

Charles Sanders Peirce  
**Analysis of Creation**

*§ 1 Introduction of the 1<sup>st</sup> Element*

We only know things by the modifications of our own consciousness which they produce. Our world, therefore, consists of modifications of consciousness & the question is how can a modification of consciousness be produced? What does such production imply?

Although we say that sensations — things — contain thoughts, it is not true that there are any thoughts except in the mind. But this admission implies that sensations contain an element which is not modification of consciousness — the thing. Even in our own mind thoughts do not really exist, that is the *necessity* for instance which I think today or tomorrow is not the same thing as that immutable, impersonal necessity which I am thinking *of*. My thought itself is in a certain degree abstract. Were it wholly so it would be the same as the abstraction itself.

Modifications of consciousness, therefore, range all the way from the impersonal manifold of sensation to the impersonal abstraction.

*§ 2 First Condition*

The abstraction in a creation must take on personality. And this can only be done by combination with a thing.

*§ 3 Introduction of the Second Element*

The abstraction must be expressed. Suppose that condition complied with, how does it pass into consciousness? By the operation of abstracting. This is as follows. From two things which are alike in one respect & different in others we can separate mentally the unlike elements from the like & distinguish each separately. If we consider each compound as an expression, the peculiar meaning of each will be its peculiarity; the common abstraction will be the condition of the abstraction of the meaning, that is the language. If the object expressed purely, all of the abstraction it contained (the expression) would be meaning. Pure expression, therefore is pure meaning. But this the mind would not notice for the mind notices through resemblance & difference. Expression, then is an abstraction lying between two unnoticeable abstractions.

*§ 4 Second Condition*

The meaning in a creation must become noticeable. This can only be through language.

Language is an abstraction not capable of realization alone, but combined (in a way of which we shall think directly) with other abstractions gives them realizability. Geometrical figures, letters, conversation, music are such languages. We seem to see their analogues in Vegetables, Animals, Chemical Compounds, Nebular Systems etc.

### *§ 5 Introduction of Third Element*

Creation is but the realization of abstractions. Our world is the creation whose abstractions can be realized in thought & feeling. That abstraction should become modification of consciousness what is wanting? That it should be combined with the manifold of sensation.

That is, it must find expression. *Pure* expression would be meaning merely. The meaning must be contained in language. The unreal thing, meaning, with the unreal thing, language, make expression.

Meaning enters into language by determining it. A determination at its vanishing point is a mere *pro forma* rule. A perfect determination would be but one abstraction instead of a mixture of two; hence, it could not be expression. I will call perfect determination normality. Normality to become regularity must take on formality.

This is a fading process. This fading may be of variable degree only it must exist & must not be entire.

Thus far a creation is a faded abstraction regulating a language.

For an abstraction to emerge into consciousness, it is necessary that it should be contained in a manifold of sense. A manifold received into consciousness is nothing but a manifold of abstractions, hence it must be combined with other abstractions. The consciousness separates one abstraction from another by the process of generalization which implies that common abstractions on the one hand are distinguished from a special abstraction on the other hand. Those common abstractions with which a special abstraction is combined of necessity in order to find an expressible form it is not merely added to but modifies. Should this modification, however, be thorough it would not result in an expressible form of the abstraction. There must therefore be a certain formal conformity which in turn implies an inconformable element. If this inconformable element is too great, inconformity will result. There must therefore be also a certain order to which the idea will be limited . . .

### *§ 1*

Abstraction, Modification of Consciousness, Manifold of Sense

### *§ 2*

Language, Expression, Meaning

### *§ 3*

Formality, Regularity, Normality

Whence are these thoughts, sensations and passions? Or to substitute an abstract for concrete terms whence is modification of consciousness? A feeling or thought pure simple & perfect divested of all that is special, accidental or external becomes such things as Causality, Space, Love — which are abstractions. An abstraction, however, is no longer a modification of consciousness at all, for it has no longer the accident of belonging to a special time, to a special person & to a special subject of thought. Abstraction, therefore, to become modification of consciousness needs to be combined with that which modification of consciousness as yet unrelated to any abstraction is, that is to the perfectly unthought manifold of sensation. Well, how shall abstraction be combined with manifold of sensation? By existing as a form for matter, by *expression*. The first condition of creation is then expression.

I shall formalize the mode by which this conception has been arrived at in order that there may be no doubt regarding the sequence of thought.

*Formula of thought.* 1. Whence is B. 2. B pure simple perfect is A. 3. A is no longer B. Why. 4. A to become B must be joined to B in its *mell* form C. What C is. 5. What is the process by which A is combined with C? It is B<sup>2nd</sup>.

