
On Emerson and Peirce

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Abstract

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In "The Law of Mind" (1892)) Charles Sanders Peirce states that a "transcendentalist virus" that he traces to Emerson and Schelling may be coming to the surface in his work. But how does it appear? I argue that the virus shows up not only in Peirce's claim that matter is "effete" or deadened mind, but in the specific laws or ideas that govern mind-robust or effete as it may be. The connection to Emerson is especially apparent in "Evolutionary Love" (1893), one of four companion papers to "The Law of Mind," and in Peirce's use of Emerson's image of the Sphinx. I also consider the importance of surprise in the writings of both writers.

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