

# Peirce's transmutation of Schelling's *Philosophie der Natur*

*A transmutação de Peirce da Philosophie der Natur de Schelling*

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**Abstract:** The paper postulates a trans-Atlantic paradigm to account for the continuity between the thought of Schelling and Peirce. Praising Schelling's freedom from the trammels of system, Peirce declared his interest in all stages of Schelling's career, and especially his *Philosophie der Natur*. In the course of the developmental teleology of his career-text, Peirce digested and transformed, via his semiotic ontology of the Three Categories, basic features of Schelling's idealistic and post-idealistic phases.

**Keywords:** Trans-Atlantic paradigm. Methodology of career-texts. Schelling's freedom from the trammels of system. *Naturphilosophie*. Ontological and semeiotic categories.

**Resumo:** O artigo postula um paradigma transatlântico responsável pela continuidade entre o pensamento de Schelling e Peirce. Exaltando a liberdade de Schelling dos tremalhos do sistema, Peirce declarou o seu interesse em todos os estágios da carreira de Schelling e, em especial, a *Philosophie der Natur*. No curso da teleologia de desenvolvimento de sua carreira, Peirce digeriu e transformou, por meio de sua ontologia semiótica das Três Categorias, características básicas das fases idealistas e pós-idealistas de Schelling.

**Palavras-chave:** Paradigma transatlântico. Metodologia de carreira. Liberdade de Schelling dos tremalhos do sistema. *Naturphilosophie*. Categorias ontológicas e semióticas.

*Müssset im Naturbetrachten  
Immer eins wie alles achten:  
Nichts ist drinnen, nichts is dräusen;  
Denn was innen, das ist aussen.  
So ergreifet ohne Säumnis  
Heilig öffentlich Geheimnis.  
Goethe, *Epirrhema* (c. 1819)*

## 1 Preamble: A Trans-Atlantic Paradigm

Scholars “doing philosophy” in the contemporary styles should bear in mind that the current distribution of professional interests is an ephemeral phenomenon. Regional-based studies of select authors and themes are shifting forms of identity politics that come and go. They are often narrow-gauged, “selfie”-concerned, and tending to neglect a fuller variety of philosophic positions even in the contemporary marketplace of ideas. Witness any large-scale philosophy convention today. This fractious way of “doing philosophy” tends to become a “doing business,” driven by career goals and opportunities. And it is often carried on in a turf-promoting perspective that puts *sur erature* the historical legacies of the major paradigms as well. Related to the latter tendency is the practice whereby “the critic replaces the author.” Such practices tend to produce heteroarchic, not to mention deliberately deconstructive, readings of the great authors of the past, while pushing local, often social-activist, agendas (nationalistic, globalistic, feminist, ethnicist, etc.) in the contemporary arena.

The construction of “Classical American philosophy” is one case in point, and will occupy us here. It is liable to become its own *a-historical* turf defended for its “brand.” But let us be reminded that our “typical American” philosopher, William James, an inveterate traveler to Europe, was no chauvinist. As a world-renowned psychologist and philosopher he addressed a trans-Atlantic republic of letters. The case of Peirce, the subject of this paper, was similar. In tandem with his several trips to Europe on international scientific teams, Peirce mastered a broad range of mathematical, logical, and scientific subjects, while explicitly inspiring to be “one of those polywags dedicated to pursuing the truth for its own sake.”<sup>1</sup> There is nothing scholastic or especially “American” in the long stretch of Peirce’s career. His inter-national and inter-generational concern for determining “the logic of inquiry” is even harder to place than James within narrow-banded academic camps.

History affords some perspective on this phenomenon. 19<sup>th</sup>-century ties with European scientific, artistic, and philosophic fronts were still strong in the heyday of James and Peirce. The First and Second World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century arguably contributed to chauvinistic tendencies by separating the European, especially German, from British and American cultural and academic traditions. America’s contemporary loss of appreciation of the high-culture impact of Goethe and Schiller is a case in point. Disingenuous philosophers like Santayana (aping Nietzsche) made

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1 Peirce’s promotion of “the will to learn” as distinguished from “the will to believe” appears ubiquitously in his writings, together with his sense of “the majesty of truth,” which is ultimately “cosmical truth.” *Exemplo gratiae*: “The man of science has received a deep impression of the majesty of truth, as that to which, sooner or later, every knee must bow. He has further found that his own mind is sufficiently akin to that truth, to enable him, on condition of submissive observation, to interpret it in some measure. As he gradually becomes better and better acquainted with the character of cosmical truth, and learns that human reason is its issue, he can be brought step by step into accord with it, he conceives a passion for its fuller revelation” (EP 2:59).

careers out of balkanizing philosophy itself.<sup>2</sup> Notoriously, the more recent British-American “professionalization of philosophy” has taken other partisan forms as well.

“Classical American philosophy,” however, as it originally thrived in the careers of such pioneer figures as Emerson, Peirce, James, and Royce, still had a trans-Atlantic ambit. While of course drawing on a broad background of French and, closer to national origins, of British political, literary, and philosophical traditions—the latter, the predominantly Elizabethan heritage of Shakespeare, Newton, and Locke<sup>3</sup>—these 19<sup>th</sup> c. American philosophers drew even more fundamentally from the *theoretical pools* of the “German Enlightenment” in the generations closer to their own day.<sup>4</sup>

As the paper develops, it should be apparent that it employs “German Enlightenment” not in the broader sense tracing back the Leibnizian and Wolffian rationalistic tradition (which included Kant), but rather refer to what has been called the *Goethezeit*, comprising a broad swath of innovative Romantic as well as post-Romantic ideas developed in response to Kant’s Copernican revolution in philosophy by exponents of the contemporary “Weimar-Jena culture” (Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and others). Arguably Schelling’s career most represents a metamorphosis through all of the “post-Kantian” forms; and Peirce, as we shall see, intriguingly averred he was interested in “all stages of Schelling.” Swedenborg was another influence on James’s father, as well as on Emerson and Peirce.<sup>5</sup>

This briefest consideration of philosophic practices and provenances draws attention to a *trans-Atlantic paradigm* for mid- and late-19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American thought—a paradigm that allows us to see the wider movement of thought in terms of which alone we will be able to measure the achievements of the philosophers and their places in the history of philosophy. It will shed a *needed* light, for example, on James’ later-phase “radical empiricism,” which gains in

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2 E.g. Santayana’s egregiously balkanizing *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916), “The genteel tradition in American Philosophy” (1911), and *Character and opinion in the United States* (1920).

3 See the still informative major work of Emerson’s mid-career, *English Traits* (1856).

4 In suggesting this trans-Atlantic paradigm I am particularly indebted to the work of two colleagues, Ivo Ibric, for his current writing in exploring the relation between Schelling and Peirce, and Nicholas Guardiano, whose recent work has clarified Peirce’s self-styled enrollment as a “New England Transcendentalist.” Mention should also be made of John J. Kaag’s *Thinking through imagination* which traces the historical roots of Peirce’s epistemology and ontology to the “German Enlightenment,” with particular reference to the implications of the theme of the artistic genius in Kant’s *Third Critique*. Looking back in time, I would also particularly cite the still valuable study of Schelling’s influence on Peirce in ESPOSITO, Joseph L. *Evolutionary metaphysics: The development of Peirce’s theory of categories*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980.

5 While this paper will focus upon the trans-Atlantic paradigm under consideration, it goes without saying that, in broader perspective, Emerson and Peirce must be appreciated as WORLD PHILOSOPHERS; they drew upon quite a range of ancient and medieval authors, of both Eastern and Western heritages: Emerson, for example, from Persian and Indian as well as from Böhme and Swedenborg, and Peirce from Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Scotus, the Cabalists, Neo-Platonic mystics, and other sources—many of these routes of ideas mediated by Schelling in the *Goethezeit* milieu of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

significance as it is seen to fall within the theoretical purview of the “progressive” or “metaphysical empiricism” of Schelling’s later-phase “Positive Philosophy.”<sup>6</sup> Emerson and Peirce even more consciously dipped into the theoretical springs of the “German Enlightenment,” harvesting and transforming a wealth of themes originally elaborated by Goethe, Kant, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and other figures (though, in the nature of the case, as will become apparent, to a lesser extent of Schopenhauer and Hegel).<sup>7</sup>

## 2 Peirce’s Interest in Schelling’s *Philosophie der Natur*

Pursuant to illustrating this trans-Atlantic paradigm, the following pages will engage in a speculative exercise of establishing a significant continuum of convergences of certain main aspects of Schelling’s and Peirce’s philosophies. What should first be noted is that, against the grain of the positivistic and materialistic presuppositions of the general run of scientific confreres in his day, as well as against patterns of detraction of Schelling’s philosophic significance (by the Hegelians for example), Peirce averred that “I consider Schelling as enormous,” and that he was interested “in all stages of Schelling, but especially the *Philosophie der Natur*.” The latter part of this quote referred specifically to the pre-1800 phase of Schelling’s career, but the

6 The suggestion here is that much will be gained by studying how James, whether he acknowledged it or not, wrote his later-phase “radical empiricism” structurally aligned with Schelling. In *Some Problems of Philosophy*, James encapsulated his signature themes of *incessantly streaming perceptual novelty* and *corresponding attack on noetic monism* in the form of a reference to a sentence, “we live forward, but we understand backwards,” which had been transmitted via Kierkegaard, who attended Schelling’s Berlin Lectures on the Positive and Negative trajectories of philosophy. “Living forwards” takes us to the heart of Schelling’s Positive Philosophy (“progressive empiricism”), and “understanding backwards” to Schelling’s critique of the apriorism of Negative Philosophy (which included Schelling’s own earlier works). The seeds of Schelling’s “progressive empiricism” and concomitant critique of the “abstract caricatures” of *a priori* rational systems goes all the way back to his early-phase *Naturphilosophie*; but, as will be seen, his sense of the *unvordenkliche* (“there is no way of *knowing* in advance”) character of novel contingencies and of the future implications of positive existence—themes which became front and center themes in Peirce and James—is properly an achievement of Schelling’s later-phase writings. See *William James: Late writings 1902-1910*. The Library of America, 1987, p. 1205; also p. 757, p. 1190 fn., and p. 1050.

7 Ivo Ibrri provides further social-historical perspective on the “German Enlightenment” and indeed broader parameters of the western European Enlightenment as follows: “During this period, the question of the ‘necessity-freedom’ dichotomy was actively resumed under a dual trend: causality, as a fundamental role of knowledge ensnaring the phenomenon in an antecedent-consequent web of as inherited from the Kantian solution of Hume’s skepticism, and the libertarian winds of the French revolution, which brought about the reassertion of the subject’s innate unconditionality. The figure of the constitutive subject owes much to this necessary reassertion of freedom. [The] ‘I’ is the vertex from which emanate the ethical-libertarian edge engraved in the Enlightenment, as well as the epistemological-constitutive edge which marks the apology of rationality in the face of a supposedly definite deciphering of the principles of Nature in the three laws of the Newtonian dynamics.” (IBRI, 2015, p. 1).

assertion ought to be read, as we shall see, as more richly nuanced with respect to Schelling's influence on Peirce in general.

