

New Developments about Peirce's Reception in the Hispanic World

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0. Introduction

A milestone about the reception of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) in the Spanish-speaking world has been the impressive catalogue *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)*, prepared by the Colombian mathematician and writer Fernando Zalamea². The aim of this brief note is 1) to summarize some of the main features of that catalogue; 2) to report the new discoveries after its publication in 2006; and 3) to suggest new directions for further research on this area of growing interest on the interaction of pragmatism and the Hispanic world.

1. The *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)*

On the year 2006 I co-authored with Fernando Zalamea the book *Peirce y el mundo hispánico. Lo que C. S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispánico ha dicho sobre Peirce* [Peirce and the Hispanic World. What Peirce said about Spain and what the Hispanic World has said about Peirce]. For my part I explored in depth and described succinctly all the available data about Peirce's visit to Spain in November of 1870 and Peirce's comments about Spain and Spaniards throughout his life.

For more than a decade in the Grupo de Estudios Peirceanos, based in Navarra (Spain) we had been collecting all the secondary bibliography related with the reception of Peirce in the Spanish-speaking world. Thanks to the tenacity and ability of Fernando Zalamea, we were able to include in the co-authored volume an impressive catalogue under the general title of *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)* with a total of 139 entries including a description and an evaluation of each one of the items. The catalogue covers from 1883 until the year 2000. It includes 96 papers, 25 books, 10 doctoral dissertations and 8 forewords of Peirce's translations, all of them written in Spanish and published in the Spanish-speaking countries. Zalamea presented a thorough quantitative and chronological study, showing also the geographical distribution of the production and a wonderful qualitative study of the topics dealt with in these items. A geographical distribution with the production over the years is reproduced in the table below.

¹ An oral version of this note was presented at First International Conference on Pragmatism and the Hispanic/Latino World Dept. of Philosophy Texas A&M University February 18-20, 2010, College Station, TX.

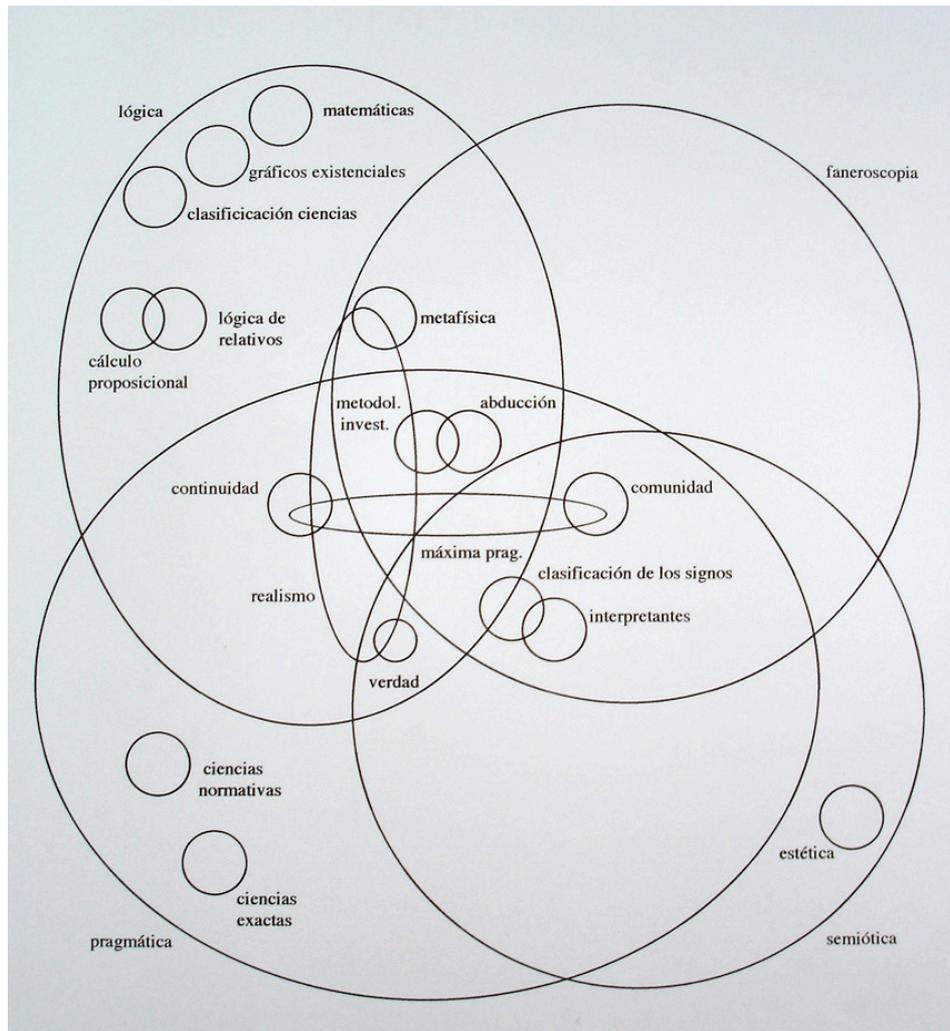
² The catalogue is included in book co-authored with Fernando Zalamea, *Peirce y el mundo hispánico. Lo que C. S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispánico ha dicho sobre Peirce* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2006). I owe gratitude to Erik Norvelle for polishing my English.

