conflation can make order out of disorder. We have to face the prospect that, to a substantial extent, the world’s lawful order as best we can determine it may lie in the eyes of the beholder.”(113)

Given the limited scope of this volume, there are some questions that receive less attention than is warranted. One glaring absence is the justification of the economy of knowledge. Rescher presumes that inquiry is productive and continuous and does not consider the possibility of any serious limitations. But he offers no argument why such puzzles are not worth pursuing. In effect Rescher demotes self-reflexive understanding to the condition of an extremely remote possibility in order to focus on functionalistic principles applied to the process of knowing. To say this another way, there is not enough complexity represented in this model to provide an opening for the development of more thorough self-critical logic of inquiry. The problems of knowledge represented here are procedural rather than potential openings to a critical understanding of inquiry. This seems to me a different kind of myopia.

Overall, this volume is a useful exercise in responding to questions of the functionalistic character of epistemic realism. Perhaps an interesting addendum would trace disconfirming instances of realism or re-examine some Berkeley-like criticisms, or extend the description of realism toward the critical common-sensism of the later Peirce.

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C. S. Peirce’s System of Science: Life as a Laboratory. Frances Williams Scott, Elsah, IL: The Press of Arisbe Associates, 2006

The Press of Arisbe Associates is one of those small heroic presses that still take up works that academic publishers apparently no longer can afford to consider. Over the last decades it has published several good books, such as Donna Orange’s Peirce’s Conception of God, Richard Tursman’s Peirce’s Theory of Scientific Discovery, and Michael Raposa’s Peirce’s Philosophy of Religion. It also republished the Peirce-Welby correspondence after IU Press had let it go out of print. I think, though, that with Frances Scott’s book on Peirce’s system of science, the Press has made a mistake. Though not without merit, the book is outdated, uneven in quality, and lacks analytic rigor and direction.

C. S. Peirce’s System of Science is divided into three parts. Part One, which carries the same title as the book, consists of two chapters. The first opens with an extensive discussion of the scientific attitude and contains a good selection of quotations taken from the corpus of Peirce’s work. However, the author fails to draw those quotations together into a solid account of Peirce’s views on science. In fact, she stumbles rather clumsily through the fixation of belief—terrain that has been covered often enough before—concluding, erroneously, that the first three methods are all merely subjective. Chapter 2 discusses Peirce’s classification of the sciences. Here we see a similar pattern. Again we are given much information and again the author fails to draw it.
all together. She pays no attention to the special status of mathematics and its complicated relationship to the positive sciences. Instead she gives the mistaken impression (for instance with her metaphor of the ladder) that mathematics is a positive science, as it was for Comte, to whom she refers. Moreover, she pays no attention to the profound shift that distinguishes the two classifications she sets out to discuss (dated c. 1890 and c. 1900 respectively), namely Peirce’s positioning of the normative sciences (esthetics, ethics, and logic) between phenomenology and metaphysics. As a result Scott misses an important opportunity to connect the scientific attitude discussed in the first chapter with the normativity of logic, where the latter is conceived broadly as the science of how to reason. Instead all we get is a rather messy summary of the classification, repeating work that has been done in a much more complete and meticulous manner by Beverly Kent in *Charles S. Peirce: Logic and the Classification of the Sciences* (Montreal, 1987), a book that is nowhere mentioned. The result is that we are thrown into Part Two, called “Four Mathematical Conceptions in Peirce’s System,” with a very incomplete, fragmentary, and erroneous notion of Peirce’s “system of science.” Although she returns to some of these issues in Chapter 7, the book never recovers.

