Abstract
Is there a poetic ground in Peirce’s philosophy? While this question may sound interesting, it is somehow odd, as Peirce is well–known as a logician, and it is also known by scholars that he was not an expert in poetry, literature, art, or even theories concerning art in general. This paper hypothesizes that there is a starting point in his philosophy that is poetical in its nature. Moreover, Peirce’s system is obviously logical in its form, but also keeps the spirit of the original silent feeling of poetry that seems to have fascinated him. Also, I claim there is a Schellingian heritage in Peirce’s philosophy that is partially responsible for that poetic starting point. This idea also has, as a support, the supposition that a realistic view of the world provides a hypothesis of symmetry between the human and natural worlds, which provides the basic form for his ontological theories and for the theoretical harmony among Peirce’s doctrines. This quality of Peirce’s philosophy is a kind of a Greek beauty that is only evident for those who can view his thought not in fragments but as a complex system that has the potency of not only answering classical philosophical questions, but also of giving rise to a new philosophy which needs to be further developed.

Keywords: Poetic ground, Symmetrical Peircean categories, Philosophical starting point, Logical harmony.

“It will be a proof that convinces the wise if not the clever” (Plato, Phaedrus, 245c).

1. Introduction
This essay is based on the hypothesis that Peirce’s mature works, after the consolidation of his classification of the sciences including—in the realm of philosophy—phenomenology, the normative sciences...
and his metaphysics, contain an aesthetic quality that may possibly be genetic, derived from his account of the admirableness of Nature, which we here describe as poetic ground. This ground, however, under classical theoretical patterns, does not claim a foundationalism in Peircean philosophy; rather, it conjectures regarding a starting point that explains why Peirce went so far in the development of his doctrines, symmetrizing logical rights between Man and Nature through his categories, as if seeking a unity that, ultimately, is not justified solely as a support for any one of the philosophical problems that he addressed, taken alone in its particularity. Besides various passages of his work that suggest the importance of that admirableness, my own contact with Peircean writings, taken in their systemic whole, and structured, at least, in those three major divisions of philosophy adopted by Peirce and not partially focused on any specific discipline, leads to the perception of a theoretical edifice that, fitting its scope, is enhanced by its logical beauty. The beauty of the logical character is enhanced by its theoretical harmony in which various doctrines intertwine, structuring not only an interlaced network of concepts but also a worldview. This worldview could be interpreted simply as something theoretically necessary to provide a better perspective for the solution of philosophical problems, such as the heuristics of the sciences or the theory of abduction. However, the scope of Peircean doctrines, as noted above, seems to reach beyond the needs of those problems, suggesting that, ultimately, his thoughts effectively constituted a vast system of ideas.

The hermeneutic exercise practiced by scholars of Peirce’s works has justifiably progressed, often seeking to interpret topically concepts in their historicity, revealing their constructive evolution. I would stress that, in this essay, I refer primarily to Peirce’s mature writings, in which the existence of an edifice can be evidenced, an edifice that if not finished, is at least self-supporting, i.e., without logical inconsistencies that might condemn its internal structure.

In this regard, this essay does not endeavor to determine anything deductively, and so does not resort to arguments of necessity. It conjectures based on evidence that requires from the reader a certain familiarity with the whole of Peirce’s system of ideas, particularly his metaphysics, and with the traditional authors dearest to him. Among these, there are those whose work agreed with Peirce, according to the letter of his thought, whilst others, tacitly, according to the spirit. While Kant emerges among the former, Schelling appears among the latter. Peirce is very frugal when referring to Schelling, notwithstanding having emphatically declared himself ‘Schellingian’ in various passages. Intriguing as this statement may seem, it at least steers the scholar toward Schelling’s works in the search for affinities, if not for theoretical development in the construction of concepts and doctrines, at least as regards their assumptions.
Indeed, Schelling is a rare realist philosopher in the scholastic meaning of the term. He is also a singularly non-anthropocentric thinker—a philosopher who, in his own way and by interaction with German romanticism, did not make of Nature a mere stage for the human saga. Precociously, prior to Darwinism and consistent with the foundation of his pantheism, Schelling was an indeterminist, acknowledging in Nature a principle of freedom with which he deals nimbly in his philosophy of art, although devoid of the logical resources to develop it and coherently to incorporate it into his philosophy of Nature in the form of an ontological theory of chance. However, the acknowledgment of this principle represents an important and distinctive step amid the determinism that dominated modern thought for several centuries. Existence to him represents the external side of experience that is determined from indetermination, and is exposed as a phenomenon, recognizing in it a principle of otherness resistant to all undue attempts at the appropriation of reality by language.

In philosophical maturity, one must acknowledge the attempts, often frustrating and innocuous, of comparing authors by their doctrines, by the developed body of their theories, it being, however, seemingly more rewarding to do this within the confines of the presuppositions, the starting points, of that which in principle inspires the beginning of reflection. In this regard, we dare to say that, by declaring himself ‘Schellingian’, Peirce acknowledged in the German thinker an affinity of assumptions that, to our mind, harmonizes with the three categories that shape the totality of his philosophy. In view of this affinity, what stands out is perhaps that which is more commonly known about the proximity between the two authors, namely, their objective idealism and their consideration of matter as partially effete mind, exhausted by repetitious behavior, an idea that Peirce acknowledged he derived from Schelling.

At the same time that I consider Peirce’s philosophical edifice more clearly evidenced when a privileged space is provided for his mature metaphysics, I affirm that the consequences of this edifice are, as yet, almost entirely unexplored and that Peirce himself, presumably, was not entirely aware of what they might be. Nevertheless, one can discern that they seem to be philosophically rich. In light of Peircean fallibilism, we can begin to explore these consequences conjecturally, and perhaps discover new entry doors to that edifice. This essay intends to show, under its hypothesis, a viewpoint through which one of these doors seems to take shape.

2. Conjectures on the Possible Starting Point of a Philosophy
When seeking a motive for philosophical reflection, beyond the fortuitousness of having run into it as a mere academic and/or professional activity, one can find systems of ideas that history provides. Each one of them will,
when the aforementioned motivation is taken into consideration, affect our reason and sensitivity in distinct manners, despite the fact that philosophical maturity brings with it the knowledge that even those systems which did not initially attract our sympathy possess exceptional theoretical aspects, worthy of the best moments of human thought.

One can, thus, commence a course through philosophy from sun-dry gateways. One of them is, divested of theoretical resources, to simply contemplate the world, amazed by its vivid and intense presence, whose mystery shifts from its minuscule appearance to its gigantic scale in the face of human minuteness, whether related to time or to space. Powers of ten are confronted, wherein we become infinitesimal in any space-time dimension.

Along this course emerges the possibility of having a sense experience with whatever is closest to Nature, characterized by a relation of pure dissolution of its strongest presence, unable to distinguish, in a contemplative state, what we feel from the object of our feeling. There is here, in this dissolution, a loss of one’s self-consciousness, the positive state of individuality, which reveals itself solely when immersed in the negative sea of otherness. In the individuality of self-consciousness one finds the undoing of that vagueness of contemplation which gathers mere possibilities of existence. It represents, due to its very essence, separation and determination: We are here; the World, there.

The course of contemplation, as I have denominated it here, is, thus, of a genesis distinct from that initial separation which defines individuality. It is, perhaps, a course in which we surrender our own internal world to an external one, whose exteriority we are no longer aware of. We are enveloped by something uncannily amenable to the dissolution of the ego, of self-consciousness. One could call this experience an aesthetic one, a state of enchantment in the presence of pure qualities, a unity of feeling with the object of senses, a boundless oblivion in which the flow of time is no longer perceived, enabling the spirit to run its course, since it does so exclusively in that which is absolutely present. Nothing is collected as past, nothing is envisioned as future.

From a logical-philosophical viewpoint, this commencement of philosophy occurs through the gateway of unity. A system of ideas emerges as an experience that does not differentiate subjective and objective worlds and, possibly, for this very reason, must unfold under a principle of freedom. Spirit is boundlessly present in its absolute presentness—to be out of temporality is to experience an absoluteness which announces itself as born in nature and which consummates itself in that dissolution of consciousness in Nature.

This point of departure, to the very extent that it is valued as philosophically significant, may suggest the adoption of the logical presupposition that the multiplicity of the qualities which constitute the exterior side, notwithstanding the fact that such exteriority does not
appear as such, shares the same nature as that of the internal side—both comprising an eidetic unity of common belonging. This experience’s spiritual nature would prevail, transcending its mere recognition as pure subjectivity, extending such nature to the qualities that appear. There is, here, a kind of hypothesis of symmetry.⁸

It is true, however, that this experience may only suggest that the spirit provides such unity, that it has a solely human origin. Admirable would be the spirit, and all that it poses for itself, heuristically. Everything else would be a scenario for this saga of that which is, historically, a human product.

In both cases I believe that the starting point to adopt would depend on the personal spontaneous decision of the one who starts a philosophy. There is nothing to prove in the comparison between the two beginning points of view. Both depend on a choice, one might say, a poetic choice. On the one hand, it seems to us that the hypothesis of symmetry holds an affinity with a realistic approach to the world, while the second favors the subject pole as the depository of enchantment, a nominalist account of the world. There is, in this second approach, necessarily, a rejection of introspection and, perhaps, even a dismissal of the possibility of a reflexive dialogue of the spirit with itself.

