

PROBING THE COMMUNAL MIND

Several persons contributed answers or research leads to the questions asked in the last issue of PPNL. In particular, we want to recognize Don Hebert, Director of Theatre at Texas Baptist University, for valuable information about Steele MacKaye (Qu. 6), as well as Joseph Brent and Stephen Pollard. Thanks! Here are some solutions or suggestions.

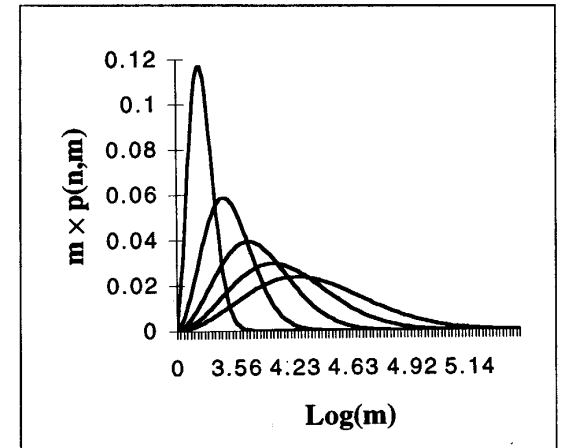
Qu. 8. The mysterious fragment page (547: 12) that was the object of this question has now been identified. In it Peirce was criticizing a certain author for some faulty logical conceptions. We asked for an identification of that author and got several leads from our readers: the names of Leibniz, Ulrici, and Bradley were suggested. But it turns out that our original suspicion was the correct one: Peirce was criticizing Kant. We recently found the leaf that immediately follows 547: 12 in 839: 161, in which Peirce is clearly alluding to Kant. That other page had already been filed previously at the back of PEP MS 555, after pages 1368: 2-4, three pages that constitute Peirce's first draft of an unpublished review of Kant's *Introduction to Logic*, and his *Essay on the Mistaken Subtlety of the Four Figures* translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott with a few notes by Coleridge (republished by Greenwood Press, 1963, 1972); that draft was published in W5: 258-59 (Fall-Winter 1885). The two pages 547: 12 and 839: 161 form an incomplete alternative draft of this book review. The paper they are written on is identical, and both versions, although very different in what they address, end on a short paragraph about Kant's *Essay on the Mistaken Subtlety*.

A reading of Kant's *Introduction to Logic* confirmed this identification. In section VII, Kant indeed explains that the formal criteria of truth in logic are the principle of contradiction, which determines the logical possibility, and the principle of sufficient reason, which determines the logical actuality, of a cognition (p. 42). Kant identifies on the next page the three principles that serve as the universal logical criteria of truth: (1) the principle of contradiction and of identity by which the intrinsic possibility of a cognition is determined for problematical judgments, (2) the principle of sufficient reason on which the logical actuality of a cognition depends (making it usable in assertorial judgments), and (3) the principle of excluded middle on which the logical necessity of a cognition is based; it is the principle of apodictic judgments (pp. 42-43). It is precisely those assertions that Peirce criticizes in pages 547: 12 and 839: 61 (says Peirce: "the book abounds with similar instances of perverse ingenuity."). Page 547: 12 has now been added to PEP MS 555, just before 839: 61.

Qu. 11. We quoted excerpts of two versions of the sixth chapter, "The Triad in Biological Development," of "A Guess at the Riddle," in one of which Peirce refers to a diagram showing curves of distribution of wealth among players at the end of the 100th, 400th, 900th, 1600th, and 2500th throws of a die. We asked whether anyone could try to recreate the missing diagram. We were very happy to receive an excellent contribution from Prof. Stephen Pollard, Truman State University (Missouri), who sent us on 22 May 1996 an elaborate document with his proposed solution. What follows is a form of Prof. Pollard's chart, with a brief explanation. Readers who are interested in the full explanation may contact us.

The five successive curves (from highest to lowest) indicate the distribution of utility after 100, 400, 900, 1600, and 2500 throws. Since dollar amounts are not the best way to measure the utility of

money (1 dollar has more utility for a poor man than for a rich man), the utility (x coordinate) is represented by the logarithm of the dollar amount. Peirce's "moral wealth" differs from this utility only by a change of scale. Having transformed the x coordinates in this way, we have to modify the y coordinates too, since Peirce intended the curves to represent probability density functions. To do so, we only need to replace $p(n,m)$ by m times $p(n,m)$, where $p(n,m)$ is the probability that a player has m dollars after n rounds of the game. As the number of rounds increases, the curves widen and flatten, while their maxima move further and further to the right. The widening represents an increasing disparity between the richest and poorest players. This does not mean that the wealth is



distributed ever more unequally. The game can be shown to produce an increasing degree of equality among richer and richer survivors as long as losers are somehow made to disappear.

Qu. 13. This is from Joseph Brent: It seems unlikely that the 15 May 1890 *Nation* review attacking Abbot's *The Way Out of Agnosticism* is by Peirce—except superficially—for the following reasons: 1. It shows no understanding of and makes no reference to Abbot's *Scientific Theism* (1885), whose definitions of realism Peirce used in the *Century Dictionary* (published the year before in 1889) and elsewhere. Furthermore, Peirce was a sympathetic friend of Abbot's who, knowing the tragedies of his life, was not likely to use such a sarcastic tone with him as the review exhibits. 2. Peirce strongly defended Abbot against Royce's attacks on him and *The Way Out of Agnosticism* in the pages of the *Nation* in November 1891 (see my biography pp. 215-19). 3. The last sentence of the first paragraph of the review, "The 'way out,' when sifted down to its real meaning, is simply 'feeling,' which is to stick to certain time-honored beliefs—no matter what facts, science, and the limits of human knowledge may say about our inability to take a rational attitude towards them one way or the other," is Cartesian, not Peircean, in its radical division of mind from body. Furthermore, "feeling" is an odd word to use for Abbot's scientific realism and its experiential basis. 4. In the second paragraph, the sentence, "Those who are in agnosticism generally remain, and those who come out of it generally defy the philosophy which tries to hold them in doubt, and so decide their convictions by sheer force of will," sounds like cocktail party Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or James, but not like Peirce. 5. The reviewer uses "intuition" and "insight" much like Cartesian direct acts of knowledge which are self-evident truths we cannot doubt, as in the sentence in the third paragraph, "religion comes by insight, if it ever comes at all; and . . . philosophy does less to supply new truth than to supervene upon knowledge already acquired." At the time of the review,

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him, but it was also politically and socially a very great loss; it is this sentiment of missing his father that is uppermost in Peirce's allusion to this passage." While interesting, Iliff's solution fails to bring a complete cessation of our doubts.

Why, after all, would Peirce have chosen the name of a place that played no significant historical role, or of a woman about whom nothing of interest is known? This is all the more puzzling in light of the fact that Peirce bought his house in Juliette's name, and that Juliette had little reason to care for a name like Arisbe. We know from the correspondence that for several weeks Peirce considered naming his house "Sunbeam," because Juliette was the sunbeam of his life, as he tells her in a letter of December 1889 at the top of which he drew the contour of kissing lips. So why would he have abandoned a name that breathed his love for his wife? Could it be that Peirce actually did not give up that intention at all but decided to fulfill it somewhat less visibly? Peirce loved conundrums and plays on words. Some time in 1890, no doubt to the French lady's amusement, he found that a piece of pedantry would be a good way to hide an amorous anagram, and that Arisbe would forever and secretly commemorate their first "baiser."