

**On a New List of Categories. By C. S. PEIRCE.**

PAAAS: 287

1 §1. This <sup>a</sup> paper is based upon the theory already established, that  
2 the function of conceptions is to reduce the manifold of sensuous im-  
3 pressions to unity, <sup>b</sup> and that the validity of a conception consists in the  
4 impossibility of reducing the content of consciousness to unity without  
5 the introduction of it.

W 2: 49  
EP 1: 1

a. "This" in W 2, EP  
1, and CP  
b. no comma in CP

6 §2. This theory gives rise to a conception of gradation among those  
7 conceptions which are universal. For one such conception may unite  
8 the manifold of sense and yet another may be required to unite the  
9 conception and the manifold to which it is applied; and so on.

CP 1.546

10 §3. That universal conception which is nearest to sense is that of  
11 *the present, in general*. This is a conception, because it is universal.  
12 But as the act of *attention* has no connotation at all, but is the pure  
13 denotative power of the mind, that is to say, the power which directs  
14 the mind to an object, in contradistinction to the power of thinking  
15 any predicate of that object,<sup>c</sup>—so the conception of *what is present in*  
16 *general*, which is nothing but the general recognition of what is con-  
17 tained in attention, has no connotation, and therefore no proper unity.  
18 This conception of the present in general, of IT<sup>d</sup> in general, is rendered  
19 in philosophical language by the word "substance" in one of its mean-  
20 ings. Before any comparison or discrimination can be made between  
21 what is present, what is present must have been recognized as such,  
22 as *it*, and subsequently the metaphysical parts which are recognized by  
23 abstraction are attributed to this *it*, but the *it* cannot itself be made  
24 a predicate. This *it* is thus neither predicated of a subject, nor in a  
25 subject, and accordingly is identical with the conception of substance.

PAAAS: 288  
CP 1.547

c. no comma in CP

EP 1: 2

d. "IT" not in small  
caps in CP

26 §4. The unity to which the understanding reduces impressions is  
27 the unity of a proposition. This unity consists in the connection of the  
28 predicate with the subject; and, therefore, that which is implied in the  
29 copula, or the conception of *being*, is that which completes the work of  
30 conceptions of reducing the manifold to unity. The copula (or rather  
31 the verb which is copula in one of its senses) means either *actually is*  
32 or *would be*, as in the two propositions, "There *is* no griffin," and "A  
33 griffin *is* a winged quadruped." The conception of *being* contains only  
34 that junction of predicate to subject wherein these two verbs agree. The  
35 conception of being, therefore, plainly has no content.

CP 1.548

36 If we say "The stove is black," the stove is the *substance*, from  
37 which its blackness has not been differentiated, and the *is*, while it  
38 leaves the substance just as it was seen, explains its confusedness, by  
39 the application to it of *blackness* as a predicate.

W 2: 50

40 Though *being* does not affect the subject, it implies an indefinite

1 determinability of the predicate. For if one could know the copula  
2 and predicate of any proposition, as "...<sup>a</sup> is a tailed-man," he would  
3 know the predicate to be applicable to something supposable, at least.  
4 Accordingly, we have propositions whose subjects are entirely indefinite,  
5 as "There is a beautiful ellipse," where the subject is merely *something*  
6 *actual or potential*; but we have no propositions whose predicate is  
7 entirely indeterminate, for it would be quite senseless to say, "*A*<sup>b</sup> has  
8 the common characters of all things," inasmuch as there are no such  
9 common characters.

10 Thus substance and being are the beginning and end of all concep-  
11 tion. Substance is inapplicable to a predicate, and being is equally so  
12 to a subject.

