the knowledge of who Juliette really was, or Jem was merely trying to play up to Herbert who was a secretary at the US Embassy in St-Petersburg at the time; he was not very favorably disposed to Juliette and did not feel like meeting her at all. This attitude in its turn could be explained, unless we consider one of Charles' letters to Jem, written between 1881 and 1883, to be another fiction. He writes that Juliette's reputation suffered from some "terrible error" he had made, from "evil machinations of a man who had tried to take advantage of her unprotected state", and from the "brutal conduct of the Peirce family", except for the father "who really did know the world, <and therefore> was with her". The name of the evil man is not revealed, the details of the terrible error are not described either. Further on, Charles writes about his break-up with Juliette and mentions Herbert, who had learnt *everything* about Juliette not long before and who decided to take advantage of the situation and started courting Juliette. Peirce also claimed that his wife had letters that could unmask his brother and that he was ready to use them at any moment.<sup>8</sup>

The circumstances of Herbert's appointment in the St. Petersburg Embassy are not quite clear. On 19 September, 1893, he applied for a consulate position in Frankfurt-on-Main or in Brussels. Shortly after that, Charles wrote to his friend William Everett<sup>v</sup>:

I want your most serious and most secret counsel. Here is Berts wants me to exhaust all my influence with Congressmen and Senators and others to get him a consulate. Now I think this is pretty hard. I might get a consulate for myself. We cannot both be consuls. ... I have in mind to tell him that Juliette's friends are talking of having me appointed minister, which is true, & that I need a place too badly to spoil my chances and that if I am appointed minister I will try to make him Secretary of Legation. ... He doesn't speak French or German. Hardly reads French with facility.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, Herbert was not a man of exceptional talents, but he did have the minimum capacity for pursuing a mediocre diplomatic career. Despite the obvious trickster nature of the letter, it remains a fact that in 1894 Herbert was appointed third secretary of the American diplomatic mission in St-Petersburg, where he worked till the year 1901. In 1897, when the mission received the status of Embassy, he was awarded the emperor's medal by the Russian government for his service during the coronation of Nicolas II; and in 1900, as a representative of the United States, he participated in the negotiations on the issue of Russian poachers' illegal fishing in the territorial waters of the US in the Bering Sea.

Of special interest to Herbert were Russian prisons, which becomes evident from his extensive letter addressed to the editor of *New York Tribune*, published as an article in the 1 March, 1898, issue. In 1899, at the peak of the construction work of the Trans Siberian railway, Jem visited Berts. The purpose of the visit is not clear; there remains only one letter from Jem to Charles that contains nothing but his general impressions of St-Petersburg, a detailed description of the appearance and personality of Nicolas II, and words of admiration of fresh caviar taste, Russian theatre talents, and St-Petersburg police:

The *go<ro>davoi*, or policemen, are the nicest looking fellows I know in that capacity, as far as possible from your big powerful London bobby, and still further from the wild Irishmen of the New York streets. They are rather small, active-looking young fellows, with faces beaming good humor, without any symbols of authority or force, standing all day long in the middle of the streets to regulate traffic and help people

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<sup>v</sup> William Everett (1839-1910) – a congressman, the son of Edward Everett, a politician known for his speech in Gettysburg, which he read before the famous Gettysburg address pronounced by Abraham Lincoln on 23 September, 1863.

find the way, which they do most obligingly and even affectionately, with soft-toned manly voices. But this does not prevent their being ready to obey the orders of their chiefs, were they to massacre all the inhabitants of Petersburg.<sup>10</sup>

In 1905, Herbert represented the USA at the peace conference in Portsmouth, which attempted to settle territorial conflicts between Russia and Japan. That was probably the peak of his diplomatic career. In March, 1906, he initiated several diplomatic scandals, exposing various cases of abuse and misconduct in American embassies in the East (drinking, corruption, illegal business, forgery of entry certificates for Chinese workers). He led rigorous investigations in US embassies in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, Port-Said, Singapore, Hong-Kong, and Vladivostok, and in 1907, upon arrival in Boston, he himself was arrested for bad debts.

A month before Herbert's appointment, in his letter to Jem, Peirce mentions certain "embassies" from New York who attempted to convince Juliette to break up with Peirce and leave for Europe.<sup>11</sup> There are also other letters written by Peirce at different times where he mentions Juliette's connections in Russia and hints that Herbert's appointment was due to her influence. Among those letters, there is one addressed to New York on 14 March, 1898, where Peirce refers to Juliette's powerful friends at the Russian court in St-Petersburg and suggests that she should consider going back to Europe, to her "friends".

In December, 1883, eight months after Peirce's marriage, Sara Mills, Charles' mother, writes him a letter about professor Sylvester's resignation from the Hopkins, where she makes a strange statement ("congratulations on your Siberian exile"), a phrase which sounds absolutely out of context and is never explained. It is quite possible, though, that this remark has nothing to do with Juliette and is just a metaphor referring to Peirce's problems in the Coast Survey.

Victor Lenzen, investigating possible Russian and Polish traces in Juliette's past, refers to this letter and several others as evidence for one of the hypotheses, which claims that Juliette's father could be Adolphe Fourier de Bacourt, born in Nance, who served as French ambassador in Washington and in Sardinia<sup>12</sup> in 1840-s. Juliette herself confirmed being acquainted with the man. De Bacourt's niece, la Comtesse de Martel de Janville, was a French writer who published critical articles and sketches under the pen-name Gyp in 1870-



s – 1890-s, ridiculing the populist democracy of the French republic. In her later book *Souvenirs d'une petite fille*, Lenzen finds a description of her former classmate, dark-haired Juliette. It is also known, that Juliette was familiar with the book and even made notes while reading it, possibly in order to use them in one of her mystifications. In Lenzen's interpretation, the name of de Bacourt is associated with the names of princes Radziwills and Golytsyns,<sup>13</sup> although the facts he provides cannot be considered sound evidence for any definite conclusions.

As it is well-known, one of the most famous American Golytsyns was prince Dmitry (1770-1840), who moved to the USA in late 18<sup>th</sup> century and became a catholic priest having been ordained in Baltimore, a city with one of the largest catholic dioceses in the US at that time. After years of traveling around Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania as a missionary, he founded a settlement named Loretto within 150 miles from Philadelphia, between Cresson and Ebensburg. It is a curious fact that these two towns hosted stations of the Coast Survey which were supervised by Charles Peirce and which he visited on several occasions.