	1883-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1995	1996-2000	Total
España	9	1	21	29	29	89
Uruguay	1	0	2	1	1	5
Argentina	1	4	3	0	6	14
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	0	1	3
México	0	1	3	5	4	13
Venezuela	0	0	1	0	0	1
Colombia	0	0	0	3	10	13
Guatemala	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	12	7	30	38	52	139

It is evident from the table that more than 90 items of the total 139 were written in the last decade of the century. It is a clear sign of the resurgence of Peirce and pragmatism in the Hispanic world. Zalamea developed also a wonderful map with the main polarities and aggrupations of the topics dealt with in those 139 items that reflects well the main interests in Peirce throughout the 20th century. The bibliographical production in Spanish was centered around three main poles of interest: logic (66), semiotics (65) and pragmatism (61). In this sense it might be said that the reception of Peirce's work in Spanish repeats the same canons of Peirce's reception in the rest of the world: Peirce is understood primarily as a generic "father" of pragmatism, as the founder of modern semiotics and as a great logician (whose contributions to logic are, however, little known).

A lot of those texts have an introductory character; the most valuable of them might be, in retrospect, some careful case studies of a specific topic and concerned in the elucidation of the Peircean legacy: to name a few examples, the creative musement (Barrena 1996), formal abduction (Aliseda 1998) or the existential graphs (Poveda 2000)³. However, beyond the specific contributions of each case, the Peircean Hispanic Bibliography was growing thanks to the gradual stabilization of an atmosphere of seriousness and rigor of argumentation, evident in this figure prepared by Zalamea:

³ S. Barrena, "Prólogo" e "Introducción" en C. S. Peirce: *Un argumento olvidado en favor de la realidad de Dios*, Pamplona, Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico, 34,1996, 5-68; A. Aliseda, "La abducción com cambio epistémico: C. S. Peirce y las teorías epistémicas en inteligencia artificial", *Analogía* 12 (1998), pp. 125-144; Y. Poveda, "Los gráficos existenciales de Peirce en los sistemas Alfa^o y Alfa^{oo}", *Boletín de Matemáticas*, Nueva Serie 7 (2000), pp. 5-17.



But what I want to remark is the wonderful work developed in the Hispanic world over the last 15 years translating Peirce into Spanish and making Peirce's texts available in the web with free access to all people interested. At present there are more texts of Peirce online in Spanish than in English. All this work of translation has been coordinated by Sara Barrena and has been developed by Peirce scholars from most of the Spanish-speaking countries besides Spain: México, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Puerto Rico and Bolivia⁴. Other good news is that a complete translation into Spanish of the two volumes of *The Essential Peirce* is soon to appear from the Mexican publisher Fondo de Cultura Económica: the translation has been prepared by Darin McNabb and Sara Barrena.

2. New recent discoveries

In order to prepare the *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)* Fernando Zalamea and myself made an almost exhaustive search for all the printed texts and doctoral dissertations related with Charles S. Peirce written in Spanish by Hispanic authors before the year 2000. It was clear from the beginning that after the publication of our catalogue some new authors and items would appear. What I want now is to describe briefly these recent discoveries. I will do that not by the chronological order of discovery (which at last is

⁴ [<http://www.unav.es/gep/Peirce-esp.html>].

irrelevant), but by the date of original publication.

1880. Thanks to the digitalization of the old journals and series of the Spanish National Library it has been possible to identify references to Peirce in the Spanish press earlier than the brief translation of 1883 known until now. These earlier references are in the reports of the scientist Ricardo Becerro de Bengoa "Las ciencias en 1879" and "Las ciencias en 1880", published in *La Revista Contemporánea*, (Madrid, March and November 1880), reviewing Peirce's *Photometric Researches* and describing Peirce's work as a geodist in Paris, respectively⁵.

