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*“I Have To Confess I Cannot Read History So,”**On the Origins and Development of Peirce’s Philosophy of History*

Abstract. This study aims at a better understanding of Peirce’s conception of a *philosophy* of history. Peirce has a well defined place for historiography in his classification of the sciences, but what he has to say about history as a philosopher is not primarily referring to it as a form of historiographic knowledge, but to history as a process *and* a medium. As a process, history is, fundamentally, a cooperative activity of man resulting in civilization and capable of varying categoriological degrees of directionality that reflect the ‘agents’ knowledge’ of history incorporated in the communicative practices of their community. As a medium, history – in the light of the cosmogonic narrative of Peirce’s evolutionary metaphysics and of his mature conception of the *summum bonum* – is one of two forms of expression of the Absolute. Our paper studies the development of these conceptions from the Schellingian influences on “The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization” (1863), to “Fixation of Belief” (1877) and “Evolutionary Love” (1892). Throughout this development, Peirce remains primordially interested in the philosophy of history as a mode of normatively conceiving of history (as a medium) in a way that enables us to pragmatically project our cultural development as a process in which an increasing control over our own history is actualized.

“The science of knowledge is to be a pragmatic history of the human mind.”

Fichte, 1794

“Nature’s highest goal, to become wholly an object to herself, is achieved only through the last and highest order of reflection, which is none other than man; or, more generally, it is what we call reason, whereby nature first completely returns into herself, and by which it becomes apparent that nature is identical from the first with what we recognize in ourselves as the intelligent and the conscious.”

Schelling, 1800

“Our physical science, whatever extravagant historicists may say, seems to have sprung up uncaused except by man’s intelligence and nature’s intelligibility, which never could before be operative because it was not studied minutely. But modern philosophy had no such divine birth. On the contrary, it pays the usual tax upon inheritances from revolutions. It was the product of a double and triple revolution – the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Copernican revolution.”

Peirce, 1902

I. Introduction

The task of speaking about the origins and development of Peirce’s *philosophy* of history is confronted with difficulties, the articulation of which will prefigure our understanding of the question and determine the direction in which an answer shall be sought.¹ Let us, therefore, first establish some common ground: Readers of Peirce will certainly agree that his *écriture* is pervaded by an encyclopaedic² and intensely

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1. I am indebted to the two anonymous referees, the editors and Emily Smith for suggestions that improved this paper.

2. Peirce, however, admits to being better acquainted with the “history of philosophy” than with “political history” (CP 7.231).

curious historical consciousness that neither shies away from the consideration of minute details (see below) nor from the responsibility to understand the causes of large scale historical processes (see third epigraph above) and is nourished by the modern ideal of our deliverance from *idola*: “one of the main purposes of studying history ought to be to free us from the tyranny of our preconceived notions,” writes Peirce in 1901. Thus when he reflects on an explanation of certain habits of mind that govern Aristotle's inquiries by conceiving of him *as* the “scion of a family whose every member, from the further prehistoric times had been trained in medicine” and did, *therefore*, not share “the Hellenic repugnance to dissection” (*CP* 2.12), we see him jotting a memo:

Before this goes to press, I have to go over three books: Barthélemy St. Hilaire's Ed. of Arist. *Historia Animal* 2. Littré's Hippocrates 3. The best German history of medicine. (*MS* 425: 14, lower left margin)

To return to the sources and, at the same time, identify and read the best available account of the historical development in any field of knowledge, touches upon what would become a routine in the intellectual metabolism of Peirce the historian of science, logic and philosophy.

Here, however, a first problem arises: the objectivistic outlook animating the routines of Peirce the historian reflects stances taken by Peirce the philosopher of history. There thus seems to be, as Esposito (1983) points out, a strong “narrativist” strand in Peirce's philosophical conception of history: “the view of the past as an objective actuality” (Esposito 1983: 160) resulting from an application of the pragmatic understanding of inquiry and reality to the realm of the past. If the real is the object of that ultimate opinion we would ultimately agree upon, then our knowledge of the past must lead to testable consequences that would eventually confirm a theory of what *the* past, as an objective sequence of events, was truly like (cf. *CP* 2.642, 5.461). In contrast to this, however, Esposito finds a less prominent “transcendentalist” (Esposito 1983: 156) conception, in which “the term ‘history’ seems to refer to a particular theoretical construction of human temporal activity” (Esposito 1983: 164). Indeed Peirce can speak of a “logic of history”³ in the sense of a logic of its processuality, which is *capable* of being guided by human intentionality; but Esposito is, nonetheless, mistaken in diagnosing a “dearth of arguments from Peirce that clearly assume the transcendentalist perspective” (Esposito 1983: 164) because he fails to realize how prominent texts such as “Fixation of Belief” assume such a perspective, which, however, is not in contrast to the objectivistic stance but rather complementary to it, as the approach to the historical in these texts is geared towards disclosing *and* enabling the growth of a normative component in our understanding of history. Thus for Peirce, objectivism notwithstanding, if history were to be tackled in a *déjà* third-person perspective, it would mean to refuse to see *what* history *really* is (cf. *EP* 1: 364, 369; *CP* 2.111-8). As a particular object of philosophy, history thus is a subject that transcends Esposito's dichotomies because our first-person conception of

3. Esposito (1983: 164) refers to *CP* 3.425, erroneously assuming that “The Regenerated Logic” (1896) belongs to the *Monist* series of the early 1890s.

it – our ‘agent’s knowledge’⁴ – determines the mode in which we will actualize (or disrupt) historical continua in our actions.⁵

This leads to the next problem: Peirce was not only interested in development as an historian, but also as a metaphysician. Where literally everything developmental seems to become historical, however, traditional distinctions could seem to have been abandoned without offering any substitute. As Hampe (2006) has aptly characterized this aspect of Peirce’s philosophy of history, his evolutionary metaphysics – in which processes of habit-taking propel the emergence of regularities in the development of nature *and* civilization – ultimately interlaces the *historicization of nature* with a *naturalization of history*⁶ so that the difference between *historia naturalis* and *historia rerum gestarum* seems to become obsolete, *unless* the subtlety of Peirce’s conception of the normativity and self-referentiality of our own conception of history is properly acknowledged. It is no coincidence that his cosmogonic philosophy of the early 1890s *culminates* in the vision of a creative “agapastic” form of the historical development of human thought, but instead indicates an essential element of Peirce’s “realistic idealism” (MS 400) with its aim to “gain room to insert mind into our scheme, and to put it into *the place where it is needed*, into the position which, as *the sole self-intelligible thing*, it is entitled to occupy.”⁷ It is, thus, only *in the acknowledgment* of the agapic processual-semeiotic causes and conditions that have led to the emergence of such a “sole self-intelligible thing” that we commit ourselves to a normative conception of history as the developmental form of an “endless perfectibility” (W 1: 114).

The term “philosophy of history,” however, is nowhere used in the *Monist* series. Thus, a third problem emerges: If we look into Peirce’s mature classifications of the heurctic sciences (a hierarchy of interdependent research activities that, being “the pursuit of living men,” exist in an “incessant state of metabolism and growth,” EP2: 129), we see that Peirce reserves a place for a family of historiographic sciences he refers to as “[descriptive] Psychognosy” (CP 1.272) or “Descriptive Psychics, or history” (CP 1.189), but nowhere in this classification can we detect anything that reflects the necessity to *philosophically* come to terms with history as a dimension and vector of that experience all men have in common and in which our relatedness to the world, ourselves and others is rooted (cf. EP 2: 372-3), whether in its meaning as *res gestae*, or ‘that which factually happened,’ or in its meaning as a *historia rerum gestarum*, i.e. as a ‘*knowledge of what has happened*.’ What we can derive from Peirce’s architectonic framing of historiography is nonetheless important: Inasmuch as “Descriptive Psychics, or history” is classified as belonging to the descriptive order of the psychical subclass of the “idioscopic” or “special sciences,” it does not attempt to *nomologically* establish general laws (cf. EP 2: 261), nor does it *taxonomically* study “kinds of mental manifestation” (CP 1.271), but rather aspires “to describe individual *manifestations of mind*, whether they be permanent *works* or actions” and “to explain

4. See Taylor (1985: 80): Agent’s knowledge, according to Taylor, originates with Vico’s *verum ipsum factum* (*ibid.*: 81) and reflects the beautifully commonsensical notion that “the degree of awareness in our action is something we come to achieve” (*ibid.*: 84).

