1 Introduction

This text builds on some points of a previous essay published as *Peircean Seeds for a Philosophy of Art* where I cited six theoretical themes extracted from Peirce’s philosophy, which I referred to as “seeds,” to set out a philosophy of art that he himself had not developed. These are:

1st Seed – The Role of Mathematics

2nd Seed – A Hiatus in Time

3rd Seed – Chance and Creativity

4th Seed – The ontological limits of science and nameless things

5th Seed – Idealism and Cosmology

6th Seed – Polysemy and the world of icons

In this essay, I will endeavor specifically to develop the 4th seed, referring to the ontological limits of science and relating them to what I call *nameless things*.

First of all, however, we must consider that many may question whether Peirce was actually interested in a reflection on art, a theme to which he seldom referred, being more renowned for his work as a logician with strong impact on epistemology in particular, as well as being acknowledged as the father of pragmatism and semiotics. Nevertheless, I feel that, had he lived longer, he would be, as I consider that he bequeathed a theoretical system of philosophy from which a theory of art could not be absent. I have intentionally referred to the focus of this article as *philosophy of art*, rather than *aesthetics*. To Peirce, aesthetics is a normative science, and although, to my mind, unsatisfactorily developed by him, it plays a particular role in the classification of the author’s sciences, having as its goal something that he called *the Admirable*. So, as scholars of his work know, under the name of *Aesthetics* Peirce did not mean a study on *beauty* or *beautifulness*. Nor, I believe, would it be a doctrine on art. It is also

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interesting to point out that, even a philosophy of art based on the seeds that Peirce bequeathed, also would not have *beautifulness* as object. I suppose that something more complex than beauty would be the focus of a reflection on art, provided it developed as a result of the entire Peircean philosophy, mainly his metaphysics.

I have used, in the previously mentioned article, a metaphor from the Chemistry vocabulary that seemed to me illustrative of Peirce’s philosophy, namely, a theoretical corpus with open valences, ready for combinations with other ideas, forming more complex and systematically connected ideas. This viewpoint leads me to suppose that a philosophy of art could, then, be combined with the open system of ideas that comprise his philosophy.

But, after all, what would be the object of a philosophy of art inspired in Peirce’s philosophy? An analysis of artistic expressions? An analysis of its objects? A reflection on its role in culture in general? The answers to these questions end up becoming extremely complex and they could only be plausible within the context of his mature philosophy, in which, in my view, Peirce’s thought is consolidated as a system. Associated to this question is one that would reflect, one could say, an endogenous aspect, i.e., what role would art play within Peirce’s theoretical system, considering that he conceived an end to each field of knowledge within his classification of the sciences?

If these questions, then, cannot be answered satisfactorily in the space of a short essay, they can at least be contextualized through an account of the theoretical guidelines that govern Peirce’s thought, as we shall endeavor to do hereupon.

2 Thoughts on Peirce’s philosophy – Some boundary conditions for a theory of art

Peirce’s mature work outlines a radically non-anthropocentric philosophy, guided, one could say, by a mater principle that is the consideration of the concept of meaning, both on the logical and ethical spheres, strictly focused on the notion of universal, of general. This vector pointing to the general implies, on the logical plane, the acquisition of mediations in relation to the brute force of any world in which existence can be defined, namely, in which there is a cohabitation of definite spatial-temporal particulars. On the other hand, from an ethical point of view, such a vector focused on the general implies the overcoming of the individual or of a group of individuals while center of power and interest, to the detriment of values that are asserted as such because they are sharable as universally common goods.

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The import philosophically, in its fullest sense, eventually becomes a question on the nature and origin of these generals that, according to Peircean philosophy, guide both our logical and ethical rationality, and also why the vectorial sense of meaning should be defined from the particular to the general, and not the opposite? Questions such as these, while legitimate in the context of Peirce’s philosophy, also cannot be answered within the scope of a mere essay such as this, without invalidating the task of, at least, referring to them. At any rate, we can emphasize that when we refer here to the general as an end that carries meaning, we are dealing with something that contains a structure of its own, defined by some system of relations, by some type of rule or law. As scholars know, the acknowledgment of the reality of these generals is part of the realistic context of Peirce’s philosophy. As I have insisted in previous papers, this realism makes a significant difference in relation to philosophical systems that do not adopt it. Peirce was right when he stated that the great majority of the system of ideas was nominalist, and his animosity against this remained practically ubiquitous throughout his intellectual life.