Peirce, a budding genius in his own right, must surely have shared the spreading transmission to America of the speculations of the *Wunderkind* Schelling and other figures of the German Enlightenment in his day. His participation in the intellectually energetic intellectual *Zeitgeist* of his age, coupled with his sense of the dialogic *commens* in the communications between original minds in the generality of Thought—and many other such doctrinal postulates concerning the synechistic transmissions of historical understanding—suggest this same exercise of probing Peirce's declared appreciation of Schelling.<sup>8</sup>

Admittedly, it will take more than one study to work out all the essential features of this convergence. Preliminarily to say it *in nuce*, just as Schelling's *Philosophie der Natur*, which rang the changes on the concepts of *necessity* (nature under Kant's determinative categories of the understanding) and *moral freedom* as bequeathed by Kant and elaborated by Fichte, metamorphosed into Schelling's post-idealistic vitalistic speculations in more probing terms of cosmic *poiesis* and purposiveness, so too Peirce's self-declared "objective idealism," which he called "the one intelligible theory of the universe," refracted in its own variety of metaphysical nuances and registers of a "Schellingian-fashioned" sort. Against necessitarian ("anancastic") concepts of nature and experience, whether of the regnant Newtonian physicalist paradigm or of the apodictic-logicist (and political) type of Hegelian absolute Idealism, Peirce came self-consciously to call himself "a Schellingian, of some stripe."<sup>9</sup> It was on this basis that he received and pointedly responded to the outstanding scientific milestones of his age, including Darwin's *Origin of Species*, while also turning new pages in logic, mathematics, and the general foundations of the hard sciences.<sup>10</sup>

Now, to be sure, our interpretive situation is complicated, given the

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8 See Peirce's theme of "the divinization of genius" in "Evolutionary love" (1893), EP 1:364.

9 CP 6.605.

10 "Schelling, although not having lived in an environment of indeterminism that emerged at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, predicts through his ideas of freedom and systematic organization of the products of Nature a science that addresses the partial indetermination of objects" (IBRI, 2015, p. 19). Peirce's *philosophic interpretation* of Darwin's paradigm breakthrough was of the same cloth, and should be considered one of the principal achievements of his career-text. It begins with Peirce receiving the news of the publication of *The origin of species* (1859) while he was surveying in the wilds of Louisiana when he was 21 (CP 5.64), and culminates in his classification of three forms of evolution in "Evolutionary love" (1893). His concepts of *commens* and *Zeitgeist*—variations on his One Law of Mind—are heuristic guidelines here. In his *scientific career* Peirce absorbed Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as well as the array of concepts of nature and evolution that had percolated up to his and Darwin's generation through many routes, including the writings of Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), John Brown (1735-88), John Hunter (1728-93), Karl August Eschenmayer (1768-1851), Karl Friedrich Kielmeyer (1765-1844), Henrik Steffens (1773-1845), Johann Ritter (1776-1810), Lorenz Oken (1779-1851), Hans Christian Ørsted (1777-1851), and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). On these figures, among others, see Henderson (2004), xii, and 233-38. Parenthetically it can be noted that Emerson's writings include frequent references to these figures.

metamorphosing phases of both Schelling's and Peirce's *career-texts*. To essay this daunting task in an admittedly preliminary way, I recommend employing the above concept of "career-text" as a technical methodic strategy. While Schelling's and Peirce's writings lend themselves to cannibalizing ("cherry-picking") of isolated themes for narrow-gauge critical purposes, nevertheless, *on the doctrinal grounds* of both philosophers, a *continuity* in their maturing production of fundamental insights and ideas (not without stumbling blocks and false leads) must be seen in terms of their intrinsic *developmental teleology* (in Peirce's term) in order to make sense of their essential meanings, as well as contributions to and places in the history of philosophy.

A great philosopher makes the history books. The works of such an author exhibits its own special character in the course of an unfolding career. For methodological purposes of interpretation, I venture to submit, character and career-text are interpollent, mutually saturating terms. For this sense of "character," which I am here extrapolating to the notion of a major author's "career-text," see for example *The Ages of the World*, second draft, 1813:

When we speak about the character of a man, we have in mind his distinctiveness, the particularity of what he does and who he is, which is given to him through the expressing of his essence. Men who hesitate to be wholly one thing or another are called characterless; but men are said to have character if they reveal a determinate expressing of their whole essence. Nevertheless, it is a well-know fact that nobody can be given character, and that nobody has chosen for himself the particular character that he bears. There is neither deliberation nor choice here, and yet everyone recognizes and judges character as an eternal (never-ceasing constant) deed and attributes to a man both it as well as the action that follows from it. Universal moral judgment thus acknowledges that every man has a freedom in which there is neither (explicit) deliberation nor choice, a freedom that is itself fate and necessity.<sup>11</sup>

The passage (comparable examples of which abound in Schopenhauer on "intelligible character") takes us pretty deep into Schelling's philosophy—and, I argue, into how *methodically* to approach the *characteristically* unfolding character of his "career-text" (and Peirce's too).

Such *characteristic* and *holistic* readings of the *developmental trajectories* of their respective careers will, in turn, inform the possibility of our parsing the complex matter of their *essential interface* on the key issues—concerning which Peirce's own words associating himself with Schelling offer us an indispensable heuristic thread.

In broader historical perspective, Peirce's self-interpretation that he was "[a] Schellingian, of some stripe" drew most obviously from one of the new reservoirs of thought in his century—namely, the complex matrix of concepts of *Philosophie der Natur* of the late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century "*Goethezeit*." This initially Romantic and Idealistic tradition had gathered momentum from a re-vitalized reading of

11 *The ages of the world* (1913). Trans. Judith Norman, p. 175.

Spinoza by Lessing and Goethe (and other literary figures). Goethe, the “lion” of the Weimar-Jena culture, produced his monumental work, *Faust, Parts One and Two*, which apotheocized the vitality of nature and the spontaneity of the aesthetic life over against abstract theoretical understanding.<sup>12</sup> And in various prose writings, Goethe promoted his personal ideal of *Gelegenheitsdichtung*, that is, poetry arising directly out of concrete life-situations<sup>13</sup> Goethe's literary genius (adored by another contemporary, Schopenhauer) had its philosophic side as well, and had taken distinct roots in the young Schelling's *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), *Von der Weltseele* (On the World Soul, 1798), and *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799).<sup>14</sup>

It is safe to surmise that the young Peirce, while he was initially impacted by Friedrich von Schiller's *Aesthetics Letters* (1795) and then commencing a career-long preoccupation to revise Kant's categories, had his ear to the ground with respect to this broader movement of thought and in particular to Schelling's breakaway “post-Kantian” sense of Nature that began to play a prominent role

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- 12 Such famous, often quoted, lines are those of Mephistopheles' alluring invitation to the graduate student, Wagner, “*Grau, teuer Freund, ist alle Theorie, / Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum*, (*Faust*, Part One. line 2,038, and 2,039),” and, as Faust awakens to the iridescence of the waterfall that mirrors the “borrowed glory” of human existence, “*Am fabrigen Abglanz haben wir das Leben*” (*Faust*, Part Two, line 4,727).
- 13 See Richard (2005), “Nature is the poetry of mind, or how Schelling solved Goethe's Kantian problems.” Goethe interacted with the young Schelling (as previously with Schiller) during these formative philosophic years of the Romantic Enlightenment. He criticized his neighbor Hegel's “dialectical disease” of abstract logical involutions, and he reacted both positively and negatively to Kant. Several of his influential poems and prose pieces expressed a revitalized Spinozistic worldview which rejected Kant's mechanistic view of nature (in Kant's first *Critique*) and Kant's “regulative only” restriction of aesthetic and teleological intuitions of nature to the transcendental form of the reflecting judgment (in Kant's third *Critique*. Goethe's (or the young Schelling's!) poetic-ontological sense of the interpermeating continuum of nature and mind appears in such poems as *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (The metamorphosis of plants, 1798), *Weltseele* (World soul, 1801) *Metamorphose der Tiere* (Metamorphosis of animals, 1806), *Epirrbema* (c. 1818), *Antipirrema* (c. 1819), *Natur und Kunst* (Nature and Art, 1800), *In tausend Formen* (A thousand forms, 1815): cf. *Goethe: The collected works; Volume one: Selected poems*. MIDDLETON, Christopher (ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994. It is crucial to see that Goethe's poetry greatly impacted Emerson and his colleagues in the next generation.
- 14 These works are currently available in English under the titles of *F. W. J. Schelling, First outline of a system of the Philosophy of Nature*. Trans. with an introduction by Keith R. Peterson. SUNY Press, 2004; and *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800). Trans. Peter Heath. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1978. The relation of Schelling's *Von der Weltseele* (1798) to contemporary poems, “on the World Soul” composed by both Goethe and Herder in this 1798-1801 period are discussed in Vassanyi (2011). Emerson's own poem entitled “The World-soul” (1847) has its provenance in this conspicuous development of the *Goethezeit*, which, incidentally, in reviving the *Weltseele* concept tracing back to Plato, Plotinus, the Christian Neo-Platonists and the Jewish Cabalists, marked a key departure from the early “German Enlightenment” Leibnizian-Kantian line that rejected the World Soul in its interpretation of Nature.

in European as well as in early- and mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. American thought. Moreover, as we shall see, in Schelling's own self-interpretation his early-phase concept of Nature went through a spiraling metamorphosis in both idealistic and post-idealistic trajectories. Peirce arguably followed suit, hewing closely to "all stages" of Schelling's career.

Peirce first read Schelling before he was thirty in Thomas Davidson's translations of Schelling's 1799 *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* and in the "Introduction" to his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*.<sup>15</sup> We can assume that Peirce, with his motivation of revising Kant's categories, thereafter gathered what he could of Schelling's revision of Kant's project—itsself a revision of Fichte's—to the extent these became available in the writings of the German authors, just as he absorbed the writings of Hegel (and a wide swath of other theorists in the wake of Kant). This would have involved Peirce taking in stride Schelling's phase of idealistic *Identitätphilosophie* in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) and his (unpublished) Philosophy of Art (1801-1804) phase, and, then, his subsequent "mid-career" post-idealistic speculations *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) and *The Ages of the World* (1811-1815), scintillatingly speculative writings on cosmical *poiesis* and purposiveness on the way to his 1840s Berlin Lectures on Positive and Negative Philosophy and *Historico-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*.<sup>16</sup> But, in short, it is plausible to surmise Peirce followed Schelling's "mid" and "late" stages which produced a sweep of signature speculations on the divine freedom and personality, on proto-temporal origins of the "past age" of aeternity, on the "fallen" nature of human freedom, on "progressive metaphysical empiricism," and on "the philosophy of religion."<sup>17</sup> In

15 ESPOSITO, 1977, p. 201.

16 Of the three drafts of *Die Weltalter* (The Ages of the World), only the third draft of 1815, published by Schelling's son in volume 8 of Schelling's *Works* in 1854, was known to exist in Peirce's time; the first and second drafts (1811, 1813), according to Žižek (1997, p. 3, were discovered at the end of World War II in the debris of the bombed Munich University Library, and published by Manfred Schröter in 1946. Actually the bombing had annihilated the Schelling's autographed texts. Manfred Schröter had saved the 1911 and 1913 *Weltalter* texts in copies he made of them during the first years of the war.

17 The scholar of Schelling faces the daunting task of following the central thread of Schelling's "protean" career—"protean" in the polemical epithet of Hegel, who accused Schelling of "conducting his education in public"). Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Idealism: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, provides an overview:

- (1) Mid-1770s: the period of Schelling's initial enthusiasm for Fichte's revision of Kant's transcendental philosophy, which gave a primary role to the activity of consciousness in the constitution of the knowable world; but together with a lifelong preoccupation with Spinoza's conviction that philosophy must begin with a self-contained Absolute.
- (2) 1795-99: Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* phase which extended the notion of activity of the subject into the idea of all of Nature as "productivity," together with a rejection of inanimate mechanism in principle.
- (3) Schelling's 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* then sought to square Fichteanism and his *Naturphilosophie*, by promoting art as the medium in which the activity of conscious thought and the "unconscious" productivity in nature can be understood



general, with respect to such issues, Peirce's frequent siding with Schelling against Hegel's notional immanentism is one case in point.

Now, the evidence is that with his ground-breaking "A Guess at the Riddle" of 1887-88, Peirce began to harvest almost *verbatim* formulations of Schelling's vitalistic trajectory. One of Peirce's signature assertions, namely that "matter is effete mind"

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as ultimately the same. Mind and matter are ultimately only different interpermeating degrees (this position Schelling maintained for the rest of his life). At the end of this period he finally breaks with Fichte who he regards as failing to move beyond self-consciousness.

