

VIOLA, TULLIO. PEIRCE ON THE USES OF HISTORY. BERLIN/BOSTON: WALTER DE GRUYTER, 2020. PP. 250 & V–XI. INDEX OF NAMES AND INDEX OF TERMS.

Vincent Colapietro

Pennsylvania State University

vx5@psu.edu

In a clear, engaging, textually informed, consistently nuanced, and extremely insightful manner, Tullio Viola addresses an integrated set of important questions. More than a hundred years before the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962), C. S. Peirce realized what science is and what it might become can be ascertained only by a detailed familiarity with the actual history of various communities of experimental inquiry. He implies as much when he writes: Even "the method of science is itself a scientific result. It did not spring out of the brain of a beginner: it was [itself] a historic attainment and a scientific achievement" (*The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* [hereafter CP], 6.428). If such history of science were not yet written, then the philosopher of science must, to some extent, become an historian and execute the task. Peirce's manuscripts especially reveal how seriously he took this implication of his understanding of science (witness what Viola refers to as the "Putnam history" [p. 41]). This interest was far from being purely antiquarian; it was rather one cultivated primarily for the sake of facilitating the growth of thought. "Opinion has," Peirce was convinced, "a regular growth [or destined outcome], though it may be stunted or deformed. To take the next step in philosophy vigorously and promptly, we must study our own historical position" (quoted in Viola, p. 45, note 34). Elsewhere he refers to the "drama of the last three centuries of struggling thought, in politics and sociology, in science, in mathematics, in philosophy." "If there is a regular growth about philosophy, we want to place ourselves historically, and take the next inevitable step in the most vigorous and prompt way" (NEW IV, 379; emphasis added). Peirce did just that: he situated himself historically and his understanding of continuity, semiosis, and indeed science enjoined him to do so. In turn, Viola has situated himself in the cross-currents of Peirce's voluminous writings for the sake of showing in detail how Peirce's uses of history were

central to virtually every facet of his philosophy. Whatever shortcomings mark his endeavor, Viola's principal aims have been largely realized. Though he is carrying forward the work of Max H. Fisch, Carolyn Eisele, and more recent scholars, he is doing so in an original and innovative manner. One of the inevitable next steps in Peirce scholarship was a fuller treatment of the "historicism" Peirce than was available before the publication of this monograph. Viola has taken this time in a timely and vigorous manner.

Though he covers a range of topics, there are two principal questions with which he is preoccupied: (1) What are the distinct, though possibly related senses of history discoverable in Peirce's voluminous writings? (2) What are the uses to which Peirce puts history in these different senses? Of course, he is deeply appreciative of the fact that history is itself (in W. B. Gallie's memorable expression) "an essentially contested concept" (a concept to which he is fully committed). While Viola takes pains to disambiguate history, he might have taken even greater care in this regard. Even so, the two main senses of this equivocal word are for his purposes sharply delineated.

In addition to the sense of history as it was identified in Peirce's classification of the sciences (put most simply, history as knowledge of the past), there is that of *historicity*. Think of Fisch's essay "Was There a Metaphysical Club in Cambridge?" He sifted through, again and again, a wide array of primary sources simply to establish the existence of this "club." Or take the alleged existence of a historical figure of world importance, say, Napoleon. It is noteworthy that Richard Whately, the author of *Elements of Logic* (1826), so pivotal in Peirce's intellectual development, also wrote *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte* (1819). It is also noteworthy that Viola takes account of the fact that "a copy of Whately's book about Napoleon could be found in Peirce's private library" (p. 204, note 48). Finally, consider the legend regarding Pythagoras. An understanding of history including a critical embrace of – hence, a reliance on – testimony, tradition, and the vague ideas of common sense is unavoidable. Please notice how much of the concern here is focused on simply *establishing* on the basis of testimony, monuments (including documents granted the status of monuments) and possi-