13 §5. The terms "prescision<sup>c</sup>" and "abstraction," which were for-  
14 merly applied to every kind of separation, are now limited, not merely  
15 to mental separation, but to that which arises from *attention to* one  
16 element and *neglect of* the other. Exclusive attention consists in a def-  
17 inite conception or *supposition* of one part of an object, without any  
18 supposition of the other. Abstraction or prescision<sup>d</sup> ought to be care-  
19 fully distinguished from two other modes of mental separation, which  
20 may be termed *discrimination* and *dissociation*. Discrimination has to  
21 do merely with the essences<sup>e</sup> of terms, and only draws a distinction  
22 in meaning. Dissociation is that separation which, in the absence of a  
23 constant association, is permitted by the law of association of images.  
24 It is the consciousness of one thing, without the necessary simultane-  
25 ous consciousness of the other. Abstraction or prescision,<sup>f</sup> therefore,  
26 supposes a greater separation than discrimination, but a less separation  
27 than dissociation. Thus I can discriminate red from blue, space from  
28 color, and color from space, but not red from color. I can prescind red  
29 from blue, and space from color (as is manifest from the fact that I  
30 actually believe there is an uncolored space between my face and the  
31 wall); but I cannot prescind color from space, nor red from color. I can  
32 dissociate red from blue, but not space from color, color from space,  
33 nor red from color.

34 Prescision<sup>g</sup> is not a reciprocal process. It is frequently the case,  
35 that, while *A* cannot be prescinded from *B*, *B* can be prescinded from  
36 *A*. This circumstance is accounted for as follows. Elementary concep-  
37 tions only arise upon the occasion of experience; that is, they are  
38 produced for the first time according to a general law, the condition of  
39 which is the existence of certain impressions. Now if a conception does  
40 not reduce the impressions upon which it follows to unity, it is a mere  
41 arbitrary addition to these latter; and elementary conceptions do not  
42 arise thus arbitrarily. But if the impressions could be definitely com-  
43 prehended without the conception, this latter would not reduce them to

a. "... " in PAAAS,  
"... " in CP

PAAAS: 289

b. "A" in the same  
typeface as the text  
in PAAAS and CP

CP 1.549

c, d. "precision" in  
PAAAS and CP

e. "senses" in CP

EP 1: 3

f. "precision" in CP  
and PAAAS

W 2: 51

g. "Precision" in CP  
and PAAAS

1 unity. Hence, the impressions (or more immediate conceptions) cannot  
2 be definitely conceived or attended to, to the neglect of an elementary  
3 conception which reduces them to unity. On the other hand, when such  
4 a conception has once been obtained, there is, in general, no reason why  
5 the premises<sup>a</sup> which have occasioned it should not be neglected, and  
6 therefore the explaining conception may frequently be prescinded from  
7 the more immediate ones and from the impressions.

PAAAS: 290

a. "premisses" in CP

8 §6. The facts now collected afford the basis for a systematic method  
9 of searching out whatever universal elementary conceptions there may  
10 be intermediate between the manifold of substance and the unity of  
11 being. It has been shown that the occasion of the introduction of a  
12 universal elementary conception is either the reduction of the manifold  
13 of substance to unity, or else the conjunction to substance of another  
14 conception. And it has further been shown that the elements conjoined  
15 cannot be supposed without the conception, whereas the conception can  
16 generally be supposed without these elements. Now, empirical psychol-  
17 ogy discovers the occasion of the introduction of a conception, and we  
18 have only to ascertain what conception already lies in the data which  
19 is united to that of substance by the first conception, but which cannot  
20 be supposed without this first conception, to have the next conception  
21 in order in passing from being to substance.

CP 1.550

22 It may be noticed that, throughout this process, *introspection* is  
23 not resorted to. Nothing is assumed respecting the subjective elements  
24 of consciousness which cannot be securely inferred from the objective  
25 elements.

W 2: 52  
EP 1: 4

26 §7. The conception of *being* arises upon the formation of a proposi-  
27 tion. A proposition always has, besides a term to express the substance,  
28 another to express the quality of that substance; and the function of the  
29 conception of being is to unite the quality to the substance. Quality,  
30 therefore, in its very widest sense, is the first conception in order in  
31 passing from being to substance.

