

A sketch of Peirce's Firstness and its significance to art¹

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Abstract. This essay treats the growth and development of Charles S. Peirce's three categories, particularly studying the qualities of Peirce's *Firstness*, a basic formula of "airy-nothingness" (CP: 6.455) serving as fragment to *Secondness* and *Thirdness*. The categories of feeling, willing, and knowing are not separate entities but work in interaction within the three interpretants. Interpretants are triadomaniac elements through the adopted, revised, or changed habits of belief. In works of art, the first glance of Firstness arouses the spontaneous responses of *musement*, expressing emotions without the struggle and resistance of factual Secondness, and not yet involving logical Thirdness. The essential qualities of a loose or vague word, color, or sound give the fugitive meanings in Firstness. The flavor, brush, timbre, color, point, line, tone or touch of the First qualities of an aesthetic object is too small a base to build the logic of aesthetic judgment. The genesis art is explained by Peirce's *undegeneracy* growing into group and individual *interpretants* and building into the passages and whole forms of *double and single* forms of *degeneracy*. The survey of the flash of Firstness is exemplified in a variety of artworks in language, music, sculpture, painting, and film. This analysis is a preliminary aid to further studies of primary Firstness in the arts.

¹ Revised and expanded for publication, this essay extends the argument of Gorlée (2008b) of *Sign System Studies*. Originated as an invited lecture about the semiotics of Peirce delivered at the University of Tartu (Estonia) on 13 November 2008, the lecture was followed by a seminar for participating students on 16 November, 2008 — Note that Bell's recent review article *Why Art?* (2009) appeared when this article was ready for publication in *Sign Systems Studies*. Unfortunately, Bell's ideas cannot be discussed here.

1. Dedication

This essay is dedicated to Professor Paul Weiss (1901–2002), who died in New York in July 2002 at the age of 101. In the 1930s, he co-edited (with Charles Hartshorne and Arthur W. Burks) the *Collected Papers* (CP) of Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914), a posthumous edition that became a beautiful adventure for modern semiotics. Weiss was widely regarded as an eminent scholar; his intellectual scope developed Peirce’s way of signs into interdisciplinary philosophy, intermixing arts, religion, sports, logic, and politics. In his later years, Weiss published *Emphatics* (2000) and *Surrogates* (2002) about the innovative development of Peirce’s Secondness and Thirdness respectively. After finishing these volumes, he worked on *Adjuncts* to analyze his version of Peirce’s Firstness. Weiss introduced the term “adjuncts” in the last chapter of the book *Surrogates* (2002: 146–173), but the manuscript *Adjuncts* was left unfinished at his death. In contrast to Thirdness and Secondness, which seem to be understandable, Firstness means, beyond a doubt, a problematic sign to comprehend, since it is a virtual non-sign. In honor of Weiss’ splendid work in semiotics, Peirce’s Firstness will be the essence of this essay.

2. Peirce’s three categories

At an early date, “after three years of almost insanely concentrated thought, hardly interrupted by sleep” (CP: 8.213, see Fisch 1982: xxvi), Peirce presented in 1867 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences his paper, *On a New List of Modes of Categories* (CP: 1.545–1.559 = W: 2: 49–59). After preliminary explanations and decisions about the revision of Immanuel Kant’s (1724–1804) “functions of judgment” that formed the “three affections of terms, determination, generality, and vagueness” (CP: 5.450) and even “adapting” Aristotle’s (384–322 BC) ten categories, Peirce “discovered” his ontological categories: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness (Esposito 1980: 46–81, 82–121). According to his private *Logic Notebook*, starting on this day

(March 23, 1867), Peirce's categoriology remained close to his "deep emotion with which I open this book again" and he emphasized the importance to himself and his work when he added "I cannot forget that there are the germs of the theory of the categories which is (if anything is) the gift I make to the world. That is my child. In it I shall live when oblivion has me — my body" (W: 2: 1, see Fisch 1982: xxvi).

The three categories constitute the foundation of Peirce's body, work and thought, and all his other logical elements rest on his own threesome divisions, e.g., icon, index, symbol; qualisign, sinsign, or legisign; tone, token, or type, and further abduction, induction, deduction; term, proposition, argument; quality, relation, representation; unity, plurality, totality or, more concretely, images, diagram, metaphor; impression, conception, idea; term, proposition, argument; language, expression, meaning; sensibility, motion, growth; instinct, desire, purpose; flavor, reaction, mediation; suggestive, indicative, imperative; as well as other revolutionary and "evolutionary" terms of Peirce's triad terminology, moving from undetermined to determined motifs in all realms and disciplines. The categories were identified thus to be the innate idea of the activity of the human mind, and their mutual interactivity learnt; but they were also informing about the idea of acquiring knowledge to inform about the world at large — to become the inquiry of life and science from day to day.

There is a real connection between sign (Firstness) and object (Secondness), but thought — the interpretant (Thirdness) — looms large in Peirce's semiotics. Peirce's categories crisscross the postulates of the dual oppositions found in the Saussurean tradition of semiology, which Peirce dramatically revised with a non-doctrinaire receptivity of the semiotic signs surrounding us. Peirce's interpretant interpreted the sign and the object — but he stressed that the specific predication of the varying interpretants to the outside world proceeds "without altering the fact" of the object (MS 920: 46). The three categories interpret (and then transpose and translate) the data from one person to the next to imagine, perceive, and experience to make the interpretants in public reality. This is done with the function of guiding and stimulating further inquiry through the discovered qualities of

one inquirer to the community of scholars — Peirce’s dream, his Firstness. The human mind is capable of transforming the formless data, surrounding itself in reality in humanized emotions and events in order to make a human world of a structured dynamic organ based on the three interpretants. This interpreting ability we need to outlive and survive the world as we perceive it in reality.

Echoing my earlier paragraphs about Peirce’s three ways of perceiving and analyzing *facts* into categories (Gorlée 1994: 40–42) — this essay involves the fiction and fantasy of fine arts and will present a general *fact* in an extended version, that is some state of affairs, event, or episode, where fact is equated with certainty and truth (Rundle 1993: 9–18). Firstness happens, however, before a real fact within the qualitative immediacy of the sign in itself, a pre-sign not related to anything and anyone. In the arts, Firstness can be considered not as a functional, mechanical, or even a theoretical sign, but will stay a sign in its own aesthetic value that after observation and study can become a varying object of speculation and opinion. Kant’s two-way division of casual and alert attitudes can refer to a musical sound as a functional or serious machinery. Weiss introduced the term “musicry” (1961: 122–125) to refer to the neutral and general type of musical compositions. Musicry concerns dinner-music (or today’s elevator or telephone music) that serves as background noise to accompany the conversation at the table or during a waiting period. To such mood music one does not pay particular attention; it is mechanical *musicry*, subordinate to the domestic settings (MacCannell 1976: 192). Instead, aesthetic music requires listening to the composition as intriguing or beautiful music. Attending a concert, choir, or an opera performance gives sensuous pleasure to the listeners (Munro 1969: 166ff.; Ehrenzweig 1967: 21–31), and the attention can grow into their intellectual pleasure.

Peirce, who was for many years a member of amateur performing groups — he was a playwright, actor, producer, and director (Brent 1993: 16, 187; see Sebeok 2001: 9) — was interested but, however, no specialist in the arts. Yet he pointed to the more complex three-way division of semiotics in his interdisciplinary classification that can be

applied to the action and interaction of beliefs, responses and even judgments of different objects of music and other arts. In music, the division starts with the fine senses of Firstness — tone, pitch, rhythm, harmony, and tempo. The primary sign claims to sense the legend of the real thing — the so-called “tuone” as “a blend of tone and tune” (MS 339: 276, see Freadman 1993: 90) — but Firstness gives no guarantee of the existence of reality (Singer 1984: 105–114; Spender 1987: 504). In other arts, we find the same procedure. The meaning is at the beginning not logical but “only” emotional, a feeling. Logics are Peirce’s goal, but logics start out as illogical Firstness, needing thus to be guessed at to arrive at some meaning whatsoever. Firstness is the hardest category to understand, in spite of the fact that it represents “pristine simplicity” and “*naïvité*” (CP: 7.551, 8.329).

Firstness means unanalyzed, instantaneous, immediate feeling of the sign. After observation, the receiver (seer, listener, etc.) offers direct “*suchness*” dependent on nothing else beyond itself for its comprehension. Peirce’s *suchness* is the in-itselfness of the object-sign offering to the audience a possible “*maybe*” (or “*maybe not*”). Firstness is not (yet) a factual entity but exists only in the interpreter’s imagination and is often a fictitious or hypothetical nonentity. Firstness is experienced in (Peirce’s examples) the pure sensation of redness or blackness, the feeling of acute pain, an electric shock, a thrill of physical delight, the piercing sound of a train whistle, or a stink of rotten cabbage (CP: 1.304). We could continue with non-Peircean examples such as touching a piece of velvet, the sensation of hunger or thirst, and the feeling of sexual pleasure or displeasure, experienced in itself. Some aesthetic examples of the interpretants could switch from activity to receptivity, that shocks rather than stuns, moving away from Firstness.

Peirce’s thrill set the violent emotions of the electrical effects, suggesting the pleasure, horror, or excitement of hearing the choral portion of Ludwig von Beethoven’s (1770–1827) *Ninth* (“*Choral*”) *Symphony*, and the *wohl-temperiertes Klavier* of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685–1750) *Goldberg Variations* or, in other artworks, seeing John Everett Millais’ (1829–1896) figurative lines of the charming

corpse of *Ophelia* from William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *Hamlet*, as she falls into the stream and drowns, or seeing the abstract handling of the human figures to express the horrors of war in *Guernica* (1937) painted by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) — all these works do reveal this radiance of the created object in moments of ecstasy. After the impression of beauty — including the unpleasing qualities of ugliness, both are signs of Firstness —, the work of art can then become “grasped into the unity which the mind requires, the unity of *I think*” (MS 357: 2 = W: 1: 471) in order to become an opinion, and then a judgment.

Firstness exemplifies any other artworks or the more functional (that is, non-aesthetic) common-sense impressions which are forced upon the human mind. Firstness compels the total sensory attention in order to give the artwork a pure and emotional meaning (Weiss 1961). Peirce himself also included in his list of Firsts “the quality of the emotion upon contemplating a fine mathematical demonstration, the quality of falling in love” (CP: 1.304). Firstness is thus the general idea of the timeless present instant experienced as the “pure emotion of the *tout ensemble*” (CP: 1.311); in arts, a feeling of the receiver (exchanging into an interpreter) into his/her direct yes or no to an artwork (a symphony, a sculpture, or a film), prior to any real thought on the object-sign. One cannot “think” (or “write”) a real First, the words or thought themselves would take away the First's unpsychological essence of direct sensory experience. Since Firstness is a silent interpretant, writing an article about Firstness is a bit of a frustrating activity. In Peirce's terminology, the reader “seem[s] to attain the notion by a circumlocution, as what is not second, instead of apprehending First in its original virgin purity” (MS 906: 4).

Whereas Firstness means undivided and undividable oneness of the artifact, Secondness involves the dynamic time and space of otherness and its two-sided consciousness, the active experience of action to reaction, stimulus to response, change to resistance to change. The idea of hitting and getting hit is a true Second, since it contains what we confront, elements of polarity, interaction, comparison, and struggle. While a First is a potentiality, a possibility, “merely some-

thing that *might* be realized”, a Second is a hard fact, “an occurrence [...] something that *actually* takes place” (CP: 7.538). According to Peirce, “the real is that which insists upon forcing its way to recognition as something *other* than the mind’s creation” (CP: 1.325). Therefore, it is through the over-againstness of the brute side of Secondness that we face and deal with reality around us, and in this process of life acquire experience. Secondness offers strong opposition or weak resistance (muscular or intellectual opposition) against hard forces. All knowledge of the factual world and the more practical aspects of human life (such as opening a door, making a phone call, sending an e-mail, and kicking a football) are Seconds. Secondness is involved whenever we make an effort, a decision, or a discovery; when we orientate ourselves in time and space; or when we discover a surprise (CP: 5.52–5.58). Secondness differs from Firstness in that Secondness occurs *hic et nunc*, yet it must also be based upon the past and the lessons we draw from it. Peirce stated that “we may say that the bulk of what is actually done consists of secondness — or better, secondness is the predominant character of what *has been done*” (CP: 1.343).

Beyond the vague generality of Firstness, “a mere idea unrealized”, and the definite nature of “real” Secondness, “the cases to which it applies” (CP: 1.343), Thirdness embodies continuity, called in-betweenness or mediation between the other categories. The intermediate rule of feeling and action by general principles provide logical explanations and all intellectual activity is primarily a Third — this includes the use (and abuse) of language, although it can be emphasized that art is creative and avoids the rules of Thirdness. Logical thought, Peirce’s Thirdness, creates order, law, and regularity as opposed to (and out of) chaos, randomness, and chance, that is Firstness flowing over into Secondness. Peirce wrote that “The thread of life is a third” (CP: 1.337), since Thirdness mediates between the sign and its object. Since the assurance given by this mediation is concerned with continuity and generality, Thirdness is future-oriented and permits us (the cultural community) to predict what is to be, and to adapt our attitude accordingly. In art, mood (First) and fashion (Second) can

become cultural trends (Thirds). Peirce argued that Thirdness is the “eternal” value, judged again and again in the long run of human history. Thirdness is

[...] not the kind of consciousness which cannot be immediate, because it covers a time, and that not merely because it continues through every instant of that time, but because it cannot be contracted into an instant. It differs from immediate consciousness as a melody does from one prolonged note. Neither can the consciousness of the two sides of an instant, of a sudden occurrence, in its individual reality, possibly embrace the consciousness of a process. This is the consciousness that binds our life together. It is the consciousness of synthesis. (CP: 1.381)

All “finer” feelings and “deeper” emotions such as love, hope, and religious devotion, which because of their sophistication are popularly considered to be peculiar to the human species are considered as Thirds. The same is true of cognition, intelligence, and mental growth arising out of unconsciousness to real consciousness, the so-called *black box* (Goriée, forthcoming). This human duty is the threeway “sign-burden” (CP: 5.467) we handle with care or even manipulate with skill.