It should also be noted that, in Peirce’s philosophy, modally considered generals appear in the form of possibilities and, for this reason, it seems convenient to use the vocabulary of synechism, or theory of continuity, thus replacing the concept of generality by that of continuity, which can either refer to the possible or the necessary. This change in terminology is important in order to understand the difference between the continuum of possibilities and relations. Ultimately, they are logical modes of addressing an old couple of concepts that appear remarkably often in the history of philosophy, namely, freedom and necessity.

It is equally important to point out that this vector of the particular to the continuous of the system of relations is one of the reasons why Peirce rebutted James’ view of pragmatism, to whom the meaning of conceptions was essentially centered on the action they could produce. Peirce emphasized that the particular should never be an end in itself, whether on the logical or the ethical sphere. As regards the logical, what should matter is what can have future extensionality and be useful as mediation equipped with continuity, in a process that may be called apprenticeship, since this continuity would be subject to the corrective flow of experience. From the standpoint of ethics, this refusal of the particular as an end is nothing more than a sharing with a traditional principle that, permeating almost the entire systems of

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morality, condemns the sin of *egotism*. One could say then, under this prism, that the purpose of art, by analogy, should not be something particular. But what would be the general, or the continuous, related to art making? A new question and a new difficulty in providing a fitting answer. I believe, however, that it may be possible to provide one further ahead.

I have to stress that I am convinced that the key in Peirce’s philosophy is in the full understanding of his categories – they structure all the doctrines that constitute the author’s theoretical system. In them, incidentally, there is this duet of the continua of *possibilities* and *relations*, both related to a world of existences populated with particular things⁴. Those continua are characterized by the categories of *firstness* and *thirdness*, in this order, whilst the world of existence is characterized by *secondness*. A long interaction with these categories enables them to be introjected in the mind of the Peircean scholar in an indelible and deeply heuristic way: one is able to understand the author’s doctrines under them and is compelled to conceive them with every renewed reading. Exemplarily, the categories related to the notion of *continuum* provide a more ontological reading of the entire theoretical system of Peirce as, incidentally, he intended in the maturity of his work⁵.

It should be also noted how the history of philosophy after Aristotle – to take a great name as a landmark – could no longer deal with a cohabitation between *freedom* and *necessity* on the metaphysical level, even though some systems could still bear them exclusively within the human scope, in the forms of *free will* and *moral duty*.

Peirce is a pioneer in rediscovering, in contemporaneity, the logical place of that cohabitation: conceiving a world in which Chance and Law act, respectively, as simultaneous principles of *spontaneity* and *order* – and, indeed, he is correct in saying that this duet only had a long life span in ancient times under the correlated forms of *Chaos and Cosmos* in mythology, and *Accident and Essence* in Aristotle, for example. This rediscovery of old principles, carried out by Peirce, was accompanied by a logical refinement provided by the theory of continuity and by the logic of relations, filtering from them the mythical-religious elements that always accompanied them throughout history.

What is important to highlight here about the categories is that they are the fulcrum of a logical symmetry between Man and Nature – *modes of appearing and being* that take the

⁴ I am here applying the concept of *existence* in its scholastic sense adopted by Peirce, namely, a state of things that shelter individuals reactive to each other.