CP 1.551

32 Quality seems at first sight to be given in the impression. Such re-  
33 sults of introspection are untrustworthy. A proposition asserts the ap-  
34 plicability of a mediate conception to a more immediate one. Since this  
35 is *asserted*, the more mediate conception is clearly regarded independ-  
36 ently of this circumstance, for otherwise the two conceptions would not  
37 be distinguished, but one would be thought through the other, without  
38 this latter being an object of thought, at all. The mediate conception,  
39 then, in order to be *asserted* to be applicable to the other, must first  
40 be considered without regard to this circumstance, and taken immedi-  
41 ately. But, taken immediately, it transcends what is given (the more  
42 immediate conception), and its applicability to the latter is hypothet-  
43 ical. Take, for example, the proposition, "This stove is black." Here

PAAAS: 291

1 the conception of *this stove* is the more immediate, that of *black* the  
2 more mediate, which latter, to be predicated of the former, must be dis-  
3 criminated from it and considered *in itself*, not as applied to an object,  
4 but simply as embodying a quality, *blackness*. Now this *blackness* is a  
5 pure species or abstraction, and its application to *this stove* is entirely  
6 hypothetical. The same thing is meant by “the stove is black,” as by  
7 “there is blackness in the stove.” *Embodying blackness* is the equivalent  
8 of *black*.\*<sup>a</sup> The proof is this. These conceptions are applied indifferently  
9 to precisely the same facts. If, therefore, they were different, the one  
10 which was first applied would fulfil every function of the other; so that  
11 one of them would be superfluous. Now a superfluous conception is an  
12 arbitrary fiction, whereas elementary conceptions arise only upon the  
13 requirement of experience; so that a superfluous elementary conception  
14 is impossible. Moreover, the conception of a pure abstraction is indis-  
15 pensable, because we cannot comprehend an agreement of two things,  
16 except as an agreement in some *respect*, and this respect is such a pure  
17 abstraction as blackness. Such a pure abstraction, reference to which  
18 constitutes a *quality* or general attribute, may be termed a *ground*.

19 Reference to a ground cannot be prescinded from being, but being  
20 can be prescinded from it.

21 §8. Empirical psychology has established the fact that we can know  
22 a quality only by means of its contrast with or similarity to another.  
23 By contrast and agreement a thing is referred to a correlate, if this  
24 term may be used in a wider sense than usual. The occasion of the  
25 introduction of the conception of reference to a ground is the reference  
26 to a correlate, and this is, therefore, the next conception in order.

27 Reference to a correlate cannot be prescinded from reference to a  
28 ground; but reference to a ground may be prescinded from reference to  
29 a correlate.

30 §9. The occasion of reference to a correlate is obviously by compar-  
31 ison. This act has not been sufficiently studied by the psychologists,  
32 and it will, therefore, be necessary to adduce some examples to show in  
33 what it consists. Suppose we wish to compare the letters p and b. We  
34 may imagine one of them to be turned over on the line of writing as  
35 an axis, then laid upon the other, and finally to become transparent so  
36 that the other can be seen through it. In this way we shall form a new  
37 image which mediates between the images of the two letters, inasmuch  
38 as it represents one of them to be (when turned over) the<sup>b</sup> likeness of the  
39 other. Again, suppose we think of a murderer as being in relation to a  
40 murdered person; in this case we conceive the act of the murder, and in  
41 this conception it is represented that corresponding to every murderer

\* This agrees with the author of *De Generibus et Speciebus, Oeuvres Inédites d'Abélard*,<sup>c</sup> p.528.

a. footnote indicated by \* is rendered footnote “1.” in W 2 and footnote “1” in CP