Golytsyn spent a lot of money on maintaining his catholic colony, hoping for an inheritance from Russia, which he never received. In the end, he incurred large amount of debt, beyond his ability to pay off. Later, Golytsyn gave up his title and his name and lived in Loretto under the name of Father Smith. In 1840, his relative Elizaveta Golytsyna moved to the USA. Being also a catholic, she took monastic vows in France and before arriving in the US, she lived in various French catholic monasteries, all of which belonged to the congregation of the Sacred Heart. The congregation was founded by Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1800 as an order devoted to bringing up orphan girls. The congregation opened its first orphanage in Amiens, France.

### *Houlné*

Juliette used to tell her friend Maria Schteiner that she was born in a little Alsatian town of Lafrimbolle. According to another story which she spread a little more rigorously, she, like Adolphe de Bacourt mentioned above, came from Nance, a city in Lorraine, on the border

with Alsace. Gifford Pinchot<sup>vi</sup>, a former student of French National Forestry school in Nance and the son of Mary Eno Pinchot, Juliette's friend, later made an attempt to find families with the name Froissy in local archives. However, his efforts did not bring any tangible results; later research of the marriage records in France was not successful either. William James, who spent most of his childhood and youth in Europe, was convinced that Juliette was born in Alsace, which, he claimed, could be proved by her peculiar local accent, evident when she spoke German or French.

After Juliette's death in 1934, a mysterious card was found among her papers. The card had the name of Pierre Fourier d'Hincourt on it; the address written on the back side read 99 Governor Street, Providence, Rhode Island. At that time, Hincourt was the name of a small Alsatian village not far from Ancienville, close to the German-Swiss border. The address on the card was that of a Rhode Island orphanage for girls, visited by Juliette in April, 1903, while Peirce was reading a course on the logic of science in Harvard, organized for him by William James. Juliette never explained the purpose of her visit. The research made by Max H. Fisch and Maurice Auger<sup>14</sup> proved only that Juliette, instead of accompanying Charles to Harvard, first visited St. Vincent orphanage in Providence as a guest of someone named Mother Maria. It has been proved that Juliette's stay at the orphanage was too long to qualify for a curiosity or charity visit. The orphanage was maintained by the order of the Sacred Heart, in whose monasteries Elizaveta Golytsyna used to live.

Mother Maria turned out to be a nun, Maria Houlné, born 10 February, 1870. In 1980-s, her niece, also Maria, was still alive, staying in St. Anne monastery in Melbourne, Kentucky. They both appeared to have been born in Steige, Lorraine region, not far from both Nance and Lafrimbolle, mentioned by Juliette as her birth places.

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<sup>vi</sup> Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946) –The Chief of the US Forestry Service (1905-1910) and the Governor of Pennsylvania (1923-1927, 1931-1935). Supported by Theodore Roosevelt, he developed the first federal program of forest preservation. Gifford Pinchot was the son of a New York trader of Belgian origin, James Pinchot, and Mary Eno, the daughter of Amos Eno, who made a fortune on construction contracts in Manhattan development.

Auger made a trip to France where he conducted research in the archives of Alsace and Lorraine, in St. Jean de Bassel, Obersteinbach, and Steige in particular. As a result of the research and correspondence with other sisters of Houlné, among other things, he discovered that Houlné is a French catholic family, one branch of which settled in the USA in 1900-s. There were five people under the name of Houlné in Steige, and all of them, like Elizaveta Golytsyna, were nuns of the order mentioned above.

Among these nuns, there was one named Marie-Louise, born 1 August, 1861. Her widowed mother, also Marie-Louise, left letters from which we learn about her daughter's death on 3 September, 1879. Meanwhile, according to one of the stories told by Charles and Juliette, some time after Juliette arrived in the USA in 1877 or 1878, a letter was sent to her family in Europe which said that the ship bound for the New World she had taken, sank.<sup>15</sup> If this be true, this decision, as Auger assumes, could have been caused by the necessity to say goodbye to the old name either due to debts, or persecution, or unwanted marriage. In the latter case, if Juliette was really a catholic, it was the only possible solution, given the obvious difficulties of a divorce.

The role of Juliette could also suit some other nuns of Houlné, in particular Eugenie Katrine, born 18 December, 1861. In any case, the research in the archives of the order in Kentucky did not yield anything as one of the volumes containing data on marriages of 1863-1873 was unaccountably missing.<sup>16vii</sup>

Besides, the Peirces' neighbors in Milford were intrigued by the fact that the Peirces were frequently visited by a French-speaking girl whom they seriously considered to be the daughter as Juliette treated her very cordially. If that be true, it is possible that it was that girl Juliette went to see at the St. Vincent orphanage in Providence, north of Boston, in April, 1903.

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<sup>vii</sup> The situation looks even more suspicious due to the fact that, according to J.Brent, all information as regards Juliette was also thoroughly deleted and cut out of Mary Eno Pinchot's correspondence, which is currently stored in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

### *Pourtalés-1*

On his way to Alsatian Obersteinbach, Auger was surprised to learn from the taxi driver about château la Verrerie, a “live” family estate, located in the vicinity. At the moment, someone named count François de Pourtalés was living in the castle. Upon his visit to the count, Auger learnt that before the castle became the property of de Pourtalés, it used to belong to the family of Bussieres. Mélanie de Bussieres, who married Edmond de Pourtalés, was accepted at the court of Spanish princess Eugénie de Montijo, who later married Napoleon III and became the last Empress of France.

In the de Pourtalés family, there was someone Jeanne-Albertine, married to Bernard-Erasme Kalberwisch, a Prussian cavalry major. The date of her death, 24 April, 1883, is very close to the date of Charles and Juliette’s wedding, 26 April, 1883. This could mean, as in the “Houlné” scenario, that Juliette was trying to conceal her real past by means of fictional death.