A threeway task of Peirce’s categories can be exemplified by the religious “transformation” to devotees listening to the sound of a chapel bell (ex. *Chapel Bell* from *Choral Evensong* 1992; ex. *Bells: Tolling of the Knell* from *Requiem Mass* 1997; see Neville 1996: 133–144, 151–199), the first and main example of pure Firstness in music. The undetermined but intrinsic significance of the sound of the vibrating ringing bells is a devotional symbol. The repetitions of the monotonous sounds of the bells mark the call to the holy worship, taken over later by the determined melodies of the organ. The sounds of the chapel bell create a world of Firstness in the articulate space of the church, “detachable both from the world of everyday and from all objects, internal and external” (Weiss 1961: 172–173). If the “inward” bell sound is “recognized and generalized” (MS 1138: 16) by the listeners, the reference to the first “tolling of the knell” (*Requiem Mass* 1997) remains a spiritual boundary, fitting into the “outward” track of

the organ (Secondness) as the foundation of the superstructure of the *Choral Evensong* and *Requiem Mass* (Thirdness). The chapel bell passes its first threshold, crossing from a daily world into the different world of the sacred worship of God. In liturgical semiotics, a rite of passage transcends from the individual functioning of the man/woman/child's private emotion (First) to the belief of the human community (Second) until reaching the goal — the Third of the collective divine epiphany (or natural cosmos) (CP: 2.704, 6.446, also 2.261, 5.554; see Gorlée 2005).

In arts, a sophisticated example of the chapel bells is transmogrified in the work of other composers, such as the continuous drum sounds accompanying the choir music of *Ein deutsches Requiem* (op. 45) of Johannes Brahms' (1833–1897) Protestant oratorio (composed 1861–1868, first performance in 1869 in Leipzig), illustrating in the argumentative text that

*Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen*

(For all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man
as the flower of grass,
The grass withereth,
and the flower thereof falleth away.) (1 Pet. 1: 24)

This biblical passage is sung by the choral music, formally setting before us the vanity of man, but the nostalgic shade of the music is deeply tenored on the rhythmical sounds on the accompanying drum sounds, where cultural concepts do not exist and the bodily power of non-logical Firstness directly reproduces the approaching death (ex. Brahms 1964). As seen from post-Beethovenian Romanticism, the mourning and consolation of Brahms's musical cantata strikes directly

at the external and internal expressions of the organic forms of meaning, as Firstness does.

Yet the chapel bell is fully repeated in itself in the modern “tintinnabuli style” of the Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), now living in Berlin (Hillier 1997: 18–23, 86–97, and *passim*). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED 1989: 18: 131) defines the onomatopoeic term ‘*tintinnabulum*’ as “a small tinkling bell”. Pärt’s later music — his *Fratres* (1977) and *Psalom* (1993) (ex. Pärt 1995, 1997) as well as his oratorio *Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum* (1982), *Stabat Mater* (1985) and other works — finds a new simplicity in the tonal harmony of the Firstness of religious music. His “tintinnabuli” music is, on the one hand, reminiscent of the chant of plainsong and Russian liturgical music; on the other hand, it probes beneath the smooth surface and, in the repeated melos, Pärt’s spare and emotionally restrained tonality incorporates the sounds of the bell-ringing. The metal bells are formally filled with overtones and undertones in the highest and lowest register, yet the standard percussions of Pärt’s music is never bound to high-style convention, but is the effect of his own intuitive Firstness. His “tintinnabuli style” seems engaged and committed, but also breathes a kind of forlorn pointlessness, a desperate boredom. Pärt’s musical project is also a good example of the tendency to jump over Secondness and Thirdness, bringing to mind a carefully cultivated image of the minimalist role of Firstness in the genesis of art.

In the 1960s art world, minimalism, a modern trend in response to Abstract Expressionism, was the idea of doing more with less. The term particularly refers to “work with a usually low degree of differentiation, which is to say a monochromic (or nearly monochromic) canvas or a piece of music composed with only a few notes, ideally to suggest, at times by critical inference, meanings that would otherwise be unavailable” (Kostelanetz 1993: 147; see Baker 1988). The definition of minimalism would be “synonymous” with Peirce’s skeletal idea of Firstness.

3. Triadomanly

In a late essay (from 1910) Peirce confessed, tongue-in-cheek, that he might be suffering from a “psychiatric” disease called “triadomanly” or “trichimania” — in his reply (or auto-reply) he wrote of “the anticipated suspicion that he [Peirce] attaches a superstition or fanciful importance to the number three, [...] he indeed forces the division to a Procrustean bed of trichotomy” (CP: 1.568 = MS 902: 2). Peirce’s response to the suspicion was negative: he stressed that he had no natural predilection nor a passion for trichotomies, and that in his logical division he spontaneously came out to the number three (CP: 1.569 = MS 902: 3ff.).

First, Peirce’s all-inclusive remark concentrated on artificial objects or “things” in themselves, with their utilitarian function with a naturalistic basis, and representing an aesthetic, psychological nature in the attitude taken by the observer towards recognizing and precluding “all laws, fashions, and styles of every kind, as well as powers, offices, institutions, and appropriations (such as roads, cities, resorts), as well as all works of literature, musical compositions, and exhibitions, although it leaves included books [...]” (MS 902: 12).

Peirce wrote that this unusual collection of various artificial objects was “dead” material (CP: 1.358, 6.201) but he classified them to use them for the purely functional, propagandistic, and educational “purposes for which the different things are made” (MS 902: 11, 14 in a MS paragraph deleted by Peirce; see Munro 1970: 269–293). The first task of the aesthetic experience of these objects of art is made of “heaps of slag and other waste material, and *rubbish*, which may constitute the first class” of what Peirce called “ornaments” (MS 902: 15, 14; see CP: 1.281, 5.392, 8.14). After this emotional experience of Firstness would arrive “separate those things which directly minister to our primary needs or desires” (Secondness) which implies that the “thing” can become the object of attention and interested contemplation. In a third class, then, we face “things which directly ensue us to achieve results, which results, however, taken in all their generality we have no decided natural desire to achieve for their own sake, such as to

generate or concentrate dynamical energy, or to make shoes” (MS 902: 15–16) or other common-sense objects to distinguish art from science and other fields. Secondly, Peirce’s taxonomy of zoology treated living things of the living animal kingdom in a limited (dyadic) division of lower or less-developed and higher and more-developed parts (Firstness and Secondness), since the human inquirer is unable to see and investigate all genre-specific details of the future of the species of flower, animal or man. This inept application of the ongoing historical development means that a triadic analysis (the trichotomy) of the history of living things remains purely speculative (MS 902: 20–23).

As argued later by Schneider (1952), the possibility of Fourthness is not real but merely a virtual reality. Since the ubiquitous system of Peirce-like “triangulation” (Schneider 1952: 209) seemed not to Schneider’s taste or mood, he added to Peirce’s cognitive triad of “individuality, causality, and import” a fourth grade: “importance” (Schneider 1952: 210). Adding such a measure of value, the “existential completion, enjoyment or consummation” (Schneider 1952: 211) would demand a last fourth phase, dealing with an ultimate state of satisfaction. In philosophy, human satisfaction is paid in happiness and is a fixed goal in empirical life, but semiotically, things *are* not what they are but what they could become. The final happiness has no real place in Peirce’s pragmatic dynamism, where things are not what they are but what they *stand for* to an interpreter (or various interpreters), in the attempt to develop with ups and downs the total community of interpreters. Firstness can suggest a partial (visual, auditory, etc.) satisfaction to the interpreter, but in Secondness and Thirdness the empirical experience is mediated to a varying conceptual experience of factual and logical evidence. This makes that the sign-action (beliefs) of sign, object, and interpretant can vary and change in time and space.

Peirce’s interpretants can thus have complex, irregular, and unstable meanings, becoming more than primary and secondary sign-appearances, semiotized for a certain time and space in the outside world. The teleological or purposive harmony of the creative process of sign-action (CP: 2.108, 5.494, 6.156, 6.434, 7.471, 7.570, 8.44) gives non-conservative thoughts between words and ideas, but still has a

final outcome, “semiosis”. But, in Peirce’s sense, semiosis is never definitive, but can be repeated again and again in time and space, representing the final judge now, and then taking a risk, or maybe adopting a different interpretant from the hands of other interpreters or analysts. Semiosis remains (and will utopically remain) an ideal for the future. Peirce’s note of gladness announced however that the “same division” of three trichomies would name an element “*tetramerous* (or a *tetratomy*), if one does not mind the *cacophony*, or *dysphony*” of four parts (MS 902: 16). The categories can be repeated and “with larger numbers [can] multiply astonishingly” (CP: 4.309) but our logical habits remain three and the fourth is imaginary and “can be dispensed with altogether” (CP: 3.647; see 1.363, 1.169, 1.391f.). Peirce related Fourthness back to Third in the company of Second, and First, thereby blurring away a higher idea of division of more than Thirdness (CP: 1.292).

The trigamy of Peirce’s categories — feeling, willing, knowing — refers not to separate entities in his three-step inquiry but knit the elements in a togetherness through the adopted or chosen *habit of belief* (CP: 5.476ff., 5.491; see Fisch 1986: 29, 93ff., 189). In Peirce’s pragmatism (from the year 1870), a habit of belief is pluralized into habits of belief, since we can locally and temporarily fix a belief in the types of regularities and irregularities we discover in the all-inclusive study of the sign and its object, and to embody the old and new sign-interpretations in the sensuous, volitional, and habitual interpretant (CP: 2.643). The togetherness of the categories generates outward the immediate (emotional), dynamical (energetic), and final (logical) interpretants. The single and complex signs (Firstness) are only knowable by studying their objects, and need an intelligent interpreter (or agent) to be understood.

The presence of signs gives a special attention to the inner thought they require to be rightly understood. These terms indicate technical synonyms of the semiotic sign and refer to Peirce’s definitions of a semiotic sign as having (in a preserved copy of a letter to Lady Victoria Welby of July 1905) “a character with the idea of being quite roughly like something, or the rough impression that experience of a thing

leaves upon the mind” (SS: 194). Peirce gave Lady Welby the following working list of italicized sign-characters:

Then we have mark, note, trait, manifestation, ostent, show, species, appearance, vision, shade, spectre, phase
 Then, copy, portraiture, figure, diagram, icon, picture, mimicry, echo
 Then, gnomon, clue, trail, vestige, indice, evidence, symptom, trace
 Then, muniment, monument, keepsake, memento, souvenir, cue
 Then, symbol, term, category, stile, character, emblem, badge
 Then, record, datum, voucher, warrant, diagnostic
 Then, key, hint, omen, oracle, prognostic
 Then, decree, command, order, law
 Then, oath, vow, promise, contract, deed
 Then, theme, thesis, proposition, premiss, postulate, prophecy
 Then, prayer, bidding, collect, homily, litany, sermon
 Then, revelation, disclosure, narration, relation
 Then, testimony, witnessing, attestation, avouching, martyrdom
 Then, talk, palaver, jargon, chat, parley, colloquy, tittle-tattle, etc. (SS: 194)

The inventory of semiotic signs is, as Peirce added, “rich in words waiting to receive technical definitions as varieties of signs” (SS: 194) in order to mix, as Peirce seemed to join in his list, the combined and interactive elements of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness.

As a correlate to the triadic sign, Peirce related to two objects, distinguishing between the immediate and the dynamical objects (Savan 1987–1988: 24ff.; Goriée 1994: 53ff.). The immediate object is the explicit and known (“inside”) object, taken at face value (Firstness of Secondness), whereas the dynamical object is implicit, a real but unknown (“outside”) object (Secondness of Secondness). The total sign-object is not fixed, but a possible or indeterminate fact, with limits “between true and false, correct and incorrect, acceptable and unacceptable, in the functioning of the object [...]” (Savan 1987–1988: 27). The dynamical object elicits the “secret” information and informs the sign “by a hint” of the immediate object (SS: 83). The dynamical object, or the object in itself, abstracted from its role in a particular sign-use, is the sum total of all the instances of the immediate object.

The dynamical object can be studied by “unlimited and final study” (CP: 8.183) of the diacritical marks of the immediate object in all its spatiotemporal contexts, and may become the end study of a semiotic process of sign actions. The discovery process arises from an intellectual curiosity of the interpreter or analyst to doubt, and change the habit, and eventually to find the truth (CP: 5.370–5.387). The semiotic panorama includes more than a mere representation of personal thought, but is the intimate, close and thinking relationship of three logical and illogical elements to signify the liaison perceived between sign, the object it stands for, together with the implications of the interpreted or translated interpretants. The interpretants can be right or wrong, suppressed or distorted, and so forth. In the end, this means that the true opinion (the truth) is unavailable in our human inquiry; despite our abilities we cannot solve the world's problems.

The series of Peirce's immediate, dynamical interpretants, as well as the final interpretant (also called the emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants) presents three kinds of reasoning (Firstness of Thirdness, Secondness of Thirdness, Thirdness of Thirdness) (Savan 1987-1988: 48ff.; Goriée 1994: 56ff.). The first trio (immediate, dynamical, and final interpretants) is limited to the stages of the interpretive process, and the second one (emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants) indicates the sign-action from the perspective of the interpreter or agent — in the arts, the threeway belief (Firstness), argument (Secondness) and the judgment (Thirdness) of the listener and seer.