1910. Almost by chance, like most of the discoveries, I found a wonderful lecture with the title *El pragmatismo*, by José María Izquierdo y Martínez, published by the Ateneo of Seville in March of 1910. This is a 60-page volume with the text of the oral lecture and 15 pages of notes and bibliography. What is most impressive about this text is the clear understanding of pragmatism by this young lawyer and poet of Seville, who died in 1922, and in particular the great number of bibliographic references, most of them coming from France. Paris in the first decade of the twentieth century was the European capital of pragmatism. In Spain pragmatism raised suspicions among the authors of scholastic training, and it is striking to see the enormous enthusiasm (the Spanish *ilusión*) of José María Izquierdo about this new way of thinking: "See how pragmatism, rather than a philosophy of common sense, is philosophy of the highly refined, who, fed from philosophizing, yearn to live by it" (p. 36). The booklet is available on the web and thanks to the initiative of the Ateneo of Seville it has been possible to publish in the year 2009 a facsimile edition with two introductory studies⁶.

1924. Probably the most relevant absence in our catalogue of the *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)* was the figure and work of Pedro S. Zulen (1889-1925), the Peruvian philosopher who has been studied by our colleague and friend Pablo Quintanilla. Quintanilla was also the person who pointed out his absence in our catalogue. Zulen stayed at Harvard and prepared there a doctoral dissertation that was published with the title *Del Neohegelianismo al Neorrealismo* (Lima, 1924). The book is a study about the origins of American philosophy from the School of St. Louis, through the neo-Hegelianism of Josiah Royce, and including Peirce, pragmatism and neo-realism. The section on Peirce (pp. 26-33)⁷ is well informed and is a personal reflection about Peirce's philosophy relating it to James' conceptions. It is not a long book (86 pages), but it has interesting information. Overall what is relevant is that this book on American philosophy was published in Peru at that time.

1946. An important book for the reception of American philosophy in the Spanish-speaking world, and particularly in México, is the volume *Historia de la filosofía en Norte-América*, published by Francisco Larroyo in 1946 (Stylo, México). The book—which is devoted "To the eminent North-American philosopher and educator John Dewey as a testimony of admiration"—provides in eleven chapters an overview of the development of philosophy in the United States in the previous centuries starting with the colonial period. Let me quote extensively from the prologue since it is relevant for the topic of our conference⁸:

⁵ Those texts are available at [<http://www.unav.es/gep/BecerroDeBengoa.html>].

⁶ The text is available at [<http://www.unav.es/gep/IzquierdoDelpragmatismo.pdf>]. Copies of the recent edition of Jose M^a Izquierdo, *Del Pragmatismo*, (Sevilla: Ateneo de Sevilla, 2009), may be obtained from the editor Enrique Barrero González, president of the Ateneo (ATENEO.SEVILLA@terra.es).

⁷ It is available at [<http://www.unav.es/gep/ZulenPeirce.html>].

⁸ It is available at [http://www.filosoficas.unam.mx/~afmbib/BibVirtual/Textos/Larroyo_Hist_norteamerica/CAP1/CO4601-8.JPG].

The relations between the United States of North-America and Latin-American have been until now, predominantly, of a political and commercial character. There is even a copious literature about these international relations. The discussion around the way of conceiving and taking sides on the problem of Pan-Americanism is a living example of this state of things.

The cultural links, in contrast, are, as a whole, poor and deficient. Perhaps only in the domain of art has there been promoted and enhanced an interchange worthy of consideration.

Amongst the cultural links, the philosophical relations in particular have been extremely stunted. Apart from the philosophical movement of pragmatism, of global significance, North-American philosophy is very little known in the countries of Latin-America. It is not a hyperbole to point that, in general, professional philosophers of one side and the other of the Río Bravo mutually ignore each other.

And, nevertheless, nothing would be more fruitful for the evolution and progress of philosophy in the New World than a common effort and cooperation in this branch of knowledge. (...)

1957. Luis Rodríguez Aranda, well-known among Hispanic scholars, since he had translated William James into Spanish (*Pragmatismo*, Madrid, Aguilar, 1954; *El significado de la verdad*, Madrid, Aguilar, 1957), wrote an article with the title "El espíritu del pragmatismo americano" in *Atlántico. Revista de Cultura Contemporánea* [nº 6, pp. 33-52], a cultural magazine published by the American House of the United States Embassy in Madrid. The article is a well informed presentation of pragmatism dealing with the contrasts between Peirce, James and Dewey.

