

GÉRARD DELEDALLE (1921–2003).
HIS HUMANISTIC TAKE ON AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Gérard Deledalle played a role of considerable importance in the history of French and American philosophy. A historian of ideas at the crossroads of the three continents of Europe, America, and Africa, Deledalle began his intellectual journey with a close examination of existentialism, which allowed him to strengthen his humanistic convictions. WWII introduced him to the thought of John Dewey, and with it that of pragmatism, pure product of the American philosophical terroir. In it Deledalle saw the philosophy of the future, bringing hope and a source of renewal for mankind, and he devoted his life to the study and teaching of that philosophy.

Shortly after Gérard Deledalle's death on June 12, 2003, the late Professor Peter Hare, editor of the journal *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, asked me to write an article that reflected the entire contribution Deledalle made to American philosophy across the sixty years he devoted to its study and elucidation. Certainly the task was not light, and because of increased commitments I never finished it, but I gladly accepted the honor at the time, for it was to Deledalle that I owed in large part the main impulse behind my own research on Peirce and my career at the Peirce Edition Project in Indianapolis. At about the same time, Deledalle's widow, the late Professor Janice Deledalle-Rhodes (1925–2013), invited me to visit her home in Montbazin, examine her husband's papers and library, and determine whether they were of such significance as to raise the Peirce Project's interest in receiving them at some later point. It was in the context of these tasks and the tribute they implied that in the summer of 2004 I sojourned for nearly four weeks in the Deledalles' residence in Montbazin to take better stock of the entire work, its history, its extent, and its depth. The text of this paper stems largely from what I gleaned during those days spent searching through the many papers of this remarkably engaging philosopher and semiotician. The *Nachlass* Gérard Deledalle left behind is considerable, being the legacy of an intensely studious and productive life. His papers and library were eventually donated to the Peirce Edition Project and the Institute for American Thought, and integrated in the Max H. Fisch Library, where they arrived on July 20, 2015.

I will not retrace here the biographical details of his life, except to signal certain stages indissolubly linked to changes of direction within the philosophical quest and the historical inquiry conducted simultaneously by Deledalle. My aim is to identify a few of the major themes that traverse his work, and show what kind of consistency emerges out of them. I use the word "consistency" deliberately, wanting it to echo Peirce's own use of it at the end of his 1868 text on "Consequences of Four Incapacities." Peirce, after showing that man behaves like a sign, says that what belongs to every sign qua sign is its consistency, namely the particular unity formed by the process of its signifying activity

and that therefore “the identity of a man consists in the *consistency* of what he does and thinks”—that is to say, consists in the general unity of everything that man continually experiences, fashions, and expresses all his life long.

Gérard Deledalle devoted his life to serving philosophy most concretely by practicing two trades whose importance tends to be sometimes unfairly underestimated, the trades of pathfinder and of mediator, or in Peirce's term the profession of “interpretant.” “Gérard Deledalle, humanistic interpretant” could be another title to this tribute.

Deledalle did not believe he deserved the title of philosopher. He was aware that his work could not be measured in terms of creativity or originality against that of thinkers who propose new methods of analysis, new understandings of man and the world, new comprehensive systems. But he gladly referred to himself as rather an intellectual historian, a historian of ideas. Yet there are many places in his articles where he claims to speak as a philosopher, but that is because he wanted to focus on the method of his speech and emphasize its difference from other non-philosophical methods. There is a similarity between philosophy and music: between virtuoso musicians unable to compose new songs and brilliant composers unable to play flawlessly there is a continuum where any amateur or professional musician can be found. That Deledalle belongs to the philosophical continuum is without doubt. That he sat with the interpreters rather than with the composers, let us take note of it while observing that as a player of philosophy he was a virtuoso.