W 2: 53

EP 1: 5  
CP 1.552

CP 1.553

PAAAS: 292

b. “he” in CP

c. “‘De Generibus et Speciebus,’ Oeuvres Inédites d’Abelard” in PAAAS and CP

1 (as well as to every murder) there is a murdered person; and thus we  
2 resort again to a mediating representation which represents the relate  
3 as standing for a correlate with which the mediating representation is  
4 itself in relation. Again, suppose we look out<sup>a</sup> the word *homme* in a  
5 French dictionary; we shall find opposite to it the word *man*, which, so  
6 placed, represents *homme* as representing the same two-legged creature  
7 which *man* itself represents. By a further accumulation of instances,  
8 it would be found that every comparison requires, besides the related  
9 thing, the ground, and the correlate, also a *mediating representation*  
10 *which represents the relate to be a representation of the same correlate*  
11 *which this mediating representation itself represents*. Such a mediat-  
12 ing representation may be termed an *interpretant*, because it fulfils the  
13 office of an interpreter, who says that a foreigner says the same thing  
14 which he himself says. The term representation is here to be understood  
15 in a very extended sense, which can be explained by instances better  
16 than by a definition. In this sense, a word represents a thing to the  
17 conception in the mind of the hearer, a portrait represents the person  
18 for whom it is intended to the conception of recognition, a weather-  
19 cock represents the direction of the wind to the conception of him who  
20 understands it, a barrister represents his client to the judge and jury  
21 whom he influences.

a. "up" in CP

W 2: 54

22 Every reference to a correlate, then, conjoins to the substance the  
23 conception of a reference to an interpretant; and this is, therefore, the  
24 next conception in order in passing from being to substance.

25 Reference to an interpretant cannot be prescinded from reference to  
26 a correlate; but the latter can be prescinded from the former.

EP 1: 6

27 §10. Reference to an interpretant is rendered possible and justified  
28 by that which renders possible and justifies comparison. But that is  
29 clearly the diversity of impressions. If we had but one impression, it  
30 would not require to be reduced to unity, and would therefore not need  
31 to be thought of as referred to an interpretant, and the conception  
32 of reference to an interpretant would not arise. But since there is a  
33 manifold of impressions, we have a feeling of complication or confusion,  
34 which leads us to differentiate this<sup>b</sup> impression from that, and then,  
35 having been differentiated, they require to be brought to unity. Now  
36 they are not brought to unity until we conceive them together as being  
37 *ours*, that is, until we refer them to a conception as their interpretant.  
38 Thus, the reference to an interpretant arises upon the holding together  
39 of diverse impressions, and therefore it does not join a conception to  
40 the substance, as the other two references do, but unites directly the  
41 manifold of the substance itself. It is, therefore, the last conception in  
42 order in passing from being to substance.