From these two starting points, we may also suppose that in otherness there is the basic experience that originally mobilizes philosophy. It would be entirely unfair to deny to this starting point its own kind of admirableness. Perhaps a “harder poetry” may be extracted from it, based on the pain of impotence before otherness, in the inexorable consciousness of finitude, in the tragic fight for freedom in the face of space-time conditionality, and in the saga of reducing to understanding that which appears as mere brute facticity.⁹ However, a point of departure of such nature could be grounded on a kind of disenchantment with all that could genuinely enchant, deriving from disappointments imposed by a real which, insolently and unashamedly, takes the space of dream.¹⁰

The start of a philosophy through the duality of the experience of otherness may often occur with the spirit cornered by power. This duality may be of the most severe kind as an origin for a philosophy. It will cry out for human values, for freedom, or may plunge into the most desperate pessimism. The inter-subjective bipolarity is the most intense focus of theoretical reflection; the intense presence of the other imposes the need for a kind of rationality, political in its nature. Again, here, Nature becomes just a scenario and, possibly, the experience of unity as described above, the sole instance of the warrior’s rest.

Let us consider, also, commencing from reason. The deciphering of the paths of Nature is, doubtlessly, a legitimate starting point; so is the analysis of reason itself. In the latter, there seems to occur, once more, and perhaps more strongly, the possibility (or not) of the hypothesis of symmetry. Are forms represented or imposed? Again, realism and
nominalism intervene as world views to be investigated; certainly not as grounds of the method of investigation, but as vital components in the choice of the objects of knowledge. Thus, these world views may cause, say, side effects, triggering other consequences, suggesting other hypotheses or, alternatively, inhibiting them, and thus, perhaps, making more complex and enriching (or not) the courses of investigation. Once any given world construction is adopted, it often subsumes the content of other hypotheses that presuppose it.

Classical and highly controversial is the commencement through reason which is founded on the deconstruction of all knowledge. The self that thinks itself should, strictu sensu, as already observed in history, have also deconstructed the language of which it has made use. We must also recall, exemplarily, Fichte’s significant critique of the cogito\textsuperscript{11}; one must perceive that, firstly, the will places the self genetically as a reaction to the world; from this act derives thought, due to the need for the mediation of the conflict between self and not-self.\textsuperscript{12} First, being, then thinking.\textsuperscript{13}

It should be stressed that it does not seem equivocal to say that to seek the ground of knowledge in reason itself is to start from a privileged pole. This privilege, from such a starting point, cannot be undone by philosophy. It will have to be developed under the shadow of this genetic asymmetry, creating, nevertheless, remarkable philosophies such as Kant’s. It seems trivial to aver that the presuppositions of a philosophy determine its development and theoretical consequences. Often, however, there are tacit presuppositions that do not appear in the letter, but rather in the spirit of a thought. For this reason, the starting point of a philosophy is not always explicit—it often simply starts, developing from a question or directing itself towards it. Its edifice will define its internal space wherein thought will move; its more or less opened windows will allow the entrance of an external light with which it will interact. On other occasions, it will close them in hope of profit from the introspection of an all-founding system, from which all forms of exteriority will have already been given. But what really determines the choice of a starting point? The contingency of a problem, or the interference of something for which there is no objective proof, but that will be good enough for the wise, leaving the experts unsatisfied.\textsuperscript{14}

3. The Influence of Schelling
As aforementioned, to specify unity as a starting point of a philosophy is to suppose that such beginning occurs through an experience of freedom, the dissolution of individuality within a whole, or through the depersonalization due to the radical absence of otherness and the conditionality of space and time.\textsuperscript{15} This experience may occur through a communion between interiority and exteriority in such a way that one is no longer conscious of one’s limits or borders. Complete in itself,
such a quality of feeling, notwithstanding a complex of qualities, is experienced as a totality, a whole, a *continuum* without parts, a genuine *qualisign*. It is evident to scholars that what is being described here is the typical experience under the category of Firstness in the philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce. But why should the unity be confined to this subject-object amalgam, where both are in a relationship of *identity*, to use a Schellingian expression? Could not such unity do without the world or, more precisely, without its qualities? Calling Fichte back into our discussion, it is interesting to remember that the first principle of his *Wissenschaftslehre* is formed by the self-identity of the self, not of a self determined by a self-consciousness, but by the atemporal unconditionality of a *continuum* devoid of any world, whose sole predicate is only itself, as in the expression A=A where subject and predicate are equal. As a pure introspection of intellectual intuition, according to Fichte, such an Absolute Subject is the ultimate ground of all existence and all knowledge. The philosopher’s following step, determined in the second principle of his Doctrine of Science, is the determination of a self that enters temporality, acting upon the world, and placing it in the consciousness as mere reaction. The absolute infinite of the self will now be a self constrained by the presence of otherness, although it always underlies, as a ground, the original absoluteness of self-identity.

Here, all the ground of philosophy radically dispenses with the world—it appears as mere *second*, a supporting actor in a kind of tragedy: the loss of absoluteness that must be, somehow, rescued in existence by overcoming the constraining otherness. To this end, knowledge plays a major role—to represent the other is to represent its behavior and to appropriate it. Reason mediates and takes possession of what constrains freedom, aiming at overwhelming it. Nature places itself as a mere obstacle to be overcome by the will and by reason.

It is interesting also to recall this distinction of genesis between Fichte’s and Schelling’s philosophies. In Schelling’s work something very similar to the experience of Firstness occurs in his concept of *aesthetic intuition*. There is a whole, absoluteness, provided in the experience of contemplating Nature, such as can be found in the work of Peirce, who was, incidentally, his confessed admirer.16

In the mature Schelling, freed from the influence of Fichte’s subjectivism, there is also an outline of a realistic philosophy, no longer dependent on the constituting pole of the Kantian subject. The genetic unity of aesthetic experience in the presence of Nature takes on a vital significance in Schelling’s work. His philosophy commences there and, in it, there is no room for the mechanism or determinism inherited from Kant and from the rationalism of the Enlightenment.

It could be said that in the hands of each author there is a rudder leading thought in multifarious directions. I believe that choices depend on what will be most valuable to him: whatever derives most
prominently from his sensitivity or reason. It is true that few authors are capable of devising a philosophy starting from an experience of unity. One should ask beforehand: even if it were valuable, how would it generate a philosophy? How through it will one arrive at knowledge? At ethics? How, from what is in principle unspeakable, does one reach that which can be spoken? As a matter of fact, should not such a philosophy explain why that principle is unspeakable and, indeed, in what language it is not speakable?

To us it seems there is a risk of losing oneself on the way. On the one hand, one might get lost because it does not seem easy to deal with this starting point, by providing it with the continuum of a philosophy. On the other, one could get lost because, despite starting from the universe of feeling, one can be led to a philosophy that seduces through its literary language—a language which is inadequate to provide a desirable precision of concepts and which does not avoid a psychologism that appears as the only hope for a system of ideas not always consistent with its logical structure.

In Schelling, the beginning through aesthetic intuition is not tacit, but explicit. In it lies the primary identity with the Absolute, the possibility of the transcendence of the finitude revealed as experience. Nature appears as a work of art in which the Absolute manifests itself as phenomenon, expressing its freedom. Evidently, as noted, Schelling’s thought characterized a reaction to mechanism and necessitarianism. Natural beauty is an expression of freedom that originated from the Absolute, and art, like Nature as a work of art, is the expression of the infinite in the finite. What that means from a logical point of view we will see later on.

For Schelling there is, in the aesthetic experience, a stronger sense of divinization of what appears as originally poetic constituting the ground of all that derives as existence, temporality, and science. In Schelling, there is no polarization of genesis between subject and object. It is not existence, in its congenital duality, that is the starting point, but something that is in it—and in it the spirit identifies what is similar to it by nature.

It should also be stressed that Schelling conceives matter as effete mind, which, as noted, is a thesis adopted by Peirce. In the System of Transcendental Idealism (1800) one finds the following:

Matter is indeed, nothing else than mind viewed in an equilibrium of its activities. There is no need to demonstrate at length how, by means of this elimination of all dualism, or all real opposition between mind and matter, whereby the latter is regarded merely as mind under a condition of dullness, or the former, conversely, as matter merely in becoming. . . .
It is important to remark that Peirce explicitly declares: “The one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws.” Two other passages clearly show the inspiration of the Peircean concept of effete mind:

I have begun by showing that tychism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind.

And

I carefully recorded my opposition to all philosophies which deny the reality of the Absolute, and asserted that the one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind. This is as much as to say that I am a Schellingian, of some stripe.

A critic of Spinoza, Schelling could not accept a pantheism whereby, in passing from the internal world to the constitution of the external world, the Absolute appears submissive to all constraints of existence and to the inexorable determination of necessity. Freedom must be preserved and it represents the reason for the diversity, for the multiplicity, for the vitality that resists causality, of the organism which, previously, structures itself more in correlations than in a logical antecedent-consequent mechanism. Thus, to him, strict causality is no more than reductionism, a requirement for an understanding that does not venture towards that which, despite appearing under some order, shows levels of freedom that characterize the singularities of existence. Also, according to Schelling, to experience freedom is to desire taking it to all places frequented by philosophy: “Only those who savored freedom can feel the desire of making everything its equal, and make the entire Universe take part.”