5. This is also clearly brought out and emphasized by Hampe (2006: 40-1, 141-52).

6. Hampe (2006: 124-52).

7. EP 1:309, emphases mine.

them *on the principles of psychology and ethnology*" (CP 1.189, emphases mine). We can thus say that history qua "Descriptive Psychics" is a form of scientific activity that focuses on the description of individual events in which mind becomes manifest as a *productive power*, incarnating itself in the materiality of "permanent works" and "actions." What such a mind is, however, and how we can account for its poetical and practical purposiveness in bringing about artifacts and practices, are questions another science has to answer: "to philosophy must fall the task of comparing the two stems of causation and of exhuming their common root" (CP 1.273). Thus, although there is no explicitly marked slot for the philosophy of history on Peirce's "ladder" of principle-dependent sciences "descending into the well of truth" (CP 2.119), it is clear that there *can* be such a slot, if not a connection of several slots contributing to the philosophical clarification of what history *is*.

In the connection of such architectonic stances, however, a third 'ontotheological' aspect of Peirce's philosophical interest in history must be taken into account, as it constitutes a constant horizon in which history is conceived of as something that is not only grounded in the sequentiality of events and, moreover, acquires degrees of directionality through the categories of evolution operative in their connection, but also constitutes a *medium* of the expression of rationality (cf. EP 2: 245-5): A passage from *How To Reason* (1894) stratifies these three central aspects of Peirce's philosophical interest in history and provides us with its pre-conception as a [a] cooperative product of individuals bringing about civilization with [b] a directionality depending on the degree of historical awareness in their actions, [c] functioning as the medium of the self-revelation of the Absolute.

[a] To say that man accomplishes nothing but that to which his endeavors are directed would be a cruel condemnation of the great bulk of mankind, who never have leisure to labor for anything but the necessities of life for themselves and their families. [b] But, without directly striving for it, far less comprehending it, they perform all that civilization requires, and bring forth another generation to advance history another step. Their fruit is, therefore, collective; it is the achievement of the whole people. [c] What is it, then, that the whole people is about, what is this civilization that is the outcome of history, but is never completed? [...]. We may say that it is the process whereby man, with all his miserable littlenesses, becomes gradually more and more imbued with the Spirit of God, in which Nature and History are rife. (CP 5.402 n2)

In the light of these aspects and interpretive problems, we will first identify the origins of central leitmotifs of Peirce's philosophy of history in the early key text "The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization" (1863). This piece is deeply influenced by Schelling's notion of history as a "self-disclosing revelation of the absolute" (SW III: 603) and presents us with a matrix of ideas outlining the metaphysical horizon and systematic interest in and with which Peirce will concretize his philosophy of history in subsequent years (Section II).

As will be sketched in the next section, this concretization takes place within the framework of two complementary argumentative movements connecting "Fixation of Belief" and "Evolutionary Love" in accordance with a scheme for the proof of

objective idealism which Schelling, in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) – designed to complement the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797) – describes as follows:

In knowing as such – *in the fact* of my knowing – objective and subjective are so united that one cannot say which of the two has priority. [...] Hence there are only two possibilities: **A. Either the object is made primary, and the question is: how a subject is annexed thereto, which coincides with it?** [...] **B. Alternatively, the subjective is made primary, and the problem is: how an objective supervenes, which coincides with it?** If all knowledge rests upon the coincidence [Übereinstimmung] of these two, then the problem of explaining this coincidence is undoubtedly the supreme problem for all knowledge. (*SW* III: 339-41)

Accordingly, we will explore an interpretation that argues for a complementaristic reading: Whereas “Evolutionary Love” is the culmination of a cosmogonic account of the phenomenon of scientific knowledge which moves from the analysis of the *objective cosmological conditions* to the “historical development of human thought” (*EP* 1: 363), resulting in the progress of scientific rationality (cf. *EP* 1: 369-71), “Fixation of Belief,” on the other hand, analyzes an inverse movement that leads us from the *subjective representational conditions* of embodied intelligences to the emergence of the idea of an “external permanency” (*EP* 1: 120). The ensuing coincidence of the structure and results of these two movements of analysis does not only confirm the objective idealist hypothesis of a processual identity of the evolution of nature and thought, but also justifies our hope that both processes are expressions of one and the same grammar of their intelligibility – “Chance is First, Law is Second, the tendency to take habits is Third” (*EP* 1: 297) – and, therefore, grounded in a categoriological form of reality thus receiving *architectonic* confirmation of its universality. It is only in the horizon of the coincidence between the objective and subjective conditions of scientific knowledge revealed in this circular movement that history can be pragmatically conceived of as a *normative* developmental form of the expression of rationality, which enables our ‘agent’s knowledge’ to project empirical history as a progress towards an increasing self-control over our future historical development (Section III).

II. Early Leitmotifs of Peirce’s Philosophy of History

As we shall see in this section, a main perspective of Peirce’s philosophy of history, namely (i.) the conception of history as a medium of the absolute, originates in his first public speech “The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization” (1863). “POA” anticipates other leitmotifs of Peirce’s philosophy of history, to wit (ii.) the conception of a universalist understanding of history, (iii.) the theme of history as a development of reason progressing in accordance with universal categories as its developmental structure, and finally (iv.) the necessity of a normative conception of history as a cooperative process that is to be reflected from the first-person stance of ‘agent’s knowledge.’

II.1 "The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization"

Among the philosophies of history developed by German Idealists from 1780 to 1830, most of which were inspired by Herder's *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity* (1784-1791) and Kant's "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" (1784), the works of Schiller and Schelling seem to have had a bigger impact on Peirce's conception of history than Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1837) or Fichte's *Fundamental Traits of the Present Age* (1804-5). Whereas *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1796) is known to be a major source for Peirce's understanding of aesthetics⁸ and of his early theory of categories,⁹ both the general nature and specification of the categoriological status of Schiller's three drives – the formal, the sensuous and the play-drive – as categorial moments of historical processes in the Letters XXIV to XXVII have gained little attention in their relevance to Peirce; something similar might be said of Schelling, inasmuch as the influence of his *Naturphilosophie* on Peirce's metaphysics has been adumbrated repeatedly,¹⁰ while the importance of his conception of the philosophy of history, as articulated in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) and the lecture "The Historical Construction of Christianity" (1803), is a subject yet to be tackled.

From a sketch Peirce gives of his *juvenilia* (1859-1864), we can infer quite safely that "POA" is rooted in the soil of his earliest speculations on the categories, which goes far beyond what Kant conceives of as the objective validity of his "pure concepts of synthesis"¹¹ and represents the undertaking of an 'historical deduction of the categories' that thus aims "to solve the puzzle [of the categories] in a [...] historical [...] manner" (CP 1.563). As the Peircean scheme of categories does, by that time, already comprise two "distinct orders of categories," namely "the particular and the universal" (EP 2: 148), we are confronted with a scheme in which the latter are conceptualized as universal developmental stages that are connected by the former as their particular disjunctive "phases of evolution" (EP 2: 143, 148). This categoriological scheme will reappear in all texts we are studying.¹²

"POA" could be read as originating in and resulting from the combination of two central ideas of Schelling's philosophy of history:¹³ The notion of a "historical construction of Christianity," which is intimately connected with a representational conception of the Absolute, and his reflections on the possibility to conceive of history

8. See Barnouw 1988, and Lefevbre 2007.

9. See De Tienne (1996: 55ff.), Topa (2007: 113-56).

10. Cf. e.g. Esposito 1977 and 1980; Reynolds (2002: 5-25); and Franks 2015.

11. CPR, A 80/B 106.

12. Cf. the analogous distinction between a "repetitive order" and a universal "greater life-history that every symbol furnished with a vehicle of life goes through" in the semeiotically grounded metaphysics of history of the Minute Logic (CP 2.111).

13. In a letter to James from 1895, Peirce acknowledges that "my views were probably influenced by Schelling, – by all stages of Schelling, but especially by the *Philosophie der Natur*" (Perry 1935: 416ff.), which implies he read substantial portions of Schelling's works in the German original. Correlating this with the 'confession' to have been introduced to the thought of Schelling through the acquaintance with the Concord Transcendentalists in his early youth (cf. EP 1: 312-3), there is, then, good reason to assume that Peirce, after having studied Schiller and Kant, started to read Schelling in the original around 1860.

as a play (*Schauspiel*, *SWIII*: 602) of the “gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute” (*SWIII*: 603).¹⁴

II.1.1 History as Drama and Revelation of the Absolute

In the chapter of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* devoted to the “Deduction of the Concept of History,” Schelling presents us with a drama in which everyone performs their role according to their preferences. A reasonable development in such a play would become conceivable only under the assumption that the mind of the playwright – the author of history – would have coordinated the roles beforehand, thus guaranteeing a harmony between the free play of the actors and the necessity constituting the intelligibility of a narrative (*SW III*: 602).