Jeanne-Albertine (whose initials J.A. are the same as Juliette Annette’s) could have crossed the ocean in late 1870-s and settled in the USA. Kalberwisch is known to have remarried in 1886, so if we believe in the fact of Juliette’s death falsification, her true identity had to be kept in absolute secret.<sup>17</sup>

### *Pourtalés-2*

While proceeding with his archive research, Auger came across the names of Hans Conrad Cramer, a physician who practiced in Milan for some time, and his wife, Elise de Pourtalés, the daughter of count Louis-Francois de Pourtalés from Neuchâtel, Switzerland, not far from the border with Alsace. The latter was one of the favorite students of a zoologist Louis Agassiz, a Lazzaroni and a close friend of Peirce’s father. Louis-Francois arrived in the USA after his teacher, in 1848, and served as an assistant in the Coast Survey till 1873. After Agassiz’ death in 1873, he became custodian of the comparative zoology museum in Harvard. Taking that into account, we can assume that he must have known Charles closely, too. From 1866 till 1868 he headed several research trips on board the Bibb, equipped by the Coast Survey to investigate the depths between Florida, Cuba, and the Bahamas. Later, on

board the *Hassler*, he traveled from the bay of Massachusetts through the strait of Magellan as far as California, the exploration of which had just begun, after Russia sold its Californian settlement of Fort Ross in 1841. Besides, Louis-Francois de Pourtalés made several important discoveries in the history of Gulf Stream.<sup>18</sup>

### *Lévy*

Michel Lévy was a French publisher, born in Alsatian Falsburg, not far from Strasburg and within 30 miles from Lafrimbolle. Being fond of theater, he kept a small drama theatre for his friends and started his career with the publication of plays in a theatre magazine *L'Entracte* and with several books on the history of theatre. Later, together with his brothers Calman and Nathan, he published large editions of authors popular at that time, including Chateaubriand, Hugo, Balzac, George Sand, Saint-Beuve, Renan, Stendhal, Baudelaire, de Tocqueville, Merime, as well as translations from Po, Dickens, and Thackeray. Michel Lévy died in 1875.

During his second trip to Europe, Peirce stayed for a while in Paris. He lodged at 11 Avenue de Matignon, and the landlady was none other than M-me Lévy. In 1877, Peirce visited Paris again, on business for the Coast Survey and in order to meet the editor of *Revue Philosophique* which published two of his articles: «Fixation of Belief» and «How to Make Our Ideas Clear». Fifth time Peirce visited Paris was in May-September, 1883. This time, like in 1877, correspondence from the Coast Survey was addressed to 7 Rue Scribe, the house located behind the building of Editions Calman Lévy office.<sup>19</sup>

In winter and spring of 1875, the year Michel Lévy and the Prussian cavalry officer Kalberwisch from “Pourtalés-1” died, Peirce met Henry James in Paris. The letter Henry wrote to his mother in Cambridge in January says that Charles, who had separated with Zina not long before, «is leading here a life of insupportable loneliness» and «sees, literally, not a soul but myself and his secretary». The “secretary” is also mentioned in Henry’s letter to his father dated 18 November, 1875. This secretary could have been either Kalberwisch’s wife Jeanne Albertine (J.A.), or, according to one of Fisch and Lenzen’s versions, M-me Lévy (although Lenzen provides no additional information which would prove that the secretary

in question was female).<sup>20</sup> However, in this context we cannot ignore the letter Zina Peirce sent to captain Patterson upon her arrival in New-York from Europe in December, the same year. This letter, quoted by Joseph Brent in his biography of Peirce almost without cuts<sup>21</sup>, explicitly refers to a quarrel between Charles and Zina, but gives no hint as to the details of the quarrel, emphasizing Charles' negligence of his business and family responsibilities. This gives us some grounds to assume that the reason for her departure was probably not Charles' infidelity.

Many of the books published by Lévy in Paris were reviewed by none other than Henry James. If Juliette was really the wife (or daughter) of Michel Lévy, she must have had dozens of melodramatic novels at hand, which would have further fed her luxurious imagination. Some extracts from books published by Lévy and reviewed by James reveal similarities with Juliette's autobiographical fantasies, though this fact cannot prove anything yet. One of numerous examples of these coincidences is the seventh letter from Prosper Merime's "Letters to an Incognita":

I talked to you about the beginning of death. Many years ago, I cannot even remember when, I aroused a serious passion in a variety show actress, a passion which lasted at least for two months. She was an extraordinary personality, not a stranger to virtue in her own way, and she left memories in many of those whom she had made happy. As I see, it was not long ago that she drowned in a shipwreck near America. Before leaving, she wrote to me and asked for money, promising that she would never again bother me, as she was not going to return. This strange death made me sad and awakened all the memories, almost forgotten, of the life I was living when I was twenty years old. Meanwhile, nothing makes me feel more bitter than these recollections. Each time, I take a deep sigh, falling asleep in the English café, and then I see this poor young girl fighting for her life in the waves.<sup>22</sup>

Juliette, as it is evident from Charles' aunt Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce's correspondence, took acting classes in New York.<sup>23</sup> One of Peirce's letters to Sarah Mills mentions the name of a famous American actor and playwright Steele MacKaye who is known to express a high opinion of Juliette's artistic talent.<sup>24</sup> There is a letter in the Peirce Edition Project archives from MacKaye to Juliette which contains his flattering remarks on Juliette's performance as an actress.<sup>25</sup> Besides, from Henry James's reviews of Merime's "Letters" Juliette might have learned some historical and biographical details which she could use in creating her own stories. It is known that Merime had been introduced at the court of Napoleon III and, like

Mélanie de Bussieres, was closely acquainted with duchess de Montijo, the mother of empress Eugénie, whom he met in 1830.

### *Romani*

As regards Juliette's appearance, Lenzen describes it as follows:

Juliette was a slightly built person, of weight less than a hundred pounds, and of height from 5 feet 5 inches to 5 feet 7 inches. She was of dark complexion, with a facial straight profile and high cheek bones. A physical anthropologist stated that her type is not common in N.W. Europe, France and Belgium, but is common in Central and Eastern Europe. A famous scholar on gypsies characterized her type as of Eastern Europe and specifically mentioned Romania. One anthropologist likened her type to one common in Spain, but another thought she might be too tall for a Spanish comparison. Both anthropologists indicated that appearance rendered a gypsy interpretation possible.<sup>26</sup>

Besides, according to Peirce's neighbors, quoted by Lenzen, Juliette would resort to various magic practices from time to time. Thus, she could send curse upon people by means of hiding pieces of clothes which used to belong to a martyred member of her family at their house or property. She was alleged to possess hypnotic powers and to be able to tell fortune with tarot cards. Philips, the Gassmans, and William Kenworthy mentioned Gypsies passing through Milford and encamping at the Peirces' land. Allegedly, Juliette shared meals with the Gypsies and talked to them in their language.<sup>27</sup>

