

**The Navarra Project (1994-2019):
Putting C. S Peirce in Spanish in the Web**

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0. Opening Words

Dear colleagues and friends,

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First of all we want to thank Emanuele for his kind invitation to take part in this interesting workshop and also to apologize for not being able to be physically with you. We will try to replace our physical presence by means of our voice through Skype, a written text and some slides in a ppt.

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Our presentation will have four parts: 1) An historical introduction to the work of our Group; 2) A brief account of our work translating Peirce into Spanish and uploading his texts in the web; 3) The *Cosmopolitan Peirce* project: Peirce's European travels through his correspondence; and 4) A brief conclusion.

1. Historical Introduction

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The Peirce Studies Group (Grupo de Estudios Peirceanos: GEP) at the University of Navarra was created in the summer of 1994. The initial team was formed by professor Jaime Nubiola and three doctoral students, including Joan Fontrodona, now director of the Business Ethics Department in the IESE Business School, and Sara Barrena, General Coordinator of the Group. Its aim was to promote the study of the work of Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), especially in Spain and in the Spanish speaking countries, in the belief that his thought may offer some key insights into problems related to the culture, science and philosophy of the 21st century.

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The Group offers a platform for an exchange of ideas regarding the work of Peirce, American pragmatism, its reception in Europe and in the Hispanic world, and related topics. Since its inception, the activities of the Group have included the participation of scholars from different fields, including philosophy, history, linguistics, literature, physics, law, communication studies and theology. The ordinary members of the Group are professors and doctoral students from the University of Navarra, Spain. There is also a wide international network of Peirce scholars and other researchers that regularly collaborate with the activities of the Group. This spirit of cooperation was beautifully captured by the motto we chose from Peirce's *Adirondack Summer School Lectures*, 1905:

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"I do not call the solitary studies of a single man a science. It is only when a group of men, more or less in intercommunication, are aiding and stimulating one another by their understanding of a particular group of studies as outsiders cannot understand them, that I call their life a science."¹

Twenty-five years later this meeting in Cosenza is a good occasion for us to look backwards in order to make a balance of our work, to identify our best results and our shortcomings with the hope that other groups might learn from our experience. It seems to us that three elements have been essential for our enterprise:

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1) **Internet:** Our Group started almost at the same time than Internet. Since the beginning we decided to gain a full visibility of our work through the web. This implied, for instance, instead of publishing books with translations of Peirce into Spanish just to upload the translations to the web in open access.

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Our early webpages listing the Peircean Bibliography that we had collected in our Library is dated in 1996. Now it has 1.200 items.

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Since the year 2002 we have been publishing a biweekly newsletter, that we sent through an e-mail list to most of the members of the Spanish-speaking community of Peirce scholars around the world. The last issue is the number 338 and it has around 300 subscribers.

¹ C. S. Peirce, "The Nature of Science", MS 1334, *Adirondack Summer School Lectures*, 1905; cf. Sara Barrena and J. Nubiola: "[Science as a Communicative Mode of Life](#)", in Torkild Thellefsen and Bent Sørensen, eds. *The Peirce Quote Book: Charles Sanders Peirce in His Own Words*, Mouton de Gruyter, Boston, 2014, 437-442

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2) **Technological support:** Since the beginning we have been allowed to host our project in the main system of the University of Navarra. We have been able to manage our webpages (they are distributed in 5.685 archives and 23 directories) with complete autonomy without any interference and without any high technology expert in our team². At the same time we have tried to follow always the "Law of KISS" ("Keep it simple, stupid", U. S. Army manual from the 1950s), avoiding the technological "improvements" (or the cumbersome "improvements" of design) that so frequently make very difficult to manage a big project like ours.

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3) **Persistence and love:** Charles S. Peirce wrote that he worked with the persistence of a "wasp in a bottle". We could say something similar: not only the same core members of the Group have been working for decades on the same issues, but we are also closely related by links of love, friendship, intelligent respect, trying to embody in our teamwork the agapastic idea expressed in our motto just quoted before. At the same time we have tried to welcome doctoral students and scholars from very different countries and backgrounds that could benefit from our library and resources, and also from our friendly personal attention.

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A successful activity has been the regular Peirce Group Seminar that we have had once monthly (six sessions each year) since the course 1994-95. We have received the visit of luminaries of our field (Mats Bergman, Rosa Calcaterra, Susan Haack, Nathan Houser, Giovanni Maddalena, Gregory Pappas, André de Tienne, Fernando Zalamea, etc.) and dozens of young scholars coming from very different universities and countries.

2. Translating Peirce into Spanish and uploading his texts in the web

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As you well know, the figure of Charles S. Peirce has an ever-increasing relevance in very different areas of knowledge (Fisch, 1980): in astronomy, metrology, geodesy, mathematics, logic, philosophy, theory and history of science, semiotics, linguistics, econometrics, and psychology. In all these fields Peirce has been considered a pioneer, a forerunner or even a 'father' or 'founder' (of semiotics, of pragmatism). In the last decades we have seen a renovated interest in his fascinating thought and in getting access to his texts.