⁵ Peirce refers specifically to the theory of continuity, whose deepest understanding would provide a sharper view of the concept of reality. In CP-4.62, he states: “When we come to study the principle of continuity, we will gain a more ontological conception of knowledge and of reality.”
same three categorial forms. In other words, the categories that emerge in Peirce’s Phenomenology, as modes of experiencing what appears to the human mind, end up becoming modes of being that comprise reality. This categorial symmetry between consciousness of world and real world accentuates his realistic adoption of philosophy: firstness, secondness and thirdness are not only modes by which we experience phenomena, but how a reality that appears phenomenologically is in itself. Of course, this conception of reality is formed abductively, namely, it is a hypothesis, in light of Peirce’s fallibilism, of how the outside world can be from its inside. This play between both sides provides a very heuristic reading of Peirce’s realism and also provides a very original view, I suppose, of the very nature of Art. Ultimately, this play is the pivot of a classic problem in philosophy, referred to earlier as the duet formed by the general and the particular.

It is commonly said in history that we cannot attribute any general character to reality – perhaps it would be better to say continuous character, to return, in time, to Peirce’s vocabulary. We had already pointed out in other texts⁶ that Hume had caused the collapse of faith in real continuities. Despite Kant’s efforts, the scars of Humean skepticism never completely healed – philosophers, rightly one could say, always renewed in their minds the deep disturbance they initially felt when faced with the question: what necessary proof do we have that the sun will rise tomorrow? Kant, in fact, did not take up the realism of the universals that the modern science of Galileo and Newton presupposed. He only offered transcendentalism as a solution to the continuous character of the theories, no longer based on any real continuity. Evidently, this solution is unsatisfactory when one intends to make a genetic philosophy, that is, a philosophy that could provide an explanation, beyond psychology, for the origin of transcendental forms, as well as for the reason why phenomena should concur with them; more than that, and this is to me the central issue, why would phenomena have the strange power of the last word in the choice of transcendent forms that will ultimately consolidate the theories admitted as true? All this belongs to the complexity of epistemology and we must here point out that contemporaneity chose to retire to the safe haven of nominalism, where world is simply that which immediately appears to the eye, a world of things, facts and objects that, in their individuality, expect from men the tolerance to receive names and theories that finally save their appearances. Within this nominalism, it seems a risky ontological step to admit, at least, an external world of things independent from

⁶ See, for example, Ibri (2011) – “Semiotics and Epistemology: The Pragmatic Ground of Communication”; in New Perspectives on Pragmatism and Analytic Philosophy. Amsterdam: Rodopi; edited by Calcaterra, Rosa M.
us. There are contemporary philosophical controversies over whether this can be admitted, and whether, ultimately, it would not be safer for us to say that we experience nothing more than our own ideas. In philosophy, there are countless problems that can be classified as fascinating and, as yet, unresolved. But, honestly, I cannot see in this nominalist controversy anything other than a nostalgic return of philosophy to Thales’ well, remaining there aloof to the course of life and the justifications of the common sense beliefs with which it should be, at least, seriously concerned, without leaving them, as Hume did, to Psychology.

Nevertheless, to speak at length about real continua is tantamount to doing metaphysics, a word that, somehow, became obscene in contemporaneity. However, as is well known, Peirce’s philosophy proposes what he calls scientific metaphysics, which should be understood as an attempt to conceive a theory of reality based on experience. Thus, this reality is, within his system of ideas, conceived in accordance with his three categories: to firstness will correspond the principle of Chance, to secondness that of Existence, and to thirdness that of the Laws or Habits of Nature.

3 On things that have names

Peirce’s realism is rooted in the nominalism versus realism dispute of the scholastics, being unrelated to the contemporaneous controversy of realism versus idealism, which developed in the wake of the problem over the existence or not of a world independent of the human mind and its representations. The Peircean question refers to the admission or not of real continuities in the world, isomorphically to the question of the reality of the universals in scholastics. His realism thus acknowledges that continuities are real, be they of possibilities or of relations.