Peirce also showed keen interest in the Gypsy language. In a letter to his friend Francis Russell, dated 14 May, 1892, he mentions having written «An Excursion into Thessaly» (later known as «Thessalian Topography»), designed as a popular lecture and presenting

...a story of the adventures of a young traveler in Thessaly about 1862 when the country was pretty wild. It has rather a poetical atmosphere, and conveys the impression of being true, but the adventures are quite surprising.<sup>28</sup>

Peirce read the story in the Century Club, a place where all New York artistic and business elite gathered. Some of the characters in the story are Gypsies and some of the dialogues are written partly in the Gypsy tongue. The theory claiming Juliette's Gypsy origin is attractive as it is not part of the Peirces' "mythological canon" and finds no support in their own

stories.<sup>viii</sup> In any case, whether we find this hypothesis plausible or not, it is necessary to remember that Peirce was acquainted with Edward Palmer, an orientalist and scholar of the Gypsy language<sup>ix</sup>, whom he met during his first trip to Europe in 1870 and who, besides several lessons of Arabic, could have taught Peirce the basics of the Gypsy language, too.<sup>29</sup>

Other Milford dwellers who knew Juliette after Charles' death testify that

Mrs. Peirce was a fruitcake ... every time something disagreeable happened she would not use that room and had another built on somewhere. She delighted in showing people through her house and the final move was always to the mantle over the fireplace where she pointed to a pretty jar about a foot high and said "And now I'd like you to meet my husband".<sup>30</sup>

The jar contained Charles' ashes: Juliette insisted on cremation, which sounds suspicious, considering her own claims of being catholic.

Among almost obvious mystifications made up by Charles and Juliette at different times are the following stories:

- 1) Juliette had to flee to the USA because she broke up the engagement of one European prince, having designed an intrigue with his fiancée's mother. The story resembles what happened between Napoleon III and princess Vasa in 1852, long before Juliette could participate in the events, as 1852 could hardly even be the year she was born.<sup>31</sup>
- 2) Juliette was a princess of the Habsburg family; she spent her childhood in the company of a boy who later became Kaiser Wilhelm II. Through misunderstanding, she became involved in the so-called Meyerling tragedy, connected with the suicide of Mary Vestera and Rudolph of Austria, the only heir of Franz Joseph I. She had to escape to Belgium, and then to the

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<sup>viii</sup> According to professor Andre de Tienne (Peirce Edition Project), Peirce's references to the life of Gypsies might be drawn from a book by Charles Leland, published in the USA in 1882 (Leland, Charles G. *The Gypsies*. Boston and New York, 1882.), with which Peirce was well familiar.

<sup>ix</sup> Edward Palmer (1840-1882), a British orientalist and polyglot, who specialized in Gypsy dialects. Among other languages, he knew Farsi, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, as well as their dialects. In 1882, during the Egyptian insurrection against the construction of the Suez canal, he participated in the negotiations between the British government and the Arab sheikhs. Shortly thereafter, while traveling across the desert and carrying a large sum of money for the sheikhs, he was robbed and murdered by Bedouins.



USA, where she was to stay on the condition of receiving regular payments to an account opened for her. She claimed possessing a dress that used to belong to Maria-Antoinette and a necklace, a gift of Franz-Joseph.<sup>32</sup>

Mrs. Ketchum Depuy, who once stayed with Juliette while the latter was sick with influenza, remembers how, unconscious, she called herself “princess Juliette” and blamed “little Willie” (the Kaiser) for the “dreadful chaos” he unleashed in Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Another Milford dweller, Edna Green, remembers:

She spoke French, was a very small woman – tiny waist, – always wore a long black dress with a high neck (in center of this high neck she always wore a Pearl Cross – pinned on – it was set in either platinum or yellow gold). ... She had a dress which had Lapis lazuli buttons, down the front, she removed these and among others gave, one each to my Grandmother, Mother, two Aunts and myself, she also gave me the earrings to match. There was a long string of graduated beads to match, and either Mrs. Annie Buchanan or Mrs. Alfred Marvin was given these. ... She also had a Cloisenne Link Bracelet (different colors – navy, coral, blue, green) which she had made into pins, also giving them as gifts.<sup>34</sup>

3) Juliette’s elder brother, who, according to her, was a diplomatic service officer, was friends with George Bancroft. They met in Berlin, where Bancroft served as an ambassador to Prussia (1867-71) and then to Germany (1871-74). According to Henry James, Bancroft spoke of Juliette’s features resembling those of his friend, a diplomat baron Nothomb.<sup>35</sup>

It is interesting to notice that while Juliette’s fantasies are abundant in detail, Peirce’s stories about his wife’s past are much more ambiguous. See, as an example, his letter to an unknown recipient<sup>x</sup> dated 13 November, 1909:

...I have a wonderful wife, and what I tell you about her is a secret never revealed and never to be revealed as long as she lives. Mind that. Nobody but me knows who she is and I have always protected her against questions and have, when pressed, simply refused to give any information. ... Her mother and father were each of them robbed of great fortunes by guardians after they had been left orphans. He then took a bourgeois name, thinking his own too incongruous and hated. Her father was once afterward pressed most earnestly to accept a large fortune but could not bring himself to do so, and several other times acted in a similar way, and so has my wife who, while free all along to be rich and leave me, has always stuck to me and to the most grinding poverty, – all the more felt, because her father who was as good as adopted by one

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<sup>x</sup> The letter is believed to be addressed to a French writer André Nepveu (1881-1959), who wrote under pen name Luc Durtain.

of the greatest of kings, was able to bring her up in the greatest delicacy while appearing to be nobody. But by a curious sort of affinity royalties always sought them out and made intimate friends of them, and although neither she nor I have ever hinted at such a thing, it is curious that friends and acquaintances in this country have always imagined that she belonged to some Royal family and have taken no end of trouble to identify her with some person in the first part of the Almanach de Gotha.<sup>xi</sup> And they were so far right that she was always more at home with royalties than with anybody else. Though we in this country are apt not to think much of that class, yet doubtless their traditions and situations have really freed them from the *sordid* and I quite see how it is that she has never felt at home here.<sup>36</sup>

Despite Peirce's allegations, all further attempts to find traces of Juliette's ancestors under all possible names in the Almanach de Gotha proved fruitless. However, one needs to remember the confirmed fact that Juliette did possess some jewelry and, at least for a length of time, an income of several thousand francs of unknown source which supported the Peirces' living. Judging by correspondence, most jewelry was gradually sold due to endless debts caused by Charles' specific attitude towards money, continuous renovation of the mansion, and the fact that Charles and Juliette kept renting an expensive apartment in New York for several years after moving to Milford.