The mix of the three categories incorporates both conventional and unconventional statements to express the truth as a basis for negotiation or action. The three categories are approached not as a metaphorical recipe or a fixed prescription in language: in Weiss' (1995: 4) view, the expression of human “volitions, assessments, idiosyncrasies, love, faith, action, creativity, or evil [...] could be squeezed into formulae or put under categories” only if seen loosely or separately. Weiss, however, examined in his cooperative project the context of other things surrounding the object. He wrote that

What is needed in order to know what is real is a study that acknowledges factors whose existence and operation are evidenced everywhere, both in what can and in what cannot be formally stated, investigated, or understood. Account should be taken of the private as well as the public, of the trivial as well as the splendid. Nothing less than a wise-ranging, sinuous, defensible account could provide what is needed. (Weiss 1995: 4)

Some things can be analyzed in one category, seen from without or within, but most things or objects can have connections to more than one category at the same time and in the same space. Peirce was fully aware of the varying connections and he stated that

Viewing a thing from the outside, considering its relations of action and reaction with other things, it appears as matter. Viewing it from the inside, looking at its immediate character as feeling, it appears as consciousness. These views are combined when we remember that mechanical laws are nothing but acquired habits, like all the regularities of mind, including the tendency to take habits, itself; and that this action of habit is nothing but generalization, and generalization is nothing but the spreading of ideas. (Weiss 1995: 4)

A practical example of Peirce's habits of belief could be one of the most popular literary forms, a "biography" which is both fact and fiction. A biography gives a storied account of another person's life, such as Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), Winston Churchill (1871–1947), Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926), Barack Obama (b. 1961). A biography is basically a flexible use of a Third: it can be a full account (when possible) of an individual, but its elements can also express some fragmentary elements, building on a report of special adventures (Second) or the thought (Third) of the individual. The account can be a written narrative (Third) but can also be (or include) illustrated material (First) or a filmed account (Second) of someone's life. The biography can narrate an artistic (First), dramatic (Second), or intellectual (Third) history of the person. In *My List of Great Men*, Peirce treated *Men of Feeling, Action, Thought* (W: 5: 32–358; see the whole *Study of Great Men* in W: 5: 25–106, introduced in CP: 7.256–7.266) with alas! only a handful of women included as personal icons.

The life of the biography forms an emotional, actional, or logical guideline for the readers, contributing to their individual or social recreation. A biography is often a biographical “novel” with special attention not to routines or rules but rather to special efforts of one famous individual, often composed after his or her death to qualify as a nuanced personality portrait.

The sources of the fidelity of the biography can be a fictional and non-fictional account, derived from the person's own souvenirs, words, letters, and photographs (Firsts) of the person including the assistance of firsthand information, interviews with family members, colleagues, and so forth, and a number of documentary biographical appurtenances of materials from the archives and the press, totalling a mingling of Seconds and Thirds. In the biography, the individual is often considered to be an experienced, wise, and aged hero or heroine (First), but the biography mainly expresses not Firstness but the narrative of the experiences in time and space (Second) or the historical events (Third) he or she played a role in. The life described can either be a personal life of his or her private character (First), as well as the occupation and temperament (Second) and milieu and field of endeavor (Third), or its joint combination in experiences and activities rescued from oblivion or human forgetfulness. The interplay and exchange of Peirce's triple view makes for all kinds of ideological, intimate, official, critical, memorial, recollective, etc. kinds of biography (and autobiography), presenting accounts of all sorts and with uncommon and alternative events revealing a compounding of genuine signs and less complete or deteriorated signs (Gorlée 1990), joining all categories together into one.

Not to overstate the triple view of the categorical case, we use not facts but also fictions to make our attention to concrete and abstract things in real and imagined reality useful within Peirce's triple view. Peirce himself wrote that he used certain “arts” in the categorical project, when he undertook

[...] to look directly upon the universal phenomenon, that is, upon all that in any way appears, whether as fact or as fiction; to pick out the different kinds of elements which I detect in it, aided by a special art

developed for the purpose; and to form clear conceptions of those kinds, of which I find that there are only three, aided by another special art developed for that purpose. (NEM: 4: 51)

Arguing the “artistic” (or maybe game-like) point from scratch, the things we study can embody one category, or we can split the things into sections in order to create a flow of elements into different things, corresponding to a variety of sections in the “game” of categories (Merrell 1991). The sectioning of the desire, will, and experience of signs means stressing one strong element accompanied by two weaker sub-elements in Peirce’s term, *degeneracy* (Gorlée 1990), as discussed later. In this fashion, the triadic paradigm is found by Peirce in all kinds of phenomena which run the whole gamut of the history of theology, science, physics, biology, and mathematics to achieve, when possible, the truth of his logical theory of signs to be the fullest by far — but always integrating illogical Firstness as the first background.

4. The work of art

John Dewey (1895–1952) wrote in *Art and Experience* (1934) about the deep “emotion recollected in tranquillity” perceived in coming face to face with the beauty of art objects, saying that

Works of art often present to us an air of spontaneity, a lyric quality, as if they were the unpremeditated song of a bird. But man, whether fortunately or unfortunately, is not a bird. His most spontaneous outbursts, if expressive, are not overflows of momentary internal pressures. The spontaneous in art is complete absorption in subject matter that is fresh, the freshness of which holds and sustains emotion. [...] But an expression will, nevertheless, manifest spontaneity if that matter has been vitally taken up into a present experience. (Dewey 1934: 70)

Firstness concerns Dewey’s “operation of doing and making” of art objects, his *poiesis* (Dewey 1934: 256) to sharpen the focus of the seer on the aesthetic side. Yet the artistic *poiesis* is not limited to Firstness and must reach further to Secondness. Starting with the nascent sign

of *autopoiesis* (or semiotically, *autosemeiopoiesis*) the sign reaches the real aesthetic material object. Significantly, the cry might be taken from Edvard Munch's (1863–1944) ambiguous one-syllable word *Skrik* — the title of his painting was accurately translated into German as *Geschrei*, yet the cry spreads into English over the more traditional two-syllable words (article, noun) of *The Scream*. *Skrik* cries out loudly to the audience, and the sentiment of anguished Firstness is transformed into the real Secondness of Munch's painting.

Firstness produces a “self-reflexive, self-referential, relatively autonomous” (Dewey 1934: 256) sensuous image in the human brain. The impression visible (audible, touchable, etc.) in Firstness experiences the qualities of the sign, actually those of a non-sign, regardless of the sign material (language, image, sound) and lacking part of the object material and part of the interpretant material. The qualities of Firstness are taken “*in itself*” (Dewey 1934: 256; see CP: 2.254, 2.276, 5.73) and refer to the dream-like sense of color, tone, flavor, and some points of details as seen or improvised by the receiver or viewer (see CP: 1.305ff., 1.418ff., 1.484, 1.551f., 2.374ff., 5.402, 5.369, 5.395f., 6.18, 6.198f., 7.530, 7.538, 8.335; NEM: 4: 18, 30). The attention of Firsts does not yet reach to see the contrasts, motives, ideas or functions that belong to Secondness and Thirdness. As Merrell said (1991: 3), in Peirce's view the qualities of Firstness refer only to “atoms” experiencing “discrete items of experience”, in other words, they do not reach separate “things” and not “events” (Secondness) or “processes” (Thirdness). The ungrounded information of the fiction and fantasy of Firstness provides “no perfect identities, but only likenesses, or partial identities” (CP: 1.418). The information is therefore neither true nor false, but gives a kind of vague significance or, semiotically, a weak “reasoning” of the feeling, as we perceive in the futility of Peirce's “musement” (CP: 6.452–6.493).

As argued before (Gorlée 2004, 2005, 2007), Peirce's term, *musement*, is the speculative and intuitive way of looking at a work of art. *Musement* is a viewer's view, a First (of Third through a Second). Its idea of playfulness gives a certain “*reverie with some qualification*” (CP: 6.458) to describe the exercise of art as consisting of different

shades of Firstness — First, Second, and Third — of meditative thought. Peirce spoke about its “Pure Play” (CP: 6.458) as the first mode of intellectual or scientific reasoning in the state of mind of his term of musement. The task of Peirce’s muser is to freely see, hear, touch, and so forth, a puzzling object, phenomenon or event. The investigator’s assumption gives an unthinking, intuitively formed, and spontaneously chosen personal belief, working with no plan or strategy but spontaneously supplying his or her plausible hypothesis for the observed work of art. The musement of the whole work and its more detailed formulations of the work of art deal with the inquirer’s musing, self-returning inwardized thought, to catch our own likeness, both physical and spiritual. Musement is a creative response, even a caricature of the sign we face, a belief indulging in a daydream without spending “real” time in the “idle” activity. The playfulness is loose and free of responsibilities, since musement stimulates indifference to the methodological imperatives that we are deeply concerned with in our daily lives. The muser embodies his or her own dream version subversive of ordinary life. In Peirce’s view, logical beliefs and opinions start with this drifting and fluctuating dream, a vague, unseen, incoherent feeling to arouse the real semiosis in the further categories.

The work of art combines the apparently logical with large doses of the absurd. The non-sign is no more than a minimal shape, for Peirce a primary “airy-nothingness” (CP: 6.455), a first “possibility, then, or potentiality, [as] a particular tinge of consciousness. I do not say the possibility is exactly a consciousness; but it is a tinge of consciousness, a potential consciousness” (CP: 6.221). The waking consciousness of the paradoxical Firstness of the art object is a sleeping consciousness of the muser. But the muser reads some traces of Firstness in the work of art and adds to and explores the musing dream between satiety and mystery. In the dramatic *mise en scène*, the artwork reaches through the qualities explored a spontaneous Firstness, but often an intensified Firstness, reaching forward to hypnotize about the relationship between other and oneself (otherness and selfhood). There is some repulsiveness and fascination in the first glance of the “raw material” of Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini’s (1598–1680) baroque sculpture of the

Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (1652). The qualities of the Spanish saint stand out in the chapel of Santa Maria della Victoria in Rome. Animated by her own body, she “moves” forward in a theatrical light. Saint Teresa’s body is engulfed in religious meditation with eyes heavenward rolling. The realism of Bernini depicts the bodily qualities of her orgasmic pleasure — in the company of a smiling angel.

In pop-art, Andy Warhol’s (1928–1987) film *Blow Job* (1964) sees the images in the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburg, PA, USA) in order to observe in this film an aesthetic factor of rhythm and harmony. Through the viewing through a cinematic “keyhole” the voyeuristic close-up picture-qualities of head and shoulders of an emotionally (or erotically) aroused man moves the viewer not to criticize or to reject him in his intoxicated state (Gidal 1977: 111). Mystical or meditative picture-qualities conjure up the sensory stimulus in artistic life, sought not through didactic knowledge, but intimately touched with beauty and transformed by lust and passion, or perhaps drifting into the vacuum of fatigue, boredom, sexual excess, or drug addiction. Firstness frequently exudes sexual and sinister images of an ambiguous and a hidden note of “pornography”.

Portrait sculpture indulges our taste for the timeless beauty of the human face and body. The art of multiplication may be able to depict the logical “truth” (Third) but not without indulging in the illogical and paradoxical enchantment of the heart (First), as seen in the examples (Second). In the reality of fine arts, Secondness is a central figure of “organized” beauty, impersonally shaped in three or two dimensions in stone, ceramic, bronze, or wood, or pictured in two dimensions in a photograph, film, or painting, as well as in “one” dimension (or dimensions) in music. The visual aspects of the images tell the story of aesthetic pleasure (and displeasure) to make visible the personal narrative — the *coloratura* (or vocal color and timbre) — of the “melodic” ornamentation from model to artist (sculptor, painter, photographer, and so forth) and to be able to create interpretants of the viewer (spectator, listener, and so forth). Outside the material and the context used, the silent visibility of the qualities of Firstness is turned flesh in the shameless and barefaced representation of dead Ophelia

floating in the river, the Christian nun's intimate carnal love to Jesus Christ, and the brash intrusion on a drug addict's private sphere.

Beyond the mastery of art works, we can enjoy musement in the humming of the washing machine (*Wunderbarer Waschsalon*, 1994), an appliance with the rotating movement of the basket and the balancing water, seen through the cosmic round door. The washing machine, with its warm temperature, pleasing scents, and silent pauses between the phases of the machine, provides a spatiotemporal division and cleaning combination from dirty to clean laundry — a day-dreaming adventure or cosmic meditation to counter the meaninglessness of life. In the launderette, the body and mind of the muser's ego is spiritually cleaned in the unconscious and uncontrolled musement, emptying the mind through a dreamy act of love, concentrating on nothingness and integrating the onlooker into the wholeness of the universe of discourse. Musement is exploring a supreme quality felt by the "artist" corresponding to the primary "*suchnesses*" (CP: 1.303–1.304, 1.424) of the emotional and expressive attitude of *abductive* Firstness — integrated with the factual reality of inductive Secondness and maybe the logical law of mind of deductive Thirdness — to push forward to Peirce's meditative wholeness of semiosis.

Summarizing the experience of Firstness versus the other categories, Firstness concerns the "[f]eeling-qualities, or sensible qualities, either unobjectified or attached each to an object. In themselves, they are not definitely objectified, since they involve no reflection whatever, and therefore no thought that they are within or without" (MS 1135: 15). For comparison with Firstness, Secondness is more than feeling, but counters the artistic "measure" of spatial and temporal dimensions in the arts (dance, music, sculpture, painting). Secondness is the "[c]onsciousness of effort and resistance [and provides] essentially a consciousness of a *within* and a *without*, correlative to one another" representing "here and now, differing in this from the qualities which are not definitely located" and "[f]rom this kind of consciousness are derived the ideas of brute force, reality, existence, relation, etc. Under this head I place all the common experiences of life, all that is real to all men" (MS 1135: 15).

Secondness integrates Firstness but is again contrasted with Thirdness. Thirdness must integrate Secondness and Firstness, and involves dynamic and compound interactive forms of art (film, opera). Transposed into logical forms, Peirce wrote that Thirdness is

Consciousness of something as a medium between two things. This involves the idea of intellectual pertinence “involving” the idea of a rule of thought. Thus, if A gives B [to C], the A is a sort of medium between B and C, unless what is meant is merely that A lays down or throws away B and that as an unsettled fact C takes B, — in which case there is no genuine mediation — then the essence of the giving lies in a psychical act by which A communicates to C the idea that B is to belong to him. If A shoots a bullet into C, and is in anyway responsible, he at least *ought* to have *thought* that the bullet would reach C. Thus every triadic relation moves consciousness of thought. This sort of consciousness is involved in all scientific knowledge, or knowledge properly so called. (MS 1135: 15–16).

