



Transcendental naturalism and skeptical materialism: legacy paradigms in Emerson, Santayana, and Peirce

Naturalismo transcendental e materialismo cético: paradigmas legados em Emerson, Santayana e Peirce

David A. Dilworth*
dd9414@aol.com

Recebido em: 01/10/2022.

Aprovado em: 16/11/2022.

Publicado em: 05/12/2022.

Abstract: The article begins with a comparative hermeneutic of the incongruent legacy worldviews of Emerson's transcendentalism and Santayana's skeptical materialism, proceeds on to Peirce's convergence with Emerson's transcendentalism in a neo-Neoplatonic and neo-Aristotelian configuration, with particular reference to the sweep of the Cambridge Conference Lectures of 1898.

Keywords: Alexandrine Neoplatonism. Comparative hermeneutic. Emerson. Homologization of Plato and Aristotle. Legacy paradigms. Peirce. Santayana. Transcendentalism. Materialism.

Resumo: O artigo começa com uma hermenêutica comparativa das incongruentes cosmovisões herdadas do transcendentalismo de Emerson e do materialismo cético de Santayana, prossegue para a convergência de Peirce com o transcendentalismo de Emerson em uma configuração neo-neoplatônica e neo-aristotélica, com referência particular ao alcance das palestras das Conferências de Cambridge de 1898.

Palavras-chave: Emerson. Hermenêutica comparativa. Homologização de Platão e Aristóteles. Materialismo. Neoplatonismo Alexandrino. Paradigmas legados. Peirce. Santayana. Transcendentalismo.

1 Introduction

In this day and age, we hear *the critic replaces the author*. In the eye of a serious historian of civilization, this working dictum of postmodernism is a low tide of meaningless semiosis. It imports an indefinite miscellany, a random play of signifiers without signified, as "literary" critics deconstruct the classics of our precious cultural heritage. For a moment let the tide rise back up to high. Let the "absent authors" of the great, immortal works of the history of philosophy, literature, and art come back into their own meaningful utterances.

In this paper, in the spirit of the great Renaissance artist Raphael's celebrated painting, *The School of Athens*, I will endeavor to revive the "legacy" paradigms of philosophy in such a "Renaissance" perspective, even venturing to suggest Emerson and Peirce trans-configured the paradigms of philosophy along the same lines as in Raphael's *essentially Neoplatonic* portrait. In a likeminded Neoplatonic "remembrance" of Emerson and Peirce, I will place them in another "School of Athens", namely the school of classical American philosophy. And for strategic purposes I will draw the contrast the distance between the central figures of Emerson and Peirce against Santayana, as representative figures of a polar tension in classical American philosophy.



Artigo está licenciado sob forma de uma licença Creative Commons Atribuição 4.0 Internacional.

* Philosophy Department, Stony Brook University.

It is a portrait, or “story”, of mid-19th to mid-20th century overlapping, inter-textual careers. The portrait furnishes food for thought in what I call a *comparative hermeneutic*. Such a comparative hermeneutic endeavors to go beyond parochial interest in classical American philosophy – as well as beyond the ordinary kind of postmodernly relativistic “hermeneutics” in today’s academy – rather situating the bottom line issues of *meaningful semiosis* in that wider “legacy” space of civilization which is the veritable *kosmos noetos of the history of philosophy*. Technocratic philosophical identities in contemporary scholastic camps are of no avail here. Narrowly focused skill-sets of professional philosophers tend to be “out to lunch” in regard to this *kosmos noetos of the history of philosophy* that is, after all, the only essential subject matter and sustainable standard of discrimination in and for the practice of philosophy.

Taking such a *kosmos noetos* view of philosophy, I propose to sketch out, first, the essential inter-textual relation between Emerson and Santayana; later, I will extend the comparative hermeneutic to include Peirce.

Writing prolifically in a variety of erudite and popular styles, Emerson and Santayana each achieved renown for the *literary* quality of their writings. But they wrote as *sense-making philosophers* as well. They ranged over *legacy ideas* in the history of philosophy, ministrant to earning their places in the world-wide republic of letters. Germane to this reflection, Santayana philosophized in the wake of Emerson, consciously parsing his differences from his illustrious predecessor, the “Sage of Concord”.¹ Peirce, we will see, came to recognize Emerson as his “Concord neighbor”, and by this he expressed his fundamental affinity with Emerson’s Transcendentalism while consciously rejecting Santayana’s skeptical naturalism. This dynamic of inter-textual relations remains central to comprehending the deepest issues that emerged in classical American philosophy and indeed in world-philosophy.

In his maiden philosophical work *Nature* (1836), Emerson’s declared his “transparent eyeball” *authorial perspective* which laid the basis of a career-long cascade of metaphysical, moral, and aesthetic intuitions. In his turn, from his undergraduate days at Harvard Santayana began shadowing Emerson, in due course articulating a plethora of variations on many of the same themes. It goes without say that like most other philosophers in the republic of letters – and in the careers of such contemporaries as James, Royce, Peirce, Dewey, and others – Emerson and Santayana drew from a common legacy of foundational concepts of “nature”, “mind”, “body”, “spirit”, “consciousness”, “existence”, “reality”, “life”, “universe”, *physis*, *bios*, *aisthesis*, *hedoné*, *eudaimonia*, and many other classical terms. What strikes the reader’s eye, however, is that their worldviews were predicated on mutually incongruent assumptions and articulations.

As a first approximation, I will characterize Emerson’s and Santayana’s worldviews as top-down and bottom-up “naturalisms”, respectively, each eschewing super-natural foundations. Emerson articulated an “upper case” idealistic naturalism, Santayana’s a “lower case” skeptical naturalism. Only a side-theme here, we can recognize Santayana’s career text as having a patently aggressive subtext of “reacting” against Emerson and, by recursive semantic extensions, against the line of classical American Pragmatism. Aside from such personal psycho-dramatic motivations,² let us look to the ontological semantics of their respective realistic worldviews in the greater noetic space of the history of philosophy.³

1 For the key perspective on Emerson as Peirce’s Concord neighbor,” see Guardiano (2017). Dilworth (2019) “Santayana’s Repression of Emerson” details the range of Santayana’s writings that explicitly interfaced with Emerson, whom he called “The Puritan Goethe”. Santayana never saw Emerson in person. He met Peirce on at least one occasion, the third of Peirce’s Harvard Conferences lectures of 1898. In 1905 Peirce saddled Santayana’s budding Harvard career with a devastating review of his multi-volume *The Life of Reason*.

2 Limiting this huge subject (in view of Santayana’s carefully crafted literary persona) of reactive *ressentiment* to arguably two key “hits” on Santayana during in early days of his Harvard career, I cite Wm. James’s remarks on Santayana’s *Interpretation of Poetry and Religion* (1900) as “the perfection of rotteness” and further comments on his “moribund Latinity” (to which Santayana responded on several occasions); and Charles Peirce’s 1905 review of Santayana’s first two volumes of *The Life of Reason* which characterized it as an “eclectic philosophy,” a “mosaic of opinions,” “highly polished, in parts too much so; so that we are bewildered and fatigued by a shimmer of rapidly passing thoughts that are hard to make out through a medium more glimmering than lucid”. For further information, Dilworth (2019).

3 Relevantly for philosophical purposes, the incongruent assumptions and articulations of Emerson’s Transcendental Naturalism and Santayana’s skeptical materialism are a template which measures contemporary controversy in the field of biosemiotics. There is the line of reductive naturalism represented by such names as Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Dawkins, Dennett, Jay Gould; on the other side, the Transcendentalist-scientific writings of such figures as Loren Eiseley (1907-1977), and Simon Conway Morris (1951 –). Loren Eiseley’s mid-20th-century writings,

2 Emerson's top-down naturalism

Emerson's career writings were a veritable vector of the highest standards of Western tradition and modernity, conveying deep experiential "prospects" of personal, higher-civilizational, and cosmic meliorism. His idealistic naturalism gave us our moral territory, so to speak, our "Young American" and world citizenship, and so reminiscent of Aristotle. our meaningful non-utilitarian transcendence in a fresh new voice. His philosophical compositions are soul-fully anthropomorphic calls to participation in the ideal interiority of Nature blossoming out of the depths of our own minds.

Recent scholarly works have performed yeomen scholarly service in portraying the deep-structured trajectory of Emerson's high-civilizational meliorism.⁴ They outline the essentials of Emerson's Transcendentalism in the terms of twin metaphysical principles of "Identity and Metamorphosis" – Goethean in "modern" provenance and yet creatively tapping into the grand Neoplatonic traditions of *Natura naturans* *Natura naturata* (Plotinus, Eruigena, Spinoza, Goethe, Schelling). In a related vein of texts, Emerson merged his twin metaphysical principles into an elemental heuristic of "the Moral Sentiment" which, in his unique style of symbolic generality, reprised Plato's Idea of the Good and Plotinus's principle of the One in a synthetic semiosis of "Over-Soul", the perfusive "air" of the Beautiful, Good, and True in our lives. "Over-Soul" is the principle of *cognitive and moral updrafts* for the receptive *thinker and doer*. We live, move, and have our being in this pervasive "moral" element of Over-Soul.

Emerson's maiden prose philosophical work *Nature* (1836) already showed its deep structure in the en-Soul-ed personal participatory ontogenetics of Plotinus and Goethe.⁵ In the *American Scholar* (1837) Emerson proclaimed a principle of "Man Thinking" set within a so-to-speak Thinkingness (Meaningfulness) principle of "Nature" admitting higher disclosures and prospects. In *History* (1841), his chosen first essay of *Essays: First Series*, begins with the words: "There is One Mind common to all men [...] Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent."⁶ Semantically, Emerson's essentially Neoplatonic sense of participatory mind-and-heart conspicuously conveyed – and, ala Goethe, daringly modernized – traditional resonances of interpollent connaturality, congeniality, consanguinity of an *entelic Nature* that ran against the rising tides of secularized scientific reductionism.⁷

These central variations of an "ideal Power" of a "sovereign agency" or "Power" were already conspicuously sense-making in Emerson's signature poem "The Rhodora" (1831), and in his aforementioned maiden prose work *Nature* (1836). He composed variations on the connatural dimension of spiritual "Power" in such brilliant essays as *The American Scholar*, *The Method Nature* (1841), *The Poet, Nature* (1843), *The Young American*, *Beauty*, *Fate*, *Illusions*, as well as in many splendid poetic

replete with references to Emerson and Thoreau, combined his career expertise in paleontology with brilliant literary intuitiveness. Conway Morris's *From Terrestrials to Animal Minds: Six Myths of Evolution* (2022) takes laboratory-minded Transcendentalism right up to the present. Following upon *Life's Solutions* (2003) and *The Runes of Evolution* (2017) which contest the views of Jay Gould and other Neo-Darwinists in dense empirical technicality and in synthetic modes of retroductive conceptualization, his "six myths" of evolution are the myths of No Limits, of Randomness, of Mass Extinctions, of Missing Links, of Animal Minds, and of Extraterrestrials. The book's momentum drives toward declaring a two level, natural and metaphysical (Platonic, Neoplatonic), uniqueness of the human mind – argued on scientific grounds very resonant with Loren Eiseley's writings, and philosophically estimable as returnable to the Neoplatonic Transcendentalist frameworks of Emerson and Peirce. While the working assumptions of reductive biosemiotics (Darwinism, Neo-Darwinism) may be considered harmless for scientific practices, they breed moral inversions of nihilistic ontosemioses in the humanities (e.g., Marxist, Freudian, and postmodern forms of technocratic "solutions" to human life and mind.)

4 Urbas (2021), *Guardiano* (2021).

5 In the pivotal mid-1830s, before the publication of Emerson's maiden prose work *Nature* (1836), as his *Journals* (*JMN* 5) in particular shows, he was reading not only Goethe *but also Plotinus* – even Goethe *translating Plotinus!* His *Journals* from 1837, the year leading up to the Divinity School Address, elaborates the doctrine of the soul in an application of a line from Plotinus that Emerson cited a few months later: "But if body is an object of pursuit because it is animated, why does any one, neglecting himself, pursue another thing? Since, therefore, you admire soul in another thing, admire yourself" (*JMN* 5: 385, quoting *On the Three Hypostases that Rank the Principles of Things* in Taylor's translation). I am indebted to Joseph Urbas for this reference.

6 Emerson (1983); E&L. 237.

7 Urbas (2021) especially conveys the ubiquity of the rock bottom "Moral Sentiment" in the array of metaphysical, ethical, aesthetic, and social thematics of Emerson's writings.

pieces expressive of transcendental radiance in *The Snow Storm*, *The Humble Bee*, *The World-Soul*, *The Sphinx*, *Bacchus*, *Merlin*, *Woodnotes*, *Brahma*, *Days*, to name only a few.⁸ *Fate* (1860) expressed the connotation of a personal participatory destiny, a blessed opportunity to transcend the cogs of organization of external causalities, rather to worship at the altar of “Beautiful Necessity” by virtue of one’s interior “Power” – namely, metaphysical freedom and integrity of mind to embody the meaningful coincidences of man’s receptive immersion in Divinity in energetic and innovative responses to the daunting challenges of life. All of Emerson’s prose and poetic compositions connote participatory updrafts in the elemental “air” of the Soul’s motions or metamorphoses of Mind (“Over-Soul”).

Now the sheer scope of Emerson’s writings recommends we appreciate his career for its singularity in the annals of modern philosopher. An arduously traveling “American” philosopher *and* poet, Emerson arguably belongs in the first column of higher civilization’s double-tasking geniuses.⁹ And the key to Emerson’s hermeneutic of life’s abundantly meaningful ontosemiosis traces to his explicitly declared Neoplatonism in the terms of which he ranged through and absorbed the world’s rich traditions of philosophy, literature, and art. From his initial small classic *Nature* (1836) onwards, Goethean provenances centered on Plotinus’s elaboration of Plato’s Idea of “Beauty”.¹⁰ His journals, essays, and over 400 poems reveal that he delighted in reading Plotinus and Plotinus’s chief exponents, Proclus and Iamblichus, in every phase of his career. In *The Transcendentalist* (1841) Emerson wrote in the terms of “the eternal Trinity of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness”, with Goethean preference for “making Beauty the sign and head” (E&L 206). He encapsulated this same personalized participatory concept in his perhaps signature essay, *The Poet* (1844), where he averred – in a decisive philosophical hermeneutic explicitly citing Plotinus, Proclus, and Iamblichus – that “Beauty is the creator of the universe” (E&L, 449). His essay *Beauty* of 1860 encompassed the same lure of aesthetic and scientific “con-science” (*Mitwissenschaft*): “The question of Beauty takes us out of surfaces, to thinking of the foundation of things. Goethe said: ‘The beautiful is a manifestation of secret laws of Nature, which, but for this appearance, had been forever concealed from us’” (E&L 1103).

As a matter of course Emerson also engaged polemically in application of his creative and redemptive “Over-Soul” ideal-real resources of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth. In the full maturity of his philosophical powers, as in the *first* essays of *Representative Men* (1850) – significantly devoted to “Plato: or, the Philosopher” and “Plato: New Readings”, and then subsequently in a contrastive thematic focusing on “Montaigne: or, the Skeptic” – Emerson affirmed the unifying *Idea-potencies* of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth in a bottom line critique of skepticism and materialism. Skepticism and its implicit reductive materialism, he avers, undermine our innermost mind-and-heart’s responsiveness to the Mind-Heart of the Universe. Such a deflationary inversion of the potencies of a transcendental moral life (Soul, Life) to a mere “miscellany of facts” (so much mere “matter in motion”) is in net effect to *cancel* our higher, more intimate powers. Here is one representative passage of Emerson’s polemic in a sweeping generalization:

8 For the full sweep of Emerson’s writings see Tiffany K. Wayne (2010).

9 It is important to recognize that overall, between 1833 and 1881, Emerson traveled by rail and horse & buggy to give nearly 1500 lecture sites in cities in the eastern United States and southern Canada. The lyceum circuit lasted from November to March. In 1846, he delivered more than 50 lectures, a pace he kept up throughout the 1850s, some years delivering as many as 80 lectures, covering vast distances from New England, New York the Midwest, Canada, and as far west as California. On Emerson’s second trip of England in 1847 he gave 67 lectures, drawing great audiences of as many as 500 to 700 people. In his essay *Eloquence* (1870) he insisted that the best prose should be poetic, but the highest eloquence must be a poem. He based his own *philosophic* career on this civilized and civilizing art form.

10 Emerson keynoted *Nature* (1836) with the often-cited declaration of his epistemic and ontological project in the famous signature words: “Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear [...] There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, – no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God [...]. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty” (E&L, 10). The currents and circulations of “Universal Being” and “immortal beauty” trace back to Plotinus’s expressions of the second hypostasis, NOUS or the ONE MIND. Arguably there is no more explicitly Neoplatonic sounding in the whole of modern philosophy.

The final solution in which skepticism is lost, is, in the moral sentiment, which never forfeits its supremacy. All moods may be tried, and their weight allowed to all objections: the moral sentiment as easily outweighs them all, as any one. This is the drop which balances the sea. I play with the miscellany of facts, and take those superficial views which we call skepticism; but I know that they will presently appear to me in that order which makes skepticism impossible. A man of thought must feel the thought that is parent of the universe: that the masses of nature do undulate and flow. This faith avails to the whole emergence of life and objects. The world is saturated with deity and with law.¹¹

Well now, “the thought that is parent of the universe” is right out of Plotinus (*Ennead* V.1.8). Call it the mainstream theme in the history of Neoplatonism.