² We are deeply indebted with our successive webmasters José Miguel Gurpegui, Juan Marrodán and since 2004 Izaskun Martínez.

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When we started to study Charles S. Peirce we realized that the first task in front of us was to translate into Spanish his main texts, since a very small part of his work was then available in our language³. Thanks to the work of Sara Barrena, who coordinated the whole task, it was possible with an international net of Spanish-speaking scholars to translate most of the more relevant texts of Peirce, uploading them in the web in a span of time of twelve years (1994-2006).

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We tried also to keep very simple the presentation of the translations following always the same format in HTML or PDF.

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The original source is always clearly identified and also the name of the translator and the year.

In fact, we can say that nowadays in Internet there are more texts of C. S. Peirce in Spanish than in English! We are extremely happy to check how often are quoted our translations in dissertations and papers written in Spanish. Also we want to highlight, that in all the texts we wrote at the bottom in bold letter:

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One of the advantages of texts in electronic format over printed texts is that they can be corrected with great ease through the active collaboration of readers who notice misprints, errors or simply better translations. In this regard we would appreciate if you send all the suggestions and corrections to sbarrena@unav.es

This message provides a sense of a community of scholars working together in order to get better translations into Spanish with the help of readers from all over the world. We can say that thanks to Internet it has been possible to arrange a real co-laboratory in order to improve gradually those translations.

In the year 2006 we realized that this work of translating Peirce's texts into Spanish was substantially done, and then we moved our attention to Peirce's correspondence, in particular related with Europe, his journeys and his European correspondents.

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³ See J. Nubiola, "[Peirce en España y España en Peirce](#)", *Signa* I (1992), 225-231.

3. The *Cosmopolitan Peirce*: Peirce's European travels through his correspondence

Charles S. Peirce traveled to Europe on five different occasions. The five trips occurred between the years 1870 and 1883, all of them in the service of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, at that time the chief scientific agency of the United States. Those trips—which covered a total of thirty-eight months—were a rich mixture of scientific research and tourism, of communication with other scientists and of enjoying the artistic treasures of Europe.

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The impact of this extensive travelling was so important to Peirce's life and thought that it makes perfect sense to identify this period of time as his “cosmopolitan period”—to use Max Fisch’s expression (Fisch 1986, 227).

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We have called *The Cosmopolitan Peirce* to the project that since 2007 we have dedicated to the study of Charles S. Peirce's relationship with Europe through his correspondence with public and private funding. Up to the present we have transcribed, translated and annotated more than 170 letters and other 413 documents from Peirce's five European journeys, and we have also studied his relationship with 18 American and 36 European correspondents.

In our webpages we provide the real images of each letter, the English transcription, and our Spanish translation, heavily annotated with links to sources in Internet or in other archives. To get a clearer idea of what we have done we suggest visiting with attention some of our pages. Here are the links to the main webpages of the five trips:

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1. First European Journey: 18 June 1870 - 7 March 1871: <http://www.unav.es/gep/PrimerViaje.html>
2. Second Journey: 3 April 1875 – 20 August 1876: <http://www.unav.es/gep/SegundoViaje.html>
3. Third Journey: 13 September 1877 – 18 November 1877: <http://www.unav.es/gep/TercerViaje.html>
4. Fourth Journey: 28 April 1880 – 4 August 1880: <http://www.unav.es/gep/CuartoViaje.html>
5. Fifth Journey: 2 May 1883 – 18 September 1883: <http://www.unav.es/gep/QuintoViaje.html>

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Preparing all these webpages we have done a lot of fascinating discoveries of unknown documents, like

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Peirce's registration in the Reading Room of the British Library,

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his signature in the visitors' book of Alhambra, Granada,

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his letters requesting access to the manuscript section of the French National Library

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or six original and unpublished letters of Peirce between May 1875 and October 11, 1876 that we found at the British National Archives.

Our plan is to finish this project in the year 2019, translating into Spanish and publishing the letters and documents from his fifth trip and to start to think into a whole volume with all our work and our findings⁴.

4. Conclusion

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It seems to us that the main conclusion that may be obtained from our project during 25 years is to acknowledge that, although technology is of course essential nowadays for humanities and indispensable to make resources accessible online, it is only a tool, an instrument, a *bridge* to reach people interested in our field of research, making possible that isolated scholars and researchers feel themselves as belonging to a real intellectual community.

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For this reason we think that it is essential that the leaders of similar projects to be developed in the future should keep technology as simple as possible, putting most of their attention in people, particularly in young doctoral students who can learn a lot and at the same time help very much in the real development of the community. As Charles S. Peirce wrote in *Science* on April 1900: "The Law of Love and the Law of Reason are quite at one." That is, technology without love is completely useless, but love with a smart (and simple) technology might change the world.

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Thanks a lot for your attention.

⁴ We are extremely grateful to the help of the Peirce Edition Project throughout all these years, in particular to its directors Nathan Houser and André de Tienne who made possible all our work thanks to the trove of documents collected by Max Fisch and kept in the Project. We are also grateful to all the information available in the volumes of *Writings* and to Brent's biography of Charles S. Peirce.