In the work of art, Firstness is affective or qualitative “thought”, or better non-thought, that gives no real information or knowledge but a virtual quality of the first emotion felt (German: *erste Empfindung*). Like a non-sign intuitively affiliated to existing signs, the intuitive quality can be transferred upwards to the wholeness of the interactive categories. Firstness is, as previously described, a fragmentary sign or *zero* sign, but is still “dense, vague, and pregnant with promise” (Savan 1977: 179) to crystallize into Secondness and Thirdness. For Peirce, a zero element is a “negative of quantity” of meaning, but has a special quantity, which is “no violation of the principle of contradiction: it is merely regarding the negative from another point of view” (MS 283: 109). The zero sign is itself a sign of emptiness, but its radiance points in some discontinuous direction. Nothingness will stay muted in reasoning until “*existing*” in Secondness, reknitting the ‘*imagined*’ Firstness (CP: 8.357) in reality. Pure Firstness “signifies a mere dream, an imagination unattached to any particular occasion” (CP: 3.459), whereas practical Secondness serves to “denominate things, which things he identifies by the clustering of reactions, and such words are proper names, and words which signify, or *mean*, qualities” (CP:

4.157). The meaning of the simple lexical, musical, pictorial, etc. form, Peirce's iconic *replica*, can become repetitive, involving a hardening of the soft and controversial separation and connection, difference and sameness; trying hard to accommodate to the jointure of one category to another. Firstness and Secondness decided to join "brick and mortar" (CP: 6.238) to define the physical change in Peirce's architectural framework, the "clay" of the logical meaning of single signs depends on the critical thought to enlighten the specific pragmatic contextualization. Then, within the real context, the simple unit would be upgraded to become an actual "building" message.

In Peirce's logical semiotics, the upgrading "grounding" sign-shades of qualisign, sinsign, or legisign (CP: 2.243f.) — also called tone, token, or type or, more concretely, images, diagram, metaphor — include "a mere idea or quality of feeling", an "individual existent" until a "general type [...] to which existents may conform" (MS 914: 3) in accordance with the order of the three categories. Tone (image, qualisign) is the mere sign itself, token (diagram, sinsign) is the object-oriented sign, and type (metaphor, legisign) is the ruled sign, often in language (Savan 1987–1988: 19–24; Goriée 1994: 51–53). Transposed into musical signs, Firstness is called "tone", Secondness "passage", and Thirdness "piece". In painting and sculpture, we can call the categories "point", "line", and "composition". In *Languages of Art*, Goodman (1985: 177–221) spoke of "score, sketch, and script", which can be transposed to other arts. Bayer (1986: 9 and *passim*) has characterized it in this way "*Punkt, Strich, Linie und Fläche*" (whereby "*Strich*" and "*Linie*" may be synonymous) and his repertoire of artistic sub-signs are characterized as "*Farb-Form-Einheiten*" and "*Figur-Grund-Differenz*". Speaking about the clarity of things in painting, Urdike (2008: 14–16) mentioned the "touch", "sweep" and "dash of the brush" to depict the clarity of "painterly" things.

Peirce's zero or "*blank form*" (CP: 8.183) of the meaning-pictures of the loose word, sound, smell, or touch is a simple speculation of Firstness we make, "unattached to any subject, which is merely an atmospheric possibility, a possibility floating *in vacuo*, not rational yet

capable of rationalization” (CP: 6.34) and unrestrained at first by concerns for logic and accuracy. Peirce wrote that

[...] when man comes to form a language, he makes words of two classes, words which denominate things, which things he identifies by the clustering of their reactions, and such words are proper names, and words which signify, or mean, qualities, which are composite photographs of ideas and feelings, and such words are verbs or portion of verbs, such as adjectives, common nouns, etc. (CP: 4.157)

Consider the creative versatility of the linguistic use (or abuse) of “dirty” four-letter words, such as the tabooed expression “fuck you”, which can describe, just by its First sound, pain, pleasure, love, mating, and other sensations, depending on the contemporary or historical context; such as “Oh, fuck!”, “Holy fuck!”, “How the fuck are you!”, “Fuck me!”, “Fuck you”, “Where the fuck are we!”, “Who gives a fuck?”, “Fuck George Bush!” as well as the last words of General George Armstrong Custer (1839–1876): “Look at all those fucking Indians” and, last but not least, the immortal words of the Captain of the *Titanic*: “Where is all this fucking water coming from?”, after the collision in 1912 with an iceberg in the Atlantic, when the ship rapidly filled with water and could not be saved (Montagu 1967: 307–315, Arango 1989: 16, 119–123, 143–157). It seems that the custom of swearing by the purely verbal but non-thematic utterance of four-letter-words gives a content of positive and negative ideas.

Steiner observed that “nonsense poetry and prose, nonsense taxonomies, and nonsense alphabets of many sorts are an ancient genre often active just below the surface of nursery rhymes, limericks, magic spells, riddles, and mnemonic tags” (Steiner 1975: 187). The universe of nonsense languages consists of bits of pure Firstness, accumulated towards the pseudo-series of nonsense-speech. As example, see the naive children’s poems, such as

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe
 Catch a tiger by the toe
 If he hollers let him go,
 Eeny, meeny, miny, moe.

Peirce called the counting rhyme “children's gibberish” with “gipsy numerals [...] employed in counting nearly as the cardinal numbers are employed” (CP: 4.155). Nursery rhymes give an illogical and nonsensical Firstness, but despite the trick test of free speech they still have inarticulate violations of form and shape, and they have an expressive meaning. Yet these meanings are the primary signs of pure sensory delight of the game, but with a fierce attachment to a vague and futile quality to further in the upcoming categories. Firstness can be repeated and is thus unfolded in actual Secondness with a direction of time and place, turning into a fluid flow of interactive signs and sounds, Peirce’s pseudo-Thirdness. Other linguistic and poetic examples of Firstness, derived from Peirce’s interactive categories, would be a possible analysis of twentieth-century stage plays. Consider the mysterious atmosphere of Samuel Beckett’s (1906–1989) dramas (*En attendant Godot* 1952, *Waiting for Godot*, transl. by Beckett, 1954, and other plays), the absurd economy of Harold Pinter’s (1930–2008) stage plays, and other plays. The ambiguity of “Serio-Comic Groping” (Booth 1974: 212, see 257–267) evolves from or into the “prerational darkness and chaos” (Coetzee 2008: 15) of the voices of Firstness, as a preliminary “program” to enjoy and use the ironic inversion in the act of creation.

5. The genesis of the artist

Firstness happens in sporadic signs, and can develop into the episodic scenes of Secondness (in jargon, proverbs, epigrams, quotes, sayings, haikus, etc.). After weighing the weak meaning of the sporadic non-sign out of context, the historical evidence will give anecdotal impressions to see the meaning of some aesthetic (and non-aesthetic) artifacts and their context. Eco’s historical *exposé* states that

At first contact and first reaction, exhibitions assume the form of an inventory, an enormous gathering of evidence from Stone to Space Age, an accumulation of objects useless and precious, an immense catalogue

of things produced by man in all countries over the past ten thousand years, displayed so that humanity will not forget them. (Eco 1987: 292)

Eco's "catalogue of things" is named as

Spires, geodesic domes, molecular structures enlarged millions of times, cathedrals, shacks, monorails, space frames, astronauts' suits and helmets, moon rocks, rare minerals, the King of Bohemia's crown, Etruscan vases, Pompeian corpses, a Magdeburg sphere, incense burners from Thailand, Persian rugs, Giuseppe Verdi's cravat, cars, TV sets, tractors, jewelry, transistors, wooden statues from the Renaissance, panoramic views of the fairytale landscapes, electronic computers, boomerangs, an Ethiopian lion, an Australian kangaroo, Donatello's *David*, a photo of Marilyn Monroe, a mirror-labyrinth, a few hundred prefabricated dwellings, a plastic human brain, three parachutes, ten carousels [...]. (Eco 1987: 291–292)

In this wandering fairyland of objects, how does the impressionistic (or anecdotal) evidence of the collection alert the art viewers to enjoy what is art separated from "art" (or even "pseudo" art)?

If we pursue the articles in *Iconicity* (Bouissac *et al.* 1986), the *Festschrift* for Thomas A. Sebeok, his efforts would exemplify the historical growth and development of the "prefigurements of art" (Sebeok 1981). Sebeok (1981: 211) analyzed the genesis of art growing from the expression of the "love of decoration", displayed by certain animals. Despite Tinbergen's statement that human and animal behavior do not have a common language, we can still compare visual landmarks of human behavior in a mixture of anthropological terms (Tinbergen 1975: 61–174). In Sebeok's view, the examples of kinesthetic, musical, pictorial, and architectural signs show clearly what the dance behavior by bird songs, finger paintings by chimpanzees, nest making by beavers, and other activities engaged in by animals, can mean (Sebeok 1981: 216–249). The theoretical remarks are exemplified in an analysis of selected passages of animal "art", in which Sebeok shows the abductive Firstness in the anthropomorphizing fine arts of animals. Seeing a compilation of human traces of Firstness, we may catch a first glimpse of the workmanship that at a

later date would mythologize fragments of the poetic atmospherics of Firstness in human arts — and see how invisible Firstness is unfolded in the inductive reality of visible Secondness.

The reasons of art (or “art”) objects can have a historical origin, from animal to man, but may also have a biological foundation running from Peirce’s “undegenerate” signs to “degenerate” signs. In Peirce’s logical and mathematical view, the symbol is the only genuine sign, and the index and icon are degenerate signs. Yet the compounding of the three categories in some signs reveals both genuine signs and less complete (or deteriorated or impure) signs, that is Peirce’s term of degeneracy (discussed in Gorlée 1990). Degeneracy is evolved in Peirce’s writings from 1885 to 1907 (see Gorlée 1990: 89–90). After 1904, degeneracy became involved in his later theory of varieties of sign, in which degeneracy is mentioned and integrated in an evolved sense (MS 339C: 498). Peirce wrote in 1909,

There are two kinds of second, the external or normal, and the internal or degenerate. For example, all relation[s] implies a second, but identity is a kind of relation which makes a thing second to itself. [...] We speak of motives or allurements as forces, as if I were under compulsion from within. So with duty, and the voice of consciousness. An echo is my own voice coming back to answer itself. All likeness is mere internal secondness, — an identity in the characters of the resembling things. [...] By the Third, I understand the medium which has its being or peculiarity in connecting the more absolute first and last. The end is second, the means third. A fork in the road is third, for [*sentence incomplete*] In place of the words, first, second, third, I might almost as well have used, “beginning, end, and middle”, — the word middle corresponding to third not to second. (MS 906: 3–4)

Both Thirds and Seconds can have themselves degenerate forms. In a degenerate Second, the Secondness partakes of Firstness and is called degeneracy to a first degree; in a degenerate Third, the Thirdness partakes of Secondness and Firstness and is called degeneracy to a second degree (Gorlée 1990). However, Firstness may have some pre-Firstness which is what Peirce named, only once in his *Collected*

Papers, as the unspecific and undetermined spirit of undegeneracy (CP: 1.383).

The undegenerate and natural pre-form of Firstness forges its *mélange* with Secondness (and Thirdness) to become a cultural artifact. Peirce wrote that

The work of the poet or novelist is not so utterly different from that of the scientific man. The artist introduces a fiction; but it is not an arbitrary one; it exhibits affinities to which the mind accords a certain approval in pronouncing them beautiful, which if it is not exactly the same as saying that the synthesis is true, is something of the same general kind. The geometer draws a diagram, which if not exactly a fiction, is at least a creation, and by means of observation of that diagram he is able to synthesize and show relations between elements which before seemed to have no necessary connection. The realities compel us to put some things into very close relation and others less so, in a highly complicated, and in the [to?] sense itself unintelligible manner; but it is the genius of the mind, that takes up all these hints of sense, adds immensely to them, makes them precise, and shows them in intelligible form in the intuitions of space and time. Intuition is the regarding of the abstract in a concrete form, by the realistic hypostatization of relations; that is the one sole method of valuable thought. (CP: 1.383)

The intuitive abilities of primitive man make iconic (image-like) traces of Firstness into weapons, tools, or even works of art, confronting not only the immediate environment but eventually with time facing the world at large. Ginzburg observed that

Man has been a hunter for thousands of years. In the course of countless chases he learned to reconstruct the shapes and movements of this invisible prey from tracks on the ground, broken branches, excrements, tufts of hair, entangled feathers, stagnating odors. He learned to sniff out, record, interpret, and classify such infinitesimal operations with lightning speed, in the depth of a forest or in a prairie with its hidden dangers (Ginzburg 1990: 102, see Ginzburg 1983: 88 and Ginzburg 1979)

Historically, the “animal” responses of the identification methods of human individuals are “readable” — that means, in Firstness, imaginable — skills used in archaic and modern hunting, shooting, and fishing activities as well as used in modern forensic techniques. These strategies, bounded by the necessities of survival versus death, create the undegeneracy of a physical translation from pre-social and pre-cultural signs of pre-Firstness to the social and cultural signs of Firstness.