bly other sources of evidence, the basic historical facts (e.g., the existence of Napoleon or the periodic meetings in Cambridge, Massachusetts, of a group of intellectuals). What is in evidence here is just how seriously Peirce took skepticism, without being a skeptic. "I applaud skepticism with all my heart," he insists," provided it have four qualities: first, that it be sincere and real doubt; second, that it be aggressive; third, that it push inquiry; and fourth, that it stand ready to acknowledge what it now doubts, as soon as the doubted element comes clearly to light" (CP 1.344). In no arena of inquiry is such aggressive skepticism more of a methodological prerequisite than historical investigations, where human commitments, passions, and especially antipathies are likely to stunt or deform, if not actually block, inquiry. Even so, Peirce appreciated Whately's book on Napoleon for what it was, a satire. Given the weight of historical testimony, it would be unreasonable to suspend belief in the existence of this figure. Indeed, the point of this satire is aimed at exposing the fatal flaw in the wholesale reject of eyewitness testimony. To nullify this weight, in the name of what seems reasonable to us today (as David Hume tried to do in his rejection of miracles), is in effect to make historical actuality conform to contemporary fashions. We are too much at risk of etherealizing the actuality of the past, in its alterity from the present (see, e.g., Viola, pp. 100ff.). To presume we are in a position to know better than those who were present smacks of arrogance, while to accept without question what they testify to have witnessed points to credulity.

Regarding *Geischichtlichkeit* (Viola, p. 67), Viola makes a bold, pivotal, and, in my judgment, plausible claim: "Peirce cultivated a strong conception of historicity, one that becomes most visible once we focus on the processualist nature of his semiotics, metaphysics, and of his theory of evolution" (p. 7). To history in the sense of our accredited knowledge of past events, there is accordingly *Geischichtlichkeit* and, moreover, our consciousness of this historicity. (There are of course not only more senses of history in general than these two but also more uses of this word in Peirce's writings than these. It would accordingly have been helpful for Viola to

have offered a fuller disambiguation of this contested concept.). There are, in addition, at least two sides to our consciousness of historicity. On one side, there is an appreciation of how decisively the past has shaped the present (see, e.g., p. 7 and p. 71). On the other, there is an awareness that our locus in the present decisively shapes not only interests in the past but also our understanding. The former can be made to look as though the historical present is in the iron grip of a completely determinate past. The latter can be taken to imply we are imprisoned in the present. As Viola notes, Peirce implicitly recognizes "that history can only be written from a specific historical angle, i.e., the stage of scientific development at which historians find themselves" (p. 59, note 81). Hence, historicity seems to pose a dilemma: Either historical determinism or invincible presentism. On Viola's reading, however, the historical present is a site of intellectual autonomy (see Chapter 4, especially pp. 100-104). Moreover, the actual past is always to some extent discoverable by those situated in the historical present. Because Viola focuses on facts rather than the significance of facts, that is, because his main concern is with establishing historical facts rather than interpreting their contested meanings, some thorny but crucial questions are largely evaded. In this he is faithful to Peirce, at least to a foreground feature of his subject's intellectual persona.

In a work deserving far more attention than it has received, Joseph L. Esposito suggests: "In contrast with the one-sided idea that we are either always within history, or mystically transcending it, the critical appreciation of the variety of forms of historical consciousness ... suggests instead the possibility of an evolution of such consciousness to the point of heightened self-awareness" (*The Transcendence of History*, p. 169). In the history of Peirce's thought, precisely as portrayed by Viola, we observe nothing less than different forms of historical consciousness reaching a "point of heightened self-awareness." In his case, then, we do not catch Peirce either endorsing the view that we are imprisoned within history or advancing the position that human beings

possess a capacity to transcend, as timeless spectators, the flux of history. With great subtlety, he (at least) implies that the transcendence of history, insofar as it is possible, is an achievement in history. While it is always partial, provisional, and fallible, such transcendence is real. But historical consciousness, not least of all such consciousness evolved to the point of heightened self-awareness, “is not something that stands apart from human cognition, but is in fact [!] a construction of the mind itself” (Esposito, pp. 169-70). While he would readily grant a constructivist role to the inquiring mind, Viola would nonetheless never abandon the objectivist commitment of the working historian. This pertains both to himself (as an intellectual historian, he is committed to a realist approach) and Peirce (as an interpreter of Peirce, he is convinced that, vis-à-vis history, Peirce is as much a realist as he is elsewhere in his philosophy). Even with regard to the reconstruction of the past, “the outward clash” plays a decisive role (see, e.g., Viola, pp. 109–12).