- (4) *On the essence of human freedom* (1809), and more coherently in the 1811-15 three drafts of *The Ages of the World*, break up the former tendency toward a static, balanced relationship of the "ideal" (mind, subject) and the "real" (matter, object) expressed in much of his preceding works; Schelling turned to articulating the "ground" of which the conflicting principles which constitute the manifest world are the consequence. (Here Bowie remarks, he "demonstrably set the scene for the agonistic universes of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud and their epigones.")
- (5) From the late 1820s, the "Positive Philosophy" already implicit in *The Ages of the World*, concerns Schelling for the rest of his life. It seeks to go beyond "Negative Philosophy," which, as in Hegel's *Logic*, explicates the *a priori* concepts of pure thought that determine *what* things are—in order positively to come to terms both with the fact *that (dass)* things are and accordingly with the *real* historical emergence and movement of consciousness. "For it is not because there is thinking that there is being, but rather, because there is being, there is thinking."

James Gutman's "Introduction" to his 1936 translation of *Philosophical Investigation into the Nature of Human Freedom* provides an overview of the earlier wave of German scholarship that parsed the stages of Schelling's career. Gutman emphasized the single developmental thread of Schelling's master concept of freedom. For another compacted approach illuminating a single developmental teleology in Schelling's career, see Jason M. Wirth, "Forward" (pp. vii-xiii) to *F. W. J. Schelling, Historico-critical introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*. Trans, Mason Richey and Marcus Zisselberger. Albany, NY: SUNY University Press, 2007. Wirth sees Schelling's "middle period" as a "mediating interval" linking Schelling's early vitalistic naturalism and his later-phase Positive Philosophy. It begins with the 1804 appearance of *Philosophy and Religion* (written before Hegel's consummate form of Negative Philosophy, his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which dialectically ascends to a retrospective theodicy that justifies the slaughter bench of the past); Schelling then pursued further nuances as he focused upon divine and human freedom and necessity in his 1809 *Freiheitschrift* and in the several drafts of *The ages of the world* (1811-1815), on the way to the culminating articulations of his Berlin lectures on the Positive and Negative Philosophy and his *Historico-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (in the 1840s).

Wirth's reading captures the thrust of Dale E. Snow's still fertile reading of Schelling's "protean" career in her *Schelling and the end of Idealism* (1996). But for direct textual evidence, see Schelling's own *self-interpretation* of the essential thread of his career-trajectory in the Preface to the *Freiheitschrift* (1809)—where he declares that after the opposition of nature and spirit having been overcome in his earlier writings focusing on *Naturphilosophie*, he is now proceeding on to "a higher, or rather, more genuine opposition [between] that of necessity and freedom." See *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Love and Schmidt (2006), 3-4, and their extended footnote number 1, 135-36.

appears to be an almost *verbatim* quote from Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800):

Matter is indeed nothing else but mind viewed in an equilibrium of its activities. There is no need to demonstrate at length how, by means of this elimination of all dualism, or all real opposition between mind and matter, whereby the latter is regarded merely as mind in a condition of dullness, or the former, conversely, as matter merely in becoming, a term is set to a host of bewildering enquiries concerning the relationship of the two.<sup>18</sup>

A similar postulate as to the “spiritual-corporeal being” of PSYCHE became a conspicuous component in Schelling's *Weltseele* speculations in *The Ages of the World*. Peirce appears to have followed Schelling in his own way. Peirce, for his part, in his 1890s metaphysical essays—where he described his objective idealism as “Schelling-fashioned”—forged a theoretical explanation of *how mind turns into matter*, not how in a chance world matter turns into mind.<sup>19</sup>

But again, overall and methodologically considered, Peirce followed Schelling in eschewing interpretive procedures that “chop with an axe.” Thus his central thesis as to the irreducible interpenetrating continuum of mind and matter dovetailed importantly with Schelling's articulations of his *Naturphilosophie* and its *Weltseele* re-expressions in the “second draft manuscript of *The ages of the world* (1813):

And besides, what is it that leads most people to slander matter as they do? In the end, it is only the modesty of matter that is so offensive to them. But this very composure proves that something dwells within matter, something of that original essence, of the germ and primordial material of existence, something that is passive on the outside but is in itself the purest spirituality.<sup>20</sup>

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18 Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*, p. 92.

19 See ESPOSITO, 1980, p. 173.

20 Schelling, *The ages of the world* (second draft 1813). Trans. Judith Norman, 1997, p. 150. (This is not to assert that Peirce had access to the three draft manuscripts of *The ages of the world*). Schelling repeats this doctrine of the “inner essence” of matter in the third draft of *The ages of the world*, c. 1815:

Whoever has to some extent exercised their eye for the spiritual contemplation of natural things knows that a spiritual image, whose mere vessel (medium of appearance) is the course and ponderable, is actually what is living *within* the coarse and the ponderable. The purer that this image is, the healthier the whole is. This incomprehensible but not imperceptible being, always ready to overflow and yet always held again, and which alone grants to all things the full charm, gleam, and glint of life, is that which at the same time the most manifest and most concealed. (trans. Jason M. Wirth, p. 61 in text).

Wirth's admirable Introduction to the third draft brings out that this doctrine already appears in Schelling's 1807 address *On the relationship of the fine arts to Nature* where he speaks of

Schelling goes on in this context to spell out “the inner vitality of matter” in terms of its effects on “the full sparkle and shine of life,” thus on humankind’s “divining instinct” of the presence of this “inner essence” in metals and especially in gold, as well as in the reproductive cycles of organic nature, especially in the animal kingdom, and, at a higher level, in “the pure, healthy, and loving benefits that liberates us.” This “inner vitality of matter”—he avers— is

[t]he essence that emanates as grace [*Anmuth*] in the highest transfiguration of human corporality [...] yet even this cannot be thought in absence of a physically active something, which alone renders explicable the involuntary delight or wonder with which the gaze is filled and which even the barbarian cannot hold back.<sup>21</sup>

In the sequel to this passage on the “apparently” inert composure of matter, Schelling penned another precedent to Peirce’s triadic-synechistic semiotics that militate against *dyadic* hermeneutics which “chop” the subjects and objects of scientific and philosophic discourse “with an axe”:

It is easy to see that the main difficulty with the current way of philosophizing lies in its lack of intermediary concepts. For instance, what is not morally free is straightway mechanistic, what is not spiritual in the highest sense is corporeal, and what is not intelligent is wholly without reason. But intermediary concepts are precisely the most important; indeed, they are the only genuinely explanatory concepts in the whole of science. Someone who wishes to think only according to the so-called principle of contradiction may be clever at disputing the pros and cons of everything, just like the sophists, but will be fully

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“the spiritual eye” that “feels the sublime (freedom) insofar as it has intimated itself within form.” [Cf. Emerson’s “transparent eyeball” in the opening pages of *Nature*, 1836!] This is not the gaze of the [reflexively] theoretical which remains on the surface, reducing it to rule-bound appearance. It rather intimates the unprethinkable (*unvordenkliche*) future in a thing, that is, its “creating life” and its “power to exist.” However, the spiritual eye glimpses the sublimity of freedom only through the proxy of the beautiful. There is no direct access to the sublime. The aesthetic intuition (“the spiritual eye”) senses the sublime in “the pain of form” as the artist “seals the power of fire, the lightning of light, in hard stone and the fair souls of tone in strict timbre.” “Only through the completion of form can the form be annihilated.” Reaching “the highest beauty without character,” “the spiritual eye” feels the soul’s grace in the body. The “body is the form and grace [*Anmuth*] of the soul, although not the soul in itself, but the soul of form, the soul of nature [*die Naturseele*].” Art emerges in the suspension of the ego’s hegemony. The theoretical eye is always a form of egoism striving to find the truth and the good in apparent forms (Realism), while “the spiritual eye” affirms the advent of divine fecundity within the grace and beauty of things. (WIRTH, 2000, p. x-xi).

21 *Loc. cit.* The concepts of “human grace” [*Anmuth*] and of “beautiful soul” were also propounded by Schiller’s 1794 “On grace and dignity,” his polemic against the “draconian” nature of Kant’s ethics which rendered the realm of physical and psychological inclination as morally heteronomous.

incapable of discovering the truth, which does not lie in the far-flung extremes.

Thus the idea of matter that is in or of itself spiritual and incorporeal will appear completely unfathomable to many people.<sup>22</sup>

In similar vein, as we will further explore, Peirce's *trivalent* ontological semiotics critically encompassed the procrustean forms of dyadic interpretation by postulating *intermediary* signs of interpretive Thought (the category of Thirdness) in the logic of inquiry, especially in the forms of probabilistic, i.e. inductive and abductive, inference. Peirce appears, once again, to have generalized Schelling here.

It will take another paper to illustrate how certain postmodern "Continental" writers have gone to the hermeneutical extreme of taking Schelling as the granddaddy of a dis-ontological, deconstructive, paradigm. Awareness of Peirce's balanced semiosis, which undercut this tendency a century before, is conspicuously absent from such "Continental" accounts which draw from the postmodern playbook of "differences" and "presences and absences" dyadically legislated.

Peirce's anti-necessitarian *Monist* metaphysical papers of 1891-93 engaged the Cartesian-dichotomized mechanistic hypothesis precisely in the *triadic* semiosis of "Man as a sign" in a sign-transferring universe, in effect setting this within Schelling's lifelong adherence to a "philosophy of organism."<sup>23</sup> Concomitantly, Peirce coupled his critique of materialism, mechanism, and disjunctive forms of associationism with a conspicuously Schelling-sounding critique of the other theoretical extreme, namely of Hegel's *a priori* sublational "system" of *absolute idealism*. (Both horns of critique were to loom prominently in the later-phase writings of William James). A decade later he declared, on similar categorical grounds, his affinity with Schelling in distinction from Hegel in his parsing of the possible system of "metaphysico-cosmical" concepts in "Seven Systems of Metaphysics" (1903).<sup>24</sup>

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22 *Loc. cit.* Schelling's third draft of *Die Weltalter* repeats this theme by way of rejecting the dichotomy of spiritualism and mechanism as a form of Sophistic disputation for and against everything, in favor of intermediate concepts on which everything depends. Hence again the transition from nature to spirit, the same creative forces in both (*The ages of the world*, 3<sup>rd</sup> draft, c. 1815, p. 64). For Peirce's Schellingian assumption of the methodic principle of continuity for a theory of probabilities in the science of logic quantitatively treated, see "The doctrine of chances" (1878), EP1:142-143; his metaphor of "chopping with an axe" appears in "Immortality in the light of synechism" (1893), EP2:2; see the remarkable application of Peirce's rejection of dyadic hermeneutics in the opening pages of "Evolutionary love," where he subordinates the Empedoclean tension of "love" and "strife" to the "eirenic" concept of Agape. The same assumption of semiotic trivalence drives his methodic maxim, "do not block the road of inquiry", which also undermines the postmodern trajectory of disruptively skeptical theory, including the special case of Adorno's "negative dialectics."