Deledalle underwent a rigorous classical schooling from the time when, at the school of Saint Vincent de Paul Lazarists in Lille, he studied the classics of literature and philosophy without neglecting church history and theology, until the end of the Second World War, when he obtained his license and his graduate degree in philosophy at the Sorbonne. The US Third Army liberated the Champagne in August 1944. Freed from his mandatory service working for the Germans, Deledalle joined the Third Army at once and first worked there as a Civil Affairs interpreter before becoming French representative with the Civil Engineers until the end of Redeployment in 1956. The US military had brought with them a well-stocked library, and it was while perusing it that Deledalle discovered an American author whose intellectual stature few in France suspected, namely John Dewey. Deledalle began to read Dewey, and his classic humanist background familiar with the philosophical issues of the day made him immediately realize the exceptional nature of the thinker with whom he was dealing. To him he devoted his master's thesis, “La vérité comme assertibilité garantie,” and in 1948, with the encouragement of his teacher Jean Wahl who also knew the importance of the production of American philosophers, he registered two theses he planned to accomplish for the state doctorate, “L'idée d'expérience dans la philosophie de John Dewey” and the French translation of a fundamental work Dewey published in 1938, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. Twenty years would be needed for the production of the two dissertations, two decades that were full of learning experiences.

Since our aim is to dig out a few major themes, it is important to understand that this spirit of his, who would spend his life, probably without realizing it yet, studying and

spreading American philosophy across more than one continent, was not an American or Americanized mind but fully European.

The first book Deledalle published in 1949 was indeed devoted to an essentially European philosophy, existential philosophy, which reached its peak in France and elsewhere at that time.¹ This summative book was composed in original and modest fashion at the same time, not being divided into chapters but into “notes,” thirty-six notes outlining sometimes briefly sometimes at greater length the central ideas of Sartre’s existentialism and of the existential philosophies of Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel Camus, Unamuno, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Bataille, Malraux, Mounier and Berdyaev. This book, whose title was simply *L’Existentiel*, already manifested several characteristics of how Deledalle worked and wrote about philosophers—not only philosophers, should we say, but also writers, psychologists, pedagogues, and later semioticians—in short, anyone who became the subject of his investigation. One trait dominates everywhere: the mission of an exposition as rigorous, analytical, and objective as possible. Deledalle’s first concern was to clarify methodically the thoughts he proposed to examine. His approach is that of a scrupulous observer who, like a botanist seeking to identify the phylum of certain plants, attempts to describe the salient or more subtle traits enabling one to compare and contrast a system of thought with another and to identify its individual characters as well as those of its species, genus, or family.

As a spirit eminently pragmatic, Deledalle believed in the effectiveness of distinctions and classifications, in the categorization of thoughts, not in order to freeze them for eternity in artificial poses like stuffed animals, but in order to provide readers with a topographic map, a detailed plan by which those readers may locate themselves without getting lost, recognize the localities, and appreciate the differences in the landscape while understanding their geological underpinnings.

Thus in *L’Existentiel* Deledalle immediately informs readers that his objective is,

first, to “present an analytical overview of the main existentialist philosophies and literatures”;

secondly, to show that there is not *one* thought but *several* existential thoughts divisible into three groups (trans-existential or metaphysical, praeter-existential or analytical, and literary-existential), that this division is before all else *practical* in this that it considers only the means of expression of these thoughts without saying anything of the inexpressible (the existential angst typical of each selected thinker);

thirdly, “to show *what is* existential thought and what place it *should* occupy in the intellectual and moral life of man”; and

fourth, “to invite all men and women who still believe in the value of the human being to *read* and *meditate* on this or that work that meets their intellectual or moral needs” (p. 9).

These four objectives are indicative of Deledalle’s mission. On the one hand, the aim is to provide an “analytical overview,” that is to say, a sort of highly detailed guide that highlights all the attractions of a more or less prolonged visit by explaining their

¹ Gérard Deledalle, *L’Existentiel: philosophies et littératures de l’existence* (Paris: Renée Lacoste, 1949).

elements, ins and outs. The aim is also to offer practical divisions allowing to recognize similarities and differences, difficulty levels of trail runs—a neutral classification that does not prejudge the special character of available experiences. On the other hand, the aim is also, through these descriptions and objective rankings, to emphasize constants, to indicate precisely those universal traits that characterize all existential thoughts so that readers may themselves become able to recognize them for what they are beyond their differences, and this not only for the sheer intellectual pleasure of doing so, but, what is more, for personal moral edification.