Reality, understood as that which possibly “stands apart from human cognition,” is in a weak sense a construction of our minds. It is how some thinkers conceive reality. This conception might track its object better than other notions, but it is one among other “essentially contested concepts.” So, too, are facts. Facts are not data: they are not given. Rather they are established. What is established as a fact stands firm. The hardness of facts is not compromised by acknowledging that the status of anything as a fact is, especially in the context of history, the result of self-controlled processes of inference. As a result, its brute actuality deserves to be acknowledged, not slighted by exaggerated emphasis on the fallible procedures by which typically contested claims are sorted out and the “hard facts” are themselves established. While facts are in a sense, as the word suggests, “fabrications,” calling attention to them as the compelling results of human procedures does nothing to reduce them to *mere* constructs. As Joseph Margolis and Bruno Latour, along with others, have argued, constructivism and objectivism are not neces-

sarily exclusive alternatives.

One of the merits of Viola’s book is to be so alive to the issues of Peirce’s day and of our own time, without either conflating these or presuming them to be utterly disparate. In his account of Peirce, he at once avoids both the insularity of presentism and the incoherence of historical relativism. As a result, Peirce does not abide in the eternal present but lives in the historical present, in all of its fissures, ambiguities, and indeed, contradictions. To live in such a present is ineluctably to be caught up in processes of renegotiating the terms of one’s inheritances and confronting more squarely than has yet been done disconcerting novelties, novelties indicative in crucial respects of a future at odds with the present. What enables Viola to accomplish this is having so thoroughly done his homework, specifically, having raked the unpublished manuscripts, read the published writings, consulted his intellectual predecessors and contemporaries, also an impressive amount of secondary literature, pertaining both specifically to Peirce and generally to the topics treated in this book (e.g., periodization, testimony, and narrative).

“The study of Peirce’s approach to history itself has,” as Tullio Viola notes in the Introduction to this book, “a history” (5). Such historical self-consciousness informs *Peirce on the Uses of History* at every turn, without undermining the author’s hermeneutic commitment to Peirce’s avowed realism (not least of all, the insistence on seeing realism as “a leading motif not only in his history of science, but also in his conception of history as a science” [p. 223]). In reference to history (our knowledge of the past), then, Viola is committed to reading Peirce as a realist. But Peirce’s attunement to the historicity of his own endeavors *and* his commitment to realism are among the defining features of his philosophical project, as Viola so deftly exhibits in this monograph (a contribution to *Peirceana*, a series edited by Francesco Bellucci and Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen). In this regard, Viola’s own orientation is unmistakably Peircean: his advocacy of realism is not allowed to blunt his awareness of the historicity of *his* project. But, then, this awareness is in

turn not allowed to compromise this advocacy. Contra such interpreters as Joseph Esposito, Peirce delicately balances rival impulses.

The history of the study of Peirce's engagement with history is thus worth recalling here, if only briefly. After mentioning the names of Max H. Fisch, Murray G. Murray, Philip P. Wiener, and Walter B. Gallie as scholars who in the 1950s oriented the study of Peirce to include an historical dimension and the formal consideration of historiographical questions. The title of Murray's book (*The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*) was itself instructive, for it unambiguously indicated the model for how to study Peirce (developmental studies were ideally suited to the dramatically unfolding character of Peirce's philosophical investigations). At the very time when academic philosophy was increasingly becoming an ahistoric discipline (see, e.g., Gallie 1964, pp. 145-51), philosophical attention to the nature of historical knowledge, especially on the part of "American" philosophers (e.g., Morris R. Cohen, Arthur O. Lovejoy, and John H. Randall, Jr.), but also analytic philosophers (e.g., Alan Donagan, William Dray, and Patrick Gardiner) was a notable feature of academic discourse. For those such as Fisch whose interests extended to Giambattista Vico, such attention was welcome, even if all too often this attention assumed forms in which broad questions of fundamental importance (above all, those pertaining to the relationship between philosophy and history) were occluded.