The four mathematical conceptions discussed in Part Two are the absolute, chance, continuity, and the categories. Scott, who admits she is not trained as a mathematician, attempts to discuss these mathematical conceptions without using mathematics. A separate chapter is devoted to each. In the first Scott shows how Peirce applied the concept of the absolute—which Arthur Cayley had introduced into mathematics—to cosmology and the theory of knowledge. The chapter relies quite heavily on Peirce’s “A Guess at the Riddle” of the mid-1880s, which reveals a clear attempt by Peirce, even if only in germinal form (the “Guess” was never finished), to further expand the theory of inquiry he had proposed in “The Fixation of Belief.” Unfortunately, Scott makes no attempt to connect the creeds of hyperbolic, elliptic, and parabolic philosophy with Peirce’s earlier account that a sufficiently large group of inquirers would in the long run reach an opinion that all would agree upon.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss chance, continuity, and the categories, respectively. These three suffer from the same defect as the preceding chapters. We get descriptions of uneven length and quality without any guidance as to their relevance for the topic at hand. Neither the choice of the four conceptions nor the order in which they are discussed is made clear. Why, for instance, discuss Tychism and Synechism, but not Agapism? Why end with the categories, rather than begin with them? Why present the categories as mathematical conceptions and then discuss them from a purely phaneroscopic standpoint? The two most interesting chapters, namely those on continuity and on the absolute, receive the least amount of space. And there too, the author seems unaware of good literature on the subject, such as Kelly Parker’s *The Continuity of Peirce’s Thought* (Nashville, 1998), which is an extensive and accessible mathematical discussion of continuity and of the categories.

In addition, an odd shift is taking place in Chapter 4. Although the book appears to be a treatise on Peirce’s “system of science” (I return to the subtitle “life as a laboratory” later), the examples are now almost exclusively drawn from art, such as the big-breasted Venus of Willendorf, Marcel Duchamp’s urinal, and Claes Oldenburg’s
giant ice bag. It now becomes abundantly clear that the book in question is only a minor reworking of Scott’s 1985 dissertation, “C. S. Peirce’s System of Science and an Application to the Visual Arts”—a fact that may partially explain the complete absence of any reference to the Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition (Bloomington, 1982–), and a complete lack of references to work published after the mid–80s.

The third and final Part, entitled “Reasoning with Models in the System of Science,” contains two chapters, one on mathematical reasoning and another on diagrammatic reasoning. The chapter on mathematical reasoning is by far the longest chapter of the book. Here Scott aims to show, using in particular Peirce’s notion that mathematical reasoning involves experimenting upon diagrams, that there is one method unifying the activities of all the sciences, which she takes as evidence that “Peirce achieved the unity required by a System of Science” (p. 140). I don’t think her discussion supports this conclusion, and aside from that, this view should have been panned out further by contrasting it with Peirce’s rejection of the definition of science as systematized knowledge, and to his comments that science isn’t even defined by its method (or methods), but by the attitude with which it is engaged in (which brings us back to Scott’s opening chapter). In the concluding chapter the author applies the mathematical method to the interpretation of works of art, discusses Peirce’s theory of perception (ignoring once again excellent work that has been done in the last two decades), makes a few comments on abduction, and stops.

So where does this leave us? Frances Scott’s C. S. Peirce’s System of Science seems a belated and slightly revised publication of her 1985 dissertation. The title has been changed, and it no longer adequately represents the content. The subtitle, “Life as a Laboratory,” which is especially intriguing because of Peirce’s attitude to issues of vital importance, makes no appearance beyond the title. No effort is made to flesh it out, and in a book that is perhaps best described as a covert attempt to give philosophical grounding to art criticism it is out of place. Overall, Scott’s book scratches many surfaces, which frequently leads to interesting associations of ideas. But in the end it remains unclear what they are surfaces of, and the reader is left with his associations hanging in the air. In fact much of the book consists of digressions that betray the novice, as they seem inspired by the author’s misconception that what is new to her must also be new to the reader. All this is not necessarily a bad thing, as sometimes you learn more from an ill-composed book than from one well written. It forces you to work harder and make your own extrapolations; it forces you to think for yourself.

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Peden’s book is the first major study on the life and work of the pragmatist, humanist, and scholar of religion, Albert Eustace Haydon. As such, Peden is to be