In agreement with this train of thought, “POA” sets out to solve its central question – is it possible to conceive of the “spirit of Scepticism and Irreverence” of the “Age of Reason” as an integral element and “work of Christianity” (*W 1*: 101-7)? – by introducing the dramatic stages of plot-development (cf. *W 1*:108) as temporal schemata of the historical synthesis of the absolute. Having differentiated six stages of dramatic development, Peirce thus immediately invites us to “see if Christianity, the plot of History, does not follow determinate laws in its development, so that from a consideration of them we can gather *where we are* and *whither we are tending*” (*W 1*: 108, emphasis mine). It will be the categories that, functioning as “determinate laws” of development, constitute the historicity of our ‘agent’s knowledge.’

Schelling’s use of drama as an analogy for history does, however, not stop where we have left it. It is only through careful observation of the next stage of Schelling’s analogy that his conception of a radically historical absolute comes to light and reveals its affinity to the Taylorian conception of ‘agent’s knowledge’ as an “achievement” (cf. fn. 4), inasmuch as “the very play of our own freedom” (*SW III*: 602) as agents in the drama of history would certainly require more creativity and sense of responsibility if we were to assume that the author had no independent existence apart from the play. Thus, Schelling argues, the author would be “only successively revealing himself through the very play of our own freedom,” so that, “without this freedom even he himself *would not be*,” whereas “we,” on the other hand, were to be “coauthors [*Mitdichter*] of the whole, and self-inventors [*Selbsterfinder*] of the peculiar role we play” (*SW III*: 602, translation mine).

Thus, we see how, in Schelling’s conception of history, human freedom is conceived as the medium of a successive revelation of the absolute. This revelation takes place in the three historical periods of “Destiny,” “Nature” and “Providence” (*SW III*: 603-4; cf. *SW V*: 209ff.); but only when, in an indefinite future, the last period will have begun, so Schelling concludes his “Deduction of the Concept of History,” “God also will then *exist*” (*SW III*: 604).

The aim of “POA” – to offer an historical outlook within which our “Age of Reason” can be grasped as a necessary stage toward the revelation of its true religious

14. I will be quoting Heath’s translation of the “System of Transcendental Idealism” (Schelling 1997), but refer to the pagination of the *Sämtliche Werke* which is also given there.

essence in the apotheosis of scientific rationality on the subsequent historical stage – is obtained by presenting the outlines of an “aesthetic view of science” (*W* 1: 114) and the conception of creation enshrined in it. With this vision of history and its goal, Peirce obviously does not appear to be primordially committed to the ideas of the progress of moral agency, political institutions and their constitutional framework, which are at the heart of the metaphysics of freedom in the tradition of Kant’s “Idea for a universal History”;¹⁵ rather it seems that Peirce conceives of the “aesthetic view of science” as a *Weltanschauung*, in which the scientific understanding of creation as an agapic process will collaterally also yield “the lever of love to move the world” and thus unleash more “surplus energy in the business of philanthropy” as has so far been used on “our triumphant road to wooing things” (*W* 1: 112-3).

Connecting the *concerto grosso scientiarum* Peirce stages at the end of his speech to the Schellingian notion of human freedom as the medium of a historical “revelation of the Absolute” (*SW* III: 603), we can see the *denouement* of Peirce’s “aesthetic view of science” to consist of the notion of a co-authorship of man – who “may impress nature with his own intellect, converse and not merely listen” (*W* 1: 113) – with the creator: This co-authorship is a reflection of the original harmony of creation manifesting itself in the “majestic symphony” resulting from the cooperation of the sciences, in which “one as viol, another as flute, another as trump” translates the modulations of the divine *agápe* into the scientific knowledge of an object envisaged as a “cosmos”:

When the conclusion of our age comes, and scepticism and materialism have done their perfect work, we shall have a far greater faith than ever before. For then man will see God’s wisdom and mercy, not only in every event of his own life, but in that of the gorilla, the lion, the fish, the polyp, the tree, the crystal, the grain of dust, the atom. He will see that each one of these has an inward existence of its own, for which God loves it, and that He has given to it a nature of endless perfectibility. He will see the folly of saying that nature was created for his use [...]. Physics will have made us familiar with the body of all things, and the unity of the body of all; natural history will have shown us the soul of all things in their infinite and amiable idiosyncracies. Philosophy will have taught us that it is this *all* which constitutes the church. (*W* 1: 114)

Let us summarize and then put this last quotation into perspective: Following Schelling, as soon as 1863, Peirce conceives of history as an ongoing “revelation of the Absolute.” This revelation proceeds in three stages, in which the Schellingian Absolute – being the ground of the identity of subject and object, mind and matter, freedom and necessity (cf. *SW* III: 600) – appears first as “destiny, *i.e.* as a wholly blind force” (*SW* III: 604), which, for Peirce, corresponds to the “arbitrarily imagined perfection” of the “egotistical stage” (*W* 1: 113). –, then, as “nature,” *i.e.* as the idea of a law-governed mechanical order – which, in “POA,” corresponds to the “idistical stage” on which perfection is “observed” (*W* 1: 113). Finally, the Schellingian Absolute will eventually appear as “providence,” *i.e.* as a process of revelation in which man conceives of nature and history as the expressions of an Absolute that has the formal

15. Cf. *AHE*: 116: “One can regard the history of the human species in the large as the completion of a hidden plan of nature to bring about an inwardly and, to this end, also an externally perfect state constitution, as the only condition in which it can fully develop all its predispositions in humanity.”

condition of its manifestation *in* the processuality of its revelation and is thus radically *historical* and of the nature of a *representation* (*SW* III: 604, and cf. 601-2).

But the very moment this Absolute were to have completed its revelation so that the objective world would then *be* (and no longer *become*) “a complete manifestation of God” (*eine vollkommene Darstellung Gottes*, *SW* III: 603), a state of absolute determination would be reached – corresponding to the “absolutely perfect, rational, and symmetrical system in which mind is at last crystallized” in Peirce’s “Cosmogonic Philosophy” (*EP* 1: 297). In this state, Schelling argues, “nothing could be *other* than the way it is” (*SW* III: 603) and the spontaneous and the necessary, freedom and necessity, would have become identical (cf. *SW* III: 340-1). Finally, Peirce’s æsthetic view of science, which is conceived as the last stage preceding the tuistical stage of revelation, presents us with a vision of the Absolute rooted in the idea of mankind’s cooperative and sympathetic co-authorship in the historical process of its revelation. The manifestation of the Absolute *as* a “cosmos” in the synergy of scientific work, however, is not independent of the semeiotic process of its representation. It only reveals itself in *our* semeiosis, thus acting as the horizon in which a maximal degree of ‘agent’s knowledge’ becomes attainable for us.¹⁶

II.1.2 History as Absolute Synthesis

For both Schelling and Peirce, the historicity and semeioticity of the Absolute are a consequence of its deep dialogical structure, reflected in the very notion of *revelation*. Peirce’s basic Schellingian assumption – that the history of our freedom is the medium of revelation of the Absolute and can be compared to a play, the author of which has no other manifestation besides – leads him to a proto-semeiotic notion of history as a process of representation that develops in accordance to “determinate laws” (*W* 1: 109), specified as categoriological “laws of [...] objective presentation” (*W* 1: 109) expressing general conditions of intelligibility: “Every object is obliged to appear under a certain set of forms” (*W* 1: 109), Peirce writes at the beginning of *his* ‘categoriological construction of Christianity.’