It is important to emphasize that a world that did not contain at least some real general relations between its events that possessed some future permanence, thus constituting continuities, would prevent the practice of cognitive thought. A world in such disorder, totally unrelated among its phenomena, would not possess any form of cognition. It is nothing less than a serious epistemological mistake to say that thought and language organize phenomena. This statement, besides not recognizing the main characteristic of a real world, namely, its otherness, confuses real order with criterion of relevance, to the extent that such criterion is a way of selecting from phenomena all that can acquire meaning for us, under guidelines of some investigative hypothesis. It is essential to point out that in an evolving world, as the Peircean conception of reality appropriately is, one could not expect an idea of real order that would be definitive, crystallized in some form of ontological determinism, hardly defensible
in contemporaneity. Through his evolutionism, Peirce conceived of a world in formation, in which natural laws would be in progress, in parallel with the permanent and growing action of Chance. Firstness and Thirdness interact by cosmically inserting, respectively, on the one hand, diversity and asymmetry and, on the other, relations of order between their phenomena, constituting what Peirce called Laws or natural Habits. Therefore, they cohabit simultaneously with a certain order in the universe that provides symmetry in spatial-temporal behavior, disorder and asymmetry as a result of the action of Chance. Observe that, in this conception, firstness and thirdness interact in secondness, which is the category that adequately lodges the things that exist definitively as individuals, as particulars. Thus, some world phenomena have relations of order, albeit approximate, while others – indeed the great majority – do not.

For the focus of this essay it is important to point out that our knowledge is totally supported by these relations of order, to the extent that they are the ones that uphold concepts, the latter being the ones that receive names. Our logical language cognitively focused on real phenomena is exclusively structured on general objects, whose spatial-temporal continuity enables all our judgments of the world. In turn, asymmetries individualize existences, highlighting what could be suitably called singularities in particularities – countless singularities in particulars that, on the one hand, make them unique, and, on the other, sharers of predicates with other particulars. Trivial as it may be, it is worth remembering, exemplarily, that rose is not the name of some rose in particular, but, rather, of a class of objects that share predicates. Thus are the names of objects of the world, grounded on concepts derived from generalizations allowed by real and general predicates – this permission comes from the belief in a realistic ontology, as Peirce’s. It seems legitimate to say that, under this standpoint, our science, our cognitive actions, depend definitively on this permission of a world that enables our logical language as mediation. The adjustments to which cognitive theories have to submit are fundamentally guided by two real criteria, namely, the otherness of phenomena, making their conducts independent of how they are represented, and the future course of these phenomena, which the prediction derived from the theories will face. To realism, the best plausible explanation for the occasional adherence between theoretical prediction and the course of phenomena is an isomorphism that structures both.

Our rationality, then, seeks in phenomena whatever may support concepts, namely, that which can be generalized and, so being, receive a name, integrate with the language of men and fulfill its role of reading the still unlit region of time, the future. This is why we have to know
how to act within the real that is to come – for this purpose we have to know how the world in which we exist will behave. This is why Peirce attributed to the future the locus of the whole meaning of logical nature.

Evidently, however, the construction of this language committed to concepts that, in turn, are structured on things that have names, keeps us away from the presentness of these very things that are only placed in our perception when they supply participant elements of classes of predicates. This distancing occurs because each particular is only referred to through the predicative class in which it participates. To think something logically, in one’s existence as a particular, is to insert it in the conceptual web that makes it continuous to us. The price we pay for this is to have our consciousness seized by kronos, by the necessary objective flow of time that places the past in continuous relation to the present inserted in the concept, and with the future, which reason has the mission of illuminating, so that we may choose what conduct would be reasonable to adopt to reach our objectives. There is, however, in each worldly thing, something that reason must disdain, namely, the differences, the singularities, all that cannot be generalized: these are the nameless things.

4 On nameless things

We cannot approach nameless things through a mediative language, totally structured in the logic of the concept. For such an approach, they require a certain disregard of kronos that would allow inserting conscience in a time hiatus, in a presentness that, as such, is capable of revealing the phenomenon in its asymmetry, uniqueness, singularity. To nameless things, language based on concepts is unfair, to the extent that it refers to it by names that do not genuinely belong to them, or tries to approach them through a combination of names under the illusion of a greater proximity. The failure of this exercise of language is one of logic: the general cannot represent the singular in its singularity. Logical language is required to be silent, and other semiotic forms must be summoned to this encounter with what repugnates the concept.

