

Seminar: **Gedanken und Blicke als Gespräche: Peirce' dialogische Semiotik**  
(180161 SE)

## 1. TEXTAUSWAHL: **Gemeinsame Erfahrung**

### 1.) Peirce: CP 4.172

When the universe of discourse relates to a common experience, but this experience is of something imaginary, as when we discuss the world of Shakespeare's creation in the play of Hamlet, we find individual distinction existing so far as the work of imagination has carried it, while beyond that point there is vagueness and generality. So, in the discussion of the consequences of a mathematical hypothesis, as long as we keep to what is distinctly posited and its positive implications, we find discrete elements, but when we pass to mere possibilities, the individuals merge together. This remark will be fully illustrated in the sequel.

(In Dezimalnotation, z.B. 4.172, wird der vierte Band und der 172. Abschnitt der "Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce" zitiert, Bd.I -VI, hrsg. v. Charles Hartshorne und Paul Weiss, Harvard UP, 1931-35; Bd. VII u. VIII, hrsg. v. Arthur W. Burks, Harvard UP, 2.Aufl.: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1958)

### 2.) Peirce: CP 5.120

#### LECTURE V

#### THE THREE KINDS OF GOODNESS

#### 1. THE DIVISIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

I have already explained that by Philosophy I mean that department of Positive Science, or Science of Fact, which does not busy itself with gathering

facts, but merely with learning what can be learned from that experience which presses in upon every one of us daily and hourly. It does not gather new facts, because it does not need them, and also because new general facts cannot be firmly established without the assumption of a metaphysical doctrine; and this, in turn, requires the cooperation of every department of philosophy; so that such new facts, however striking they may be, afford weaker support to philosophy by far than that common experience which nobody doubts or can doubt, and which nobody ever even pretended to doubt except as a consequence of belief in that experience so entire and perfect that it failed to be conscious of itself; just as an American who has never been abroad fails to perceive the characteristics of Americans; just as a writer is unaware of the peculiarities of his own style; just as none of us can see himself as others see him.

### 3.)Peirce: CP 8.112

Remembering, then, that philosophy is a science based upon everyday experience, we must not fall into the absurdity of setting down as a datum and starting-point of philosophy any abstract and simple idea, as Hegel did when he began his logic with pure Being; but we must set out from ideas familiar and complex, as Hegel began his greater masterpiece by considering a man sitting under a tree in a garden in the afternoon. We must not begin by talking of pure ideas, -- vagabond thoughts that tramp the public roads without any human habitation, -- but must begin with men and their conversation. We are familiar with the phenomenon of a man's expressing an opinion, sometimes decidedly, often otherwise. Perhaps it will be a mere suggestion, a mere question. Any such suggestion that may be expressed and understood relates to some common experience of the interlocutors, or, if there is a misunderstanding, they may think they refer to some common experience when, in fact, they refer to quite different

experiences. A man reasoning with himself is liable to just such a misunderstanding. About this common experience the speaker has something to suggest which is supposed to be new to his auditor. Now this suggestion will be found inductively, by the examination of instances, to consist invariably in this, that if the auditor or any other man will act in a certain way, more or less vaguely described, he will find that common experience to connect itself with a new experience after a fashion analogous to other connections of experiences, which have made this mode of connection familiar to both parties. For example, if example be needed, suppose a man to go out of his house at night and see the light of a distant fire in the sky. He meets a neighbor and remarks, "There is a fire."<sup>5</sup> If he had only said "a fire exists," he would have conveyed next to no meaning at all. Not quite no meaning, since the remark would even so refer to that universe that is familiarly known to both men. But in saying "There is a fire," he refers to the common experience of that very place and time, and virtually says that if the second person will raise his eyes and look about him, he will find the common experience of that place and time to connect itself with the experience of a light as of a fire, the mode of connection being the familiar one that the speaker indicated. Let us take another example. Let the second man, having seen the fire, ask "Would you say, now, that that fire was about three miles away?" This virtually suggests that if the first man or any other man will fill his purse, and take ship, and go to Westminster, and break into the houses of parliament, and bring away the standard yard, and lay it down repeatedly on the ground from where the two stand to where the fire is, and utter the cardinal numbers in their order as the successive layings down proceed, or if he will perform any other experiment virtually amounting to that, then the last number uttered might be 5280, and if it should prove to be a number near to that, he might not be surprised. Extensive experience leads us to expect that if an

experiment virtually amounting to that were tried a hundred times, different numbers would be obtained which would cluster about one of them, and that among a million trials the clustering would be still more marked, according to a law well-known to mathematicians. It is possible, no doubt, that if our experience were still more extensive, we should find that if the experiment were tried, say, more than a billion times, then a new phenomenon would emerge and the oftener it was tried the less marked might grow the clustering. Our hope, however, in endeavoring to make a measurement extremely precise, is that there is a certain value toward which the resultant of all the experiments would approximate more and more, without limitation. Having that hope, the Berkeleyan theory is, that whenever we endeavor to state the distance, all that we aim at is to state as nearly as possible what that ultimate result of experience would be. We do not aim at anything quite beyond experience, but only at the limiting result toward which all experience will approximate, -- or, at any rate, would approximate, were the inquiry to be prosecuted without cessation. And the theory is that so it is with all attempts at knowing anything more than what we immediately experience. This might be called the doctrine of the Non-relativity of Knowledge, since it eliminates any non-notional correlate of knowledge.

#### 4.) Peirce: CP 8.199

The sort of science that is founded upon the common experience of all men was recognized by Jeremy Bentham under the name of cenoscopy, in opposition to idioscopy, which discovers new phenomena. But long before Bentham's day the situation was sufficiently understood to set up a movement in the more enlightened countries to supply the psychical sciences with an analogous analytical foundation. The innumerable grades in the distinctness of thought prevent us from assigning dates, but one may say that the idea is struggling to the

light in Locke's 'Essay' of 1689, and that its development was the best fruit of the eighteenth century. It moved in Italy, in France, and especially in Scotland. The analytical economics of Adam Smith and of Ricardo were examples of it. The whole doctrine in its totality is properly termed the Philosophy of Common Sense, of which analytical mechanics and analytical economics are branches. That Pragmatism of which so much has been said of late years is only an endeavor to give the philosophy of common sense a more exact development, especially by emphasizing the point that there is no intellectual value in mere feeling per se, but that the whole function of thinking consists in the regulation of conduct. All this it is most needful to comprehend in order to assign to Wundt his proper rating in the history of philosophy.