And it is a decisive articulation. In what I am calling *legacy* perspective, Emerson’s Mind-Heart-felt “faith” that avails in a universe “saturated with divinity and law” should again be read as a portal, *conveying*, in his highly lucid and original ontosemiosis, traditional Neoplatonic accents of participatory “contemplation” (*theoria*) and moral “sentiment” (*eros*) – Plotinus’s “the soul becomes what it knows” – at odds with materialistic and skeptical worldviews which appear in classical paradigms (notably Epicureanism and Academic Skepticism) and carried on in various promotions of secularist Enlightenment modernity and its offshoot, the “all-out skeptical” post-modernity. In the veritable *kosmos noetos* of the history of philosophy, strategically major phases of this Neoplatonic mainstream appear in the rich history of Christian Neoplatonism, in the Cambridge Platonists of the Elizabethan era, in the *Ethics* of Spinoza, and in the German *Jena-zeit* appropriations of Spinoza. The young Schelling carried on Goethe’s and Schiller’s revitalization of Spinoza. Goethe and Schelling in turn were formative influences Emerson and Peirce. Peirce’s “Musement” and “Evolutionary Love” rearticulated Emerson’s Neoplatonism in declaring that the “signs” of divinity and law are “incessantly pouring in” on us.

And what is relevant to our present comparative hermeneutic of worldviews, Emerson’s universe, suffused with revelatory signs of divinity and law, anticipated, as well as undercut, the reactive skeptical and materialistic paradigm his near-contemporary Santayana upheld throughout his career. Considered here as a miniature version of *The School of Athens*, Santayana’s place in classical American philosophy appears in Raphael’s figures of Democritus and Epicurus, if not also of Dionysius of Sinope, set at symbolic distances from the central figures of Plato and Aristotle.

3 Santayana’s bottom-up naturalism

As he explicitly recorded in his key work *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1927) and again in his retrospective “Apologia pro Vita Sua” (1940), Santayana’s writings centered on a binary logic of “skepticism and animal faith”. Such an agonistic logic of incommensurable modalities of “mind” (inert essences) and “matter” (natural existence) ubiquitously pervades Santayana’s career text from his initial work *A Sense of Beauty* (1898) on. “Animal faith,” the epistemic locus of the biological “psyche” in the irrational “flux of matter”, conveyed the meaning of a so-to-speak measureless metric of passive “intuitions of essence”. Essences, the momentary “data” of consciousness “do not exist”, – namely, have no “physical” efficacy – in the life of the biological psyche afloat in the contextual miscellany of contingent nature. In “A General Confession”, which introduces his “Apologia pro Vita Sua”, Santayana characterized his root naturalism in the parallel binary terms: “We must oscillate between a radical transcendentalism, frankly reduced to a [skeptical] solipsism of the living moment, and a materialism

11 Emerson (1983), E&L 708.

posited as a presupposition of conventional sanity.”¹² He asserted this agonistic binary grounded all his writings. It is a huge hermeneutic of “the life of the psyche” which he came consciously to associate with the classical Epicurean and Socratic-Skeptical worldviews. His earlier five-volume work, *The Life of Reason* (1909-07) and his later four-volume *Realms of Being* (1927-30) spun rhetorical variations on the same binary of a *radical solipsism of the present moment of essence intuition* grounded in *substrative materialism*.

But now, let us hear from John McCormick’s authoritative and magisterial biography of Santayana. McCormick astutely epitomized Santayana’s bottom line concept of animal “psyche” in affinity with 19th-century Darwinism. (And here let us recall that Epicurus’s “swerve” of the atoms reappears in Darwin’s breakthrough paradigm of the “chance” or “randomness” of the natural processes of evolutionary adaption, by way of replacing an older deterministic component in the Newton-Kantian physics). Summarizing the fundamental trajectory of one of Santayana’s culminating works, *The Realm of Spirit* (1930), McCormick writes:

The gist of his [Santayana’s] argument for the natural basis of conscience and morality occurs in the final pages of the chapter [of *The Realm of Spirit*] called “The Will”. Here the moral dimension, unmechanical and “biologically idle”, results from the complexity of the human organism reacting in a complex manner to the dangers and commitments implicit in all life, even vegetable life. [Human] Spirit vastly extends those dangers “by the whole perceptive, aggressive, and teachable reflex machinery of the animal psyche. Here too [McCormick continues] Santayana is faithful to Darwinian theory, which he embroiders with his own theory of [conscious] spirit. He resists linking himself to the humanists, however: [again quoting Santayana] “A visit to the Zoo may convince anybody that [the risk of confusion and disaster in life] is no prerogative of man, much less a miraculous inroad of spirit into nature. All those odd animals are seen straining under the burden of their oddity”. As animals become extinct, so may man, for his alleged superiority to the animals has cost him terribly in “inner conflicts, reaching war and organized tyranny in the race and madness of the individual” (*The Realm of Spirit*, p. 614-615). (MCCORMICK, 1988, p. 389).

The gist of McCormick’s description imports that Santayana expounded a relativistic naturalism – featuring the “burden of their oddity” of the indefinitely many zoo-psyches striving to adapt to their shifting informational environments, each achieving whatever passing prosperity available to it. (Santayana unburdened his own oddity in a three-volume autobiography, *Persons and Places*, and again in *The Last Puritan*, a “memoir in the form of a novel”, and in what is now several volumes of letters). Santayana consistently absorbed Darwin’s evolutionary doctrine of the “descent of man” while, again like Darwin, eschewing any sense of mankind’s ascending participation in a transcendental Universal Mind revealed in signs of Divinity and Law.

In his later-phase *Apologia pro Mente Sua* Santayana expressed his own “humanism” – calling it a “modest Epicurean humanism”, which actually was a hybrid conception that included classical Skeptical and Cynic components. As McCormick notes, Santayana *embroidered* his binary semiosis of “skepticism and animal faith” with an idiocentric “theory of spirit” articulated in the terms of “the spirituality of spirit and the ideality of data”. “Spirituality of spirit” referred to his “post-rational morality” of pure essence intuition, while the “ideality of data” continued the strain of skepticism’s “solipsism of the living moment”.

Santayana significantly characterized his philosophy as a “Sceptical Platonism” (he preferred the British spelling), in terms of which he essayed a wholesale deconstruction of Platonic, Neoplatonic,

12 Schilpp (1991, p. 17).

as well as Idealist, Romantic, and Transcendentalist lines of Western modernity. His *bête-noirs* were precisely Goethe and Emerson. In all these “sceptical” – sometimes ironically cartooning and lampooning – rejections of iconic authors and historical “orthodoxies”, he played out his rather idiosyncratic sense of “biologically idle” spirit – namely, his sense that the “psyche” does not participate in or contribute to any higher platform of Moral Sentiment in “Nature”. Rather, he averred that “animal faith” consisted of “intuitions of essence” that are only “spasmodic and decidedly wind-blown” (SAF 273). He played out the consequences of that whirligig postulate in a four volume “phenomenological” system, *The Realms of Being* (the Realms of Matter, Essence, Truth, and Spirit) published between 1927 and 1930. Finally, he came to articulate what he called an “optional” post-rational morality which centered on the enjoyment of goods that might flow from their material substance and appearance, – that is to say, enjoyment of goods “intellectually, pictorially, and convivially” – the stuff of “unreal” poetry and “unreal” religion (*Apologia pro Mente Sua*, 566). “Spiritual ideals” actualized in thought what the “labouring psyche” was sometimes pregnant with, namely, “top moments.” “sudden emotions”, “glimpses of [pure] essence”, “at first graphically”, later “re-exemplified in a [Proustian-like] form of beauty, containing the original essence but suffusing it with a new magic” (568).

Santayana’s hedonistic aestheticism was rooted in his idiocentric Darwinism as well – in fact, the title of his first book, *The Sense of Beauty* (1898), seems to have been drawn directly from Darwin’s frequent usage of that phrase in *The Descent of Man* (1879). Be that as it may, it occupied a semiotic space fundamentally different from Emerson’s sense of Neoplatonic Beauty that signified the Mind-Heart of a cosmic Moral Sentiment which affirmed human life’s potentiality for connatural participation in the “Natural History” of Life and Mind. Explicitly drawing on Schopenhauer and obliquely on Freud, Santayana’s “psyche” inhabited an agonistic world of “civilization and its discontents”. To the contrary, Emerson’s melioristic sense of the “conduct of life” presaged the Pragmatistic line of Peirce, and variations in James, Royce, and Dewey.

So now, back to Emerson. In remarkable words of *The Young American* (1844) Emerson went so far as to express his Transcendentalism of Nature in a kind of cosmically symbolic meliorism:

The census of the population is found to keep an invariable equality of the sexes, as if to counterbalance the necessarily increased exposure of male life in war, navigation, and other accidents. Remark the unceasing effort throughout nature at somewhat better than the actual creatures; *amelioration in nature*, which alone permits and authorizes amelioration in mankind. The population of the world is a conditional population; these are not the best, but the best that could live in the existing state of soils, gases, animals, and morals; the best that could *yet* live; there shall be better, please God.¹³

We may read these “divining” lines as importing that the “continental American” experience *symbolized* the human race’s conditional privilege of sharing in the revealing and redemptive “Mind-Heart” of cosmic amelioration. Which is to say that Emerson, in an overall trajectory expressing strengths and weaknesses, winners and losers in life’s fatal circumstances, placed evolutionarily civilized mankind as a central node of both horizontal and vertical (“contemplative”) metamorphoses of “power”. The geographical, historical, and aesthetical sites of the “American Continent” counted as polysemic metaphors for the ameliorative potencies and strivings of “Nature” – alternately, of “Over-Soul”, of “Beauty,” of the *Natura Naturans*, which “*respects genius and not talent*” and inspires mankind’s participatory responses to “Divinity and Law” in transcendental faith, hope, love, confidence, resilience, risk-taking, and innovative genius in the “American” cultural symbolic of historical existence.

As we have seen, in such a huge cultural symbolization of connatural participation in, and co-creativity with, the *genius loci* of “Nature”, Emerson wrote the *prospective script* for the emergence

13 Emerson (1983, p. 218, Emerson’s emphasis).

of the classical American Pragmatists. For his part, Santayana, though originally coming into his own in the heyday of classical American Pragmatism during the careers of Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, and others, came to make his career by rejecting Pragmatism *tout court*; he left America and settled in Mussolini's Italy where he continued to express the burdensome oddities of psyches in tropes of disaffected neutrality combined with an arsenal of cultural criticism.

Emerson depicted Man Thinking in a multiverse of One-Mindedness; Santayana's "psyche" denied the upper Intelligible air, remaining at ground level, like William James' cat in a library.

I will leave it at that. For now, the *comparative hermeneutic* question becomes whether to address their diverging worldviews in Santayana's postmodern relativistic and deflationary naturalism of the idiocentric "life of the spirit", or in Emerson's hierarchical terms of a Moral Sentiment energizing the melioristic conduct of personal life and civilization. It should contribute to the clarification of their respective worldviews to recognize they reprised competing classical paradigms. Emerson's career output was a prodigious re-symbolization of the historically vibrant and continuously revitalizing Neoplatonic paradigm, itself a synthesis of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic components, played out with closer mediations from Goethe and Schelling in respect of the civilizational prospects of the new "continental American" experience. Santayana's career text, perhaps even more consciously reenacting classical roots, conveyed a hybridized synthesis of Epicurean, Socratic-Skeptical, and Cynic worldviews.

4 Peirce's neo-plotinian transcendentalism

I will now endeavor to add Peirce to the foregoing discussion by way of reading his essential career-text on the deep, big ticket, issues. Certainly, the irreducibility of transcendentalist vs. skeptical naturalistic worldviews looms as one of the deep issues in the history of philosophy. It is perhaps *the* legacy issue at the very bottom of the sweep of classical and modern (including postmodern) worldviews. As in the classical American cases of Emerson and Santayana, the ultimately significant question for Peirce concerns *his* place in the eidetic firmament of that special *kosmos noetos* which is the entire (and ongoing) history of philosophy. Here I will approach Peirce's as having achieved such a place by virtue of sharing with, if not also going beyond, Emerson in a trans-Atlantic line of Transcendental Naturalism or Objective Idealism that has deep "legacy" affinities with the Neoplatonic tradition, which is an archetypal conceptualization of Moral Thinkingness or Meaningfulness, and one that on the wider stage of the world history of philosophy is found in Eastern cultures as well.¹⁴

For the Western tradition, I venture to suggest that Peirce has emerged as our "modern" Neoplatonist *par excellence*. From Peirce's declaration for an "extreme form of Scotistic realism" – ubiquitous in his writing from the beginning – Peirce gradually evolved an architectonic framework which blossomed in his later phase "Platonic World" cosmology of the Cambridge Lectures of 1898 and related writings.¹⁵ The full story will include his genial engagement with F. E. Abbot's *Scientific Theism* (1885) on the anti-nominalism issue, while also tracing the Neoplatonic line of "objective idealism" through provenances of Emerson and

14 Cf. R. Baines Harris (1976, p. 19), "A Brief Description of Neoplatonism". Baines traces the transmissions of Neoplatonism from early antiquity to the present; for the moderns, he takes particular note of Berkeley (*Siris*), Spencer, Wordsworth, Shelly, William Blake, Coleridge and Yeats in England, and Bergson in France. Coming to American thought: "Even though American Philosophy shows little Neoplatonic influence, it would be possible to note an affinity before Charles. S. Peirce and those of Plotinus, as William James once noted. James' own attempt to ground religious meaning on religious experience has already been accomplished by Plotinus. Whitehead, at least in the mind of this writer, gives certain intimations of a knowledge of Neoplatonism and it would be possible to regard the system that he suggests in *Process and Reality*, as a modern example of the type of system produced by Plotinus within the level of nous" (HARRIS, 1976, p. 19). Peirce articulated his type of Neoplatonism a generation before Whitehead. A subtheme below, the extreme generality of Peirce's later-phase Cosmology suggests extending Harris' description, discovering significant correlations between Peirce, Plotinus's conception of *Nous*, *Soul*, and *Nature*, and certain Eastern worldviews. – e.g., the "Mind Only" philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism.

15 In presenting Peirce's architectonic framework I am especially indebted to Ivo Ibrri (2017). See notes 15 and 36 below. For this present endeavor I also express my appreciation of Michael Raposa (1989), *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, and ongoing discussions with colleague Owen Polley.

his own father Benjamin's "ideal realism" (Charles Peirce as Aeneas carrying his father Anchises on his back), and of Henry James Sr., then especially Schelling's huge mediating role (very much indebted to Plato's *Timaeus* and Plotinus's treatise "On Nature, Contemplation, and the One" (Ennead III.8),¹⁶ and, as well again, of Peirce's recognition of the Cambridge Platonists (such as Ralph Cudworth, who led the Elizabethan reaction against the neo-Epicureanism of Gassendi and its atomistic component in the Cartesian mind/matter dichotomy) – and finally, further backward to Plotinus and "the monstrous mysticism of the East" (which I suggest refers to the "monstrous" qua metaphysical mysticism of Ammonius Saccas and the other Alexandrians who formed the milieu out of which Plotinus' thought emerged).¹⁷

Peirce gathered all these lines of thought in tandem with his career-long formulation of "the logic of scientific inquiry". His Cambridge Lectures of 1898 can be read as a consummate effort in which Peirce theorized a form "mathematical metaphysics" that merged key components of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy that in effect reenacted the same merger of Plato and Aristotle achieved by Plotinus (and captured in Raphael's genius in *The School of Athens*). I understand this homodoxical reconfiguration of Plato and Aristotle was first achieved by Plotinus, whose thought, among other things, interpollently merges the doctrines of Plato's *Republic*, *Sophist*, *Parmenides*, and *Timaeus* with Aristotle doctrine of entelic Thinkingness (*noesis noeseos*) in his *Metaphysics* and *De Anima* (III.6).

It is of course a huge merger. As suggested above, as such a heuristic reflection on how Peirce, in his own fashion, followed Plotinus' suit centuries later, I have found myself musing on Raphael's famous Renaissance painting of *The School of Athens*. Epitomizing the historical legacy of Athenian philosophy, Raphael's own Neoplatonic muse re-imagined the entire legacy of Athenian philosophical culture by way of prominently *centering* Plato (pointing upward, with his *Timaeus* under arm) and Aristotle, hand pointing horizontally (with his *Ethics* under arm), in a towering equipollence of mutually inter-saturating ontosemioses.¹⁸ Remarkably, Peirce grasped the same interpenetrating homodoxy of Plato and Aristotle in his own neo-Plotinian fashion.

I will unroll the gist of Peirce's reenactment of Raphael's remembrance of Plotinus' theoretical reenactment in an Additament to this paper. Peirce accomplishes this in the first chapters of the Cambridge Lectures of 1898 by way of correcting Plato's *noumenal* signification of the Forms in realignment with Aristotle's *essentialist* sense of reality – which was precisely the homodoxical realignment theorized in the Alexandrine synthesis.

But before unrolling this Additament, let me work with other sources, calling attention to certain poetically expressed "glimmerings" of Neoplatonism that surface in Peirce's mature years. I will argue that these glimmerings are semantically charged connotations with deep-structured associations of Neoplatonic ideas which require corresponding mythopoetic intuitions in the same register. Veritably,

16 For *Ennead* III.8, see Dillon and Gerson (2004, p. 35), and O'Brien (1975, p. 162). Substantial secondary literature on Schelling's absorption of Plotinus after 1804 appears in Beierwaltes (2010); Leinkauf (2019); Vater (1976).

