**Paul Carus 1852‑1919**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\_Carus

   

  

**Paul Carus, Ph.D.** (1852‑1919) was a [German-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German-American) [author](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Author), [editor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editing), a student of comparative religion,[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Dictionary-0) and former [professor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor) of [philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Friesian-1)

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| **Contents*** [1 Life and education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Life_and_education)
* [2 Career](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Career)
* [3 Carus's world view and philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Carus.27s_world_view_and_philosophy)
	+ [3.1 Religion of Science](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Religion_of_Science)
	+ [3.2 Criticisms of Carus' ideas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Criticisms_of_Carus.27_ideas)
* [4 Legacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Legacy)
* [5 References](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#References)
* [6 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#External_links)
	+ [6.1 Bibliography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#Bibliography)
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**Life and education**

Carus was born at [Ilsenburg, Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilsenburg), and educated at the universities of [Strassburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Strasbourg), [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) and [Tübingen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eberhard_Karls_University_of_T%C3%BCbingen), [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany). After obtaining his Ph. D from Tübingen in 1876[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Monist-2) he served in the army and then taught school. He had been raised in a pious and orthodox Protestant home, but gradually moved away from this tradition.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Encounter-3)

He left [Bismarck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_von_Bismarck)'s [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) for the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), "because of his liberal views".[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Friesian-1) [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-OpenCourt-4) After he immigrated to the USA (in 1884) he lived in [Chicago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago%2C_Illinois), and in [LaSalle, Illinois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LaSalle%2C_Illinois). Paul Carus married Edward C. Hegeler's daughter Mary (Marie) and the couple later moved into the [Hegeler Carus Mansion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegeler_Carus_Mansion), built by her father. They had six children.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Foundation-5)

**Career**

In America Carus briefly edited a German-language journal and wrote several articles for the *Index*, the [Free Religious Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Religious_Association) organ.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Dictionary-0)

Soon after, he became the first managing editor of the [Open Court Publishing Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Court_Publishing_Company), founded in 1887 by his father-in-law.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-OpenCourt-4) The goals of Open Court were to provide a forum for the discussion of philosophy, science, and religion, and to make philosophical classics widely available by making them affordable.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Foundation-5)

He also acted as the editor for two periodicals published by the company, *The Open Court* and [*The Monist*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Monist)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Monist-2)

He was introduced to [Charles Sanders Peirce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce#Poverty), the founder of [American Pragmatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Pragmatism), by Judge Francis C. Russell of Chicago. Carus stayed abreast of Peirce's work and would eventually publish a number of his articles.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-6)

During his lifetime, Carus published 75 books and 1500 articles,[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Foundation2-7) mostly through Open Court Publishing Company. He wrote books and articles on history, politics, philosophy, religion, logic, mathematics, anthropology, science, and social issues of his day. In addition, Carus corresponded with many of the greatest minds of the late 19th and early 20th century. Sending and receiving letters from [Leo Tolstoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy), [Thomas Edision](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Edision), [Nichola Tesla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nichola_Tesla), [Booker T. Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booker_T._Washington), [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton), [Ernst Mach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Mach), [Ernst Haeckel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Haeckel), [John Dewey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey), and many more.

**Carus's world view and philosophy**

Carus considered himself a [theologian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theologian) rather than [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher). He referred to himself as "an atheist who loved God".[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-8) [[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Radical-9)

Carus is proposed to be a pioneer in the promotion of [interfaith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interfaith) dialogue. He explored the relationship of science and religion, and was instrumental in introducing Eastern traditions and ideas to the West.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-OpenCourt-4) He was a key figure in the introduction of [Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism), to the West,[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Encounter-3) sponsoring Buddhist translation work of [D.T. Suzuki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D.T._Suzuki), and fostering a lifelong working friendship with Buddhist Master, [Soyen Shaku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soyen_Shaku). Carus’ interest in Asian religions seems to have intensified after he attended the [World’s Parliament of Religions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_World%27s_Religions) (in 1893).

