

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the basic delimiting of the issue of play within the framework C. S. Peirce's semiotics. Its objective is to expound and explicate the role of the phenomena of play in Peirce's philosophy using selected Peirce's texts and secondary literature, whereas our main starting-point is Peirce's identification of play with the inferential form of abduction. As such play is connected to Peirce's theories of sign and inference, as well as to the concepts of synechism, evolutionary cosmology and pragmatism. This finding sets Peirce's theory of inference within critical logic as one of the key themes of the thesis. In relation to this finding we give a basic explanation of Peirce's phaneroscopy and speculative grammar which in dependency on Peirce's classification of sciences set the ground for our analysis of play as a process of inference as well as a significant function. Within the framework of critical logic we focus primarily on abduction, especially on the question of the validity of abduction as a form of logical reasoning as well as on Peirce's transition from understanding different forms of inference as separate processes to understanding them as a continuous and interdependent whole of the scientific method. We develop Peirce's brief conception of play through an excursion into the historical-descriptive analysis of play of Johan Huizinga. The final chapter then deals with a comparison between Peirce and Huizinga and also with the semiotic analysis of play which is based on the findings obtained in the preceding chapters.