23 This is Schelling's own phrase, later adopted by Whitehead's *Process and Reality*.

24 It should be underscored that Peirce, always an astutely accurate reader of philosophical texts, was in a position to parse the array of significant varieties of idealism to be found in the major varieties of Kant's *critical idealism*, Fichte's *subjective idealism*, Schelling's *objective*

### 3 Freedom from the Trammels of System

Now then, for present purposes, let me more fully cite Peirce's 1894 letter to William James:

My views were probably influenced by Schelling—by all stages of Schelling, but especially by the *Philosophie der Natur*. I consider Schelling as enormous; and one thing I admire about him is his freedom from the trammels of system, and his holding himself uncommitted to any previous utterance. In that, he is like a scientific man. If you were to call my philosophy Schellingian transformed in the light of modern physics, I should not take it hard.<sup>25</sup>

First of all, Peirce's reference to Schelling's "freedom from the trammels of system" appears to speak to his awareness of the German philosopher's passage beyond his idealistic *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) and *Philosophy of Art* (1801-04) phases to his "middle" years of post-idealistic speculation. (In a wider sense still, it encapsulates Schelling's "protean" philosophic trajectory *tout court*). And once again, it sides with, and captures the essence of Schelling's career-text's polemic against Hegel, who sought to bury Schelling in an infamous paragraph of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

But secondly, Peirce's letter can be regarded as obliquely autobiographical: in conjunction with "consider[ing] Schelling as enormous," it expressed his own mind-set steeped in the untrammelled heuristic of "progressive" Fallibilism—a Fallibilism which requires a man "to dump his whole cartload of beliefs the moment experience is against him"—while at the same time alluding to his own competence in physics, to say nothing of a range of the hard and soft sciences he studied at a level of advanced professional expertise. Let us say that Schelling's "freedom from the trammels of system" appealed to Peirce as symbolic of his own doctrine of the open-ended pursuit of the truth under the dictate of his heuristic maxim *Do not block the road of inquiry*.<sup>26</sup> But again, quite directly, Peirce's letter to James signaled his elective affinity with Schelling's *Philosophie der Natur*, given that, among other

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*idealism*, and Hegel's *absolute idealism* (in a fuller list we could add Schopenhauer's dis-ontological vitalistic idealism as per Peirce's remarks on Schopenhauer's pessimism in EP 2:449). Without appreciation of such a differential analysis Peirce studies have tended to remain neo-positivistically a-historical or scholastic. Reversing this a-historical analytical trend in the academy, a real contribution to understanding the trans-Atlantic provenance and historical alignment of Peirce's thought can be found in Ivo Ibrí in the aforementioned "The Schellingian roots of Peirce's Idealism," *Noema*, v.6, n.2, 2015, p. 1-25. Ibrí's paper astutely parses the differences between Fichte's *subjective transcendentalism* and Schelling's *objective idealism*, on the way to aligning Peirce with Schelling.

25 *The thought and character of William James*. PERRY, Ralph Barton (ed.). Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1935; letter dated January 28, 1894).

26 See Dilworth (2015), which traces Peirce's methodic maxim, Do Not Block the Road of Inquiry, to the presuppositional trajectory ("transcendental hope") of Kant's reflecting judgment in the published version of Kant "Introduction" to his third *Critique*.

reasons, the German philosopher in his “Introduction” to *First Outline of a System of Nature* of 1799 had explicitly articulated it as the kind of “speculative physics” with which Peirce himself was increasingly concerned in his own writing under the title of his “scientific metaphysics.”<sup>27</sup>

It is possible further to note that Schelling’s “freedom from the trammels of system” resonates with—or rather, instantiates!—Peirce’s epistemological doctrine enunciated in “The Fixation of Belief” (1878) which prioritized the fallibilistic scientific method over the other three “methods of fixing belief” (of subjective tenacity, the force of external authority, and *a priori* rationalism). Arguably drawing from Schelling’s *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, Peirce’s frequent examples of *a priori* rationalism were the immanently reflexive systems of Descartes and Hegel.<sup>28</sup>

Now, then, while these are mostly overview considerations, they contribute to the illumination of the pattern of trans-Atlantic continuity and convergence. Once again, this is a matter of methodological importance. The older analytic-style *a-historical epistemological* interest in Peirce, has often taken the path of cutting Peirce’s career in half—in procrustean fashion thereby neglecting his mid- and later-career metaphysical writings—an approach that has proven inadequate in addressing the trans-Atlantic paradigm brought to light in this paper’s inquiry.<sup>29</sup>

To the contrary, in historical perspective as noted above, the young Schelling had developed his *Naturphilosophie* in a collaborative effort with Goethe when they were together at Jena.<sup>30</sup> And Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling, in the generation before Peirce, had in fact already impacted the development of American Transcendentalism, as witnessed especially in Emerson’s early writings.<sup>31</sup> Margaret Fuller, Emerson’s co-

27 Schelling’s *cosmogonic* metaphysical speculation dates from his 18-year-old notebook on Plato’s *Timaeus*. For a detailed exegesis, see (MATTHEWS, 2011, p. 103-136).

28 Concomitantly, Peirce may be thought to have been taking a stand here against Hegel’s reference to Schelling’s “protean” career, by, to an opposite effect, establishing Schelling’s career as a paradigmatic example of the “progressive empiricism” of the scientific method and Peirce’s “scientific metaphysics.”

29 On the other hand, the laudable collection of essays of fourteen scholars collected in Jason M. Wirth’s (ed.) *Schelling Now* (2007) confines the historical commentary to interest in Schelling-backgrounded “Continental” themes. Egregiously, Peirce’s name does not make an appearance in the entire volume! Peirce, who still cannot be conscripted in any scholastic sense, nevertheless “wrote the script” of appreciation of Schelling well in advance of contemporary postmodern interpretations. And it will be seen that his appreciation of Schelling lacked the kind of *Weltschmerz* found in some of the same readings.

30 As note above, Goethe had been instrumental in the young Schelling securing his appointment at the university of Jena in 1798.

31 E.g., Emerson’s inaugural work *Nature* of 1836, “The method of Nature of 1839, “Nature” of 1841, “Fate” and “Beauty” of 1860, and other famous essays and poems, such as “The Rhodora,” “The Sphinx,” “The World-soul,” and “Woodnotes,” to name just a few, all of which conspicuously reprised Schellingian themes of the epistemological-and-metaphysical affinity (“consanguinity”) of mind and nature. Emerson’s related theme of “the Blessed Necessity,” which again signifies the Schellingian coincidence of necessity and freedom, came to be a central theme (“amor fati”) in the writings of Emerson’s disciple, Friedrich Nietzsche.

editor of the first Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*, proves to have been one of the prominent Goethe scholars of the day who directly mediated Emerson's appreciation of Goethe's literary and scientific genius.<sup>32</sup> Schelling's (and Schiller's) influence on Emerson was also mediated by the reports of several of his colleagues studying in Germany. Through the early wave of American Transcendentalism and other conduits of access (e.g., Coleridge and Carlyle), Schelling's exuberant "speculative physics"—which at the same time condemned positivistic-associationist empiricism and scientific mechanism as well as exposing the drift of Hegel's anancastic theodicy—impacted Peirce in the next generation. Crossing the Atlantic, it provided a congenial philosophic framework for Peirce's polymathic scientific studies and his own "guess at the riddle."

In the long run, Schelling, free of the trammels of system, philosophized *beyond* the initially Romantic and Idealistic formulations of his *Philosophie der Natur*.<sup>33</sup> Peirce, I will further suggest, followed suit here too, by way of declaring his interest in "all stages of Schelling," and thereby, in due course, transforming this trans-Atlantic paradigm of speculative epistemology and cosmology into the terms of his own—arguably more general—semiotic ontology of Three Categories.

#### 4 Thematic contents of Schelling's *Philosophie der Natur*

Schelling's dates are 1775-1854. After his *Wunderkind* beginning (Schelling was fluent in Greek at the age of 10, also in Hebrew and Arabic) and his precocious seminary days during which he began to revise Kant's categories, at 21 he relocated to Leipzig, where he immersed himself in the natural sciences of his day and began evolving

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32 Emerson's biographer Robert Richardson notes that "the effect of Goethe on Emerson is nearly impossible to overestimate" and that "Goethe laid down fundamental lessons that over the years became parts of Emerson's own bedrock" (cited from WAYNE, Tiffany K. (ed.). *Critical companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson: A literary reference to his life and work*, p. 341-342). Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), co-founder and co-editor with Emerson of the Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*, published several books and translations of the works of Goethe as well as translating Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe in the last years of his life*. Margaret gave Emerson German lessons—they probably read Goethe together. See "Margaret Fuller" (1810-1850) in *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism* (2005) and in *Critical Commentary to Ralph Waldo Emerson: A literary reference to his life and work* (2010), both edited by Tiffany K. Wayne. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) wrote on Goethe in the 1820s; James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888), close friend of Margaret Fuller and fluent in German, also contributed translations of Goethe in Emerson's day.

33 Nevertheless, the young Schelling's initial version of *Naturphilosophie* remains as one of the great theoretical moments in the history of philosophy, a synthesis of currents of the day that is still relevant in today's academy. In the words of his translator, Keith R. Peterson, Schelling's early speculations on nature consisted *negatively* of a critique of mechanistic, materialistic, and deterministic science, and *positively* of dynamical, organic, teleological, synthetic, and holistic accounts of the natural world, integrating human beings into the world rather than severing them from it—and thus forerunning recent programmatic trends in evolutionary and developmental biology, cosmology, ecology, critical theory, and scientific studies.

an “organic *Urform*” premised on a synthesis of Plato and Kant.<sup>34</sup> In this early phase devoted to *Naturphilosophie*, Schelling published in rapid succession *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797, reissued 1803),<sup>35</sup> following this the next year with *On the World-Soul* (1798, again in 1806, 1809)—the latter work receiving the plaudits of Goethe who recommended him for a professorship at Jena in the same year—then, in tandem with his university lectures, *First Outline for a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799), as well as a separately issued *Introduction* to the *First Outline*.

Adding to this account of the explosive contextual enfoldment of his *Philosophie der Natur*, Schelling had already adumbrated the basic premise of “Life as the *Urform*” in a series of youthful notebook writings before 1797.<sup>36</sup> The young Schelling, in collaboration with fellow-seminarians Hegel and Hölderlin, wrote a manifesto, “On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy” which problematized the dichotomy of phenomenal and noumenal realms of Kant’s two fundamental concepts of Nature and Freedom. This youthful manifesto adhered to Fichte’s revision of Kant, which postulated an “absolute I” as the self-positing synthesis of the two Kantian realms.<sup>37</sup> In another manifesto at this time, “On the *I* as Principle of Philosophy,” Schelling similarly contended that the conscious subject’s freedom can no longer be thought as a merely noumenal spontaneity in Kant’s dichotomized sense. It rather requires the point of departure of a practical postulate of the ego’s “absolute freedom” in experientially embodied engagement with the objective world—a dialectical construction of the *lived* coincidence of “necessity and freedom” which the young Schelling sought further to

34 MATTHEWS, Bruce (ed.). *Schelling’s organic form of Philosophy: Life as the schema of freedom*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2011. In another study it will be interesting to compare the youthful Schelling’s management of the thought of Plato and Kant with the generation-later articulation of Schopenhauer in *World as will and representation* (1818). While Schopenhauer often denounced “the three Sophists,” namely Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel, his vitalistic concept of the gradations of a World-Will, as he himself eventually came to acknowledge, ran parallel to Schelling in important respects; and Schopenhauer of course adored Goethe. But when Schopenhauer’s “pessimistic” thought was later imported to the United States, it suffered strong resistance from such leading philosophers as Emerson, Peirce, and William James whose thought was already saturated with Schelling’s “progressive empiricism”.

35 Translated E. Harris and P. Heath. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

36 MATTHEW, Bruce, *ibid.*, argues cogently that the vitalistic *Urform* already began to emerge in Schelling’s first fourteen years of writing. The seeds of the *Urform* appear inscribed in *The unconditional in human knowledge: Four early essays (1794-1796)*: “On the possibility of a form of all Philosophy,” “Of the I as principle of Philosophy; or, On the unconditioned in human knowledge,” “Philosophical letters on dogmatism and criticism,” and “New deductions of natural right”. Trans. by Fritz Marti. Lewisberg, PA.: Bucknell University Press, 1980.

37 IBRI, Ivo. “The Schellingian roots of Peirce’s Idealism,” provides a succinct and penetrating analysis of Schelling’s original adherence to Fichte’s transcendental idealism and eventual breakthrough to the “cosmic poetics” of his own *Naturphilosophie*. “The Schellingian eye does not turn on itself as Fichte’s does; it opens to a Nature whose verbal silence is not indicative of a radical lack of language, but is rather a challenge to see it in time as a teleological process intelligently articulated by it” (IBRI, 2015, p. 5). For this “Schellingian eye,” see also footnote 20 above.



develop by combining Spinoza's *objective realism* and Fichte's *subjective idealism*.

The young Schelling continued to "balance" Spinoza and Fichte in his next work, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800); but then, adhering to the *Urform* of vital freedom in other speculative directions, he abandoned such lingering transcendentalist constructions and transitioned into a post-idealistic phase concerned with elemental metaphysical-volitional oppositions inscribed in *The Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) and *The Ages of the World* (1811-1815).