17 In contrast to this "Alexandrine" interpretation, see Paul Franks, "Peirce's 'Schelling-Fashioned Idealism' and 'the Monstrous Mysticism of the East'". Franks quotes the opening paragraph of "The Law of Mind" where Peirce states his "mental biography" – having been born and reared in the neighborhood of Concord "at the time when Emerson, Hedge, and their friends were disseminating the ideas that they had caught from Schelling, and Schelling from Plotinus, from Boehm, or from God knows what minds stricken with the monstrous mysticism of the East". Franks claims that the "monstrous mysticism of the East", transmitted through Schelling, traces to "Lurianic kabbalah", which had already been publicized by Christian kabbalists such as Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont. Franks does not make any further reference to the origin of Peirce's claim as to his philosophy's continuity in Emerson, Hedge, and other Transcendentalist friends, except for a passing reference to the mathematical symbolism of the kabbalah in a speech of Peirce's father, Benjamin. He sidesteps Plotinus, and proceeds to relate "the monstrous mysticism of the East" via Boehme to the Lurianic doctrine which was "well known to European philosophers". Franks argues that Jacobi's *Letters to Mendelssohn* mentions a von Helmont; and he says Jacobi was "especially important to Schelling who was directly influenced by the Swabian Christian kabbalist, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger". He goes on to admit there are no references to the kabbalah in Charles Peirce. Parsing (or weighting) these influences becomes crucial to confirm Franks' interpretation, or to place Peirce in relation to the Alexandrine context (Ammonius Saccas et al.) out of which Plotinus emerged. The Egyptian Plotinus (205-270) was the student of Ammonius Saccas (185-250) in Alexandria for eleven years. After joining a military force that suffered defeat by the Persians in the year 244, he fled to Antioch and then went to Rome where he taught for the next twenty-six years.

18 Plato and Aristotle are centered together and tower over the other representatives of Athenian philosophy in Raphael's painting. See the places Raphael assigns to Socrates, Democritus, Epicurus, Dionysius the Cynic, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Euclid, Ptolemy, and others. It is a hologram of the history of philosophy tout court.

there is that onto-poetical side of Peirce – an “Emersonian” and “Schellingian” side – not always captured in standard exegesis of his texts.¹⁹

Proceeding backward from to the very end of his career text, let me first call attention to such an onto-poetical resonance in the charming phrase “the smile upon beauty” which Peirce penned (whether spontaneously out of a pool of unconscious association of ideas or the result of conscious invention) in his “An Essay toward Reasoning in Security and Uberty” (1913). Just before he died of cancer in 1913, Peirce wrote several manuscript versions of this final philosophical testament which insisted on his having departed from his early Pragmatism in his later career’s Pragmatism’s prioritization of the uberous (“pregnant with new birth”) intentionality of abductive/retroductive reasoning in the logic of inquiry. The key words of this final reflection are: “the [former] maxim of Pragmatism does not bestow a single smile upon beauty, upon moral virtue, or upon abstract truth; – the three things [e.g., his three inexhaustible entelic ideals of Normative Science] that alone raise Humanity above Animality.”²⁰

I venture to take Peirce’s words as purporting a sense-governing effect. They are precise *mot justes* concerning the three controlling “Idea-potentialities” that “*alone raise Humanity above Animality*”. All three of course are Emersonian “transcendentals” (Beauty, Goodness, and Truth) with deeper legacy associations in the history of philosophy. Peirce’s enigmatic “smile upon beauty” especially teases the reader’s imagination and understanding.

So let me muse a little here. I personally think of Peirce’s “smile upon beauty” in association with Goethe’s famous ending lines of *Faust, Part Two* which features an allusion to *Das Ewige-weibliche* (The Eternal Feminine) that “draws us on” (*Zeiht uns hinan*).²¹ The last lines of *Faust, Part Two*, gain in consummate significance when seen in antithesis to Mephistophiles’s intention to drag everything down into Eternal Emptiness (*die Ewige Leere*).²² As far as I know, commentators have not realized the heuristic potential of this arguably Neoplatonic resonance between Goethe and Peirce.²³

This of course is only my personal “association of ideas” or “remembrance” of my poetic imagination – and a stretch at that. It is certainly not to assert that the dying Peirce had Goethe in mind in penning his wonderful phrase “the smile upon beauty”. It is rather to suggest the necessity of approaching Peirce’s mythopoetic power of “musement” that occasionally surfaces in his text, and may remain out of reach of straight-laced analytical exegesis. Peirce’s text does sometimes semantically blossom in “sudden rightnesses” (in the apt phrase of Wallace Stevens) of poetic insight. The sometimes notoriously (and aptly) apophatic “vagueness” of Peirce’s text is on a par with those of Plato, Plotinus, mystical writers of East and West, and pointedly of Schelling and Emerson. Cusanus’ late medieval version of Neoplatonic

19 Here once again recognition of the work of Ivo Ibrí is in order. Ibrí has led recent Peirce studies *par excellence* in insisting on approaching Peirce’s thought in a Schellingian poetical trajectory. See Nathan Hauser, *Ibrí’s Peirce: Poetry and Play in the Life of the Mind* (p. 33-47), and Doug Anderson, *Thinking Poetically with Peirce* (p. 59-66), in Ibrí *Sementes de Pragmatismo* (2018).

20 EP2:465.

21 *Faust, Part Two*, final lines, 12104-12109:

Alles Vergängliche,
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird’s Ereignis;
Das Unbeschriebliche,
Hier ist’s getan;
Das Ewig-weibliche,
Zieht uns hinan.

All that must disappear
Is but a parable,
What is beyond us, here
All is made visible;
Here deeds have understood
Words they were darkened by;
Eternal Womanhood
Draws us on high. (trans. David Luke).

22 Lines 11595-11160.

23 In the three drafts of *The Ages of the World* (1811-1813) Schelling rendered stunning theoretical variations on Goethe’s Eternal Feminine; speculation on Peirce’s awareness of it would require knowledge of the timelines of Schelling’s publications (Schelling wrote up to 20 versions, but never published, the first draft, which is arguably the most stunning).

“learned ignorance” may be cited as another example. Contrary to the run of professionalized academic practices, the great texts of philosophy are great in virtue of *balancing* cataphic denotations and silencing apophatic connotations.

So now indulging my imaginative association a bit further, I venture to cite here the “Neoplatonic” poet Wallace Stevens, whose soliloquizing “Muse” inscribes another variation on Goethe’s “Eternal Feminine” and Peirce’s “smile upon beauty”.

The Woman in Sunshine
It is only that this warmth and movement are like
The warmth and movement of a woman,
It is not that there is any image in the air
Nor the beginning and end of a form:
It is empty. But a woman in threadless gold
Burns us with brushings of her dress
And a disassociated abundance of being,
More definite for what she is –
Because she is disembodied,
Bearing the odors of the summer fields.
Confessing the taciturn and yet indifferent,
Invisibly clear, the only love.²⁴

For my mind, Stevens’ poem exhibits Platonic, Plotinian, Goethean, Emersonian, and Peircean onto-poetics in a nutshell. (And not to forget *Amaterasu-o-mi-kami*, the *Ur-Sun-goddess* in Japan’s national mythology). Something spiritual, transcendental, religious, is going on here. *Disembodied invisibly clear abundance of being*, “*the only love*”.

And here is my “scholarly” point concerning these metaphoric convergences. Analogizing in the spirit of Goethe’s and Wallace Stevens’s onto-poetic signifiers, Peirce’s words “smile upon beauty” in consequence of uberously “divining” *thought-musement* can be understood as a residuum of transcendently rich *inspiration and aspiration* that does occasionally break through the surface in his text. Methodologically speaking, adherence to straight-laced (or water-tight) “scholastic” exegesis of Peirce’s sometimes mythopoetic moments will fall short of fathoming his text’s profounder “legacy” resonances. After all, indulging in “supreme fictions” of the imagination’s deep glimmerings of “ideal reality” is just to exercise Peirce’s sense of the uberous (“pregnant with new birth”) semiosis of retroductive intuition. (Semiotic inklings of metaphysical meanings that do not last, and may not be for everyone).²⁵

24 Stevens, 1954, 445. In a separate study I will show that Stevens inscribes the irradiating luminosity of the Sun as his central (Neoplatonic) symbol of his poetic imagination of a transcendental Reality.

25 See Jason Wirth (2000), “Translator’s Introduction” to Schelling’s *The Ages of World* (third version, c. 1815), x-xi. Wirth (2000, p. 61) cites Schelling’s text: “Whoever has to some extent exercised their eye for the spiritual contemplation of natural things knows that a spiritual image, whose mere vessel (medium of appearance) is the coarse and ponderable, is actually what is living *within* the coarse and the ponderable. The purer that this image is, the healthier the whole is. This incomprehensible but not imperceptible being, always ready to overflow and yet always held again, and *which alone grants to all things the full charm, gleam, and glint of life*, is that which at the same time the most manifest and most concealed.” [my emphases] Wirth comments: “Schelling develops this in his 1807 address *On the Relationship of the Fine Arts to Nature*. He speaks of “the spiritual eye” that feels the sublime (freedom) insofar as it has intimated itself within form. This is not the gaze of the theoretical which remains on the surface reducing it to rule-bound appearance. It rather intimates the unprethinkable (*unvordenklich*) future in a thing, that is, its “creating life” in its “power to exist”. However, the spiritual eye glimpses the sublimity of freedom only through the proxy of the beautiful. There is no direct access to the sublime. The aesthetic intuition (the spiritual eye) senses the sublime in “the pain of form” as the artist “seals the power of fire, the lightning of light, in hard stone and the fair souls of tone in strict timbre”. Only through the completion of form can the form be annihilated. Reaching “the highest beauty without character”, the spiritual eye feels the soul’s grace in the body. The “body is the form and grace [*Anmut*] of the soul, although not the soul in itself, but the soul of form, that is, the soul of nature [*die Naturseele*]”. Art emerges in the suspension of the ego’s hegemony. The theoretical eye is always a form of egoism striving to find the truth and the good in apparent forms (Realism); the spiritual eye affirms the advent of divine fecundity within the grace and beauty of things. “This grace is a prodigality that does not hold the future in reserve, but rather releases it to the non-prec calculable advent of freedom’s grace.” Here – let me suggest – Schelling’s (and Wirth’s) articulation of the unprethinkable future in the grace and beauty of things is provenance for Peirce’s semiosis of Thirdness’s modality of the Platonic generality in “reasoning and the logic of things” Peirce spells out in the Cambridge Conference Lectures of 1898 and elsewhere. Schelling’s provenance traces to the philosophical writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Peirce, and the naturalist writings Teilhard de Chardin, Michael Polanyi, Loren Eiseley, Simon Conway Morris.

Be that as it may, allow me to muse on in an imaginative spirit. Another instantiation of arguably Plotinian-and-Emersonian thinking-sensibility appears in Peirce's "The Neglect Argument for the Reality of God" (1909). In the rich opening segment of this essay on the presence-in-absence of divine reality (on which Peirce devoted three months to write), Peirce recommends that "off-hours" in "contemplative musement" on any two of the "three universes" will yield dividends of Transcendentalist consciousness: "Enter your skiff of Musement, push off into the lake of thought, and leave the breath of heaven to swell your sail. With your eyes open, awake to what is about or within you, and open conversation with yourself; for such is all meditation."²⁶

"Push[ing] off into the lake of *Thought*" (here my capitalization) and "leaving the breath of *Heaven* (here also capitalized) to swell your sail" certainly gains in semantical strength as resonating Plotinian and Emersonian semiosis.²⁷ Among other things, they resonate with Emerson's teaching of "awakening" to "what is about you or within you" in "reception" of the divine Beauty in Nature.²⁸ But again, "*Heaven's*" filling the sails of our little skiff of "musement" arguably conveys the nuance of *Nous*, i. e., of Plotinus' Thinking Mind of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth, the very "*kosmos noetos*" (in Plotinus' own words) *perfuming* (in Plotinus's own word) or *perfusing* (in Peirce's word) the orders of Intelligible Being and the connatural aspirations of the "contemplative" (not the calculative) human mind. In Plotinus, all of Mind, Soul, and Nature "muses," or "theorizes" – that is, is receptively and actively "contemplative" – in a *kosmos* of pure *noesis* (antecedent to Peirce's "one intelligible theory of the universe"). The Christian Neoplatonic mystical and theological traditions (Eruigena, Augustine, Bonaventure, Cusanus, Eckhart, et al.) merged Plotinus' sense of the One "beyond" *Noesis noeseos*, Soul, and Nature in theological versions of transcendent and immanent presence of the "Divine Mind" – a veritable "theoretical" mainstream tradition conveyed further in Schelling (and others) that prioritized a metaphysics of Personality, Soul, and Becoming experienced in the revealing and redeeming "portals" of Nature (e.g., as conspicuously in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* carrying forward the legacy tradition of *Natura naturans Natura naturata* reprised by Emerson and Peirce in versions of cataphatic and apophatic signifiers).

While this is already a mouthful, let me imaginatively probe on again. We may also trace Peirce's "smile upon beauty" and "heavenly" musement to his 1890s *Monist* essays that culminated in his metaphysical reprisal of the "Sentimentalism" of the ontological gospeler whose synechistic doctrine of Agapism Peirce theoretically and metaphorically (mythopoetically) prioritized over the degenerate evolutionary forms of Tychasm and Anachasm. In the same paragraph Peirce cites St. John's metaphor, "God is light and in him there is no darkness". The perfusion of light metaphor also functions as the central image of *Nous*'s "irradiations" in Soul and Life, as we will shortly see in the terms of Plotinus's concept of *perilampusis*. Light and Love are intertwined in Peirce's strands of ontological and theosemiotic Agapism that in fact traces back through various Christian Neoplatonic and Schellingian tenets of an "inner Mind-Heart" of Reality, and Peirce's concomitant rejection of theories of "self-love", as found in the epistemic, ethical, and other kinds of nominalistic theories of "proud and ignorant" human

26 EP2: 437.

27 Directly following this paragraph Peirce characterized "some semi-psychological ideas of the Darwinians" in the terms: "Darwinians, with truly surprising ingenuity, have concocted, and with still more astonishing confidence have accepted as proved, one explanation for the diverse and delicate beauties of flowers, and another for those butterflies, and so on; but why is all nature, – the forms of trees, the compositions of sunsets, – suffused with such beauties throughout, – and not nature only, but the other two [triadic] Universes as well?" (EP2: 438).

28 Peirce's metaphor of "pushing off on the skiff of Musement" has a nice precedent in Emerson: "My house stands on low land, with limited outlook, and on the skirt of the village. But I go with my friend to the shore of our little river, and with one stroke of the paddle, I leave the village politics and personalities, yes, and the world of villages and personalities behind, and pass into a delicate realm of sunset and moonlight, too bright almost for spotted man to enter without novitiate and probation. We penetrate bodily this incredible beauty; we dip our hands in this painted element; our eyes are bathed in these lights and forms. A holiday, a villeggiatura, a royal revel, the proudest, most heart-rejoicing festival that valor and beauty, power and taste, ever decked and enjoyed, establishes itself on the instant. These sunset clouds, these delicately emerging stars, with their private and ineffable glances, signify it and proffer it. I am taught the poorness of our invention, the ugliness of towns and palaces. Art and luxury have early learned that they must work as enhancement and sequel to this original beauty." Emerson (1844, *E&L*, p. 543).

voluntarism.²⁹ Peirce's later "poetic words" on the "smile upon beauty" and "heaven's" swelling the sails of "musement" are later expressions of his neo-Plotinian Agapism.

And turning now to another centerpiece of Peirce's later phase Pragmatistic writings, another "glimmering" instance of metaphoric narration where a structural (baked-in) Neoplatonism can be recognized as underpinning his text's recursive semiosis. It appears in a passage that postulates a *symbolical* universe that is "perfused with signs":

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.³⁰

Once again, I should think this often cited passage gains in significance when we ask, *What, ultimately, are these signs?* Surely not just sign-transferences in the empirical webs of external nature or utilitarian human exchanges. When all the concomitant signifiers of his Transcendentalist cosmology are taken into account, the "universe perfused with signs" surely connotes the "Heaven" of *Kosmos Noetos* – namely, the *Idea-signs of the Intelligible World*. "Perfusion" is such a loaded "divining" word.

Accordingly, I submit, it will be entirely germane to consider that Peirce's symbolical universe has a key precedent in Emerson's *The Poet* (1843) where he declares:

But the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. The poet did not stop to see color, or the form, but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects the exponents of his new thought. Here is the difference betwixt the poet and the mystic, that the last nails a symbol to one sense, which was a true sense for a moment, but soon becomes old and false. For all symbols are fluxional: all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses, for homestead.³¹

We will see likeminded Emersonian connotations in Peirce's Cambridge Lectures.

Here I would also venture to relate Peirce's "universe perfused with signs" that "divine" the energetic inter-activity of a symbolic universe to the terms of Plotinus' processional and entelic penetration of *Nous*, the *Kosmos Noetos* locus of the Platonic Ideas into Soul and Life and their further perfusion/diffusion via the agency of the World-Soul into the moving formations of Nature down to its final substrate in pure Aristotelian potentiality. Self-activation of lower souls in "contemplation" of the supremely lucent Forms keys Plotinus's concept of *perilampsis*, the "irradiation" of the *Nous*, in Soul, in its "elder sister" World-Soul, and in Nature. The irradiations of *Nous* are the "Idea-signs" of an eidetic universe causative of incessant incipency of Becoming "down" and "up" the "emanational" architectonic. Such, arguably, are also Peirce's cosmological *signs* of symbolical *Idea-generality*, as we will glean from the final pages of his Cambridge Lectures.³²

29 See for example "Man's' Glassy Essence" in "Some Incapacities"; the ending paragraphs of "Grounds for Validity of Logic"; and denunciation of the theory of self-love in "Synechism and Immortality". In the above I am again mindful of and indebted to Michael Raposa's important work *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*.