Recently I visited the city of Tartu. There is a cultic stone kept for memory, known as the sacrificial stone (Salupere 2006: 98–100, 64–65 ill.) with identificative marks to shed human and animal blood within the holes and curves of the stone. According to Frazer’s classic *The Golden Bough*, the sacred stone with the pagan icons was “simply a precaution against witchcraft” (Frazer 1963: 273–274, see 38). Further Frazer (1963: 50) commented the magical sense of the person’s “impressions left by his body in sand or earth”. Indeed, the shapes of foot tracks, fingerprints, bloodstains, followed by the seals with pictured impressions and the X rays, ID photographs, name stamps, initials, autographs, and signatures — see today’s public and personal email addresses and websites — are magic signs. “Automatically” (Dewey 1934: 227) created as undegenerate traces of selfhood, their shapes are real and their form perceived in Secondness, but these bodily signs are a fugitive hint of Firstness (*Black’s Law Dictionary* 1999: pp. 129–130 “automatic/ism”, p. 648 “fingerprint”, p. 656 “footprint”, p. 982 “mark”, p. 1146 “passport”, p. 1387 “signature”, p. 1412 “stamp”). Expressing everyday practical objects or parts of the human body, these undegenerate signs are by most of us *believed* to be physical and personal imprints. The copy imitates a visible image enabling us to communicate a de-formalized or subjective “idea” of the formalized indication of the individual person. This “idea” is no more than an improvization (Firstness), secretly keeping a name secret, but it must be stressed that there is no scientific means of deciding the control of the visual or digital human identity (no Secondness) of the person. The pre-ontological experience of the material traces of

selfhood is no more than an illusory promise, but is officially considered a formal, even “legal” copy.

The marks, stamps, and traces are regarded in fairytales and legends “sympathetic magic, where any person has to be careful in disposing of finger-nails, excreta, hair, and the like — since each item of the *disjecta membra* retains a significant trace of the identity that gives to the sorcerer holding the part a measure of control over the whole” (Shands 1977: 20). Following Sebeok’s semiotic analysis of the magic of Cheremis “charms” (Sebeok 1974: 14–36, originally published in 1953), the idea of *disjecta membra* appears in beautiful charms, attractive to the receivers. Sebeok gave to the cultivated charm a mythical content of prayer for health, love, and weather conditions. The “historiola” (Sebeok 1974: 24–26) of the pre-Firstness of magical charms are basically undegenerate sign-events, taken without genuine psychic awareness from natural history to intimate identity, as it is or seems to be, without legal evidence and without the artistic playfulness of art. They may be helpful for group identity for anthropologists or archeologists, but singularly unhelpful for the legal identification of the authenticity and legal certification of a specific natural person (*Black’s Law Dictionary* 1999: 127-129 “authority”, 220 “certification”) — who knows what is what? Semiotically, the genuine First (of First) of the physical nature is thus rooted in “ignorant” functions — that means, unconscious and unauthorized bodily signs — taken from living individuals to serve as some legal proof to the community. Foot- and handprints as well as other identification marks constitute an imperfect record of selfhood, since the sketchy meaning of the zero signhood represents almost Peircean “airy-nothingness” (CP: 6.455).

Used by the police as an evidence of personal well-being or public security in the atmosphere of terrorism today, the functional traces or marks of a person can be scanned by electronic capture, recorded, and accounted for real authentication or certification (versus minor or major variations in copies and clones). The abductive nature of these confessional acts lays bare a central feature: they measure some visual and imaginable clarity of the real identity of the individual, but they emphatically provide nothing as a clear narrative clarity, in the sense

of legal evidence of the person involved. The dangers of the testimonial techniques of undegenerate signs are improvised traces and no more, and must thus constantly be violated by new and more advanced methods to resist a total identification outside the given immediate environment of the “animal” world, to handle a fixed context facing the verbal and nonverbal human communication of both the literate and illiterate world spheres. As borderline cases of public and private signs, consider the “decorative” imagery of rune inscriptions, the Mesopotamian tablets, Chinese or Japanese pictographs for “ignorant” Western *amateurs*, or written texts (in any language) that do not “look like” script but as pictorial images to a child or adult illiterate.

Undegenerate signs can grow into degenerate signs, and degenerate signs may eventually develop into art. In his article “Tribal styles”, the art historian Gombrich retraced the mechanical analogy of the knitting pattern which offers instruction for a sequence of stitches for carpetlike designs (Gombrich 1987: 26–27) — as today in Navajo carpets and Oriental kilim rugs. Weaving is one of the oldest arts, and serves as a historical example of art, but we see that the term “decorative” loses its specific meaning for the symbolism of tribal art. The technique for pattern-weaving is not personal and playful but stays strictly programmed, according to the spiritual mythology of the shapes, images, and colors used in the religious nature of the group. This traditional craft and technique, even with slight innovations, cannot yet be considered the art of an individual weaver. Gombrich wrote that this point was made long ago by Franz Boas, the founding father of modern anthropology, who made clear in his classic work, *Primitive Man* (1st ed. 1927) that

When the purely decorative tendency prevails we have essentially geometrical, highly conventionalized forms, when the idea of representation prevails, we have, on the contrary, more realistic forms. In every case, however, the formal element that characterizes the style, is older than the particular type of representation. This does not signify that early representations do not occur, it means that the method of

representation was always controlled by formal elements of distinctive origin. (Boas 1951: 354)

Long before Boas, Peirce discussed in 1907 the semiotic workings of the Jacquard loom, the first machine to weave in patterns, exhibited in Paris at the Industrial Revolution (1801). He wrote that the Jacquard loom produced, as he called them, primitive icons — that is, “quasi-signs” with a qualitative likeness to the object (CP: 1.473). Peirce’s statement of pre-Firstness — “quasi-signs” — illustrated the possibility of the development from this “purely brute and dyadic way [with] automatic regulation” to a tertiary design of a textile weaver. Peirce clarified that “it will be convenient to give a mere glance” (CP: 5.473) to produce the first interpretant. The abductive “mere glance” of the textile or the carpet implies dramatic variations of meaning-giving interpretants to appear as novelty to the outside world.

Cultures have dominant technologies in order to shape their own technomorphic designs, yet “real” art disrupts the seers in delightful ways of Firstness, and stands for new and abductive art. Breaking out of purely functional or totemic emblems for the ethnic group (Singer 1984: 105–154; Lévi-Strauss 1963), artistic selfhood opens up with the ethnocultural Firstness of the undetermined and undecided motifs representing events and thought-signs of children’s drawings, early cave paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphs, tattoos, Oriental ideographs, voodoo dolls, American cryptographs, and in comics and folk-tales. The familial feeling of a *doubly* degenerate sign — First of Second — spreads to the austere naturalism of “primitive” art styles towards singly degenerate signs — real Second — made by the mastery of a particular artist. The style disrupts in a “potential mood” but stays inside the fixed “imperative, or indicative” tradition, showing the artist’s cry, “See there!” or ‘Look out!’” (CP: 2.291), familiar to Munch’s later cry. In the degeneracy of the work of art, logicalism remains out of focus and tribal and subjective emotionalism is brought into sharp focus. The image of the group instinct and religious feeling is transposed from folklore into subjective painting, music, and other art forms, and gives in art-making “a kind of self-enjoyment, though

involving an inner detachment or psychological distancing of the self from itself" (Aldrich 1963: 13). The distance from reality will direct the artworks to the struggle of Secondness with and against reality. Gombrich called ethnocultural art "zebra crossings" that occur in the "living fossils" (Gombrich 1987: 23, 26) of evolutionist art today.

A few examples of the growth of the emergent status of art until well into the twentieth century will celebrate how doubly degenerate art can grow into the individual styles of singly degenerate art. The musical "vocabulary" of the Brazilian composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959) imitates the exotic sounds of Brazil's Indians, including the carnivalesque dances and songs, bringing them into Western modernity (ex. Villa-Lobos 1996; Tarasti 1995: 126–127). Villa-Lobos' cantata *Mandú-Çárará* that builds on "syllables of a fictitious Indian language, *jakatá kamarajá*", spreading from the tenors to the mixed chorus, whereas "the male voices' stifled, onomatopoetic *Hum Tum!* [stays] reminiscent of an Indian dance" (Tarasti 1995: 128–130, 370–372). In Villa-Lobos' *A Floresta do Amazonas (Dawn in a Tropical Forest)*; ex. Villa-Lobos 1991), the listeners are introduced to a musical "copy" of the sounds of the Indian jungle and the fauna of the Amazonas. Villa-Lobos turned the indigenous Firstness of natural birds and animals into elements of his modern fantastical insight — building his musical Secondness.

The eminent Peirce scholar Merrell (1995: 158) transfers doubly and singly degenerate signs to "contemporary painting, and its counterparts in our high-tech, fast-track world of mass media (television, videos, movies)" as we see — inspired by the American pop-art's graffiti, animation, etc. — the sketchy human figures drawn by Keith Haring (1958–1990) on his path back to a ritualistic way of being in the world. Modern art can be adorned with a patriarchal and patriotic, or even sentimental stage of nostalgia. This new harmony is perhaps based on Paul Klee's (1879–1940) formal and imaginative human icons — small visual elements with line, color, and shapes of Surrealist and Dadaist origin — out of which the painter builds the total order and the mystified balance of his "multi-dimensional" and "polyphonic" pictures (Ehrenzweig 1967: 25). Consider the example of

the Swiss-Italian sculptor Alberto Giacometti's (1901–1966) narrow, long, and thin upright figures from the years 1950–1960. His almost one-dimensional human silhouettes are transformed into sinister and meager caricatures of figures (Ehrenzweig 1967: 17, 144). Giacometti's sculptural likeness was directed against traditionalism and naturalism, but his modern prototypes of individual persons are clearly reminiscent of the Firstness of African art. His "primitive" Firstness of the bodily lines has the fugitive and even fleeting meaning of Peirce's "airy-nothingness" (CP: 6.455).

Another example of the modern use of the ethnocultural icons is the Italian sculptor and painter Mimmo Paladino's (b. 1912) mixography of human figures, pointing way back to a fairytale past (Paladino 1985). Building a bridge between two worlds, Paladino's bronze and iron sculptures, drawings, woodcuts, and linos present a charming and witty synthesis of a modern artist to the "art" of some other historical civilization. In Paladino's sculptural "poems" (or metapoems), icons are vaguely interconnected and deconstructed to the figures, in such a way that the complex of the artwork makes the primary Firstness of the "tribal" art of the mythical characters. The icons are found in "vulvar, phallic, cruciform, sticklike, egg-like ideograms, cup marks, cup and ring marks, hand prints, foot prints, and animal tracks" (Anati 1994: 138). The iconic superimpositions on human figures make "modern" signs beside or beyond the rudimentary historical indications (sub-signs) of some previous art. It makes the viewers more conscious of Paladino's modern expression and (probably his) entertainment, transforming disparate materials into new art, creating some mysterious place with an indeterminate or possible meaning, similar to ideograms or hieroglyphs (Kuspit 1985: 18).

6. Archaic iconography and beyond

The modern shapes and forms of iconicity of Haring, Klee, Giacometti, and Paladino seem to be "synonymous" with the historical "art or

script” (Bouissac 1994) of the rock paintings in pre-civilized days. Rock art was painted by the first artists in the Paleolithic era of c. 6,000–14,000 years ago (and some considerably further back). Spiralled back in time to witness the archeological or quasi-archeological nature of art, the ancient discoveries of ethno-graffiti are today considered not only in the anthropological and historical but also in the psychological and religious sense. As Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) wrote:

From the very beginning of human society we find traces of man’s efforts to banish his dark forebodings by expressing them in a magical or propitiatory form. Even in the Rhodesian rockdrawing of the Stone Age there appears, side by side with amazingly lifelike pictures of animals, an abstract pattern — a double cross contained in a circle. This design has turned up in practically every culture, and we find it today not only in Christian churches but in Tibetan monasteries as well. It is the so-called sun-wheel, and since it dates from a time when the wheel had not yet been invented, it cannot have had its origin in any expression of the external world. It is rather a symbol for some inner experience, and as a representation of this it is probably just as life-like as the famous rhinoceros with tick-birds on its back. (Jung 1975: 96).

The mythology of the Paleolithic rock art — “abstract art” painted on the rocky surface of the walls and ceilings in the remote caves, rock shelters, and cliffs, inhabited by Stone Age proto-people — contains both undegenerate and degenerate signs. In many areas, art — painting as well as music and dance — seemed to take up more time than any other activity, devoted to basic needs for food production together with the procreative and sexual functions (Boas 1951: 299ff.). Art was no hobby but seemed to be a specific talent of *Homo sapiens*. The rock paintings express stylized images of species such as rhinoceros, mammoth, horse, bison, bear, ibex, and reindeer. Beyond the artistic copies of the movement of animals, there exist the unindividualized “stick figures” of man (or woman) (Gombrich 1996: 12; see Gregory 1987: 45–46; Herminione 1996) together with copies of human handprints and other icons painted on the rock (McNeill 2006: 21–22). In the pattern of artistic expression that emerges from a

lengthy pre-cultural period, the “copied” imprints suggest the evolutionary Firstness of the untamed (undegenerate) and measured (degenerate) signs, contributing at a later date to personal art-signs (Ehrenzweig 1967: 139, 173; Gailli 1996: 29, 41 ill.).

The caves show authentic relics produced over some 40,000 years, but they still remain *in situ* to be researched as cultural heritage. Most caves (Altamira, Lascaux, and others) have depictions inside, preserving abstract images of bits of charcoal or red-ochre as vivid sketches reproduced in the darkness of the rock caverns; but those in the Portuguese Côa Valley are hardly visible designs in open air rock surfaces. Over time, the serigraphic sights of scenes and events are bound to lose their tone, shape, and color, through erosion, rainfall, storm, snow, and ice falling on the rock. The vision of the future visitors and scholars of palaeoart must conjure something from nothing, or almost nothing — an inconclusive evidence indulging in “subjective hunches” (Gombrich 1996: 10) to give a meaning to the imaginary images and ambiguous fragments. Sebeok would guess the meaning of

[...] stick-figures, cartoons, sketches, paintings, photographs, and a host of other possibilities for pictorial representation, with varying degrees of accuracy [where] the perception of all depictions, moreover, varies across species, cultures, and times. For example in the crowd scene [...] are the people fighting, dancing, or engaged in some other activity? (Sebeok 1984: 17; see Bouissac 1994: 355)

Recapulating in the pseudoart the characteristic silhouettes of archaic animals, hunters, breeders (and later farmers) (Anati 1994: 131–134), tribal or group art (called anthropological art) is then and now considered as the first “childhood of mankind” (Gombrich 1996: 8). The drawings have a twisted perspective on the flatness of the painted surface: the animal is drawn in profile and the body in full face. Coincidentally, this twisted perspective was followed from pseudoart to modern art — taken up by Picasso’s “objects” who observed the “semiotic twist” of the earlier examples of Iberian (and other) sculptures and reliefs in his collages and assemblages (Quinn 1995). In

terms of giving the work of art a mystery, rock art goes back to where we started, in the *undegenerate* fossil record with a *degenerate* sacred meaning (Highwater 1994; Jung 1975; Gorlée 1990). The starting development of the human race seems to include artistic portrayals of magic rituals — are the caves sanctuaries? — and social scenes — such as dancing or warfare, or hunting, fishing, and angling — performed together as clan totems (McNeill 2006: 20; Lévi-Strauss 1963).