Peirce's unfolding career-text, I am arguing, generally follow suit. He appears to have absorbed the "bottom line" of Schelling's metamorphosing trajectory of *Naturphilosophie* in a variety of accounts of the affinity of mind and matter as well as in insisting on an elemental "law of liberty" in the cosmical-cosmogonic process.<sup>38</sup> There is much to be unpacked here! Let us first return to the *Naturphilosophie*.

As early as 1878 Peirce appears to have taken over *verbatim* the exact problematic of Schelling's inquiry into the mind's relation to nature in the words: "We are interested not just in Kant's synthetic *a priori* but how synthetic reasoning is possible at all."<sup>39</sup> Peirce positioned this tenet front and center in his philosophy, namely, that the human mind's "plastic" productions of intelligence in the sciences (and arts)—and indeed in the "conduct of life" in our energetic habit-formations—presuppose intertwined nodes of *necessity* (nature) and *freedom* (consciousness) that are essentially continuous with the gradations of the evolutionary universe at large.

It was this postulate of continuous and ever-incipient semiosis in "the universe perfused with signs" that drove Peirce's architectonic realism-idealism, a doctrine he came explicitly to refer to as "Schelling-fashioned" and "the one intelligible theory of the universe." On the synechistic side, as he wrote in various contexts, "Man's mind, having been developed under the influence of the laws of nature, for that reason naturally thinks somewhat after nature's pattern" (CP 7.39). Or again, "Man divines something of the secret of the principles of the universe because his mind has developed as a part of the universe and under the influence of these same secret principles" (CP 7.46). The difference between mental and natural events is therefore only a matter of degree: "All mind partakes more or less of the nature of matter; hence it is a mistake to conceive of the psychical and physical aspects of matter as absolutely distinct" (CP 6.265; 7.463).

Such postulates (and many more!) carried on the sense of the coalescent plasticity of mind and nature inscribed in the philosophic trajectories of Goethe and Schelling and transmitted by Coleridge to Emerson. Among other things, through such pronouncements Peirce asserted his explicit departure from what he called the "one-idea'd" nominalistic positions of modern philosophy, beginning with the mind-

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38 "In the *Stuttgart Seminar* (1810) Schelling affirms of the Absolute identity of the Real and the Ideal that 'this is not to say that the Real and Ideal are numerically or logically the same but, instead, designates an essential unity' (IBRI, 2015, p. 11). But further: "The existence of what is unconditional cannot be proven as the existence of something finite. The unconditional is the element on which any demonstration becomes possible [...] Philosophy is occupied with the progressive demonstration of the Absolute, which cannot be required as a principle of philosophy" (IBRI, *loc. cit.*). The second quote is a forerunner to Schelling's doctrine of Positive and Negative Philosophy.

39 PEIRCE, "The Probability of Induction" (1878): CP 5.348, EP1:167.

matter split in Descartes and Locke and culminating in Kant's, Fichte', and Hegel's versions of formalistic idealism.<sup>40</sup>

But it bears repeating that Friedrich von Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* of 1795, which resonated with the collaborative influence of Goethe, had also impacted the young Peirce. Postulating a sphere of *spontaneity* beyond the abstract oppositions of the empirical and transcendental realms, Schiller's *Letters* turned Kant's "merely regulative" idea of aesthetic "taste" in the third *Critique* into a postulate of the "play-drive" (*Spieltrieb*) of *imaginative freedom* experienced in our interactive experiences of Beauty in nature and art. From the beginning to the end of his career, Peirce's signature doctrine of quale-consciousness (Firstness) was impacted by Schiller's transformation of Kant. Thus his doctrine of the immediate spontaneity of "Feeling" (Firstness) underwrote his doctrine of ontological Tychism. And accordingly, Peirce reset Schiller's primacy of imaginative interaction as the heuristic edge in the productions of science and art; as the first principle of the normative sciences (in which "Esthetics" precedes Ethics and Logic); and, as well, as the intuitive prompting of "Musement" in his "Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (1908) and as the "uberous" primacy of abduction in the instinctive prospectings of valid logical inference (1913).<sup>41</sup>

In brief, underlying these various thematics of Peirce's text shine the cross-lights of strands of trans-Atlantic influence from *both* Schiller and Schelling, with a further background in Kant's third *Critique's* theory of the artistic genius. As we will explore further, taking in tow his own background accomplishments in mathematics, logic, and a range of the hard sciences of his day, Peirce's "scientific metaphysics" fused these Romantic and Idealistic, as well as post-Romantic and post-Idealistic strands, of experiential and metaphysical "necessity-and-freedom" in his own form of asymptotic hyperbolic worldview—which conspicuously aligned, once again, with Schelling's late-phase "progressive," that is, "metaphysical empiricism."<sup>42</sup>

But again, even Peirce's early epistemological writings, such as "On a New List of Categories" (1867) and "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" and "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868), can be regarded as patterned

40 As early as his "Some consequences of four incapacities" (1868), and on to "The fixation of belief" and "How to make our ideas clear" (1878), Peirce's reading of the history of modern philosophy stemming from the "paper doubt" of Descartes' reflexive *cogito* and its rationalistic extensions in Leibniz, Wolff, Kant, Fichte and Hegel, appears to have followed the main lineaments of Schelling's critical lectures on post-Cartesian transcendentalism. See Schelling's *On the history of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (1994), and the two chapters "Metaphysics Before Kant" and "Kant, Fichte, and the Science of Reason." In: *The Berlin Lectures: The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*. (Trans. by MATTHEWS, 2007, p.111-139).

41 See DILWORTH, 2014, p. 57-72, and 2015, p. 233-258.

42 Schelling's "Metaphysical empiricism," is the penultimate chapter of his Berlin Lectures (1842), trans. Bruce Matthews (2007). As I have suggested in this paper's Preamble, Wm. James's "radical empiricism" has its provenance here as well. I venture to speculate here that from *The essence of human freedom* (1809) and the three drafts of *The ages of the world* (1811-15) Schelling's career-text metamorphosed from a residual *parabolic* Neo-Platonism still evident in his early *Naturphilosophie* period to a kind of asymptotic *hyperbolic* Neo-Platonism of his later writings.

after Schelling. They appear to draw directly from Schelling's *On the History of Modern Philosophy* in undermining the Cartesian and Lockean dichotomies of mind and matter, together with the false criterion of the clearness and distinctness of introspective "ideas" and merely formal analytic "definitions." Peirce also laid the foundation of his semiotics—another signature doctrine which expressed the trivalent nature of sign-transference in terms of which "man is a thinking sign" in an open-ended "universe perfused with signs"—in these early writings.

In short, Schelling can be regarded as a forerunner of Peirce in a variety of respects. However haltingly at first, his youthful *Philosophie der Natur* had moved philosophy in the direction of transforming Kant's regulative *Idea* of moral freedom into a postulate of *absolute freedom* as a constitutive principle with an *ontological* productive force—thus intending the sublation of Kant's (and Fichte's) ethical and aesthetic principles with which *philosophical science* must begin.<sup>43</sup> As Peterson quotes Schelling: "His first step in philosophy must announce the arrival of a free human being"; and accordingly, "What is caught up in mere mechanism cannot step out of the mechanism and ask: how has all this become possible?"<sup>44</sup> In due course Peirce followed suit, answering the trans-Atlantic question, *how are synthetic reasonings at all possible?*, in the terms of his theoretical architectonics of heuristic-semiotic discovery in the interactive manifold of the mathematical, philosophic, and idioscopic sciences—"heuristic" sciences of discovery driven by the *summum bonum* of the "admirable *per se*," i.e. "concrete reasonableness" or "energetic reasonableness," in an open-ended, spontaneously habit-forming "universe perfused with signs."<sup>45</sup>

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43 Schelling's move, developed in his Philosophy of Art phase (1801-1804), to aesthetic freedom as encompassing Kant's cognitive and ethical domains, had already been intended by Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* of 1795.

44 Cf. PETERSON, "Introduction," xvii, and fn. 15, p. 241, which references Emerson, *E&L*, 953.

45 As indicated, Peirce captures the Schellingian sense of cosmic freedom in multiform registers. Before "the continuum of the Platonic Worlds" on which Peirce speculated in his 1898 Cambridge Lectures, there is his version of the Schellingian "abyss" (*Abgrund*) of freedom, in his concept of the "Zero" of "absolute liberty" that is prior to "the Platonic Worlds." In my reading here, Peirce's ontological semiotics features the trivalence of signs (icon, index, and symbol) in the terms of which every kind of "pure sense quality" can function as a new First in the continuing spontaneity of qualitative enfoldments of the cosmic *poiesis*. The *locus* for this Schellingian provenance is Peirce's *Reasoning and the logic of things* (especially ch. 8, "The Logic of Continuity" (KETNER, 1992, p. 242-270); the co-editors, Ketner and Hilary Putnam, call attention to the same point of the Schellingian background on two occasions of their Introduction (77, 97). Peirce stunningly pictures the "pure sense qualities" which we now experience as colors, odors, sounds, feelings of every description, together with our loves, sorrows, surprises, etc., as but "relics" of an aboriginal "continuum of Platonic Worlds" after the analogy of some old-world forum with its basilica and temples whose vague "under-existence in the mind of its creator" remains in the "ruins" of our experience. Here Peirce also employs at least two other descriptions directly reminiscent of *The ages of the world*. This earliest stage of "vague potentiality," he says, is a "contraction" of "the vagueness of that potentiality of everything in general"; and "Every quality is a First in itself, that is a "feeling": "Even

## 5 Peirce's Categorical Transmutation of Schelling's *Philosophie der Natur*

Given the trans-Atlantic paradigm that links the German *Goethezeit* with 19<sup>th</sup>-century American thought and sets Schelling's career-text centrally in it, let us now further regard how Peirce absorbed it in his own career-text. This exercise will necessarily be speculative in that we must presuppose parameters of conceptual relationships that formed at many cultural and intellectual levels over several generations on both side of the Atlantic. But Peirce's conscious appropriation of Schelling (and not of Hegel, by significant contrast) serves as *prima facie* evidence for us to divine this historically significant transmission of ideas. The bottom line, I will argue here, will be that Peirce selectively reprised Schelling's speculations while at the same time *transmutating* them in his *more comprehensive and more flexible* Tritism of categories.<sup>46</sup>

Back, then, to the drawing board. Keith Peterson's "Introduction" to Schelling's 1797-1799 period indicates that the young Schelling went on in his next work, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), to develop his postulate of "absolute freedom" along two *parallel* lines—as *transcendental* philosophy and as *natural* philosophy—grounding both in a first principle of "pure activity" or "pure productivity." Expanding on Spinoza via Fichte, this final version of his *Philosophie der Natur* ambitiously inscribed a dialectical symmetry between what "appears" objectively in Nature as the "eternal becoming" of nature's "products" (*Natura naturata*), and its Siamese twin, the subjective conditions of originary infinite productivity (*Natura naturans*). Such a "logogenetic" parallelism of the *Philosophie der Natur* extended to his early Philosophy of Art phase (1801-1804) which rang the changes on Kant's theory of the artistic genius.

However, as Peirce came to be appraised, Schelling eventually abandoned this logogenetic articulation of the dialectical symmetry of mind and matter for the trajectory of his "middle period" which featured the "abyssal" *Abgrund* of ever-incipient, *ontologically dis-completing Freedom*—that is, of Will-full Becoming at the heart of divine, human, and natural Life. It is of course a huge topic to be pursued elsewhere at greater length, but I am suggesting here that, while departing from Schelling's pietistic and theosophical language of his 1809 *Essence of Human Freedom* and *The Ages of the World*, Peirce's category of Firstness absorbed, resonated with, or at least explored in its own categoriological obligations, significant respects of Schelling's *Urgrund*, *Ungrund*, *Abgrund*.<sup>47</sup> And just

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if you say it is a *slumbering* feeling, that does not make it less intense; perhaps the reverse." It will take a careful exegesis of Schelling's text to clarify such parallels. Not to be pursued further here, the passage (especially p. 257-259) is rife with such intimations, inklings, and adumbrations of Schelling. *In futuro* the present writer expects to elaborate at greater length on Schelling's *Essay on human freedom* and *The ages of the world* as a possible provenance of Peirce's metaphysical worldview.