In this construction, Peirce lays down the “formula of Christianity” (*W* 1: 113) – the proposition “The Church is the Kingdom of Heaven” (*W* 1: 110) – as the starting-point of a gradual revelation of the total semantic contents of the idea of Christianity. Accordingly, the deductive plan contained in those central sections of the text that are lost (they were not published in the *Cambridge Chronicle*, which instead notifies its readers that “the orator here proceeded to analyze the formula ‘The Church is the Kingdom of Heaven’ and endeavored to show what part each had played in its enunciation” (*W* 1: 110)) becomes clear:

[a] First there was the *egotistical stage* when man arbitrarily imagined perfection, now is the *idistical stage* when he observes it. Hereafter must be the more glorious *tuistical stage* when he shall be in communion with her. And this is exactly what, step by step,

16. See *MS* 1334: 21 where Peirce defines ‘God’ as “the highest flight toward an understanding of the original of the whole physico-psychical universe that we can make” of HIM as *inquirers*.

we are coming to. [b] For if you will recur a moment to my draw analysis of the formula of Christianity, you will perceive that *the conclusions of the preceding ages have answered three kinds of questions* concerning that proposition. [ba] Two were metaphysical, what is its predicate and what is its subject? [bb] two were dynamical; is it hypothetical or actual, and is it categorical or conditional? [bc] two were mathematical; what is its quality, and what is its quantity? [bd] And now there are questions of but one kind more that remain to be asked, and they are physical. And they are two. The first is, is christianity a fact of consciousness merely, or one of the external world? And this shall be answered by the conclusion of our own age. The second is, is the predicate true to the understanding merely, or also to the sense? And this, if we may look forward so far, will be answered by Christ's coming to rule his kingdom in person. And when that occurs, religion will no longer be presented objectively, but we shall receive it by direct communication with him. (W 1: 113ff., additions in brackets and all italics mine)

In this passage, Peirce answers the question raised in the title of his speech by connecting the three stages of revelation with a categoriological movement reminiscent of Kant's four types of principles of the understanding (CPR, B 201n.f). He thus relates (1) eight ages with (2) the three stages of revelation of the Absolute, which are connected by (5) eight categories that (4) answer four types of categoriological questions, and are (3) schematized as moments of dramatic development. We may put these correlations in the following table:

1. Age	2. Stage	3. Dramatic Schema ¹	4. Question	5. Category
Heathens & Jews	egotistical	prologue	metaphysical	predicate
Rise of Christianity		plot is actualized		subject
Migrations of Barbarians		causes, means, conditions	dynamical	hypothetical – actual
Modern Nations		passion in full operation		categorical – conditional
Crusades		counterplot	mathematical	quality
Reformation		idea in material effects		quantity
Reason	idistical	conclusion	physical	internal – external
Future age	tuistical	soliloquy		ens rationis – ens realis

1. Cf. W 1: 108.

Now, we might be willing to accept the idea that history is “the gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute” as a postulate that aims to ascribe maximal solidarity, cooperativity, circumspection and responsibility to rational agents for the use of their freedom in the historical development of rational purposes that are embodied within nature and culture (cf. *CP* 1.615). Still, a question needs to be addressed: In which sense can history be seen as developing by ‘answering categoriological questions’? The answer, I think, lies in the difficulties connected to a normative component ingrained in our conception of history, according to which, as Schelling puts it, “history ought to represent freedom and necessity in unification” (*SW* III: 593): Neither a strictly predetermined *anancastic* sequence of events representing a “system of *fatalism*” (*SW* III: 601), nor a *tychastic* progression resulting from mere chance – “a system of *irreligiosity* and *atheism*” (*ibid.*), as Schelling calls it – can be considered to be historical. Only a view that allows us to conceive of an absolute ground of the harmony between freedom and necessity, so Schelling argues, will allow us to conceive of *history* in the first place. Such a history is “a system of providence, or *religion* in the only proper sense of the word” (*ibid.*) and – as we might anticipate: *agapastic* (cf. III.3) – the product of an “absolute synthesis” (*SW* III: 602), which, as such, can never be completed without negating the appearance of freedom in the world (cf. *SW* III: 270).

The view of the Absolute *as* historical, so Schelling argues in “The Historical Construction of Christianity” (1805), emerges with Christianity as the worldview in which “the world is looked upon as History, as a moral kingdom” (*SW* V: 287).¹⁷ With Christianity, thus, the Absolute as the ground of unity of the finite and infinite, the divine and the natural, necessity and freedom, represents itself in the new symbolism of historical action:

Where the infinite itself can become finite, there it can also become plurality; there polytheism is possible. Where the infinite is only signified by the finite, it remains necessarily one, and no polytheism as a co-existence of divine forms is possible. [...] Consequently, Christianity can be taken only from that which falls in time, that is, from History; and, hence, Christianity is, in the highest sense and in its innermost spirit, historical. Every particular moment of time is a revelation of a particular side of God, in each of which He is absolute: that which the Greek religion had as co-existent, Christianity has as a succession. (*SW* III: 288)

The Christian God here *appears* as the totality of historical time; but as the “endlessness and immensity” of history render it incapable of providing us with a representation of God, it becomes necessary “to represent history in a both infinite and limited appearance, which itself is not real, as the political state is, but ideal, and represents the unity of all [human beings] in spirit, their individual segregation notwithstanding, as an immediate presence” (*SW* V: 293). This representation is “the church,” which Schelling conceives of as a “living work of art” (*ibid.*), adding strong aesthetic connotations to the Kantian origins of this concept.¹⁸

¹⁷ All translations from “The Historical Construction of Christianity” are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁸ See Kant’s *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Part III: “Concerning the victory of the good over the evil principle and the founding of a Kingdom of God on earth,” in *RRT*: 129-71.

In the central section of the *argumentatio* of “POA” (cf. *W* 1: 108-10), we see Peirce embarking on an attempt to deliver that detailed construction of Christianity, of which Schelling had only demonstrated “the possibility in general” (*SW* V: 295). That the subject of Peirce’s formula of Christianity is the Church and has its predicate in the notion of a “heavenly kingdom,” which consummated the condition of being “perfection in human form” with the life of Christ (cf. *W* 1: 110), thus becomes intelligible after having considered the Schellingian backgrounds of the speech: The church is a growing cooperative community attracted by a goal it is destined to in its predicate, which it gradually makes clearer to itself in its history. The categories of the revelation of its predicate, therefore, are moments of a synthesis of the Absolute in the medium of history, directing us from the first stage of revelation to an eschatological end we can only approach in history (cf. *W* 1: 114).

III. Developments: “The Fixation of Belief” and “Evolutionary Love”

In this section we will trace the further development of Peirce’s philosophy of history by focusing on two quite remote networks of ideas: Whereas “Fixation of Belief” (1877) and its twin “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” were written to introduce the readers of the *Popular Science Monthly* to a series of articles entitled *Illustrations of the Logic of Science* (1877-8), in which Peirce, for the first time, developed his theory of inquiry within the broader horizon of a set of themes and tenets that, two decades later, became canonical for the pragmatistic movement, “Evolutionary Love” (1893) is part of a speculative “Cosmogonic Philosophy” (*EP* 1: 297) Peirce outlined in his so-called ‘*Monist Metaphysical Series*’ (1891-3).

In this cosmogony, Peirce develops a categoriologically founded account of the whole of reality, including minds sharing an interest in cosmogony, as having evolved in the process of a “natural history of the laws of nature” (*EP* 1: 246, 288) that originates from a state of absolute chaotic potentiality and – by mere chance – actualizes possible developmental paths through a “generalizing tendency” (*EP* 1: 297) of habit-taking, in which regularities and uniformities like laws of nature or the directionality of cultural processes begin to emerge. Unless, that is, in an infinitely remote future, a final state of complete rationalization of the cosmic system is reached and mind – being the habit-taking agency of the universe – becomes “crystallised” as “effete mind” (*EP* 1: 297, 293). The origins of this narrative in Schelling’s philosophy become obvious when they are couched in a theological language that reveals a significant continuity with the metaphysical narrative of “POA”:

The starting-point of the universe, God the Creator, is the Absolute First; the terminus of the universe, God completely revealed, is the Absolute Second; every state of the universe at a measurable point of time is the third. (*EP* 1:251)

Still, as it is far from trivial to identify a point of convergence between the philosophical interests and methodological approaches that characterize the writings of two series – which have even been deemed to be incompatible¹⁹ – it comes as

19. See e.g. Gallie (1952: 221-9); and Hookway 1997.

no surprise that “for some early commentators the whole idea of a Peircean system of metaphysics was a puzzling embarrassment,” as Hookway (1997: 2) succinctly puts it.²⁰ Upon closer inspection, however, the distant phases to which “FOB” and “ELO” belong turn out to be consecutive in the mental biography of someone who, moreover, cultivated cosmological interests from the start.²¹ Thus, as soon as 1885, Peirce writes to W. James to “have something very vast now,” namely “an attempt to explain the laws of nature, to show their general characteristics and to trace them to their origin & *predict new laws by the law of the laws of nature*” (*W* 6: 595; emphasis mine). Consequently, as a close reading of the opening sections of the *Monist Series* confirms, the interest in the explanation of the possibility of hypothesis-framing reflects a central heuristic aspect that Peirce’s “Cosmogonic Philosophy” shares with his logic of science. Consequently, after having sketched his theory of a rational instinct, according to which the success of early scientists to select hypotheses in accordance with the criterium of simplicity can be explained by considering that and how embodied minds have been shaped by the very laws they have become able to divinate (*EP* 1: 287-8, cf. *EP* 1: 181), Peirce writes:

[a] To find out much more about molecules and atoms we must search out a natural history of laws of nature *which may fulfill that function* which the presumption in favor of simple laws fulfilled in the early days of dynamics, [aa] *by showing us what kind of laws we have to expect* and [ab] by answering such questions as this: Can we, with reasonable prospect of not wasting time, try the supposition that atoms attract one another inversely as the seventh power of their distances, or can we not? [b] *To suppose universal laws of nature capable of being apprehended by the mind and yet having no reason for their special forms, but standing inexplicable and irrational, is hardly a justifiable position.* [c] Uniformities are precisely the sort of facts that need to be accounted for [...]. Law is par excellence the thing that wants a reason. Now the *only possible way* of accounting for the laws of nature...is to *suppose them results of evolution.* (*EP* 1: 288, additions in squared brackets and italics mine)

Peirce here states that the program of his architectonic philosophy is motivated by two interdependent concerns: First, the need to find a *functional substitute* for the heuristic power of the principle of simplicity, which would [aa] enable us to hypothetically derive specific laws from a ‘law of laws,’ and thus second [ab] provide us with a criterium for testing hypotheses efficiently. The concerns [aa] and [ab], however, make it imperative to have a theory of the diversification of the special forms of laws of nature and their relation to the law of laws if we do not want to lose all grounds for assuming the general intelligibility of nature, which would be the case

20. This embarrassment stems from the fact that the position Peirce develops in his metaphysics – and which he is not too shy to call “Schellingism transformed in the light of modern physics” (Letter to W. James, 1895, quoted in Perry 1935: 416 ff.; cf. 6.605) or a “Schelling-fashioned idealism” (*EP* 1: 312-3; cf. *MS* 400) – must appear as a betrayal to those who read (i.) the theory of reality (cf. *EP* 1: 120-1, 136-9) as a form of positivistic scientism, (ii.) the pragmatic maxim (cf. *EP* 1: 132) as a verificationist procedure, and (iii.) the theory of inquiry (cf. *EP* 1: 111-5) as a naturalistic instrumentalism anchored in a proto-behavioristic biologism, in which thought and the development of its logicity are understood to be aiming at nothing nobler (and less relativistic) than the production of adaptive habits of action.

21. *CP* 4.2 (1898): “I came to the study of philosophy intensely curious about Cosmology and Psychology.”

if we were to claim *[b]*: a radically unsystematic empiricism that merely postulates general lawfulness without being able to account for the relation that needs to be thought as obtaining between general lawfulness and its specifications.²² The concerns *[aa]* and *[ab]*, thus, necessitate us to offer an account of the grounds of the *general* intelligibility of nature, from which, then, *the lawfulness* of the special laws would become intelligible to us in the first place. Such an account, Peirce says, needs to be evolutionary.²³

III.1 The Structure of “The Fixation of Belief”

The structural analysis of “FOB” reveals a symmetry: After an episodic sketch of the history of the empirical sciences, the sections II-IV introduce the basic concepts of Peirce's theory of inquiry by outlining the archetypal pragmatistic epistemic situation in which an organism is primordially related to its environment through biological needs, emotional responses and conceptual dispositions to act. The normative grounding of inquiry, however, has so far only been involved embryonically, especially in a momentous reference to the role of reflection (*EP* 1: 114). This normative grounding will be articulated in section V, where a second narrative sequentially introducing four methods of fixating belief leads to the emergence of scientific rationality and its apotheosis in the “integrity of belief” (*EP* 1: 123). On the whole then, this structuring presents a triptych: Two narratives are mediated through the theory of inquiry. The unity of the text thus consists in its giving an answer to the question ‘What conception of logical thought is needed to account for scientific progress?’

There is, however, another possible analysis: We can read “FOB” as a sequence of three narratives soaked with theory that disclose three aspects of history: In its *firstness* (in its being what it is without reference to anything else),²⁴ history is chronicled as a mere sequence of *monadic events and agents* (sec. I). In its *secondness* (in its being what it is as determined by something else), history is resulting from a blind evolutionary process in which “logical animals” (*EP* 1: 112) are *forced to react* to the challenges of their environment (sec. II-IV). In its *thirdness* (in its being what it is as mediating between a first and a second) *and* third degree of clearness,²⁵ history eventually is projected as a gradual realization of the conceptual moments of scientific rationality (sec. V). With this approach – and the conception of an ideal

22. Note that this is the same problem that Kant, in *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*, tries to solve with his account of the regulative apriority of an heautonomous reflective power of judgment; cf. *CPI*, *Introduction*, IV.

23. For a further elucidation of this point see Hookway (1985: 265-71).

24. In their most primitive meaning, the Peircean categories we are here using represent the three elementary and irreducible relational modes of the determination of being (cf. e.g. *EP* 1: 242 and *EP* 2: 267-8). A fine introduction to Peirce's categoriology is offered by de Waal (2013: 33-46)

25. See Peirce's identification of the “third grade of clearness of apprehension” of the meaning of a concept with the reflection on its “conceived sensible effects” on the basis of the pragmatic maxim in “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” (*EP* 1: 132). Before, Peirce reflects on the historical impact the cultural preference for two opposed conceptions of the goodness of ideas might have: On the one hand, the preference for an “excessive wealth of language and its natural concomitant, a vast, unfathomable deep of ideas”; on the other hand, the pragmatic predilection for a language “whose ideas [...] are few, but which possesses a wonderful mastery over those that it has” (*EP* 1: 126-7).

history (cf. 1.60) enshrined within it – Peirce follows a tradition that can be traced back to Fichte's conception of a “pragmatic history of the human mind,” articulated in his 1794 *Science of Knowledge*,²⁶ that with its emphasis on the dialectical actuality obtaining between Ego and Non-Ego in the genesis of subjectivity, not only inspires the philosophy of history in Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* – which Peirce remembers as his first philosophical reading (cf. 2.197) leaving an “indelible impression upon my soul” (*MS* 619: 10) – but also informs the conception of “Philosophy as a History of Self-Consciousness in Epochs” in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) that, through excerpts and paraphrases in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817),²⁷ had become part and parcel of the Concord Transcendentalism Peirce remembers to be the origin of his “Schelling-fashioned idealism” (*EP* 1: 312).²⁸ A decade before Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Schiller and Schelling thus are among the first idealists to emphasize the historicity of reason by conceiving of it as a process of education in which the static faculties of Kant's first *Critique* – which closes with a chapter on “The History of Pure Reason” merely to “designate a place that is left open in the system and must be filled in the future” (A852/B880) – are interpreted as stages of the historical becoming of reason. On this backdrop, “FOB” answers a question which complements the first: What philosophical conception of history will allow us to conceive of ourselves as historically capable of gaining increasing control over the development of rationality by studying logic as “an art not yet reduced to rules” (*EP* 1: 141)?

III.2 *The Sequence of Methods and Transitions: Peirce's Analytic Program*

The sequence of four methods of belief-fixation is introduced to test their respective conformity with the normative principle of belief-formation (*NPBF*). As Peirce indicates in section IV, this principle, which should regulate all rational processes of reflectively turning – not to the sensuous matter of inquiry, but – to the procedural *mode of belief-formation*, “will make us reject any belief which does not seem *to have been so formed as to insure this result*” (*EP* 1: 114, emphasis mine): This result is to produce beliefs which can (i.) “truly guide our actions,” (ii.) “so as to” (iii.) “satisfy our desires.” Reflection thus monitors – and in case of a violation of norms, inhibits – the process of belief-formation under the profile of the question whether a belief has been produced in such a way that it meets the conditions to be (i.) irrevocably authoritative (ii.) to establish a relation of functionality (iii.) among our beliefs and aims of action. Inasmuch as *NPBF* – as a principle that does not state *what* our goal is, but only which *form* it requires – thus sets the norm that all our beliefs ought to be formed in a certain way so as to guarantee the most fundamental requirement for the practical identity of an agent, namely *the possibility of the continuity of its actions*,²⁹ section V, consequently, assigns itself the task to assess which methods of generating

26. Fichte (1982: 198-9): “The Science of Knowledge is to be a pragmatic history of the human mind.”

27. Cf. Coleridge (1983: 129-67).

28. Cf. Goodman (2015: 147-61)

29. Cf. *CP* 5.133.

and stabilizing belief are in accordance with this principle and, *therefore*, practically rational.

