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# Peirce's inheritance of Schelling's progressive metaphysical empiricism

*A herança do empirismo metafísico progressivo do Schelling de Peirce*

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**Abstract:** The career-texts of Kant, Schelling, and Peirce unfolded in historical sequence to form a paradigm progression in philosophical modernity. To wit, Kant's third *Critique*'s reflective synthesis of foundational concepts of nature and freedom opened a speculative path for a landmark line of development in Schelling's later-phase metaphysical empiricism which, in turn, conveyed a decisive provenance for Peirce's articulation of indecomposable categories of epistemology, cosmology, and ontological semeiosis. Peirce's categoriology reconfigured certain theoretical implications of Schelling's *Investigation into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) and *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1841) in his later-phase trajectory of postulating an energetic reasonableness in the nature of things.

**Keywords:** Connaturality. Energetic reasonableness. Metaphysical empiricism. Objective idealism. Philosophical modernity. Tripartite paradigm.

**Resumo:** As obras da vida de Kant, Schelling e Peirce se desdobraram em sequência histórica para formar uma progressão paradigmática na modernidade filosófica. A terceira síntese reflexiva da crítica de Kant relativa aos conceitos fundacionais de natureza e liberdade abriu um caminho especulativo para uma linhagem notável de desenvolvimento no empirismo metafísico mais tardio de Schelling que, por sua vez, transmitiu uma proveniência decisiva para a articulação de Peirce de categorias indecomponíveis de epistemologia, cosmologia e semiose ontológica. A categoriologia de Peirce reconfigurou certas implicações teóricas da *Investigação sobre a Essência da Liberdade Humana* de Schelling (1809) e *A Fundamentação da Filosofia Positiva* (1841) em sua trajetória de fase tardia de postular uma razoabilidade energética na natureza das coisas.

**Palavras-chave:** Conaturalidade. Empirismo metafísico. Idealismo objetivo. Modernidade filosófica. Paradigma tripartite. Razoabilidade energética.

## 1 Peirce's completion of a tripartite paradigm in philosophic modernity

In this paper I propose to draw attention to a mainstream of *progressive metaphysical empiricism* in the history of modern philosophy. I refer to a 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century current of thought that focused on orientations of *prospective a posteriori intelligence* in bottom line registers of *normative philosophic theory*. It is the theory of growth of mind, indeed of growth into mind, in the universe. In philosophic modernity, the landmark lines of progressive metaphysical empiricism trace back to the major figures Kant, Schelling, and Peirce. There were of course other currents of modern thought—adjudicated here as minor tributaries in relation to



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the “Kantist” line. Peirce directly absorbed and upgraded the Kantist line, arguably completing what I will suggest was a tripartite paradigm shift in philosophic modernity.

In this endeavor I will practice a “cluster” approach to historically important authors and their texts. I analogize the term in a viticulturalist’s sense of harvesting a cluster of ripened grapes on the vine. In the perspective of what I term comparative hermeneutic, the noetic field of the history of philosophy manifestly presents such organically interrelated clusters in the form of interrelated ensembles of fundamental concepts—assumptions as to principles, methods, authorial perspectives, ontological emphases—comprising textual interfaces among the major authors, whether close-up or distanced by centuries. These occur in so many contexts of the history of philosophy as to render the technocratic methodology of analysis of texts in isolation to be a secondary, subordinate practice.<sup>1</sup>

The Kantist line, which progressed from Kant through Schelling to Peirce, significantly exemplifies the investigative obligation of such an inter-textual “cluster” approach. Fichte needs to be recognized in passing; he played a key transitional role between Kant and Schelling. But Kant and Schelling were the major force turners in the line leading to the architectonic achievements of Peirce’s career. Much is gained by seeing a growth in ideas, a veritable paradigm shift, in such a perspective.

Peirce’s participation in the Kantist line dates from his Harvard undergraduate days when he began to focus on the problematic of revising Kant’s categories. Later in the full maturity of his career, he reminisced about the seeds of Pragmatism sprouting in a knot of young men who formed a half-ironically, “half-defiantly” named “The Metaphysical Club” in the earliest seventies. After a generous enumeration of that all-star cast of early colleagues, Peirce went on to say: “I, alone of our number, had come upon the threshing-floor of philosophy through the door of Kant.” (EP 2:399-400). In due course, his long years devoted to pragmatist modification of Kant’s method of deduction from *a priori* premisses turned the directions of philosophy, the special sciences, and, more comprehensively speaking, the “logic of inquiry” *tout court*, on its head. His gradually evolved Fallibilism—Pragmatism, Pragmaticism, and ontological Semeiosis—not only revised Kant’s categories, it re-oriented the gamut of sciences and arts in the forward-facing direction of prognostic ingenuity of inquiry in an evolutionary universe. In due course, Peirce’s career-text overturned the entire platform of nominalistic-anthropocentric presuppositions of inquiry (still conspicuous in Kant’s critical transcendentalism) in favor of a sense of humankind’s connatural affinity with nature’s intrinsic processes of “energetic reasonableness.” The developmental teleology of Peirce’s career-text accomplished this in an architectonic theory comprised of trivalent categorical foundations that absorbed and transmuted the paradigm shift implicit in Kant’s “Copernican revolution” and then hugely advanced by Schelling.<sup>2</sup>

Ripeness is all. Peirce’s wrought the array of his mature concepts in consummate articulations of his later-phase writings. To look ahead, Peirce, at the height of his philosophic powers in his early sixties, wrote in one grand generalization of his anthromorphic-cum-cosmomorphic worldview in 1901: “Must we not say [...] there is an energizing reasonableness that shapes phenomena in some sense, and that the same working reasonableness has molded the reason of man into something like its own image.” (EP 2:68). Peirce followed this with another exemplary articulation of his bottom line “*cosmo-logical*” concept in his 1903 Lowell Institute lecture:

1 The writer’s interest in establishing the inter-textual relations among major theories goes back to his “*Philosophy in world perspective: a comparative hermeneutic of the major theories*” (DILWORTH, 1989). He considers Peirce’s “*Seven Systems of Metaphysics*” (1893) as a forerunner to this approach, and also currently regards it as a superior heuristic to reading the history of philosophy—a subject for further investigation.

2 The present paper is especially indebted to the works of Joseph L. Esposito (1977, 1980), Ivo Assad Ibri (2017), and Douglas Anderson (1987) who published pioneering interpretations of the array of Schellingian concepts in Peirce’s career culminating in his ontological semeiosis of “energetic reasonableness.” It seems important to observe that three otherwise valuable Anglophone “companion” volumes of scholarly essays on Schelling—edited by Jason Wirth (2005), Lara Ostaric (2014), and G. Anthony Bruno (2020), respectively—are remarkable for complete absence of reference to Peirce who strongly endorsed “all phases” of Schelling’s career over a century before. The lesson here is the difference between a primary source creative thinker (Peirce) and secondary source commentators.

The very being of the General, of Reason, consists in its governing individual events. So, then, the essence of Reason is such that its being never can have been completely perfected. It always must be in a state of incipency, of growth. It is like the character of a man which consists in the ideas that he will conceive and in the efforts that he will make, and which only develops as the occasions actually arise. Yet in all his life long no son of Adam has ever fully manifested what there was in him. So, then, the development of Reason requires as a part of it the occurrence of more individual events than ever can occur. It requires, too, all the coloring of all qualities of feeling, including pleasure in its proper place among the rest. This development of Reason consists, you will observe, in embodiment, that is, in manifestation. The creation of the universe which did not take place during a certain busy week in 4004 B.C., but is going on today and never will be done, is the very development of Reason. I do not see how one can have a more satisfying ideal of the admirable than the development of Reason so understood. The one thing whose admirableness is not due to an ulterior Reason is Reason itself comprehended in all its fullness, so far as we can comprehend it. (EP 2:254-255).<sup>3</sup>

And in this 1903 context in which Peirce postulated his normative category of the Esthetic Ideal of embodied Reason, he went on to elaborate a sequent “parallelism” between Ethical and Logical normativity:

Under this conception, the ideal of conduct will be to execute our little function in the operation of the creation by giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the saying goes, it is “up to us” to do so. In logic, it will be observed that knowledge is reasonableness; and the ideal of reasoning will be to follow such methods as must develop knowledge the most speedily. (EP 2:254-255).<sup>4</sup>

In his later-phase career (c.1903-1906 and beyond), Peirce can be seen as having articulated several such bottom-line pronouncements as to the universe’s intrinsic reasonableness at the basis of anthropomorphic reasonability.<sup>5</sup>

Now, to suggest a viable line of inquiry to these mature resolutions of the tripartite paradigm in Peirce’s thought, the present paper’s plan is, firstly, to bear witness to Peirce’s inheritance of some of the key variables of idealistic and post-idealistic legacy in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Kantist line. It will, secondly, endeavor to provide a detailed exegesis of one of the key conceptual vectors in the developmental teleology of that line, namely, Schelling’s Berlin lectures *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1841). While Schelling’s Berlin lectures were themselves grounded in his mid-career classic, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), I will concentrate on *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* which, I submit, deserves careful reading as a provenance to Peirce’s Fallibilism in its unfolding phases.

This is, of course, already a tall order—in full scope beyond the limits of the present space; I can only hope to convey readers further along a path of contemporary scholarship that illumines such a “Schellingian” line culminating in Peirce.

3 As we will have further opportunity to note, Peirce’s sense of “cosmo-logical” has been magisterially rendered in the terms of Ivo Assad Ibrī’s phrase “kosmos noetos,” a term tracing to Plato’s *Timaeus*. Here, a fertile subject of further inquiry is suggested by Peirce’s declaration of *pleasure’s* “proper place among the rest” among the qualitative colorations of the world process. In previous paragraphs of the same 1903 essay Peirce elaborated a conception of the supervenience of *pleasure* (which Peirce always categorized together with *pain* as a “secondary phenomena”), adhering closely to the same classical analysis in Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10). Peirce also adhered closely to the same subordination of *pleasure* to *rationality* in the classical to be found in the writings of the Hellenistic Stoics in their opposition to Epicurean worldview as to the primacy or supervenience of pleasure. The Aristotelian/Stoic vs. Epicurean opposition surfaced continuously in Peirce’s text—in worldview terms and in Peirce’s present essay’s prioritization of the criterion of energetic reasonableness over a sensualistic criterion of “logical feeling” (*logische Gefühl*), an issue which underlay Peirce’s distancing his newly christened Pragmaticism from Wm. James’ rendering of Pragmatism.

4 Peirce’s “up to us” carries on his expression of ethical sensibility in “Evolutionary Love” (EP 1:353-354, 1893).

5 I will return to these articulations in the final section of the paper.

## 2 Kant's third critique

Now, as the initial phase of this tripartite paradigm change, let us recognize that Kant's self-styled Copernican revolution virtually invented "modern," and simultaneously reinvented, "German" philosophy.<sup>6</sup> His first two *Critiques* (1781, 1798) articulated "universal" *a priori* concepts of "Nature" and "Freedom" that were to be decisive for the various projects of philosophic modernity overall. His third Critique, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), progressed to conceptualize a new *a priori* for the discovery of specific "lawfulness" or "regularity," both aesthetical and teleological, in the apparent randomness of contingent phenomena. The *a priori* operations of "reflective judgment" presupposed a "suitable," that is to say, "agreeable" or "congenial," region of cognitive affinity between contingent phenomena and imaginative intelligence, a "mediating" region of inductive cognition functioning between the universal forms of Nature and Freedom to account for our powers of anthropological judgment along the gamut of the fine arts and nature's own organic products.

Now, while Kant established the heuristic power of reflective judgment as "regulative only," the next generation of Kantists endeavored forthwith to reconfigure Kant's three *Critiques* in various speculative directions. Fichte's *Wissenschaftlehre* took off in the direction of reconstructing Kant's dichotomy of Nature and Freedom by postulating a more radical depth of transcendental *noesis*, which reconceived *Nature* within a univocal dimension of humanity's self-positing Freedom *per se* and *überhaupt*.<sup>7</sup> Fichte's univocal overhaul of Kant's binary of Nature and Freedom prompted the speculative careers of Schelling and Hegel. (Not to forget that all three Kantists—Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel—were denounced by their contemporary Schopenhauer, a self-styled originalist Kantian who reconfigured Kant's binary of Freedom and Necessity in the eccentric terms of his foundational concepts of Will and Representation.

Schelling, in his *Naturphilosophie* writings between 1795-1797 and *Identitätsphilosophie* speculations in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), gradually transcended his early Fichteanism, diverging from and arguably outdistancing his earlier speculative companion Hegel as well.<sup>8</sup> Schelling came to formulate a theory of *metaphysical freedom in the nature of things*, as couched in the terms of his classic, *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), and then in his *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1841). In due course, Peirce came to endorse "all the phases of Schelling's career" as the provenance of his Fallibilism, which he ultimately evolved into an architectonic metaphysics of the tychistic universe's "energetic reasonableness."

Likeminded with Fichte, Schelling (and Hegel), Peirce's Kantism developed in the trajectory of overhauling Kant's baseline dichotomy of phenomenon and thing-in-itself.<sup>9</sup> His early-phase

6 See the excellent account of "Germany" and Kant's central role in shaping modern philosophy in Terry Pinkard (2002, p. 1-18 *and passim*). Peirce drew attention to Kant's reinvention of modern philosophy in many contexts, for example in his essay "The Probability of Induction" (1878) where he wrote that Kant's question, "'How are synthetical judgments *a priori* possible?' [should be evaluated] Not so much by his answer to this question as by the mere asking of it, the current philosophy of that time was shattered and destroyed, and a new epoch in its history was begun. [Then, in a direct sourcing of Schelling's text:] But before asking *that* question he ought to have asked the more general one, 'How are any synthetical judgments at all possible?'" (EP 1:167). Such a rethinking of the implications of Kant's key role in philosophic modernity energized Peirce from his Harvard undergraduate days where he expressed aspiration to revise Kant's categories, an aspiration then later expressly realized in his "One, Two, Three: Kantian Categories" (1885), and in other such declarations until the end of his career.