46 Employing *Transmutation* (same spelling in German and English) which is Schelling's own word, for example in *The essence of human freedom* (trans. Love and Schmidt, 2006, p. 53). Peirce also used the word in different contexts.

47 *Mutatis mutandis*, while departing from Schelling's pietistic and theosophic language of his 1809 *Essence of Human Freedom*, I am here suggesting that Peirce's "first" category of Firstness absorbed, or at least parallels in its own categoriological terms,

as Schelling, in due course, came to regard his own earlier phase of logogenetic transcendentalism as a model of "Negative Philosophy" that was already exemplified in Kant and Fichte, similarly Peirce, in due course, absorbed Schelling's move beyond transcendentalism. His categorical Tritism incorporated Schelling's speculative trajectory toward what he called "Positive Philosophy," namely a "progressive" or "metaphysical empiricism," a well as his suggestion as to a synthesis of Positive and Negative Philosophy, in a wider orbit of "metaphysico-cosmical" generalizations.

Now, in the "Introduction" to *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, the young Schelling had written that philosophy is nothing other than "a natural history of our mind."<sup>48</sup> In collaboration with Goethe, he intended to undercut the Cartesian and Lockean dichotomies of mind and nature that plagued the theory of nature up to and including Kant. This path of a "re-vitalized Spinozistic physics" he had already adumbrated in 1797: "From now on there is no longer any separation between experience and speculation. The system of Nature is at the same time the system of our mind, and only now, once the great [absolute] synthesis [of nature and mind, i.e. of "necessity and freedom"] has been accomplished, does our knowledge return to analysis (to *research* and *experiment*)."<sup>49</sup> Continuing the theme into the *First Outline* of 1799, Schelling explicitly subordinated what he called "empirical research" to the foundational science of "speculative physics."<sup>50</sup>

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Schelling's *Urgrund, Ungrund, Abgrund*. One can also find strains of influence running up to Heidegger's *Schelling's Treatise on the essence of human freedom*. Tübingen, 1971 (trans. Joan Stambaugh. Ohio University Press, 1985). Jason M. Wirth insightfully draws attention to this point of Heideggerian commentary on Schelling's "aboriginal" sense of "freedom" in the "key sentence" of Heidegger: "Freedom is not the property of the human but rather: the human the property of freedom"; and Wirth does so on the way to citing Schelling: "It must be *before* every ground and before everything that exists and therefore must be a *Wesen* before any kind of duality whatsoever. How can we call it anything else other than the primordial ground or better so the non-ground." (Wirth, "Forward," *Historico-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, p. x). Further to explore these convergences centering on nuances of ontological "Firstness," one would need to take into account Peirce's interest in Boehme and Swedenborg.

- 48 Schelling's fuller text reads: "Philosophy [...] is nothing other than a *natural history of our mind*. From now on all dogmatism [based on reading Nature exclusively on concepts of cause-and-effect that are inapplicable to mental activity] is overturned at its foundations. [...] Philosophy becomes genetic. [...] From now on there is no longer any separation between experience and speculation. The system of Nature is at the same time the system of our mind, and only now, once the great synthesis has been accomplished, does our knowledge return to (research and experiment)." This passage is cited by Ibrí (*op. cit.*, p. 17) who goes on to say: "Philosophy as the natural history of our minds [is thus] legitimized as also being a Philosophy of Nature and of the Identity of the ideal and the real, enabling Schelling to state that "Nature would be Mind made visible, and the Mind the invisible Nature" (p 19). Coleridge and Emerson were fond of citing the latter pronouncement. We should also note that, *via* Schelling and as precedent to Peirce, Emerson reprised the thematics of a "natural history of our mind" in his "Method of Nature" (1841) and in one of his final works, "The natural history of intellect," 1870.
- 49 SCHELLING, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), trans. Harris and Heath, p. 31 (IBRI, art. cit., p. 17).
- 50 With regard to "the distinction between the speculative and the empirical generally,"

Needless to say, the seeds of Peirce's "objective idealism" ("the one intelligible theory of the universe") can be seen already to be sprouting here! Nurtured in the aesthetic and organic ideas of art and teleological nature ambiguously adumbrated by Kant (in his third *Critique*), the young Schelling sought to speculate beyond Kant in writing of "the sacred bond that couples our mind to Nature." In *On the World-Soul, a Hypothesis of the Higher Physics towards the Explanation of the Universal Organism* (1798), Schelling continued to assert how the concept of *organism* is "prior" to the concept of mechanism, and subtends it. "The world is an organism, and a universal organism is the very condition (and to that extent the positive factor) of mechanism."<sup>51</sup> Thus—he averred—the "mechanically simple" atomistic hypothesis cannot be shown to ground the "dynamically complex" of nature, but rather, vice versa.

As well, the young Schelling clearly typecasted the mechanistic hypothesis as an *a priori* construction, while for his own theory he rather intended the subordination of the quantitative propositions of mechanistic causation to the vectorial dynamics of living nature. For his part, Peirce recognized an indeterministic form of materialism in Epicurus' transformation of the necessitarian physics of Democritus; but he still regarded the Epicurean hypothesis as mechanistic, conspicuously lacking a concept of organic growth in Thirdness. He characterized the Epicurean philosophy as an "Elliptic" worldview in contrast to the "Parabolic" worldview of Newtonian mechanics, both of which he contrasted with his own asymptotic "Hyperbolic" worldview.<sup>52</sup>

Preceding Peirce, Schelling spelled out his *vitalistic* critique of transcendental mechanism even more emphatically in the "Introduction" to the *First Outline* of 1799, signifying that the presupposition of *life and not mechanism* is at the root of all investigation of Nature. As the *first* postulate of philosophy, *our own vital freedom* is an "involuntary" foundational postulate of intelligibility in terms of which materialism and mechanism are mere "abstract caricatures" that eliminate the universal *life* of nature and of humanity.

As long as I myself am *identical* with Nature, I understand what a living nature is as well as I understand my own life;

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Schelling opined that "the idea of 'experimental science' is a mongrel idea that implies no consistent thought"; therefore "what is pure [bluff] empiricism is not science and, conversely, what is science is not empiricism"; or again, "pure empiricism, be its object what it may, is history, [...] and conversely, history alone is empiricism." (Peterson, p. 201). (Cf. Peirce's 1903 "An Outline Classification of the Sciences," EP 2:258, which propounded the logical order of epistemic spaces that situate the special, or idioscopic, research sciences, as reliant upon the mathematical and philosophical sciences, and thereby accounting for the mutual disciplinary interaction of the entire array of formal and material-factual trajectories of heuritic-scientific research).

51 Cf. *First Outline* (1799) on the distinction between the dynamical and mechanical causes of motion: "[...] all mechanical force is the merely secondary and derivative motion of that which is solely primitive and original, and which wells forth from the very first factors in the construction of a Nature overall (the fundamental forces)" (PETERSON, p. 196).

52 See Peirce's discussion of Elliptic, Parabolic, and Hyperbolic Worldview in EP 1:251 and CP 6.581-585.

I comprehend how this universal life reveals itself in the most manifold forms, in measured developments, in gradual approximations to freedom. However, as soon as I separate myself, and with me everything ideal, from nature, nothing remains to me but a dead object, and I cease to comprehend how a *life outside* me could be possible.<sup>53</sup>

As noted above, the great poet and student of nature Goethe expressed the same sentiment, and praised young Schelling's sequent work, *On the World-Soul*. In the next generation, Goethe's influence, which pervades the cited passage, inspired the prose and poetry of Emerson and other Transcendentalists who formed the generational background of Peirce. Emerson's poems "The Sphinx," "The World-Soul," and "Wood-Notes," among others, conspicuously re-expressed Goethe's and Schelling's doctrine of the affinity of mind and nature and corresponding postulation of the twin principles of identity-and-metamorphosis, as typified for example as the latter's metaphor of a "stream" and its vortical dynamics of systolic and diastolic phases, in the following passage from Schelling's *First Outline*:

Suppose, for illustration, a stream; it is *pure identity*; where it meets resistance, a whirlpool is formed; this whirlpool is not an abiding thing, but something that vanishes at every moment, and every moment springs up anew.—Originally, in Nature there is nothing distinguishable; all products are, so to speak still in solution, and invisible in the universal productivity [...] At every such point the stream breaks [...], but at every step there comes a new wave which fills up the sphere.<sup>54</sup>

Now, Peirce scholars will readily recognize that variations on such early-phase Schellingian formulations conspicuously reappeared in Peirce's ontological postulations in "The Architecture of Theories," "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined," "Man's Glassy Essence," "Evolutionary Love" and other 1890s writings on how the proliferating complexifications of the world cannot intelligibly be derived from an *a priori* uniformity principle of mechanistic pre-determinism. Such variations alone form a clear basis for Peirce's letter to Wm. James reporting on his special interest in the *Philosophie der Natur*.

But, as well, we have seen that Peirce declared—against the prevailing mind-set of his mid-19<sup>th</sup> scientific colleagues—that he was interested in "*all* stages of Schelling." With his own interest in the logic of scientific inquiry, he transformed Schelling's vitalistic *Urform* into the categoriology of his own unfolding career-text.<sup>55</sup> Thus when Peirce's mature "speculative physics" hit full stride beginning with "A

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53 Ibid., p. 36. Emerson reinscribed precisely the same thought in his essay "Beauty" (1860).

54 Schelling "Introduction" to the *First Outline*, p. 206. See also Emerson's poem "The two rivers," and the Emersonian poet Wallace Stevens' "The river of rivers of Connecticut."

55 In terms of authorial narration, I suggest here that Peirce's training and expertise in "laboratory-mindedness" is reflected in the *objective perspective* of his style that is *transformative* of Schelling's Neo-Platonic, mystical, and theosophistic sources. Peirce says as much in the opening paragraph of his "The law of mind" (1892).

Guess at the Riddle” (1887-88), it achieved a *transmutation* of Schelling in its relegation of the postulate of linear mechanism to the negative status of disabling the *chance spontaneity* of nature (Tychism) as well as rendering inexplicable the synechistic front-edges of cosmogenesis and agapistic evolution. Peirce of course may have drawn upon other historical and contemporary sources for his revision of Kant’s categories in reference to the changing scientific landscape (including but not limited to interpretations of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*), but his declaration that he was a “Schellingian, of some stripe” remains as unimpeachable testimony in its own right.

However, my thesis here is that, in crucial respects, Peirce philosophized *beyond* Schelling. He brought to the table his expertise in logical classification that enabled him to reinterpret Schelling’s blend of Romantic, Neoplatonic, mystical, and theosophical speculations in elegant categorical form. That is, his Three Categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness reached a bottom line of ontological semiosis, heuristically encompassing the “stages” of Schelling’s metamorphosing *Naturphilosophie*, by way of parsing wider registers of ever-incipient randomness, spontaneity, and freedom (Firstness), a quale-consciousness experienced in itself as well as together with the contingent determinations of physical-mechanical facticity in the “Outward Clashes” of life-experiences (Secondness), and, concomitantly, of continuous potencies of mental evolution and growth (Thirdness) in the abductively “uberous” “universe perfused with signs.” Peirce’s architectonic was another quantum leap in vitalistic theory, achieving a new philosophic life of its own.