The latter consideration should not merely make us smile, because it indicates a concern that will evolve and traverse both the work and action of Deledalle until the end of his life. At the very end of *L'Existentiel*, in the last note preceding the bibliography, our young historian of ideas (who was 28 at the time) explains (p. 275):

The philosophy of existence [...] is in our opinion a sign of the rebirth or rather of the recognition of man.

Man does not want to see himself as a solved problem: he puts himself into question. So it goes from age to age: and it is good that this be so. Answers quickly stifle the issue, but very quickly they dry up and anguish pulverizes them, reduces them to ashes that fertilize the land where grows the man one does not harvest.

The young Deledalle—which at the time, it is important to point out, had just married and become a father—here expresses a kind of pragmatic hope. In the aftermath of a horrible war that showed how man could hate and destroy, here dawns most opportunely a philosophy whose very coming is a sign that man can be reborn, reborn while recognizing in his humanity an irreducible element that deserves preservation and loving care. Deledalle ends *L'Existentiel* by hammering his conviction (p. 279):

There is only one way to *know* man, *be* a man. This man of whom existential philosophy is the recognition and of whom we'd like that philosophy to mark the rebirth in a more human world.

We cannot truly understand the scope of Deledalle's mediating work if we forget the ethical dimension here firmly adopted. What this young man is seeking is a philosophy that not only recognizes man for what he is, but that also participates in his rebirth by laying the foundations of a world where the humanity of man can grow, blossom, accomplish itself, beyond all attempts to reduce it.

Now that philosophy, Deledalle suspected its presence and its promise as soon as he fell upon Dewey and was led through that chance encounter to pragmatism. He had already made room for the latter in his first book by reserving for it a “note”, Note 30 in *L'Existentiel* devoted to North America. But that note was not yet a declaration of love for pragmatism, far from it. One does not declare one's love in a clinical tone, and *L'Existentiel* was the work of a clinician of ideas.

Dewey's philosophy is existential, says Deledalle, but unlike all European existential philosophies, that of Dewey is that of an existential “without angst”; it is that of the *homo americanus*, a human species that appeared not by anguishing about the profound changes which occasioned it, but by keeping confidence in itself while authoring the transformation of its world through the development of science and technology. Dewey affirms the unity of the concrete human being and conceives that unity as the unstable

equilibrium, but tending towards stability, of a functional whole in continuous relation with its environment.

The young Deledalle is captivated by this emphasis on the inseparability of man and his world, on the continuity between the two. The principle of continuity indeed preserves both the integrity of the thinking and acting subject and the balance of the environment in which they live—social, cultural, and natural environment. There are certainly here important ingredients for the design of a philosophy that would ensure human rebirth. But there are other ingredients that made Deledalle more doubtful and hesitant, ingredients that have to do with what he feared, for not having sufficiently read Dewey, to be a philosophy of success, a philosophy that would not lead, like its European counterparts, into mystery and angst, but into the problem they caused and the operation needed to get rid of them. Deledalle concluded his note on Dewey saying (p. 219):

Dewey's philosophy is the instrumental pragmatism of the man who has succeeded in business, knows the reason for his success and prepares methodically for further success. It is the philosophy of the American man.

Instrumental or not, pragmatism's palpating hook had been set for him, and Deledalle eagerly bit into it, never to set himself free from it. For a while Deledalle tried in this regard to take on the role of composer rather than of philosophical player by endeavoring to lay the foundations of his own system. We find indeed in the documents of that time a few pages—not many—where he provided a sketch of what he called a “diaphysics”:²

Metaphysics has been an attempt to depreciate mankind. Its clearest result, however, has only been a “hominification” of God. The obstacle to the development of a metaphysics was the will to reach the world's nature using human logic as a starting point. [...] Man has only managed to create to date a human metaphysics, a “meta-andrics”.

Metaphysics is not worthless, it is not nonsense either. It is a stage in the history of thought. With it today man ends his selfish course; it is time he produced a metaphysics of the world, of the cosmos, a diaphysics.

Diaphysics is both broader and narrower than metaphysics; broader, it embraces the universe in its entirety, narrower, it does not leave it.