An absurd thing is that despite the authenticity of Juliette's French and German, recognized by several people, nevertheless, according to Gassman senior's interview, she often made mistakes, like omitting the final *-e* in women's names, while Gassman's wife is reported to help her in writing letters in German.<sup>37</sup>

In any way, all that we have is a complex or rather a mixture of names, facts, and dates. However, it is an interesting – and highly important – fact that many of them occur several times or directly refer to each other in different stories, which allows arranging the stories in a certain web-like pattern.

Juliette did have some interest in the Rhode Island orphanage which belonged to the congregation of the Sacred Heart. The monasteries where Elizaveta Golytsyna, father Dmitry's daughter, stayed belonged to the same congregation. Father Dmitry founded the settlement of Loretto, located in the vicinity of the two Coast Survey stations which were

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<sup>xi</sup> Almanach de Gotha is a list of European ruling dynasties, first published in 1763 in the duchy of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha, the territory of present Turingia, at the court of Friedrich III.

supervised by Charles Peirce. Charles' brother, Herbert, served as secretary at the American embassy in St-Petersburg and, according to Charles, received the position thanks to Juliette's connections. The families of Bacourt and Hincourt mentioned above are connected by their Alsatian origin and by a common ancestor, mathematician Jean Fourier, who participated in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign and served as a secretary in Cairo University, founded by Napoleon. Adolphe Fourier de Bacourt was acquainted with Grand duchess Stephanie, the aunt of Napoleon III and through her – with Prince Wilhelm, future Wilhelm I, the first German Emperor. Alsace and Lorraine, lost by the French in 1872, turn out to be Houlné's place of birth and the location of château la Verrerie. Kalberwisch and Lévy die the same year, and the date is very close to the date Juliette and Charles supposedly met. Etc. The list of coincidences and analogies that abound in the brief account above may be substantially extended.

Indeed – and this was one of our starting points – it is hard to disagree with the fictional hero Don Quixote in that any story, real or fictional, is good only as far as it resembles the truth, even if remotely. As well as it is hard to argue with Aristotle, the real human being, in that any universe, real or fictional, longs for closedness. What is it that creates a ground for such closedness, making a story at least resemble the truth? What is it that allows us to make ourselves at home within a given arrangement of facts, be it a story or a theory, to live it through as if it had personal significance for us? Among other things, in a very basic sense, our belief in it is grounded in the fact that certain details appear to repeat themselves throughout the story, thus organizing it as a system of resemblances and forming in us a disposition to interpret certain things in a predictable way.

In hope that some of aforementioned coincidences might provide a ground, however feeble, for a hypotheses of Juliette's identity, we have tried to arrange the dispersed data obtained by Max H. Fisch, Viktor Lenzen and Maurice Auger into a set of several distinct versions.

However, although in our case these coincidences appear to be not of much help, an interesting detail came out. Curiously enough, moving within each story, we can pass, as if through an open door, to another story, where the verisimilitude and the motivation of the previous one stop working. Eventually, it becomes impossible to escape from this Borges-like encyclopedia, this “garden of forking paths” generated by both Juliette's tales and research

abductions. Each assumption we make allows more than one interpretation; witnesses' stories contradict each other; hypotheses make fancy but indefinite connections with each other; and when several names are mentioned, it remains ambiguous whether the same person is referred to, or different people. Fiction is interwoven with real events in such a manner that none of the hypotheses can claim enough grounds. Thus, we can only say that biographers see only what they want and are prepared to see, or that they are deliberately being led by the nose.

What has been added, then, by the endeavor, if rearrangement of all the abundant facts in a manner that points to a definite conclusion has proven fruitless – as if some supremely powerful and intelligent Cartesian-like “evil spirit” persistently deceived us at every step? To all intents and purposes, apart from the detail mentioned above, one important positive fact did come to light.

From what has been presented above, it is quite evident that whoever Juliette was, she had reasons to be interested in the period of European history between the end of the Second Republic in France, the Crimea campaign, and the French-Prussian war of 1871-1872, provoked by Bismarck, which resulted in the capture of Napoleon III, the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, or Lotharingia, by the French, and the formation of the German Empire. At least that much is certain: this period spans all possible dates and circumstances of her birth as well as stories of her childhood. Certainly – and this is our abduction – it might be the case that she was just personally interested in everything related to the figure of Charles Luis Bonaparte, or Napoleon III, the last French monarch, the son of the king of Holland Ludowik Bonaparte and Hortenzia Bogarne. Charles Luis, with his temper of a Dutch and a Corsican, was seen by most European royal families as a parvenu; and despite his romantic purposefulness, he was a specimen of inconstancy, eclecticism, and illogical behavior both in politics and in private life.

### *Peirces*

Having addressed the problem of Juliette's origins, one would very likely be lead to consider her relations with the Peirce family. Although this may not necessarily help to obtain a *clear*

idea of how different versions of Juliette's origins connect to later events, it may certainly help to obtain *some* idea of it. Besides, it might reveal some ground for the aforesaid abduction; and, in any case, it is hardly arguable that this would provide a much better picture of Juliette's personality.

As regards the attitude of the family members towards Juliette, it was always quite complex. Most curious but at the same time hostile and lacking understanding was Charles' aunt, Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce, in whose house on Kirkland Avenue in Cambridge the Peirce family lived.