30 EP2: 394.

31 Emerson (1983, E&L, p. 463). We might note here that Santayana's skeptical doctrine of "the ideality of data" and "spirituality of essences" cannot render such onto-poetically symbolical universe; his data and essences are inefficaciously inert, biologically idle, dead in the water.

32 Parenthetically let me suggest here that this Neoplatonic epistemology of onto-poetic symbolism appears to fit the Emersonian and Peircean poet Wallace Stevens's work (and perhaps that of Rilke's later poetry as well).

Now in a related writing of 1903 Peirce articulated his symbolical cosmology of irradiating, interpenetrative sign-transmissions in respect of an ultimate *hyper-esthetic* normative Ideal of Reason:

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 that 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.³³

Here too we may hear resonances of the very perfusive and pervasive *Nous* of Plotinus.

We know that Peirce grappled with this super-“esthetic” admirability of Reason from an early influence of Friedrich von Schiller. In his later MS 310 (1903) he upgraded esthetic to hyper-esthetic normativity in remarks where he avers he was not satisfied with the English *Beauty*, preferring the riches nuance of the French *Beauté*, which, however, still fell short of his effort to speak of the sublime Admirableness of the Creation *per se*. Peirce goes on to *muse* in a fairy-dream as to the super-esthetic Admirability of Creation:

It must be a dream of extreme variety and must seem to embrace an eventful history extending through millions of years. It shall be a drama in which numberless living caprices shall jostle and work themselves out in larger and stronger harmonies and antagonisms, and ultimately execute intelligent reasonablenesses of existence more and more intellectually stupendous and bring forth new designs still more admirable and prolific.³⁴

Once more, in this sublime regard my poor and paltry analogizing instinct refers me once again to Plotinus’s Supreme Hypostasis of the One that is “all things but not a single one of them,” that is, glorious source of the internal irradiations of *Nous*, and of *Nous*’s irradiations in Soul, and Soul’s irradiation in Nature. The One does not *have* Unity; it is of a totally different, inexpressible order. As in *Ennead* III.8, Plotinus calls the One the Beautiful in a certain extrinsic denomination: The One throws Beauty “like a garment” over the instantiations of Intelligible Forms of Being, Soul, World-Soul, and Nature (*Ennead* I.1.9). Beauty and Goodness (the latter of which in Plato’s *Republic* mysteriously transcends the other Forms “in dignity in power”) are *super-esthetic* rather than mundanely aesthetic as they throw a “glow” on all they produce and inspire. The One as *Nous* is this creative Firstness of “glow power” – the “smile upon of beauty” and of melioristic goodness – shining like the Sun on all the interpenetrating unities in a “universe perfused with signs”.

³³ EP2: 254-255.

³⁴ A fairy-dream on the way to the Cambridge Lectures of 1898.

As poorly, I presume to relate this mythopoesis to what I call Peirce’s *Life in the “First” lane*. Emersonian poets such as Wallace Stevens often write in a “glowing” (or “glowing ember”) language. But we may see it even in Stevens’ decidedly “naturalist” friend William Carlos Williams whose signature poem “The Red Wheelbarrow” is a cascade of scintillating quale-signs [perhaps distantly reminiscent of Goethe’s waterfall image: “*Am fabrigen Abglanz haben wir das Leben*” (*Faust, Part Two*, line):

so much depends
 upon
 a red wheel
 barrow
 glazed with rain
 water
 besides the white
 chickens.

Peirce’s neo-Plotinian Transcendentalism writes the philosophical script for any such “appearance” of pure quale-sensibility. To take another example, even in Hume’s classic of naturalistic moral theory, *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), “There is”, writes Hume (in arguably supra-esthetic words), “a MANNER, a grace, a genteelness, an I-know-not-what, which some men possess above others, and which is very different from external beauty and comeliness, and which, however, catches our affection almost as suddenly and powerfully.”³⁵ Friedrich von Schelling featured a like kind of “graceful” quality of personality in his moral classic *On Dignity and Grace*, his polemic against Kant’s rationalistic moral theory.³⁶

And now reminiscing these I-know-not-what qualities back to the metaphysical architectonics of Plotinus and Peirce. In *Ennead* VI.7.12.23-30 Plotinus declares: “All flows, so to speak, from one fount not to be thought of as some one breath or warmth, but rather as one quality englobing and safeguarding all qualities – sweetness with fragrance, wine-quality, and the savours of everything that may be tasted, all colours seen, everything known to touch, all that ear may hear, all melodies, every rhythm” (MacKenna’s translation). Plotinus’ words shed light on Peirce’s metaphor of the presence-in-absence of “the Platonic World” in his Cambridge Lecture’s stunning metaphor of the *ur*-pristine immediacy of feelings:

Those sense qualities that we now experience – colors, sounds, odors, feelings of every description, loves, grief, surprises, – are but the relics of an ancient ruined continuum of qualities, like a few columns standing here and there in testimony of some old-world forum with its basilica and temples that once made a magnificent ensemble [There are corresponding passages in Emerson].³⁷

Plotinus, in a second passage in the same context, is more explicitly “glowing” with regard to the pristine irradiation (*perilampsis*) of sense qualities in *Nous*: “[*Nous*] may be likened to a living sphere teeming with variety, to a globe of faces radiant with faces all living, to a unity of souls, all the pure souls, not the faulty but the perfect, with Intellect enthroned over all so that the place entire glows with intellectual splendour.”³⁸

35 Hume, 1998, 143.

36 Schiller, 1992. Friedrich von Schiller wrote this treatise on *moral beauty of character* before his *Aesthetic Letters* of 1795, the work Peirce cited as most influential on his sense of (supra-) aesthetic normativity. Hegel remarked that this mysterious quality of “grace” is especially embodied in the female characters of Schiller’s historical dramas. Schelling upgraded it as a kind of feminine interiority of divinity in the first draft of his *The Ages of the World* (1811).

37 CP 6.197.

38 *Ennead* VI.7.15.24-30. Cf. “The sun, There [*Nous*], is all the stars; and every star, again is all the stars and sun. While some one manner of being is dominant in each, all are mirrored in each other” (V.8.4.9-11) [These last three citations of *Enneads* from Wallis (1976, p. 123-125)]. They and many other places in the *Enneads* are so many *kosmos noetos* precedents to Shelley’s beautiful “The Splendours of the Firmament”. (And they

Now back to Peirce. In another writing of his mature phase, Peirce can be understood to render the same Platonic (ultimately Neoplatonic) and Schellingian tenet of energetic “Idea-potentiality” as, for example, when he declares: “[...] 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” (EP2:343). The Platonic Ideas are efficacious potencies, Aristotle’s formal, efficient, and final causes in one supra-eminent package.

And again in this same time-frame Peirce averred that the Universe is God’s “great poem” – a passage, incidentally, that we can read as certifying the ontological basis of his occasional glimmerings of Transcendentalist mythopoetic metaphors:

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 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 premises.³⁹

A year later, in 1904, he wrote of the Symbolic Entelechy of Reality: “[...] 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” (EP2: 322-324).

As well, in 1906, several years after delivering his Cambridge Lectures at the invitation of William James, Peirce postulated that the world’s sign-languages are not just imaginary, “not just a mere exercise of a World-spirit’s *Spieltrieb*”; rather, ideas “grow in this process [...] a part, perhaps the chief part, of the process of Creation of the World” (EP2: 388).

In sum, all these variations of Peirce’s “universe perfused with signs” – that is to say, with Platonic Ideas – gain in significance as forerunners of his later expressions of Neoplatonic “Musement” and the hyper-esthetic normativity of “the smile upon beauty”.⁴⁰

sound like the *dharmadatu* doctrine of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* too).

*The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love, and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.*

39 EP2: 193-94.

40 Cf. other expressions of Peirce on Nature’s mind, Human mind, and God’s mind: “All knowledge comes to us by observation, part of it forced upon us from without from Nature’s mind and part of it from the depths of that inward aspect of mind, which we egotistically call ours, though in truth it is we who float upon its surface and belong to it more than it belongs to us. Nor can we affirm that the inwardly seen mind is altogether independent of the outward mind which is its Creator” (CP 7.558). “Pragmaticism makes thinking to consist in the living inferential metaboly of symbols whose purport lies in conditional general resolutions to act. As for the ultimate purpose of thought, which must be the purpose of everything, it is beyond comprehension; but according to the stage of approach which my thought has made of it [...] it is by the indefinite replication of self-control upon self-control that the *vir* is begotten, and by action through thought, he grows an esthetical ideal, not for the behoof of his own poor noodle merely, but as the share which God permits him to have in the work of creation” (CP 5. 402, n.3).

And finally, readers of Peirce's career text will inevitably trace these occasional "glimmerings" of a deep-structured mythopoetic Neoplatonic semantics in Peirce's maturing "scientific" – that is to say, "theoretical" and "sentimentalist" – cosmology of "the Platonic World" inscribed in his 1898 Cambridge Lectures. Brushing aside all hesitant nominalistic interpretations of Peirce, these lectures are spectacularly significant expressions of Peirce's *kosmos noetos*, deeply drawing (consciously and unconsciously) on the legacy of Plato's *Timaeus* and premodern and medieval modern vectors of Neoplatonism.

5 Additament: Peirce's alexandrine homologization of Plato and Aristotle in the Cambridge Conference Lectures of 1898

I will now endeavor further to unfold the gist of Peirce's version of a cosmogonic Neoplatonism in the following brief account. I take my cue from the famous painting of the Renaissance artist Raphael, *The School of Athens*, a masterpiece of Renaissance Neoplatonic humanism. It features Plato and Aristotle as the central figures while placing an array of lesser philosophers in subordinate positions, some on Plato's, some on Aristotle's side. Some of these lesser figures have been identified, but the key focus of the Vatican fresco lays its placing Plato and Aristotle *on equal standing under the central archway*, in effect *merging* their philosophical worldviews in an equipollent, interpenetrative, homodoxical synthesis that was in fact the distinctive stamp of the "Alexandrine" trajectory of Ammonias Saccas, Plotinus, and his school.⁴¹ In this fresco Raphael seems to be Plotinus with a paint brush! My suggestion here is that Peirce like-mindedly "cashed in" a modern version of this Alexandrine Neoplatonic configuration in the sustained coenosoptic and kaino-pythagorean speculation of the Cambridge Conference Lectures of 1898. The Cambridge Lectures turn out to be an ontosemiosis of "conceivable" Pragmatistic updrafts, extending the hermeneutic "legacy" of Neoplatonism in the late 19th-century *Zeitgeist* of classical American philosophy – affine versions of which appear in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emerson, Charles's father Benjamin Peirce, his contemporary Francis Ellingwood Abbot, and William James, BUT NOT available in the reductive "naturalistic" line of his contemporary Santayana, nor even in Dewey's "emergent naturalism", not to mention all sorts of more extreme nominalistic semiotic and biosemiotic as well as materialistic, skeptical, ironic, and Cynical "postmodern" points of departure.⁴²

Peirce's neo-Neoplatonic ontosemiosis expressed in the Cambridge Lectures of 1898 can just as well be called a neo-Aristotelian ontosemiosis for its *realistic* stress on the inexhaustible "potencies" of the Platonic World – the precedent for such a neo-Aristotelian semiosis tracing back to the cosmogenesis doctrine of Plato's *Timaeus*. I propose to feature Peirce's ontosemiotic merger (or homologization) of

41 Further to appreciating Raphael's Neoplatonic humanism, the ceiling of the room of the Segnatura juxtaposes the four faculties of spirit: Philosophy, Theology, Poetry, and Justice, all captured by female allegories. The whole room is *the theory of life* in the *kosmos noetos*: looking backwards, frescoes which encapsulate the grandest achievements of the West – of the human heart and spirit and intellect – up to the days of Raphael; thinking forward, *in futuro* prospects of the *general* Mind of the Universe to be manifested in humanity's realizations of higher civilization (FEGHELM, 2004, p. 77-85).

42 It would be another project to understand the various characterizations of the subordinate figures in Raphael's *The School of Athens* as portraying, via Raphael's "graphic instinct", the variety of forms of philosophical paradigms in the history of philosophy, including the traditions of American philosophy and contemporary scholasticisms. For the purposes of this present project, see Jean A. Potter (1976). The Schelling-Emerson-Peirce line has a distinct "mainstream" provenance in the transmission of the "Eastern" as distinguished from "Western" line of Neoplatonism. The two transmissions of Christian Neoplatonic thought derived from the blend of Hebraic religious thought and Platonic philosophy initiated in Alexandria, the center of Hellenistic culture, first in Philo (c. 25-c.50), later by the Christian apologists, Clement (d.c.215) and Origen (c.184-c.254) – both drawing on the purely philosophical architectonic of Plotinus, a contemporary of Origen. The Alexandrian "Eastern" tradition carried on through such authors as Gregory Nazienzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, to John Scotus Eruigena, and arguably at least partially to Nicolas of Cusa, who has been called the last of the medievals and the first of the moderns. The "Western" line of Neoplatonism was authoritatively launched by St. Augustine, whose thought centered on a more cataphatic theory of creation and salvation in terms of a binary of "grace" and "nature" – Augustine's influence carried on in medieval Christian orthodoxy by such representative figures as Anselm and Bonaventure, even in Aquinas (and of course many others). While the two traditions intersected in various respects – as exemplified in the writings of Augustine and Eruigena – Eruigena's *Periphuseon* leaned decidedly "Eastward," a precedent to the *Natura natura Natura naturata* theoretical speculations in such authors as Spinoza, Leibniz, Schelling, Emerson, and Peirce – speculations which veer away from orthodox theological dogmatics while fashioning "modern" (post-medieval) blendings of cataphatic and apophatic architectonics of Neoplatonic semiosis.

Plato and Aristotle by rehearsing an abundance of direct citations of his text – so stunning for their singularity in the history of philosophy – while underlining their structural trajectory. An interest in hermeneutic conciseness must be the order of the day, though opening portals of expanded studies. In passing, wonderful glints, gleams, and glimmerings of Plotinian and Schellingian (especially from his 1809 *Freiheitschrift* and 1811-1815 *Die Weltalter* speculations), and corresponding strains of Emersonian “musement” on the “Moral Sentiment” in “Nature”, may be found to *converge, pervade, and lace together* the articulations of the Cambridge Conference Lectures.⁴³

In Lecture One, *Philosophy and the Conduct of Life* [Item 4 in *The Essential Peirce* vol. 2], it immediately becomes apparent that the background correspondence between Peirce and James in regard to James’s invitation and expectations of Peirce’s Harvard Conferences Lectures comes to life.⁴⁴ Peirce chose to begin by contrasting the paradigm of “the Hellenic sage” as a kind of “virtue signaling” epistemic model of the conduct of life (that conflates philosophical theory with ethical practice – as in Socratic “knowledge is virtue”, and, I might add parenthetically, taken to a culture-canceling extreme by the Cynics who traced their lineage back to Socrates) – with his own allegiance to Aristotle, a “scientific man”. The latter entails the epistemic stance of “laboratory-mindedness” in contrast to that of a *priori* “seminar-mindedness” – a topic resumed in Lecture Four, *The First Rule of Logic*, which contrasts James’s *The Will to Believe* with Peirce’s grand epistemic dictum, *The Will to Learn*.

We learn that Peirce’s “Aristotelian” bottom line paradigm of *creative learning* is itself of a classical stamp, as he goes on to merge “Aristotle” with “Plato” in an neo-Plotinian reconfiguration of an essentialist (as distinguished from noumenal) cosmology of the universe’s manifestations, or embodiments, of “energetic reasonableness” – along the same interpretive line of the artist Raphael’s suggestion as to the equipollence of Plato and Aristotle (and subordination of the moralizing Socrates) achieved in the work of the Alexandrians (Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, et al.).⁴⁵

Ab initio Peirce argues positively *ala* Aristotle for the “Conservatism of Sentimentalism” in matters of “Vital Importance”, namely of resilient sentiments which have slowly percolated in the millennial evolution of instincts, including agapistic in contrast to the “egotistical” instincts of self-willed individuals who exaggerate the importance of their own ratiocination in the conduct of life. “It is the instincts, the sentiments”, Peirce declares, “that make the substance of the soul. Cognition is only its surface, the locus of contact with what is external to it.” Self-willed “beliefs”, or psychologized “opinions”, have no long-range evolutionary depth, and no place in authentic “science” either. Idiocentric “beliefs” are what you are prepared to act upon here and now, but “[P]ure science has nothing at all to do with *action*”. Not just surface cognition, but *human intelligence* (Thirdness) is a power that raises animal instinct onto a higher plane of *soulful theoretical vitality*. He inscribed that sense of intellectual energy into his later-phase essays on Pragmaticism.⁴⁶ “Action”, on the other hand, is psychological, and worse, inevitably politicized.

Lecture Three, *The Logic of Relatives*, resumes this creative “Aristotelian” trajectory of *resilient teleology* of nature’s connatural semiosis in asserting – again contra James – one of his crucial, bottom line teachings, namely that *the logic of things* is independent of psychology. Here and in later passages

43 Charles Sanders Peirce, *Reasoning and the Logic of Things* (1898), ed. by Kenneth Laine (1881). Peirce’s Cambridge Lectures should be recognized as reflecting the powerful influence of his recently deceased father Benjamin’s *Ideality in the Physical Sciences* (1881). See Murphey (1961), Raposa (1989), and the work of Owen Polley (forthcoming).

44 See Ketner (1992) for an extended report on the James-Peirce correspondences before the Cambridge Conference Lectures.