For years afterwards, Carus was a strong sympathizer of Buddhist ideas, but stopped short of committing fully to this, or any other, religion. Instead, he ceaselessly promoted his own rational concept which he called the “Religion of Science." Carus had a selective approach and he believed that religions evolve over time. After a battle for survival, he expected a "cosmic religion of universal truth" to emerge from the ashes of traditional beliefs.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Encounter-3)

**Religion of Science**

Carus was a follower of [Benedictus de Spinoza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictus_de_Spinoza); he was of the opinion that Western thought had fallen into error early in its development in accepting the distinctions between body and mind and the material and the spiritual. (Kant's [phenomenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenal#Kant.27s_use_of_phenomenon) and [noumenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noumenal) realms of knowledge; Christianity's views of the [soul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul) and the [body](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body), and the [natural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural) and the [supernatural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supernatural)). Carus rejected such dualisms, and wanted science to reestablish the unity of knowledge. The philosophical result he labeled [*Monism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monism).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Dictionary-0)

His version of *monism* is more closely associated with a kind of [pantheism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheism), although it was occasionally identified with [positivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positivism).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Radical-9) He regarded every [law of nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_nature) as a part of God's being. Carus held that [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God) was the name for a *cosmic order* comprising "all that which is the bread of our spiritual life." He held the concept of a [personal God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_God) as untenable. He acknowledged [Jesus Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ) as a redeemer, but not as the only one, for he believed that other religious founders were equally endowed with similar qualities.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Radical-9)

His beliefs attempted to steer a middle course between idealistic [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics) and [materialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Materialism). He differed with metaphysicians because they "reified" words and treated them as if they were realities, and he objected to materialism because it ignored or overlooked the importance of form. Carus emphasized form by conceiving of the divinity as a cosmic order. He objected to any monism which sought the unity of the world, not in the unity of truth, but in the oneness of a logical assumption of ideas. He referred to such concepts as *henism*, not monism.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Radical-9)

Carus held that [truth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth) was independent of [time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time), human desire, and human [action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_%28philosophy%29). Therefore, science was not a human invention, but a human [revelation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation) which needed to be apprehended; discovery meant apprehension; it was the result or manifestation of the cosmic order in which all truth were ultimately harmonious.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-Radical-9)

**Criticisms of Carus' ideas**

It is claimed that Carus' was dismissed by Orientalists and philosophers alike because of his failure to comply with the rules of either discipline.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-10)

**Legacy**

The legacy of Paul Carus is honored through the efforts of the *Hegeler Carus Foundation*, the *Carus Lectures* at the [*American Philosophical Association*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Philosophical_Association) *(APA)*, and the *Paul Carus Award for Interreligious Understanding*[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_note-11) by the *Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR)*.

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2. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Friesian_1-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Friesian_1-1) [Austrian Philosophy](http://www.friesian.com/austrian.htm#note), by Barry Smith, Note
3. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Monist_2-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Monist_2-1) [The Monist:An International Quarterly Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry](http://www.nlx.com/Journals/mst.htm), featuring essays from scholars around the globe.
4. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Encounter_3-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Encounter_3-1) [***c***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Encounter_3-2) [The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0807849065/), by Thomas A. Tweed (Paperback), page 65-67
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8. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Foundation2_7-0) [History of the Heleger Carus Foundation - Open Court Publishing Company](http://www.hegelercarus.org/history/)
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10. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Radical_9-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Radical_9-1) [***c***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Radical_9-2) [***d***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Radical_9-3) [***e***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-Radical_9-4) [Recent American Thought](http://www.radicalacademy.com/amphilosophy8.htm#carus), from [The Radical Academy](http://radicalacademy.com/adiphildirectory.htm)
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12. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Carus#cite_ref-11) [The Paul Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement](http://www.cpwr.org/what/programs/carusaward.htm). *See also:* [*Carus Award 2004*](http://www.cpwr.org/2004Parliament/assets/CarusAward.pdf)

**External links**

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* [Hegeler Carus Foundation](http://www.hegelercarus.org/)
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