The purely deictic function of rock art is the form of expressing group art, whereas the emergence of personal artistry is primarily expressed in the next phase, starting with child art (Ehrenzweig 1967: 3–20, 290). The abstract or “primitive” drawings with the reverse perspective occur “in the transition between symbolic play and imagination” (Krampen 1986: 148) in the footsteps of Jean Piaget’s (1896–1980) mixed Saussurean-Peircean definitions of the drawing and its psychological background. The following age phases appear in the children’s free drawings:

- [rhythmic] scribbles pertain to the phase of sensorimotor intelligence (age 2–3)
- fortuitous and failed realism (= synthetic incapacity) are connected to the preoperational stage of concrete mental operations (age 3–5)
- intellectual realism is connected with the transition from the preoperational stage to that of concrete mental operations (age 5–8)
- visual realism presupposes concrete mental operations (age 8–12) (Krampen 1986: 150)

The infancy of drawing seems to overlook “a crucial difference between child development and hominid evolution — namely, that the former is dependent on adults for its survival, while the latter had to be highly successful survivors at every single stage of their evolution” (Bouissac 1994: 363). Naturalistic (that is “primitive”) psychology is really the stylized effort of play and imagination to extend the historical course from doubly to singly degenerate signs. In tribal art, the copying of geometrical figures into something else, a more personal expression, would clash with the artistic icons of Firstness. In the evolutionary sense, the artist starts from a romantic-expressive

image (Firstness) to reach the trivial-didactic “mythology” of developmental art (Secondness), which must be learnt to be understood.

Archeological art is a catalogue of “uprooted” objects coming today in fragmentary states. Partly broken, with some pieces missing, and the surface worn, they need reconstruction to see the whole form — interpreted from Firstness upgraded to Secondness and even to pseudo-Thirdness. The free-standing figure of the Greek (Hellenistic) masterpiece of the *Venus of Milo* (dated to around 2nd Century B.C., in the Louvre, Paris) is, despite her height of 1.8 m., a fragmentary symbol (Boardman 1994: 192, 193 ill.). Found in the Aegean island of Melos in 1820, she lacks both arms, but the female beauty of the body, the fluidity of the lines and the contrast between the folds of the draperies and the nudity of the torso transformed her into the statue of female beauty for all times (Curtis 2003). Venus is portrayed in classic style following the features and conventions of nude studies. Despite the old pose, in the present variant of the sculpture Venus’ head is based on a twisting movement, and her body turns in different directions in such a way that the statue looks like a moving sculpture.

As the *Venus of Milo*, most classical statues have long lost their head, eyes, noses, arms, or legs, see *The Winged Victory of Samothrace* (c. 190 B.C., in Louvre, Paris). The colossal figure of an arched body in marble (height 2.4 m.) is poised upright with spread wings, and seems to be resisting the wind, which is flattening the soft folds of fabric against the body (Dewey 1934: 234). *The Winged Victory*, a symbol of military success, was erected to commemorate a victory of the fleet of Rhodes at Samothrace (Boardman 1994: 190, 191 ill.). As Dewey observed, the definition of the style is not clear-cut, particularly the expression of the drapery in bronze-casting, which expresses the artist’s mood in the play of folds forcing the spectator to move around the statue in a twisting pose. Since the 1950s discovery of the figure’s right arm, it is thought that the right arm was stretched high to announce the victory. Together with Venus’ arms, there is in both statues a “possibility” of meaning of the energy pushing the movement forward from classical features to the masterdom of new artistry (Boardman 1994: 191, 193 ill.).

Venus and *Samothrace* start an epic memory of artistic selfhood for the sculptor and the spectator. The artist stayed inside the despotic tradition of cultural perspective and convention — that means double degeneracy developing towards single degeneracy with authentic surprises of “specialized” artistry that did not follow the sculptor’s model. Peirce wrote that “I have my doubts whether Greek sculptors of that age used models as ours do. I think the canon and their memory guided them mainly” (SS: 194). Yet Peirce added to the general “type” a personal “token”, on the contrary, — literally, = French *coup*” (SS: 194), in English the effort of an creative knock or kick. The abductive impression of the sculptures is no “melodic” tradition, according to the current fashions, but reflects the personal vision of the “reality” of the artist him/ herself. The statues’ graceful and explosive movement reflects the artist’s abductive art — Firstness moving until Secondness of art.

As an excursus, the tourist attraction of ancient Pompeii, the archeological city on the Bay of Naples that was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Pompeii is today a touristic setting that, however, is decaying and, in part, left in ruins, with fallen stones and frescoes with faded or disfigured surfaces. The discolored fragmentariness happens through time, the radiance of sun, and falling rain drops is similar to rock art. Significantly, Pompeii also lacks manpower to undertake the project of the cultural heritage. Not considered “art” but speculatively “art for science’s sake” are the displayed excavated bodies of the Roman citizens. The “pseudo-event” (MacCannell 1976: 103f.) of offering the display of real bodies, exhibited in glass boxes, serves as a living *cabinet des curiosités* for the visitors of the Pompeii “museum”. The nude twisted bodies contorted into anguished poses are transformed into exotic museum pieces showing to the visitors undegenerate signs with a “possible” meaning. The physical bodies are thus turned into virtual degenerate art, similar to the imagery of the frescoes, mosaics, and statues, deflecting the military, artifactual, and leisure activities of life of the Roman holiday resort.

The discoveries of Pompeii have been excavated under cinders and ashes, and become archeological findings in the modernized museum, where undegeneracy is linked with degeneracy. In the Pompeii museum or gallery, both physical and real signs are located as art in the showcases to amuse and entertain the more than two million visitors each year. This quasi-official status of art with “art” exhibits, as a subject of the Pompeii controversy, all kinds of objects to be “consumed” in their educative, ethical, and aesthetic roles (D’Ambra 1998) — despite the real historical fact of the actual volcano eruption, a catastrophe surprising everyone in the daily life of Pompeii. Art and “art” (including “pseudo-art”) in Pompeii is no outward form of specific art of shapen and misshapen bodies and faces, recognized by marks of undegeneracy and degeneracy. Pompeiiian life everywhere on the streets can only be understood through knowledge of what happened in the life and times of the Roman Empire (Beard 2008), that is outside primary Firstness.

If we return from archeological fragments and other portions of Secondness back to the undirected pre-forms of Firstness, we see that flashes of pure Firstness in other arts represent the *nothingness* involved in the sign(s) and/or the object(s) within the “possible” interpretants. Some practical examples of the mindless, wordless and imageless belief of the *nirvana* (a First directing to Third) in the art-sign would compose and arrange the viewers’ fantasies (Firstness) into reflections (Secondness), making the strange obvious and eloquent. Since Firstness is a non-sign, the examples are already signs of Secondness and perhaps some Thirdness is integrated to reflect an interpretive meaning not of a fragment or details but of a whole piece.

Richard Wagner’s (1813–1883) opera *Das Rheingold* (discussed in Gorrée 1996: 422–426; 1997: 252–264) — written between 1853 and 1876 to be performed as *Vorabend* of the whole *Ring des Nibelungen* cycle — begins with an introduction (*Vorspiel*) transpiring at the dark bottom of the Rhine. The introduction is played during 4’36 minutes by the “underwater” orchestra without any stage performance. The watermusic is built upon one point, the third tone E flat. From this leading *Ur-note* (Firstness) three motifs gradually seem to grow from

nothing to a continuous *crescendo* played by different instruments — from strings to brass, woodwind, etc. — to provide a musical framework (Secondness). The murmuring *arpeggio* motif is shifted by a broken chord growing into a wavy musical pattern (Apel 1946: 52–54 “arpeggio”; 103 “broken chord”). Indeed, from nothingness to richness, the object of Wagner’s *Vorspiel* eventually breaks the chords up and down, extends the tempo, and interpolates foreign notes. The objectual complexities of Wagner’s prelude come from within and are left unknown (or “anonymous”) to the listeners, yet by being outwardly repeated and developed — Wagnerian *leitmotif* — they will at liberty open up in possible interpretants of the opera itself (Ehrenzweig 1967: 54, 91f.). The wave motif, lifting upwards through the dark shades of the turbulent Rhine water, symbolizes the brightness of light. Wagner’s *Valhalla* music suggests a First indication of something deep in shadow — from an “oceanic” level (Ehrenzweig 1967: 120, 192, 294f.) the sunken treasure is raised from the deep bottom of the river. This revelation explains the further search in Wagner’s tetralogy — after *Das Rheingold*, we have the three remaining operas, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* — to find the hidden treasures of gold, love, and success (Tarasti 1979: 78).

Wagner’s *arpeggio* motif was echoed by Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) in his Third Symphony in C minor, also called the “Organ” Symphony (1886) scored for vast orchestra, but with a flair of bringing a dramatic variety of orchestral color, also played by a piano and an organ (ex. Saint-Saëns 2001). This Third Symphony was composed by this musical craftsman at the highpoint of his brilliant career, and is now almost forgotten. Saint-Saëns was not only a French Wagnerian but had a “flair for assimilating everything assimilable in Berlioz, Liszt and Gounod” (Abraham 1964: 180). The theme-transformation was not only shown in Saint-Saëns’ charming *Carnaval des animaux: fantaisie zoologique* (1866) and the seductive music of the popular opera, *Samson and Delila* (1877). From 1858, Saint-Saëns was, aged just twenty-three, the organist of the voluminous organ at *La Madeleine* in Paris. He varied the orchestral symphony with his love for organ music and Gregorian chants. The

Third Symphony was a heterogeneous “motto-theme” (Abraham 1964: 172) sporting all of Saint-Saëns’ technical skills in a kind of “rhapsody”. The Symphony had four different movements: the first movement, a slow introduction of *Adagio — Allegro Moderato* “imitates” Wagner’s *Vorspiel* to *Das Rheingold*, leading further to a lyrical theme. In the second movement, *Poco Adagio*, the organ starts with the musing undertones of the lowest register, almost the inaudible sounds of the chapel bells. The overtones of the organ come in the concluding *Maestoso — Allegro* movement. Yet Saint-Saëns’ romantic and lyrical melodies are considered as superficial and cool harmonies, missing the dark pathos of Wagner’s tragedies.

The musical examples have shown the high and low tone-sounds reflecting pure and polyphonic tones of the melody, the slow and quick tempo, the flat and sharp pitch and loudness and softness of tonal timbres, the spoken and sung rhythm, together with the chromatic harmony of consonant and dissonant chords (Apel 1946: 753 “tone”, 497 “note”, 736 “tempo”, 584 “pitch”, 747–748 “timbre”, 639–642 “rhythm”, 322–325 “harmony”). They intermix in the function of musical Firstness, its transition into Secondness and pseudo-Thirdness. Peirce wrote in his *Logic Notebook* (1865–1909), on a handwritten memo dated from July 8, 1906, that “A *Tone* as that whose accidental being makes it a sign. A *Token* or that whose accidents of existence make it a sign. A *Type* or that thought upon which makes it a sign” (MS 339C: 499). To make the distinction in music, this triad pertains to the voice or instrument, the written signs, and the notational systems: a tone embodies material properties, a token signifies the condition of the musical action, a type is a significant rule affecting musical notation (CP: 4.537; see Freadman 1993: 88ff.). The pictorially symbolic and graphic system of arbitrary signs translated into performance indicates pitch, duration, and song (or score). In musical genres, the triad tone, token and type affect together the categorical elements of expression, tempo and nuance with rhythms, harmony, and tune.

Taking the sounds of the chapel bells and the monophonic (unisonous) Gregorian chant as a base, the written and sung syllable and

accent is musicalized in the later medieval and Renaissance anthems of Orlando Gibbons' (1583–1625) polyphonic music in the English tradition. Gibbons was the English composer and organist of the Chapel Royal and the Westminster Abbey of the Tudor period, around the same time as the liturgical reform of church music in the hands of Martin Luther (1438–1546) in Germany (Gorlée 2005: 26, 66–76), both are hallmarks of the new chants of the church, stigmatizing the Catholic tradition and moving into revival movements leading to the modern consciousness of Humanism and Reformation. Gibbons' organ intermixes with the lyrical types of the English high voices in his vocal church music. In *Praise the Lord, I My Soul, Lord, We Beseech Thee*, and the anthems (ex. Gibbons 1983–1984), the polyphonic settings of the hymns and the psalm tones are attuned to the old-style “treble” and “mean” boys' voices or, an octave lower, the man's countertenor. This vocal *mélange* (solo or accompanied with organ) mastered the absolute counterpoint of the choirmaster's art — preparing the way for the musical declamation of the oratorios of Henry Purcell (1659–1695). The fragments of Gibbons' original designs, as they have survived today from the second half of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century, bury in the performances the vocal and musical instruments together in one single lyric tone color and artistic harmony of pure Firstness. Beyond the elastic limits of the melodic Firstness, the holy words “tell” the narrated faith in Thirdness, brought together in Secondness. Anthems are a “wilderness” of vague words with fuzzy edges, but this problematic fact makes faith and reason come together.