These are the five relevant items discovered in the last ten years that should complete by now our catalogue of the century. The brief presentation that I have made does not do justice to their individual value, but the collection presents, in my opinion, a good approach to the typical results of Spanish scholars working for decades in relative isolation and in an environment of hostility or at least resistance to American philosophy.

3. New directions

In the last section of this brief note I want to suggest about possible avenues for exploration and research in order to strengthen this emerging field of research on the overlapping of the Hispanic/Latino world with pragmatism. Ortega —without any doubt the most international of the Spanish-speaking philosophers of the past century— was publicly hostile to pragmatism, but nevertheless he could not ignore the peculiar affinity between his views and American pragmatism⁹. Let me bring here only one quotation from his well-known *What is Philosophy?*:

(...) in the infant dawning of our century, a philosophy was made out of this idea [truth as the intellectual precipitate of practical utility] which is called pragmatism. With that amiable cynicism which is characteristic of the Yankees, characteristic of every new people (...), pragmatism in North America dares to proclaim this thesis— "There is no other truth than success in dealing with things." And with this thesis, as audacious as it is ingenuous, and so ingenuously audacious, the Northern lobe of the American continent made its entrance into the age-old history of philosophy.

⁹ Cf. John T. Graham, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MS. Graham has studied with great attention the relevant debt of Ortega to William James and pragmatism in general: see pp. 145-186.

Do not confuse the small esteem which pragmatism merits, as a philosophy and a general thesis of life, with any preconceived, arbitrary and bigoted disdain toward the fact of human practicality as contrasted with pure contemplation, and favoring the latter.¹⁰

For me what is more relevant, besides this caricature of American pragmatism, is what Ortega writes in a footnote to the first paragraph of this quotation: "With this I suggest that in pragmatism, and especially in its audacity and naïveté *there is something profoundly true*, even though it be centrifugal" [my italics].

If I understand correctly this passage, what Ortega is trying to say is that pragmatism is a valuable philosophical tradition, but it is alien, foreign ("centrifugal") to the mainstream of European philosophy. Moreover, as Graham noted¹¹, there is an autobiographical text of Ortega in which he seems to assert that Pragmatism, which started off of the European stage, did not reach its full maturity until it was integrated in the framework of German philosophy, that is, in the mainstream of his own philosophical position¹². This is for me one of the main avenues for further exploration on the overlapping of pragmatism and Hispanic philosophy: if one understands Ortega's thought as a German flourishing of pragmatist roots it is possible to bring closer the most distinctive traits of Hispanic philosophy and American philosophy, as Pappas and others have started to highlight¹³.

A *second* avenue for exploration is the reception of American pragmatism in the Catholic cultural and philosophical milieu of the Spanish-speaking countries in the early decades of the twentieth century. A good number of the Catholic readers of William James were enthusiastic about the fresh air that James' books were offering to the somehow stale Scholastic tradition. Let us mention, with Joseph Louis Perrier, the author of *The Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (1908) and a student of John Dewey in Columbia University, "the enthusiasm with which some eminent Catholics of the same country [France] have welcomed the appearance of Pragmatism"¹⁴. I will quote from the preface of this volume:

I have likewise studied South American republics in connection with the neo-Scholastic movement in Spain. It is into races, rather than into arbitrary tracts of land, that the world is divided. In spite of the ridiculous principle we call the Monroe doctrine, South American nations are and will always be essentially Spanish. With Spain they speak, they think and they pray. They regard us as strangers, sometimes as barbarians. They emphatically refuse to accept the protection we would force upon them¹⁵.

In the following year 1909, Perrier writes in Spanish a 16-page paper in the Colombian journal *Revista del Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* with the title "El Pragmatismo". I want to cite here (translated into English) his opening paragraph:

¹⁰ José Ortega y Gasset, *What is Philosophy*, transl. by Mildred Adams, Norton, New York, 1964, pp. 44-45

¹¹ John T. Graham, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*, p. 146.

¹² José Ortega y Gasset, "Medio siglo de filosofía", *Revista de Occidente*, 3 (1980), p. 14.

¹³ Graham gives evidence that Ortega read James early in his career, and that Ortega was aware that James had anticipated "razón vital," the notion central to his philosophy (pp. 147-152). His evidence of James' influences on Ortega by German sources themselves influenced by James is specially convincing (Cf. Antón Donoso, "Review of Graham's *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*", *Hispania* 78 (1995), p. 499). Along this line, Gregory F. Pappas studied the remarkable similarities between Peirce and Ortega on the distinction between indubitable and doubtful beliefs (Gregory F. Pappas, "Peirce y Ortega", *Anuario Filosófico* 29 (1996), pp. 1225-1237).