Would art then be a generator of signs, in all its manifestations, capable of restoring to men ways of saying what can no longer be said through logical language? Evidently, what is proposed here is a question on the possible objects of art, those that logical and mediating language cannot say, endeavoring to relate them to an ontology of the real, in which, supposedly, there is a kind of residue of world requiring that it be approached by semiotic forms that no longer feed on universal relations, laws, habits and, ultimately, all that sustains the construction of concepts.
But why should art be grounded on such residue of world composed of objects that are singular, asymmetric, irregular, and that could provide a fair reading of Duns Scotus’ concept of *haecceitas*? What in it relates to our aesthetic experience? What do literature, the plastic arts and music possibly have to do with nameless things?

### 5 A passage through Peirce’s Cosmology

I consider Peirce’s Cosmology, particularly his cosmogenesis, a heuristic source for the reading of his entire work. I realize that it is a temerity to broach this subject in the confined space of this essay, however I will try to say something that, at least, will not betray the rigor with which he conceived it, limiting myself to the logical structure of his reasoning, his abduction over how this universe could have emerged. The vector of this abduction is based on the logical principle that everything that is pure possibility should cease to be, as a sole movement that provides logical meaning to the concept of possible. The possible can only exist if it ceases to be, annihilating itself, otherwise it cannot fully hold the character of possibility. It is interesting that this principle of transformation of the indeterminate into determination often appears in the history of philosophy under a mythical-religious guise, and even, one could say, mythical-anthropomorphic, as the concept of Will in Schopenhauer. In any case, what matters here is that the universe as we know it – as existence – is a set of particular, determined objects, a world under the category of secondness that holds external manifestations of the other two categories of an internal nature, firstness and thirdness. I refer to these categories as internal because they hold general and continuous objects, while secondness is the category of the discontinuous, of individuals that exist as its determination. Chance and Law converge to an existence of objects, some parts of which are ordered and some are not. It may appear surprising, but there seems to be much more disorder than order in this universe. A series of passages in Peirce’s work summarizes many of the points raised here, as follows:

*Nature is not regular. No disorder would be less orderly than the existing arrangement. It is true that the special laws and regularities are innumerable; but nobody thinks of the irregularities, which are infinitely more frequent. Every fact true of any one thing in the universe is related to every fact true of every other. But the immense majority of these relations are fortuitous and irregular. A man in China bought a cow three days and five minutes after a Greenlander had sneezed. Is that abstract circumstance connected with any regularity whatever? And are not such relations infinitely more frequent than those which are regular?* [Further:] From this point of view, uniformity is seen to be really a

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7 I believe that Peirce himself did not have a correct understanding of Scotus’ concept of *haecceitas*, relating it to the category of secondness as a reactive characteristic of an object for being individual, as I believe that Scotus referred to what in each particular is its singularity, namely, its firstness as difference.

8 CP, 5.342.
highly exceptional phenomenon. But we pay no attention to irregular relationships, as having no interest for us,\(^9\) [and] nobody is surprised that the trees in a forest do not form a regular pattern, or asks for any explanation of such a fact...mere irregularity, where no definite regularity is expected, creates no surprise nor excites any curiosity.\(^10\)

All of this refers to a real world. However, Peirce’s Cosmology conjectures on a pre-world where no reality even existed. A disturbing, albeit quite logical, theory of Nothing as origin of anything else that, in turn, could engender a universe. Following the vector mentioned, namely, passing from the vague to the definite, the intermediary stages will regulate an evolution in this logical direction. Thus, the first step after the germinal Nothing is a continuum of qualities that will be established in more specific continua, reaching a fragmentation of qualities that begin to acquire habits. Cosmology is also a history of the emergence of the categories, with firstness as a unit of the original continuum, secondness as an individualization of fragmentary continua, and thirdness as a formation of logical continua of relational structures, giving rise to laws, habits and an objective time. This brief passage through Peirce’s complex Cosmology is relevant solely for the possibility of saying, supplementary to the theme of this essay, that a continuum of qualities originates from its unity and is, as all continuity, of an internal nature. I insist that we must, for the clarity of Peirce’s realistic ontology, distinguish interiority from subjectivity, in which the latter – human – is a special case of the former – cosmic, objective. At the risk of being redundant, I again say that two categories, firstness and thirdness, are of an internal nature, while secondness is of an external nature.