So, Schelling is faithful to what appears, despite not proceeding from this starting point to the construction of a consistently conceived system, nor, as is common knowledge, did he possess the logical repertoire and clarity of language to accomplish it. Nevertheless, highly creative insights derive from his philosophy and it seems to us that history, perhaps overly influenced by Hegel’s critique of his works, has not done justice to this quality of his.

Our hypothesis in this paper is that a hypothesis of symmetry, that is to say, the conception of theories structured with a logical symmetry between subjective and objective worlds, arises in Peirce’s work, under the influence of Emerson’s works, among others, and from an inspiration derived from contact with Schelling’s ideas, taken mainly as starting...
points to constitute a philosophy. There is, in favor of this hypothesis, a constitutive similarity between aesthetic intuition in Schelling and the experience of Firstness in Peirce, considering that Peirce’s objective idealism is based on the idealism of Schelling primarily in its consideration of matter as effete mind, as just noted.

Starting philosophy through unity evidently cannot be imposed as a rule. Further, it seems plausible to us to say that every beginning occurs due to a choice that depends on each author’s sensitivity, and also, I must stress, on the problems that the philosophy to be constructed proposes to solve. It is certainly true that the development of a philosophy often encounters unforeseen problems. But, in principle, it is important to consider that problems of genesis are the object of few philosophical systems.

Starting with a unity of a poetic nature probably requires a sort of poetic soul. A principle of unity, i.e., an original unity that can only be provided independently of theoretical models, consists in a pure experience not of reaction in the face of otherness, nor of mediation of judgment, but of an aesthetic nature. On this point, precisely on this point, Schelling, seems, in our view, to penetrate Peirce’s mind.

4. Unity as a Starting Point in Peirce’s Philosophy
By having initiated his classification of sciences with mathematics, Peirce, a logician, chemist and physicist, creates the expectation that he will produce an extremely rationalistic philosophical system, focusing exclusively on a theory of rationality in general and a theory of science in particular. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that though Peirce’s philosophy has a profile strongly focused on epistemology, it remains clearly distant from a rationality that is exclusively based on deduction. On this view, Peirce’s most original point is, unquestionably, his theory of abduction as a necessary and generative stage of investigation, which deductive systems put aside or ignore. It is interesting to ask: does the theory of abduction have any link with that primary unity that I affirm as the poetic ground of Peirce’s philosophy?

Leaving this question unanswered for the time being, it should be noted that, at this original point of Peirce’s logic, there is a striking feature of his philosophy, the intention of replying to questions of genesis, i.e., concerning an archeology not only of knowledge but also of the objects of knowledge. His philosophy unfolds as a fundamentally genetic one, and also, as prefigured by Schelling, as the kind that avoids all and every sort of dogmatism.

In his phenomenology, Peirce could have conceived his category of Firstness solely as a support for his epistemological indeterminism, strongly associated with his metaphysical theory of chance (tychism). However, it seems to us, he needed to go farther. More than a category of spontaneity, of deviation in relation to law, of the diversity and mul-
tiplicity present in phenomena, Firstness genuinely houses the classical ideas of freedom and unconditionality, thanks to its appearing both on the internal and the external side of the mind, taken in a general ontological sense. And the great predicate of unity is its being, essentially, internal. But, by affirming this and, at the same time, by knowing that the experience that typifies Firstness in its pure state is one of non-differentiation between subjective and objective aspects of phenomena, one must conjecture that such unity does not differentiate two interiorities, making its nature essentially eidetic.

The dissolution of self-consciousness in that experience is, simultaneously, the loss of the notion of exteriority, and, therefore, everything is experienced as purely internal. Certainly, this experience is no longer of an interiority confined to a subject, but an innerness as the substratum of a unity, of a continuum which is eidetic in nature. It could be said that there is an amalgam between the subjective innerness and Nature’s objective innerness and, in this experience, all temporality vanishes, all discontinuity is subverted, all dichotomy between object and representation is undone. However, it is not the same as Fichte’s solitude of a self-identity empty of intuition, but is analogous to communion, as it is given in Schelling’s aesthetic experience.

Firstness characterizes the absolute freedom of the mind, free from the constraints of existence. It could now be said that such freedom embodies a continuum of possibilities, that possible existences may be engendered. Contemplation assumes the status of a genetically silent starting point, full of an intense potential meaning. This experience, however, can be interpreted as if such unity constitutes nothing more than a set of qualities that can only be grounded on subjective innerness and, therefore, would have its origin exclusively in it. Here, again, a subjectivist, constitutive approach is adopted, and the hypothesis of symmetry does not fit: only the subjective realm generates qualities and therefore they have no origin in Nature, but in human innerness. Evidently, there are no over-riding rules to adopt this or that approach. It depends, once more, on what one desires of a philosophy; it depends, again, I would say, on one’s taking a realist or nominalist approach to the world. From each one of them, I think, distinct philosophical systems emerge.

Supposing that the forms of science are provided exclusively by reason in its encounter with amorphous phenomena reveals a philosophical approach similar to that one which considers that the beauty and the enchantment of aesthetic experience can only be originated in the human mind. In Hegel, let us recall, for example, beauty only reaches its spiritual heights as a work of art, never as natural beauty. To him, aesthetic experience never represented a communion reflecting an identity that could hold, in our terms, a hypothesis of symmetry. The night in which all cows are black appears as such only to those who, by valuing
the determination, seem to disregard the fact that this derives from the indetermination in which it is inscribed as free possibility.

Thus, according to Peirce, it is interesting to learn that Scholastic realism, later perfected in his Synecchism, tacitly emerges as a choice, even, perhaps, as a kind of feeling of the world. In the light of this realist choice, that unity of feeling is a quale-consciousness or, semiotically speaking, a qualisign. But why, as I have said, would Peirce need these concepts? Would it not suffice, as we have seen, to confine Firstness to the recognition of Nature’s asymmetries and to our congenital tendency to error at the phenomenological level, and to chance at the metaphysical one? Would these admissions not suffice to systematically constitute its indeterminism, either epistemologically expressed in his fallibilism, or ontologically, in his doctrine of tychism? In the light of a purely rationalist-deductivist epistemology, perhaps the unity of the qualisign could be disposed of, and quale-consciousness would not have to be a philosophical object, and having to deal with this inconvenient vagueness of the mere possibilities embodied in the continuum of unity could be logically avoided. It seems, however, that this unity is of utmost importance in Peirce’s system. On the one hand, it is axial for his theory of abduction. On the other hand, it is a kind of fulcrum for the author’s cosmology. Moreover, in our hypothesis, it is poetic by nature.

This brief essay is not the proper place for developing a theory of art or of beauty, notwithstanding their being, it seems clear to us, extractable from Peirce’s philosophical system, in addition to his theory of the Admirable. However, it may suffice to affirm here that poetic language characterizes itself by a deconstruction of logical language, which, because of its very nature, seeks a univocality of meaning with its objects, maintaining with them a relationship of otherness. Poetry, like mathematics, constructs possible worlds, from, precisely, the absence of duality, of otherness, between its language and its objects.

If we admit that poetic consciousness, the spiritual state primary to creation, is characterized by a non-commitment to theories that previously established formally relevant criteria for the selective apprehension of phenomena, we must suppose that such original unity is poetic by nature, since it embodies in its indetermination possibilities of existence, and requires that we construct something to say about it from its ineffability. Inversely, when one moves from an intentionally cognitive discourse to a poetic one, a deconstruction of the logical or mediating language is necessary for the subsequent conquering of the poetic language.

Thus, the original unity is already naturally poetic. And here poetry, poetic unity, and everything that is of the nature of art, is logically associated, as noted earlier, with the universe of possibilities. If the original
unity is the expression of *freedom*, of being *first*, then it has nothing to do with any conditionality that could be derived from logical *necessity*. 

Insofar as there is any enchantment in the unity of Firstness, an enchantment full of the atemporality of the nature of poetry, Peirce does not draw from this experience a meaning associated with the sensual pleasure that it may eventually provide, but eschews aesthetic theories that confine such experience to the sensations of pleasure and pain.²⁹ There is much more for him in this experience, and this is revealed in the theoretical monument that he builds, probably celebrating his world feeling with an admirable *philosophical construction*. 

What is the philosophical meaning that Peirce gives to such experience when mentioning it as possessing those qualities that are first, of a suchness that is unable to integrate classes, generalities, universals or laws, precisely that which would interest science? What interest would such a First have other than being poetic in its nature? Notwithstanding all such questions, it seems to us that Peirce attempts to show that the entire theoretical construction of his philosophy maintains a commitment to this unity. The realist hypothesis of symmetry is kept in a kind of fidelity to a love of genesis. By conceiving the loving of the enchantment of aesthetic experience in Nature as involving a feeling of certainty that the enchantment does not derive from itself, one sees clearly that it is more than a self-love grounded on a pole that presumptuously attributes to itself a power to constitute everything. But this experience will reveal that otherness must derive from unity, together with the need to establish a dialogue with it, *symmetric in form*, a need which will require a semiotics to consummate it.

5. The Theoretical System

For our purposes, it is not fitting to introduce here an exhaustive Peircean classification of the sciences, but only to make use of a macroscopic classification that places philosophy in relation to mathematics and the special sciences. Thus, it suffices to consider the triad mathematics, philosophy—the latter comprising phenomenology, the normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics and logic or semiotics) and metaphysics—and the special sciences.³⁰

5.1. Mathematics

Mathematics emerges in the system of sciences as the first science, a position which makes it difficult to understand the hierarchy established between itself and phenomenology. How can mathematics come before phenomenology, when the latter is a science without categorical affirmations, a science that has as its main task a mere inventory of appearances? Indeed, mathematics is a science of forms produced by our subjective world, where the perception of generality is essentially
trained. Here, both geometry and algebra, and even arithmetic, deal with structures of order, created independently of any realities.