¹⁴ Joseph Louis Perrier, *The Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1909), p. 6 [<http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924029028103#page/n21/mode/2up>].

¹⁵ Joseph Louis Perrier, *The Revival...*, p. v [<http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924029028103#page/n11/mode/2up>].

Few philosophical movements have been embraced more enthusiastically than pragmatism. Completely unknown a few years ago, nowadays it has supporters everywhere. With its bright colored flag and its name somewhat barbarian, has gone around the world. It has been acclaimed not only among Anglo-Saxons: it has attracted attention and aroused the enthusiasm of the Latin races. In France, the *Revue de Philosophie*, of Catholic and Thomistic approach, recently announced its intention to publish articles written by pragmatists themselves. In Belgium, the *Revue Neo-Scholastique* gave in 1907 a highly instructive historical study. At the same time, the discussions were multiplied. Now the theories of James and Dewey were extolled; now they were condemned without mercy. In Germany itself, which seems to have been determined to remain unaware of the new movement, Pragmatism has penetrated by contraband. Just remember the names of Simmel, Mach, Oswald, to be convinced that this philosophy, the philosophy of cooking as it was derisively labeled by devotees of Kant and Hegel, has taken deep roots in the Germanic soil.¹⁶

The paper is a very general confrontation between pragmatism and Scholastic philosophy, but for the contemporary reader it is very illuminating about the enthusiasms and the reluctances that pragmatism raised in the Hispanic world. Something similar, but more scholarly based, was published by the Spanish Dominican Marcelino Arnáiz in *Cultura Española* under the title "Pragmatismo y Humanismo" in 1907¹⁷. For instance, the Spanish poet mentioned earlier, José María Izquierdo, in endnote 21 of his lecture of 1910 says of Arnáiz's paper: "If instead of finding this paper, as I did, after having planned my lecture, I had known it before, it would have changed my work or perhaps I would not have done it". It is not possible to go into more detail here, what I want to stress that the Hispanic world is still in need of a full-length study similar to the recent book *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & The Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*¹⁸, dealing with the reception of pragmatism in the Spanish-speaking Catholic world and the suspicions of modernism which followed upon it. In order to do this work, I want to remark on the great interest for the historian of ideas of the journals and magazines in Spanish of those decades that are starting to be available on line, with easy access through electronic tools¹⁹. They are a real treasure of hitherto buried secrets that is worthwhile to uncover to understand better the affinities and contrasts between Pragmatism and the Hispanic world.

Besides these two wide avenues for further explorations, I want to mention finally two other names that require much more attention. The first of them is the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941), who is always in the middle of the dialogue or confrontation between Pragmatism and Scholasticism. The second name is José Ferrater Mora (1912-1991), a student of the Spanish pragmatist Eugeni d'Ors. As all of you know, Ferrater has had an immense influence in the Spanish-speaking world thanks particularly to his *Diccionario*. His own philosophy, which Ferrater calls "integracionismo", is a peculiar blend of pragmatism and most European mainstream movements²⁰.

¹⁶ Joseph Louis Perrier, "El Pragmatismo", *Revista del Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, V, n° 45 (1909), pp. 257-271 [<http://www.unav.es/gep/PerrierRevistaRosario.pdf>].

¹⁷ Marcelino Arnáiz, "Pragmatismo y humanismo", *Cultura Española*, vols. 5-6 (1907), pp. 617-627 y vols. 7-8 (1907), pp. 855-867.

¹⁸ David G. Schultenover, ed. *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & The Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

¹⁹ See for instance, Arxiu de Revistes Catalanes Antiques [<http://www.bnc.es/digital/arca/index.html>]; Hemeroteca de la Biblioteca Nacional [<http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/cgi-bin/Pandora.exe>], *La Vanguardia* [<http://www.lavanguardia.es/hemeroteca/>], etc.

²⁰ Cf. M. Torregrosa and J. Nubiola, "A vueltas con el pragmatismo: Ferrater Mora y Eugenio d'Ors", *Simposi Internacional Eugeni d'Ors*, Girona, 27th November 2008 [<http://www.unav.es/users/FerraterMoraEugenidOrs.pdf>].

In sum, besides Zalamea's wonderful catalogue *Bibliografía Peirceana Hispánica (1883-2000)*, there is still a lot of scholarly work to be done to get a clearer view of the reception of Charles S. Peirce and pragmatism in general in the Spanish-speaking world.