

Douglas Anderson

*Peirce, Observation, and the Discipline of Waiting*

In the essay at hand I explore a few features of the practice of observing suggested by Charles Peirce. Peirce saw the human inquirer as having a natural ability to «know» or to learn, and he saw observation in its many guises as the key to knowing. But observing is more than merely looking—it is a process of coming to know by an embodied organism living in a natural environment. The process is in part self-controlled and therefore is open to amelioration. My aim here is to discuss briefly a few of the things Peirce thought we might do to improve our observing skills, one of which was to develop a discipline of waiting that would help us avoid the tendency to dominate and over-determine our observing processes.