7 See the excellent treatment of Fichte's *Wissenschaftlehre* by David Breazeale (2018).

8 On Schelling's divergence from Hegel (crucial for Peirce's career), see Hegel (1977) and Fichte (2012).

9 Kant's dichotomy of noumenon (Freedom) and phenomenon (Nature, Necessity) is at stake in all the post-Kantian speculations. Goethe's poetry, expressive of a vitalistic Spinozism, in effect rejected Kant's dichotomy, as did he writings of Friedrich von Schiller. In the same time frame, Fichte speculatively undermined Kant's "thing-in-itself." Schelling, adhering to Goethe, speculated to like effect in the wake of Fichte's ground-breaking accomplishment, whereas Schopenhauer retained Kant's dichotomy in his idiosyncratic account of the *Ding-an-sich* as the irrationality of the World-will. In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century America, Emerson's "Fate" (1860) adhered to Schelling's version of the covalence of metaphysical freedom and necessity he found in a translation Schelling's *Investigations into the Essence of Freedom* (1809). Peirce's inherited this multiform theoretical legacy and re-conceptualized it in various intersecting nodes of his thought. His rejection of the Kantian dichotomy of phenomenon and noumenon already appeared in his early "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868): under the fourth incapacity of the sign-transferring mind, namely, "that we have no conception of the absolutely incognizable," he wrote: "... the particular thing in-itself. It does not exist as such. That is, there is no thing which is in-itself in the sense of not being relative to the mind, though things which are relative to the mind doubtless are, apart from that relation." (EP 1:52). Again early on, in "Frazer's *The Works of George Berkeley*" (1871), while distinguishing the "phenomenalism of Kant" from that of Hume by way of suggesting a Kantian passage from a "nominalistic" to a "realistic" view of reality, Peirce averred: "The

phenomenological concern centered on a probabilistic logic of inquiry that presaged other conceptual articulations of the connatural inter-saturation of “nature” and “mind,” while, coincidentally, constituting the clear evidence of the transmission of a trans-Atlantic paradigm beginning with the speculations of the *Jena-zeit* “German Enlightenment” in the wake of Kant, and eventuating in American Pragmatism. Along the way, Peirce wrote the *philosophic* script for Darwin’s paradigm-changing century, his evolving thought on cosmological (cosmogonic) evolution undercutting the regnant nominalistic interpretations of Darwin’s theory. The multiform generality of realistic-idealistic orientation of his bottom line cosmical semeiosis reconfigured numerous 19<sup>th</sup>-century lines of philosophical, scientific, and historical interpretations.<sup>10</sup> And, as we shall further see, a conspicuous feature of Peirce’s accomplishment (following Schelling) was to exclude Hegel from the main line of paradigm development, though he critically recognized Hegel’s place in certain limited respects.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 Schelling’s differential analysis of the strains of 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy

Now then, my paper’s thesis is that, to a recognizable extent, Peirce’s architectonic achievement of his mature “metaphysico-cosmical” worldview grew out of the intellectual soil of Schelling’s own Kantist break with the immanently reflective strains of German idealism. As Peirce recognized, Schelling’s break with the nominalistic forms of modern idealism carried along deeper traditions of Boehme and Plotinus all the way back to Aristotle and Plato’s *Timaeus*.

There is, of course, no final algorithm for the diffuse, endlessly ramifying strains of thought in the annals of modern philosophy dating from Kant. What Peirce called “one-idea’d” systems randomly filling opportunistic conceptual niches abounded then, still abound now, and will ever abound. But in retrospect, “schools of thought” come to occupy the historian of philosophy’s attention. Thus, on the contemporary stage, schools of *analytic, phenomenological, and pragmatist* camps of “professional” identity loom as the “big tent” workshops under which academic philosophers ply their trade. These contemporary schools know their own drills; they promote their own iconic figures, repeating and consolidating their narratives. Still, underlying these platforms of contemporary academic activity, archetypal fault lines can be discerned—fault lines stemming from Kant’s “solution to Hume’s problem” and “reinvention” of philosophy for subsequent variations on fundamental themes.

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realist will hold that the very same objects which are immediately present to our minds in experience really exist just as they are experienced out of the mind; that is, he will maintain a doctrine of immediate perception. He will not, therefore, sunder existence out of the mind and being in the mind as two wholly improportionable modes” (EP 1:91). It is possible to follow the thread of this theme throughout Peirce’s career-text. For a later example, in expounding his Critical-Commonsensus in 1905: “The present writer was a pure Kantist until he was forced by successive steps into Pragmatism. The Kantist has only to abjure from the bottom of his heart the proposition that a thing-in-itself can, however indirectly, be conceived; and then correct the details of Kant’s doctrine, and he will find himself to have become a Critical Common-Sensist” (“Issues of Pragmatism,” EP 2:354-355, 1905). In the final analysis, Peirce’s own thought uniquely evolved in the form of establishing a system of trivalent categories of ontological semeiosis in place the general trajectory of Kant, as well as in contrast to Fichte, and even to Schelling, who addressed the fundamental subject matters of philosophy in binary logical terms of subject and object, phenomenon and noumenon, nature and freedom, and the like. Originally, ala Schelling, denouncing Hegel’s form of internal triadic discursivity, Peirce came eventually to recognize a partial resonance between Hegel’s and his employment of trichotomic forms of architectonic categorization.

- 10 In another paper the topic should be explored that, in the American philosophic tradition, James’ “radical empiricism” of “pure experience” that is “prior to subject and object discrimination” and comprised of “novelties forever leaking in,” arguably constituted a psychologistic version of the Schellingian line of metaphysical empiricism. James frequently denounced the legacy of “German” Kantism, as did Santayana and Dewey; their writings do not reflect any serious consideration of Schelling—or, as far as I know, of the innovation of Kant’s *Third Critique*. Peirce came to estimate his contemporary American philosophic confreres James, Royce, Dewey, and Santayana as articulating nominalistic versions of, in Dewey’s phrase, “experience and nature.” Santayana, a keen critic of German transcendentalism, does not appear to have taken account of Kant’s *Third Critique* or of Schelling, either. Among the many resources for estimation of Peirce’s knotty relation to James, see “Pragmatism,” (EP 2:421, 1907). For Peirce’s more clear-cut estimate of Santayana, see the writer’s “Peirce’s Concise Review of Santayana’s *The Life of Reason*,” (DILWORTH, 2019). Santayana’s career-text bottomed out in an ironic humanistic materialism, drawing on Schopenhauer and totally at variance with the Schelling-Emerson-Peirce line, that was designed to turn all of modern philosophy including American Pragmatism on its head.
- 11 Peirce’s text continuously unfolded its inter-textual relation with Hegel’s. See for example, “A Guess at the Riddle,” (EP 1:256-270, 1887-1888); “What Pragmatism Is,” (EP 2:345, 1905); “Pragmatism,” 1907, which references his study of Hegel’s *Phenomenology and Logic*, epitomized his thinking about Hegel (EP 2:428); see also the writer’s “Peirce’s Schelling-fashioned Critique of Hegel” (DILWORTH, 2015).

A looming problem, however, emerges here in that the contemporary scholasticisms tend systematically to promote ahistorical hermeneutics, with the net result of erecting kinds of firewalls against appreciating the “cluster” paradigm of Kant-through-Schelling-to-Peirce (especially underestimating Schelling’s middle role). In historical perspective, however, I would argue the scholastic forms of contemporary professional philosophy should be recognized for the most part as *derivative* from the main fault lines of Kantian legacy; even the British line of logical positivism has been a reaction to Kant’s resolution of Hume’s empirical skepticism.

Which is to say that the forms of contemporary scholasticism radiate along a spectrum of inherited paradigms—let us say, in a preliminary overview—from Kant’s original “critical idealism”; to Fichte’s “subjective idealism”; to Schelling’s “objective idealism” and to Hegel’s “absolute idealism” (contemporary with Schopenhauer’s form of dis-ontological Kantism); to Husserl’s neo-Cartesian “transcendental idealism”; and on to Peirce’s pragmatistic reprisal of Schelling’s “objective idealism”—with of course numerous minor tributaries leading up to the contemporary present (such as Nietzsche’s hybrid text comprised of Schopenhauerian and Emersonian components, James’s and Dewey’s forms of Pragmatism, Heidegger’s neo-Schellingian *Existenz-philosophie*, and so on). Let us add the British-based lines of psychological empiricism as well. But then, a crucial question of comparative hermeneutic arises: namely, granted the sense-making autonomy of the major forms of Idealism and post-Idealism, which of these strains—we ought to inquire—can be judged as having achieved the most consequential paradigm breakthrough as well as having contributed to a comprehensive differential analysis of the other strains?

Here, I think the groundwork of *parsing* these distinguishable options of philosophic modernity should be accredited to Schelling, whose career enacted several of the phases of post-Kantian idealism on the way to achieving a unique post-idealistic “ending” of idealism.<sup>12</sup> Schelling’s “protean” philosophic career produced considerably more than “one-idea’d” system. In net effect, Schelling’s career-text can now be read as of a *synoptic discrimination* of the main currents of Kantism stemming from Kant.

But for reasons of their own agendas, the “one-idea’d,” or regionally based contemporary workshops of academic philosophy, have generally failed to appreciate Schelling’s place in the history of modern philosophy, including his contribution to Peirce’s Fallibilism.

The implication of my argument here is that, compared with Schelling’s net “parsing” of philosophic variables (“archic” assumptions and outcomes) accomplished in his career text, the mid- and late 19<sup>th</sup>-century systems—for example, of Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, and other big names—now also including the psychologistic British tradition carried on by Bentham and John Stuart Mill up through Russell, Wittgenstein, and others—while as sensitive as Schelling to the philosophic environment of their times—articulated and prioritized their respective fundamental principles in tenets that too closely compressed the full range of categorical variables. Such, arguably, were the categorically contracting parameters of Hegel’s “Concrete Universal,” Schopenhauer’s “Denial of the Will,” Kierkegaard’s “Either-Or,” Nietzsche’s “Will to Power,” Husserl’s re-prospecting of Cartesian and Fichtean depths of transcendental *noesis*—in contrast to the more expansive generalities of Schelling’s (later Peirce’s) bottom line reflections on fundamental categories.

Accordingly, on this interpretive premiss of degrees of categorical generality, Schelling’s more comprehensive parsing of the foundational lines of idealism and post-idealism in the line of Kant deserves careful consideration. There was, of course, plenty of crossfire between Kant and Fichte, between Schelling and Fichte, between Schelling and Hegel, and from Schopenhauer or Kierkegaard! There was also Goethe’s magisterial influence behind the young Schelling. When the smoke cleared, I submit, it was the tradition of “objective idealism”—a distinct *movement* of a specific doctrine of

12 See Snow (1996), Beiser (1987), and Bowie (1993).

*progressive metaphysical empiricism* (in Schelling's own words) that was digested and transmuted by Peirce's Fallibilism, Pragmatism, and ontological Semiotics of the universe's "energetic reasonableness." Peirce arguably achieved the most innovative completion of the trajectory of 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophic thought; it now commands our recognition as more consequential for the history of philosophy than found in the other currents of 19<sup>th</sup>-, 20<sup>th</sup>- century, and possibly, even contemporary schools.

#### 4 Peirce's Kantist paradigm of heuristic inquiry

To borrow James' useful language from his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, the Schelling-to-Peirce paradigm of *objective idealism* conspicuously featured open-ended intellectual and experiential outcomes in the *connatural intercourse of nature and mind*, which outpaced the settled array of "ordinary empiricist" as well as "transcendentalist rationalist" camps of their day, and arguably of today as well. In the twilight of his career, James inherited this strain of positive metaphysical empiricism in the wake of the contributions of Ralph Waldo Emerson and, notwithstanding their differences, in contemporary collaboration with Peirce on many issues.<sup>13</sup>

There was indeed a *transmission*: a veritable trans-Atlantic inter-generational *paradigm change* comprised of evolving phases of conscious amplification in the line of Kant, (Fichte), Schelling, Peirce (and James). Synoptically to re-express this paradigm change *in nuce*, Kant's Copernican revolution broke new ground for modern philosophy *tout court*; Fichte stepped forward boldly to refashion Kant's transcendental turn;<sup>14</sup> Goethe and Friedrich von Schiller formatively impacted the young Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and his youthful apotheosis of artistic genius in *The System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), as well as becoming key influences on the early phases of American Transcendentalism (RICHARDS, 2005). After his earlier collaboration with Goethe, Schelling's *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) and *Berlin Lectures on Positive Philosophy* (1841) speculated in post-idealistic freefall, predicating an ever-"irreducible remainder" of existential freedom in the metaphysical nature of things, in due course mediating the path to Peirce's reception and transmutation of epistemological and ontological strains of his progressive metaphysical empiricism.<sup>15</sup>

13 As noted above, James tended to inveigh rhetorically against the systems of German idealism, while perhaps unwittingly failing to recognize the continuity of his philosophy with that of Schelling on the big issues of "novelties forever leaking in" and "we live forwards, while understanding backwards." The relation of James to Peirce, who consciously endorsed Schelling, is of course an extremely complicated one. It was a lifetime of mutual saturation in advancing the trans-Atlantic paradigm of Schellingian Kantism. I will not go into the details here, but simply observe that Peirce recognized the confluence of James' thought and his own in various respects, though always in considered reflection on his logical in contrast to James's *psychological* platforms of philosophic discourse—Peirce's adjudication found for example in the "Additament" to his "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (EP 2:446-450) and "Excerpts from Letters to William James" (EP 2:492-502).

14 Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* should be recognized as a truly ground-breaking achievement in itself. A future study can be contemplated which probes fundamental concepts of Fichte—for example of the "Anstoss" or "check" to the free, practical activity of the "I" that posits its own limitation—in relation to Peirce's philosophy. Fichte's unfolding of the "Anstoss" first as mere "feeling," then as "sensation," then as "intuition" of a thing, and finally as a "concept," has much in common with Peirce's trivalent categoriology. Fichte's doctrine of "original feeling" in the unexplainable contingent givenness of freedom has the ring of Peirce's category of Firstness. *Mutatis mutandis* and retrospectively, and mediated by Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* thought, Fichte's anthropocentric "practical" power of the "I" in which freedom itself is a "theoretical" determining principle of our world of rational purport is a ponderable provenance to Peirce's pragmatistic doctrine of "energetic reasonableness." His religious sense of a "moral world order" in which the "postulates" of our moral sentimentalism do really make some difference in the world is a distant ring to Schelling's sense of the *Ungrund* of God's love (in the final passages of *Investigation of the Essence of Human Freedom*), to the central metaphysics of "moral sentiment" in Emerson, and to Peirce's "sentimentalist" concept of "evolutionary love." And so, on employing a cluster methodology which suggests that an interface between Fichte and Peirce is worth exploring in many respects of fundamental categorizations of "Kantist" heritage. See Breazeale (2018, p. 9, 11 and 18).

15 In tracing the development of this trans-Atlantic paradigm, the career of Ralph Waldo Emerson looms large as the most significant catalytic intermediary between Goethe, Schelling, Coleridge, Carlyle, and the American Pragmatists. Peirce and James inherited Emerson's legacy in their overlapping careers, as did Dewey in the following generation. For reasons of limited space, however, I will presume scholarly recognition of Emerson's input, and I will defer James' contribution. The recent blockbuster work of Joseph Urbas (2021) places Emerson's deep-structured philosophy in the Goethe-Schelling line, providing citation-saturated evidence and theoretical articulation of Emerson's key role in the evolution of the trans-Atlantic paradigm under consideration.

The Kantist line ripened in approximately a century's time.<sup>16</sup> As indicated above, Kant's Third Critique, perhaps exceeding his own initial theoretical intentions, opened the possibility of a *forward trajectory of inquiry* by way of distinguishing an irreducible transcendental ground with respect of an entirely new subject matter of transcendental consciousness, namely, of the "regulative" inventions of the "reflective judgment" concerning the possibility of "supplemental intuitions" of the aesthetical imagination and of teleological judgments of organic nature. Even prior to the functions of aesthetical and teleological judgments, Kant conceived the "reflective judgment" as a "first" (in Peircean language) *a priori* condition of the possibility of discovering the specific relations among contingent phenomena in general (KANT, 2000).<sup>17</sup> Peirce was explicitly to cite that "first" aspect of Kant's innovation concerning heuristic discovery of contingent relations, while transmuted into a non-nominalistic sense of nature's own intrinsic reasonability, referring to it on various occasions as the "hopeful" suggestively of prognostic inference and thus making it the heart of his maxim of Fallibilism, "do not block the road of inquiry."