In particular, Schelling’s early *Philosophie der Natur* remained caught in the drag of the rationalistic projects of Kant and Fichte insofar as it intended to postulate an internally complete system of transcendental deduction. Peirce’s bottom line was different. Peirce departed *negatively* from the trammels of transcendental system altogether in his negative critique of systematic apriorism in “The fixation of belief” and, of course, *positively* in his own asymptotic hyperbolic speculation which, in “A Guess at the Riddle,” *abducted* a genuinely random Tychism of “variescences” (Firstness) of Feeling feeding an open-ended cosmogonic trajectory (Thirdness), together with a corresponding melioristic emphasis on the primacy of quale-consciousness in the logic of scientific inquiry (and, of course, in aesthetic consciousness). Peirce’s fusion of these epistemic and cosmical parameters of “purposive” freedom-and-necessity bade fair to be a theoretical accomplishment he called “one of the new births of time.”<sup>56</sup> It is no less.

One such aspect of this contrastive difference between Schelling’s *Philosophie der Natur* and Peirce’s Tritism we may rehearse as follows. With regard to his “speculative physics,” the young Schelling in his *First Outline* of 1799 wrote that *experimentation* in the natural sciences presupposes processes of *hypothetical postulation* in the minds of the experimenters—based on the heuristic assumption of an “organizing whole” of contingent existents that are commensurable with competent inquiry.<sup>57</sup> However, this does not seem to have signified genuine *hypothesis* in the “uberous” sense of Peirce’s signature doctrine of *abduction*. Rather, Schelling followed Kant who indicated reflexive

56 EP 1:244.

57 Again following the helpful outline and articulation of Peterson’s Introduction, pp. xxiv. For a valuable treatment of this trajectory in Peirce’s thought, see IBRI, 2006, p. 89-111.



"maxims of subjective wisdom" of the "reflective judgment" that seek to discover viable universalizing paths for inquiries "when the contingent and not the universal is given"—heuristic maxims such as "nature does nothing in vain," "nature does not take leaps," etc.<sup>58</sup> For his part, Schelling averred that experimental inquiry presupposes a complete "organic whole" theoretically inclusive of all the intermediate links in the inductively discovered chains of nature. And he set the "free" behavior of scientists who contribute to productive human knowledge on this transcendental basis.<sup>59</sup>

Thus in terms of Schelling's "speculative physics," experimental intelligence takes off from the "principles of possibility" of a thing, the *a priori* conditions under which it can be produced by the imaginative intervention of the experimenter. Such experimental interventions sometimes yield that Nature can be "compelled to act under certain conditions." "Every experiment [...] is a prophecy." "The first step toward science, therefore, at least in the domain of physics, is taken when we ourselves begin to produce the objects of that science."<sup>60</sup> It is this "first" transcendental step toward inductive knowledge that produces the "necessary" in phenomena, in effect transforming the *a posteriori* into *a priori*. And thus "Experimenting itself is a production of phenomena," and "We *know* only the self-

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58 KAAG, John. *Thinking through the imagination* (2015) illumines how Kant's theory of productive imagination in his third *Critique* is the provenance of Peirce's theory of the primacy of abductive reasoning; Dilworth (2009), "Peirce's Schelling-fashioned Critique of Hegel," establishes the textual basis of this linkage between Kant and Peirce in greater exegetical discussion. These studies bring out that Peirce's heuristic sense of abduction constituted a leading edge of discovery by probalistic reasoning, whereas Schelling's sense of "hypothesis" in his *Naturphilosophie* phase remained a function of an encompassing deductive logic of the Kantian and Fichtean sort.

59 This doctrine is also articulated in Emerson's later-phase writings, "The natural history of the intellect" (1870) and "Poetry and imagination." Such a root assumption as to the "consanguinity" of mind and nature, Emerson avers, governs the performance and accomplishments of artistic and scientific intuition, both of which are productions partaking of the synthetic "inklings" and "promptings" of Nature—e.g., via a synthesis of conscious and unconscious dimensions of Nature in the poet-genius. This Kantian doctrine of the artistic genius was already carried forward in Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* and in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800 and his *Philosophy of Art* phase of 1801-04. But the emphasis on scientific discovery as having a status co-equal with imaginative art in the "cosmic poetics" rather stems from Goethe. Cf. IBRI: "The task of both science and art is innately heuristic and must, in infinite time, flow into one another" (*op. cit.*, p. 21). Ibri goes on to write: "Thus, to Schelling, the pristine 'indifferentiation' of ideal and real assumes heuristic grounds not only for science, but also for the arts, making them related as activities of the spirit. [But] In short, while the temporality of history traces a long and enduring path for science, necessary for the obtainment of identity between the logical forms of human thought and Nature, in the a-temporality of poetry everything is already pre-contained as virtually written as an amorous and pleasurable invitation to the deciphering of the Absolute" (*op. cit.*, p. 22). Adding Peirce's mature philosophy into the conversation, with particular reference to his notions of "continuum of the Platonic Worlds" and of the normative ideal of quale-consciousness in Concrete Reasonableness, the question arises as to whether Peirce's generalizations more closely align with Goethe's or Schelling's in his idealistic *Philosophy of Art* phase.

60 SCHELLING, 2004, p. 197.

produced; knowing, therefore, in the *strictest* sense of the term, is a *pure* knowing *a priori*.”<sup>61</sup>

The question here is whether Schelling’s doctrine here fully aligns with Peirce’s logic of inquiry?

Keith Peterson’s Introduction goes on to illustrate Schelling’s doctrine that what is “produced” in certain experiments involves the *a priori* idea of polarity, which, in turn, is the transcendental condition of the theories of electricity and magnetism. As universal and *a priori*, the Ur-archetype of polarity can never be found in the objects of nature, and so its knowledge is not produced by experimentation on things. Hence “the prophetic” aspect. The postulate of polarity functions retroductively, so to speak, as the “final cause” of the phenomena. We must “put it in nature, endow nature with it” in our objective experiments. This “putting in” is itself involuntary; it is not merely regulative but pertains to what is real outside us. “How come we impose this idea only on certain things, and not all things”—Schelling asks—and in so doing we feel ourselves in no way free, but absolutely constrained? This constraining aspect of objective teleological representation in nature legitimates the project of the philosophy of nature to investigate “nature as subject” (sphere of autonomous productivity) and not only to view “nature as object.”

Thus Schelling asserted, on the basis of his system’s *deduction* of phenomena within an “organic whole.”

Now, however, it must in all cases be possible to recognize every natural phenomenon as absolutely necessary; for, if there is no chance in Nature at all, then likewise no original phenomenon of Nature can be fortuitous; on the contrary, for the very reason that Nature is a system, there must be a necessary connection, in some principle embracing the whole of Nature, for everything that happens or come to pass in it:—Insight into this internal necessity of all natural phenomena becomes, of course, still more complete, as soon as we reflect that there is no real system which is not, at the same time, an organic whole [...] It is *not, therefore*, that WE KNOW Nature as *a priori*, but Nature IS *a priori*; that is, everything individual in it is pre-determined by the whole or by the idea of a Nature generally. But if Nature is *a priori*, then it must be possible to recognize it as something that is *a priori*, and that is really the meaning of our affirmation.<sup>62</sup>

As we have seen, Schelling further essayed this *balancing act* of idealism and realism in his next work, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800).

But then, as we have also seen, freeing himself “from the trammels of system” in the cosmical-poetical-mystical- and cabalistical writings of his “mid career” (1809-1815), Schelling abandoned Kant and Fichte in pursuit of deeper, more irrational, “grounding” and “ungrounding” registers of “freedom” in the divine and human natures, and in speculations on “the stages of the world.” His 1840s post-idealistic anti-Hegelian

61 *Loc. cit.*

62 “Introduction” to *First Outline* (1799). Trans. Peterson, p. 198.

polemic, which contrasted concepts of *existentialistic* Positive and *transcendentalist* Negative philosophy, followed in due course. Schelling's later worldview thus ran much closer to Schopenhauer's (and to Nietzsche's) sense of bottomless World-Will than his earlier Romantic phase, to the extent of eventually regarding his own earlier transcendentalism as illustrative of "critical," or Negative Philosophy.

But again, for his part, Peirce came to transmute Schelling's issues in his inclusive semiotic architectonic that tri-valently valorizes both the irrational and the rational dimensions of experience. He agreed with Schelling that mental action is essentially teleological, and thus non-mechanistically causative of phenomena—averring that it so functions in the registers of representational Thought (Thirdness) that is conjugative of indexical signs and their iconic predicates. And he broadened this conception beyond the egocentrism of individual mind to mind-in-the universe. But Peirce's Tritism likewise insisted upon a predominant sense of elemental randomness, spontaneity, and novelty in nature at large—in the terms of an ontological Tychism, or of genuine Chance—together with a corresponding epistemic function of abductive quale-consciousness in "uberously" abductive discovery of the progressive potencies of nature. The indecomposable *spontaneity* of nature and experience (Firstness), as well as the indecomposably determinate, factually and fatalistically, *resistant* dimensions of Secondness, are, in themselves, "non-dicible" in the sense of Schelling's own famous term, *unvordenkliche*. Also *unvordenkliche* of course is representation (Thirdness) *in futuro*: "we live forwards but we understand backwards."

In this ostensibly more comprehensive way, Peirce's semiotic ontology raised the theoretical bar to a new level; and in this context we can perhaps understand more precisely why he *carefully* described himself as "a Schellingian, of some stripe."<sup>63</sup>

Peirce's distinctive Schellingian "stripe" of ontological semiosis consisted of a transmutation of Schelling's early-phase *logogenetic deduction* of nature in and by a new emphasis on open-ended tri-valent dimensions of nature and mind, or (in Kantian language) of "necessity and freedom." Even as elementally indecomposable, these compresent dimensions of ontological semiosis remain uberously melioristic (in contrast to some of the *Weltschmerz* pronouncements of Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and certain of the postmoderns—though Schelling and Nietzsche also projected ontologically resolute *futures* in their writings). Thirdness, the dimension of translatable representation *in futuro*, has the "potency" of synthesizing the other two dimensions of the spontaneity and contextual necessity of sign-percepts in open-ended proliferating processes of inquiry and discovery. This conception bottoms out as an ubiquitously spontaneous "universe perfused with signs" in which any sign-symbol ("sign-soul" in Peirce's own language) functioning as a Third may also function as a new First in the open-ended "energizing reasonableness" of the universe.

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63 Here we might return to the aforesaid Jamesian dictum, "we live forwards, but we understand backwards." That is, we *live* forwards, but *know* it in our transcendental rear-view mirror. Peirce's position is more encompassing: we *know* backwards in the dimension of Secondness while simultaneously, in the same semiosis, we *project* forward in the "concrete reasonableness" of Thirdness. Arguably James's position is closer to Bergson's which dichotomizes transcendentalism and metaphysical empiricism, while Peirce's version reprises Schelling's project of synthesizing the Negative and Positive philosophies.

In itself, Peirce's highly imaginative, though perspicaciously grounded logical, formulations have proved difficult to grasp, perhaps especially by readers of an *abistorical stripe* who do not set Peirce's accomplishment within the trans-Atlantic paradigm under consideration. But in brief, in important respects Peirce was a "New England Transcendentalist" ringing the changes on a continuum of ideas whose intermediaries were Schelling, Coleridge, Emerson, and many others. With "A guess at the riddle" (1887-1888), Peirce constructed an essentially *prospective* architectonic in the terms of a *hyperbolic, open-ended* worldview which maintained the trajectory of Schelling's "progressively empiricist" Positive Philosophy as distinct from any residual "critical" or Negative reflexivity still present in the latter's 1797-1800 *Philosophie der Natur*.<sup>64</sup> Schelling's early *Philosophie der Natur* rather still inscribed a noetic monism—in the language of Wm. James—an *Identitätphilosophie* of the conditioned and unconditioned, at once *Natura naturata* and *Natura naturans*, "product" and "productivity," in a perpetual "dialectic."<sup>65</sup> This was Schelling's early-phase "transcendental construction" or "deduction" by which alone we can think of nature at all.