In modern days, the natural sound of the Brazilian jungle sounds are fictionalized in Villa-Lobos' folk-like musical style, the mythology of the chapel bells has echoed in the unconfined spiritual Firstness of Pärt's “tintinnabuli” style, together with the other examples. The unreal, non-sign simplicity of Firstness can be given a space in a meaningful Secondness and Thirdness. In terms of the possibility of a meaning, the leaning toward “nothingness” of artistic Firstness was fully exploited by Wagner's “stationary spread of sound, albeit animated by interior motion” (Dahlhaus 1985: 107). He introduced in

his operas the antithesis of the “popular” or “childlike” with “classical” and “refined” elements (Schwab 1965: 131; Gorlée 2008a: 118). Wagner’s narratives of self-sacrifice, redemption, and revelation, clothed in his sentimental tunes, would grow into the popular(ized) music performed in the music hall, operetta, ballet, and the musical. Wagner’s dynamic movement between nature and culture, between intuition and knowledge, and between banality and mythology, deeply determined the vigor of primary Firstness in post-Wagnerian music and other arts.

7. Other flashes of Firstness

During the second half of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions of art, other modern composers, painters and film-makers repeated in orchestral music, painting, and film the minimalist technique of using examples of artworks, reconciling and upgrading the idea of Firstness.

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) — after his versions and revisions of the *Fifth Symphony* (Op. 82, 1915–1919) — inaugurated a release bordering on a “functional economy” (Whittall 1988: 10–11). In Peirce’s semiotics, this is a “silence” form of Firstness, a foreboding of something new. The changing “emotional map” (Whittall 1988: 12) turned the innovative Finnish composer into an experimental stage, moving from “absolute” symphonies to a new mixed genre: symphonic tone-poems. Sibelius introduced the magical mood of Firstness in his tonal music, such as *En Saga* (1892, rev. 1902), *Voces intimae* (Op. 56, 1909), *The Bard* (Op. 64, 1913, rev. 1914), *The Oceanides* (Op. 73, 1914), *Prelude to a Tempest* (Op. 109, 1925), and *Tapiola* (Op. 112, 1926) (ex. Sibelius 1991, 1998a, 1998b; Whittall 1988 18–24).

Wagner’s prelude to *Das Rheingold* and the storm in *Die Walküre* inspired Sibelius’ *Tonmalerei* (Dahlhaus 1985: 101–102, 106, 121). In the tone-poems, the natural world, inspired by the nationalist and nostalgic depiction of the epic *Kalevala*, leads to an “oceanic” feeling of magic (Ehrenzweig 1967: 294f.). Sibelius’ musical miniatures

introduce Peircean icons of the timeless forces of nature in the dark Northern winter in “a single frozen moment: a painting” (Whittall 1988: 24) transposed into music. The mysteries of the Finnish forests, the cries of the swans and cranes, and other natural wonders have lost the controlled consciousness of sign and object, and are for the listeners transformed into a vague vision seen “through a glass, darkly” (1 Cor. 13: 12). The musical icon is “not the [very] thing [and] the distinction of the real and the copy disappears, and [the musical painting] is for the moment a pure dream” (CP: 3.362).

Tone poems are programmatic music, their “likeness” sets Sibelius’ Firstness to musical “reality”. *The Bard* is a short tone poem, musically picturing Johan Ludwig Runeberg’s (1904–1977) poem of a “primitive” musician that after a life-work returns home to die. *The Bard* shows the simple chords of a solitary harp as the only solo instrument (Firstness). The symphonic poems, *The Oceanides*, derived from the nymphs of the ocean of *Kalevala* and based on Homeric mythology, and *Prelude to a Tempest*, are derived from Shakespeare’s (1564–1616) *The Tempest*. The musical poems are incidental pieces with the main program of “graphically” depicting the natural “monotony” of the ocean waves and the wild storm (Firstness) in musical signs. *Tapiola*, the twenty-minute orchestral composition completed in 1926, is Sibelius’ last major work. The final work is about Tapio, the forest god of Finnish mythology. *Tapiola* is a nature-inspired combination of the “fragments” of the programmatic tone-poem and Sibelius’ “whole” seven symphonies. Based on one short home chord of B minor (Firstness) that is repeated throughout the work, the whole-tone harmony of the tone poem depicts the physical or mental storm in the Finnish forests. *Tapiola* represents the “infinite varieties of life in the forest, all of which spring from a common source” (Johnson 1959: 168). Peirce’s Firstness represents the Creation of Firstness.

Firstness is transmuted into Secondness through the intensified concentration on the growth of different aspects of the single idea of Firstness. Within the string quartet of *Voces intimae* (*Inner Voices*; ex. Sibelius 1998b), the instrumental monolog between first violin and cello in the opening measures undergoes the musical evolution of

making degenerate signs. The strange sounds grow into a polyphonic and chromatic dialogue of tragic despair, "creating something out of nothing" (Johnson 1959: 167). This double procedure is also criticized in *En Saga*, musically derived from the Nordic Edda runes (Tawaststjerna 1968: 192; see Tarasti 1979: 102). To musically depict the "vague title" (Johnson 1959: 60) of the song, *En Saga* presents a monotonous dialog of bassoon and bass, giving a rhythmical "whirl of pizzicatos and arpeggios" to make together an "archaic clumsiness of the main theme itself" (Tarasti 1979: 103, see Tawaststjerna 1968: 193–198).

Sibelius' nationalist drama is nicely illustrated by his own archeological experience in the year 1911. When Sibelius was walking in the shore of Lake Vitträsk, he happened to find a series of barely visible visual carvings on the edge of the steep rock cliffs, dating from 1500–500 B.C. (Kartunen 1995), a period from which no written documents have survived there. Sibelius performed a solitary quest of climbing over rocks and seeing the primitive images of, as we guess, an elk figure and a fishing net — an epic discovery of Finland's first primitive artform. His discovery of rock carvings in danger of being lost must have determined his self-critical gaze and influenced his interdisciplinary "forging" (as he himself put it) (Kilpeläinen 1995: 18, 22) of the separate scraps of tone into fragments to compose the whole pieces.

Wagner's and Sibelius' vague "aboutness", giving a single-mindedness to the lyrical qualities, unfolds in different shades of Firstness in later composers. Against the Wagnerian flamboyant and expressionist associations of this time, there is the Firstness of Eric Satie's (1866–1925) simple piano chords, played alone in the miniatures of *Gnossiennes* (1890–1897), *Gymnopédie* (1887–1888), and many other quiet piano pieces (Whittall 1988: 196–197). The rhythmic pulse has a classic but obscure feeling of spiritual release, a sign of pure Firstness. The indeterminate duration (tempo), also a sign of Firstness, is left to the pianist: there is the "fast" interpretation of Aldo Ciccolini (ex. Satie 1971 [1966]) and the "slow" performance of Reinbert de Leeuw (ex. Satie 1995). Satie's balancing silence of the tones and passages makes

for an overall melodic simplicity that has become the trademark of Satie's quasi-mystical music. Making a living as a bar pianist, Satie's adult years were devoted to religion and politics. He composed for the *Ordre de la Rose-Crois Catholique* and was the founder, member, and composer of the French church, *Eglise Métropolitaine d'Art de Jésus*. On the other hand, Satie also wrote cabaret and ballet music. Although later audiences were impressed by the intensity of his piano music, despite or because of the recurrent clichés, they were also baffled by Satie's First monotony of tonality, chromatism, and tempo.

Olivier Messiaen's (1908–1992) *Éclairs sur l'au-delà ...* (composed in 1987–1991) is another contemporaneous exponent of globalized Firstness, composed by a modern French composer, organist, and ornithologist. This orchestral piece is Messiaen's last work (ex. Messiaen 2004; Hill and Simeone 2005; for previous works see Whittall 1988: 216–219, 226–231). Messiaen was a religious (Catholic) composer and his musical testament depicts the illuminations of “flashes of the beyond” (tr. of *Éclairs sur l'au-delà*) to reach Paradise. Messiaen was totally “dedicated to the task of reconciling human imperfection and Divine Glory through the medium of Art” (Whittall 1988: 216). The natural, but musically not “simple”, Firstness of Messiaen's music had no fixed metric scheme, while he lengthened and shortened the tempo of the note or fraction, while repeating magical sounds of non-European music as well as a musical versions of bird sounds. Using a series of undetermined meanings in his essential Firstness, Messiaen engineered the 11 movements of *Éclairs sur l'au-delà ...* to reach Paradise. Messiaen was an untraditional composer and he wrote this new serial music (Holtzman 1994: 88–91) to illuminate his own “natural” and “supernatural” tastes.

Messiaen seemed to prefer the abductive mood of the tribal ideas of the great Assyrian, Sumerian, and Indian cultures, including their astronomy, numerology, and bird songs (Gorlée 2008a: 157–159, 174). Tarasti (1979: 116–117) called Messiaen's (earlier) style an “exotic” mythology, meant in the structural sense of mystic versus natural signs. Within Peirce's semiotics, Messiaen's musical experimentation and avant-garde exploration is a prolonged musement based on Peirce's

Firstness. The interpreters (director, musicians, listeners) must appeal to their feeling and emotion to understand Messiaen. By the way, Peirce called his *Éclairs* an illuminated “flash”, meaning for Peirce an “abductive suggestion [...] an act of insight, although is extremely fallible insight” (CP: 7.181; compare Peirce’s favorite term “flash” in CP: 1.292, 1.412–413, 2.85, 4.642, 5.45, 7.36, 7.498, 8.41–42). The flash is known, but the object of the flash is in part unknown. Similar to the episode of the chapel bells, the sign (and sign-fragment) can be repeated and the repetitions accumulate towards a final manifold. In other words: the composer Messiaen gives access to the supernatural and his musical way makes a path to nature or God.

Linking Sibelius’ and Messiaen’s engineering of notes and fragments to Wagner’s *leitmotif* structures, this compositional process is also applied to the spare and alert tones-and-durations of Henryk M. Górecki’s (b. 1933) musical work. During three decades, Górecki lived under the Communist control of musical aesthetics in Poland, but despite his antipathy to the Communist authorities and the ideological environment in which he lived, he followed his own new radical direction from 1960 on, until he became internationally known from 1990 on (Thomas 1997). Górecki’s music builds a bridge from liturgy and folksong from Silesia in the Bohemian Tatra Mountains to his avant-garde pieces of a free serial technique. His musical style is derived from past culture and folklore in his homeland, Poland, but is modernized in Górecki’s theological works with a mystic view. His *Third Symphony* (Op. 36) with the English title *Symphony for Sorrowful Songs* for soprano and orchestra in 1976 (ex. Górecki 1994) was a silent lament of war in the face of death (Thomas 1997: 81–94). It was followed by *Lerchenmusik* (Op. 53, 1984–1985) and *Arioso* (from *Quasi una Fantasia*, Op. 64, String Quartet No. 2, 1991; ex. Górecki 1995b; see Thomas 1997: 120–128, 135–144). Górecki had a fascination with all kinds of percussion instruments and introduced in his choir works the punctuating rhythm of the church bells, see also his *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (Op. 66, 1993; Thomas 1997: 144–149, for church bells 47; ex. Górecki 1995a).

Górecki's technique is an "elemental" or undecided style with a seemingly modal simplicity but with an extremely compositional complexity. His pure Firstness becomes an interplay of fast tempos with slow sections, where melodic motion is suspended. The apparent lack of motion (his silence) in which the "general lack of motivic consistency — despite a degree of spasmodic intervallic correspondence — gives the work a loose, improvisatory air", forming a parallel to church chanting (Thomas 1997: 27). In an interview in 1968, Górecki said that "all [compositions] tackle the same problem, that of putting the most stringently restricted material to maximum use" (Thomas 1997: 55). Despite the scrupulous economy of minimalism, the tonically static sound material of the simple and motionless major-minor chords (Firstness) builds in intensity to become dissonant with harsher sounds to achieve a speed in configurations and sequences (Secondness) to build up the definitive (never final) moment of Thirdness.

Like the composers in Firstness in music, new visual languages also pioneered in other arts. The nineteenth-century Romantic painting offered the broad impressions of nature of William Turner (1775–1851) announcing the twentieth-century impressionist painter, Claude Monet (1840–1926) with his own indistinct pattern of color areas, and the expressionist and symbolic Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch (1863–1944) — later, followed by a group of abstract (that is, non-representational and non-objective) painters, such as Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and others (Holtzman 1994: 69–84). The mystical Firstness of the painture of almost "nothing" adds an undetermined sparkle of light and colors with colored shadows, and creates new signs and new objects in the visible images, suggesting a possibility of interpretants.

William Turner (1775–1851) worked as an aquarellist and later as a painter. The sea and Alpine landscapes of his late works were, however, composed not from real life but *impromptu* before the finished design, taken from the many vistas of Turner's sketchbook drawings made on the natural spot. The totality of 20,000 watercolor studies, such as *Landscape with Water, Norham Castle, Sunrise, Sunrise over the*

Waters, Sunsetting over the Lake, Snow Storm and many others were made as his private work, and were not appreciated by his contemporaries as sellable art (Reynolds 1976: 139–149, 186 ills.). Turner's improvisatory epoch with purely chromatic watercolors without any fixed contour but with sketched blots, lines, and stripes is now called his important (and capitalized) "Colour Beginnings" (1820–1840) by the Turner Bequest of the British Museum. Turner's drawings are "thrillingly minimal and airy" traces (Updike 2008a: 14) of

[...] the main ingredients of painting, form, light and colour [...] making steam, smoke, mist [...] So in the later finished pictures he [Turner] composes in colour, dissolving, suggesting, and only half-defining, form; in his private exercise he composed in coloured washes alone, virtually excluding any reference to the forms of nature, unless we regard them as veiled areas of sky, earth, and sea. (Reynolds 1976: 146, 149)

Some of the ambiguous "beginnings" of the First landscapes were probably later "helped" by Turner to form a Second whole: see what he did to his miraculous *Sunrise with Sea Monster* (c.1840–1845), which originally was an indeterminate *Sunrise*. At some point, the spare form was thought to be "unfinished" and in order to form a completeness, Turner added in the center the form of a cryptic sea monster (Warrell 2007: 198). Turner's unprepared Firstness can be prepared for Secondness, when necessary (Updike 2008a).