But as well, Kant's consideration of the works of aesthetical genius in the fine arts in which "Nature gives the rule to art" can arguably be regarded as an inchoate "first" step in expression of a doctrine (Emersonian and Peircean) of connatural symbiotic coalescence of nature and mind. Indeed, Peirce hewed close to the trajectory of Kant's *a priori* of reflective judgment, while transforming its *a priori* status into his *logical* theory of the validity of statistical (inductive) and qualitative (abductive) inference as the forms of veritable inquiry *qua* "logical interpretant"—with "abduction" constituting the leading edge-tool of "uberously" forward-moving intelligence *tout court* in a universe of "energetic" reasonableness.<sup>18</sup>

Kant expressed his *a priori* of "hope" in a somewhat ambiguating fashion: "The correspondence of nature in the multiplicity of its particular laws with our need to find universality of principles for it [...] is indispensable for the needs of our understanding, and hence as a purposiveness through which nature agrees with our aim, but only as directed to cognition" (Ibid., p. 73). He thereby linked subjective "purposiveness" (*Zweckmässigkeit*) with the continuity of heuristic inquiry in general grounded on certain "subjective axioms of metaphysical wisdom," which in effect keyed his nominalistic moment in the annals of modern philosophy.<sup>19</sup> It was nevertheless his breakthrough moment towards philosophic modernity's epistemology of research into nature intrinsically determined as a manifold of particular

16 Always there is a more complicated narrative involving degrees of influence on the multivariate platform of post-Kantian idealism. But my suggestion in this writing is that it is possible to discern a significant thread—namely, about a century of theoretical development spanning the publication of Kant's three *Critiques*, the phases of Schelling's career, and Peirce's mid-career trajectory in "A Guess at the Riddle" (1887-1888) and five *Monist* metaphysical essays of 1891-1893. In an overlapping chronology, Kant (1724-1804) lived for 80 years, Schelling (1775-1854) for 79, Peirce (1839-1914) for 75.

17 In his "Editor's Introduction" to the *Critique of the power of judgment*, Paul Guyer makes a crucial point: "the first form of the reflecting judgment that Kant considers, which is not subsequently treated in the main body of the book at all, is judgment about the systematicity of the body of our scientific concepts and laws itself" (as in Sections IV through VII). This *first* sense of systematicity precedes that of aesthetical and teleological systematicity. "As Kant puts it in the first draft of the introduction, the *a priori* principle of reflecting judgment is simply that 'Nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, in behalf of the power of judgment.' [Guyer adds:] This principle merely confirms our authorization to see for the systematicity in our concepts and laws, or is what the published Introduction calls a principle of 'heautonomy' of judgment, a law prescribed not so much to nature as to judgment itself." (KANT, 2000, p. xiv-xxv).

18 On Peirce's doctrine of "logical interpretant" and significant ramifications, see Ibrí (2019).

19 Kant's nominalism comes out in his descriptions of the "subjective maxims, pronouncements of metaphysical wisdom": "maxims which are laid down *a priori* as the basis of research into nature. [...] i.e., of nature as determined by a manifold of particular laws." "They are to be found often enough in the course of this science, but only scattered about, as pronouncement of metaphysical wisdom, on the occasion of various rules whose necessity cannot be demonstrated from concepts." Examples: "Nature takes the shortest way" (*lex parsimoniae*); "it makes no leaps, either in the sequence of its changes or in the juxtaposition of specifically different forms" (*lex continui in natura*); "the great multiplicity of its empirical laws is nevertheless unity under a few principles" (*principia praeter necessitatem non sunt multiplicanda*); and so forth (KANT, 2000, p. 69; cf. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* A652/ B680 ff.) "... thus the power of judgment, which with regard to things under possible (still to be discovered) empirical laws is merely reflecting, must think of nature with regard to the latter in accordance with a principle of purposiveness for our faculty of cognition, which is then expressed in the maxims of the power of judgment expressed above." (KANT, 2000, p. 71). The reader will note that Kant's "maxims of metaphysical wisdom" are transcendental precedent legisigns of Peirce's methodic principle of synechism.



laws.<sup>20</sup> It is one of the originating textual provenances for Peirce's development of the concept of "rational purport" in anthropomorphic and cosmomorphic terms.

But now returning to Peirce's transformation of this legacy, in his early career pronouncement of a fourth incapacity of cognition—namely, that the recourse to a principle of inexplicability is no principle of explanation—Peirce already reconfigured Kant's law of the purposive specification of nature in a non-nominalistic form (EP 1:30-51). The declaration of this incapacity positively issued forth in Peirce's repeated methodic dictum, "do not block the road of inquiry" (or "never say die"), the reverse side of which implicates the presupposition as to the continuing possibilities of trivalent sign-transferences of the Man-sign.

In another early-phase consideration of methodology, Peirce carried forward Kant's third *Critique's* breakthrough beyond deductive towards inductive systematicity of inquiry in expressing his logical principle of synechism: namely, that "the assumption of continuity provides a powerful engine for logic" (EP 1:142-143). Accordingly, he described how the assumption of a continuum of intermediately resembling (iconic) predicates energizes the heuristic practices of authentic *naturalists* (such as botanists and ornithologists) who *measure continua of specification* in their empirical subject matters. These synechistic practices in discovering speciation in nature—Peirce contended—constituted the very model of logical inductive generalization in the form of measurement by "continuous quantity."<sup>21</sup>

What is more, from there Peirce segued to his thesis of "logical socialism" grounded in the indefinite community (EP 1:81-82, EP 1:149). The synechistic identification of one's interest with those of an unlimited community, Peirce averred in 1878, centers on "having a *hope*, or calm and cheerful wish," that the community may last beyond any assignable date (EP 1:150). In this context Peirce further reconfigured Kant's theory of "transcendental hope" into his logic of the synechistic prospects of empirical inquiry in the following remarkable terms:

It may seem strange that I should put forward three sentiments, namely, interest in an indefinite community, recognition of the possibility of that interest being made supreme, and hope in the unlimited continuance of intellectual activity, as indispensable requirements of logic. Yet, when we consider that logic depends on a mere struggle to escape doubt, which, as it terminates in action, must begin in emotion, and that, furthermore, the only cause of our planting ourselves on reason is that the other methods of escaping doubt fail on account of the social impulse, why should we wonder to find social sentiment presupposed in reasoning? As for the other two sentiments which I find necessary, they are so as supports and accessories of that.

Peirce continued:

It interests me to notice that these three sentiments seem to be pretty much the same as that famous trio of Charity, Faith, and Hope, which, in the estimation of St. Paul,

20 "The law of the specification of nature [...] assumes it on behalf of an order of nature cognizable for our understanding [...] into a *suitability* for human understanding in its necessary business of finding the universal for the particular that is offered to it [(my emphasis)]. Accordingly, it] "grounds all reflections on empirical nature on an *a priori* principle, the principle, namely, that in accordance with these laws a cognizable order of nature is possible—the sort of principle that is expressed in the following proposition: that there is in nature a subordination of genera and species that we can grasp; that the latter in turn converge in accordance with a common principle, so that a transition from one to the other and thereby to a higher genus is possible [...] without presupposing this, we would have no order of nature in accordance with empirical laws, hence no guideline for an experience of this in all its multiplicity and for research into it." (KANT, 2000, p. 71-72). The reader should again note that the sense of the "suitability" of the mind's power of discovering the contingent laws of nature is Kant's transcendental precedent to Peirce's sense of heuristic "connaturality" in the logic of inquiry.

21 The next sections of Peirce's "The Doctrine of Chances" (1878) elaborate on "the theory of probabilities" as "simply the science of logic quantitatively treated." (EP 1:144). Here I would like to cite the extraordinary empirical-cum-aesthetical achievements of J. J. Audubon (1785-1851) whose celebrated ornithological and animal paintings of biological speciation in the wilds of early 19<sup>th</sup>-century America remain an excellent example of Kant's twin doctrines of aesthetical and teleological judgment in his *Critique of the power of judgment*, as well as of Peirce's doctrine of the synechistic learning process based on his three categories. J. J. Audubon's prodigious accomplishments also exemplify Goethe's insistence that his experience of beauty in nature was an essential trigger for his scientific discoveries of nature.

are the finest and greatest of spiritual gifts. Neither Old nor New Testament is a textbook of the logic of science, but the latter is certainly the highest existing authority in regard to the dispositions of heart which a man ought to have. (EP 1:150-151).<sup>22</sup>

Peirce soon transformed Kant's reflective *a priori* of heuristic hope into a central methodic tenet of his speculative breakthrough, "A Guess at the Riddle," 1887-88.<sup>23</sup> The transformation in terms of objective idealism—from subjectively "regulative only" to connaturally regulative—keyed his later-phase theorizing on nature's intrinsic reasonability. In "The Nature of Meaning" (1903), for example, Peirce wrote to the effect that if the "force of experience" were "mere blind compulsion" (Secondness), "we would be utter foreigners in the world," stuck in subjective thoughts that "could not even conform with that mere Secondness"—but the "saving truth is that there is a Thirdness in experience, an element of Reasonableness to which we can train our reason to conform more and more." The passage goes on to aver that this heuristic expectation is not just a product of experience; it is antecedently "an instinctive feeling that it is so," "since in that hope lies the only possibility of any knowledge." (EP 2:212).<sup>24</sup> It's a two-way street. Nature's own prodigiously prolific sign-language involves "hopeful suggestions," that is to say, signs of "concrete reasonability" that "pour in on us every minute." Peirce expounded this heuristic of "hope" all the way to his final writing on the "uberous" nature of abductive inquiry, which alone puts a smile on Beauty for our rational participation in a universe perfused with signs (EP 2:463-476).

## 5 Peirce, "a Schellingian of some stripe"

So now, chronologically, between Peirce's absorption of Kant's *a priori* of contingent judgment into his logic of probable inferences there loomed Schelling's theory of "progressive metaphysical empiricism." So here, again, is the textual transition in transistorized form. In evolving stages, Schelling's works were replete with assertions of advancing Kant's legacy beyond that of his contemporaries. For his part, Peirce sketched various accounts of personal intellectual biography detailing his early preoccupation to revise Kant's categories along with conscious mid-career estimations of Schelling's significance.<sup>25</sup> The picture that emerges is that despite his early preparations for a lifetime expertise in logic and mathematics as well as in several of the hard sciences, Peirce's *philosophic* career already commenced in his Harvard undergraduate study of Friedrich von Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795)—a work through which Peirce inevitably tracked Schiller's aesthetics back to Kant, recognizing it as already a reconfiguration of the theoretical potentials of Kant's "regulative only" status of aesthetical imagination and genius in the fine arts. Having digested that lesson from Schiller, in due course over several decades of polymathic accomplishments, Peirce came to endorse the post-idealistic progression of Schelling's thought and came consciously to declare himself "a Schellingian, of some stripe."<sup>26</sup>

22 Coincidentally, this passage of 1878 contained one of Peirce's early announcements of his three categories of Firstness (sentiment), Secondness (action), and Thirdness (logical reasoning). It presaged such categorical articulations in "A Guess at the Riddle" (1887-1888) and "Evolutionary Love" (1893).

23 "But every fact of a general or orderly nature calls for an explanation; and logic forbids us to assume in regard to any given fact of that sort that it is of its own nature absolutely inexplicable. That is what Kant calls a regulative principle, that is to say, an intellectual hope." "A Guess at the Riddle," (EP 1:275, 1887-1888).

24 The very heart of Pragmaticism consists in such "hopeful suggestions" of nature's energetic reasonableness ("Pragmaticism as the Logic of Abduction," EP 2:235, 1903). This sense of "two-way" connaturality should be recognized as the heart and soul of Emerson's writings, beginning with his maiden small classic, *Nature* (1836), and continuing thereafter in such essays as "The Method of Nature" (1841) and "Nature" (1844). Such an Emersonian doctrine was propaedeutic to Peirce's articulation that "the generalities of nature are pouring in on us every minute." Emerson's prose and poetic expressions of connatural sign-transference trace back to Goethe's poetry as well as Schelling's philosophic writings.

25 See Ibrí (2015).

26 Before the age of 30, Peirce read Schelling in Thomas Davidson's translations of Schelling's 1799 *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* as well as the 'Introduction' to his *System of Transcendental Idealism, 1800* (ESPOSITO, 1977, p. 201). In "The Architecture of Theories" (1891), Peirce aligned with Schelling's objective idealism in declaring that "the only intelligible theory of the universe" is one in which mind and matter are to be conceived synechistically in an open-ended evolutionary process. He went on in "The Law of Mind" (1892) to assert that "...tychism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to

Schelling's so-called "quicksilver" career evolved through various phases, from early *Naturphilosophie* (1797-1799), *System of Transcendental Idealism* and Identity-philosophy (1800-1804), to post-idealistic transmutations resulting in his *Freiheitschrift* of 1809 and his *Berlin Lectures on Positive Philosophy* in the 1840s.<sup>27</sup> In due course, Peirce pointedly deflated a residue of Hegelian criticism of Schelling's "protean" career, declaring he endorsed "all the phases of Schelling's career," and especially admired Schelling as a "scientific-minded man," "free of the trammels of system." This was no casual, off-the-cuff remark. The metamorphic phases of Schelling's career ought to be regarded as personal enactment *qua* rational embodiment of his own metaphysical empiricism. Peirce, in fact, appreciated it as a kind of inductive and abductive "laboratory-mindedness," instantiating his own fallibilistic doctrine of epistemological and ontological semeiosis.

Now, Peirce came to tilt with his friendly editor and philosophic sparring partner, Paul Carus, a Hegelian who accused Peirce of being a Humean. Peirce undercut the charge in calling himself a "Schellingian, of some stripe."<sup>28</sup> He then emphatically identified with Schelling in a broader set of key

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a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be a mere specialized and partially deadened mind." (CP 6.102; EP 1:312-313) The following year, 1893, in "A Rejoinder to Dr. Carus," while referring to his five metaphysical essays published in *The Monist* journal, Peirce wrote: "In the first of this series [...] I carefully recorded my opposition to all philosophies which deny the reality of the Absolute, and asserted that 'the one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism,' that matter is effete mind. This is as much as to say that I am a Schellingian, of some stripe; so that, on the whole I do not think Dr. Carus has made a very happy hit in likening me to Hume, to whose whole method and style of philosophizing I have always been perhaps too intensely averse." (CP 6.605) The next year, 1894, Peirce reiterated his elective affinity with Schelling in a 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." (Cited from *The Thought and Character of William James*, ed. Ralph Barton Perry (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1935).

27 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 (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 as ultimately the same. Mind and matter are ultimately only different inter-permeating 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 1811-1815 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 (was)* things are—in order positively to come to terms both with the fact that (*das*) 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" (p. vii-xiii) to *F. W. J. Schelling, Historico-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (SCHELLING, 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* (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 3-4), and extended footnote 1 (p. 135-36). As we will see, in *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (Berlin Lectures, 1841), Schelling declared that his post-Idealistic phase has gone beyond his earlier *Identitätphilosophie*.