The transcendental temptation always seems to be lurking around reflections on the nature of mathematics, leading thinkers towards a kind of agreement, if not an explicit one, at least a tacit one, with Kant. Peirce, however, rejects the transcendentalism of mathematics, regarding it as a science which, albeit not empirical, depends on a heuristic experimentation with diagrams and signs despite its absence of commitment to the facticity of any world that may appear to reason.

Thus, although rejecting mathematics as an \textit{a priori} ground of rationality, Peirce acknowledges the importance of Kant’s schematism from which he draws a major part of his concept of diagram:

\begin{quote}
Kant is entirely right in saying that, in drawing those consequences, the mathematician uses what, in geometry, is called ‘construction’ or in general a diagram, or visual array of characters and lines. Such a construction is formed according to the precept furnished by the hypothesis. Being formed, the construction is submitted to the scrutiny of observation, and new relations are discovered among its parts, not stated in the precept by which it is formed. . . .
\end{quote}

In his Transcendental Analytic, Kant had already proposed the concept of a \textit{transcendental scheme}, which plays a mediating role between the categories and the phenomena, having both intellectual and sensible characteristics. He also defines it as the \textit{product of the capacity of the imagination} and a \textit{rule of synthesis} of this capacity, so that the schemata are, thus, “nothing but a priori determinations of time according to rules. These rules relate in the order of the categories to the time-series, to the time-content, to the time-order, and lastly, to the whole of time, regarding all possible objects.” By attributing a quality of generality to the scheme, Kant distinguishes it from image: “Indeed it is the schemata, not the image of objects, which underlies our pure sensible concepts. No image could, in any way, be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. . . . The triangle scheme can only exist in thought.”

In the Doctrine of Method, Kant distinguishes philosophical and mathematical knowledge, for the former occurs discursively through concepts, and the latter through the construction of concepts. Comparing these two forms of knowledge, Kant simulates a situation in which a philosopher and geometer encounter the development of a demonstration in which the sum of the internal angles of a given triangle is two right angles. The former, conceptually reflecting on angles, straight lines or the number three, “will produce nothing new.” The geometer, on the other hand, “starts off by building a triangle” and, through other supplementary constructions, “sees” the solution. To which Kant adds: “thus, like in algebra, by means of symbolic con-
structions, and in geometry through the ostensive construction (the geometrical construction of the objects themselves), we succeed in arriving at results which discursive knowledge could never have reached by means of mere concepts.”

This is how the constructive method of mathematics “together with its heuristic advantages, protects all inferences against error by placing each one of them before our eyes.” Notwithstanding differences in principle between Peirce’s and Kant’s philosophies, the latter exerted, it is known, major influence on the former’s thought. It is true that Peirce had full knowledge of the “constructions” of ancient Greek geometry, used in theorematic demonstrations, preventing him from saying that he had derived this concept from Kant. However, in our judgment, Kant appears to have been the first to differentiate, epistemologically, the verbal and mathematical discourses. Nevertheless, Peirce generalizes the idea of diagram to an extreme that results in his correlation with the logic of relatives and the theory of logical graphs. This deepening of the notion of diagram made him interpret transcendental logic as Kant’s uncalled-for intention to reduce every necessary reasoning to the syllogism in Barbara; Peirce sees, for example, diagrammatic deductibility in the operations of predictive thought, in a kind of internal dialogue in which the mind outlines a plan of behavior when faced with a presumed course of future experience. As he saw it, even in the simplest syllogism a diagrammatic structure is present, stating, also, that the ancient syllogistic logic, reviewed under the Logic of Relatives, leads arguments to a multiplicity of possible conclusions.

Let us reflect now, first of all, on that heuristic power of human vision, which, as we have seen, whether for Peirce or for Kant, appears as an effective resource for the discovery of relationships and systemic understanding of a state of things contained in a diagram. Let us take the Kantian concept of the rule of synthesis of the whole of time, as valid for his idea of a scheme. If we consider a diagram as an icon of relations revealed to vision, the presentness of all those relational qualities will appear in it. I think that this is the idea ingrained in the Kantian concept of a scheme, in which, in fact, time is abolished for intuition. Those qualities are, for the mind, absolutely simultaneous, presenting themselves, already, as a first synthesis and facilitating, perceptively, the association of other ideas to correlated ones. The synthesis of time implies, under these terms, its own exclusion for consciousness; the importance of time in a diagram is, in fact, its vital absence, by gathering, simultaneously, all the predicates of relations under a single system. Let us recall that this presentness of ideas for the mind is its fundamentally heuristic condition, despite the diagram, as an icon, showing the object represented under a form to which it is structurally analogous. What seems to be excluded is the repetitive need for mnemonic operations; the presentness of the diagram enables it to be contemplated free from
any constraints. This is the state of creative ideality that can discover new relations in which the eye for the exteriority of the diagram and the eye for the interiority of the imaginary join in the unity of a heuristically perceptive consciousness. It is thus that a deductive diagram causes “surprises.” It is in this sense that Peirce criticizes those who “manifestly disregard the construction of a diagram, mental experimentation, and the startling novelities of many deductive discoveries."  

From this angle of vision, verbal language does not possess the visual resources which take advantage of a kind of “paralysis of time” in ostensive predicates, requiring, in its spoken or written expressions, temporality for the intelligibility of the whole of the conceptual relations. Added to this line of argumentation is the fact that the verbal sign, in its atomicity, or even, in its expressive system, depends exclusively on conventional rules, and is not able to resort to that relation of formal similarity between iconic structures and their objects. Significantly, the scientific revolution that occurred in the Renaissance coincides, also, with a revolution in the language of the sciences of Nature, to the detriment of medieval verbalism, through the advantageous systematic and heuristic use of geometry and mathematics in the elaboration of its theoretical work. It seems to me that this view of the diagram as an image of time in which, in fact, time is absent from consciousness, enabling us to think synthetically all the predicates exhibited in a unity of vision, is an important step to understand the heuristic relevance of this unity, particularly as a support for the diagrammatic structures of the hypotheses in the abductive stage of an investigation.

On the other hand, it is also interesting to bear in mind that, in a science such as mathematics, and certainly, as in all the special sciences that rely on it, there is an important atemporality of thought present in the heuristic processes, one provided by the general diagrams or general icons of relations. The often-noted relationship between iconic signs and creative processes, is due, so it seems to me, to this kind of time paralysis for consciousness. Thus, it could be said that if diagrams are fundamental for heuristic operations, and certainly for the structuring of abductive arguments, insofar as consequences are deductively drawn from abduction, it can also be said that under the realm of Thirdness, the state of consciousness found in Firstness is fundamental. Here then, in mathematics, reason appears as contemplating itself, creating new world possibilities. This view of mathematics appears to bring it closer to poetry, and more generally, to art. Is art not also a builder of worlds, and for this reason, totally iconic, to the extent that it does not depend on any reality to assume the possibility of signifying? It could be argued that both math and art have their own objects internal to their respective discourses; in this much mathematics and art are formed as languages. And here a new path can be foreshadowed for the analysis of
art as a semiotic object, although this essay does not afford the required space to pursue this point further.

Let us return, then, to the question at hand: how can the operating manner of mathematics condition phenomenological research? Is not phenomenology, also defined by Peirce as phaneroscopy, that science which, almost naively, only makes an inventory of appearances, without aiming at arriving at true affirmations? After all, its mission is to study phenomena in their Firstness. Why, then, would it depend on mathematics? Let us see, then, in general outline, how Peirce designed his phenomenology.

5.2. Phenomenology and Categorical Genetic Symmetry—The Roots of a World Theory

What are the requirements for the practice of this science defined by Peirce as phenomenology? He explains:

The faculties which we must endeavor to gather for this work are three. The first and foremost is that rare faculty, the faculty of seeing what stares one in the face, just as it presents itself, unreplaced by any interpretation . . . . This is the faculty of the artist who sees for example the apparent colors of nature as they appear. . . .

The second faculty we must strive to arm ourselves with is a resolute discrimination which fastens itself like a bulldog upon the particular feature that we are studying, follows it wherever it may lurk, and detects it beneath all it distinguishes. The third faculty we shall need is the generalizing power of the mathematician who produces the abstract formula that comprehends the very essence of the feature under examination purified from all admixtures of extraneous and irrelevant accompaniments.50

Here Peirce calls for the eye of the artist, namely, that we open our eyes and simply see things as they appear, divesting the mind of all forms of conceptual mediation which, surely, would place those things under a temporal cognitive framework. Here, unity is not the logical form of judgment, but a kind of fusion between qualities and feeling, comprising qualities of feeling present in a depersonalized subject as such. Here, mathematics shares with phenomenology an art of contemplation, in which it is disinterested in art, as Kant had already pointed out.51 However, in mathematics, as here conceptualized, contemplation is the heuristic recourse for operating on diagrams and, therefore, is committed to the solution of a problem. In both, temporality is absent, whether in phenomenology, by the totality of qualities present in the phenomenon and absence of mediation, or in mathematics, by the simultaneous presence of the predicates of a possible relation.
It is also required, as a second rule for the practice of phenomenology, that one give attention to some privileged aspect of the phenomenon, that which is outstanding in its way of appearing. A separation of qualities is initiated in this perceptual operation; perception is focused on some aspect of the object that insists against consciousness for its recognition. This requirement for attention to outstanding points is manifestly, also, a characteristic of the operations of mathematics.