6 Returning to some aspects of Peirce’s Phenomenology

The phenomenological experience of firstness is provided through contemplation, either subjective or objective, constituting a consciousness of unity, continuous in its quality, which Peirce calls quality of feeling. This experience of firstness is the only one we can have as pure category, independent of the others. In it, there is no sense of otherness, consciousness of oneself while a distinct subject of an external world. Equally, there is no meditative-judicative thought, being unnecessary in view of the absence of a reactive world; also absent is any temporality as a continuous nexus between past and future. The experience of firstness, essentially associated with the experience of pure contemplation is, we must bear in mind, very well described by Schopenhauer as of an aesthetic nature\(^11\). Because of its

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\(^{9}\) CP, 1.406.
\(^{10}\) CP, 7.189.
\(^{11}\) Third book of *World as Will and Representation.*
characteristics, there is in this experience an absence of world, an absolute presence of firstness, a total absence of secondness and thirdness. With it we abandon language structured on concepts and move on to simply feel, elementarily, the unity of a quale-element, according to Peirce’s vocabulary. This is also an experience of unity with the object contemplated, occurring in an absolute present, through a hiatus in time. Peirce, incidentally, affirmed that time has a point of discontinuity in the present. This is one of most important topics for a theory of art in Peirce, one of the seeds that I mentioned in the beginning of this text, but on which I am not able to expand here.

In Peirce there is always a correspondence between external and internal worlds and, to my mind, it is the deepest root of pragmatism – an exclusive essay on this theme will be worth writing in the near future.

The spontaneity and unconditionality of the quale-element, which seizes the consciousness that contemplates, appears inside, while outside what it corresponds to is something of its nature. On this, Peirce stated: And thus it is that 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.\(^{12}\)

To get closer to nameless things we must, first of all, contemplate them. They are logical sisters of the qualities of feeling, their external sides, inhabiting a world of discontinuities abandoned by reason. Once more, Peirce is explicit in saying: Wherever chance-spontaneity is found, there in the same proportion feeling exists. In fact, chance is but the outward aspect of that which within itself is feeling.\(^{13}\)

To me this is the most radical consequence of Peircean realism. To symmetrize cognitive theoretical structures with real structures provided by general laws is the correspondential logical expression of this realism - this relationship of interactive dependency between epistemology and ontology is, somehow, always expected of realistic viewpoints.

Nevertheless, we can now conclude that this symmetry goes further, finding connaturality between feeling and world objects that do not follow rules, the nameless things. In them there is an originary unity that from the outside is seen as variety, which we experience as unity, quale-consciousness.

\(^{12}\) CP, 6.236.

\(^{13}\) CP, 6.265.
7 Finally Art

It is now time to approach Art explicitly. First of all, however, it must be clarified that the scheme of categories affirms that firstness is present in secondness – there is an element of spontaneity in every relation of duality. In thirdness, in turn, the second and the first category are implicated – there is an element of spontaneity and duality within every triadic logical relation. I make this brief comment to say that quality of feeling as unity of consciousness is only possible in the pure experience of firstness, without the presence of the other categories. Nevertheless, phenomenologically, there is also feeling in every experience of otherness, of duality in the second category, just as there is also feeling in judicative, cognitive experiences. This is why, in Peirce’s philosophy, feeling and reason do not interact as opposites – actually, qualities of feeling are present in the three categories.

I mentioned that nameless things, to allow to be said, require signical structures logically deconstructed as, exemplarily, metaphors are. In order to contemplate nameless things we must, first of all, approach them in the time hiatus of the pure present, while present. After, and only after, can we face the challenge of saying them – this challenge befalls every genuine artist.