45 For the provenance of Ammonius Saccas and the new Hellenic wave of homodoxy of Plato and Aristotle, see J. N. Findlay, *The Neoplatonism of Plato*, and A. Hilary Armstrong, *The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and the Cosmos*, both articles appearing in Harris (1976). These writers also confirm Peirce’s earlier apprehension, or original intuition, of this kind of Alexandrine “homodoxy” or homologization centering around Plato’s revision of his earlier doctrine of Ideas into a metaphysics of mathematics, as reported by Aristotle.

46 “The two great tasks of humanity – Theory and Practice” (EP2:304). Here we may see that this initial declaration of the Cambridge Lectures also resonates with Emerson’s methodic postulate of the difference between “transparent eyeball” or “intuitional” contemplation (“musement”) on the one hand, and of “tuitional,” or fact-empirical, calculative reasoning on the other. Later, however, we should note that both Emerson and Peirce subscribed to Plotinus’s theory that, in equipollent degrees and dimensions, all “actions” of higher Soul and lower souls are “sign-contemplative” in the grand synechistic scheme of the Mind-Creation.

he aligns Philosophy with Mathematics, Metaphysics, and Logic, excluding existentialistic Ethics and empirical Psychology, and what is called “Literary Psychology” (as in Santayana’s signature phrase and in the various contemporary nominalistic versions of postmodern “Lit Crit”) – for reasons finally clarified by the grand ontosemiosis of Lecture Eight on the human mind’s capacity for participation in the universe’s evolutionary *mathesis* of symbolic generality.

In this initial context of the Cambridge Lectures Peirce inscribes a short form of his 1893 classification of the “heuristic” (truth-discovering) sciences (mathematics, coenoscopic philosophy, the special sciences, with an additional animadversion that the “tendency” in the sciences is that of the more concrete sciences “growing” into more abstract sciences, all ideally “converging” into Mathematics in the theorematic *mathesis* of pure generalization in regard to the continuum of the “Platonic World” (Lecture Eight, *The Logic of Continuity*).⁴⁷ This theorematic sense of the evolutionary coalescence of anthropomorphic and cosmomorphic *intelligibility* – alternately expressed, “theory” of creative connaturality in the form of fallibilistic “metaphysical empiricism” – reprises Peirce’s line of “Schelling-fashioned” Objective Idealism articulated in *The Architecture of Theories* (1891). Such a creative “relationity” (Thirdness) realized in the eidetic sciences, Peirce declares, refutes the (skeptical and materialistic) sense of a “boundless void of arbitrariness in the nature of things”.⁴⁸

As already noted, the original provenance of this line of eidetic cosmogenesis traces back to the ontosemiotic symbolism of Plato’s *Timaeus* where Plato transformed his earlier doctrine of statically “existing” qualitative Forms into mathematical potentials of entelic realization. The Divine Craftsman (Demiurge) “looks to” the essentially mathematical Forms to create harmonies in the unruly world of matter. The *Timaeus* thus presaged Aristotle’s correction of early Plato and, historically speaking, initiated the interpretive vector carried over by the Alexandrian Neoplatonists and by Peirce’s neo-Alexandrine synthesis.⁴⁹

47 Peirce, *An Outline Classification of the Sciences* (1903) (chapter five in *The Philosophy of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler, Dover; chapter 18 in EP2: 258-62; see also *Reasoning and the Logic of Things*, Cambridge Lectures (1898), chapter one, *Philosophy and the Conduct of Life*, p. 116-120). See Albert Atkin of the University of Sheffield, UK, <https://iep.utm.edu/peircear/#SH3c> (no date). In a substantial study, Alessando Topa (2020) has outlined Peirce’s parallel construction of semeiotic causality in rhetoric’s form of specicultural instinct in the practical sciences.

48 Francis Ellingwood Abbot’s contemporary *Scientific Theism* published in 1885 but going back to initial drafts of the 1860s, should be taken into account – as Peirce generously acknowledged on several occasions – as an independent refutation of nominalist/phenomenalist and skeptical materialist accounts of scientific inquiry in favor of an eidetic/Platonic world of what he called noumenist realism. Elsewhere I have alluded to the probable influence of Benjamin Peirce’s “idealism-realism” on both “next gen” Aristotelian Platonists, his son Charles and Francis Ellingwood Abbot. (Abbot was a sometimes member of Peirce and James’ Metaphysical Club of 18). See Polley (2022).

49 Peirce’s three categories in which Thirdness conjoins – conjugates, copulates, mediates – Firstness and Secondness comes close to Hegel’s sublational logic of thesis, antithesis, synthesis (as Peirce acknowledged). But following Schelling’s critique of Hegel’s sublational dialectic which achieves an internally complete synthesis in Absolute Consciousness (*Geist*), Peirce contended that Firstness and Secondness are not *aufgehoben*, not sublated, in Hegel’s sense. He assigns Hegelian dialectic to the logical form of ananchism, or deterministic set of internally discursive progression and culmination of abstract concepts (as in Hegel’s and Royce’s “absolute self-knowledge” of “absolute Spirit”). Peirce’s three categories are rather co-valent in Thirdness, the *in futuro* would-be modal component in Thought (not sensation), having the semiotic value of open-endedly fallibilistic heuristic inquiry. And so for the sign-perfusive universe “in which we live, move, and have our being.” He hews close to Hegel (and others) in featuring a tritistic logic, but his logic, or method of categorical inquiry, remains Aristotelian in the synoptic, or integratively organic sense of conjugation of matter (namely, any and every potential subject matter of inquiry) and form (formal, efficient, and final components of the subject matter). As in Kant, who was another Aristotelian in method, intuitions without concepts are blind, concepts without intuition are empty. (Hence too, his “Aristotelian” correction of Plato’s transcendent forms). Now add in, in *archic* or *sense-governing terms*, a *creative principle* (which departs from the *reflective principle* of Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, or Hegel), Peirce’s semiotic shift to the non-dicible Firstness cum Thirdness creativity of things – (as also in Whitehead), and you have the methodic factor in the form of fallibilistic inquiry, via inductive and abductive resolutions in ever-incipient process of “energetic reasonableness” in the sciences and arts (and in the universe at large) – for “Nature too makes inductions and retractions”, which we endeavor to grasp in our limited but “hopeful” anthropomorphic scientific and artistic endeavors. Nature’s evolutionary inductions and retractions, Peirce declares, are constantly “pouring in on us” as the *laws of nature* which we are trying to find out and live with. (Coincidentally, Emerson is great on this theme). And what about mathematics, the first of his heuristic sciences, the science of pure hypothesis, the status of which is prior to philosophy’s coenoscopic platforms of heuristic discovery (phaneroscopic, normative, and metaphysical)? Peirce postulated there are two forms of mathematics, deductive and abductive, or corollarial and theorematic, respectively. Corollarial mathematics is the traditional Euclidean type of deduction from first axioms. Theorematic mathematics is free-falling purely hypothetical mathematics. Pure mathematics of that qualitative theorematic type illustrates his archaic principle of creativity at the basis of heuristically expansive synechistic *continua* of generalization. In its architectonic sense his whole cosmology, metaphysics, and ontosemiotics amount to a theorematic *mathesis*. That to accounts for his Neoplatonic doctrine of “the Platonic World” in his Cambridge Conference lectures of 1898 (and elsewhere). And he says traditional metaphysics is out of date for having aped the epistemic form of Euclidean mathematics extrapolated into metaphysics (as in Spinoza and Hegel). In regard to the projects of current mathematicians to unify mathematics, or of physicists to unified field theory, Peirce’s (or Whitehead’s) *principle of creativity* calls for a variescently tychistic and hyperbolical worldview. See Moore (1910).

In the immediate sequel of the Cambridge Lectures Peirce further sowed the seeds for his cosmogonic architectonic of Mathematics, Metaphysics, and Logic as connatural realizations of a “Platonic World” – itself a “metaphor” for the boundless continuum of all potential qualities and dimensions comprised of categorical spontaneity and realization. His own creative retroduction consists – ala the Neoplatonic symbolization of Raphael’s *The School of Athens* – of establishing an inter-saturating equivalence of the ontosemiotic values of Plato and Aristotle. He astutely reads Plato as having been “very right and very wrong”, *though still* having realized the “definite philosophy”. Plato’s maturely developed sense of “Ideas” as mathematical relations refuted the error of Heraclitus (and the error of his own earlier theory) that motion entails “transitoriness of continua” (as in Heraclitus, “you can’t step into the same river twice”; or the postulate of discrete instances of cinematic transitoriness in Zeno’s refutation of motion in the race of Achilles and the Tortoise). In his own categorical terms, Peirce, following Aristotle’s unimpeachable contemporary testimony, interpreted Plato’s later period as having abandoned his earlier theory of Ideas for Mathematical Essences not possessed of “Actual Existence” but only of “Potential Being” that are “quite as real”, so that “his maturest philosophy became welded into mathematics”.

In this regard, let me to draw attention to the astute account of J. N. Findlay, “The Neoplatonism of Plato”, which supports Peirce’s reading of Aristotle’s authoritative testimony as to the mathematization of the Forms in Plato’s mature philosophy:

From this material [Aristotle’s two complete treatises, one *On the Ideas* and one *On the Good*, the remnants of which are found in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and in the commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias and others] we know that Plato, as far back probably as the time of the *Republic*, had replaced the moralisms of Socrates with a thoroughgoing mathematization of all the Forms, and had come to see in them complex, many-dimensional patterns of numbers and numerical ratios, and believed in some sort of logical procession of all of them all from a Supreme Principle of Unity which was also a Principle of Goodness. This Principle of Unity exercised mastery over another Principle of indefiniteness, continuity and badness, and gave rise to the Forms, and it then operated on a second version of the same indefiniteness, continuity and badness, thus giving rise – by way of the soul of souls, which were themselves pure exemplifications of ratio – to the numberless instances of ideal natures that confront us in the world of change and becoming.⁵⁰

Now the crucial teachable lesson here is that in advance of Findlay’s account (published in 1976) Peirce theorized (in 1898) that making the Ideas “potential and continuous” in a kind of Pure Mathematics generates his “philosophy of Thirdness”. Plato fell short by only recognizing Quality (Firstness) as *existing* (Secondness), and thus “making himself an apostle of Dichotomy”, by way of erroneously subordinating External Causes (Secondness) to the moral superiority of higher Platonic “wisdom” (the Socratic “Hellenic sage” in Lecture One). Instead of his Divided Line Plato should have “welded the two propositions together” (the moralizing influence and the mathematical continuum of Ideas) to achieve a “correct view of the ultimate end of philosophy and of science in general,” – thus revising Platonic Idealism by bringing in Aristotle’s sense of existential Secondness, the “scientific facts” in the ongoing energetic reasonableness (Thirdness) of the universe.⁵¹

50 J. N. Findlay, *The Neoplatonism of Plato*, in R. Baines and Harris (1976).

51 Peirce’s critique of Heraclitean discontinuity is deeply inscribed in all phases of his philosophy. It is his synechism in the form of the idea of “continuity objectified”, such that our knowledge is “never absolute but always swims as it were in a continuum of uncertainty and of indeterminacy. Now the doctrine of continuity is that *all things* so swim in continua (Peirce’s emphasis, in *Scientific Fallibilism* (1893, MS 995, cited in MOORE, 2010, p. xxi)) Thus in critique not only of the early-phase Plato’s transcendent Ideas but also of the opposite pole error of materialism, (which regards atoms analogous to points which have no parts, no further structure to be understood), “the synechist” is one who “insists upon [...] the necessity of hypothesis involving continuity”, such that he “would never be satisfied with the hypothesis that matter is composed of atoms, all spherical and exactly alike. [...] [Neither] the eternity of the atoms nor their precise resemblance is, in the synechist’s view, an element of the

In further interpretive exegesis, as exemplified or suggested by the *Sophist*, we can say Plato corrected his own Heraclitean error by trading the Forms for Numbers (Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (987b) and *De Anima* (404b)). Peirce interprets Plato's former doctrine of "static" Forms as only implying Firstness, whereas his (Plato's) whole philosophy is a "philosophy of Thirdness", even though Plato seemed not to have realized this.⁵² By abandoning the noumenal super-natural Forms in exchange for Numbers or Mathematical Essences, and taking what Peirce holds mathematics to be (i.e., pure abduction), Peirce accounted for two categorical forms of being, actual or existential being and being *in potentia*. Their creative synthesis in Thirdness becomes the doctrine of "energetic reasonableness" in the "emanational" – (read: synechistic) – theory of Peirce's own neo-Plotinism, namely the theory of *vital contemplation* of the One's "glow" power of Beauty and Goodness in natural and metaphysical orders of inexhaustible mathematical generalities and ensouled instantiations.⁵³

So here I am also suggesting that Peirce's neo-Plotinism conveyed the transmutational forms of Schelling's "objective idealism" (and like Aeneas carrying his father on his shoulders, conveyed the essential gist of Benjamin Peirce's "ideal-realism")⁵⁴ into the tritistic obligations of his categoriology. Peirce called his final doctrine "Synechism" (also "Tritism") in so postulating the continuum of connatural growth of human reasoning's fallibilistic contemplation of "the logic of things," that is, of concretescently energizing reasonableness in an evolutionary cosmogony of the manifestations of the Platonic World.

In passing, I also suggest that Whitehead's "Process Philosophy" participated in this neo-Plotinian Renaissance. Whitehead elaborated an architectonic "Philosophy of Organism" – itself arguably rooted in Cambridge Platonism – as was Peirce's too – and (I should think) in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* – which followed Peirce in articulating a likeminded fusion of Platonic and Aristotelian variables.⁵⁵ Both Peirce and Whitehead were Platonizing Aristotelian mathematicians.

Well now, in this free-wheeling spirit of appreciating such "legacy convergences", let me now cite some of the exact formulations of Peirce's Cambridge Lectures that arguably are neo-Plotinian in speculative trajectory *par excellence*. In the same Lecture Three, *The Logic of Relatives*, Peirce's thematizes a "logic of things" that is independent of psychologism in a theoretical updraft that lifts the discussion of Lecture One. It takes up his longstanding rejection of nominalistic/phenomenalistic interpretations of nature and human life in reference to the theme, "What is reality?" Peirce writes: "As I have repeatedly insisted, [the concept of Reality] is but a retroduction, a working hypothesis which we

hypothesis that is even admissible hypothetically. For it would be an attempt to explain the phenomena by means of an absolute inexplicability" (MOORE, 2010, p. xx). Generalizing further, "the ordinary scientific infallibilist [...] is committed to discontinuity in regard to all those things which he fancies he has exactly ascertained, and especially in regard to that part of his knowledge which he fancies he has exactly ascertained to be certain. [...] This scientific infallibilism draws down a veil before the eyes which prevents the evidence of continuity from being discerned (1893, MS 995, cited in MOORE, 2010, p. xxi.) Though I cannot elaborate it here, let me add that that it is a short step from here to a cross-cultural metaphysical convergence, namely to the *Avatasaka Sutra* (Yogacara, or "Mind Only") logic of the "unhindered mutual interpenetration of absolute and phenomenon and of phenomenon and phenomenon" (Chinese: *ri-shih, shih-shih wu-ai*; Japanese: *riji, jiji muge*) that can be thought to intersect with Peirce's synechistic ontosemiosis at various theoretical points.

52 Emerson in his chapters on "Plato: the Philosopher" in *Representative Men* (1860) has remarks to the same effect concerning Plato's lack of self-awareness: "He is charged with having failed to make the transition from ideas to matter. [...] These things we are forced to say, if we consider the effort of Plato, or of any philosopher, to dispose of Nature, – which will not be disposed of. No power of genius has ever yet the smallest success in explaining existence". (EMERSON, 1983, E&L, p. 653.) This passage in Emerson is also a precedent to Peirce's critique of Cartesianism.

53 I am indebted to valuable exchanges with Owen Polley in articulating Peirce's homodoxical account of the fusion of Platonic and Aristotelian worldviews here.

54 See Polley (2022).

55 To be elaborated in another study, in broader historical perspective Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (1927) represents another homodoxy that merges the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies in the spirit of the Alexandrians and of Peirce. His categorical obligations of a mathematical metaphysics, featuring "the ingression of eternal objects" from the "conceptual nature of God" that are creatively absorbed in the "consequent nature of God", has its provenance in the Cambridge Platonists of 17th-century England and in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as well. By conspicuous contrast, Santayana's skeptical materialism ("sceptical Platonism") fell back on his "literary psychology" in ironical rhetorical descriptions of Epicurean and Darwinian "psyche" and its inert "life of the spirit" – while versions of nominalistic "philosophy of science" and of postmodern "Lit Crit" loom even today as parlous antitheses of these legacy accounts of the "better logic" of things advocated by Peirce et al. Perhaps Dewey is also an odd man out in this conversation: an "emergent naturalist" interested in a reconstruction of Darwinism in cultural semantics, Dewey (here closer to his sparring partner, Santayana) rejected Whitehead's Platonism of the "ingression of eternal objects" as well as the Transcendentalist sensibilities of Emerson, James, and Peirce.

try, *our one desperate forlorn hope of knowing anything.*” And what such a working hypothesis comes to is that “The world *lives*, and moves, and HAS ITS BEING, in a logic of events.”⁵⁶

Accordingly, against the nominalistic persuasions of his contemporaries – including James and Dewey – Peirce rather remarkably avers that “Nature also makes inductions and retroductions⁵⁷ [...] Evolution wherever it takes place is one vast succession of generalizations, by which matter is becoming subjected to ever higher and higher Laws; and I point to the infinite variety of nature as testifying to her Originality or power of Retroduction”.⁵⁸ (Parenthetically, I venture to suggest, Peirce’s words reconfigure the Alexandrian trajectory of the One (*Hen*) – and Mind (*Nous*) – and Soul/Life (*Psyche*) as metaphysical dimensions of an architectonic “theory” (*Theoria*) of Real Nature in terms of a “contemplative” proliferation and retroduction). So again, “Real Thirdness there must somewhere be”. And now back to his “correction of Platonism”, Peirce declares the *most hopeless* of metaphysical theories is that “continuity [*real continuity, real organicity, real synechism*] is a fiction” (And here again Peirce is on the same page with Emerson’s critique of the skepticism of “miscellaneous randomness”).