In 1883-1884 Charles and Juliette visited Cambridge twice, in November, 1883, and April, 1884, immediately before and soon after what happened at the Johns Hopkins. They were not quite welcome there, considering the scandalous character of their marriage. On the eve of their arrival, Sara Mills wrote to Helen, Charles' sister:

I dread the troubles which are sure to be in store for them and thro' them for me in the family and in society. Poor Charlie is like a child about conventionalities and has no idea that anything stands in the way of her being received everywhere!!<sup>38</sup>

Even the first visit made somewhat different impressions on Charles' mother and Elizabeth Peirce:

Her manners are very pleasing and sometimes when she is animated her eyes are beautiful. Her teeth and hair too are very handsome, and she has a pretty figure and hands – but her cheeks are hollow and she is deathly pale.<sup>39</sup>

I will say this of her that she was always lady-like, gentle and thoughtful of others. I could not help being interested in her – yet I was not in the least fascinated. I do wish Charley would come out openly and tell her true story – yet I am afraid if he did I should not like her any better than I do – now – though I do hate mystery. It seems to me that she is a spoilt child – and I should be wretched if I had to pass any length of time with her...<sup>40</sup>

Well I do pity Charley, still it was his own choice to marry J. contrary to the advice or wishes of all his friends. I never could imagine what he could discover fascinating in or about her. It was not her beauty – since she *had none*... The fact is she bewitched him, I suppose. If she had lived in Salem during witch time she wd certainly have been tried as a witch and been sentenced accordingly.<sup>41</sup>

In April and May, an agitated correspondence between Elizabeth and Helen Peirce Ellis, Charles' sister, started, as during the second visit "aunt Lizzie" managed to become better

acquainted with Juliette. These letters are of great importance as they provide an elaborately detailed picture:

My dearest Helen,

...Yesterday morning after I had written to you a telegram came from Charles saying he and Juliette would come here (if we had a room for them) to stay till Monday, and arrive here today! ...I felt perfect despair, and evidently your mother was far from pleased and Jem was barely willing, yet did not feel as if he could say “no” – I should at once have said “no” as I did when Charles asked me to lend him \$200. That poor sick creature (is she sick?) on her “last legs”<sup>xii</sup> – a victim to hysterics – how utterly regardless of what is due to your mother, at her years and state of health and to me at 80 – to bring her here. To say the least it is entirely deficient in delicacy and propriety in every way. I am afraid that Madame’s plan is to fasten herself upon us. I am more disgusted with her than ever if possible. ... Charles ought to consider that this is absolutely my house. He and Juliette assume that I am fond of her just because I pitied her when she was sick here and was simply polite to her and now as I gave them an inch they take an ell. ...when she was here I pitied her when she was sick in bed and looked so pale and frail, but when she came down stairs in the evening she was like a spoiled and forward child and I thought I never could bear to be with her except for a very short time. And then I heard more of her and got disgusted and sort of afraid of her. Even the legacy myth is enough! What is the meaning of it all? I think that she believes herself irresistible and she means to catch me and make the most of me ... Certainly the way she has come round Charley would warrant any conclusion in regard to her.<sup>42</sup>

She looked a great deal better than she did when she was here before, and there is no hurry about getting mourning for her and Charles as he said *he* meant to lie down on her grave and die with her, but there is not the least danger of her departing “for one while” and as to Charley I doubt if he even would put on crape for her. Yesterday afternoon I was alone with her in the parlor and she began to tell me what a horrid winter she has had and all owing to Charles’ treatment of her. ... it is strange that Zina and now Juliette should have the same sort of experience. She (Juliette) told me that when Charles gets into his passions it is “perfectly awful”. I asked her what he did. She said, “Oh, I cannot tell you; it would pain you too much”. ... One of her complaints is that he interfered so with the housekeeping and the girls that she could not get along at all and the servants would not stay. She told me that within a few weeks Charley *lent* Bradford nearly a hundred dollars, that he had often lent him money but *never* got it back, and that it was in reality *Mrs.* Bradford to whom he lent the money and that both Mr. and Mrs. B. dressed a great deal and she wore jewelry &c... I suspect she is obstinate and self-willed and likes to rule, yet when she pleases she can be very winning.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>xii</sup> Juliette outlived Peirce by 20 years.

When I came home, Juliette, whom I left sick in bed, was sitting with your mother and apparently quite restored. She told me afterwards, that her sickness was caused by something unkind, that Charlie had said to her. She says that all her sicknesses have been caused by that. In the afternoon I was sitting in the dining room and she came and sat beside me. We talked German and then French together. Her pronunciation of her native language is really beautiful – so clear, easy and distinct – and so fluent and expressive. She tells great stories of her father and her bringing up. She is a real mystery to me. She seems so artless and simple – it is most strange that a woman brought up as she says she was could have gone round with Charles and been so intimate with him as she has been for many years.<sup>44</sup>

Juliette and Charles got their trunks packed – all ready to go. After lunch (or dinner) Juliette sat in the dining room and wanted to help me – but of course I would not let her – and she laid down on the sofa while I washed the things – and then we sat down and we talked together in French and in German. ... I asked her – if she had money of her own – independently of Charles. She said she had – but that *she did not let him know she had any, because he would get it and spend it right and left – she did not know how – only he was so extravagant.* I had heard that she was in Boston at the time of your father's sickness that long sad summer – you remember Charles came home from Europe – I said to Juliette “Were you in Boston that summer, when my brother was sick?” “I was sick in New York.” She said. But there was a woman Charles had brought with him from Europe and she was in Boston at that time! ... She told me also that there was another woman, to whom Charles gave a great deal of money, and whom he sent for to come here – and she came. She was a handsome “Dutch” girl. How strange Juliette could have married if she knew these things to be true! She said, she did not want to marry him... and he came to her with a pistol in hands and said he would shoot her if she did not consent to marry him – and then your mother wrote to her. ... <Charles> told your mother, that Juliette kept every thing nice and in good order; but that she understood nothing about figures and he was obliged to interfere about housekeeping – if he did not – things wd go all wrong financially. ... I cannot help being under the influence of her winning ways when I am with her – though at the very time I distrust her.<sup>45</sup>

After Charles and Juliette left Cambridge, Elizabeth wrote a letter to Charles asking him to reveal the date and place of his wife's birth. This was not mere curiosity, it was an attempt to write her into history, to find her place in family hierarchies, and thus find some basis for reconciliation. Of course, there was no reply. Three years later, she wrote to Helen:

She is no doubt a born actress of some sort, but whether she will ever make her everlasting fortune by it – is – the question.<sup>46</sup>

Juliette really took acting classes in 1885-1886, and not without success. The classes are mentioned not only by Elizabeth, but by Sara Mills and by Peirce himself. The image of Juliette becomes even more ambiguous if we look at some of the letters related to her that

Peirce sent to his family in Cambridge at different times. Thus, he writes in an undated letter to Herbert:

Juliette seems to have a continual large correspondence about my imaginary irregularities. Why cannot someone say plainly to her that she should not keep those letters a mystery but *show them*, show who they are from and what the charges and evidence are?

Then she asks who spends the money. In the main she spends it, but she does not consider that when she orders me to pay anything, it is *she* who is spending the money.