28 In "Evolutionary Love" (1893) Peirce, in the context of replying to Paul Carus, extolled the years from 1846 to the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 as "the most productive period of equal length in the entire history of science until now," writing "The idea that chance begets order, which is one of the corner-stones of modern physics (although Dr. Carus considers it 'the weakest point in Mr. Peirce's system,') was at that time put in its clearest light." (EP 1:358). See also EP 1:388, fn. 9, which references Paul Carus' "Mr. Charles S. Peirce's Onslaught on the Doctrine of Necessity," *The Monist*, v. 2, p. 576, 1892. Carus titled the first section of his paper "David Hume Redivivus" (p. 561-65), as per EP 2:518, fn. 18.

personal influences in the opening paragraph of his metaphysical essay, “The Law of Mind” (1892), published in Carus’s *Monist* journal:

I have begun by showing that tychism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind, I may mention, for the benefit of those who are curious in studying mental biographies, that I was born and reared in the neighborhood of Concord,—I mean in Cambridge,—at the time when Emerson, Hedge, and their friends were disseminating the ideas they had caught from Schelling, and from Schelling from Plotinus, from Boehm, or from what minds stricken with the monstrous mysticism of the East. But the atmosphere of Cambridge had many an antiseptic against Concord transcendentalism, and I am not conscious of having contracted any of that virus. Nevertheless, it is probable that some cultured bacilli, some benignant form of the disease was implanted in my soul, unawares, and that now, after long incubation, it comes to the surface, modified by mathematical conceptions and by training in physical investigations. (EP 1:312-313).

This signature autobiographical passage looms large as a straightforward endorsement of Schelling’s central influence, together with a more nuanced sense of his relation to his Transcendentalist neighbors. That Peirce astutely placed Schelling between Emerson and Plotinus suggests volumes of further research, including, as a subset, the interface of Schelling with Boehme and theosophy.<sup>29</sup> Its significant historical implication traces to the aforesaid developmental teleology from Kant’s third *Critique* through Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* to Schelling’s formulation of a “progressive metaphysical empiricism” that constituted the provenance of subsequent transmigrations in the trans-Atlantic Pragmatism of Emerson, Peirce, James, and Dewey.<sup>30</sup>

Now, to further probe the key mediating role of Schelling in this unfolding historical narrative, it should be underlined that Peirce’s characterization of himself as “a Schellingian, of some stripe” serves as

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Of interest here is that Peirce’s friendly exchanges with his editor Paul Carus comprise a valuable sidelight illuminating his self-characterization as “A Schellingian, of some stripe” and his thesis as to the universe’s “energetic reasonableness.” A reference to Carus’ necessitarianism appears in “Philosophy and the Conduct of Life” of 1898 where Peirce refers to Carus employment of the “energetic phrase” *ktema eis aei* (“possession for all time”) for what is properly and usually called *belief*, Peirce rejoicing that it “has no place in science at all. [...] Pure science has nothing to do with *action*” (EP 2:33). In “The First Rule of Logic” of the same year, Peirce refers to Dr. Carus as “an eminent religious teacher,” who is horrified at Peirce’s conception of truth as “ambiguous.” He refers to Carus’ article “The Founder of Tychism, His Methods, Philosophy, and Criticisms: In Reply to Mr. Charles S. Peirce,” *The Monist*, v. 3, p. 571-622, July 1893 (EP 2:509, fn. 32). In “On the Logic of Drawing History from Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies” (1901): “What, then, is that element of a phenomenon that renders it surprising, in the sense that an explanation for it is demanded? Par excellence, it is irregularity, says Dr. Paul Carus, in substance.” (EP 2:512, fn. 20, here referencing Carus’ “The Idea of Necessity, Its Basis and Scope,” *The Monist*, v. 3, p. 68-96, Oct. 1892, especially p. 86 in the section “Necessity and Chance.”) To the contrary, Peirce contended that “irregularity does not prompt us to ask for an explanation.” “Mere irregularity,” he continued, “where no definite regularity is expected, creates no surprise nor excites any curiosity. Why should I, when irregularity is the overwhelmingly preponderant rules of experience, and regularity only the strange exception” (EP 2:88). “Let me not, however, be understood to make the strength of an emotion of surprise the measure of the logical need for explanation. The emotion is merely the instinctive indication of the logical situation. It is evolution (*physis*) that has provided us with the emotion. The situation is what we have to study.” (EP 2:88).

29 See Franks (2015).

30 In his “Seven Systems of Metaphysics” (1903), Peirce classified the formal array of metaphysical worldviews in terms of his Three Categories. He opined that the only type that features all Three Categories is one that “embraces Kantism,—Reid’s philosophy and the Platonic philosophy of which Aristotelianism is a special development.” He continued: “The doctrine of Aristotle is distinguished from substantially all modern philosophy by its recognition of at least two grades of being. That is, besides *actual* reactive existence, Aristotle recognizes a *germinal* being, an *esse in potentia*, or I like to call it an *esse in futuro*”; thus in places of his text Aristotle “has glimpses of a distinction between *energeia* and *entelecheia*.” What is significant here is that Peirce originally inserted “except perhaps Schelling & mine” after “all modern philosophy”; he then crossed out the insertion, and added instead the word “substantially” earlier in the sentence. In other articulations Peirce argued that, together with the standard nominalistic-cum-mechanistic interpretation of Darwinian evolution, most if not all the forms of modern philosophy—and this included Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and such contemporaries as Royce, James, and Dewey—are based predominantly on a concept of *energeia* without *entelecheia*, that is, of *actual reactive being* falling in the category of *Secondness*, without full attention to the indecomposable category of *energetic reasonableness* (*Thirdness*.) All Three Categories trivalently informed Peirce’s “asymptotic hyperbolic worldview” whose open-ended “reasonability” presupposed Schelling’s “progressive” or “metaphysical empiricism.” At the same time, via “remembering” Schiller, Peirce established the ideal of Esthetic Normativity as the Final Interpretant of connatural symbolic metaboly (semiotic interchanges) of nature and mind, both ethical and logical, in a metaphysical “universe perfused with signs.”

the smoothly fitting key that opens access to a deep metaphysical current of his philosophic mindedness which gradually ripened amidst the myriad of other influences and interests in his polymathic career. And for this purpose, let us also remember that Peirce was a keen and accurate reader of the history of thought. Indeed, he appears to have taken a page out of Schelling in insisting on “gathering the building blocks” of former historical achievements of significant ideas as a propaedeutic for his own “architecture of theories.”<sup>31</sup>

By the same token, Peirce’s estimation of Schelling presents itself as a key to interpreting *Schelling’s* place and essential contribution in the Kantist legacy he sought to advance. And to track this significant linkage, it is instructive to ponder Schelling’s pointed characterizations of *his* philosophy’s progressive relation to his predecessors and contemporaries (such as Spinoza, Boehme, Fichte, Jacobi, Hegel) which he parsed in his *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) and his Berlin lectures on *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy* (1841)—lectures, incidentally, which were attended by Engels, Buchanin, Kierkegaard, and certain American Transcendentalist colleagues of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

As indicated above, Schelling in fact achieved his articulation of a progressive metaphysical empiricism in such a comparative hermeneutical fashion by reinterpreting the principles of his predecessors in the Kantian tradition in relation to his own contribution. That he both *parsed* the differences and *established his place* among the post-Kantian strains of thought remains as a decisive contribution for any contemporary hermeneutic. Hegel of course (and later Comte) also “invented” histories of modern philosophy. It is important to see that Peirce eventually surveyed their respective versions but deferred to Schelling’s critique of Hegel’s aprioristic fixation of belief as well as to Schelling’s critique of anti-metaphysical empiricism as inscribed in Comte’s bluff positivistic account. In consideration of the former, namely, the continuance of the Hegel-Marx historicist line in contemporary “Continental” thought, this should be construed as a momentous line of demarcation for our own comparative hermeneutic. As well, Peirce’s judgment on the limitations of Comte’s positivistic account—which, we will see, was also presaged in Schelling’s critique of psychologistic “Baconian empiricism”—is equally of contemporary relevance in today’s marketplace of ideas.

## 6 The provenance of Peirce’s thought in Schelling’s early-phase Kantism

While the main focus of this paper will be to pursue the textual provenance of Peirce’s absorption of Schelling’s metaphysical empiricism in his *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1841), let me here—very briefly (and however inadequately in view of the quantity of primary source materials and conceptualizations)—enter a few observations to contextualize certain relevant aspects of Schelling’s earlier-phase Kantism. To this end, I will feature one of the pioneering papers of Ivo Assad Ibri who has framed the matter at hand in a magisterial historical reprise of Schelling’s early-phase trajectory.<sup>32</sup>

Ibri excellently observed, in reference to the *Jena-zeit* years (c.1800) of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, the young Schelling, and Hegel, (among others):

31 Peirce’s opening remark concerning the obligation to build an architectonic philosophy in “The Architecture of Theories,” (EP 1:286, 1892) was not only an oblique reference to the final section of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, but can also be traced to Schelling: “The general foundation of it [Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*] is the thought: before one wishes to know something, it is necessary to submit our capacity for knowing itself to an examination. Just as a careful builder carefully ponders his resources before he erects a house, to see whether they are sufficient for both the firm foundation and the successful execution of the building, the philosopher must, before thinking of erecting a building of metaphysics, first be sure of the materials for it, whether he can obtain them, and, since these materials are drawn from a spiritual source in this case, this source must itself first be examined, in order to be certain whether it really contains or offers sufficient material for the intended building. Before we can hope to have knowledge—particularly of supersensuous objects—we must first examine whether we also have the capacity to know them.” (SCHELLING, 1994, p. 98).

32 Ivo Assad Ibri, *kosmos noetos: the metaphysical architecture of Charles S. Peirce* (2017) and stream of other essays are replete with references to Schelling’s provenance to Peirce. In the following account I will draw primarily from Ibri’s (2015) “The Schellingian Roots of Peirce’s Idealism,” in tandem with Ibri’s (2018) “Reflections on the Presence of Peirce’s Category of Firstness in Schelling and Schopenhauer’s Philosophy” and Ibri’s (2006) “The Heuristic Exclusivity of Abduction in Peirce’s Philosophy.”

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 concepts 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).

Ibri went on to hit the exact target of the young Schelling’s accomplishment of moving out beyond the appreciable influence of Fichte in the wake of Kant:

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).

In the historical lens of the forming trans-Atlantic paradigm to which I have alluded, we should recognize that Ibri’s account of “the Schellingian eye” and nature’s intelligent teleological process was conspicuously carried over by Emerson’s “*transparent eyeball*” theme in his inaugural work, *Nature* (1836), which eventually culminated in Peirce’s epistemology of “prognostic generalization” and concomitant connatural semeiosis of Nature’s “energetic reasonableness” in the universe “perfused with signs” (EP 2:62).

Keith R. Peterson, in his Introduction to Schelling’s *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1797), wrote to the same effect in the following terms of the significance of Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* that was eventually prized by Peirce:

“[...] an aura which the philosophy of Nature inherited from the beginning of Greek cosmological speculation, which is not redeemable by reflexive philosophy, [...] an aura which the philosophy of mere reflection, which sets out only to separate, can never develop, whereas the pure intuition [= creative imagination], long since discovered symbolic language, which one has only to construe in order to discover that Nature speaks to us the more intelligently the less we think of her in a merely reflective way. (SCHELLING, 2004, p. 5).

These seeds of the doctrine of connatural ontological semeiosis that is front and center in Emerson and in Peirce’s “universe perfused with signs,” Schelling began to sow in his early *Naturphilosophie* (1879) and again in “artistic genius” appendix to his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800):

Just as the man of destiny does not execute what he wishes or intends, but rather what he is obliged to execute by an inscrutable fate which governs him, so the artist, however deliberate he may be, seems nonetheless to be governed, in regard to what is truly objective in his creation, by a power which separates him from all other men, and compels him to say or depict things which he does not fully understand himself, and whose meaning is infinite. (SCHELLING, 1978, p. 229).

Schelling's famous early pronouncement in 1800 clearly bought into Kant's notion of the genius in the third *Critique* where Kant in effect broke through his own "regulative only" transcendentalism of aesthetical judgment in the connatural semiotic consideration that, in the fine arts, "nature gives the rule to art."<sup>33</sup>

Now, returning to Ivo Ibrí's configuration of the same issues that occupied the young Schelling: "There is an unconscious poetics," Ibrí averred, "permeating ideality and reality that, as a universe of heuristic possibilities, overcomes merely conscious activity; such an unconscious poetics is the metamorphosing and necessary ability to achieve the artistic object" (IBRI, 2015, p. 7). Ibrí here translated Schelling's own words of his *System of Transcendental Idealism* on the element of *poiesis* in art: "... which cannot be learned, not attained by practice, but can only be inborn through the free bounty of nature; and this is what we may call, in a word, the element of poetry in art." (SCHELLING, 1978, p. 225).

For his part, via his earlier influence by and later remembrance of Friedrich von Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, Peirce elaborated his concept of *prognostic generalization* in a wider perspective with respect to the universe's dimension of energetic reasonableness (thirdness) (EP 2:68)—and later again in the terms of the heuristic primacy of the "uberous" potency in abduction—which reprised Schelling's youthful pronouncements into a categorical assertion of such an "unconscious poetics" for both art and science in the framework of objective idealism. With such categorical pronouncements we have come to the heart of the essential Peirce (EP 2:463 ff.).<sup>34</sup>

Now, in this same context Ibrí, went on to note: "Even Spinoza, whom he genuinely admired as 'the first who, with a complete clarity, saw mind and matter as one' made the mistake of placing the identity of the ideal and the real outside the human in an Infinite Substance." (2015. p. 10). Accordingly, Ibrí, referring to Schelling's *Stuttgart Seminar* (1810), noted that Schelling's 1800 affirmation of the absolute Identity of the Real and the Ideal was "not to say that the Real and Ideal are numerically or logically the same but, instead, designates an essential unity"; further to the same point: "The existence of what is unconditional [Absolute] 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, 2015, p. 11). Schelling conspicuously elaborated the same point in his *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809).

Ibrí's second quote is a forerunner to this present paper's description of Schelling's later-phase thesis of Positive and Negative philosophy (see below). For his part, Peirce's mid-career espousal of the doctrine of idealism-realism increasingly recaptured Schelling's career variations on the identity of the real and ideal in the bottom-line terms of his (Peirce's) hyperbolic synechism, which he called the keystone of the arch of his system.<sup>35</sup> As well, he recaptured the content of Schelling's later-phase declaration of his breaking with the Identity philosophy in his own early period.

For his part, Schelling already intimated a sense of his later position of progressive metaphysical empiricism in such an earlier-phase articulation as follows:

As long as I myself am identical with Nature, I understand what a living nature is as well as I understand my own life; I apprehend how this universal life of Nature reveals itself in manifold forms, in progressive developments, in gradual approximations to freedom. As soon, however, 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 myself can be possible. (SCHELLING, 1988, p. 136).

33 "Genius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. Since the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: *Genius* is the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art." (KANT, 2000, p. 186.) Kant further elaborated the theory of the genius in the ensuing sections 45-50.