Finally, Peirce recommends that we have the capacity of generalization of the mathematician, since the science of phenomenology involves the author’s three categories, each one of them being the designation of a generalized class of phenomena. Perhaps, here, mathematics more decisively affects the practice of phenomenology. But it should be observed that such impact does not so much occur as science, but rather as expertise and training. The task of phenomenology is, truly, to form classes, and it is in this task that such mathematical expertise emerges in support of the observation of similarities as well as in generalization acceptable to reason. However, one must emphasize the independence of phenomenology in relation to logic, since the former is a mere inventory of phenomena, not a system of categorial claims concerning the data of experience.

It is also important to stress that Peirce seeks to expand his concept of experience within phenomenology, considering not only that which affects our senses, providing us with a consciousness of outwardsness, but also by introducing the idea of an inner experience, where objects may be equally inventoried. Thus, categories become homogeneous in the sense of characterizing external and internal experiences, although, I must stress, this consideration is a distinction, not a separation. Firstness is the category of the qualities of feeling in its internal aspect and in the aspects of diversity and variety observed in external objects. Here emerges one of the crucial points for the grounding of the poetry latent in Peirce’s thought: the categorial unity between external diversity and quality of feeling already suggests the cosmic-metaphysical grounding of feeling. The unity of the quality of feeling drawing consciousness from time, creating for it a kind a hiatus in temporality, since it is an experience of pure presentness, leads us to conjecture that there may be a similar hiatus in objective time, corresponding to the diversity and asymmetry of Nature, considering that both phenomena, feeling and diversity, fall under the same category.

The phenomenological range of the category of Firstness, embodying unity of consciousness and an apparent aspect of Nature, namely, its diversity, is infused with the possibilities of a poetic dialogue, a silent dialogue in which there is a sea of signs constituted by the merging of that which originally presents itself as interior and exterior worlds. Now, however, there appears only one anonymous inner realm that possibly heralds, joyfully, the end of the dualism between mind and matter, making the sea of signs a continuum whose only substance is
This correspondence between diversity and unity of the qualities of feeling also seems to suggest, already, that such a continuum is, by nature, heuristic, grounded on the freedom of the possibilities of aesthetic experience. It is here that Schiller’s *spieltrieb* ostensibly appears. This correspondence promises new views of art and of the metaphysical nature of aesthetic experience, views which, as a matter of fact, were not developed by Peirce.

Further, and even more so, the correspondence presents a most interesting problem, which is to show that objective time is really disrupted in the present, as there is a hiatus of time in consciousness that does not experience the otherness of the world nor mediating thought, but only qualities in its unity. What is important to stress here is that *quale-consciousness* is a continuous quality of feeling that does not set itself apart from consciousness as such. Moreover, such consciousness is absolutely separated from time, and, for this reason, it is a consciousness of complete presentness, with no links to the flow of temporality due to its unconditionality; it does not generate itself from the past, nor does it have any future intentions: “The Now is one, and but one.” Thus, this state of consciousness is a *continuum* of possibilities; from it nothing necessary can be derived. It is, then, a feeling of undefined freedom that occurs in an internal hiatus of time. Peirce explicitly claims that the ontological expression of this phenomenon of interiority is exactly that principle of fortuitousness in exteriority that he denominated absolute chance, responsible for the variety and spontaneity of Nature:

> that very same logical element of experience, the quale-element, which appears upon the inside as unity, when viewed from the outside is seen as variety.

Wherever chance-spontaneity is found, there is feeling in the same proportion. In fact, chance is but the outward aspect of that which within itself is feeling.

Phenomenology as conceived by Peirce is a suggestive science, from which many conjectures may arise. From what appears phenomenologically, namely, in an experimental sphere where the subject is involved, metaphysical hypotheses are suggested. But Peirce starts his philosophy from phenomenology already committed to his three categories and every such hypothesis is indeed pre-formed by them. However, no necessity is imposed on this pre-formation. Peirce adopts the categories as a kind of mold for every theory inspired by phenomenology associated with a science of general forms—that is, mathematics. And when a theory has reality as its object, being thus ontological, then what I have called *symmetry between subjective and objective worlds* is somehow established by Peirce. This non-necessary procedure is the
ground of my own conjecture in this essay, viz., that Peirce pays tribute to a poetical feeling before a vast universe of phenomena by conceiving it realistically, with the same logical rights—rights that nominalistic philosophies only recognize in the subjective realm. I consider a good example of this Peircean procedure, which is purely abductive, the following passage where there is a brilliant conjecture by Peirce about a possible rupture of the objective time continuum precisely in the present: “time has a point of discontinuity at the present . . . the past is broken off from the future as it is in our consciousness.”

From this point of analysis, let us see how such categorial symmetry is extended to Secondness and Thirdness. The second class of phenomenological experience, that of the reaction of the facts against consciousness, the experience of duality, introducing the consciousness of individuality in the ego/non-ego distinction, has its internal correlate in the conflict of the past ego with present consciousness. There is a kind of inner non-ego comprised by the lived past that possesses the same otherness characteristics of an external world, thus phenomenologically highlighting these internal and external aspects of this experience.

From this realm of appearance Peirce formulates a metaphysical hypothesis, in the same way that the hypothesis of chance was related to Firstness. This is the hypothesis of existence, as the locus of reaction and duality not only between subject and object, but also of reaction and reciprocal space-time reaction of the objects of the world. So declares Peirce:

> Although in all direct experience of reaction, an ego, a something within, is one member of the pair, yet we attribute reactions to objects outside of us. When we say that a thing exists, what we mean is that it reacts upon other things. That we are transferring to it our direct experience of reaction is shown by our saying that one thing acts upon another. It is our hypothesis to explain the phenomena,—a hypothesis which like the working hypothesis of a scientific inquiry, we may not believe to be altogether true, but which is useful in enabling us to conceive of what takes place.

On the other hand, the experience of mediating thought is to Peirce also a phenomenon, and its external correlate is the apparent and partial ordering of the facts of the world, through which that mediating activity seems to find support. This generates the metaphysical hypothesis of realism, i.e., that such ordering has a real grounding in the generality of the laws of Nature. But a philosophy that intends to be genetic will have a lot to explain. What is the origin of the unity of the experience of Firstness? Where does the duality of existence come from? What is
the origin of this apparent order of the world and, furthermore, what is the origin of the laws of Nature?

5.3. The Fabric of Ontology

Peirce’s concept of reality has three primary predicates that significantly enrich it. The first one is the essential one of otherness, viz., the radical independence of the real in relation to thought, language, or human will. The second is the acknowledgment that there is real generality which is independent of the generality of language, as is the case in Scholastic realism: “We understand by the Real that which possesses such attributes as it does possess, independently of any person or definite existent group of persons thinking that it possesses them. Thus, Hamlet is not Real, since his sanity depends on whether or not Shakespeare thought him sane.”

In his maturity, Peirce perfected this realism with the logic of relatives, where he replaces the notion of class with system. This was something that was to better represent his realism as one no longer of genera, but of continua. His question was no longer about the reality of general classes: “The continuum is that which the logic of relatives shows the true universal to be. I say the true universal; for no realist is so foolish as to maintain that no universal is a fiction. Thus, the question of nominalism and realism has taken this shape: Are any continua real?”

The third predicate is that of the intelligibility of laws. Evidently, the admission of the realism of laws or of continua should enable their representation and this possibility only occurs if there is a connaturalit y between thought and the thought-of object, as declared by Peirce: “What we think cannot possibly be of a different nature from thought itself” and “That which the truth represents is a reality. This reality being cognizable and comprehensible is of the nature of thought.”

The admission of this connaturality in the sphere of reason already was preceded by the non-differentiation between subjective and objective worlds in the experience of Firstness, as this lack of differentiation can only be feasible through a substantial connaturality. Both this connaturality and the admission of continuity between mind and matter, considering mind as the fundamental substance of the universe, constitute the core content of Peirce’s objective idealism. This idealism, when misunderstood as subjective idealism, leads to a kind of incompatibility with realism, for how could reality, grounded on subjectivity, as proclaimed by Berkeley and Fichte, for example, be considered to be independent of thought and language? Nevertheless, here, Peirce’s realism and idealism are doctrines that interlock and complement each other. A good project of philosophy should see to it that a doctrine, which resolves any given problem, does not conflict with other theories within the same system. On this issue, Peirce was an extremely careful designer.
However, it must also be stressed that Idealism derives its strongest support from a question about the origin of the laws of Nature. After denying necessitarian doctrines and philosophies that admit a determinism without a logical foundation, Peirce argues that the explanation for this origin can only be an evolutionary one, and that the laws must have resulted from an evolutionary process, which is still going on. This explanation, in turn, prompts another: if there is a process of evolution, it must be due to a principle in the form of a law that can develop from itself. Continuing his argument, Peirce states that such a law must be a tendency towards generalization, a generalizing tendency, and that such tendency is the major law of mind, the law of association and of the acquisition of habits.