Juliette is pursuing a wild course; doing all she can to prevent her husband from having his living and hers; and it is surprising how many people she gets to aid her in this.

She has lost me my office at the Johns Hopkins and then my office of Weights and Measures. ... In a few days, I shall lose my place on the Survey. Soon after we were married she told me she had married me to ruin me. It will come to that (though the expression was not serious)...

One habit of hers, is to look over my papers without saying anything to me. She totally misunderstands documents, and then thinking herself very discrete, tells the falsest things owing to her mistakes.<sup>47</sup>

Keeping in mind Peirce's impracticality and the obviously maniacal nature of the letter (even if we assume that Juliette's secret correspondence did exist), we can conclude that his blaming Juliette for squandering was merely wishful thinking. However, the destructive nature of their union was obviously absolutely clear to Peirce, even though for some reason it did not prevent them from marrying. Why didn't it? Straightly speaking, there's not enough reliable information to answer this question. So we can choose either to continue looking for a black cat in a dark room, or to consider those singular, unique existential feelings and situations when human beings just do things which no biography or philosophy is able to generalize.

In January, 1887, while preparing for his course in logic through correspondence, which failed later, Peirce wrote to Jem:

She seems to have this mysterious correspondence which she hides from me, and all the statements it contains she retails pretty generally as facts within her own knowledge. It was a visit she paid to the Treasury Department, I have always thought, which brought on the trouble in the Coast Survey. She will calmly state that she knows me to be a thief, – state it confidentially as something which “must go no further”. She may intercept letters from pupils and break up correspondence, or write as if I was not to be trusted with the advance money. I cannot have any clerk at the flat, nor any woman to work for me at all.



Then there is the struggle to fill our mouths, for every morsel has to be paid cash for, till the pupils begin to come. ... Uncle Sam and Juliette are enough to drive me out of my wits. I have not learned to calculate in any measure what the former will do; but from the latter I can expect with confidence 30 different lines of conduct per month, of which 25 will be in one way or another impedimentary to my success. Burn this letter, which is imprudent, because I love her devotedly. But I am rather exasperated... this morning <she> broke up a business interview with a gentlemen by bursting in about my "bitches".<sup>48</sup>

As regards Juliette's skills in money management, there is plentiful evidence of her exceptional frugality and rationality, especially in her correspondence with lawyers on the issues of Milford mortgage and in the reports she sent to a lawyer hired by Jem in 1895 in order to avoid the threat of having to sell the house.

The strange changeability of Juliette's physical and emotional state puzzled not only Elizabeth Peirce. In 1890, Charles sent Juliette abroad to have rest due to suspected tuberculosis infection. In Cairo and Alexandria, Julia met Jem, who wrote to Charles:

I have seen Juliette several times in the last week or ten days, and you will like to hear my impressions about her state of health. I cannot help thinking that her winter has been of substantial benefit to her. She speaks of the serious attacks which she still has, and seems to regard herself doomed. But whenever I saw her, she looked and appeared strong and vigorous, and has evidently enjoyed much in her Cairene life and is familiar with Cairo through frequent visits to its streets and bazaars. I passed one morning with her in the bazaars, going to see various articles which she was considering buying. It was not a very good day, but she never seemed to grow tired or to lose her clearness of judgment, and she displayed skill of a high order in selecting the best specimens and bargaining for them. I saw her off for Alexandria on Wednesday last. She went to the train perfectly fresh, not in the least disturbed apparently either by the effort of padding &c or by the confusion at the station. Of course, she looks very fragile and pale, as she always does. Now and then, there seems to be some effort of breathing and of speaking. But this is not generally perceptible, and the belief left in my mind is that there cannot be serious disease of the lungs. In fact, she seemed to me better and stronger than I have generally seen her, and yet I am aware that only a person very familiar with her phases could form a really valuable opinion of her condition.<sup>49</sup>

The opinion I was able to form of her case is certainly not worth much. But it may be worth something. I did not believe she was so ill as she herself thought. She is easily excited and depressed. When she felt well, she felt happy and interested in all about her, and could not resist exerting herself too much. Then would come the reaction and the fatigue, and she would be in bed for several days. I could not help wondering at her energy and self-reliance and capacity, and though she is certainly a most delicate and sometimes suffering woman, I am sure she has a vast fund of strength and life to draw upon.<sup>50</sup>

The list of Juliette's diseases may seem very serious, indeed: tuberculosis, frequent immobility, problems that required hysterectomy in 1896-1897, etc. However, if we consider these facts with regard to the date of Juliette's death (1934) and to the descriptions in Jem's letter, we can assume that Elizabeth Peirce could have been right in her interpretation of Juliette's behavior, which she found so bizarre: in one of the letters quoted above she refers to Juliette as «a victim to hysterics». Obviously emphatic emotional reactions, possibly fictional diseases, frequent mood fluctuations, autosuggestibility, inclination to making up stories, imitation of a personality that impressed her imagination, all that can be seen as symptoms of that ailment, quite wide-spread in the Victorian epoch.

Hysteria was discovered by Freud and Breuer approximately at that time, in 1890-s, not long before the birth of psychoanalysis, that is the publication of "The Interpretation of Dreams" in 1900. (A curious fact is that in the USA psychoanalysis received recognition earlier than in Europe, that is immediately after Freud visited the US in 1909, invited by Stanley Hall, the president of the Clark University at the time.)<sup>51</sup> Freud classified hysteria as a conversion neurosis: conversion symptoms stimulate this or that physical problem (e.g., temporary paralysis), and thus, symbolically reflect and externalize the inner spiritual conflict. The unresolved and unrecognized inner trauma is translated into symbolic physiological phenomena, whereas the hysterics, and in many cases even the physician, are absolutely convinced in the reality of the phenomena. The main point of such a conversion is releasing one's inner trauma through liberation from external obligations and an attempt to draw others people' attention to oneself.

Hysteria, as described by Freud, i.e. as a socially conditioned disease, disappeared with the decline of the Victorian epoch, a time of strict social prohibitions and restrictions. In any way, it represented a truly *semiotic ailment*, translating the displaced internal into external signs. The internal in such a situation (and it became crucial in further psychoanalytic practices) does not lose its substantiality, but what becomes important is the narrated story, as the content of the conflict per se is nothing more than a diagnosis, a mere statement of which is totally devoid of meaning.