34 See "Peirce's Last Philosophic Will and Testament: Uberty in the Logic of Instinctive Reasoning" (DILWORTH, 2015).

35 See Peirce, "A Guess at the Riddle," 1887-1888; "The Architecture of Theories," (EP 1:192, 1892); "Immortality in the Light of Synechism," (EP 2:1-3, 1893).

The passage can also be read as Schelling's considered disavowal of nominalism.

Ibri's article illumined the same point in reference to Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences* (1786) which, he astutely says, "relates the inertia of matter to an absence of life, whereas in an evolutionary prism of Schellingian philosophy the question of the genesis of subjectivity almost naturally emerges." (IBRI, 2015, p. 13).<sup>36</sup>

More, now, from Ibri's astute analysis. He writes that "Philosophy as the natural history of our minds 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.'" (2015, p. 19).<sup>37</sup> Ibri continued: "Schelling, although not having lived in an environment of indeterminism that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, predicts through his ideas of freedom and systematic organization of the products of Nature a science that addresses the partial indetermination of objects." For his part, Peirce, after Emerson, followed suit in his categorical rejection of epistemic and ontological determinism, as articulated, for example, in his Schellingian exposure of Hegel's aprioristic necessitarianism in "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined" (1892) and in "Evolutionary Love" (1893).

Now, returning again to Schelling's words: "So, here again, we meet that absolute unification of Nature and Freedom in one and the same being. The living organism is a product of Nature: but in this natural product an ordering and coordinating Mind is to rule." (SCHELLING, 1988, p. 36, apud IBRI, 2015, p. 19). Carrying this (youthful) articulation forward in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), Schelling averred: "Freedom is revealed not only temporally in the intuition that provides the observation of life in Nature, whether in conscious inwardness or unconscious exteriority, but also in that non-time of aesthetic, primary intuition of the Absolute." (SCHELLING, 1978, p. 204-228, apud IBRI, 2015, p. 19).<sup>38</sup>

We can trace these considerations back to Schelling's teen-age notebook on Plato's *Timaeus* where Plato's "time is the moving image of eternity" remained a deep current of his career-text. For Schelling and for Peirce, the originary intuitions of both science and art are aesthetical intuitions. The primary and originative ("first") intuitions of both art and science then undergo continuous confirmations and embodiments in historical processes. Thus, comparable to the great scientific paradigm changes, certain great works of art become "immortal works" for their staying power in history. Peirce's epistemic and ontological Fallibilism, drawing further on Schelling's post-*Identität-philosophie* writings, underwrote this entire ensemble with his theoretical generalization of the hyperbolic universe's "energetic reasonableness" in the nature of things.

Now, while the remaining parts of this paper will explore the ground of Schelling's post-*Identität-philosophie*, a final look at Ibri's articulation of Schelling's early prioritization of the "poetic" genius of nature will contribute to our consideration of the transmission of a trans-Atlantic paradigm that carries over from Schelling (and his mentor Goethe) through Emerson to Peirce. Ibri: "Moving with total freedom through the ideality of the external and internal worlds, art becomes a heuristic expression that is raw material for philosophical reflection on a cosmic poetics." Schelling: "The objective world is simply the original, as yet unconscious, poetry of the spirit; the universal organon of philosophy—and the keystone of its entire arch—is the philosophy of art." (IBRI, 2015, p. 21).<sup>39</sup> Ibri:

36 Citing Andrew Bowie to the same effect. And to return to Schelling's own words: "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)." (IBRI, 2015, p. 17).

37 Let us note in passing the title (and Schellingian) content of Emerson's final great essay, "The Natural History of the Intellect" (1870), an exemplary instantiation of the trans-Atlantic paradigm I am elaborating here. See Dilworth (2010).

38 Or, in Ibri's words: "It is in that non-time of initial chaos and its unity that aesthetic intuition penetrates, transgressing Nature's forms of time and order, and finding that infinite and original freedom. Likewise, it is in this immediacy that art recalls its indefinable source that science can only know through the way this source is exteriorized in finitude and temporality" (IBRI, 2015, p. 20).

39 The phrase "keystone of the arch" which Peirce employs in his letter of Wm. James traces back to the same words in Schelling's writings.



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. 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.” (IBRI, 2015, p. 22).

In sum, we are here able to anticipate many applications of Peirce’s previously cited avowal that he endorsed “all phases of Schelling’s career” (as against the malicious Hegelian characterization of Schelling’s mercurial theoretical developments) and that he was “a Schellingian, of some stripe.” To pursue this electric matrix of Schellingian and Peircean concepts is the assigned task of this paper.

Here, I will be content to refer (in passing) to Peirce’s doctrine of the Platonic World, which has its own iconic origin in Plato’s *Timaeus*. Schelling and Peirce account for how science and art evolve in time. Peirce accounts for the fact that every advance in the history of science is first an instinctive abduction. In his terms of uberty and security, we can distinguish between the rare instance of “pure science” or “pure art” that in its Firstness progresses in penetration into truth and beauty for their own sake, as distinguished from workaday “technocratic science” and from politicized art which function as instruments of social security and utilitarian control. Both pure art and pure science “nostalgically” (Schelling) hypostacize the non-time of the Platonic World, just as they are progressive forms of concrete reasonableness (= the cosmic poetics) in natural history.

In his *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1841) Schelling re-featured this ensemble of concepts in the terms of the spontaneous appearances of the *unvordenkliche* of Being not available via the forms of immanent discursivity (Fichte, Hegel).<sup>40</sup>

## 7 The provenance of Peirce’s fallibilism in Schelling’s later-phase Kantism

Now then, having surveyed arguably the central underlying current of Schelling’s youthful breakout from Fichte’s subjective transcendental idealism and from the *Naturphilosophie* and *Identitätsphilosophie* stages of his own early career (1797-1802), let us move on to his later-phase *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (Berlin Lectures, 1841). This 1841 post-Idealistic work directly spelled out Schelling’s doctrine of “metaphysical empiricism” which, in the argument of this paper, Peirce absorbed and categorically upgraded in his own mid- and later-career writings.<sup>41</sup>

40 Coincidentally, we should appreciate the later-phase writings of Wm. James as having an excellent (though psychologized) variation on Schelling’s metaphysical empiricism in his “radical empiricism’s” critique of reflexive transcendentalism—(“We live forward and understand backwards,” James wrote, quoting Kierkegaard, who attended Schelling’s Berlin Lectures). See James (1987, p. 1205, also p. 759, 1058, 1190).

41 As suggested above, in a fuller account of Schelling’s evolving career, the key concepts of the *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (Berlin Lectures, 1841) should be read as a theoretical reinvestment of the capital concepts of his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809). For limitation of space, the theoretical adumbration of the chronologically former work (arguably Schelling’s greatest work) requires a serious study not endeavored here. Let it suffice to observe that his 1809 *Freiheitschrift* contained Schelling’s further declaration of his *Naturphilosophie* at the baseline of his rejection of pantheism and materialism, now expressed in the positive terms of the Divine Being as begetting freedom in terms of a principle of identity that is progressively antecedent and consequent, such that the Being which proceeds from God “can never be mechanical,” but rather must be theorized as “the final empowering act through which all of nature is transfigured in feeling, intelligence, and, finally, in will. In the final and highest judgment, there is no other Being than will” (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 21). As well, the text pre-contains Schelling’s formulation of the “Negative philosophy” (in its iconic form of the Kantian “critique”) in which formal *a priori* structures are considered exclusively as “possibilities,” but without reference to whether or not they actually exist, and, for Schelling, must rather be directly intuited in immediate experience of *das Das* of actual existence (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 23). The metaphysical-empirical concept of Becoming Schelling famously developed in terms of an “indivisible remainder” of the eternal act of the divine self-revelation (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 27-29). These Schellingian articulations of the progressive Becoming of Reality Peirce carried forward in his own terms of the hyperbolic *kosmos noetos*—which is “God’s poem”—theorized as an overcoming of merely irrational contingency in its process of the universe’s embodiment of “energetic reasonableness.”

Already presuming five decades of Kantian legacy, Schelling pointedly inaugurated his Berlin lectures of 1841 with a disquisition “On Philosophy,” consisting of a consideration of the nature of “philosophy as such” stemming from Kant’s and then from Fichte’s transcendental work of legitimizing the *a priori* presuppositions at the basis of all the special sciences. Fichte, he argued, followed Kant with a key speculative advance.

Human freedom, Schelling first averred in agreement with Fichte, established “mankind” as a “second world” that extends life itself “beyond *nature*.” But as his Berlin audience understood, he did not mean “beyond nature” in Fichte’s transcendental sense of *anthropocentric priority* in critique of the dichotomized sense of nature and freedom in Kant’s first and second *Critiques*. As also clarified by the young Hegel, Schelling had begun to break with Fichte’s subjective idealism in his *Naturphilosophie* phase of 1787-1789, postulating the parallel of objective idealism to subjective idealism and carrying on that parallelism in the dialectics of Absolute Identity formulations of his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 1800 (HEGEL, 1977). Schelling’s *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) further reconfigured Fichte’s transcendental account in the terms of an individual action resulting

[...] from the inner necessity of a free being and, accordingly from necessity itself, which must not be confused, as still happens, with empirical necessity based on compulsion (which is, however only a disguised contingency.) [Accordingly,] precisely this inner necessity is itself freedom, the essence of man is fundamentally his own act; necessity and freedom are in one another as one being that appears as one or the other when considered from different sides, [...] (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 50).<sup>42</sup>

Though human history is itself so dreadful, Schelling continued, our “modern philosophy” must be “a new robust philosophy,” one that satisfies an *uralt* longing, an anciently affirmative estimation of human freedom set within a profounder sense of *freedom in the nature of things* (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 93-94).

Coincidentally, for his knowledgeable Berlin audience, Schelling here implicated the sense of the affinity of mind and nature which his earlier mentor, Goethe, in prose and poetic writings, had leveled against the “regulative only” status of Kant’s reflective judgment.

Schelling accordingly proceeded to construct the basis of a “new philosophy” with a preliminary backward glance at the history of modern philosophy before Kant. After the “dogmatizing” Middle Ages, he opined, post-medieval philosophy took the form of an “immature beginning” in Descartes; then, having reached a metaphysical height in Leibniz’s “brilliant restoration” of “German” philosophy, it only “spiritlessly lingered on” in Christian Wolff, until its systematic destruction by Kant’s “critical” philosophy.

Schelling’s second and third Berlin lectures unrolled Kant’s new point of departure for German philosophy in the terms of a substantial exegesis of (1) how Kant destroyed the old metaphysics, but, in consequence, (2) how Kant’s own *thing-in-itself* collapsed under the scrutiny of Fichte’s *subjective idealism*. In tandem with that, he featured Fichte’s *subjective idealism* as a key emergence in historical antithesis to Spinoza’s *objective realism* (p. 114 ff., 124, 126)—a theme that extended Schelling’s earlier articulations of this antithesis in his *Naturphilosophie*, his *System of Transcendental Idealism* and Identity-philosophy (1800-1804), as well as in his *Freiheitschrift* (1809). Schelling (like Goethe and others of the Romantics of the *Jena-zeit* days of his youth) was keen to propound a “vitalized Spinozism,” so as to reprise Kant’s foundational concepts of *nature and freedom* on a new philosophic platform—namely, *freedom in the nature of things*. Schelling’s phases of synthesis of Spinoza and Schelling should be regarded as one of his signature articulations in the history of philosophy.

Now, looking ahead to Peirce’s inheritance of Schelling’s thought, we should recognize that Peirce, citing Aristotle and Epicurus, inherited this “vitalized” platform combining Fichte and Spinoza, to the

<sup>42</sup> The passage, which resonates of the influence of Goethe, is provenance to Emerson’s “The Blessed Unity” and “The Beautiful Necessity” concepts in “Fate” (1860), as well as to Peirce’s various formulations of his objective idealism of the mutual saturation of mind and matter.

effect of catalytically re-conceptualizing the essential variables in his categorical modalities (1) of the tychistic spontaneity of freedom in “feeling” prior to subject-object awareness (firstness), (2) of subject-object and object-object determining causalities in “efforts and resistances” (secondness), and (3) of the vital reproductive continuities of evolutionary growth (thirdness)—of all “three universes” trivalently postulated *in rerum natura*. In net effect, this was Peirce’s stupendously innovative paradigm change, a new architecture of theories of cosmical embodiment of energetic reasonableness.

We could also recognize that Peirce’s triadic categoriology transmuted Schelling’s general pattern of articulation in the binary logical form of antithetical oppositions (of nature and mind, necessity and freedom, the *Was* and the *Das*) into his—closer-to but still distinct-from Hegel’s—form of triadic articulation. But Peirce hewed close to Schelling’s conspicuous critique of Hegel in his trajectory of articulating a hyperbolic universe of existentially unfolding reality as “embodied” reasonableness. He agreed with Schelling that Hegel’s system was a system of immanent discursivity, lacking a sense of the “outward clash” of contingent experience.

Once again, Schelling’s career-text stood as the conspicuously significant precedent to Peirce’s declared “idealism-realism,” as per, for example, Schelling’s early-phase synechistic pronouncement:

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. (SCHELLING, 1878, p. 92).

Or again, in a later draft of *The Ages of the World*, c. 1815:

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 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. (SCHELLING, 2000, p. 64).

So, back to the Berlin lectures. Schelling, who had been called to Berlin to occupy Hegel’s chair amidst the politics of the day, warmed to the expected polemical occasion of clarifying his relation to his old rival, Hegel. His lecture, “Kant, Fichte, and the Science of Reason,” estimated Hegel’s philosophy to have consummated a “Negative” philosophy of immanent discursivity concerning the *whatness/essence* (*das Was*) of Absolute Reason’s “in-itself” dialectical implosion; conspicuously, however, it did *not* concern the *thatness* (*Das*) of transcendent, contingency existence. In Schelling’s analysis, it was Fichte’s subjective idealism which was *already* determinative for all subsequent schools of immanent transcendentalism, and in two respects. First, in a limited form, not Kant but Fichte gave the *true starting point*—the absolutely free self-positing and world-positing “I” of transcendental subjectivity, therefore of the true *universal prius* of any and all *a priori* sciences. Second, Fichte showed *the way beyond* Kant’s tripartite array of *particular a priori* sciences (concerning the forms of sensibility, the categories of understanding, and the ideas of pure reason), toward a science of absolute Reason *per se* in the most general and highest sense of apriorism, not just in Kant’s three particular forms (SCHELLING, 2007, p.127).

Thus, before Hegel, Fichte had already advanced and perfected such an *unconditioned science* of absolute Reason, of Reason directing itself to itself, pertaining to the *Wesen*, the matter of *what is*, *das Was*, the conceptual framework of any and every things's *essence*. Such a transcendental Reason of *das Was* (*whatness* in general) does not pertain to *das Das*, the world of non-conceptual existence (*Existenz*). The former is immanent to transcendental self-consciousness, the latter is taught by experience.