To state that Nature has a tendency towards the acquisition of habits is to reaffirm the mental substratum of ideality that permeates reality. In fact, this argument interlocks harmoniously with the theory that matter is effete mind and with the predicate of intelligibility of natural processes, i.e., the connaturalism between these processes and the reasoning processes. The poetic joy of Firstness, in which consciousness moves, anonymous to itself, in the universe of qualities, in pure ideality, now seems to be extended to the logical sphere, suggesting that the inward and outward worlds are no strangers to one another. The possibility of a commerce of signs also seems to be announced between these worlds, and semiotics has to be sufficiently powerful to deal with it.

Excluding mathematicians, whose science is independent of the empirical world, it seems that no original thinkers construct a theoretical framework without first designing its size, thinking about what questions they want to answer, just as a fisherman cannot foresee the size of his net without first considering what type of fish he wants to catch. Incidentally, the historical tracking of the paths followed by a thinker in the construction of his or her philosophy shows that he or she progresses to finely edged problems and returns to basic theories in order to develop sufficient power to solve those problems. Returning to the question of mind and matter, and their common matrix, ideality, let us deal, once more, with the theory of synchism. This theory stands in support of objective idealism, affirming the continuity between mind and matter. It must be noted that this continuity occurs between what is continuous, mind, and what is discontinuous, matter. This will only be possible if matter is under a system of general relations in which its conduct appears as a replica—such relations will make matter logically representable. This will require a time continuum with its hiatus in the present, through which the action of the principle of chance is possible. Time, like any real continuum, is in evolution and, therefore, is not a perfect continuum, having, thus, that discontinuity point in the present.

The possibility of knowledge and representation depends on the continuum of the laws. This is one of the crucial points for the necessity
of realism. A world without laws, i.e., without a system of relations that allows individuals to be represented, is not cognizable. Again, once mediative thought is introduced as a phenomenon, it requires a real explanation of its possibility, as with any other appearance inventoried by phenomenology. And its possibility finds support in the reality of laws. This seems to be the greatest mistake of nominalism: to suppose the possibility of thinking individual things while imposing on them general relations whose genesis is in language. The absence of real general relations characterizes a state of absolute freedom, the exclusive action of absolute chance over things, or, in other words, a state of chaos. Peirce, on this view, will claim that “Chaos is pure nothing,” and such nothing means the impossibility of any Thirdness.

The tacit intention in composing a genetic philosophy makes Peirce give utmost importance to evolutionism, to the point of adopting it radically: “It is doubtful whether any consistent philosophical position other than an evolutionist position is possible.” The development of laws from chance, and the need to explain the harmony between a principle of order and one of freedom—responsible for two modes of phenomena—occurs under an evolutionary vector. Here the stage is set for cosmology, where Peirce builds a theory to explain the emergence of the categories. In it, he reconstructs the origin of Firstness and its passage to Secondness, though it is not possible to develop it here even briefly. The passage from the latter to Thirdness already had an explanatory framework in the tendency of the world towards the acquisition of habits within the fabric of ideality that is founded on Firstness. What I am interested in emphasizing here is that Peirce, in his account of cosmogenesis, shows that that original unity which configures Firstness, under the cosmic viewpoint, is metaphysical in nature. From it, in the same way that there is a silent echo from the original freedom through Chance, we have the remnants of the qualities of the world experienced as qualities of feeling, experienced outside temporality. Here, I think, Peirce seems to recover, through other means, the feeling of nostalgia found in Schelling’s aesthetic experience. There is a kind of timeless return to a beginning from where everything is born. This is the deepest poetic ground in Peirce’s philosophy. In it, everything begins; from it duality is generated; in it the synthesis of reason finds support.

However, it is necessary to guarantee an evolutionary force, which, leaving that first unity, sets the world in motion and possesses the same initial poetic charm. And Peirce finds it in the doctrine of agapism, or “evolutionary love,” which is the seminal force of evolution, joining two other principles and constituting the triad of tychism, anancism and agapism, associated, in this order, with the three categories. Thus, agapism is linked to Thirdness, which, I must recall, plays the role of mediator, generalizer, and reducer of the brute force of the particular to the unity of a cosmic continuum that does not differentiate inner
and outward worlds. In its congealing and continuous nature, agapism is not a principle that requires the reconciling oppositions of genesis, since they possess a unity that endows them with a connaturality similar to the ideal-real unity within Schelling’s philosophy. This brings to mind a passage from Peirce: “love cannot have a contrary, but must embrace what is most opposed to it. . . .” 76

Agapism is the doctrine that proclaims the presence of a synthesizing force of ideas enabling them to group together and grow through a power of sympathy. This conjecture by Peirce harmonizes with his theory of abduction. See how such a conjecture depends semiotically on the theory of abduction itself and harmonizes with it. Our capacity to form hypotheses must, somehow, be correlated with a theory of the world, which, in turn, is also a metaphysical conjecture, which derives from experience. However, this apparent circle has, I suppose, a reason: doctrines are so logically interlocked that they seem to support one another in an undifferentiated and reciprocal manner. The same occurs with the epistemological and metaphysical theories. There is an evident logical consistency between fallibilism and tychism. By acknowledging the freedom of Nature as a phenomenon which has a seminal principle, chance, and the consequent deviations from laws, one must refrain from representing in the sign that which the object does not contain, i.e., precision and full determination of conduct. Fallibilism, somehow, attenuates the classical anxiety for epistemological determinism, by removing a certain theological weight that has always accompanied the concept of truth.

The logical circularity of theories is solved by an evolutionary philosophy that establishes a hierarchy in temporality, and that places the human mind as emerging long after the formation of the universe, making the structure of Nature a conditioner of our faculties. This is one of the central reasons why Peirce’s philosophy cannot start from a transcendental subject. It must emerge naturally from this simple and genetic being in the world and, if this primary relationship is one of love, must allow the theories to grow from it.

5.4. The Normative Sciences

Peirce’s aesthetics is one of the least developed sciences within his system. This was not because he declared himself ignorant of art, 77 since this was never the object of Peircean aesthetics. He intended to give it a primary role in the hierarchy of the normative sciences, making both ethics and logic, or semiotics, dependent on it. I believe its ground was contained in the primary aesthetic experience of the admirableness of Nature. Thus, the concept of the admirable was born, that which must surely integrate in the mind not only all the faculties in a single unity, but also the objects of reason and behavior. Thus, it is not a science of beauty, which, by the way, behind its appearance, does not always
portray something admirable. Beauty, however, can be the bridge to the admirable and here, within the small space of this essay, I propose only to show that art, when the metaphysical nature of aesthetic experience under Peirce’s philosophy is recovered, can assume a special charm and open a new universe of meaning, which will certainly transcend the mere satisfaction of the senses. Semiotics, in particular, would not need to have its emphasis on the determination of the sign by the object that appears in many expressions of sign definition, if only it purported to be a philosophy of language or an instrument for the analysis of signs in culture in general. In this emphasis, the roots of realism already reappear, as they had already appeared in phenomenology, requiring, out of fidelity to this definition, an effective triadic approach, considering the realistic presence of the object and, when the ambience of reflection is not the real, to be aware of the object as something built within the sign. I believe that the first step towards a better understanding of what fiction is begins by understanding what reality is. The analysis of the nature of art, in my view, must start from this point, and here semiotics may offer a very original contribution.

The “complexification” of semiotics that goes beyond mere verbal representation, surpassing the logocentric tradition of the history of western philosophy, reveals that the world conception already foreseen in phenomenology, through the homology of the categories, within what I have called the hypothesis of symmetry, required for its acknowledgment a theoretically dialogical structure, in which the natural signs had a meaning and in which the processes of Nature could be dialogically represented. Thus, science is not an invention of theories, although it could be so in the abductive stage of the investigation. It rather has the task of discovering laws. Between these two terms, invention and discovery, lies the distinction of the nominalistic and the realistic presuppositions.

Within the stages of inquiry—abduction, deduction and induction—abduction emerges as the mode of argument that holds the entire new content of knowledge, and Peirce is emphatic when he declares that deduction and induction have no heuristic power. It is abduction, then, which, under Firstness, within Thirdness, embodies the entire new content of knowledge; to use an expression from Kant, only it is synthetic. The synthesis is no longer found in a constituting ego, in the transcendentality of the I think, but in the freedom of a pure play of musement, or of articulating new signs in theories which, despite having a high degree of randomness, show an amazing rate of correctness. Peirce compares this capacity for guessing the paths of Nature to the skill animals have to find their ways to survive, attributing to the human being the faculty of instinct: “Our faculty of guessing corresponds to a bird’s musical and aeronautical powers; that is, it is to us, as those are to them, the loftiest of our merely instinctive powers.”
Peirce, at times, allows himself an explicit moment of poetry when he says that in the abductive moment the researcher must “sit down and listen to the voice of nature until you catch the tune . . . The invention of the right hypothesis requires genius—an inward garden of ideas that will furnish the true pollen for the flowers of observation.”

This apprehension of the tonality also enables him to say that “man’s mind must have been attuned to the truth of things in order to discover what he has discovered. It is the very bedrock of logical truth.”

Evidently, for a logician with a classical education, these statements must sound out of character. But Peirce, according to our basic hypothesis in this essay, starts from that original aesthetic unity and introduces the logical value of the qualities of feeling, giving it an ontological meaning under the category of Firstness. It comes from his appreciation of the freedom of the mind as heuristically fundamental for the discovery of theories. Everything that is original in Peirce develops, first of all, under this mantle of freedom characteristic of poetic play. And this concept of play is fundamental for an understanding of the poetic basis in Peirce’s philosophy.