The response from the realistic Impressionist painters, particularly Claude Monet (1840–1926), was to follow Turner's example to paint the fleeting impressions of what the word Impressionism meant. Monet's oil on canvas of 1872–1873, called *Impression, Soleil levant* (*Impression, Sunrise*), is a rapid rendering of a seascape drawn in free and loose brush strokes and colors. Monet depicted a harbor at dawn with the seascape, small boats and quayside cranes, with the sun coming up (Delafond and Genet-Bondeville 2002: 18–19). *Impression* looks absolutely Turner-like. By 1897, in paintings such as *Vétheuil dans le brouillard* (*Vétheuil in the fog*), Monet painted in Turner-like strokes the village Vétheuil on the cliffs of the right bank of the Seine with an eerie shadow of its *château* (Delafond and Genet-Bondeville

2002: 30–32). Beyond these and other paintings or pastels, the quick pencil sketches of his notebook were full of penciled pages. They were “unknown” sketches, but they brought to light “unknown facts” about Monet’s painting life and about “the far greater part that drawings had in his career than previously thought” (Herbert 2007: 31). Monet used his soft-gray drawings as his “private space” to be used as “spontaneous” preparation for his known oils on canvas. The drawings are absolute Firsts; they give “no hints of tonal structure, color or detail” but are inaccurate “memory clues” of visual ideas (Herbert 2007: 31–32). The drawings are recently exposed and analyzed for the first time in the Monet’s collections of the *Musée Marmottan* in Paris.

Monet’s collection of water lilies is the best example. He painted the series of *Nymphéas* (*Water Lilies*) in his own garden at Giverny from 1897 until his death in 1926 (Delafond and Genet-Bondeville 2002: 59–101). Nearly blind, Monet worked

[...] on his giant canvases in a windowless studio, he brought back the sketchbook and independent drawings he made at the edges of the pond to serve as memory clues while he painted [...] Some of them probably guided initial compositions, which were then developed and altered over sessions that lasted months and years. (Herbert 2007: 32 ills.)

By now, times have changed and “most museum visitors have learned that Monet’s pictures ostensibly devoted to spontaneity were actually constructed with the cunning of a gifted craftsman” (Herbert 2007: 32). He accurately used the evocative drawings of his first pastels made before of the country scenes, seascapes or fishermen, and his conceptual sketches announced the postimpressionists as Paul Cézanne’s (1839–1906) distortions and Vincent van Gogh’s (1853–1890) flamboyant colors to end in the totally modern art of the twentieth century, disrupting in the purist Dutch painter Piet Mondriaan (1872–1944), whose non-figurative technique concentrated on geometric precision. Remembering traditional Islamic art, Mondriaan’s abstract paintings are the pure geometries of horizontals, verticals, and diagonals, eliminating brushstrokes, away from the contours of life and reality — pure Firsts.

As final example of artistic Firstness, the innocence and mystery of Firstness is pictured by Michelangelo Antonioni's (1912–2006) film *Blow-Up* (1966, ex. 2005). In the film, the unreflective limitations of Firstness traverses the ambiguity of reality, just as human reality seems to be for the possible self. The visual interface of *Blow-Up* is a quest of imagery without many words, interpreting fantasy into reality to bridge the gap between pattern and process. The stream of consciousness of the film gives ample room for the viewers' own interpretation of what happened (or not happened) in the famous images of the episode of the park. One day, a high-fashion photographer becomes bored with fashion and takes pictures in a deserted park. Against the bushes, he takes photos of a lover's rendezvous. The next day, the woman asks him for the illicit photos. The images that he has unwittingly witnessed have an invisible scene of sexual intrigue. When the photographer *blows up* several pictures from the park, the magnified pictures reveal a potential or real murder happening in the shadows of some bushes. Further *blow-ups* from negative to poster uncover what could be an image of a dead body.

Not only is Antonioni's avant-garde film a fascinating portrait of the "swinging" London of the 1960s, with drugs, sex, and wild parties, the filmic world also constructs with the visual observations, fallacies, and deceptions a spiritual thriller with an accidental death. The detective images of a photographer wandering with a camera in his hand through the park are followed by his investigative techniques and mind-binding magnified images in his studio to see the misadventure of the "real" truth. Yet the truth of the image-maker's lens, doubly mediated by Antonioni's camera as well as the view of the spectators of the film, leaves the aesthetic still-image of the park with practically nothing — again a pure First. The visible-invisible and the representational-unrepresentational images do give some evidence but provide no proof of the murder (Gardner 2002).

Blow-Up (1966) was a modern avant-garde film discussed in Metz's book *Film Language* (Metz 1974: 185–227, in the original French ed. of 1968) and more specifically in Lotman's article "Problems of semiotics and directions of contemporary cinematography" (Lotman

1976: 97–106; originally published in 1973 as *Semiotika kino i problemy kinoestetiki*), seen from structuralist semiotics. Metz (1974: 193–194, 185) spoke about “dead spaces” within the main scenes of the film, where the movement has filmically turned into a non-dramatic story, the Firstness of doing “nothing” in the quiet park. The breakdown of the narrative syntax of semiotic events makes that “nothing” is turned into the freedom of undetermined Firstness. Firstness is involved in the random scenes that imply “nothing other than a non-codified mobility of the camera, a movement that is truly *free*” (Metz 1974: 48).

Lotman took a contrary view of Metz’s “dead spaces” and he attempted to “capture the face of contemporary life in unposed, unarranged and documentary-like” cinema (Lotman 1976: 97). Lotman observed that *Blow-Up* offers the frozen images of (transposed into Peirce’s terminology) an unfulfilled First, contrasted with the semiotic nature of moving (photographic, motion-picture, etc.) images fulfilled into Secondness. The film wanders around the party scene of London as a travelogue of the wandering and struggling signs of Secondness. Yet in the central episode of the images of the lonely park, the viewers are given the broad field of vision of the bushes and the kissing couple. The episode is pictured by the accidental photographer, taking spontaneous (non-professional) close-ups to please himself. The random scene in the park remains uninterpreted Firstness in itself. The “realness” of the “document about reality” (Lotman 1976: 98) lies in the photographs taken and the film images themselves.

The mystery raised by *Blow-Up* is half-cleared up by the *blow-ups*. Lotman (1976: 103) wrote that the photographer was a “modern chronicler” acting as a

[...] criminologist [working] with a photodocument and a visual aid in researching the semiotics of depictions. [...] Ordinarily both the historian and the criminologist see their task as the establishing of life from a document. Here a different task is formulated: to *interpret* life with the aid of a document, since the audience has seen for itself that direct observation of life is no guarantee that profound mistakes will not occur. The “obvious” fact is by no means so obvious. (Lotman 1976: 100)

The film is an abductive metatext, with a wider degree between chaos and order. The meaning of the film is what can happen to underdeveloped and open-ended Firstness. This makes that meaning in artistic signs stays conjectural and that there is (and will not be in the future) no absolute truth in art.

8. Concluding remarks

The painters, composers, and film-makers discussed explain the rise of the abductive “art of the fact” which has opposed the ‘art of the ideas’” (Lotman 1976: 103), from outside ideas to inside things. This abduction signifies not logical reasoning but is backward reasoning, a mythology based on hunches and guessing, whereas the emotional overtones build opportune opportunities of both “may” and “maybe not”. In Peirce’s semiotics, the art of the inside thing could suggest art for art’s sake, but not exactly:

Only in the Western world is art produced for art’s sake, to be hung in museums and galleries or to be performed in concert before large audiences. In the societies that anthropologists typically study, art is embedded in the culture. It is actively used in the performance of ceremony and ritual, and the meanings the art is communicating relate to the meaning of the ritual and the mythology associated with it. (Rosman and Rubel 1989: 222)

A work of art is a visible and functional fact, not only displayed in the organized exhibition of museums but everywhere. If any generalization can be made about this long history of art, it is perhaps that the idea of perfect form combined with simple substance has already prevailed.

The engaging simplicity of the themes of Firstness (from pre-Firstness) has the genius for transmuting the mystic view of fresh ideas into poetry. Evaluating the instrumental naturalism of physical and spontaneous undegenerate art and coming face-to-face with an anthropological vision of pseudo-art, the word of art reaches the

principal mode of artistic expression of a creative artist — from double to single degeneracy. The work of art creates the meaning of a single monolith in a minimal (or perhaps monumental) created object that in the undetermined interpretants explores the secret qualities that seem actively involved in the sign and the object, emerge in the (still undetermined) interpretants. In the practical example, the bronze bells with the natural associations of their sounds, the (dis)ambiguity of the vague *riflesso* (reflex) of the vaguely liturgical — romantic, nostalgic, religious, mystic, atavistic, archaic — icons produce in the viewers-listeners an emotional ecstasy; but since the work of art is and will remain a fictional task, the meaning of Firstness is too narrow, and the real truth can be far away from the epiphany. The sporadic transformation (transition, translation) process of making and giving further cultural meaning(s) arises from the exterior context, that is the motivic words and fragments indicating the self-contained and self-referred qualities of Firstness, directing to an awareness of Secondness. The artistic signs with their partially known and unknown objects acquire in the mind of the attentive receiver (reader, listener, visitor) improvisatory and possible interpretants.

The spare sign of pure Firstness gives a pseudo-religious (or a mystic, spiritual, or animistic) feeling to the vagueness and abstraction of the work of art. The minimal significance of human emotion could transform “upwards” into Secondness, concentrating on the real state in the sign’s reality. In Secondness, the sign can episodically unfold into a more complex mood, key and material, thereby in advanced stages receiving all kinds of spiritual or temperamental interpretants, invoking primitive rites and judging the artistic composition made by individual artists. The fragments of Firstness conjure something for nothing. The musement of something and nothing starts with the pre-historic and pre-industrial, yet visionary, impressions of the nature-mythical passages: reprising the primordial flux of Creation with the basic qualities of the innocent Firstness of Nature, yet with a hidden and creative focus of achieving real Secondness and touching the formal rules of Thirdness. The moments of minimalist Firstness contain the spiritual principles of the human person to achieve the

cosmos. Seeing, hearing, listening, and touching in the artwork the magical moments of self-concentration is the direct experience of the oneness of the sign's qualities. Totally, within and beyond ourselves as sign receivers, Firstness proves a vague, unfulfilled sign, ready to fulfill the total sign-semiosis.

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Набросок категории Первичности Пирса и ее значение для искусства

Данное эссе рассказывает о создании и развитии пирсовских трех категорий, сосредоточиваясь прежде всего на Первичности, на ее базовой формуле «воздушного ничто» (СР: 6.455), которая действует как фрагмент Вторичности и Третичности. Категории чувствования, хотения и знания не являются обособленными, они действуют во взаимосвязи с тремя интерпретантами. Интерпретанты действуют в качестве элементов триады благодаря принятию, изменению или перемене верований. В произведениях искусства первое дыхание Первичности вызывает спонтанную реакцию *musement*, где эмоции выражаются без сопротивления фактов Вторичности и применения

логики Третичности. Основные качества туманного и неясного слова, краски или звука несут свои мимолетные значения в Первичности. Первичные качества вкуса, взмаха кисти, тембра, краски, точки, линии или прикосновения слишком скудны, чтоб на них строить логику эстетической оценки. Возникновение искусства Пирс объясняет ростом «невырожденности» (*undegeneracy*) в групповые и индивидуальные интерпретанты и возникновением констелляций единичных и двоичных форм вырожденности (*degeneracy*). Обзор «проблесков» Первичности сопровождается множеством примеров ее проявления в произведениях искусства (литература, музыка, скульптура, изобразительное искусство, кино). Настоящий анализ является первым этапом на пути изучения Первичности в искусстве.

Visand Peirce'i Esmasuse kategooriast ja selle tähendusest kunstidele

Käesolev esse räägib Peirce'i kolme kategooria loomisest ja arengust, keskendudes seejuures esmajärjekorras Peirce'i Esmasusele, tema "õhulise mittemillegi" alusvalemile (CP: 6.455), mis toimib Teisesuse ja Kolmasuse fragmendina. Tundmise, soovimise ja teadmise kategooriad ei ole eraldi seisvad üksused, vaid toimivad vastastikusel koostoimes kolme tõlgendiga. Tõlgendid toimivad kolmiksuhteliste elementidena tänu sisseharjunud uskumuste kasutamisele, muutmisele või ümber tegemisele. Kunstiteostes kutsub Esmasuse esimene hõng esile "mõtiskluse" (*musement*) spontaanse reaktsiooni, kus emotsioone väljendatakse ilma faktilise loomusega Teisesuse vastuseisuta ja loogilise Kolmasuse osaluseta. Ähmase ja ebaselge sõna, värvi ja heli põhiomadused kannavad oma põgusaid tähendusi edasi Esmasuses. Esteetilise objekti maitse, pintsli tõmbe, tämbri, värvi, punkti, joone, tooni või puudutuse Esmased omadused on liiga napid, et nendele ehitada esteetilise hinnangu loogikat. Kunsti tarkamist seletab Peirce'i *eba-degeneratiivsuse* (*undegeneracy*) kasvamine grupiviisilisteks ja individuaalseteks tõlgenditeks ning degeneratiivsuse (*degeneracy*) üksik- ja kaksikvormide konstellatsioonide moodustumine. Esmasuse välgatuse ülevaates tuuakse näiteid paljudest kunstiteostest nii sõnas, muusikas, skulptuuris, maalil kui filmis. Käesolev analüüs on esmane abimees primaarse Esmasuse uurimisel Kunstis.