CP 1.554

PAAAS: 293

b. "the" in PAAAS

43 §11. The five conceptions thus obtained, for reasons which will be

CP 1.555

1	sufficiently obvious, may be termed <i>categories</i> . That is, <sup>a</sup>	a. second through
2	BEING, <sup>b</sup>	fifth comma and pe-
3	Quality (Reference to a Ground),	riod of this sentence
4	Relation (Reference to a Correlate),	not in CP
5	Representation (Reference to an Interpretant),	b, c. "Being" and
6	SUBSTANCE. <sup>c</sup>	"Substance" in CP
7	The three intermediate conceptions may be termed accidents. <sup>d</sup>	d. the sentence not
8	§12. This passage from the many to the one is numerical. The con-	indented in CP
9	ception of a <i>third</i> is that of an object which is so related to two others,	W 2: 55
10	that one of these must be related to the other in the same way in which	CP 1.556
11	the third is related to that other. Now this coincides with the concep-	
12	tion of an interpretant. An <i>other</i> is plainly equivalent to a <i>correlate</i> .	
13	The conception of second differs from that of other, in implying the	
14	possibility of a third. In the same way, the conception of <i>self</i> implies	
15	the possibility of an <i>other</i> . The <i>Ground</i> <sup>e</sup> is the self abstracted from the	e. "ground" in CP
16	concreteness which implies the possibility of another.	
17	§13. Since no one of the categories can be prescinded from those	CP 1.557
18	above it, the list of supposable objects which they afford is,	
19	What is.	
20	Quale—that which refers to a ground, <sup>f</sup>	f, g, h. first two com-
21	Relate—that which refers to ground and correlate, <sup>g</sup>	mas and period of the
22	Representamen—that which refers to ground, correlate, and	sentence not in CP
23	interpretant. <sup>h</sup>	
24	It.	
25	§14. A quality may have a special determination which prevents	EP 1: 7
26	its being prescinded from reference to a correlate. Hence there are two	CP 1.558
27	kinds of relation.	PAAAS: 294
28	1st. <sup>i</sup> That of relates whose reference to a ground is a prescindible or	i. "First." in CP
29	internal quality.	
30	2d. <sup>j</sup> That of relates whose reference to a ground is an unprescindible	j. "Second." in CP
31	or relative quality.	
32	In the former case, the relation is a mere <i>concurrence</i> of the corre-	
33	lates in one character, and the relate and correlate are not distinguished.	
34	In the latter case the correlate is set over against the relate, and there	
35	is in some sense an <i>opposition</i> .	
36	Relates of the first kind are brought into relation simply by their	
37	agreement. But mere disagreement (unrecognized) does not constitute	
38	relation, and therefore relates of the second kind are only brought into	
39	relation by correspondence in fact.	
40	A reference to a ground may also be such that it cannot be pre-	
41	scinded from a reference to an interpretant. In this case it may be	
42	termed an <i>imputed</i> quality. If the reference of a relate to its ground	
43	can be prescinded from reference to an interpretant, its relation to its	W 2: 56

1 correlate is a mere concurrence or community in the possession of a  
2 quality, and therefore the reference to a correlate can be prescind  
3 from reference to an interpretant. It follows that there are three kinds  
4 of representations.

5 1st.<sup>a</sup> Those whose relation to their objects is a mere community in  
6 some quality, and these representations may be termed *Likenesses*.

7 2d.<sup>b</sup> Those whose relation to their objects consists in a correspond-  
8 ence in fact, and these may be termed *Indices* or *Signs*.

9 3d.<sup>c</sup> Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an im-  
10 puted character, which are the *general signs*, and these may be termed  
11 *Symbols*.

12 §15. I shall now show how the three conceptions of reference to  
13 a ground, reference to an object, and reference to an interpretant are  
14 the fundamental ones of at least one universal science, that of logic.  
15 Logic is said to treat of second intentions as applied to first. It would  
16 lead me too far away from the matter in hand to discuss the truth of  
17 this statement; I shall simply adopt it as one which seems to me to af-  
18 ford a good definition of the subject-genus of this science. Now, second  
19 intentions are the objects of the understanding considered as represen-  
20 tations, and the first intentions to which they apply are the objects of  
21 those representations. The objects of the understanding, considered as  
22 representations, are symbols, that is, signs which are at least potentially  
23 general. But the rules of logic hold good of any symbols, of those which  
24 are written or spoken as well as of those which are thought. They have  
25 no immediate application to likenesses or indices, because no arguments  
26 can be constructed of these alone, but do apply to all symbols. All sym-  
27 bols, indeed, are in one sense relative to the understanding, but only  
28 in the sense in which also all things are relative to the understanding.  
29 On this account, therefore, the relation to the understanding need not  
30 be expressed in the definition of the sphere of logic, since it determines  
31 no limitation of that sphere. But a distinction can be made between  
32 concepts which are supposed to have no existence except so far as they  
33 are actually present to the understanding, and external symbols which  
34 still retain their character of symbols so long as they are only *capable*  
35 of being understood. And as the rules of logic apply to these latter as  
36 much as to the former<sup>d</sup> (and though only through the former, yet this  
37 character, since it belongs to all things, is no limitation),<sup>e</sup> it follows that  
38 logic has for its subject-genus all symbols and not merely concepts.\*<sup>f</sup>