5.5. The Concept of Play

There is a certain agreeable occupation of mind which, from its having no distinctive name, I infer is not as commonly practiced as it deserves to be; for indulged in moderately—say through some five to six per cent of one’s waking time, perhaps during a stroll—it’s refreshing enough more than to repay the expenditure. Because it involves no purpose save that of casting aside all serious purpose, I have sometimes been half-inclined to call it reverie with some qualification; but for a frame of mind so antipodal to vacancy and dreaminess such a designation would be too excruciating a misfit. In fact it is Pure Play. Now, Play, we all know, is a lively exercise of one’s powers. Pure Play has no rules, except this very law of liberty. It bloweth where it listeth.

In the concept of pure play, Peirce reveals in the letter of his mature work the spirit of Schiller’s (1759–1805) thought, which he had already absorbed in his youth. In Aesthetic Education the idea of play, in which the human spirit experiences its freedom, whether by the unconditional passing of the mind through ideas without any purpose, or as aesthetic contemplation, totally giving in to a playful impulse (Spieltrieb) that is the full synthesis between the formal and sensitive universes. Whether in Schiller, or in Schelling, or in Peirce, we find contemplation in the form of an experience marked by freedom, in which the mind simply muses in an absolute state of Firstness.

In the well-known essay “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God,” Peirce develops this play of musement, under which the three
universes of experience parade before the eyes. There is an enchantment of unified experience involving qualities of feeling, the strong presence of the existence of things before consciousness, and the observation of a certain order and regularity, whose deepening requires the reintroduction of consciousness in time:

The dawn and the gloaming most invite one to Musement. . . . It begins passively enough with drinking in the impression of some nook in one of the three universes. But impression soon passes into attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into a lively give and take of communion between self and self. If one's observations and reflections are allowed to specialize themselves too much, the Play will be converted into scientific study; and that cannot be pursued in odd half hours.

Divested of mediation before the spectacle of Nature, the mind is absorbed by that Schellingian spirit of the primary experience of aesthetic intuition, and becomes a stage for a play free of feelings and ideas, opening itself to a continuum of possibilities. It is in this environment of a deep aesthetic experience that Peirce grounds his hypothesis of the reality of God, revealing how that experience, slowly, becomes heuristic. There is evidence here of a primary element of admirableness that is the genesis of the work of intelligence where Peirce shows, I suppose, the root of the original inspiration of his work, the poetic ground of his philosophy, of a poetry unconstrained not only by qualities, but also by forms, in an integration of all our human faculties:

Let the Muser, for example, after well appreciating, in its breadth and depth, the unspeakable variety of each Universe, turn to those phenomena that are of the nature of homogeneities of connectedness in each; and what a spectacle will unroll itself! As a mere hint of them I may point out that every small part of space, however remote, is bounded by just such neighboring parts of every other, without a single exception throughout immensity. The matter of Nature is in every star of the same elementary kinds, and (or except for variations of circumstance), what is more wonderful still, throughout the whole visible universe, about the same proportions of the different chemical elements prevail.

The spectacle of Nature generates in Peirce's work the beginning of all knowledge, as was the case in primeval philosophy, as Schelling well observed. That original presentiment enables Schiller to say: "In a word, there can no longer be any question of how he (man) passes from Beauty to Truth, since the latter is potentially contained in the former. . . ."
6. Conclusion

Peirce’s tacit poetry, which I have endeavored to show herein, is deeply influenced, in my view, by his religiousness. It is common knowledge that Peirce was a religious man, and I believe that Firstness is the backdrop where primary poetry meets a feeling of religiousness, bestowing to aesthetic experience its metaphysical dimension. If there is an idea of God in Peirce’s work, this doubtlessly originates in an experience of the play of musement in which the mind converses freely with Nature, contemplating and apprehending it in the totality of the faculties.

By exteriorizing itself as Nature, Schelling’s Absolute introduces itself in time as a work of art, Nature, thus becoming a visible mind. Would not Peirce’s Absolute also be given in this experience of contemplation and enthrallment? If there is an aesthetic starting point in his philosophy, Peirce is faithful to it in the construction of his theories: there is, in my view, another aesthetic quality in his thought, i.e., the logical consistency in the entire system, the way in which doctrines interlock and support themselves reciprocally. Subjecting itself to the honing stone of pragmatism, which ensures meaning to theories, the system reveals a kind of harmony that recovers a Greek beauty grounded in the elegance of its forms. A third aesthetic quality can be found in the idea of universe that his ontology presents. There are in Peirce’s work, then, at least three expressions of a poetic nature: that which is given genetically in Firstness and which will expand through the other two categories; the architecture itself of his theoretical system; and finally the universe revealed by the system.

The conception of a beautiful universe, permeated with intelligibility, by intelligence and freedom, an evolutionary universe that grows simultaneously in diversification and order, under the continuum of ideality, is a universe that can hold a divinity, where a God may be philosophically imagined. Indeed, a universe of dichotomies, led by necessity, full of inexplicable facts and logical inconsistencies, cannot contain a divinity.

We suppose that what we haven’t examined is like what we have examined, and that these laws are absolute, and the whole universe is a boundless machine working by the blind laws of mechanics. This is a philosophy which leaves no room for a God! No, indeed! It leaves even human consciousness, which cannot well be denied to exist, as a perfectly idle and functionless flâneur in the world, with no possible influence upon anything—not even upon itself.

The dearest, most precious and, for some, most sacred experience, that of unity, of connaturality between man and Nature, seems to be celebrated in Peirce’s philosophical system, much beyond any epistemological problems. He leads us to the radical commitment to such
unity. Poetic by nature, the ground of all heuristics, it comes about in the silence of contemplation, later inviting one to the joy of thinking creatively.

Even if Peirce’s works contained poems or any works of art conceived by him, it seems to me that these would not be the manifestations through which he would have genuinely celebrated his poetic feeling of the world. His homage to his own deep feeling of musement was to conceive a philosophical system wherein the doctrines would interlock in a logically exemplary way, allowing for enchantment in the sensible sphere to then acquire the shape of intelligence. And this might have been his greatest poem. Poetry qua poetry he left to those who could write it as such. Undoubtedly we can tend our gardens, but perhaps, closer to the flowers, we can also find a new poetic ground to continue our philosophical reflections.

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Other Works
NOTES

1. I would like to thank all those who read this essay and who, in various ways, helped towards its improvement with comments and suggestions, such as Nathan Houser, Carl Hausman, Tom Short and David Dilworth.

2. I mean by the expression ‘logical rights’ a consequence of the symmetry of categories (see footnote 6). This consequence considers that the three steps of logical reasoning, namely, abduction, deduction and induction are also discoverable in Nature as, respectively, introducing diversity, law operating by necessity, and habit acquisition (see CP 2.713 and NEM 4 p. 344).

3. I had the pleasure of sending some time ago a nearly finished version of this paper to Robert Lane, who was at the time working on his article on “Persons, Signs, Animals: A Peircean Account of Personhood” recently published in this journal. He had asked for my help in locating the passages where Peirce declared himself a follower of Schelling, particularly as regards the origin of his objective idealism. I was gratified to see that Lane was able to make good use of my essay.
by referring to the same passages. My wish is that our positive collaboration will help promote more discussion on the relationship between Peirce and Schelling, on which I have been insisting for many years.

4. Peirce in several passages explicitly exposes this experience of presentness (see, exemplarily, CP1.310; 1.304; 1.304; 1.310; 5.44) where our consciousness is composed purely by qualities of feelings.

5. “We become aware of ourself in becoming aware of the not-self.” (CP1.324)

6. See, for example, the following passage where Peirce directly mentions the relationship between presentness and poetic experiences, the common unity of which occurs in a hiatus of time: “Go out under the blue dome of heaven and look at what is present as it appears to the artist’s eye. The poetic mood approaches the state in which the present appears as it is present. Is poetry so abstract and colorless? The present is just what it is regardless of the absent, regardless of past and future. It is such as it is, utterly ignoring anything else.” (CP1.304)

7. Here I am using the term spirit, which is not exactly a Peircean expression, only to make provisional reference to a subjective inner world. I think that when you are trying to establish a kind of dialogue between one thinker and other traditional thinkers, you must venture into a terminological common ground in order to provide communication among them, despite some imprecision which you carefully try to eliminate.

8. I use this expression at this point to convey the genesis of what will become clearer as this essay progresses. Symmetry will mean sharing of predicates, depolarization of the traditional approach of subject—object relationship. This symmetry will be provided by the equipollent validation of Peirce’s categories, as much for man, as for Nature.

9. The phrase “harder poetry” is Nathan Houser’s creation, and it arises from a dialogue with him about kinds of poetry.

10. In NEM4, p. 135, we find (my italics): “It has often been said that the difference between the real world and a dream is that the real world coheres and is consistent. Undoubtedly this is the principal characteristic. The real events conspire as it were against the unreal ones, because there is not room for all.”


12. AA I, 2 266, op. cit.

13. Despite the disdain that Peirce seems to have for Fichte’s extreme nominalism (see CP 4.551, for example), this inversion of the cogito is a very interesting insight by the German thinker, harmonious with the ontological sequence of Peirce’s categories foundation, when one takes into account the principles of Fichte’s Wissenschaftslehre and Peirce’s cosmology.