Viola takes care to highlight certain salient details in what for many Peirce scholars is an unknown story. In 1971 Willard M. Miller published in the *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* an article entitled "Peirce on the Use of History." In it he was critical of Phillip P. Wiener's "Evolutionary Interpretation of the History of Science." This prompted Wiener to respond ("W. M. Miller on Peirce's Interpretation of the History of Science"). He makes a point of charging Miller with exaggerating Peirce's historical concerns. It is possible to make too much of Peirce's use of history. This in effect is what Wiener is claiming in his response to Miller. "Peirce's philosophy of science and metaphysics was [sic.] more

intimately linked to his logical studies than to his historical interests ... he wrote much more on the logic of science than on its history, and ... he minimized the logical strength of historical explanation and yet used it in his metaphysical; evolutionism inconsistently" (1971, 233). But, then, it is possible to make too little of Peirce's engagement with history. This is clearly Miller's position against Wiener's onslaught. Peirce's "work as a philosopher of history," he contends, "is valuable both for understanding Peirce's other work [including that on the logic of science] and it is own right as a theory of history" (1971, 105). This work is more intimately related to Peirce's focal concerns (e.g., offering a normative account of objective inquiry or instituting a theory of signs) and more consistent than expositors such as Wiener are willing to grant.

Other knowledgeable, sympathetic expositors of Peirce appear to side with Wiener in their misgivings about Peirce's understanding or appreciation of history. W. B. Gallie goes so far as to suggest, in one place, that Peirce lacked nothing less than "historical imagination." As Peirce conceived it, *inquiry* is the name for "the fact that somehow a wide variety of our activities have come to be initiated and guided by signs which admit of logical criticism and correction" (Gallie's *Peirce and Pragmatism*, p. 92). This manifestly makes inquiry depend "on the fact that man is a sign-using animal and the sign-systems which he employs include signs for the questioning, correction, and qualification of other signs." Peirce however does not even try to explain, at least in detail, how this situation has come about. "Like almost every other philosopher of the western tradition, Peirce lacked the kind of historical imagination which this task would have required." In his own work on history, however, Gallie praises Peirce for his "historical-mindedness." He claims, "with comparatively few exceptions – Aristotle, Leibniz and Peirce being the greatest – philosophers have displayed a fantastic lack of historical mindedness and an almost total lack of interest in their own historical role within intellectual life" (*Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, p. 146; quoted in part in Viola, p. 150). It is difficult to know

how to reconcile Gallie's characterization of Peirce as lacking a specific kind of historical imagination and his praise of Peirce as a philosopher uncommonly marked by historical-mindedness. Perhaps he changed his assessment. Or perhaps there simply is no incompatibility between lacking the specific kind of historical imagination required to execute the task in question (constructing a detailed explanation of how a sign-using animal instituted self-corrective procedures) and what is meant by "historical-mindedness." What is especially noteworthy is that the very same commentator (if only at different times) criticizes Peirce for his lack of historical imagination and praises this figure for his historical-mindedness. Conflicting assessments of Peirce's historical sensitivity are – or at least appear to be – evident in different texts by the same author but far more so in the critical exchanges between different expositors.

Let us return for a moment to a previous discussion. In "Peirce and the Philosophy of History" (1983) and other writings, most notably, if only by implication, *The Transcendence of History: Essays in the Evolution of Historical Consciousness* (1984), Joseph Esposito, another informed, sympathetic expositor, discerns an unresolved tension between Peirce's objectivist and constructivist (or "transcendentalist") tendencies. "The first position is decidedly realist ('without a past to study there would be no historical consciousness'), while the other is more 'constructionist' ('without an historical consciousness there would be no past to study') (Viola, p. 6; Esposito 1983, p. 156). As Esposito sees it, Peirce oscillates between these two positions. In other words, there is an unresolved tension in Peirce's commitment to historical consciousness (at times, his realism seems to undermine or even preclude his appreciation of the historicity of all human undertakings, including his philosophical projects), whereas at other times, his very appreciation of this historicity seems to compromise his realism). In *The Transcendence of History*, Esposito, with only passing reference to Peirce, develops his own stance. In the end, Viola's stance is not far removed from Esposito's in *The Transcendence of History*. He does

stress the extent to which Peirce achieved a delicate, if unstable, balance between these rival tendencies. But, like Esposito, Viola does not judge Peirce to have articulated a fully satisfactory position in which the reconstructive activity of the historian is perfectly balanced with the irrevocable actuality of history itself (see, e.g., Viola, pp. 109–11; also, pp. 224–26).