Here, again, we can fast-forward to Peirce's text. Schelling's critique of Fichte's and Hegel's apriorism appears in the opening contention of Peirce's "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" of 1868, namely "We have no power of Introspection, but all knowledge of the internal world is derived by hypothetical reasoning from our knowledge of external facts" (EP 1:30). It reappeared in his critique of apriorism in the third method of fixing belief, and *passim* in his declarations of the nominalistic character of virtually all the forms of modern philosophy, of the traditions of British empiricism as well as of the Germans of the idealistic stamp. His mature phase articulations of cosmogonic reasonableness undercut the immanently discursive versions of Reason, rendering them as conspicuous forms of idealistic nominalism.

Now back to Schelling. Against this background of estimating the inner core of Fichte's science of absolute reason, Hegel's science of reason was only "a later philosophy," with the difference that Hegel veered, beyond Fichte's limited form of transcendental subjectivity, in the "wrong direction" of conceiving an absolute identity of thought and existence—thus a system of "absolute idealism" in which "the real is the rational and the rational is the real." "Hegel's original thought," Schelling estimated, was that Reason relates to itself independent of real existential contingency, an immanent conceptual movement by the logical necessity of which the things themselves are rational and thus present a rational nexus (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 130). Here, Schelling astutely credited Kant with having also *already* developed this account of "reason in itself" considered entirely "negatively" as the *infinite potential of cognition in general* (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 132).

In his systematic configuration of the array of "metaphysico-cosmical" worldviews, Peirce characterized Hegel's apriorism as a kind of Parmenidean Thirdness ("Seven Systems of Metaphysics," 1893). And Peirce argued in several other writings that Hegel's sublational dialectics lacked the categorical determinations of both Firstness and Secondness.<sup>43</sup> According to both Schelling's and, later, Peirce's critiques, Hegel introduced his dialectical logic of sublation so as to render the *mobility* of the "highest Concept" (of Being in Itself) in distinction from the thought processes of the medieval scholastics. Unlike the medievals, his science of reason moved forward *in mere thought that is yet absolute thought*. It does so by its method of *negation of negation*, which systematically *eliminates* what is relative or contingent until it "results" in the highest "Concrete Concept" of Being in Itself (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 133-135)—thereby completing the circular *telos* of "Negative" philosophy *par excellence*.

Now, in further anticipation of Peirce's absorption of these issues, Schelling described a variation on this critique of the discursive immanence of Negative philosophy. He referred to any and every *ethical* philosophy that advocates the *willed elimination* of all *particular wanting* so as, paradoxically, to *repose* in a putative "*absolute Willing*"—an *absolutized Willing of Nothingness* that *absolves and releases* a person from the adventitious adversity and suffering of existential life. Such a putative form of *dis-ontological* negation would appear to cover the case of Schopenhauer's ethics of "denial of the will"—no reference, however, to Schopenhauer appear in Schelling's writing here. Schelling's critique plausibly extends to all philosophies of "ataraxy" (tranquility of "katastemic pleasure" as the absence of pain) from classical Epicureanism to "blissful" versions of Hindu *moksa* and Buddhist *nirvana*. The heart of the doctrines of Hindu *moksa* and Buddhist *nirvana* predicate such an attainment of intrinsic purity of "No-Mindedness" in terms of skeptical deflation of phenomenal karmic life.<sup>44</sup>

43 Peirce elaborated an early-phase critique of Hegel's apriorism in his review of "Royce, The American Plato," (EP 1:229-241, 1885).

44 It is no digression to observe here that the classical precedent for Schelling's (later Peirce's) versions of *pro-ontological moral empiricism* was arguably Aristotle's rejection of the ethical claim of "unconditioned" ataraxy in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Advancing his pragmatic criterion of the

Such a putatively “unaffected repose” in an absolute Willing, Schelling considered, is just the reverse side of the Negative philosophy’s “infinite potency of Being” which Absolute Reason finds in its immediate *a priori* content “without qualification.” The logical essence of such an ethical “negative science” amounts to a form of *negation* by the *elimination* of everything that is *not* Being in Itself. By a *via exclusionis* it, thus, achieves an absolute “end” of the affective and cognitive process by eliminating that which is *not* absolute Being/Nothing Itself in a negative critique of what is *not* Being in a self-movement of its Concept, the only “concrete universal.” From beginning to end, philosophies of both *absolute* Being and of *absolute* Nothingness are *immanent* philosophies—that is, they move in *mere* Thought—and are by no means *transcendent* philosophies (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 136-138).

Peirce, we have observed, undercut this form of immanent apriorism in his 1878 critique of the third method of fixing belief which he associated with the rationalistic tradition from Descartes to Hegel. The skeptical “mystics,” he further opined, did not go beyond the first method of fixing belief by emotional tenacity. His critique of dis-ontological ethics, quite the opposite of his positive ethics of the reasonable conduct of sentimental life, subtended his strong rejection of Schopenhauer’s form of world-negating pessimism appended to “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God.”<sup>45</sup> In semeiotic terms, Peirce reformulated Schelling’s critique of Negative philosophy in terms of the “degenerate emotional interpretant” which functions as self-enclosed “concrete universal”—which is to say, as a reductive and arresting process that forecloses the Kantist “hope” of logical reasonableness in theoretical inquiry and its parallel embodiment of sentimental reasonableness in the conduct of life.

## 8 The difference between negative and positive philosophy

The provenance of Peirce’s pro-ontological fallibilism and semeiotics of the positive sentimentality of ethical and aesthetic life is further evidenced in Schelling’s sequent 1841 Berlin lecture, “The Difference between Negative and Positive Philosophy,” which amplified his reading of the Negative systems in modern philosophy.

In passing, it should be said that Peirce, for his part, exposed the same Negative systems in various critiques of the anthropocentric assumptions of nominalism—in the form of both first principles of cognitive intelligence and false assumptions as to the “selfish theory” of the human heart. Peirce brought both sides of this critique to a head in “Evolutionary Love” (1893).

“Pure Reason,” Schelling contended, is only “the infinite potency” (*a priori* conditioning possibility) of cognition. As a prime example, Hegel’s Negative philosophy “flees into a complete wasteland devoid of all being” (= contingent existence) where nothing is encountered but the infinite potency of all being. It can only encounter that which it *already is* in its interior dialectics of transcendental reflection. Fichte had posited the subject = object only for human consciousness; Hegel sublated this limitation into a universal and unconditioned subject = object (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 142-143). Such a science that accomplishes the *elimination* of contingency (*das Das*) is a “critical” = “negative” type, whereas a philosophy that focuses on contingent existence is a *positive* type. Hegel’s fundamental error was to cross transcendental reflection over into a Positive philosophy.

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always qualifying ethical mean (*mesotes*) between the always present extremes of pleasures and pains, Aristotle wrote: “These [bad effects of pleasure and pain] are the reason why people actually define the virtues as ways of being unaffected and undisturbed [by pleasures and pains]. They are wrong, however, because they speak of being unaffected without qualification, not of being unaffected in the right or wrong way, at the right or wrong time, and the added qualifications. (Nicomachean Ethics, 1104b 22-25). Aristotle leveled his critique against the “sagely” tenets of “Knowledge is Virtue” in Socrates, against the Idea of the Good in Plato’s *Republic*, and against the early Cynics (and accordingly, one could argue, against other variations that were later formulated in the Hellenistic schools of Epicureanism and Skepticism.)

45 Peirce inscribed a strong rejection of Schopenhauer’s pessimism in the “Additament” to “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God,” (EP 2:449, 1909). In a future paper the writer hopes to explore the relation between the dis-ontological (ataraxic) psychological voluntarism of Schopenhauer and his disciple, Santayana, who declared his allegiance to Schopenhauer in his methodic commitment to “oscillation” between “a radical skepticism of the present moment” (immediacy of essence) and an existential substrate of irrational fluxation of matter (physical contingency). The issue can be framed in the terms of whether the texts of Schopenhauer or Santayana have viable concepts of Thirdness.

So, Hegelian philosophy ends up only “puffing itself up,” wrongly claiming to present God as engaged in a necessary process—in effect, a regression back to Spinoza. Hegel’s system is “the wild, deserted essence [Wesen] into which one fell when one attempted to present God as engaged in a necessary process, after which [...] one took refuge in a brazen atheism” [left-wing Hegelianism]. “Even the Christian dogmas were but a trifle for this philosophy” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 145).

Schelling here praised Kant for staying within the Negative philosophy “as early as 1795.” Kant restricted the “critical” philosophy to the negative pole, rejecting the ontological argument that wanted to derive the existence of God from the abstract concept—as in Anselm, Descartes, and later in Hegel (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 144-145). But Kant, after completely eliminating the positive from theoretical philosophy, slipped it back in through the backdoor of his practical (moral) philosophy. This provoked Jacobi who, against Kant and Fichte, proclaimed that any scientific rationalism leads to atheism—a position which Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard also took, though along entirely divergent paths (*Idem*, p. 148). Schelling here characterized Spinoza’s atheistic philosophy, which was being revived at this time in Germany, as having already conflated the Negative and the Positive philosophies in making “that which necessarily exists” into his “principle” (beginning), but from which he then just *logically* derived real things (*Ibidem*, p. 149).<sup>46</sup>

## 9 Negative and positive philosophy in classical antiquity

In the perspective of comparative hermeneutics, philosophy consists of the entire noetic field of the world-history of philosophy. Philosophy *is* its developmental history, past, present, and future. The high degree of comprehensive generality of Peirce’s categories are, in this writer’s experience, valuable tools for probing the legacy of primary sources, resources of world-philosophy. As well, Schelling’s works should be appreciated as background to Peirce’s comparative hermeneutic of metaphysico-cosmical worldviews in categorical terms.<sup>47</sup>

So here, it is worth re-emphasizing that both Schelling and Peirce, within the limits of the learning possibilities of their times, were astute interpreters of the historical legacy of world-philosophy. Importantly in this regard, Schelling’s style of philosophizing included his hermeneutical transmission of archetypal issues in classical antiquity illuminating the difference between the Negative and Positive philosophy.

Schelling commenced his reading of the legacy of classical antiquity from the premiss of his account of the Negative philosophy, namely, that systems of philosophies which tried to conceptualize the world and even their own existence as the logical consequence of some kind of original necessity [such as those of Spinoza and Hegel], “do not have the proper words [...]” Two directions of philosophies are demanded—a science that grasps the *essence* of things and the *concept* of all being, as well as a science that pertains to the *actual existence* of things. He averred that in fact both directions have appeared in philosophy since time immemorial and recognizable so in the annals of Greek philosophy (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 155-157).

Aristotle, Schelling concluded, recognized certain mythologizing philosophers he called theologians; they represented a “dogmatic” type. In contrast, there were such “dogmatizing” Ionic physicists as Heraclitus, “whose *Logos* basically predicated nothing other than the science of reason that also abides by nothing else.” The Eleatic philosophers, Parmenides, Zeno, and followers, belonged to this same

46 Importantly for our understanding of the phases of his career, Schelling, in this critique of Spinoza, pointedly acknowledged he has “gone beyond” his earlier Identity-philosophy, saying it was “only a transitional moment” (and he cites his polemical article against Jacobi of 1812). For his Berlin audience of the 1840s, he ended this concise account of the mainstream progress of modern philosophy with a further characterization of Hegel: Hegel methodically constructed a “complete system,” Schelling concluded, but he “lacked an artistic sensibility” which had emerged in the *Jena-zeit* of “the good old days” of Kant, Fichte, and especially Goethe, “which released the human spirit to a real freedom” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 150-151).

47 See Lectures III and IV of Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism (1903): “The Categories Defended” (EP 2:160-179), and “The Seven Systems of Metaphysics” (EP 2:179-195).

class of *rationalistic* philosophies in which “the movement of logical thought never leaves its starting point,” such that there cannot be a *real* progression of events, and so “rather producing bewilderment like any circular movement that revolves around one point.” (What Peirce characterized as such a parabolic worldview is witnessed in the other pre-Socratic philosophers as well).

According to Schelling, Plato's Socrates introduced a different kind of Negative philosophy, a tool of destruction directed against both the Sophists' subjective = logical pseudo-knowledge and the rational pseudo-knowledge of the Eleatic school. Here, Schelling avers that the Socratic “ignorance”—(which, in Aristotle's own critique, drew from its own rationalistic principle that “Knowledge is Virtue”)—should be preceded by a profounder and more exceptional knowledge, a *docta ignorantia* caused by the “exuberant nature (*Ueberschwendlichkeit*) of what is to be positively known.” Only with the World-Soul of the *Timaeus* did Plato become “historical,” precariously breaking through into the Positive philosophy as something of the future, i.e., prophetically.

Aristotle, Schelling continued, endeavored to cleanse philosophy of the prophetic and mythical. He turned away from the *merely logical* toward the Positive that was accessible to him—to the *empirical* in the widest sense of the word—the world's existential *thatness* that is “first” such that the Platonic *whatness* of the Ideas is “subsidiary.” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 158-159). The Stagirite was correct in rebuking Plato's *methexis* [theory of participation in the Ideal Forms] to the extent the latter reinstates a logical explanation of the process of becoming. In general, Aristotle opposed the rationalist philosophers, arguing there is an unbridgeable chasm between logical necessity and reality. However, he ended up achieving the same results as the Negative philosophy in his conception of theoretical reason, though not in the purely *a priori* form of systematicity as in Hegel, but rather on an empirical base *a posteriori* that exceeds the necessary movement of thought (*Idem*, p. 160). Combining form and matter in the array of sciences, Aristotle achieved an architectonic synthesis of logical categories and the empirical orders, quite pertinent to the ethical and political orders. But as he proceeded step by step to the First Philosophy, he had to encounter the Negative philosophy in his metaphysics movement from potency to “act as pure entelechy” that is the antithesis of *dynamis*.

Aristotle conceived this pure *actus* as the final *telos*, to *energeia on*. It was finally not a question of existence, the contingent element, but of the essence, the *whatness* of things, according to its nature as pure *actus*, the final *telos* of rational or Negative philosophy. So, Aristotle's metaphysics fell back into Negative philosophy. He made God as such a final cause, to *aition telikon* that is not *poietikon*—God as the *end* but not the efficacious *beginning* principle of existential explanation. The net result: Aristotle's was a hybrid mixture starting from experience but ending in pure thought, in the form of the *noesis noeseos* of an unmoved mover (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 162).

Here, Schelling was minded to call Kant “the German Aristotle,” while satirizing “a later philosophy” [Hegel's] that reserved itself the right to call itself Aristotelian. Unlike Aristotle's blessed God, Hegel's is a perpetual philosophizing, a cycle of divine life implicating an imprisoned God in unconscious nature—that is, initially a blind and deaf absolute that climbs forever upward to human form, then working off its human subjectivity, finally reaching the consummate status of “absolute Spirit.” So, Hegel's Absolute was definitely not Aristotle's God (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 163).

According to Schelling, it was the Neo-Platonists who sought to revive the sentiments of a Positive philosophy found inchoately in Plato. Aristotle's had only a God as *terminus*, not as a generative cause. Platonic philosophy was far closer to the creationism of Christianity in the Middle Ages. It is a mystery, Schelling opined, why Aristotle was taught in the schools given to rational dogmatism or theological rationalism, whose essential vehicle was the Aristotelian syllogism. It was only the authoritarian power of the Church that maintained it as a universal *organon* until the Reformation, after which it split into the two camps of [Continental] pure rationalism and [British] pure empiricism in “modern philosophy” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 165).