On another sheet Deledalle added:

Diaphysics attempts to regain man at his birth and place him back into his first natural context, unknown to him, cosmogonical for him, known to us, scientific for us.

Deledalle did not write much more about diaphysics—a science not beyond nature but through nature— than what has just been quoted, but it would be a mistake to believe that it remained a philosophy dead in the bud. By studying more the American pragmatists, and beginning to discover Peirce a bit later, he realized that the score he was trying to compose had been written by others with immense felicity—and so he returned and harnessed himself from then on to the task at which he excelled, the virtuoso player, the interpretant in search of a new humanism, of a cosmocentric rather than anthropocentric humanism, to the benefit of the more human at the heart of humanity.

To better understand the idea of experience not only in Dewey's philosophy but also in his psychology and pedagogy, Deledalle understood that he had to investigate more

² Folder “Diaphysique,” Papers of Gérard Deledalle, Institute for American Thought, IUPUI.

widely and deeply about the cosmos that spawned Dewey. He could not understand Dewey without understanding his environment, by virtue of Dewey's principle of continuity. He began therefore to study the history of American philosophy since the Civil War until World War II, and he produced a small book of 200 pages published in 1954 with two prefaces, one by his master Jean Wahl, the other by the American Roy Wood Sellars.

Like the previous book on *L'Existentiel*, the *Histoire de la philosophie américaine* presents an analytical overview of the main American philosophies and shows that there are not just one but several of them—pragmatism, neo-realism (R. B. Perry, Montague), critical realism (Santayana, Lovejoy, R. W. Sellars), naturalism (Santayana, Dewey, Sellars), idealism (Le Conte, Boodin, Howison, Hocking, Creighton). The book describes in detail the basic principles of those thinkers Deledalle considers to be the five major philosophers of the golden age: Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey and Mead. And it invites the reader to a conclusion that draws out the general characters of this American philosophy—that philosophy which, to the delight of Deledalle the diaphysician, opposes to the Cartesian dualism evolutionary naturalism, to substance event, to eternity temporality, to contemplation action, to intuition meaning, to elements collections, to the past the future, to system method, to ivory-tower philosophy team philosophy, to the thinker's philosophy the citizen's philosophy, and to the pessimistic moral of metaphysics the optimistic or melioristic moral of the philosophy of action.

A good tenth of this first book on the history of American philosophy, we should note, is devoted to Peirce. The first six volumes of the *Collected Papers* had been published nearly twenty years earlier and Deledalle read them with intense curiosity. He was immediately attracted and mesmerized by the logical heart of Peirce's system, a heart that unveiled a new, original, and powerful theory—a great prolegomenon to any future diaphysics. Indeed, among all that could be said of Peirce, Deledalle chose to focus mainly on the theory of signs and meaning, on the theory of categories and phaneroscopy, and on the particular philosophical status of Peirce's semiotics whose direct ramifications both in metaphysics and in psychology he had already perceived. Deledalle became quickly persuaded, in the mid fifties, that the triadic logic of signs Peirce had founded as much upon a new theory of categories as upon a new logic, no longer syllogistic and predicative but relational—that that logic of signs constituted the cornerstone of the new philosophy, the one by which man could be reborn thanks to a new way of recognizing himself.

Deledalle had immediately understood what William James could not fully appreciate despite the many lessons Peirce had inflicted on him, and what Josiah Royce eventually ended up understanding though only very late (to his regret), that the pragmatist philosophy could not become a classic contribution to the history of thought by ignoring or neglecting Peirce's phaneroscopy and logic. Pragmatism without Peirce was a pragmatism without solid foundation. With Peirce and his social logic of signs, pragmatism was losing its apparent arbitrariness and earned a framework enabling it to withstand the vicissitudes of criticism. The main reason was that the pragmatic maxim Peirce, famously published by him in his 1878 text "How to Make Our ideas Clear," was

actually a logical maxim Peirce had derived from a logical and not a psychological study of signs—as he represented much later in 1904,³ and as Paul Forster demonstrated in an article published in 2003 in the *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*. What Peirce thus brought was a foundation in principle provable of pragmatism, showing that this philosophy was nothing but the development of all the consequences of the lessons taught by the logical examination of the representational mechanism, not a dyadic but a triadic mechanism, involving a philosophy no longer nominalistic as that which was and still remains dominant—although it has here and there been losing momentum—but fully realistic.