Before any of the essays mentioned above were published in *The Transactions*, Max H. Fisch presented a paper at what was then called the Western Division of the APA (Chicago; May 3, 1957) entitled "The Philosophy of History: A Dialogue" (*Philosophy and the History of Science: Essays in Honor of Max Fisch*, edited by Richard Tursman). The last word is given the Philosopher in this dialogue ("a Philosopher"). After the Historian discloses s/he discerns "a continuum of inquiry connecting the shortest-tethered grubbing of the historian with the most abstract and universal critiques and speculations of the philosophy," the Philosopher offers this speculation: "the ultimate problem of the philosophy of history may well be that of the relation between history and philosophy. ... For the solution we had best look to philosophers who are also historians, or to philosophers who have carefully considered the work of such philosopher-historians" (205) – or thinkers who are both.

Almost exactly fifty years after the publication of Miller's article ("Peirce on the Use of History"), Tullio Viola has published *Peirce on the Uses of History*. Like his predecessor (Miller earned his doctorate for his dissertation at the University of Illinois; 1970), he is drawing upon his doctoral work ("Philosophy and History: The Legacy of Peirce's Realism," a dissertation at Humboldt-Universität Berlin; 2014). Viola self-consciously joins a historiographic lineage.

The title of Miller's article (Miller being one of Fisch's students at Illinois) is slightly but significantly altered by Viola. The emphasis on the plurality of uses is announced in the title of the exemplary study under review here. There are arguably more uses of history than those to which Viola attends, as there are unquestionably more sense of *history* than he identifies.

Even so, the scope of this study is ambitious. Viola is appreciative of what he in a single monograph can reasonably achieve. "Needless to say, I cannot pretend to offer an exhaustive interpretation of this very large segment of Peirce's production. Rather, I isolate some of the most significant themes from his historical writings" (p. 8). While he is here specifically referring to his descriptive account in Chapter 6 ("Peirce the Historian") of Peirce's actual work as an intellectual historian, this lack of pretense marks this study as a whole. Viola does not take himself to be offering an exhaustive account of any specific facet of Peirce's engagement with history. He cannot but be selective in focusing on what he judges to be "the most significant themes" and, in my judgment, his own is in this and other respects solid and reliable.

This book is divided into three untitled parts. They are enclosed within an Introduction and Conclusion ("The Legacy of a Realist"). Part I is comprised of two chapters (Chapter 1, "The Making of a Polymath," and 2, "Not a Mere Wonder Book"); Part II of three chapters (3, "Historicity as Process," 4, "Autonomy and the Value of Experience," and 5, "Sociality, Dialogue, and Disagreement"); and Part III is comprised of two Chapters (6, "Peirce the Historian," and 7, "The Logic of Historical Inquiry"). In a brief Conclusion (pp. 218-26), the author highlights the "complex and multi-layered interplay between historical and philosophical inquiries," alleging this interplay is more intricate and layered than Peirce was disposed to acknowledge (p. 218). Doing so allows him "to focus on three major themes that have emerged" in the course of his investigation. The first of these themes is the one signaled in the title of this study, "Peirce's pluralism with regard to the uses of history" (p. 218). The second theme is "the relation between Peirce's interest in history and his more general philosophical commitments." The third one is "the problem of realism."

Each of the chapters is divided into titled sections, most of which are quite short (e.g., the sections making up Chapter 5, "Sociality, Dialogue, Disagreement," are: "The Problem of Peirce's Social Thought"; "The Guiding Thread of Dialogue"; Science: A Community in History";

"Philosophy: The Architectonic Principle"; "Disagreement and Convergence"; "Conservatism and Sentimentalism"; and "The Ethics of Terminology," several of these sections being only two or three pages). It is perhaps not too much to suggest that the "architecture" of this study is, in important respects, Gothic. In particular, the ribbed vault is herein a structural feature calling the mind to the highest level of philosophical generality (this is nowhere more evident than in pressing the question of the relationship between philosophy and history), while the intricate details and massive weight of such accumulated details combine to achieve a paradoxical result – a sense of solidity and weightiness conjoined to the power of making stone feel ethereal.

In the Introduction, the author helpfully provides a map for his readers. The function of Part I is introductory: it is designed principally to frame the project, first in biographical and then in philosophical terms. Chapter 1, "The Making of a Polymath," turns out to be a portrait of both an historian and an historicist. Chapter 2, "Not a Mere Wonder Book," Viola makes explicit his intention in identifying this chapter as such: "History is not a mere wonder book [a chronicle of events and incidents eliciting our amazement]; it is a necessary implement in every scientist's toolkit" (p. 49).