Francis Bacon was the pivotal figure for the latter. “A worship of brute facts” ensued in the empiricist camp, “an enthusiasm for natural science that eventually coalesced as its own kind of pure rationalism.” Bacon himself was an Aristotelian of the old stamp, but he was overcome by “naturalistic empiricism,” restricting philosophical empiricism to the observation and analysis of psychological facts, excluding from its circle the “true empiricism” that rules out nothing that is in nature or present in the great history of human development (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 166). Bacon’s exclusively “psychological empiricism” ended up denying the reality of the universal and necessary concepts, even in legal and ethical spheres—“as narrow-minded a view as you can get.” Creative intelligence and free will do not even fall under any “empiricism of mere sensations.” A creative intelligence in the world cannot be known *a priori*, but only through its *deeds* that occur in experience. Although supersensible, it must be something that could only be known commensurate with experience.

## 10 Metaphysical empiricism

Having so characterized *naturalistic* empiricism, Schelling proceeded to elaborate his own position, predicating there can be a *metaphysical* empiricism as distinct from the psychologistic empiricism of the Baconian type—the type caricatured by Hegel on the opposite pole of rationalistic discursivity of *a priori* conceptualization (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 168). Schelling intended his own *metaphysical empiricism* as having the *gravitas* of a game-changing paradigm shift, tipping the scales of post-Kantian philosophy innovatively forward. (Namely, in its trajectory of asymptotic objective idealism, it established a prospective categorical space for, among other possible philosophic outcomes, Peirce’s epistemological, cosmological, and metaphysical *worldview*). As a key provenance of Peirce’s trivalent categorization of open-ended semeiosis in the hyperbolic forms of probabilistic induction, Schelling’s brand of metaphysical empiricism reoriented philosophy to an “indivisible remainder” of energizing reasonableness of world-experience.

Accordingly, Schelling’s *metaphysical* conception of “progressive empiricism” undercut the Baconian platform of psychological empiricism (precedent to what James later labeled as “ordinary empiricism”). He parsed his *progressive metaphysical* empiricism by way of a differential analysis of the types of empiricism, first contending that *naturalistic* empiricism of the Baconian tradition was the lowest level of empiricism. In principle, for Schelling, this Baconian kind of empiricism goes so far as to deny the supersensible or to maintain it is unknowable, and therefore does not share with Positive philosophy’s opposition to rationalism.

A decade later, Peirce was to cash in the implications of Schelling’s analysis. Peirce, in various places, referred to “the High Chancellor Bacon” in critical nuances on the same page with Schelling’s avowal of the constrained legacy of “ordinary” British empiricism. A keen student of British empiricism, Peirce inaugurated a career-long rejection of the nominalistic character of psychological empiricism in favor of what he termed his extreme form of Scotistic realism. He crucially contested the Baconian tradition of psychologized empiricism from his early “The Fixation of Belief” (1877) through to his last writings (EP 1:110-116, EP 2.464-466). His career-long critique of the criterion of truth in “psychological satisfaction” (as in certain German sensationalistic schools, in the pragmatisms of Wm. James and F. C. S. Schiller, and in Santayana’s hedonistic sensualism), were further variations in point.

True, then, to his more comprehensive orientation to existential experience of the irreducible *das Das*, Schelling parsed a higher platform of philosophical empiricism in various manifestations of *mystical empiricism*, by way of distinguishing three levels. The first, claims to reach the supersensible only through direct divine revelation; the second, the earlier teaching of Jacobi’s attack on all forms of philosophic conceptualization as atheistic; the third, theosophy, a predominately “speculative or theoretical mysticism.”



Schelling, whose thought indeed drew from the German mystics, was particularly concerned to clarify his innovative sense of metaphysical empiricism in relation to the last named (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 171-173). In an illuminating passage crucial to the consideration of his own difference from theosophy—as well as, later, of Peirce's, whose “The Law of Mind” of 1892 declared that his intellectual biography was influenced by Emerson, Schelling, Boehme, Plotinus, and the monstrous mysticism of the East)—Schelling expatiated on Jacob Boehme's theosophy for several pages. While Boehme represented “the zenith of theosophy,” Schelling opined, theosophy has always overlapped with inchoate forms of Positive philosophy. The crucial difference is theosophy dispenses with “scientific philosophy” while the Positive philosophy does not. At the heart of Boehme's theosophy is his substantive doctrine of “the birth of God”; he wanted to comprehend “the emergence of God in the actual chain of events,” thus “involving the deity in natural processes.” The authentic Positive philosophy, Schelling averred, rejects all natural processes in this sense, in which God would be not only the logical but also the actual result of a process. Hegel seems to have avoided this doctrine but actually did not, Schelling opined, while adding that Boehme was better than Hegel for reaching the conclusion out of deep religious intuition.

Boehme, Schelling expatiated further, was “a miraculous appearance of the German spirit.” He was born in 1575, Descartes in 1596. Spinoza, a hundred years later after Boehme's birth, had nothing but the physics of Descartes, utterly mechanical and soulless, whereas in Boehme nature was “theogonic.” But precisely this prevented him from forming a concept of a free creation of the world as required in the Positive philosophy. Rationalism, as in Spinoza, is a *substantial* knowledge, excluding a personal God's free creation by a generating *act*; it is familiar only with *essential* relations, movement following in a merely immanent logical manner. Boehme, too, presented God in such a *substantial* movement; in essence his theosophy was no less ahistorical than rationalism.

Thus, reprising the breakaway metaphysical position of his *Freiheitschrift* of 1809, Schelling here asserted that “the God of a truly historical and positive philosophy does not move, he *acts*.” This is an *actus prius* that the Positive philosophy posits in complete freedom from the beginning, a consideration that marks the crucial difference: theosophy is a pre-scientific and regressive theogony of the birth of the divine essence (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 174-178). All the mysticisms start out from experience, though not of the Positive philosophy's kind of metaphysically empirical experience. The Positive philosophy does not start from *any* kind of relative being but from experience of an absolute *prius* external to thought, a completely transcendent being, not just a *prius* like a potency that serves as the basis of logical progression. An absolute *prius* has no necessity to move itself into being: such a free act can only be comprehended *a posteriori*.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Positive philosophy goes *toward* experience, proving *a posteriori* what it has to prove, namely, that God is *prius*—that is, God is not a self-evident *res naturae* but a *res facti* that can only be proven factually, according to its reality (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 179).

Here, Schelling returned to his general thesis that Rational or Negative philosophy, by contrast, has its “truth” in the immanent necessity of its progress. In Positive philosophy, there is no *necessary* transition into experience of this *prius*. Accordingly, he labeled the Negative philosophy as an “*a priori empiricism*,” an *Apriorismus*, while the Positive philosophy is an “*empirical apriorism*.” It proves the *prius per posterius* that God exists, featuring not a particular kind but the entirety of experience from beginning to end, progressively strengthening with every step, a continually growing experience of the actually existing God. The realm of reality in which this proof moves is not finished and complete—even if *nature* were to come at its end and stand still, there is still the unrelenting advance and movement of *history*. Its proof is not in its individual components but rather only in its continual development (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 180-181).

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48 Schelling's *actus prius* here resonates with Goethe's famous line in where Faust is interpreting the Bible in *Faust*, Part One, “In Anfang war die Tat.”

Now, throughout Schelling's breakaway articulation of metaphysical empiricism here, the student of Peirce may sense a propaedeutic of the universe's energetic reasonableness in his "hyperbolic" worldview. We can also recognize the provenance of Schelling's thought in the theosemiotic resonances of "Evolutionary Love" (1893) and, again, in Peirce's sense of "Musement" in his "Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (1906). Unlike mathematics, as in Euclidean geometry, the Positive philosophy consists of nothing other than the *progressive evidence* of the Reality of the power that rules over Being—that is to say, of Reality that is above "Being" [transmuted in Peirce's terms, not reducible to the category of *existence*, or Secondness]. This entire Positive philosophy, therefore, is an *always advancing knowledge*, always nothing other than a *philo-sophia*, a fallibilistic prognosis never rigid or stagnant or arrested. (In "Evolutionary Love" Peirce invented the term "energetic pro-ejaculation" to capture the same nuance).

As such, Schelling added, it is only for the *wise*. It is a truly *free* philosophy; "whosoever does not want it should just as well leave it alone." If one wants the actual chain of events, if he wants a freely created world, and so on, he can have all of this only via the path of such a Positive philosophy—namely, what the Negative philosophy can no longer possess—"the real God, the actual chain of events, and a free relationship of God to the world."<sup>49</sup> (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 182).

In sum, the Positive philosophy cannot be called a self-enclosed system because it never is absolutely closed. But in its own way, it is an architectonic expression compared with the Negative philosophy which systematically proclaims nothing. What, then, about "revelation"? Revelation is neither its source nor its point of departure, Schelling insisted, as it is in the so-called dogmatic Christian philosophy from which it is in this respect *toto caelo* different. Revelation will be present within Positive philosophy in no other sense than within nature or the entire history of the human race. (So much for Hegel's "philosophy of revelation").

Schelling concluded his presentation of his progressive metaphysical empiricism based on the inseparable duality of Positive and Negative philosophies—to which the entire history of philosophy bears witness—in reference back to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant's cosmological antinomies affirmed the thesis on the positive side, the antithesis on the negative side (the antithesis asserting something that is not the case); Kant's so-called antinomy was therefore not an opposition, a collision of reason with itself, but rather a contradiction between reason and that which is "more than reason," the thesis side implicating the true Positive philosophy. Kant ended up satisfying the demand for a Positive philosophy in ethical action but not for science (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 191).

Peirce, we will have further occasion to understand, did not develop his Kantism in binary logical terms of antinomies and contradictions. He remained true to Schelling in transmuting his antithesis of *das Was* and *das Das* into trivalent categorical terms of non-dicible spontaneous immediacy (Firstness), non-dicible existentially determinative exertional and resistant causality (Secondness), and representational evolutionary increase of the universe's reasonable embodiment *in futuro* (Thirdness). He captured the logic of inquiry—the *logos* of a *kosmos noetos*— in a more comprehensive set of cosmomorphic categories that "revealed" progressive ameliorations (*logoi*, or *signs*) of nature and history in the semiotic proliferations of the divine Poem, the creative economy of the Universe at large (EP 2:194).

## 11 The grounding of positive philosophy

On, now, to Schelling's final "grounding" of his Positive philosophy.

49 See the end passage, "The All-Unity of Love," in Schelling's earlier classic, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (SCHELLING, 2006, p. 66-79).

Schelling began his final disquisition on the Positive philosophy by returning to his point of departure, namely, Kant's (and Fichte's) breakthrough to the transcendental status of philosophy itself. Among the sciences, philosophy is the only one that is entirely self-reflectively explanatory, not dependent on the other sciences whose content is only contingent. It grounds the other sciences in [Kantian, and classically, Aristotelian] synoptic method of complete enumeration and consistent arrangement of its essential parts. Schelling himself so philosophized in the terms of his over-arching articulation of the trajectories of Negative and Positive philosophy, and therewith of their necessary interface in *philosophia* "of the wise."

The ultimate of Positive philosophy is Being itself (*das Seyende selbst*), *entirely Being*, not conceptual potency, but rather *actus of Being, pure actuality [qua pure Becoming]*, whereas everything else passes from potency to act. It can only be known in a pure knowing in a new science that starts from the beginning, a positive not negative science, an actual knowledge, not merely of the highest idea, but of that which actually exists. The Negative philosophy, though it claims to be the first science, the science of sciences, only functions in relation to the Positive or highest science. All the other sciences lie between them. This necessary advance to the Positive philosophy goes beyond Kant and also Schelling's own earlier Philosophy of Identity.

The Negative philosophy only consists in the constant overthrow [*Umsturz*] of reason within its own conceptual circle, but is capable of no *actual* knowledge of that which goes beyond reason, namely actual experience (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 194-195). And accordingly, the Positive philosophy rejects a merely humanistic God [as in Fichte], which would only be the incarnation of God or becoming of God by man through the development of the freedom of the human spirit—in a movement to a greater critical negativity, through which the divine progress is supposed to be realized.<sup>50</sup> In the Positive philosophy, inverting the variables, the potency is the *posterius* and the *actus* is the *prius*.

Spinoza, Schelling opined, "got it right at the beginning" but didn't know how to proceed beyond it. Spinoza began from that which infinitely exists anterior to any potency—*Deus* devoid of all *whatness*, "before which thought becomes silent and before which reason bows down," thus positioned securely against thought and all doubt. Pertinent to his critique of the ontological argument which proceeds from the *concept* of God, the true *prius* is "that which indubitably exists" [*das unzweifelhaft Existirende*]—"freed from all potency, a singularity of Being [*Einzelwesen*] like no other." Of this true *prius*, nothing should be thought other than that which exists [*das Existiren*]—that is to say, purely and simply exists, foundationless and excluding every foundation—*das bloss Seyende* that exists independently of every idea and thus even from the "final idea" of the Negative philosophy.

Here, Schelling expressed a final metaphysical generalization that spiraled down in the history of modern philosophy to a wide range of "existentialist thinkers" including James, Heidegger, and Nishida Kitaro in Japan. Namely, "It is not because there is thinking there is being but because there is being there is thinking." The beginning of all thought is not itself thought (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 201-203). In the Positive philosophy, what is elsewhere the predicate is here the subject—precedent for "pure experience" in James' and Nishida's respective "world of pure experience". The *quod* is in the position of the *quid*—that which "just is being" from which, properly speaking every idea, that is every potency, is excluded. Ergo is "the inverted Idea" (*Umgekehrte Idee*), the idea in which reason is set outside itself, or Idea "absolutely ecstatic." And this is the ecstatic dimension of Spinoza's philosophy and of all other teachings that begin with that which necessarily exists. Kant referred to it in speaking of "true abyss" of human reason (quoting Kant's CPR A613, B641), though not just as a matter of thought but of "the being that exists *before* all thought." This "true abyss," Schelling concluded, was unknown to Fichtean idealism and to Hegelian philosophy (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 203-204).

50 Here, Schelling averred, the Academy and Aristotle represent the minor mysteries, Plato, and Plotinus the major mysteries.

So again, in Positive philosophy we must then start from being devoid of the concept, from “that before which reason stands motionless, by which reason is devoured in the face of which it is momentarily nothing and capable of nothing.” “Absolute eternity” is itself nothing other than precisely this pure existence, of which we know no *prius* and no beginning. The Positive philosophy deals with what is not capable of being comprehended *a priori*, but concerns itself with transforming what is incomprehensible *a priori* into what is *a posteriori* comprehensible: what is incomprehensible *a priori* becomes comprehensible in God. Reason must abide in this (that is, not draw back into itself, thereby seeking the object within itself), and then only can it, as the infinite potency of cognition, correspond to the infinite *actus*. According to its pure *nature* it posits only infinite being. In so positing this, Schelling continued, it “becomes motionless, paralyzed, *quasi attonita*.” Through this astonishment, reason may reach its true and eternal content, which it cannot find in the phenomenal world as something actually known, and which, for this reason, it even now *eternally* possesses (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 205).

