

This essay follows a path laid down by the collaboration of Charles Darwin with Chauncey Wright, so as to explore the niche subsequently developed by Wright's closest friends, especially William James and Charles Peirce. Charles Darwin offered us no definition of life, and certainly no definition of being; he seems never to have been particularly interested in either his theological studies or any of the philosophy that happened his way. However by definition, he did operate by means of – and through the agency therein – a specific ontological set. His was one wherein the quickening of life is reciprocal becoming. Despite the obvious efficacy and élan this set has offered and vast libraries devoted to the man, Darwin's Ontology remains woefully under studied. And yet Darwin did specifically engage Wright to develop philosophical considerations of his science, a study which came to demand a redefinition of thinking itself, of sapience, and of the consequences of rationality which include the various constructions we call science and religion, knowing and believing, culture and self, but also cause and effect, existence and being, and more. We will follow the various streams of influence and chart some of the confluences therein, primarily through the immediate encounter of Wright with Darwin, and then on to chart the development of Darwin's Ontology within/throughout some principle features of James and Peirce. Our intent is to critique and thereby clarify our mental mapping, and better adapt it to the terrain we inhabit. Our methodology and purpose will follow each other; they are at once pragmatic and historical – to study the record of the past so as to open more potential for extended continuity, future study and greater being, by performing in real time acts of metaphysical ecopoiesis.