It is at this stage fitting to open a parenthesis to say a few words about Deledalle's interest in psychology, and especially in American psychology, from the early fifties until the late sixties. We must remember that in France at the time, psychology was studied in the faculties of philosophy and that it was common for philosophers to discourse on psychology. Now Deledalle read many American philosophers, many of whom were intensely curious about psychology, starting of course with William James, the “figurehead” of American psychology.

Deledalle in 1950 published a long article on this American psychology in two issues of the magazine *L'Ecole*, before expanding it into a long chapter entitled “La psychologie expérimentale américaine,” which became the second chapter of Paul Foulquié's book on *La psychologie contemporaine* published in 1951.⁴ Just as Deledalle's other works, this chapter sought to provide an analytical overview of the different kinds of psychology at work in the United States: experimental in James, structural in Cattell and Titchener, functional in Dewey and the Chicago School, behaviorist in Watson. The reader was then invited to appreciate, beyond the differences, the common characteristics of these psychologies, namely the primacy they give to practice over experimentation and to experimentation over theory. A theory does not have to explain but to suggest possibilities of experimentation, and experimentation must produce results applicable to everyday life. James's pluralistic pragmatism saves this psychology from materialism by instilling it with the respect for conscience and mind. And above all its main objective is to establish the complete science of man, that is to say, a science that respects Dewey's principle of continuity. We may easily grasp the kind of interest psychology represented for Deledalle owing to its continuity with American pragmatism.

Like Dewey, and of course following in his footsteps, Deledalle also studied pedagogy intensely. He wrote many articles to expound the pedagogy of Dewey and his school. This is a subject that fascinated him and which he continued to write upon, in his familiar vein of an analytic overview—as well as synthetic—until his death. He published in 1965 a small book on *La pédagogie de John Dewey* that was well received by teachers—witness for instance the late Olivier Reboul, upon whom the work had a great influence.

What justified Deledalle's sustained and continuous interest for Deweyan pedagogy? Always the same reason: it was a pedagogy that led not only to a “new humanism”

³ In manuscript titled “Topical Geometry,” R 137: 92–93.

⁴ FOULQUIÉ P. (1951), chap. 2: “La psychologie expérimentale américaine”, pp. 48–95.

(p. 108), but in its very design to a continually renewed humanism, that is to say, constantly attuned to the new problems, especially educational, encountered in different societies. Again, what attracted Deledalle in his study of Dewey's pedagogy was not this pedagogy for itself, but the pragmatic spirit that inhabited it. When asked whether fifteen years after Dewey's death—and a fortiori today—one still ought to adopt Dewey's pedagogy in theory and in practice, Deledalle clearly answered (p. 109):

No, and for the following reason: The principle of continuity requires constant revision of experience based on the present problems of experience. Both the theory and the practice of Deweyan education are the answer to a problem that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when [...] traditional education was no longer able to give the individual the necessary training—both intellectual and moral—to live in society. Today, we have *other* problems to which Dewey himself invites us to find the right solutions—and which are no longer his own—in conformity with the principle of continuity.

And Deledalle concluded, once again manifesting his own consistency (p. 115):

Dewey trusts men to understand and apply his principle as he himself understood and applied it, in his community in his time, as an act of continuous faith in man and in the world of values that characterize *humanism*, as much that of ancient Greece as that of the scientific twentieth century. It is an act of faith in life and in the life of the mind. What human being worthy of the name would refuse to associate himself with it?

This question ends the book by issuing an ethical challenge to contemporary man; it manifests the existential angst that has since the beginning caught Deledalle in its grip—an anxiety which finds its solution in the lack of angst of melioristic and optimistic pragmatism. But the struggle is constant and the danger posed by nominalist practices favoring dualism and discontinuity requires constant vigilance.

