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**Author:** Magada-Ward, Mary

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**Abstract:** In two fairly early papers, Charles Sanders Peirce claims both that logic should teach us how to be "masters of our own meaning" (EP 1, 126) and that the meaning of a thought is "altogether something virtual" (EP 1, 42). For those of us still struggling to free ourselves from Cartesian subjectivism, with its "elusive and misleading ideal" of certainty (Lachs 1996, 20), these claims appear difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile. For Peirce, however, "modern science and modern logic" (EP 1, 28) show us that "the problem becomes how to fix belief, not in the individual merely, but in the community" (EP 1, 117). As a consequence, he will insist that "the existence of thought now, depends on what it is to be hereafter, so that it has only a potential existence, dependent on the future thought of the community" (EP 1, 54). (...)

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