Moreover, Peirce goes on to say, “The extraordinary disposition of the human mind to think of everything under the difficult and almost incomprehensible form of a continuum can only be explained by supposing that each one of us is in his own real nature a continuum”. (Later, in Lecture Seven [RLT 241] we indeed *learn* “the intelligibility of nature” from the best example, namely “the plasticity of our own human minds”). The Pragmatist lesson here is that “The only things valuable, even here in this life, are the continuities”. “The *zero* collection is bare, abstract, germinal possibility. The continuum is concrete, developed possibility.” Accordingly, “The whole universe of true and real possibilities forms a continuum, upon which this Universe of Actual Existence is, by virtue of the essential Secondness of Existence, a discontinuous mark [...] There is room in the world of possibility for any multitude of such universes of Existence.” And accordingly, even in this transitory life, “the only value of all the arbitrary arrangements which mark actuality” [...] [which] “spring out of every hand and all the time, as the act of creation goes on”, – “their only value is to be shaped into a continuous delineation under the creative hand, and at any rate their only use for us is to hold us down to learning one lesson at a time, so that we may make generalizations of intellect and the more important generalizations of sentiment which make the value of this world.”

These valuations make good on Peirce’s indication of his intellectual biography in the opening paragraph of *The Law of Mind* that his philosophy is a modification into scientific and mathematical vocabulary of the Neoplatonic and Transcendentalist traditions. And here, reprising other themes articulated in his five *Monist* articles of 1891-1893, Peirce goes on in this context to detail how “Endeavors to effectuate continuity have been the great task of the Nineteenth Century” [These 19th-century efforts enumerated].⁵⁹ “Such a work will not be aided by regarding continuity as an unreal figment, it cannot but be helped by regarding it as the really possible eternal order of things to which we are trying to make our

56 To my mind, a crucial earlier expression of this is to be found in the final segment of *How to Make Our Ideas Clear* where Peirce defines Reality in the terms of what is independent of what you, I, or anyone else thinks of it, *though not necessarily independent of thought in general*.

57 On Nature’s inductions and retroductions, I cite here in condensed form a longer passage: “The clustering of ideas is either due to an outward occult power or to an inward one. [...] That cause is that occult power acting like our wills, though with far greater might, which lies behind experience, and which the old philosophers called Nature. [...] It is often called Reason. [...] But it is really an occult power of Nature” (MOORE, 2010, p. 50).

58 See also Peirce’s *Laws of Nature* (1901) in EP2: 67-74, which inscribe Peirce’s later phase critique of nominalistic points of departure. In a sweeping early version: “The realistic philosophy of the last century has now lost all its popularity, except for the most conservative minds. And science as well as philosophy is nominalistic. The doctrine of the correlation of forces, the discoveries of Helmholtz, and the hypotheses of Liebig and Darwin, have all that character of explaining phenomena apparently of a peculiar kind by extending the operation of simple mechanical principles, which belongs to nominalism. Or if the nominalistic character of these doctrines themselves cannot be detected, it will at least be admitted that they are observed to carry along with them those daughters of nominalism, – sensationalism, phenomenalism, individualism, and materialism. That physical science is necessarily connected with doctrines of a debasing moral tendency will be believed by few. But [...]” (Frazer’s *The Works of George Berkeley*, 1871, EPI: 104).

59 This is an important passage for understanding Peirce’s overall Pragmatist agenda: “Endeavors to effectuate continuity have been the great task of the Nineteenth Century. To bind ideas together, to bind together facts, to bind together knowledge, to bind together sentiment, to bind together the purposes of men, to bind together industry, to bind together great works, to bind together power, to bind together nations into great, natural, living systems was the business that lay before our great grandfathers to commence and which we now see just about to pass into a second and more advanced stage of achievement. Such a work will not be aided by regarding continuity as an unreal figment, it cannot but be helped by regarding it as the real possible eternal order of things to which we are trying to make our arbitrariness conform” (RLT, 163.)

arbitrariness conform.” “Generalization, the spilling out of continuous systems, in thought, in sentiment, in deed, is the true end of life.”

Once again, I suggest we need only substitute Plotinus’s notion of “ascendant contemplation” qua “theory” (*theoria*) for Peirce’s “generalization” to get the full ontosemiotic effect. “Ascendant” translates as “would-be” generalization in creative connaturality (Thirdness). In such original neo-Plotinian terms, Peirce absorbed Emerson’s Transcendental Naturalism over against the skeptical materialism of Santayana, not to mention generations of 19^{th-c.}, 20^{th-c.}, and now 21^{st-c.}, Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian naturalists.⁶⁰ Closer to home, he reinscribed his father Benjamin’s “ideal-realism”, enfolding it in his cosmology.

Lecture Four, *The First Rule of Logic* [Item 5, EP2] then spells out the fallibilistic disposition of contemplative Pragmatistic mindedness that is part and parcel of this neo-Plotinian merger (homodoxy) of Platonic and Aristotelian ontosemiosis. It begins with Peirce asserting how reasoning has the “wonderful power of correcting itself” in the interpretive representations of the three forms of valid inference – induction, deduction, and abduction/retroduction. He notes that the retroductive, or explanatory Idioscopic Sciences, include Geology, Paleontology, Biological Evolution, and the like. This self-correcting feature of explanatory inquiry involves “The Will to Learn”. The failure of the American universities, Peirce declares, is that they are institutions of “teaching” not of “learning.”⁶¹

Here Peirce does not refer to James’ “Will to Believe” (or Santayana’s materialistic version of “animal faith” skeptically deployed) but rather reinscribes his longstanding Emersonian, and of course Plotinian and Schellingian, critique of positivistic, data-facticity “Scientism”. Our educational institutions must:

[...] disabuse the student of the popular notion that modern science is so great a thing as to be commensurate with Nature and indeed constitute of itself some account of the universe, and to show him that it is yet, what it appeared to Isaac Newton to be, a child’s collection of pebbles gathered upon the beach, – the vast ocean of Being lying there unsounded (EP2:173). Not only is our knowledge thus limited in scope, but it is even more important that we should thoroughly realize that the very best we, humanly speaking, know only in an uncertain and inexact way (EP2:178).

And this leads Peirce to reiterate the fallibilistic entelechy of his ontological semiotics, namely that the:

[...] first, and in one sense this sole, rule of reason, that in order to learn you must first desire to learn and in so desiring not be satisfied with what you already incline to think, there follows one corollary which itself deserves to be inscribed upon every wall of the city of philosophy: DO NOT BLOCK THE WAY OF INQUIRY.⁶²

Against setting up a philosophy “which barricades the road to further advance toward the truth”, Peirce ends the lecture with reasserting four “familiar” maxims – “familiar” from his earlier epistemological writings:

1. first is the fallacy of absolute assertion (explained further);
2. second is maintaining that this, that, and the other never can be known (explained further);
3. third is maintaining that this, that, or the other element of science is basic, ultimate, independent of aught else, and utterly inexplicable, there being nothing beneath it to know.
4. fourth is holding that this or that law or truth has found its last and perfect formulation, – and especially that the ordinary and usual course of nature never can be broken through.

60 There is a longer story here. Dilworth (2019) includes a discussion of Santayana’s “attendance” at Peirce’s third lecture at Harvard in 1898, along with Peirce’s critical review of the first two volumes of Santayana’s *The Life of Reason* in 1905.

61 Referring back to Chapter One on the “Hellenic sage” and seminar-mindedness.

62 CP1.135.

These familiar maxims reprise Peirce's earlier epistemic postulates in *Some Consequences of Four Incapacities* (1878); but it is important to note that the agenda of the Cambridge Lectures is now to *upgrade* his later phase Pragmaticism into a realistic cosmology of the Platonic World. And here again we note Peirce writes (with perfect resonances of Emersonian "Moral Sentiment" in Nature): "Moreover, in all its progress, science vaguely feels that it is only learning a lesson. *The value of Facts to it*, lies in this only, that they belong to Nature, *and Nature is something great, and beautiful, and sacred, and eternal, and real, – the object of its worship and its aspiration.*"

This may be the finest, most *meaningfully realistic*, sentence Peirce ever wrote. I have suggested that its provenance traces all the way back to Plotinus' homologization of the ontosemiotic principles of Plato and Aristotle. "Science" is "theory" in the form of ascendant contemplation of Nature, which is itself the connaturally ascendant contemplation of Soul/Life (Mind in motion) – which itself is the ascendant contemplation of a Kosmos Noetos (Mind at rest) – all "synechistic expressions" of the creative *nature of things*.

Lecture Five, *Training in Reasoning*, continues the ontological semiosis by way of declaring that "common education" should focus upon "the art of reasoning" (inspired by the "Will to Learn", in the "logic of inquiry") in three forms: 1) training in Observation, including the first and most genuine element of observation: which is that of "subconscious induction" in "acquiring associational potency"; 2) Experimentation; and 3) Habituation. The first of these, Observation, Peirce divides into a) observation of sensible qualities *per se* (colors, sounds, sizes, shapes, etc.); b) of emotional qualities, such as esthetic qualities; c) of discrimination of mental states (RLT 183-184). Referring to his own observational training as a *sommelier*, Peirce significantly avers that training in esthetic discrimination is "ten times more intellectually beneficial than cultivation in sensuous discrimination". He also illustrates this esthetic discrimination of qualities of characters in novels (the observation of which redounds to his early theme of the self-correction nature of inquiry, specifically in sharing an author's experience of a novel "writing itself" – a similar experience discovered in great paintings, musical compositions, and so on).

Coming back to Observation proper, it is the "observation of the relations of real objects and parts of objects external to us". (For example – observation of external things in Natural History, Biopaleontology, and the like, which generally requires professional training). Peirce counsels to avoid wasting time in delusive self-observation: "The great thing is to become emancipated from oneself." What ought to be trained is "the power of observing the objects of our own creative fancy", and in three ways: 1) the sensuous element; 2) the relation between different parts of the esthetic object; 3) the system, the form and the idea of the whole. The highest kind of observation is of systems, forms, ideas, as exemplarily gained in the *study* of pure mathematical theories and in *making* such theories – (by contrast, he adds, the study of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* "is almost immeasurably inferior to the study of mathematics") – for reasons to be further elaborated.

The second operation is Experimentation, not the passivity of plain sensuous observation but "the energetic, strong work of the will, both external and internal". *Laborare* means to "make experiments", featuring 1) "creative imagination" of "unfatiguing will-power always begging for a harder task"; 2) "flair", which abridges a work to concentrate on its most viable features; and 3) "perseverance". "Detached experiments, like detached thoughts and detached soldiers, are of little account" compared to "systematized masses of experimentation". "An active mind ought always to be carrying out some systematic experimentation" (RLT 187-188).

The third of psychological operations involved in reasoning is "Habituation" – "the power of readily taking habits and of readily throwing them off". Peirce now links all these psychological reflections to the logical significance that generality is continuity. "Generality [...] is logically the same as continuity. But continuity is Thirdness in its full entelechy." Habituation has a synthetical inferential character, linked to "the flow of time", and to the "consciousness of learning", which is different from both feeling-quality and from the sense of reaction, thus belonging "not merely to subjective logic but to the logic of being"

(RLT 191-192). Habituation's "operation of acquiring associations" "is a sort of generalization" like the "plasticity of childhood" (which, Peirce notes in tandem with Emerson and many other Romantics, is unfortunately outgrown by adult technocratic, calculative intelligence, but which is essential to be a *veritable learner*, that is, "a *philosopher*, or a scientific man" – one who exercises the capacity of contemplative speculation of the generality of things in their full, accumulating entelechy (RLT 189-190).

Although articulated in Peirce's own language, this entire doctrine conveys the implication of his Neoplatonic trajectory in Lectures One and Three) – predicated on the homodoxy (interpollence) of Plato and Aristotle, which we have seen is a legacy paradigm tracing back to "the monstrous wisdom of the East", namely the Alexandrian School from which Plotinus began to philosophize.

Lecture Six, *Causation and Force*, and Lecture Seven, *Habit*, exhibit, in part, Peirce's expertise in dense formulations of mathematical physics. The general reader can at least follow his "big-ticket" considerations, i.e., the failure of Newtonian physics in its view of causality pertaining to conservation of energy and reversible mechanical forces, to account for psychical causation in the nature of things. Here we find Peirce also reasserting his longstanding thesis that we need a *better logic* to cover the non-reversible forms of "psychic causation", – *such as of life and real growth in nature's own habits of induction and retrodution*. Accordingly, "The desideratum of philosophy is to unify the phenomena of mind and matter. The logic of retrodution directs us to adopt Monism, as a provisional hypothesis of philosophy."⁶³

Peirce "better logic" played out in the terms of an anthropomorphic-cum-cosmomorphic semiosis, affine with Emerson's Transcendental Naturalism (and needless to add, rejective of Santayana's skeptical materialism).⁶⁴ In the Cambridge Lectures he re-expressed the gist of his *Monist* metaphysical essays (1891-1893) in postulating that the "first requisite" of an objective logic accounting for Nature's induction and retroductions is to define "Chance" as an objective phenomenon, namely as a property of nature's "fortuitous distributions". A fortuitous distribution is a "pure First, without any cause or reason whatsoever". Accordingly, "Uniformity, or necessary law, can only spring from another law, while fortuitous distribution can only spring from another fortuitous distribution. Law begets law; and chance begets chance, and these elements of the phenomena of nature must of their very nature be primordial and radically distinct stocks."

To escape this duality, pressed by the principle of retrodution to find an underlying unity, the only possible way is to suppose "Chance, utter irregularity", to be First, and the first germ of Law (as a Second). Moreover, the "absolute First" in nature illumines Peirce's Fallibilism, namely that "all the intellectual development of man rests upon the circumstance that all our action is subject to error". *Errare est humanum*. "Inanimate things do not err at all; and the lower animals very little. Instinct is all but unerring, but reasoning in all vitally important matters is a treacherous guide." On the positive side, fortuitous variation of our action in time is also the basis of intellectual nourishment and growth. "For without such fortuitous variation, habit-taking would be impossible, and intellect consists in a plasticity of habit." (RLT 216-217). This was an important step in subsuming the Darwinian strain of fortuitous variation into his Tritistic categoriology.

63 In passing, let us note again that Peirce's contemporary Francis Ellingwood Abbot developed a parallel system of Platonizing scientific intelligence, and arguably both Abbot's and Peirce's versions were profoundly influenced by Peirce's father Benjamin, who was a Transcendentalist colleague of Emerson. Emerson's and the two Peirces' versions of neo-Neoplatonism were precedents to a range of contemporary or near-contemporary philosophers, including James, Bergson, and Whitehead who championed holistic and organic pro-ontological concepts of nature and experience. Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (1927) and other works are particularly remarkable for conceptualizing the world's "actual occasions of experience" in the terms of "the becoming of continuity" in departure from the classical linear concept of "the continuity of becoming". He addressed this in the terms of the predominance of "vector over scalar quantities", while claiming to find a metaphorical account of the same doctrine of the primacy of *psychic* as trumping *physical* causation in James' metaphor of "drops or buds of experience" (in *Some Problems of Philosophy* (1911)). In broader historical perspective, Whitehead's *Process and Reality* is another homodoxy merging the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies in the spirit of the Alexandrians and of Peirce.

64 My quotation-rich account here of Peirce's *Reasoning and the Logic of Things* (the Cambridge Lectures of 1898) is comprehensively elaborated in Ivo Ibrí's magisterial work, *Kosmos Noetos*, 2017. As always, Ibrí is my Virgil. I am also indebted to the many works of Douglas Anderson on this range of interpretations of Peirce's cosmology and his relation to Emerson. Michael Raposa's writings on Peirce's philosophy of religion and theosemiotics also rate very high in my understanding.

My interpretation here is that Plotinus's philosophy – understood as dynamic homologization of Plato's shift to mathematization of the Forms combined with Aristotle's sense of energetic causality of natural forms and “the infinite potency of matter” – is the “legacy” provenance of Peirce's account of the Firstness of “fortuitous variation” – in the lower Life of Soul that is constituted in being in its contemplation of the higher reality of Mind (Nous). In Plotinus, Beauty and Goodness are elusive predicates of Nous, the Kosmos Noetos, which is their permeating unifying *power* (ultimately, *power* of the One, “the First”, that is a *creative principle* in Plotinus, Emerson, Peirce, and Whitehead). As we have seen, such a glorious ontological dynamic underpins Peirce's reflections on the “smile upon beauty” in the world processes of uberous abduction.

Lecture Seven, *Habit*, Following up on Peirce's postulation of the sheer or “first” appearances of fortuitous variations in the nature of things, he again postulates “a non-mechanistic law of mind” as primarily operative in the universe, – postulate that reprises the ideas from *The Law of Mind* (1892) and *Man's Glassy Essence* (1892). Likewise, he argues for nature's laws as the outcomes of an evolutionary development, i.e., as *nature's habits*, thus for evolution of the laws of the universe (reprising *The Doctrine of Necessity Examined* (1891), and his advocacy of Scotistic *Realism in the Laws of Nature* (1893)).