#### Examples of the Necessity of Expression

1. Nobody can think pure abstraction on account of the necessity of doing it at a particular time etc. The abstraction to be realized must be a form of the thought, passion, or sensation in which it is realized.
2. If we have instead of one person two people in conversation or correspondence the abstraction must be the form of a speech or deed.
3. Even religion must exist in some forms or rites in order to find the least realization.

#### § 2

1. Whence is expression? That is what are the conditions of its existence? 2. Expression perfectly free from the extraneous & accidental is mere meaning, which is of course no longer expression at all, because it will be shorn of its matter altogether. Expression is form but mere form in its purity being deprived of matter is only form because the intellect regards it as such & not really. Meaning to become expression needs to be combined with that which expression is before it has any meaning, or Language. This Language is not matter but is a partial form which permits the existence of that ideal form Meaning to become a realizable form. The means therefore by which meaning enters into language, is the determination, the *regulation* of language.

#### Examples of the Necessity of Regulation

1. No one can have a thought of an abstraction which does not belong to some subject. For instance, we cannot think of length without thinking of a line of space or time. Here the space or time is our language — unthinkable without length. By the determination or regulation of the time we introduce length as the meaning.

So plurality must be thought through imagining a plural of dots or something else, This plural need not be thought very accurately, it will have a variable character, at one moment appearing before the minds

eye thus  then  then  etc.

2. Nothing can be clearer than the necessity of the regulation of Language meaning the mode of expression between man & man by Meaning – whether this Language consists of gestures or speech or music or what.

3. A prayer is not a prayer so long as the prayerfulness is wanting; neither is it one before prayerfulness regulates some rite, or at least some inward movement.

4. A curve is an expression, in which the meaning regulates the Language – which is geometrical form.

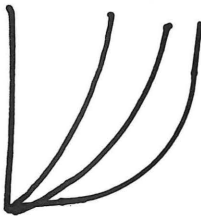
5. The animal kingdom is a Language. The four types are the regulations of that Language by the Meaning.

6. The human life is a language. The character is the regulation by the meaning, which is the principles of action.

7. The minds & hearts of two people is a language capable of expressing a meaning which regulates them by virtue of their ratio.

### 5 3

Whence is this regulation possible? Regulation carried to perfection becomes in the case of the curve a straight line, thus in the illustration the meaning of the curve is



regular increasing increase, but when this is carried out in the language to the utmost, the curve becomes a straight line, where the idea is no longer conveyed. So the plurality of dots must have no unitary interspace, hence it would cease to be a plural. The long line can have no breadth & thus ceases to be a line. The language must cease to have ...

### Anmerkung

Die hier veröffentlichten Fragmente zur "Analyse der Kreation" sind ein bisher noch nicht publiziertes Manuskript (Nr. 1105), das im "Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce" von Richard S. Robin (1967) unter der Rubrik "Psychologie" aufgeführt ist. Da es weder Zeit- noch Ortsangabe enthält, war eine genaue Datierung bisher nicht möglich. Doch da es mit vielen anderen Ausführungen von Peirce zu Problemen der Wahrnehmung, Bedeutung, Sprache und auch der Zeichen zusammenhängt, die in Manuskripten von 1864–69 auftauchen, könnte es sich um ein frühes Manuskript um 1865 handeln. In den achtziger Jahren führte Peirce zwar zusammen mit J. Jastrow Untersuchungen zur Sinneswahrnehmung durch und hat dann um 1903 in den unveröffentlichten Entwürfen zu seinen Pragmatismus-Vorlesungen an der Harvard-Universität ein "Kreations-Schema" dargelegt,

das das Thema der "Kreation" erneut behandelt, aber die hier veröffentlichten fragmentarischen Entwürfe scheinen doch eher in einem engen Zusammenhang mit seinen frühesten semiotischen Überlegungen zu stehen, wie ich in meinem Aufsatz "Erste Überlegungen von C.S. Peirce zur Semiotik 1860–1866" (Semiosis 1, p. 35–42) bereits ausführte.

Diese Fragmente enthalten übrigens wichtige Erweiterungen der bereits durch Platon und Aristoteles fixierten Abstraktionstheorie und sind nicht nur für die Ausarbeitung der heutigen *genetischen* Erkenntnistheorie wichtig, sondern bilden auch eine entscheidende Grundlage für die Ausarbeitung einer *semiotischen* Erkenntnistheorie und Bewußtseinstheorie.

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Elisabeth Walther

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