14. See quotation at the beginning of this essay.

15. Let me clarify that this unity is not the Kantian transcendental unity necessary for the possibility of every synthesis. An epistemological unity is considered in Peirce’s philosophy as well, but its logical unity is justified by his synechism and constitutes the category of thirdness. The unity mentioned here is characteristically from firstness, and so in Peircean terms it expresses a continuum of free possibilities, not the continuum of law.

16. There are invariably, as mentioned before, brief references by commentators on Peirce’s work to the relationship between Peirce and Schelling. However, there has been little reference made to an excerpt from a letter to William James, where
Peirce clearly and remarkably assumes his affinity with Schelling’s thought: “My views were probably influenced by Schelling—by all stages of Schelling, but especially by the Philosophie der Natur. I consider Schelling as enormous; and one thing I admire about him is his freedom from the trammels of system and his holding himself uncommitted to any previous utterance. In that, he is like a scientific man. If you were to call my philosophy as a Schellingism transformed in light of modern physics I should not take it hard” [letter to W. James, January 28, 1894].

17. This is one good example of shared terminology between two thinkers. For sure, intuition is not an appropriate term in Peirce’s philosophy, considering his criticism of the Cartesian epistemology. But in order to establish a dialogue between him and Schelling, which is necessary to understand why Peirce declares himself Schellingian, let us here take aesthetic intuition as a qualisign, as both are defined in the sphere of feelings and immediacy. Let us remember that despite the abundant use of the concept of intuition by Kant, this fact was not an obstacle for an intense philosophical dialogue between the Peircean and Kantian philosophies.

18. Regarding the term “Absolute,” which is also inserted in Peirce’s terminology, see the prior footnote 17.

20. CP 6.25.
22. CP 6.605.
24. Let me observe that, in Peirce’s phenomenology, a poetical way for seeing the world in its firstness is very important in order to realize what is frequently disdained by an extremely mediated and rational relationship with the phenomena.
25. See footnote 12.
27. See quotations 53 and 54 of this paper.
28. This is, by the way, what is shown in Peirce’s cosmogenesis—see, exemplarily, NEM4, pp. 133–140.
29. CP 5.112ff; 5.552.
31. CP 3.560.
34. Ibidem, A141/B180. In A714/B742, Kant apparently contradicts himself when he states that when drawing a triangle on paper “the unique figure drawn is empiric, serving to express the concept without reducing its universality.”
36. Ibidem, A716/B744. Kant, here, proposes that, in an ABC triangle, the geometer would extend his BC side and draw a parallel to AC through the B vertices. The external angles thus formed would be equal to α and β, respectively, which, with γ, would result in two straight angles.
37. A717/B745.
38. A734/B762.

39. In a letter to his friend William James (April 1897), Peirce says: “The Critic of Pure Reason was, as you know, my babysitter in Philosophy.”

40. This theory is, ultimately, a radical demonstration of the possible universe of logical relations in the form of diagrams. Roberts (1973) is a classical commentator on Peirce’s theory of graphs.

41. In CP 4.37, Peirce extends his criticism to Kant’s supposition that Logic had reached a definitive point, with no room for subsequent advancement.

42. See, exemplarily, CP 1.69.

43. CP 1.35.

44. Examine the relevant passage in HP, p. 1123 (1899). In RLT, p. 156, Peirce, aside from the technical details of the logic of relatives, expounds it conceptually: “where ordinary logic considers only a single, special kind of relation, that of similarity,—a relation too, of a particularly featureless and insignificant kind, the logic of relatives imagines a relation in general to be placed. Consequently, in place of the class,—which is composed of a number of individual objects or facts brought together in ordinary logic by means of their relation of similarity, the logic of relatives considers the system, which is composed of objects brought together by any kind of relations whatsoever.” In my view, this exchange of class for system provided by the logic of relatives, is, considered an ontological prism, a radicalization of his realism.

45. According to Peirce: “Kant holds that all the general metaphysical conceptions applicable to experience are capable of being represented as in a diagram, by means of the image of time. Such diagrams he calls ‘schemata’” [CP 2.385].

46. I think this is the correct understanding of this issue, rather than Findlay’s (1981), p. 159, who does not seem to understand “the reason for this strange privilege of time in schematism.” Rightfully, I believe, Winterbourne (1981) defines, in the realm of schematism, “time as a connective possibility of the perceived” (p.43).

47. CP 4.9; a similar content is found in CP 3.363/885. Murphey (1993) comments on this “surprising” aspect of the diagrams (p. 231), recalling that “by building an icon, we do not do it according to a particular case under the hypothesis, but, rather, we build any particular case under the hypothesis” (p. 234).

48. I call ‘medieval verbalism’ the exclusive use of verbal language to describe natural phenomena during the medieval period. The work of Galileo was revolutionary in this aspect, by introducing mathematics as the main language of physics.

49. Contemporarily, there is an interesting example of the heuristic power of diagrams in the work of Paul Dirac [Dirac (1978), pp. 11–20]. Conjecturing on Einstein’s quadratic equation referring to the energy of atomic particles, it was wondered whether the negative root of this equation could have a physical meaning. Shortly afterwards this conjecture led to the discovery of the positron.

50. CP 5.42.


52. Reinforcing this idea, the homogeneity of firstness, subsuming inner and outer experiences of spontaneity, provides a common ground where signs can
dialogue freely in a play of musement, by the way an expression created by Peirce to highlight this kind of experience, which for him is essentially heuristic.

53. Here I am again highlighting that there are consequences from the concept of firstness much beyond the epistemological ones, and I claim that a brand new theory of art arises from it, certainly deserving further study.

54. CP 6.231.
55. CP 6.236.
56. CP 6.265.
57. CP 6.86.
58. CP 7.534.
59. Nevertheless, the posture of constructing symmetries is in itself already realistic or, in other words, it is tacitly the adoption of realism.

60. NEM, III/2, p. 881.
61. See footnote 42.

62. A realism of genders doesn't imply general logical connections among them, as provided by continuous space-temporal systems. So, Peirce’s synechism is a way for breaking the insulation of genders, putting them under general relations as well.

63. NEM, IV, p. 343.
64. CP 6.339.
65. CP 8.153.
66. CP 6.39; 6.48; 1.144.
67. CP 7.514–515.
68. Actually, this Semiotic power can be understood as a logical structure able to deal with Peirce’s realism-idealism. His consideration of a dynamic object inside Semiotics is the acknowledgement of an independent world regarding the universe of human signs that composes thought and language. Peirce’s dynamic object is indeed a realistic concept that, besides its proper semiotic function, plays an important role against nominalistic reduction of object to mere reference of language.

69. Chance cannot be dependent on time continuity, as its events are not linked either with the past or with the future.

70. See, for example, CP 6.86.
71. CP 5.431.
72. NEM, IV, p. 140.
73. In Ibri (1992) there is a detailed presentation of Peirce’s cosmology.
75. CP 6.302.
76. CP 6.304.
77. See CP 5.113.
78. Among several definitions of ‘sign’, see, for example, in PW, pp. 80–81, this one which is characteristically realist: “I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, whose effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former.”

80. CP 7.48.
82. CP 6.476.
83. CP 6.458.
84. In CP 2.197, Peirce writes: “It is now forty-seven years ago that I undertook
to expound Schiller’s *Aesthetische Briefe* to my dear friend Horatio Paine. We spent
every afternoon for long months upon it, picking the matter to pieces as well as we
boys knew how to do. In those days I read various works on esthetics; but on the
whole, I must confess that, like most logicians, I have pondered that subject far too
little . . . . And then esthetics and logic seem, at first blush, to belong to different
universes. It is only very recently that I have become persuaded that that seeming
is illusory, and that, on the contrary, logic needs the help of esthetics.” In 1857,
Peirce, not yet eighteen, wrote a small essay on Schiller’s *Letters*, commenting on
the concept of play (W 1, pp. 10–12). On the published work of Peirce, as we
have commented concerning Schelling, there are only short references to Schiller;
evertheless, in PW, p. 77 (1908) we find: “As to the word ‘play’, the first book of
philosophy I ever read . . . was Schiller’s *Aesthetische Briefe*, where he has so much
to say about the Spiel-Trieb; and it made so much impression upon me as to have
thoroughly soaked my notion of ‘play’ to this day.”
85. Schiller (1967). Letters XIV and XV.
86. “Contemplation (or reflection) is the first liberal relation which man
establishes with the universe around him” [Schiller (1990), Letter XXV, p. 183].
Relations between Peirce and Schiller are explored by Barnouw (1988), who sees
in the German thinker one of the possible origins of pragmatism.
87. CP 6.452–493.
88. Ibidem, CP 6.459. The reflexive aspect of musement also appears in
another passage in which Peirce reveals having absorbed the spirit of the beautiful
images of romanticism: “Enter your skiff of Musement, push off into the lake of
thought, and leave the breathe 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” (Ibidem, CP–6.461).
and Mind invisible Nature.”
92. In CP 6.493 it reads: “as to God, open your eyes—and your heart, which
is also a perceptive organ—and you see him.”
94. It is quite probable that Peirce’s conception of the universe was thought
in such way to be favorable to an understandable idea of the Absolute. This is
certainly a good theme for a new essay.
95. CP 1.162
96. See Nathan Houser’s brilliant paper in Houser (2003).