Thus resonant with Emerson's insistence on the Moral Sentiment involving “faith” in Divinity and Law, Nature's “manifestation of forms showing a power of spreading and of reproducing are evidences of genuine vitality and fundamental reality of the form of law” (RLT 219). What he calls “finious” and “irreversible” causation, as distinct from the action of conservative force, evidence Nature's “*psychic causation*” which is “a real, and fundamental, and vital element both in the outer and in the inner world”. “Finious” and “irreversible” express “a determinate tendency toward a [“general”, but not pre-determined] final state”.⁶⁵

Once again, Peirce's epistemic perspective features a connatural aspiration (“hope”) of “a logical process in nature” whereby our narratives of laws of nature have been brought about. The (Platonic and Neoplatonic!) “association of ideas” by “resemblance” is a natural disposition of the mind (RLT 241). The bottom line trajectory of “The Law of Mind” as habit-formation, or the generalizing tendency in nature, constitutes the correspondent, or connatural, symbiosis of the interior and extrinsic (Thought and Extension) modalities of life; however, the interior, intimate metaphysical modality of psychic causation must be logically prioritized, and this is best exemplified in the positive plasticity of the human mind.⁶⁶

Now finally, in Lecture Eight, *The Logic of Continuity*, after another difficult mathematical opening, Peirce, in grandest neo-Plotinian flair, pulls together the threads of the foregoing postulations in a “Cosmogony” of the “Platonic World”. Its “vertiginous sweep” (in the words of James) must have nonplussed the Harvard Philosophy Department audience as well it must still dazzle contemporary

65 I take “finious” here as resonating with Kant's *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck* or “purposiveness without purpose”, the key phrase in his third *Critique* with regard to the *a priori* intentionality of the aesthetic judgment. The young Schelling launched his *Naturphilosophie* by discerning how Kant's phrase, which holds together the aesthetics and teleological biology parts of his *third Critique* (together with Kant's other key concept that “Nature gives the rule to art” in the work of artistic genius), should be reemployed for the purposes of an objective idealism of nature. One can speculate that Peirce's emphasis on the finious and irreversible organicity of nature traces back to this provenance in Schelling and his youthful conversations with Goethe. Goethe famously rejected the nominalistic conclusions of Kant's philosophy but recalled the “joyful time” he owed to reading Kant's *Critique of Judgment* where he (Goethe) “saw the creations of art and of nature, one treated like the other; that the capacities of aesthetic and teleological judgment each illuminated the other”. Worthy of a separate study, one finds Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* reflected in many of Goethe's *Kunst* and *Gott und Natur* poems.

66 Precedent to Peirce, Schelling, in various phases of his writings, developed this prioritization of Thought (Mind, “intensionality”) over Extension (Matter, “extensionality”) in broader realistic-cosmical Creationist terms in confrontation with Spinoza's equalization (equivalancing) of the two Attributes of Infinite Substance and the parallelism of their corresponding Two Modes. E.g., in the First Draft of *The Ages of the World* (1911): “Spinoza knows that powerful balance of the primordial forces that he opposes to one another as the extended primordial force [...] and the thinking primordial force. [...] But he only knows the balance, but not the conflict that emerges out of the equipollence. Both forces are juxtaposed in inactivity, without reciprocal excitation or intensification. Hence the duality is lost in favor of the unity. Consequently, his substance, or the common being of both essences, persists in an eternal, immobile, inactive parity [...] without their unity coming to language as the active, living copula of both substance and attribute. Hence the lack of life and progression in his system.” The passage immediately goes on to declare that his (Schelling's) concept of “potencies” already includes the concept of progression and movement within it (SCHELLING, 2019, p. 104-105). In the background of Schelling, one always feels the iconic influence of Goethe who broke through, against the Baconian and Newtonian tradition, to a concept of the creative interiority and “intensionality” of Nature.

students of Peirce, some of whom may have remained oblivious or in denial of Peirce's explicit conceptualization of a Platonic World in the Cambridge Conference Lectures. This is not Santayana's "sceptical Platonism" or any other "nominalistic Platonism", but the full-bore realistic consummation of his "Alexandrine" dynamic reconfiguration of the homodoxy of Plato and Aristotle.

So, in another brilliant metaphor intimating higher and lower Soul's contemplative participation in the higher *kosmos noetos* (the Greek phrase is in Plotinus), Peirce speaks of "those relics of an ancient ruined continuum of qualities", a "once magnificent ensemble". A very magnificent ensemble indeed! His metaphor of the Platonic World absorbs the full sweep of Emerson's transcendentalist meliorism of the intimately felt Moral Sentiment that is revelatory of "Divinity and Law". Categorically updating his cosmology in a Platonic-Aristotelian language (somewhat modified from the *Monist* articles), Peirce, in accord with Emerson, theorizes that a conerescent, or coalescent "growth of the universe" moves from "the vague, indefinite potentiality of nothing in particular", to more definite potentialities (Firstness of the Platonic World), to definite actualities (Secondnesses of space/time) (RLT 257).

In this regard he declares again: "Every research process proceeds on the aspiration that the very objects of study themselves are subject to a logic more or less identical with that which we employ – notwithstanding that the logic of the universe is more rudimentary than our subjective logic goes violently against the (nominalistic, skeptical, and materialistic) presumptions of this age of culture". Peirce's uberous theoretical retroduction is that "the logic of the universe" is one to which our own *aspires* rather than attains. This too in effect reprises the gist of Emerson's transcendentalist meliorism in averring in grand cosmical generality that "*Continuity*" is nothing but "a higher type" of what we know as "generality"; it is a "relational generality". "Continuity proceeds from the vague to the definite; all of evolution so proceeds from the vague to the definite. The indeterminate future becomes the irrevocable past. The undifferentiated differentiates itself. The homogeneous puts on heterogeneity. A continuum is derived from a more general continuum, a continuum of higher generality". And it follows that "The existing universe with all its arbitrary Secondness is an offshoot from, or an arbitrary determination, of a world of ideas, a Platonic world", of which our fallible logic must always fall short. "Before time and logic, it began in an utter vagueness of completely undetermined and dimensionless potentiality. Not only the existing universe, but the very Platonic forms themselves have become or are becoming developed. This universe has a special existence, some theatre of reactions; there can be other forms of evolutionary existence."

All these vertiginous formulations grow in significance when set in the framework of Plotinus's Third Hypostasis – of Soul that is Mind in Motion. And it is here that Peirce goes on to formulate his speculative cosmogony in his famous metaphor that reaches back to the "emanational" resonances of Plotinus.

From an early stage of vaguest potentiality of dimensions, by a contraction of the vagueness of that potentiality in general but of nothing in particular, the world of Platonic forms comes about. Those sense qualities that we now experience – colors, sounds, odors, feelings of every description, loves, grief, surprises, – are but the relics of an ancient ruined continuum of qualities, like a few columns standing here and there in testimony of some old-world forum with its basilica and temples that once made a magnificent ensemble. It grew out of an antecedent stage of development of a vague being before the relations of its dimensions became definite and contracted.

In such variations on the metaphysically moral sensibility of contemplative ascendancy in Plotinus, Schelling, and Emerson (the opposite of Santayana's deflationary "life of the spirit"), Peirce here avers that "pure sense qualities" are "feelings," even slumbering feelings (slumbering "musements", also with doctrinal precedents in Plotinus and Schelling). Pure sense qualities – he gives the example of magenta – "are definite potentialities that can emerge from the indefinite continuum of potentiality only by their own vital Firstness, or spontaneity, so that the general indefinite potentiality becomes limited

and heterogeneous.” Peirce continues in what I would characterize as drawing upon his ontosemiotic creative principle: “That the Divine Creator determined it so, while traditionally clothed in a symbolic garb (“Mind of God”) that is “ludicrously figurative,” is “after all, substantially the only philosophical answer to the problem.”⁶⁷

Here I suggest we may double back to his *Evolutionary Love* (1893) essay to “feel” the momentum and uberosity of Peirce’s cosmogonic generalization. It is all about lucent generalization as agapic development. The Platonic World releases its interiority of Idea-potentialities for concrescent externalities of Secondness as the metaphorical “Mind-Heart” of things swells in Thirdness. The “signs” of the Platonic World perfuse all upsurges of Vitality (irreducible to dead atoms and the void). Our job is to nourish our loved ones’ growth, externalizing our own mind-hearts’ interior sensibilities, like tending the flowers in our garden.

So now, “The very first and most fundamental element that we have to assume is a Freedom, or Chance, or Spontaneity, by virtue of which the general vague nothing-in-particular-ness that preceded the chaos took a thousand definite qualities. The qualities themselves are mere eternal possibilities. But these reactions we must think of as *events*. The accidental reactions were, at first, one of the special determinations that came about by pure spontaneity or chance.” Such an uberous (“pregnant with new birth”) Cosmic Tychism, Peirce declares, differs from the theologians or other minute regulators of Nature, but also from the materialists (whose theory incoherently attributes Firstness to things perfectly dead and material, as in the swerving atoms of Epicurus and Lucretius). However, “They are not absolutely dead. I mean there is First, Feelings, Second, Efforts, Third, Habits – all of which are more familiar to us on the psychic side than on the physical side; and that dead matter would be merely the final result of the complete induration of habit reducing the free play of feeling and the brute irrationality of effort to complete death”.

Peirce calls this cosmogonic theory “Synechism”, “because it rests on the study of continuity” (which he says is the very hardest of concepts) and adds it could also be called “Tritism” (RLT 262). So, Peirce’s three categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness function co-valently, just as Plotinus’ three hypostases which slide into and transform one another – such that everything is both “yonder” and also “here”. (We might add that Schelling’s three drafts of *The Ages of the World* essayed variations on Plotinian and Christian Trinitarian doctrines in the same trajectory of the so-to-speak “enSouled Mind” (or *kosmos noetos* in upsurges of vitality). Peirce’s version of hyperbolic emanationism contributes to the same sense of trivalent *reality* in world-forming habit-formation: “some beginning of a *habit* has been established by virtue of which the accident acquires some incipient saving quality, some tendency toward consistency”. “This habit is a generalizing tendency, and as such a generalization, and as such a general, and as such a continuum or continuity. It must have its origin in the original continuity which is inherent in potentiality. Continuity, as generality, is inherent in potentiality, which is essentially general”. And here again, in the remarkable words, “some incipient saving quality, some tendency toward consistency”, Peirce is our modern neo-Platonist qua Agapic “theorist” *par excellence*.⁶⁸ He thus follows through on

67 Subsequent to The Cambridge Conference Lectures, in a long footnote in *The Laws of Nature* (1901) Peirce analyzes “Reasonableness energizing the world” into concepts of “generality” and “general character”, in the sense that it is not necessarily a “purpose”, but “a law that shapes events, not just a chance resemblance that constitutes the law”. Real Generality, as commonly understood, includes “Continuity of which Generality is but a cruder form. Nor is this all. We refuse to call a design reasonable unless it is feasible” [...] certain feasible ideas of characters which our reason does not create, “but which characters insure their sooner or later getting realized” [...] “The laws of nature have been brought about [by whatever machinery]” and “if so, they were of such a nature as to realize themselves.” Furthermore, in relation to the idea of God: - “Whether or not it be a legitimate presumption from those characters that nature has an intelligent author, I certainly do not see how the abstraction could, better than in that statement, be clothed in the concrete forms which many minds require, or how they could better be connected with appropriate sentiments” (EP2 72-73).

68 Permit me to speculate in retroductive fashion here. Peirce’s Agapism of *Evolutionary Love* (1893) may be seen as unfolded further in this final lecture of the Cambridge Conferences (1898). It is a cosmogonic semiosis resonant with the final chapter of Whitehead’s *Process and Reality*. Whitehead (the modern Cambridge Platonist) thematizes the *primordial* “nature of God”, the conceptual realm of eternal objects, together with the “consequent nature of God”, which “saves” the realizations of the actual occasions of experience in world process. Peirce’s metaphor of an ancient basilica of the Platonic World antecedent to cosmogenesis similarly “looks back” to a conceptual nature (the Platonic World, Plotinian

his earlier discussion of the correction of the abstract, static, discontinuous Ideas of Plato by merging the Firstness of the Platonic Ideas with Aristotle's insistence on the real animation of soul-qualities in the world's factual and open-ended entelechies (This theoretical achievement is inaccessible in bluff empiricist, neo-Kantian, or skeptical materialist accounts). "This rather prettily illustrates the logical process which we may suppose takes place in things, in which the generalizing tendency builds up new habits from chance occurrences. [...] The original potentiality is the Aristotelian matter or indeterminacy from which the universe is formed" (RLT 263). So again, arguably indebted to the mediating speculations of Schelling, if not directly from Plotinus, he equates the Platonic World's original potentiality with Aristotelian "matter", while indicating that the Platonic World contains many more dimensions than the particular tychistic accidentality of the actual world in which we happen to exist.⁶⁹

But then again, the conceptual obligation of this grand vertiginous sweep is that the actual world does not bottom out in random accidentality, as in the classical Epicurean (and Santayanan) versions of reductive materialism: "But for all that, it will be found that if we suppose the laws of nature to have been formed under the influence of a universal tendency of things to take habits, there are certain characters that those laws will necessarily possess." Related to this theoretical obligation, Peirce says elsewhere "the mind makes the organism, not the organism the mind."⁷⁰ Moreover, as we have seen, the prime evidence of nature's generalizing tendency is manifested in "the plasticity of the human mind" – the very thematic of Plotinus' equation of "seeing" and "being", that is, the soul "becoming what it knows". In Berkeley's language, to be is to be perceived (*esse est percipi*), while in Plotinus's language, to perceive is to be.

Peirce concluded the Cambridge Lectures of 1898 on the note that was also essentially Neoplatonic: "Reasoning about continuity can be applied to give real vitality to metaphysical reasoning, and to cure it of its deathly impotency". His final words can be read as obliquely self-referent: "The subject of mathematical metaphysics, or Cosmology deeply concerns both the physicist and the psychist" – as in his own polymathic career that hewed close to the upper case, transcendentalist Naturalism of Emerson, as well as having replayed the "ideal-realism" of his father Benjamin, in essential agreement with the anti-nominalistic tenets of his contemporary Francis Ellingwood Abbot, as well as the *Naturphilosophie* legacy of Schelling and Goethe, and reaching further back into the "moral semiosis" of Christian Neoplatonism and the "monstrous mystics of the East" of the Alexandrians (Ammonias Saccas, Plotinus, and the rest).

I must leave it to the reader to recognize that Peirce's Neoplatonism does quite "glitter" in spots. The "smile upon beauty" functioning as alluring nurturer of the uberous "divining rod" instinct of retroductive prognosis; "the winds of Heaven" filling the sails of contemplative Musement; Nature's own prospective habit-formations of inductive and retroductive reasoning to which the human mind is connaturally attuned in a "universe perfused with signs", – are features of Peirce's considered philosophy of "objective idealism", the "one intelligible theory of the universe". His Synechism may

Nous), while arguably just as vaguely is suggestive of an *in futuro* consequential nature of agapistic redemption. The hints of such a universal redemption in a grand metaphysical finale can be found in many Christian sources, even in Dante, and are intrinsic to the Mahayana Buddhist metaphysics (as in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* traditions). The *metaphysical simultaneity* of the grand finale of cosmogenesis is theoretically suggested by Eruigena's fourth Division of Nature; closer to home, Schelling's first (1811) draft of *The Ages of the World* is replete with speculations about the "clarified" future of time, the "third age" of the world, in terms of the agapistic function of the Third Person of Trinitarian teaching – upgrading Neoplatonic emanationist theory and, arguably, a theoretical provenance of Peirce's Tritism. My admittedly speculative point here is that Peirce's language of the "finious" directionality of cosmogenesis, the "relational generality" of the universe's concretescently energetic reasonableness, and the ideal normativity of the admirableness of the creative process (as in MS 310), may be considered in association of ideas with Schelling's and Whitehead's doctrines of cosmological "hope", if not Christian faith (un-orthodoxically conceived). Synechism, we see, is such an ontosemiosis of aspiration that Peirce spells out in terms of the Man-sign's connatural participation in the logic of things.

69 It will be another project to study Schelling's variations on "matter" in the drafts of *The Ages of the World* (1811-1815). For one example, I cite the first draft (SCHELLING, 2019, p. 106), where Schelling renders Plotinus' concept of matter as "receptivity" (*Gelassenheit*) in relation to the absolute purity (*Lauterkeit*) of a feminine principle of World-conception and thus as a principle of humility and meek suffering (*Leiden*) in human happiness.

70 See Ibrri, 2017, 70.

also be probed for its rapport with the “Mind Only” philosophy of Indian Yogacara Buddhism, and its variants in Chinese Hua-Yen Buddhism, Japanese Kegon (especially of the Japanese theurgist, Kūkai) and in Japanese Zen variants, all of which in turn entail a rejection of theoretical materialism and its variations in nominalistic and skeptical, not to speak of Cynical, worldviews.⁷¹

6 Coda

Two of Peirce’s letters to William James might serve as the coda to this Additament. They further confirm the essential hermeneutic – the recursive ontosemantics – of Peirce’s transmutation of the developmental entelechy of Neoplatonic legacy in the history of philosophy:

Only one must not take a nominalistic view of Thought as something that a man has in his consciousness. Consciousness may mean any one of the three categories. But if it means Thought, it is more without than within. It is we that are in it, rather than it in any of us [...]. This then leads to synechism, which is the keystone of the arch. (CP 8: 257, 1902).