While he taught at the University of Tunis during these same 1960s, a debate arose regarding the redesign of the curriculum in psychology. Deledalle did not join that debate orally because he knew it had been undermined in advance, but at the end of it he wrote a letter to the university pro-rector (December 10 of an unspecified year, but probably c. 1968), a few passages of which are worth quoting because they again reflect the philosophical identity of this French thinker.⁵

Should psychology train pilots, help sell washing machines, or should it form mankind? The whole problem is there.

Modern psychology, by separating itself from philosophy, also separated itself from man. Wanting to become 'scientific', it became by force of circumstances a physics [...]. I have been following for twenty years the evolution of American thought and, among other expressions of this thought, of psychology. Now there is a gulf between the Treaty of William James who [...] was a humanist and [...] today's experimental psychology: man has given way to the rat. [...] The modern technicist psychology is perfectly suited to what in man is not human.

The technicist psychologist lacks two things: a philosophy of science and a philosophy of man. Because he does not have the former, he thought he could move from his experiments on rats to humans, and that he could apply to man the methods that work (if even at that!) on rats. [...] Because he does not have the latter, man appears to him to be a being with stereotypical behavior obeying the laws that ratology reveals. Now this is precisely what is in question. The laws of

⁵ Letter to M. Ahmed Abdessellem, pro-rector of the University of Tunis, 10 December (1968 ?), folder "Corresp. française — Michel Foucault (corresp. et notes)", Papers of Gérard Deledalle, Institute for American Thought, IUPUI.

behavior and learning do not concern us, or rather, they concern man only to the extent that being human is to infringe those laws to foil them, in other words to make progress.

Both existential philosophy and the pragmatism that does not fall into the trap of nominalism proclaim the irreducibility of the human being. What is human cannot be reborn more human if its competence is limited to analyses and inferences made from statistical snapshots taken from man's experience by technicians non imbued with philosophy. For Deledalle all the so-called human sciences should be the sciences of the means for man to excel, that is to say, to exceed the averages that those sciences would have otherwise assigned to him. In this sense Deledalle was by no means backward. He was thoroughly in favor of modern psychology, as long as the latter remained in its proper place, as an exposition of our limits, but an exposition refusing to judge those limits. This judgment is reserved to the man who, by accomplishing himself, fashions for himself a philosophy of man. "Psychology is for man and not man for psychology," concluded Deledalle in his letter to the pro-rector. Man is a plant that grows on land one does not harvest, he had written twenty years earlier. The role of the human sciences is not to harvest but to fertilize the ground and let man grow there.

When Deledalle finished writing his two dissertations for the state doctorate, he ran immediately into a difficulty that recurred many times afterward: the difficulty of finding a publisher willing to take the risk of publishing a book, fat or thin, about an illustrious little-known figure. Witness for example the letter of Gaston Gallimard written on 6 September 1965:⁶

The work that you have devoted to John Dewey called "L'idée d'expérience dans la philosophie de John Dewey" was read here with greatest interest. But we do not think that your thesis can meet a large enough audience for us to ensure a good dissemination. John Dewey is little known in France and what is said of him in the *Histoire de la Philosophie Américaine* of Herbert W. Schneider, published in the NRF in 1955, is, we believe, sufficient for the average reader and even for very cultured readers.

Please be assured that we regret having to make this response and we beg you to believe in all our esteem.

We are free to speculate why Gallimard thought the enormous interest of his publishing house for Deledalle's book could not be shared by the rest of the French public, cultivated or not; we are also free to regret that these publishers did not absorb the humanistic message of the existential philosophers whose books they had been able to sell at a profit. The letter from Gallimard reflected a state of mind that was not only commercial but also shared by the intellectual environment of the time.