The Positive philosophy thus grounds a *metaphysical empiricism* that breaks out of Kant’s critical prolegomena to any future metaphysics. Kant’s cosmological proof wanted to ascend retrogressively from the conditioned to the unconditioned; but the simple and immediately posited concept of “that which necessarily exists” is precisely that which excludes all critique. It excludes every *anterior* possibility and precedes every potency. No one has been able to critique Spinoza’s starting point. It is just *what exists* and in which still nothing of an *essence*, of a what (*das Was*) can be thought (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 206). Positive philosophy therefore seeks to go from that which necessarily exists (as a still non-conceptual *prius*) to the *concept*, to the essence (*God*) as *posterius*—a strategy exactly the opposite of the ontological argument. That which necessarily exists, exists *of itself*—“as one used to express it, *a se*, that is, *sponte*, *ultra*, and which exists without an antecedent ground” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 207).

Or again, the Negative philosophy *ends* with a supreme being; the Positive philosophy *begins* from that which necessarily exists. That which is devoid of anterior potency is “the absolutely transcendent concept”—not “transcendent” in the forbidden Kantian sense, nor immanent in pure thought, but starting from the transcendent in which there is nothing to exceed—from that which *simply* and, thus, *infinitely exists* to the concept of the most Supreme Being as *posterius* (“Kant never thought of this,” Schelling added). The Negative philosophy is identical with thought and therefore does not go *toward thought*, but rather only proceeds *out from* thought. “That which infinitely (simply) exists, that which reason cannot hide within itself, becomes immanent for reason in reference to a creative God.” (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 208-209).

*Of itself*, therefore, transcendental reason cannot realize or prove any actual, real being even in the sensible world; it cannot realize or prove present existence—for example, the existence of *this* plant or *this* stone. The plant that exists *here* cannot be realized from the mere representation of the *nature* of things, and thus from reason. In Hegel, God is only a representation, a *Vorstellung* in the conclusion, the result of the system. God, however, can only be who is *creative*, who can *begin* something, who thus exists *before* everything, and who is not just a final idea of reason. Hegel was immersed in a dialectical logic whose contents were mere abstractions and, thus, nothing real. He remained within the modality of representation, which knows nothing of a *decision*, of an *act*, or even of a *deed*.<sup>51</sup> (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 210-211).

Representation as *Vorstellung* refers to objects or sense perception and can then be extended to something in general (*etwas überhaupt*). The *Was* is what is represented—the *Quid* not the *Quod*. But representation and thought relate to one another as existence and essence, such that they both can’t exist in abstraction, the existence-referent *Vorstellung* precedes the thought-essence. Against this pure thatness,

51 Here again we may hear the resonance with Goethe’s famous line in *Faust*, Part One: “*In Anfang war die Tat*.” Peirce captured the entirety of Schelling’s critique of Hegel’s transcendental immanentism in “Seven Systems of Metaphysics,” 1903, in classifying the Hegelian worldviews as exemplifications of degenerate Thirdness.

thought immediately rises up and inquiries about the whatness or about the concept. This is also the path of the Positive philosophy's metaphysical empiricism in considering the indubitable existence of God. God is the *potentia universalis*, qua absolutely individual before all potencies—the embodiment (*Inbegriff*) of all principles and comprehension of all being—thus the *me on*, the sheer totality of all possibility, sheer openness, as well as the cause of being, the Being of being (*das Seyende-seyn*), in which embodiment of universal potency resides his eternal divinity and through which he makes himself knowable.

Having so precisely and yet concisely built his innovative conception of a *metaphysical empiricism* which breaks clear of both the “ordinary” empiricism of the Baconian type and the traditions of irrational and theosophical mysticism, Schelling harvested a consummate “musement” as to the personal presence of God. Of itself, the One is unknown, has no concept, but rather only a name—namely, The One as the universal essence, the *to pan*, being according to its own spontaneous content, the individual being who is everything. This is the true concept of absolute spirit—namely, the concept of that which is capable of all things—for what embodies the principles of being can only be spirit, and what is the embodiment of all principles can only be *absolute* spirit. The [Hegelian] “philosophy of revelation” is nothing other than a subordinate application of the spirit of Positive philosophy itself (SCHELLING, 2007, p. 212).

## 12 Epilogue: Peirce's trivalent categorical transmutation of Schelling's positive philosophy

The reader of the deep currents of Peirce's thought will find symmetrical as well as asymmetrical correspondences with Schelling's strategic grounding of Positive philosophy. At the heart of Schelling's later-phase contribution to “modern” philosophy is the intuition of his metaphysical empiricism, “we live forwards, while we understand backwards.”<sup>52</sup> Or, rather felicitously in Goethe's version: “*Grau, teuer Freud, ist alle Theorie, / Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum*” (*Faust*, Part One). Such a *vitalistic* sense of the fecund nature of reality pours forth incessantly over us beyond all settled conceptualizations.

In Wm. James' own felicitous phrase, “novelties are forever leaking in.” Nature is prospective, life facing forward towards *unvordenkliche* paths of possible fruitions.

Shakespeare's famous phrase “Ripeness is all” (in *King Lear*) can be enlisted to epitomize this essential ontological sensibility—or in Goethe's variant expression, “*Was ist fruchtbar, allein ist wahr*”<sup>53</sup>—the latter arguably one of the poetic inspirations for Schelling's metaphysical *poiesis* of metaphysical existence as a veritable Becoming.

In regard to such musings, my thesis has been that Peirce, after Emerson—who was profoundly impacted by Goethe—, forwarded, indeed upgraded, the philosophic momentum of this trans-Atlantic paradigm of metaphysical empiricism in his invention of American Pragmatism. Inheriting the various streams of post-Kantian idealism, Peirce's epistemic and ontological fallibilism ripened in the Kantist line of Schelling's objective idealism, “the one intelligible theory of the universe.”

Peirce, the ontological semiotician *par excellence*, achieved a consummate ripening of his polymathic career in his later-phase architectonic configuration of the intelligible universe's *symbolic entelechy of energetic reasonableness*. One of the speculative achievements in the mature phase of his career consisted in transmuting Schelling's binary form of world-existential articulations of Becoming into trivalent categorical forms. Schelling's metaphysical empiricism became Peirce's “evolutionary love.” Adhering to the essence of Schelling's post-idealistic thought, the “life of the universe” Peirce expressed in the terms of a diastolic unfoldment of “a vast representamen, a great work of art,” namely God's own poem. In Peirce's remarkable articulation in 1903:

52 Kierkegaard and Wm. James embraced the phrase, and arguably it is a central presupposition of Nietzsche's Dionysius and even Heidegger's *Existenz-philosophie*.

53 A line in *Vermächtnis*, Goethe's “Legacy” poem of 1829 (GOETHE, 1983, p. 267).

Therefore, if you ask me what part Qualities can play in the economy of the Universe, I shall reply that the Universe is a vast representamen, a great symbol of God's purpose, working out its conclusion in living realities. Now every symbol must have, organically attached to it, its Indices of Reactions and its Icons of Qualities, and such part as these reactions and these qualities play in an argument, that they of course play in the Universe, that Universe being precisely an argument. In the little bit that you or I can make out of this huge demonstration, our perceptual judgments are the premises for us and these perceptual judgments have icons as their predicates, in which icons Qualities are immediately presented.

Here Peirce may also be appreciated for having expanded on Aristotle's ontological articulation of the universe's "active intellect:"<sup>54</sup>

But what is first for us is not first in nature. The premisses of Nature's own process are all the independent uncaused elements of fact that go to make up the variety of nature, which the necessitarian supposes to have been all in existence from the foundation of the world, but which the Tychist supposes are continually receiving new accretions. Those premisses of nature, however, though they are not the perceptual facts that are premisses to us, nevertheless must resemble them in being premisses. We can only imagine what they are by comparing them with the premisses for us. As premisses they must involve Qualities.

Now as to their function in the economy of the Universe,—the Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem,—for every fine argument is a poem and a symphony,—just as every true poem is a sound argument. But let us compare it rather with a painting,—with an impressionist seashore piece,—then every Quality in a premiss is one of the elementary colored particles of the painting; they are all meant to go together to make up the intended Quality that belongs to the whole as whole. That total effect is beyond our ken; but we can appreciate in some measure that resultant Quality of parts of the whole,—which Qualities result from the combinations of elementary Qualities that belong to the premisses. (EP 2:193-194).

In "Evolutionary Love" (1893), Peirce's re-conceptualization of the ontological gospeler's "God is love" was also redolent with a sense of "divinization of genius" as to the synechistic revelation of the *spiritual life* of the universe in our minor poems. Again, in his precedent metaphysical essay "The Law of Mind" (1892), Peirce—sworn enemy of "mere" nominalistic formulae—had declared for a version of the ontological gospeler's thesis in thematizing the developmental teleology of "personality" inclusive of an "I-Thou" intimacy with the divine presence.

Peirce grounded his Buddhisto-Christian religiosity in instinctive "musement," that is to say, in respect of the universe's intelligible embodiment of outcomes. His early-phase Kantist platform of epistemic sentiments of "faith, hope, and charity" blossomed into his later pragmatistic declarations of "Truth and Justice" as intrinsically formative forces in the world process. Thus, in a remarkable passage expressing the normative parallelism between ethical and logical reasonableness grounded in the creative nature of things, Peirce wrote of the purposive efficacy of Truth and Justice in 1902:

Do you think, reader, that it is a positive fact that  
Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
or do you think that this, being poetry, is only a pretty fiction? Do you think that,  
notwithstanding the horrible wickedness of every mortal wight, the idea of right and

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54 Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book III. Ch. 6.

wrong is nevertheless the greatest power on this earth, to which every knee must sooner or later bow or be broken down; or do you think that this is another notion at which common sense should smile? (EP 2:122).

In 1904 he answered his own interrogation in the context of saying “a symbol is the only kind of sign which can be an argumentation.” The passage is obliquely autobiographical, central to his awareness of the trajectory of his philosophic career:

The words justice and truth, amid a world that habitually neglects these things and utterly derides the words, are nevertheless among the greatest powers the world contains. They create defenders and animate them with strength. This is not rhetoric or metaphor: it is a great and solid fact of which it behooves a logician to take account. (EP 2:308).<sup>55</sup>

In perhaps even larger terms, Peirce's ontological semeiotics transmuted Schelling's metaphysical empiricism in rendering the energetic entelechy of the universe in terms of its symbolic metaboly. Thus, in 1904:

Now it is of the essential nature of a symbol that it determines an interpretant, which is itself a symbol. A symbol, therefore, produces an endless series of interpretants. [...] The symbol represents itself to be represented; and that representedness is real owing to its utter vagueness. For all that is represented must be thoroughly born out. For reality is compulsive. But the compulsiveness is absolutely *hic et nunc*. It is for an instant and it is gone. Let it be no more and it is absolutely nothing. The reality only exists as an element of regularity. And the regularity is the symbol. Reality, therefore, can only be regarded as the limit of the endless series of symbols.

A symbol is essentially a purpose, that is to say, is a representation that seeks to make itself definite, or seeks to produce an interpretant more definite than itself. For its whole signification consists in its determining an interpretant; so that it is from its interpretant that it derives the actuality of its signification. [...] A symbol is an embryonic reality endowed with power of growth into its very truth, the very entelechy of reality. This appears mystical and mysterious simply because we insist on remaining blind to what is plain, that there can be no reality which has not the life of a symbol. (EP 2:322-324).

Peirce achieved two more “final” expressions of his ontological semeiosis in 1906:

What are signs for, anyhow? They are to communicate ideas, are they not? Even the imaginary signs called thoughts convey ideas from the mind of yesterday to the mind of tomorrow into which yesterday's have grown. Of course, then, these “ideas” are not themselves “thoughts,” or imaginary signs. They are some potentiality, some form, which may be embodied in external or internal signs. But why should this idea-potentiality be so poured from one vessel into another unceasingly? It is a mere exercise of the World-spirit's Spiel-trieb,—mere amusement? Ideas do, no doubt, grow in this process. It is a part, perhaps we may say the chief part, of the process of Creation of the World. If it has no ultimate aim at all, it may be likened to the performance

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55 Again in 1906: “... the ideas of “justice” and “truth” are, notwithstanding the iniquity of the world, the mightiest forces that move it. Generality is, indeed, an indispensable ingredient of reality; for mere individual existence or actuality without regularity whatever is a nullity. Chaos is pure nothing.” This passage goes on to say: “Accordingly, the pragmatist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in the process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*, which is what we strive to express in calling the *reasonable*. In its higher stages, evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control, and this gives the pragmatist a sort of justification for making the rational purport to be general. “What Pragmatism Is” (EP 2:343, 1906).

of a symphony. The pragmatist insists that this is not all, and offers to back his assertion with proof. He grants that this continued increase of the embodiment of the idea-potentiality is the summum bonum. But he undertakes to prove by the minute examination of logic that signs which would be merely parts of an endless viaduct for the transmission of idea-potentiality, without any conveyance of it into anything but symbols, namely [conveyance] into action or habit of action, would not be signs at all, since they would not, little or much, fulfill the function of signs; and further, that without embodiment in something else than symbols, the principles of logic show there never could be the least growth in idea-potentiality. (EP 2:388).

When I speak of “final” here I ask the reader to recollect the meaning of “consummate” and more specifically “eudaimonic” as found in the most general, therefore vague, meanings expressed in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, XII and *Nicomachean Ethics*, X. Combining or fusing the felicitously vague generality of the two passages prompts a path of interpretation of the afore-cited passage and Peirce’s companion sentences from the same 1906 writing, itself a kind of grand finale of his career-text:

It seems a strange thing, when one comes to ponder over it, that a sign should leave its interpreter to supply a part of its meaning; but the explanation of the phenomenon lies in the fact that the entire universe,—not merely the universe of existents, but all the wider universe, embracing the universe of existents as a part, the universe which we are all accustomed to refer to as “the truth,” that all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs. Let us note this in passing as having a bearing upon the question of pragmatism. (EP 2:394).

I have deliberately displayed these passages at length to establish their accumulative *gravitas*. In such a continuum of passages we witness the fusion of anthropomorphic and cosmomorphic concepts in Peirce’s later-phase writings. And we reach Peirce’s consummate expressions of pragmatism, the outcome of a ripening of ideas over the long stretch of his career-text, a harvesting of a bottom line trivalent categorical expression as to a *veritable* universe perfused with signs concrescently interpreting signs.

My argument has been that, in such wise, Peirce advanced and theoretically upgraded Schelling’s expansion of the Kantist legacy in the direction of progressive metaphysical empiricism. And, in such wise, Peirce completed no less than a tripartite paradigm change in the history of philosophic modernity.

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## List of Abbreviations\*

The works of Charles S. Peirce are cited as follows:

*Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*: volume (v) and paragraph (p) (CP v.p).

*The Essential Peirce*: volume (v), page (p) (EP v:p).

*The New Elements of Mathematics*: volume (v), page (p) (NEM v:p).

Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Writings: page (p) (PMSW p).

*Reasoning and the Logic of Things*: page (p) (RLT p).

*Writings of Charles S. Peirce*: volume (v), page (p) (W v:p).

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\* Editor's Note: This list of abbreviations follows the rules described at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce\\_bibliography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce_bibliography). Accessed on: 01 jul. 2021.