I believe that a very brief passage through the various artistic expressions is interesting, seeking to associate them with the theoretical background heretofore developed. Let us start with literature. In its narrative form it cannot abstain from the theater of some world where existential relations are simulated, highlighting precisely the myriad of feelings that accompany factual accidentality. The quality of literature as art, its true value, is in the rupture of the merely descriptive linear narrative, like journalism. The element of firstness is its essence in its freedom of promoting the pain of the unfair, of the hidden, the joy of the encounter, the illusion of permanence of the ephemeral, the irony within the pathetic. Under this aspect, narrative literature develops the spirit for possible worlds, as mathematicians do, creating alternatives of intelligible universes. In this form of art a moral world is designed – as each reader judges the characters in each story, simulating within himself what he would do if he were one of them. Nameless things appear in the succession of accidents that contradicts all logical causality, in the casual play that prevents or promotes human passions, in the crude otherness of an unsuccessful choice.

Poetry is, possibly, more intense as a deconstructor of logical language: its play of metaphors, its appeal to the sound of words, its more incisive power to touch the immediacy of the qualities of feeling, and extract from vagueness the greater predicate of the very nature of Art,
namely, its polysemy. In the play of manifold meanings, poetry occurs in an environment of firstness, which weaves nameless things, approaching them as if intending to celebrate the sharing of the same origin.

Plastic arts, in their articulation of qualisigns, get closer to nameless things when they lose figurative representation, deconstructing it for the sake of highlighting qualities, as such, offering themselves to depersonalized contemplation that, phenomenologically, restores subjectivity to the genetic innerness of the world.

Finally, it is fitting to speak of music, which can be considered the most intransitive of the arts. Its independence in relation to the world is sui generis – it derives from its essentially inner nature and from its power of presentification of consciousness, essential to the pure experience of firstness. Schopenhauer was right in considering music the highest form of art, for providing access to the originary innerness of Will, this blind and motor dimension of a world of phenomena in which all science is confined. In Schopenhauer, the powerlessness of reason submits to the power of the arts, in particular music. However, to call Will the unconditioned that hiddenly decides what kind of form to confer to the world, is to continue with the tragic in unknowability, whence seemingly derives the subsumption of the human soul to a natural pessimism. I feel this is a consequence of the exclusively deterministic view predominant in the Enlightenment. In the environment of late 19th century, Peirce’s Cosmology reveals this heuristic origin from where many worlds could emerge, reviving the concept of possibility as logical and objective property. Fallible knowledge unravels the pessimism of an impotent reason in the face of what is always hidden. To Schopenhauer, music seems to be a refuge from reality and an access to what despairs human existence, but which, once reached, imposes the silence of what cannot be said.

Exemplarily, much of Bach and Mozart, not to mention my beloved Mahler, call for a celebration of the originary continuum of possibility, from where all nameless things are its outward side – its practical consequences, albeit far from useful, to remain true to the broader spirit of Peirce’s pragmatism.

8 A very brief conclusion, out of the many possible ones

In this essay I sought an objective meaning for art, beyond its confinement to mere human creativity, as if creating were not a cosmic predicate spread over the entire Nature – as the German romantics ably tried to show, particularly Schelling, this inspiring genius of the multifaceted and radical realism of Peirce. Under this approach, art then redeems the originary continuum where possible worlds are inscribed and from where, like the throw of dice, the
existing world derives. Far from necessity and, by its nature, close to what appears as possibility, it promotes a knowledge that defies being conceptualized, as it is not characterized by an agreement of opinions grounded on a reality external to the language of the sciences. Such a concurrence remains, but it is allowable to say that, under the standpoint of pragmatism, a genuine knowledge is that capable of affecting our conduct of life. One could ask, then: what world view, what possible conduct would remain indifferent to the reading of a Dostoyevsky, to the sonnets of a Rilke, to Mahler’s 2nd symphony? Would there not lie the essential role of art, way beyond its reduction to mere entertainment, namely, to lead us to all that indelibly touches and moves? Would there not lie in these feelings that which genuinely molds what is admirable by itself, without any other ulterior reason, as Peirce desired to ground his Aesthetics? I believe we have here a long way to go, accepting the invitation from the open valences of Peirce’s philosophy to the most valuable reward of the spirit: the discovery of new ideas.

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