The Presses Universitaires de France fortunately agreed eventually to publish the two books—thus also the translation of Dewey's *Logic*—in 1967 (in Tunis), and Deledalle was able to defend his dissertation with greatest honor. I will not claim that Deledalle's work had a considerable impact, but everyone who studied it praised the feat accomplished unqualifiedly, and that on both sides of the Atlantic. Herbert Schneider, for example, wrote that *L'Idée d'expérience* gave us "by far the most comprehensive exposition of the

⁶ Letter from Gaston Gallimard to G. Deledalle, 6 September 1965, folder "Corresp. française — Michel Foucault (corresp. et notes)", Papers of Gérard Deledalle, Institute for American Thought, IUPUI.

growth and substance of Dewey's philosophy that has appeared to date, and that probably will ever appear."⁷

Faithful to his method, Deledalle provided a truly staggering analytical and chronological panorama of Deweyan thought, covering nearly every text published by Dewey, and manifesting an erudition and mastery of his subject that remains a model for every historian of ideas. In twenty years of patient and obstinate research, taking the time to understand the cosmos that spawned Dewey throughout his long life, Deledalle deepened his intimate understanding of this thought so that he not only rid himself of his first hasty judgments regarding Dewey's mercantile instrumentalism, but he also became convinced that Dewey's philosophy of experience had all the qualities required to become, as he concluded at the end of the book, a perennial philosophy, a philosophy with a future as flourishing as that of Plato or Aristotle, Dewey having done "for the modern city what [the latter two] did for the ancient city" (p. 531), that is, to bring "a new method, a new way to address and resolve the problems of men in the new mobile society, a new way of *experiencing* the world, which is re-construction and re-creation of the world and man" (p. 532). We see thereby that Dewey became for Deledalle the diaphysician par excellence.⁸

It was shortly after he finished and defended his dissertation on Dewey that Deledalle returned his attention to Peirce, and this time never to let him go. He published in 1969 in the *Revue philosophique* a translation of a late text by Peirce, "What Is Pragmatism"—"La nature du pragmatisme,"⁹ and this publication kicked off a long series of articles, translations, lectures, courses, seminars, on various aspects of Peirce's philosophy, but mostly—and in this he remained faithful to his 1954 chapter on Peirce—to phaneroscopy, the theory of categories, semiotics, and pragmatism.

Deledalle left Tunisia in 1972 to run for two years the Franco-Japanese Institute in Tokyo. After returning from Japan he obtained a philosophy chair at the University of Perpignan and founded the Institute for Research in Semiotics, Communication, and Education (IRSCE). It will be noted that the three research topics of the Institute, semiotics, communication, and education, reflect Deledalle's consistent identity, as humanistic interpretant and secret agent of diaphysics. This Institute and its members procured Deledalle, player of pragmatist philosophy, the ideal platform and audience before whom and with whom he could soon perform—and that meant teaching the semiotic theory of Peirce, developing adequate pedagogical tools, deepening the understanding of that theory and that philosophy, and working hard and tirelessly to make it better known, contrast it with other mainstream or competing theories, and highlight its benefits and virtues. This is not the place for retracing the history of that Institute, but let us emphasize the boundless recognition owed to the Institute founded by

⁷ SCHNEIDER H. W. (1968), p. 300.

⁸ The only regret Deledalle felt regarding his work, and was really sad about, was that he had never found the time or the means to get his dissertation translated into English. The consequence is that most American specialists of Dewey have never read Deledalle's groundbreaking book.

⁹ C. S. Peirce, "La nature du pragmatisme", introd. and transl. by G. Deledalle, in *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 159 (1969): 31–60.

Deledalle, a recognition that acknowledges its rightful place in the recent history of Peircean and more widely semiotic studies in Europe. Without the Institute, it is not certain that there would have been in fact such a history.

But back to Deledalle and Peirce. There is so much that deserves to be said on this subject, but I will limit myself to mentioning only those elements that enter Deledalle's neo-humanist project that has guided me so far. So I will not mention the titanic fights that Deledalle had repeatedly to wage to convince publishing houses to publish sometimes translations (collective or not), sometimes his own work. Let it be known simply that the victories were not easy, demanded years of patience in many cases, and that if today Peirce studies, and more generally pragmatist studies, do better in France and Europe, it is largely due to Deledalle's unstinting subterranean work. I also pass over the details of his considerable contribution to semiotics.