Irrespective of Peirce's literary style, there is a dense analytic program underlying the description of each of the four methods and three transitions.³⁰ This analysis progresses towards two goals, in which the accomplishment of the first depends on the second: (A.) to differentiate the *developmental stages* of the unfolding of man's *second nature* as being rooted in a capacity to acquire and modify *complexes of habits*, and (B.) to give an account of the *necessity of the form* (and thus: lawfulness) of this development by identifying the *principle of its movement* and thus provide a justification for the specification of its moments qua particular developmental stages, which is required for accomplishing the first task.

III.3 A Categoriological Grounded Interpretation of Section V of "Fixation of Belief"

As we can here only sketch the close reading that becomes possible when we conceive of "ELO" as a complement to "FOB," let me immediately refer you to the passage that holds the key both for the reconstruction of the sequence of methods as categoriological moments *and* for the explanation of their unity and form through a principle that specifies the *origin, growth* and *télos* of the development they constitute: In the third section of "ELO" we see Peirce applying the *general* modes of evolution he has categoriological differentiated to the "historical development of human thought," thus obtaining a tychistic mode, "two varieties of anancasm" and "three of agapasm" (*EP* 1: 363). He writes:

[o] In the very nature of things, the line of demarcation between the three modes of evolution is not perfectly sharp. That does not prevent its being quite real, perhaps it is rather a mark of its reality [...]. The main question is whether three radically different evolutionary elements have been operative; and [...] what are the most striking characteristics of whatever elements have been operative [...]. The [a] agapastic development of thought is the adoption of certain mental tendencies, not [aa] altogether heedlessly, as in tychasm, nor quite blindly by [aba] the mere force of circumstances or [abb] of logic, as [ab] in anancasm, but [b] by an immediate attraction for the idea itself, whose nature is divined before the mind possesses it, by the power of sympathy, that is, by virtue of the continuity of mind; and this mental tendency may be of three varieties, as follows. First, [ba] it may affect a whole people or community in its *collective personality*, and be thence communicated to such individuals as are in powerfully sympathetic connection with the collective people, although they may be intellectually incapable of attaining the idea by their private understandings or even perhaps of consciously apprehending it. Second, [bb] it may affect a *private person* directly, yet so that he is only enabled to apprehend the idea, or to appreciate its attractiveness, by virtue of his sympathy with his neighbors, under the influence of a striking experience

30. Items on this agenda are (i.) descriptions of the practices constituting the methods; (ii.) implicit analyses of the faculties involved and the specific historical constellations emerging among them; emphasis on individuating the (iii.) social, (iv.) objective and (v.) normative relations established in the practices of each method between the individual on the one and the community, world and rational thought on the other hand.

or development of thought. The conversion of St. Paul may be taken as an example of what is meant. Third, [bc] it may affect *an individual*, independently of his human affections, by virtue of an attraction it exercises upon his mind, even before he has comprehended it. This is the phenomenon which has been well called the *divination* of genius; for it is due to the continuity between the man's mind and the Most High. (*EP* 1: 364, additions in brackets and all italicizations except the last are mine)

I shall first briefly show how this passage allows us to understand the categoriological nature of the distinctions Peirce draws in “FOB” (III.3.1). Then I will adumbrate in how far ‘that-which-first-manifests-itself-as-the-social-impulse’ functions as the principle of the internal development – i.e. as the *origin, growth* and *télos* – of the impulse's manifestation in three stages (III.3.2). As we will see, Peirce is first retroactively establishing a seamless correspondence between the methods of belief-fixation and the modes of the historical development of thought ontologically grounding them (cf. [a]-[bc]), and then proceeding to account for the internal unity and categoriological order of the three manifestations of the social impulse as concretizations of the modes of agapic historical development (cf. [ba]-[bc]). In this perspective, thus, the methods of tenacity, authority and pure reason are conceived of as degenerate forms of the method of science, whereas tychistic and anacastic agapic evolution reveal themselves to be degenerate forms of “divination” (cf. [bc]).

III.3.1 The Methods of Belief-Fixation are Praxeological Manifestations of the Evolutionary modes of the development of Human Thought Cosmologically Grounding them

The claim that the objective relation man is capable of establishing between him and the world through science is grounded in practices and social relations among human beings, is the explicit *epistemological* theme of “FOB”: we establish our relation to an objective realm we call ‘reality’ or ‘the world we share’ by entering and entertaining definite social – i.e. *cooperative* – relations to others. The claim that the objective relation that man is capable of establishing to reality via scientific inquiries, is the upshot of a development in which mind – as a communicative agency unfolding from a “social impulse” – has the tendency to develop in accordance to a categoriologically ordered sequence, is the implicit *metaphysical* theme of Peirce's philosophy of history in “FOB,” culminating in the temporal schematization of a categoriological analysis of the moments of scientific rationality in section V: A conceptual sequence is schematized in a dramatic form in order to *idealiter* present methods of fixating belief as *distinct* complex sets of habits that *realiter* are not sharply demarcated, but – being *simultaneously* operative types of causes of historical processes – do, rather, overlap (cf. [o]).

The description of the method of tenacity does thus not mean to imply that there are real historical individuals who are capable of *exclusively* following the method of tenacity in their belief-forming-procedures by voluntaristically determining their beliefs in order to then cut themselves off from all communication with others and

the world by selectively perceiving and hearing what confirms their beliefs and, as a last resort, rejecting all requests to abide by standards of rationality as a request to use standards that are not their own (cf. *EP* 1: 116). We also resist the temptation to conceive of the method of tenacity as an *independently existing*³¹ “historical state of culture [...] [in which] one opinion does not influence another” and men “cannot put two and two together,” as Peirce characterizes *its essence* two pages later (*EP* 1: 118).³² Rather, we understand that this method aims to capture the internal bond of certain attitudes, practices and economies inherent in routines of belief-production which, both on the onto- and phylogenetic level, are verifiable as the dominating factors *periodically* determining phases of personal and cultural development. Moreover, we understand that these practices have an *unrestricted autonomy* at their core which, when pushed to its extremes, will result in the complete absence of rule-governed forms of fixating and reflectively assessing belief. Of course, these rule-governed forms have yet to develop; but they *cannot* develop without having *the act of logical determination in its firstness* as its prerequisite: “[W]e cling tenaciously, not merely to believing, but to believing just what we do believe” (*EP* 1: 114). What emerges on the stage of tenacity, thus, is the intent to determine one’s self by determining one’s beliefs: the most fundamental condition of any form of logical determination or practical identity. Here and in what follows, Peirce does not base his analysis on “purported fact[s] about our psychological make-up.”³³ The taking control of their processes of belief-formation by organisms *praxeologically* requires their autonomy. Consequently, Peirce emphasizes that tenacity, considered in isolation from the other methods, is a praxeological fiction:³⁴ it is “unable to hold its ground in practice” as “the social impulse is against it” (*EP* 1: 116).

In correspondence with the method of tenacity, the tychistic mode of evolution is held to be capable of reigning a historical process only for a limited time, insofar as this mode occurs “whenever we find men’s thought taking by imperceptible degrees a turn contrary to the purposes which animate them, in spite of their highest impulses” (*EP* 1: 365). As a result, this mode – like the tenacious method cosmologically grounded within it – will effectuate “slight departures from habitual ideas in different directions indifferently, quite purposeless and quite unconstrained whether by outward circumstances or by force of logic” (*EP* 1: 363), thus establishing a practice of “heedlessly” (*EP* 1: 364) fixating beliefs, i.e. without any concern for general standards and the well-being of others.

31. Murphey’s (1961: 164-5) decision to read section V of “FOB” as a mere assemblage of methods, leads him to a view which has significantly shaped later scholarship: once the first three methods are degraded to “straw methods” (Murphey 1961: 165), the main problem is no longer an analysis of the moments of scientific rationality, but the justification of the superiority of the method of science and the ensuing search for Peircean arguments supporting this claim, which then, quite unsurprisingly, turn out to be “barely worthy of the name” (Murphey 1961: 164). By taking it for granted that “there is no historical justification of the list” (Murphey 1961: 164), Murphey’s interpretation buries the distinction between historiography and a *philosophy* of history in the graveyard of oblivion and prevents the contextualization of “FOB” in the idealist tradition, taken up again by Smyth 1988.