\* Herbart says: "Unsre sämmtlichen Gedanken lassen sich von zwei Seiten be-  
trachten; theils als Thätigkeiten unseres Geistes, theils in Hinsicht dessen, was durch  
sie gedacht wird. In letzterer<sup>g</sup> Beziehung heissen sie *Begriffe*, welches Wort, indem  
es das *Begriffene* bezeichnet, zu abstrahiren gebietet von der Art und Weise, wie wir  
den Gedanken empfangen, produciren, oder reproduciren mögen." But the whole  
difference between a concept and an external sign lies in these respects which logic

a. "First." in CP

b. "Second." in CP

c. "Third." in CP

CP 1.559

PAAAS: 295

EP 1: 8

d. comma used after  
"former" in PAAAS

e. comma placed in-  
side right parenthesis  
in PAAAS

f. footnote indicated  
by \* is rendered foot-  
note "2." in W 2 and  
footnote "1" in CP

g. "letzterer" in CP  
and PAAAS

1 We come, therefore, to this, that logic treats of the reference of sym- W 2: 57  
2 bols in general to their objects. In this view it is one of a trivium of  
3 conceivable sciences. The first would treat of the formal conditions of  
4 symbols having meaning, that is of the reference of symbols in general  
5 to their grounds or imputed characters, and this might be called formal  
6 grammar; the second, logic, would treat of the formal conditions of the  
7 truth of symbols; and the third would treat of the formal conditions  
8 of the force of symbols, or their power of appealing to a mind, that is,  
9 of their reference in general to interpretants, and this might be called  
10 formal rhetoric.

11 There would be a general division of symbols, common to all these  
12 sciences; namely, into,

13 1°: <sup>a</sup> Symbols which directly determine only their *grounds* or im- a, b, c. colons re-  
14 puted qualities, and are thus but sums of marks or *terms*; placed with periods  
in CP

15 2°: <sup>b</sup> Symbols which also independently determine their *objects* by PAAAS: 296  
16 means of other term or terms, and thus, expressing their own objective  
17 validity, become capable of truth or falsehood, that is, are *propositions*;  
18 and,

19 3°: <sup>c</sup> Symbols which also independently determine their *interpretants*,  
20 and thus the minds to which they appeal, by premising <sup>d</sup> a proposition d. "premissing" in  
21 or propositions which such a mind is to admit. These are *arguments*. CP

22 And it is remarkable that, among all the definitions of the propo-  
23 sition, for example, as the *oratio indicativa*, as the subsumption of an  
24 object under a concept, as the expression of the relation of two con-  
25 cepts, and as the indication of the mutable ground of appearance, there  
26 is, perhaps, not one in which the conception of reference to an object EP 1: 9  
27 or correlate is not the important one. In the same way, the concep-  
28 tion of reference to an interpretant or third, is always prominent in the  
29 definitions of argument.

30 In a proposition, the term which separately indicates the object of  
31 the symbol is termed the subject, and that which indicates the ground e. no comma in CP  
32 is termed the predicate. The objects indicated by the subject (which  
33 are always potentially a plurality, <sup>e</sup>—at least, of phases or appearances) W 2: 58  
34 are therefore stated by the proposition to be related to one another  
35 on the ground of the character indicated by the predicate. Now this  
36 relation may be either a concurrence or an opposition. Propositions of  
37 concurrence are those which are usually considered in logic; but I have  
38 shown in a paper upon the classification of arguments that it is also  
39 necessary to consider separately propositions of opposition, if we are to  
40 take account of such arguments as the following:— <sup>f</sup>

41 Whatever is the half of anything is less than that of which it is the  
42 half;

ought, according to Herbart, to abstract from.

f. no dash in CP



1 that extension and comprehension are very often taken in other senses  
2 in which this last proposition is not true.  
3 This is an imperfect view of the application which the conceptions  
4 which, according to our analysis, are the most fundamental ones find in  
5 the sphere of logic. It is believed, however, that it is sufficient to show  
6 that at least something may be usefully suggested by considering this  
7 science in this light.

PAAAS: 298