Deledalle was fond of claiming that the United States had produced two great philosophers, one, John Dewey, the philosopher of the man in the street, and the other, Charles S. Peirce, the philosopher of philosophers. Not only that, but Deledalle also thought that Peirce would be the philosopher of the twenty-first century. Until the twentieth century, Western philosophy remained the heir of Greece and its metaphysics of being. Greek philosophy provided an ontology that St. Paul reconciled in Christianity with the monotheism of Israel, which is how Greek philosophy, as Deledalle put it,¹⁰ became universal—became philosophy per se. The founding fathers of America who fled Europe and its imperialism also fled its philosophy, so it is not the latter that could provide solutions to their theoretical and practical problems. Another philosophy became necessary, which could only be pluralistic and pragmatic, and that is how it came to be born in America. This new philosophy, which is not an extension of Western philosophy, is based on a new type of relationship between man and world, a relationship whose logic implies no longer an essentialist conception of the world in which we live, but a phenomenological conception of which Peirce happens to be the only logician and theorist. This phenomenology or phaneroscopy inscribes in the history of thought, next to the dualistic paradigm of Western thought, a new paradigm which includes, as Sandra Rosenthal has shown, all pragmatists. “All the pragmatists,” Rosenthal wrote, “[...] converge toward a process metaphysics that can be characterized in terms of the categories of Firstness or quality, diversity, spontaneity, unity, possibility; Secondness, or interaction, over-againstness, shock, presentness, actuality, existence, discreteness; Thirdness, or dispositional tendencies, potentialities, lawful modes of behavior.”¹¹

In an 1990 article entitled “Peirce in the history of thought: American philosophy and the new universal philosophy,” Deledalle has sought to show how the three Peircean categories have actually penetrated and saturated American philosophy. Firstness characterizes the American transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau. Secondness characterizes the pragmatist philosophy of action, a philosophy whose growth required a new country of pioneers who are not merely looking at the outside world that eludes them, but who care to act to transform it. Of this, Deledalle said, Europe was quite simply

¹⁰ DELEDALLE G. (1990), p. 30.

¹¹ ROSENTHAL S. B. (1986), p. 112.

incapable. Thirdness, finally, characterizes the metaphysics of the pragmatists, a metaphysics that does justice to the three categorial dimensions of reality and experience, namely that of chance that can be found in Peirce's "tychism" which underlies fallibilism, that of the principle of continuity found in the synechism that underlies among others the faith of the pragmatist in the knowability of all things and in the self-correcting power of experimental knowledge, and that the principle of love that we find in agapism, and which manifests itself without ever being able to be expressed in words.

In 1995 Deledalle published a charming little book whose title posed the question "Can philosophy be American?" His purpose in writing it was not to defend the idea of an American philosophy—something he had already done for a long time—but to defend a new universal philosophy of the West, born perhaps in the United States, but whose content and promises transcended entirely its American origin.¹² Pragmatism is American but no longer belongs to America. "The task of the philosopher," wrote Deledalle, "is today no longer to tell what is,—what we should *know*—but to act to meet the needs,—the *hopes*—of man in society."¹³ From this standpoint, he added, Dewey is indeed the philosopher of today's global world whose limits exceed those of the Western world. But then, if it truly was America's destiny to give birth to the new philosophy of pragmatism, we owe it to Peirce in the first place, Peirce without whom, as Deledalle concluded his latest book *La philosophie des signes de Charles S. Peirce*, philosophy would not be what it is, not only in America but around the world.¹⁴

Herein is the tenor of the neo-humanistic and philosophical message that Gérard Deledalle bequeathed us—a message of tenacious hope in man's most human. "What human being worthy of the name would refuse to listen to it?"

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¹² As Deledalle explained in a letter to his publisher Micher Grancher (from the éditions Jacques Grancher) on 6 October 1995.

¹³ DELEDALLE G. (1995), p. 279.

¹⁴ DELEDALLE G. (2000), p. 189.

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This essay is an English translation of a text composed in July 2004, at the end of several weeks spent in the late Gérard Deledalle's home in Montbazin, France. Titled “Gérard Deledalle, Interprétant Humaniste,” that essay was presented at a round-table organized by Joëlle Réthoré to honor Deledalle's memory at the 9th World Congress of the International Association for Semiotics Studies (2004) in Lyon, France. Deledalle's widow Janice Deledalle-Rhodes (†2013) had welcomed me in their home so that I could catalogue the entire collection of Deledalle's papers and assess its historical significance (immense).