32. Cf. *SW* V: 287: “There is no state of barbarism that does not have its origins in a perished culture.”

33. Misak (2004: 57-8); and cf. Hookway (1985: 48-9).

34. This analytical abstractness and real interdependence of the methods is also seen by Pape (2002: 65-79).

As Peirce impatiently exclaims in “ELO,” we surely cannot understand ourselves and our history on the basis of the supposedly exclusive action of absolute chance: “I have to confess I cannot read history so” (*EP* 1: 365). As much as the method of tenacity has the social impulse against it, it is correspondingly not possible that “tychasm” – note Peirce’s slip from talk of a mode of evolution to talk of a method – “has been the sole method [sic!] of intellectual development,” inasmuch as such a development “has seldom been of a tychastic nature, and exclusively in backward and barbarising movements” (*EP* 1: 365). Cooperation and communication reign in the historical world we inhabit, thus indicating the operativeness of a “real entitative »spirit« of an age or of a people” (*EP* 1: 365).

Is the social impulse really the “psychological property of human beings, [that] we cannot hold on to beliefs that other people confidently deny”?³⁵ Peirce’s argumentation points to a different meaning: the upshot of the social impulse is that men as historical beings “necessarily influence each other’s opinions” (*EP* 1: 118), inasmuch as the most fundamental practices – especially the semeiotic-communicative ones – *are* rule-governed. The social impulse, then, is primarily an instinctive openness to coordinate and communicate, a capacity to have our thoughts influenced by others; only secondarily is it a form of pressure to accept the views of others, as this presupposes the *recognition* that “another man’s thoughts or sentiment may be equivalent to one’s own” and “arises from an impulse too strong in men to be suppressed, without danger of destroying the human species,” i.e. the recognition arises *from* the social impulse *as* a first manifestation of a transactional instinct to coordinate, cooperate and communicate (*EP* 1: 116-7; my emphasis). Without this impulse then, men, passing on their experiences through mediatic practices from generation to generation, would never become part of the collective process of experience they most naturally dwell in.

The social impulse, originating from the transactional-communicative instinct is the *origo* of all histories and communities. Like the *agápe* generating the “agapastic development of thought,” this impulse is neither *autonomous* (like tenacity as the praxeological manifestation of the tychastic mode of thought-development, cf. [aa]) nor *heteronomous* (as the methods of authority and pure reason qua manifestations of the two anancastic modes, cf. [aba]³⁶ and [abb]³⁷), but *heautonomous*³⁸ (like the self-correcting method of science qua embodiment of the agapic mode; cf. [bc]) or: ‘inventive in giving *to* itself rules for the reflection *of* itself.’

We are thus invited to conceive of the methods of authority and the apriori method as those sets of habits of belief-determination in its secondness that are expressions

35. Hookway (1985: 48).

36. *External anancasm*, which praxeologically corresponds to the uniformity of will brought about by the forced surrender of the will of the individual to “the will of the state” through its techniques of indoctrination, censorship and degrees of violence as *ultima ratio* of its power (cf. *EP* 1: 117), thus establishes vast historical spaces dominated by the gradually morphing belief-systems of monotheistic faiths, which utilize the intellects, hearts and hands of human beings to produce and refine material culture (cf. *EP* 1: 118).

37. *Internal anancasm* or “logical groping” (*EP* 1: 368) brings about a change of ideas not by external constraints, but by causes “internal to the mind as logical developments of ideas already accepted, such as generalisations” (*EP* 1: 364) and corresponds to the a priori method as its processual ground of historical concretization.

38. See *CPJ*: 28, 72.

of the two varieties of the anacastic development of thought, in which, *generally*, “new ideas are adopted without foreseeing whither they tend” and have the *specific* character to be “determined by causes either external to the mind [...] or internal” (EP1: 364), whereas the method of science corresponds to the agapistic mode and is “distinguished by its purposive character,” consisting in the “development of an idea” (EP1: 369).

III.3.2 The Manifestations of the Social Impulse are Categoriological Concretizations of the Agapic Modes of the Development of Thought

The categoriologically structured ideal history of scientific rationality Peirce develops in section V of “FOB” makes intelligible the scientific progress sketched in its first section. We thus see the tenacity with which Roger Bacon holds on to the concept of interior illumination at the threshold of modern science, move to the ideas of the authoritarian Francis Bacon, who “wrote on science like a Lord Chancellor,” cross the apriorism of the Copernican Revolution, which almost prevented Kepler from testing the hypothesis of elliptical orbits (cf. EP 1: 110), and reach the experimentalism of Lavoisier, whose new habit was “to conceive of reasoning as something which was to be done with one’s eyes open” (EP 1: 111). Darwin, Clausius and Maxwell, eventually, engender a new form of statistical control over natural phenomena in which a cross-fertilization of methods emerges and announces the possibility of a method of devising methods of inquiry – a pragmatic “method of methods” required for “the age of method.”³⁹ Our categoriological scheme thus allows us to pragmatically conceive of our history as the unfolding of an increasing control over the development of the scientific life-form we have become.

Is it possible to offer a cosmological account of the origin, growth and *télos* of our interest in our history? Are there resources to account for the development of the transactional-communicative instinct that manifests itself (i.) as “the social impulse” (EP 1: 116), then (ii.) as “a wider sort of social feeling” (EP 1: 117) and finally (iii.) as the desire to have our beliefs determined by “nothing human” (EP 1: 120)? Note that the *qualitative* changes from method to method would be impossible if the propellant of the movement were not itself capable of development: Each method has been grounded in a corresponding evolutionary mode of the development of thought (cf. III.3.1), but a cosmogonic account that shows how *these modes themselves* evolve from each other *as diversifications* of a unifying principle is still missing.

It is exactly here that Peirce’s “law of love” (EP 1: 362) and the differentiation of three modes of the agapic historical development of thought (cf. [b]-[bb]) become relevant. As this account is carefully prepared in what Peirce, especially in “The Law of Mind” (1892), has to say about the mathematical form of experience (cf. EP 1: 323-7), the semeiotic structures and inferential forms of psychic processes (cf. EP 1: 327-9), and the developmental stages of personality and communication (cf. EP 1: 330-3, 348-51), we can here only sketch the objective cosmological account of the evolution of the social impulse.

39. Peirce in a letter from 1882 to his brother James Mills, quoted in EP 1: 211.

1) Whereas the growth of the social impulse in “FOB” is represented as the development of a reflexive activity culminating in a thematization of the grounds of the generalizability of the motives of our beliefs,⁴⁰ the term *reflection*⁴¹ is avoided in the 1890s and substituted with an inferentialistic account of thought (generally predilected since the 1860s).

2) In order to appreciate in which sense Peirce's – often neglected⁴² – account of the three modes of agapic development of thought (cf. *[b]*-*[bc]*) represents the key to understanding the origin, growth and *télos*, thus: the *unity* and principle of diversification of the development of the social impulse, it is crucial to understand the common nature of the agapic modes: Their generic distinctive mark consists of their having the attractivity of an idea as the ground of the “adoption of a mental tendency.” In the characterization of *genuine* agapic development (cf. *[b]* and *[bc]*), however, Peirce speaks of “an *immediate* attraction for the idea *itself*” (my italics) emphasizing that the idea is apprehended *for no other reason* but its sheer attractivity. In accordance with Peirce's distinction of three inferential “modes of action of the human soul” (*EP* 1: 327-9), this attractivity consists in abductively bringing formerly discrete elements into an unexpected continuum and thus reflects the *pure mediality* of the creation of a new habit of mind, which – in the experience of the emergence of an intelligible form hovering between object and cognizer – *interlocks* both in a possible continuous cognitive relation, without which mind and world would forever remain worlds apart:

Habit is that specialisation of the law of mind whereby a general idea gains the power of exciting reactions. But in order that the general idea should attain all its functionality, it is necessary, also, that it should become suggestible by sensations. That is accomplished by a psychical process having the form of hypothetical inference. (*EP* 1: 328)

3) The degeneracy of the two other forms is grounded in the *impurity of their mediality*: in an attraction which is either *[ba]* ‘not an immediate attraction for the idea itself’ (tychastic agapism) or *[bb]* ‘not an immediate attraction for the idea itself’ (anacastic agapism).