Such indeed was Schelling's *early*, that is, *initial* invention of *Naturphilosophie* which, of course, cannot be faulted for its youthful brilliance. The "untrammelled" and "protean" Schelling eventually speculated in terms beyond this logogenetic doctrine; in the long run he remodeled it, so to speak, as the transcendentalist reflexivity definitive of the Negative Philosophy part of his 1840s writing. Correspondingly, Peirce originally tended to associate Schelling's and Hegel's systems together as modern philosophy's new but "inhabitable" mansions of speculation; but in due

64 As indicated above, Schelling outgrew his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*. In his *Berlin Lectures on the Negative and positive Philosophy* of 1841-42, he explicated Aristotle's concepts of *energeia* and *entelecheia* as a conflation of negative (*a priori*) and positive (existential) components, which Aristotle ultimately reintegrated in his *rationalistic* metaphysical formula of *noesis noeseos* (thought thinking itself). In rejecting Aristotle on this point, he again rejected the logocentric trajectory of his own 1800 *System*. This analysis formed the provenance of Peirce's similar critique of Aristotle's tendency to conflate *energeia* and *entelecheia* in his "Seven systems of metaphysics" of 1893 (EP 2:180). I submit that Peirce's "metaphysico-cosmical" categoriology constituted a realism-idealism comprised of three irreducible dimensions (pre-rational, irrational and rational) that bottoms out as radically "existentialistic-vitalistic" as does the trajectory of Schelling's post-idealistic writings.

65 Schelling *First Outline*: "Assuming [...] what must be assumed, that the sum of phenomena is not a mere [aggregational] world, but of necessity a Nature (that is, that this whole is not merely a product, but at the same time productive), it follows that in this whole we can never arrive at absolute identity, because this would bring about an absolute transition of Nature as productive into Nature as product, that is, it would produce absolute rest. Such a wavering of Nature, therefore, between productivity and product, will necessarily appear as a universal duplicity of principles, whereby Nature is maintained in continual activity, and prevented from exhausting itself in its product; and universal duality as the principle of explanation of Nature will be as necessary as the idea of Nature itself" (trans. Peterson, p. 197). In Peirce's terms, not just a universal duplicity of principles, but a triadicity; more fundamentally categorized, an "absolute rest" of nature would constitute a Secondness, while its incipient and ongoing activity (as a semiotic metamorphosis of a "universe perfused with signs") would reveal its Firstness and Thirdness, respectively.

course his text uncoupled the two German philosophers, pointedly “consider[ing] Schelling as enormous,” while regarding Hegel’s system as paradigmatic exponent of abstract dialectical rationalism *par excellence*.

Nevertheless, on the other side of this equation, there were many vital seeds of Positive Philosophy contained in Schelling’s *Philosophie der Natur* that can reasonably be identified as having been harvested—before Darwin—by the previous generations of scientists, as well as by the New England Transcendentalists, and by Peirce. For example, from such a postulated binary of productivity and product in the Idea of Nature, Schelling’s *First Outline* of 1799 went on to derive a graduated series of increasingly complex stages in the evolution of nature. Here Schelling’s “dynamical” rather than the “atomic” deduction of categories described “nested spheres” of systolic and diastolic activity and product, in contentious evolutionary progression of a single unfolding continuum, ascending from the inorganic realm into the organic. Nature, therefore, is to be conceived as always spiraling upward, while its existing “products” are “suspended” or “arrested” as temporary permanencies in the ongoing flow.

In historical perspective, such formulations of organic evolution, even though couched within Schelling’s transcendental deduction, paved the way for the non-mechanistic philosophic paradigm of nature leading (after Darwin) in the direction of Peirce (Bergson, James, Whitehead). Indeed, many of Schelling’s breakaway concepts had already reappeared shortly thereafter in his contemporary critic, Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1818) and soon after that in Emerson (*Nature*, 1836). Thus, for example, in Schelling’s words in the *First Outline*: “The points of inhibition [of the absolute productivity, *Natura naturans*] will be signified by the products [*Natura naturata*]; every product of this kind will represent a determinate sphere which Nature always fills anew, and into which the stream of its force incessantly gushes.”<sup>66</sup> The *vortical existents*—or simultaneously inhibiting and expanding habit-formations of Nature—are preserved in their existence by their “striving” [in Goethe’s key word] to express the whole in increasing individuation, and thus to approximate a single perfect organism, a single archetype. But conversely “the individual exists against the will of nature,” which also has a tendency to return to “a state of indifference” where no strife exists, and all individuals are eliminated. In the world’s life forms, the “perfect balance” of these two tendencies is expressed in the preservation of a genus or species at the expense of the individual. Super-organic species express certain proportions and intensities of the primary organic functions.

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66 *First Outline*, p. 18. Or again: “A stream flows in a straight line as long as it encounters no resistance. Where there is resistance—a whirlpool forms. Every original product of Nature is such a vortex, every organized being. E.g., the whirlpool is not something immobilized, it is rather something constantly transforming—but reproduced anew at each moment. Thus no product in Nature is *fixed*, but is reproduced at each instant throughout the force of Nature entire. (We do not really see the subsistence of Nature’s products, just their continually being-reproduced.) Nature as a whole co-operates in every product.” (trans. Peterson, *loc. cit.*) Here I would draw attention again to a poetically prolific variation on this theme in Goethe’s contemporary *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (The metamorphosis of plants, 1798), a variation carried over in Emerson’s “The method nature” (1839) and “Nominalist and realist” (1844). And, as noted, Schelling’s “stream” metaphor reappears in several of Emerson’s poems and prose essays.

It is through the so-to-speak discontinuous continuity of organic functions that the whole diversity of the natural world is connected and forms a single whole organism.<sup>67</sup>

While the young Schelling eventually abandoned this kind of logogenetic dialectic to explore deeper oppositional implications of the “*Urform* of life” in the divine and human natures, we should recognize that many of these themes resurfaced in the conceptual elaborations of his later writings. The binary conception of contracting and expansive potencies and their synthetic resolutions in gradations of spirit remained a powerful undercurrent. He shared with Schopenhauer significant articulations of the metaphysical Will, the gradation of life forms, the service of the individual to the species, the disclosures of a Platonic World through Beauty and Art, and a “nostalgic” character-ethics of our “intelligible” eternal natures.

In due course Peirce and many other thinkers were interested recipients of these concepts before and after Darwin. Peirce absorbed and transformed them in his cosmological formulations subtending his career-long philosophic endeavor to write the “logic of inquiry.”<sup>68</sup> More recent formulations, such as those of the

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67 Here Schelling defines every organism as maintaining itself by its specific proportion of reproductive forces, irritability, and sensibility. Plants have a preponderance of reproductive force, a minimum of sensibility; mammals are the opposite. Forces of reproduction are positive, expansive, and the most widely distributed. Irritability is reactive and designates the juxtaposition of inner and outer worlds, and is less widely distributed. Sensibility is the implicit identity the two because it is the source of movement and cause of life’s reproduction of itself and of its reaction to the world. In this sense the third (sensibility) is there from the beginning. As Peterson notes, Schelling’s *Introduction* of 1799 analyzes these trivalent powers in the opposite order. Magnetism is the first power of inorganic nature, the state of unity in difference. Electricity has the poles in separation and opposition, a state of explicit difference. Chemical process recombines these separate products, achieving an “intussusception” and unification, a return to a state of indifference. The trivalent formula is repeated at a higher organic level. Sensibility is the (magnetic) stage of unity in difference, irritability that of explicit (electrical) differentiation, and reproductive drive the (chemical process’s recombinant) stage of return to unity or indifference. Reproductive drive is more extensive in the organic as chemical process is in the inorganic. Nature is the expression of greater or lower degrees of intensity. The powers of sensibility, irritability, and reproductive force are isomorphic with magnetism, electricity, and the chemical processes or light, respectively, and the former are nothing other than the latter “raised to a higher power.” (At a later point, in *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, Schelling said that *light* is nothing but *spirit* at a lower level of potency (p. 119).) Hence all the “analogies” in nature among the various levels of potencies. The distinction between the organic and inorganic is itself only apparent. “The word *Potenzierung* names Schelling’s original and powerful concept of conceiving this identity in diversity” (Peterson, xxxi-ii). Apropos of Peirce, Joseph Esposito (1980) has argued that Schelling’s latticed triads of magnetism/sensibility, electricity/irritability, and chemical/reproductive forces may be a source of Peirce’s three categories (of qualitative feeling, sense of resistance, and evolutionary habit-formation, respectively).

68 It will take another paper to clarify how Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945), founder of the Kyoto School in Japan, and certain of his disciples such as Nishitani Keiji, drew some of their elemental concepts on life and human existence (further elaborated in Buddhist metaphysical terms) from the writings of Schelling.

Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro's (1870-1945) who composed post-Fichtean Buddhist metaphysical writings between 1927 and 1945, or such "postmodern French" critical work of Gilles Deleuzes and others, appear to have "retailed" ideas of Schelling, Bergson, Whitehead, though conspicuously without reference to Peirce's "wholesale" interpretive accomplishment.<sup>69</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

But now to end, though still *in medias res*. Where there is Life there is Death. Peirce shared with Schelling a sense that "birth and death" are the great mysteries of the *Dass*, and not the *Was*, of Nature. He addressed these mysteries in his Three Categories, where Secondness is the principle of Otherness, of past accomplishment, arrested growth, brute facticity, the enormity of evil, and thus also of Death's long arm, while Firstness and Thirdness combine to express the spontaneity and incessant Vitality of Nature and History. Those two foundational categorical obligations of Kant, namely of "Freedom and Necessity," are tri-valently compresent in the Life, Death, and continuously spiraling Life of the "universe perfused with signs."

But what (*Was*) of the *Dass* of God's nature?

Schelling's vitalistic-existentialistic resolution of his early-phase tension between the objective realism of Spinoza and the transcendental idealism of Fichte retold Kant's story, and indeed retold the story of many of the great religious and metaphysical texts of civilization. It may legitimately be thought to have formed one source of the provenance of Peirce's metaphysico-cosmical Tritism, too. Both philosophers reached bottom line thoughts on the relentlessly-ever-incipient, *unvordenkliche* Reality, a bottom line that Schelling himself regarded as qualifying as a philosophy of religion. Such a philosophy of "religiosity" was the *natural* implication of the "stages" of his career-long vitalistic re-soundings of Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*. The same trajectory recurs in what Peirce called his own "Buddhisto-Christian religion."<sup>70</sup>

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69 See for example DELEUZE, 1994.

70 Peirce's spoke of his "Buddhisto-Christian religion," itself a variation on his normative ideal of the *summum bonum* as concrete reasonableness, in an 1898 manuscript on Religion: "[...] the supreme commandment of the Buddhisto-Christian religion is, to generalize, to complete the whole system until continuity results and the distinct individuals weld together [...] the very supreme commandment of sentiment is that man should generalize [...] should become welded into the universal continuum, which is what true reasoning consist in." Accordingly, "[...] not merely in man's cognitions, which are but the superficial film of his being, but objectively, man prepares himself for transmutation into a new form of life, the joyful Nirvana in which the discontinuities of his will shall all but disappear." (For this reference, see DILWORTH, 2009, p. 55). Why "Buddhisto-Christian"? Cf. Schelling: "God's will is to universalize everything, to raise everything up toward unity with the light or keep it there; the will of the ground, however, is to particularize everything or to make it creaturely." [...] "The first beginning for the creation is the yearning of the One to give birth to itself or the will of the ground. The second is the will of love, whereby the word is spoken out into nature and through which God first makes himself personal" (*The Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Love and Schmidt, p. 47 and 59, respectively). But obviously these connections between religiosity in Schelling and Peirce require a separate consideration.

A like consideration of the multifaceted interface of Peirce and Schelling ought to go toward a just estimation of Peirce's essential place in the history of philosophy. Way ahead of the contemporary "Continental" interest, Peirce "consider[ed] Schelling as enormous," took a special interest in his *Philosophie der Natur*; and harvested Schelling's subsequent "stages" of speculation concerning the dynamical continuum of Freedom and Necessity, while resetting these speculations in line with the mathematical, logical, and empirical advances of his day. To a recognizable degree, he harvested the trans-Atlantic legacy of Schelling in neo-Emersonian, New England Transcendentalist, categorical perspective.

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