However, the coherence of a neurotic narrative is questionable, as it always implies gaps which – *just like in the versions of Juliette's origin related above* – allow easy passage from

one story to another, but do not allow building a single picture of all of them. Consequently, they who want to find out the truth about Juliette build something opposite to it, a biographical thriller, which, on top of all, deceives the reader as it defies the main principle of literature as stated by one of the greatest Victorian authors, Robert Louis Stevenson: the art of writing is the awareness of what one should be silent about, and the art of reading is the ability to skip what the author failed to be silent about. Failure to follow this rule results in the situation when what is left unsaid, instead of becoming a subject of interest, inevitably becomes a subject of neurotic attempts of the researcher to narrate a story, while the story does have an author already, the latter being Juliette Peirce, who did a good job and is not inclined to yield and give up her authorship. The researcher, in his turn, finds himself trapped in the net of abductions which he himself built.

And yet, in any case, if the internal represents a problem, the external narrates a story of a live human, and if a human is a picture, this picture, like Velasquez' "Les Ménines", constitutes a space which, as described by Foucault in the first chapter of his *Les Mots et les Choses*, is delusory, disappearing, and doubled in the mirror reflection, a space which embraces the artist, the spectator, and the depicted object. This semiotic space is devoid of pure reciprocity of classical semantics, for, as in "Les Ménines", the real object of an eye is the spot which cannot be seen directly, it is the back side of the canvas painted in the picture, which portrays the one who looks.

For those who believe that the discovery of any reliable facts about Juliette's past could provide an explanation to some of the decisions Peirce had made, there still remain quite a few questions unanswered by the present account. What role did Juliette's origins play in her marriage to Charles Peirce? Did Juliette's reasons for coming to the United States have anything to do with this marriage? Why did she stay with him? Etc. In the meantime, we might treat the problem differently: What if who Juliette *really was* is less important than what she actually *told* about the matter? And if so, what traits of Juliette's character, what patterns of her behavior and relations with other people might impress Peirce so deeply that he married her in defiance of common sense and against his family's wishes? Thus stated, this question may find at least a hypothetical answer in a set of pictures of the above-described semiotic space created by Juliette's stories.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in: MHFF, “Maurice Auger”, MHF-MA, 15.06.1984.

<sup>2</sup> Among many other accounts, one of the most telling examples may be found in: L 482, CSP-Unidentified, 13.11.09.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, L 339, CSP-JMP, 31.07.94; MHFC, CSP-HPE, 21.07.07, CSP-HHDP, 01.11.07, etc., etc. See also MHFF, MA-MHF, 28.10.1984 and a general outline of Peirce’s concoctions about Juliette’s background and origin in: MHFF, “The Identity of Juliette” by Victor Lenzen, pp. 3-4, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition. Ed. by the Peirce Edition Project. Vol. 2, Bloomington, 1984, P. 240-241.

<sup>5</sup> MHFF, “Juliette”, CSP-WJ, after 03.09.09.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. “Walter Gassman”.

<sup>7</sup> MHFC, JMP-HHDP, 01.02.01.

<sup>8</sup> L 339, CSP-JMP, n. d.

<sup>9</sup> MHFC, CSP-WE, after 20.09.93.

<sup>10</sup> L 339, JMP-CSP, 27.02.99-11.03.99.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. CSP-JMP, 31.07.94.

<sup>12</sup> MHFF, “The Identity of Juliette” by Victor Lenzen, pp. 5-7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. “Maurice Auger”.

<sup>15</sup> As stated and discussed in: MHFF, MA-MHF, 28.10.1985.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. MA-Houlnés, 27.01.1985; Brent. J. Charles Sanders Peirce. A Life. Bloomington, 1993., pp. 142-143.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. MA-MHF, 23.10.1984.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. MA-Director of Lombardian Institute Archives, 27.01.1985; American Journal of Science, Vol. XX, September 1880, Obituary of J.F. Pourtalés; Brent J. Op. cit. p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. MA-Alain Oulman, Editions Calman Lévy 04.08.1984.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. “Notes on Juliette”.

<sup>21</sup> Brent. J. Op. cit., pp. 99-100.

<sup>22</sup> Seventh letter; MHFF, “Maurice Auger”, MA-MHF, 19. 08. 1984.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, L 687. CEP-HPE, 06.09.87; CEP-HPE, 22.04.86; L 676, CEP-HPE, 06.05.87.

<sup>24</sup> L 341, CSP-SMP, 03.04.87.

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- <sup>25</sup> MHFC, Steele MacKaye-JP, 07. 03.88.
- <sup>26</sup> MHFF, "Maurice Auger", p. 2.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 3; VL-MHF, 11.07.61.
- <sup>28</sup> L 387, CSP-FCR, 14.05.92; FCR-CSP, 11.05.92.
- <sup>29</sup> L 434, CP-VW, 31.01.1909; *Semiotic and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby* (ed. By Charles S. Hardwick), Bloomington, 1977, P. 95-96.
- <sup>30</sup> MHFF, "W.B. Kenworthy, Jr."
- <sup>31</sup> MHFC, CSP-HPE, 21.07.07.
- <sup>32</sup> MHFF. "The Identity of Juliette" by Victor Lenzen, p. 7; Ibid. "Notes on Juliette"; Brent J. Op. cit., p. 143.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. "Notes on Juliette".
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid. "Edna V. Green", EG-MHF, 18.06.1979
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid. "Notes on Juliette".
- <sup>36</sup> L 713, CSP-Unknown, 13.11.09.
- <sup>37</sup> MHFF, "Gassman Family", letter of V. Lenzen 11.07.1961, Statler Hilton, Washington D.C.
- <sup>38</sup> L 687, SMP-HPE, 09.19.83
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid. SMP-HPE, 11.27.83
- <sup>40</sup> L 676, CEP-HPE, 12.18.83.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 03.18.84.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 04.12.84.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 04.14.84.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 04.16.84.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 04.17.84.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid. CEP-HPE, 06.09.87.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid. CSP-HHDP, n. d. (according to M. Fisch's, probably June, 1885).
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid. CSP – JMP, 01.87.
- <sup>49</sup> L 339, JMP-CSP, 04.05.90.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid. JMP-CSP, 06.13.90.

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<sup>51</sup> Colapietro V. Pragmatism and Psychoanalysis – C.S. Peirce as a Mediating Figure, in: *Cognitio*, Vol. 7, Nº 2, São Paulo, 2006, pp. 197-198.