"Part II (Chapters 3–5) contains," Viola stresses, "the argumentative gist of the book." For in these pages the author provides "a comprehensive reconstruction of the different senses in which Peirce's philosophy allows history to play a significant role" (p. 7). This however identifies the function of Part II too modestly, for Viola presents the substance of his argument in Chapters 3 through 5, not merely his "argumentative gist." Finally, "Part III ... focuses on Peirce's actual work as a historian and as a methodologist of historical inquiry" (p. 7). The arc of the book is accordingly from the very selective sketch of an intellectual biography to a detailed portrait of Peirce as a working history (even if in the field a history, as he was in other engagements, an autodidact).

In his presidential address to the American Historical Society, "Every Man His Own Historian"), Carl Becker

(delivered in December, 1931, published in *The American Historical Review* in January, 1932) argued every responsible person must, to some extent, become a historian. That is, each one of us must in a careful, painstaking, and conscientious manner reconstruct those parts of the past directly bearing on our central, especially our defining, interests or concerns. Peirce certainly discovered this about himself, precisely as a philosopher. He was nonetheless acutely aware of his lack of training. He readily admitted he “was no scholar of history except that of science, including philosophy” (quoted in Viola, p. 42). But his very understanding of science forced him to make himself into a historian of inquiry (see pp. 18–21). Given his methodological bent, this meant developing, along with his actual investigations of intellectual history, a methodological self-consciousness (a self-consciousness however cultivated to serve self-criticism and ultimately self-control). In Peirce’s judgment, “progress in science depends upon the observation of the right [or relevant] facts by minds *furnished with appropriate ideas*” (Peirce CP 6.604 [1893]; quoted in Viola, p. 47; also, see Chapter 4).

In “The Critic of Institutions,” his Presidential Address to the Western Division of the APA (Bloomington, IN; May, 1956), Max Fisch stressed at the conclusion of his talk, “the history of philosophy has an importance [for philosophers] the history of science cannot have,” at least for scientists preoccupied with the first-order questions of their disciplines. “The history of philosophy is,” he rather playfully notes, “philosophy itself taking its time.” But how does philosophy take its time, how does it engage with its historicity? This involves more than “merely a continual bringing forth of things new,” for it encompasses “a continual review of the old.” More fully, philosophy in taking its time “continually re-sifts, re-selects, and re-orders its past creations, re-edits, re-translated, re-reads, re-interprets, and criticizes afresh.” In this process, “its great classics do not diminish but grow in power. Indeed, their very status as classics is most dramatically revealed in the course of such processes.

Tullio Viola’s *Peirce on the Uses of History* exemplifies how philosophy takes its time, how it confronts its own historicity, in just the sense pragmatically clarified by Max Fisch. The pragmatic meaning of the working conceptions of the engaged historian can only be clarified by carefully – thus, critically – attending to the habits of re-sifting, re-selecting, and re-ordering, also those of re-editing, re-translating, re-reading, re-interpreting, and evaluating anew historical materials – moreover, the disposition of documents and texts to resist certain interpretations and appropriations.

As Viola emphasizes, we certainly ought not to trifle with facts. But we ought to tarry longer with the narration and interpretation of these facts than the gifted author of this admirable study is apparently disposed to stress. Unquestionably, Peirce “indicated the path for a hermeneutic strategy that relies on a robust contextualism as well as a tight interaction between interpretation and discover” (Viola, p. 226). It is however hardly sufficient to point out such a path. At least at more advanced stages in their investigations, historians must make their way some distance down such paths. The extent to which interpretation is an abductive process should not be allowed to obscure the extent to which history is a hermeneutic enterprise. As crucial as establishing the basic facts is, explanations, interpretations, and an unending process of innovative recontextualization of those historical facts are arguably more important. To grant that Peirce’s approach to history allows for these processes is encouraging; to show in convincing detail how a Peircean approach to historical facts would explain, interpret, and recontextualize those facts is “the next inevitable step.” But, whatever shortcomings there possibly are in this book, its contribution to our understanding of Peirce and, beyond this, to the topics to which Viola, tracing the trajectory of Peirce’s own thought, has devoted himself is singular. To this author, a large gratitude is owed for this immensely – and diversely – useful study.