3.1) In the first case, the ground for the adoption of the habit, is *not* the idea as such, but the semi-conscious mimesis of the habits of a “collective personality”: mere custom, the individual abides by almost involuntarily, though lovingly as out of sympathy with others. The tychistic stage of agapic development thus represents a weak purposive processuality which corresponds to the first manifestation of the social impulse: on the lowest level of reflexivity, processes of interaction between

40. All three transitional reflections are related to NPBF (cf. III.2) and can be reconstructed as aspects of a *sensus communis*, in the sense that the § 40 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* defines it as “a faculty of judgement” that “in its reflection takes account” of the following “maxims of common human understanding”: “1. to think for oneself; 2. to put ourselves in thought in the place of everyone else; 3. always to think consistently” (*CPJ*, § 40; see *AHE*, 307-8, for a parallel in § 43 of the *Anthropology*).

41. Cf. the account Peirce gives of reflection in the earliest phase of his evolutionary metaphysics in “Design and Chance”: although reflection is “the instrument by which we make ourselves rational, it does not follow that it is essential to rationality” (*EP* 1: 222-3). For Peirce, in this period, reflexivity thus is only an accidental remedy for a generic imperfection in our modes of bringing thought to unity.

42. An exception is the excellent interpretation offered by Pape 1997.

organisms are necessary, in which *mimetically* adopted habits can evolve and establish the primitive “kind of coordination or connection of ideas” (EP1 : 331) on the existence of which the emergence of an almost undifferentiated individual *within* a “collective personality” depends. The continuity of mind diversifying itself in the evolution of culture and human purposes does, thus, have its first sedimentation in the establishment of semeiotic practices in which the directionality of time and the spatial coordination of mental action emerges (EP 1: 323-5).

When an idea is conveyed from one mind to another, it is by forms of combination of the diverse elements of nature, say by some curious symmetry, or by some union of a tender color with a refined odor. To such forms the law of mechanical energy has no application. [...] They are embodied ideas; and so only can they convey ideas. (EP 1: 333)

3.2) In the second case, the ground for the adoption of the habit, is *not* the idea *in its immediacy*, but rather that which it helps us to accomplish (cf. [bb]). Consequently, we observe how the “collective personality” dominating the first phase diversifies into personalities, which now, by explicitly conceiving of themselves over against the community, exist and act as “private person[s].” Peirce mentions St. Paul; but we are invited to think of a variety of historical individuals necessitated to experiencing their existence in an identical categoriological constellation determining their adoption of a new habit of thought. What characterizes the specific nature of the anacastic stage of the agapic evolution of thought as exemplified in Socrates (Ap. 20c4 – 23b9), Saulus (Acts 9: 3-9; 22: 6-16) or Mohamed (Qur’an 33: 19-22; 96: 1-5) is the necessity to bridge their dualistic existences as diversified, committed members of the community through *reformative* action,⁴³ thus grounding that “wider sort of social feeling” (EP 1:118), in which the adoption of new ideas “affect[s] a private person directly [...] by virtue of his sympathy with his neighbors, under the influence of a striking experience or development of thought.” This mode, thus, is determined by the loss of a social unity it has emancipated itself from and is animated by the desire to found new communities. The idea is thus not apprehended for the sake of its contents, but of its use.

4) The word “divination” encapsulates and structures Peirce’s thought on the *possibility* of genuine agapic historical progress. Bearing in mind that Peirce – in conformity with the historical role he ascribes to the method of authority as “the path of peace” (EP 1: 122) for the “intellectual slaves” of the “mass of mankind” (EP 1: 118) – held anacastic development to have been “the chief factor in the historical evolution” (EP 1: 290), the ‘etymological chord’ *divination* nonetheless connects four ideas in a harmonious unity: First, the idea of a predictive power of the mind (*divination*); second, the idea of something’s originating from God (lat. *divinus*); third, the idea of a supreme goodness something has (engl. *divine*) and fourth, the etymological association of a latinization of the *homoiosis theoi* (ital. *divenire*: to become; from lat. *devenire*: to descend from above), i.e. the becoming like God.⁴⁴

43. Cf. Peirce’s division of three classes of men, in: MS 1334: 16-8.

44. Cf. Plato, *Theaitetus*, 176 a-b and *Timaetus*, 90 a-d.

5) In speaking of “divination,” Peirce introduces four aspects of that genuine mode of agapic evolution in which the social impulse transcends itself in the contemplative life of *theoria* adopting an idea in its pure mediality “by virtue of the continuity of mind” (cf. [b]). The third stage of the social impulse, thus, discloses the tendency of mind to establish continua *within* itself by joining continua beyond itself: Historically, the idea of a highest continuum man can relate to and immortalize in by surrendering the needs and wants of his biological and political existence to an engagement with the cosmos in the aspect of its pure intelligibility originates in the thought of Plato and Aristotle. With them, the ultimate stage of man’s ethical development is characterized by the dialectic of self-transcendence and true self⁴⁵ in the contemplative life with its capacity to grant authentic *eudaimonia* in accordance with our psychic structure. We thus see how the modes of agapic development anchor the stages of the social impulse in *bioi* (EN, I, 5) qua degrees of self-transcendence in ecstatic feeling, the memory of the *pólis* and a life “in conformity with the highest that is in us”:

The wise man, no less than the just one and all the rest, requires the necessities of life; [...] but the wise man can practise contemplation by himself, and the wiser he is, the more he can do it. No doubt he does it better with the help of fellow-workers; but for all that he is the most self-sufficient of men. Again, contemplation would seem to be the only activity that is appreciated for its own sake; because nothing is gained from it except the act of contemplation, whereas from practical activities we expect to gain something more or less over and above the action [...]. [Thus] this activity will be the perfect happiness for man [...]. But such a life will be too high for human attainment; for any man who lives it will do so not as a human being but in virtue of something divine within him [...]. So if the intellect is divine compared with man, the life of the intellect must be divine compared with the life of a human being [...]. [W]e ought, so far as in us lies, to put on immortality, [...] do all that we can to live in conformity with the highest that is in us; for even if it is small in bulk, in power and preciousness it far excels all the rest. Indeed it would seem that this is the true self of the individual, since it is the authoritative and better part of him; so it would be an odd thing if a man chose to live someone else’s life instead of his own. (EN, X, 7)

The prevention of the “odd” choice, to which Aristotle here refers, seems to be at the heart of Peirce’s understanding of what we have called ‘agent’s knowledge’: A wisdom that – being of the nature of a “developmental teleology” (EP 1: 331) and ensuing a harmony which, “at one and the same impulse,” requires the capacity of creative love of “projecting creations into dependency” and “drawing them into harmony” (EP 1: 353) – constitutes the ethical dimension of Peirce’s normative philosophy of history. It is, after all, in every living second, up to us to *lovingly* conceive of the mode of connection of our past with our possible futures.

45. Cf. Ventimiglia 2008; and Colapietro (1989: 61-97, and esp. 95-7) on this theme in Peirce.

Abbreviations

TCSPS: Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society

– In citations from and references to C. S. Peirce's writings the following notations are used:

CP *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, followed by volume number and paragraph number: *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 vols., vols. 1-6 Hartshorne, C. & Weiss, P. (eds.), Cambridge, 1931-1935; vols. 7-8, Burks, A. (ed.), Cambridge, 1958.

EP *The Essential Peirce*, followed by volume number and page number: *The Essential Peirce*, vols. 1-2, Bloomington, 1998.

MS *Manuscripts of Charles S. Peirce in the Houghton Library of Harvard University*, followed by manuscript number and page number, as identified in: ROBIN, R. (1967): *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, Amherst, and in: ROBIN, R. (1971): *The Peirce Papers: A supplementary catalogue*, in: *TCSPS*, vol. 7, 37-57.

W *Writings of Charles S. Peirce*, followed by volume number and page number: *Writings of Charles S. Peirce. A Chronological Edition*, vols. 1-8, Bloomington, 1982 -.

– In citations from and references to F. W. J. Schelling the following notation is used:

SW *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings sämtliche Werke, Erste Abtheilung*, vols. 1-10, followed by volume and page number, ed. by K. A. Schelling, Stuttgart und Augsburg 1856 – 1861.

– In citations from and references to Immanuel Kant the following notation is used:

AHE *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Kant: Anthropology, History, Education*, followed by page number, ed. by Zöllner, G., translated by Louden, R. B. and Zöllner, G., Cambridge 2011.

CPR *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Kant: Critique of Pure Reason*, followed by page number of the first and/or second edition: *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Guyer, P. & Wood, A. W., Cambridge, 1998.

CPJ *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Kant: Critique of the Power of Judgment*, followed by reference to page number: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Guyer, P., translated by Guyer, P. and Matthews, E., Cambridge, 2000.

RRT *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, followed by page number, edited and translated by Wood, A. & Di Giovanni, G., Cambridge 2001.

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