As for humanism, [...] I prefer the word ‘anthropomorphism’ as *expressive of the scientific opinion* [...]. But the God of my theism is not finite. That won’t do at all. For to begin with, existence is reaction, and therefore no existent can *be clear supreme* [...] the true Ideal is a living power [...]. That is, the esthetic ideal, that which we all love and adore; the altogether admirable, has, *as ideal*, necessarily a mode of being to be called living [...]. Now the Ideal is not a finite existent. Moreover, the human mind and the human heart have a filiation with God. (CP 8: 262, 1905).

7 Appendix one: Peirce’s man-sign as *Homo narrans* and *Homo semanticus*

Peirce’s later-phase Neoplatonic ontosemiosis traces back to his “Certain Consequences of Four Incapacities” of 1868, the second of which consequences considers that meaningful representations are not discrete events but appear in continuous transmissions of signifiers. Following Schelling, he went on to inquire: How are not just *a priori* but any synthetic propositions possible? Answer: Semiosis is what makes synthesis possible. Peirce depicts a polysemous Man-sign, a traveler in hyperbolic complexifications of planetary earth’s mental convergences. Fluxional and transitive, historical human culture (*Bildung*) is evolutionarily polysemous *überhaupt*, civilizing Man-sign writ larger, forming an inter-penetrating *kosmos noetos* of the making/discovering of symbols of interpretation in sometimes harmonious generalizations of the Beautiful, the Good, and the True.

How does this basically Neoplatonic episteme compare with Santayana’s doctrine of the “ideality of data” that constitutes the “solipsism of the present moment” for the perceiving animal psyche? Santayana’s worldview is bereft of Thirdness, a theory of induction but not of abduction. He postulates his epistemic Archimedean point as Epicurean, based on indubitable presentations of immediate sensation – (a tenet already contested by Stoicism’s canonical doctrine of “*lecta*” based on Aristotle’s semiosis of universal concepts conjugating immediate sense perceptions in the processes of human intelligence). In Peirce’s terms, Santayana’s “biologically idle” data in animal psyche’s “intuitions of essence” amount to contextually congealed butterflies in amber. They occur intransitively in non-dicible orders of Secondness. As in his hedonistic aestheticism, Santayana characterizes animal perception in a naturalistic Epicurean

71 See Innis (2018) in *Sementes de Pragmatismo*, p. 47-58, for an excellent account of Peircean parallels in the Chinese Taoist “Way of Beauty”.

and Darwinian semiosis that is context-reactive and context-adaptive – or, in Peirce’s sign-language, context-*indicative*, context-*demanding*, concurrently designative, percussant, imperative.⁷²

Peirce’s legisignificant universe of Man-Sign cannot be conceived on this force-and-resistance model; it is abundantly *declarative*; holistically and finiously entelic, “would be” dispositional, copulative, destinative, pragmatistic – rather than efficiently causative and step-like. His categorical Thirdness constitutes the Man-Sign as mental traveler into indefinitely deep dimensions and interpenetrative structures of intra and extra-verted worlds of past, present, and future. Deeply metaphoric worlds, deeply symbolic and abstract vistas – fictional, factional, and counter-factional landscapes, moonscapes, and starscapes “light-years” beyond context-congealed animal perception – constitute the Man-Sign as a unique evolutionary species of *H. Sapiens*. Indeed, *H. Sapiens* discovers himself to be *Homo Narrans* – which is to say, *Homo Semanticus* – capable of jiggling, jingling, jiving concepts (mathematical hypotheses and musical rhythms!) in recursive distillations of Platonic Ideas – convergent illuminations of reality in new “crystallizations” (Wallace Steven) that are qualitatively orthogonal to everyday perceptual experience.

The Man-sign finds himself *narrating his own story* which *paradoxically* is not his own making, but rather appearing in a cosmic evolutionary story in which he seems to have been expected to arrive.⁷³ In the Cambridge Lectures and other later-phase writings Peirce crystallized this story of the orthogonal experience of transcendental semiosis in an essentially Neoplatonic formulation that “Mind is not in us, but rather that we are in Mind”. The role of the Man-sign in this story of “the perfusion of signs” is also found in Emerson.⁷⁴ And it turns out to be a crucial issue in contemporary biosemiotics.

72 David Savan (1987). This semiotic effect of Santayana’s text is a function of its agonistic logic, the sense-governing logical operator of “skepticism and yet animal faith, animal faith and yet skepticism”. This is a two-voice logic of paradox and irony against which Peirce inveighed throughout his career as having the binary form (A and yet not-A) which binds rather than releases logical interpretants. The classical description of the semiotic *irresolution* of the agonistic form of logical operator appears in Aristotle’s rejection of the *paradox logic* of the Sophists: “Further, the sophistical argument is a puzzle. For [the Sophists] wish to refute an [opponent, by showing] that his views have paradoxical results, so that they will be clever in encounters. Hence their [ironic] inference that results is a puzzle; for thought is tied up, whenever it does not want to stand still, because the conclusion is displeasing, but it cannot advance, because it cannot solve the argument” (EN 1146a 23-25). “These, then are the sorts of puzzles that arise. We must undermine some of these claims, and leave others intact; for the solution [“loosening”] of the puzzle is the discovery [of what we are seeking]” (EN 1146b 6-7). In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle characterizes the Sophistic logic as playing fast and loose with both sides of the principle of non-contradiction (as paradigmatically in Protagoras and Gorgias), saying it is “like tracking flying game” (Aristotle, 1999, 101-102).

73 Conway Morris (2022, p. 203).

74 In the pivotal mid-1830s, as his Journal *JMN 5* in particular shows, Emerson was reading not only Goethe but also Plotinus – even Goethe translating Plotinus! Emerson quoted Plotinus on the original title page of his first book, *Nature*, which he published anonymously by the Boston publisher James Munroe and Co. in 1836. The title page reads: “Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom [Nous], the last thing of the soul [Psyche, Soul]; nature being a thing which doth only, but not know.” Then, in the reprint of *Nature* in 1849 in *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, along with several of his most important lectures given between 1837 and 1844 including *The Method of Nature* (1841) and *Nature* (1844), Emerson creatively expanded (modernized) Plotinus’s third Hypostasis with his own new “motto” or prefatory poem: A subtle chain of countless things

The next unto the farthest brings:
 The eye reads omens where it goes,
 And speaks all languages the rose;
 And, striving to be man, the worm
 Mounts through all the spires of form.

Still a decade before Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, Emerson parleys Plotinus’s *Nature*, the lower Life of Soul’s contemplation of Mind, into a transcendentalist vision of humanity’s role as *Homo Narrans* and *Semanticus*. Along with other variations of this modernized Plotinian narrative, his poem *Wealth* (1860) reprised the same theme of Nature evolving mankind’s capacity for a new stage of evolutionary consciousness. The story of evolution in miniature, the poem compresses the “creeping centuries” of a “lifeless ball” on the way to the advent of human intelligence.

And well the primal pioneer [Nature]
 Knew the strong task to it assigned
 Patient through Heaven’s enormous year
 To build in matter home for mind.

All of planet earth’s “quarry” remained “waste and worthless, till /Arrives the wise selecting will, / And, out of slime and chaos Wit / Draws the threads of fair and fit”. “Then temples rose, and towns, and marts, / the shop of toil, and the hall of arts”. Next, the ages of human exploration on the high seas, the networks of docks and international commerce. In all this cosmogony, “remembering Matter pays her debt” and is still providing “Electric thrills and ties of Law, / Which bind the strength of Nature wild / To the conscience of a child”. In net semiosis, the poem *Wealth* declares Man’s unique inheritance to carry on the work of natural evolution in the quantum leap of his symbolic intelligence. For only one more of many examples, in *Nature* (1844): “*Nature is the incarnation of thought*. Hence the virtue and pungency of the influence on the mind, of natural objects, whether inorganic or organized. *Man crystallized, man vegetative, speaks to man impersonated* [...] *for wisdom is infused in every form*. It has been poured into us a blood; it convulsed us as pain; it slid into us as pleasure; it enveloped us in dull, melancholy days, or in days of cheerful labor; we did not guess its essence, *until after a long time*.” (E&L, 555, my emphases). “Until after a long time” I take as one of Emerson’s allusions to the arrival of man in the evolutionary process. Conceivably, the overall meaning of the passage is a kind of “modernized” Neoplatonism, the

References

- ABBOT, Francis Ellingwood. *Scientific Theism*. Cambridge: University Press: John Wilson and Son, 1885.
- ARISTOTLE. *Nicomachean Ethics*. translated with introduction and glossary by Terrence Irwin. Second ed., Hackett Publishing Co., 1999.
- ARMSTRONG, A. Hilary. The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus. In: HARRIS, R. B. (ed.). *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. New York: SUNY Press, 1976.
- ATKIN, Albert. Peirce's Architectonic of the Sciences. Available in: <https://iep.utm.edu/peirce-ar/#SH3c> (no date).
- BEIERWALTES, Werner. The Legacy of Neoplatonism in F. W. J. Schelling's Thought. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, v. 10, n. 4, p. 393-428, 2010. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672550210167414>.
- BRANHAM, R. et al. *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1996.
- CHARDIN, T. *The Phenomenon of Man*, Transl. Bernard Wall with introduction by Julian Huxley. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1955.
- DILLON, John; GERSON, L. P. (ed.). *Neoplatonic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2004.
- DILWORTH, David A. Peirce's Concise Review of Santayana's The Life of Reason. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, v. 55, n. 1, p. 20-38, 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/tranchar-peirsoc.55.1.02>.
- DILWORTH, David A. Peirce's Last Philosophic Will and Testament: Uberty in the Logic of Instinctive Reasoning. *Cognitio: Revista de Filosofia*, v. 16, n. 2, p. 233-258, 2015.
- DILWORTH, David A. Santayana's Critique of Modernity and His Repression of Emerson. *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*, n. 17, p. 125-145. 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5840/santayana2019373715>.
- EISELEY, Loren. Eiseley: Collected Essays on Evolution, Nature, and the Cosmos. In: CRONON, W. (ed.). Volume One: *The Immense Journey, The Firmament of Time, The Unexpected Universe, Uncollected Prose*; Volume Two: *The Unexpected Universe, The Night Country*, and 14 essays from *The Star Thrower*. New York: The Library of America, 2016.
- EMERSON, Ralph Waldo. Essays and Lectures: "Plato; or, The Philosopher" and "Montaigne: or, The Skeptic". In: *Representative Men: Seven Lectures (1850)*. New York: The Library of America, 1983.
- ERIGUINA, John Scotus. *John the Scot: Periphyseon, on the Division of Nature*. Trans. Myra L. Uhlfeder. Introduction by Jean A. Potter. The Library of Liberal Arts, 1976.
- FEGHELM, Dagmar. *I, Raphael*. trans. By: Ishbel Flett and Paul Aston. New York: Prestel Publishing, 2004.

- FINDLAY, J. N. The Neoplatonism of Plato. In: HARRIS, R. B. (ed.). *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. New York: SUNY Press, 1976.
- FRANKS, Paul. Peirce's "Schelling-Fashioned Idealism" and "the Monstrous Mysticism of the East". *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, v. 23, n. 4, p. 732-755, 2015. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2015.1057686>.
- GERSH, Stephen (ed.). *Plotinus' Legacy: The Transformation of Platonism from the Renaissance to the Modern Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- GUARDIANO, Nickolas L. Charles S. Peirce's New England Neighbors and Embrace of Transcendentalism. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, v. 53, n. 2, p. 216-245, 2017. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.53.2.03>.
- GUARDIANO, Nickolas L. Critical Notice of Joseph URBAS, The Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* [Online], XIII-2, 2021, connection on 15 June 2022.
- HARRIS, R. B. (ed.). *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. Norfolk, Va.: International Society of Neoplatonic Studies, Old Dominion University, 1976.
- HUME, David. *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. BEAUCHAMP, T. L. (ed.). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- IBRI, Ivo Assad. *Kosmos Noetos: The Metaphysical Architecture of Charles S. Pierce* (English edition). Springer, 2017.
- IBRI, Ivo Assad. *Sementes de Pragmatismo na Contemporaneidade: Homagen a Ivo Assad Ibri*. GHIZZI, E. et al. (ed.). San Paulo: FiloCzar, 2018.
- IBRI, Ivo Assad. *Semiótica e Pragmatismo: Interfaces Teóricas*. Vol. 1. Marília: Oficina Universitária; São Paulo: FiloCzar, 2020.
- IBRI, Ivo Assad. *Semiótica e Pragmatismo: Interfaces Teóricas*. Vol. 2. Marília: Oficina Universitária; São Paulo: FiloCzar, 2021.
- INNIS, Robert E. Peirce's Aesthetics and the "Way of Beauty". In: GHIZZI, E. et al. (ed.). *Sementes de Pragmatismo na Contemporaneidade: Homagen a Ivo Assad Ibri*. San Paulo: FiloCzar, 2018.
- KIM, Alan. *Brill's Companion to German Platonism*. KIM, Alan (ed.). Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019.
- LEINKAUF, Thomas. Schelling and Plotinus. In: GERSH, S. (ed.). *Plotinus' Legacy: The Transformation of Platonism from the Renaissance to the Modern Era*. Trans. Stephen Gersh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- MARTINO, Isabella. *An Analysis of Plotinus's Mysticism in Light of Emerson's Nature*. Independent Reading and MA program paper: The Philosophy Department, SUNY Stony Brook University, 2022.
- MARTINO, Isabella. *Commentary on "The Over-Soul" (First Series, 1841.)*. Independent readings MA program paper: The Philosophy Department, SUNY Stony Brook University, 2022.
- MCCORMICK, John. *George Santayana: A Biography*. New York: Paragon House, 1988.
- MEREDITH, Anthony. Later Philosophy [Plotinus]. In: BOARDMAN, J. et al. (ed.). *The Oxford History of the Roman World*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1986.

- MOORE, Matthew. *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Writings: Charles S. Peirce*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- MORRIS, Simon Conway. *From Extraterrestrials to Animal Minds: Six Myths of Evolution*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2022.
- MURPHEY, Murray. *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc, 1961.
- PATRIDES, C. A. (ed.) *The Cambridge Platonists*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- PEIRCE, Benjamin. *Ideality in the Physical Sciences*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1881.
- PEIRCE, Charles Sanders. *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Writings*. MOORE, M. E. (ed.). Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- PEIRCE, Charles Sanders. *Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898*. KETNER, K. L.; PUTNAM, H. (ed.). Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- PLOTINUS. *The Essential Plotinus: Representative Treatises from the Enneads*. Elmer O'BRIEN, E. (ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1964.
- POLANYI, Michael. *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- POLLEY, Owen. Announcing Undiscovered Regions of Thought: Emersonian Transcendentalism in Benjamin Peirce. *Emerson Society Papers*, v. 33, n. 1, p. 1-7, Spring 2022.
- POLLEY, Owen. *Ideal-Realism: Its Roots in Plotinus and Blossoming in Peirce*. Honors Thesis, Philosophy Department, SUNY Stony Brook University, Spring 2022.
- POTTER, Jean A. "Introduction" to *John the Scot: Periphyseon: on the Division of Nature*. The Library of Liberal Arts, 1976.
- POWICKE, Frederick J. *The Cambridge Platonists: A Study*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- RAPOSA, Michael. *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- SANTAYANA, George. A General Confession; Apologia pro Mente Sua. In: SCHILPP, P. A. (ed.). *The Philosophy of George Santayana*. New York: Open Court, 1991.
- SANTAYANA, George. *Scepticism and Animal Faith*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923.
- SAVAN, David. *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce's Full System of Semeiotic*. Monograph Series of the Toronto Semeiotic Circle, Victoria College of the University of Toronto, Number 1, 1987.
- SCHELLING, F. W. J. *Bruno, or On the Natural and the Divine Principles of Things*. Edited with an introduction by Michael J. Vater. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.
- SCHELLING, F. W. J. *The Ages of the World (1811)*. Translated with an introduction by Joseph P. Lawrence. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019.
- SCHELLING, F. W. J. *The Abyss of Freedom / Ages of the World*. An essay by Slavoj Zizek and the complete text of Schelling's *Die Weltalter* (second draft, 1813), translated by Judith Norman. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- SCHELLING, F. W. J. *The Ages of the World (3rd version, c. 1815)*, translated with an introduction by Jason M. Wirth. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

SCHILLER, Friedrich von. *Anmut und Würde (Grace and Dignity, 1793)*. trans. George Gregory. Schiller Institute, Inc., 1992.

STEINER, Rudolph. *Nature's Open Secret: Introduction to Goethe's Scientific Writings*. Trans. John Barnes and Mado Spiegler, with an Essay on Participatory Science by John Barnes. Anthroposophic Press, 2000.

TOPA, Alessandro. Graphic instinct: the account of graphic instinct: the account of rhetorical action and its instinctive roots in Peirce's classification of practical sciences. *Cognitio: Revista de Filosofia*, v. 21, n. 1, p. 132-151, 2020. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23925/2316-5278.2020v21i1p132-151>.

URBAS, Joseph. *The Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York: Rutledge, 2021.

VATER, Michael J. Schelling's Neoplatonic System-Notion: 'Ineinsbildung' and Temporal Unfolding. In: R. Baines HARRIS, R. B. (ed.). *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. Norfolk, Va.: International Society of Neoplatonic Studies, Old Dominion University, 1976.

WALLIS, Richard T. NOUS as Experience. In: HARRIS, R. B. (ed.). *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. Norfolk, Va.: International Society of Neoplatonic Studies, Old Dominion University, 1976.

WAYNE, Tiffany K, (ed.). *Critical Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts on File, 2010.

WIRTH, Jason M. "Translator's Introduction" to *F. W. J. Schelling, The Ages of the World, (Fragment) From the handwritten remains, third edition c. 1815*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.