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## Peirce's Esthetics: A New Look

What little is to be found in the *Collected Papers*<sup>1</sup> on the subject of esthetics is confused and often inconsistent. Why, then, should Peirce have regarded that science as important to both logic and pragmatism? An investigation of its precise significance requires a much broader study than is attempted here; yet with the aid of the unpublished manuscripts, I think it is possible to sort out the confusion and to present a view of that science which will make Peirce's claim concerning its importance more plausible.

Near the end of 1902, Peirce declared that the ordering of the normative sciences was in accordance with his categories (8.256, November 25, 1902). Although all three sciences had been included under philosophy in Peirce's classification of the sciences just prior to that, there had been no claim that they were ordered in terms of the categories. The new stipulation meant that esthetics, ethics, and logic were, in the first place, to be arranged in a hierarchy consistent with the principle governing Peirce's entire classification scheme — that of principle-dependence. According to that principle, preceding sciences supply principles to those which follow while succeeding sciences reciprocate by providing data or problems to those above, but while there can be only one originating source of principles, any one of a number of sciences might provide a problem which activates the same solution by the science supplying principles. The justification for any given science to employ a principle from another science without submitting that principle to examination, is simply that the latter science numbers among its objects — that is to say "those of which its conclusions hold good" (693a.60, n.d.) — those objects investigated by the given science.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, within that hierarchy, Peirce's three categories become the formal differentiating principle so that within the normative sciences esthetics is, in some sense, a first, ethics a second, and logic a third.

As far as I have been able to discover Peirce produced some twenty different classifications between 1866 and 1902. An investigation into these and subsequent developments<sup>3</sup> indicates that the classification

published in the *Collected Papers* as "A Detailed Classification of the Sciences" (1.203ff., c1902) is not his settled formulation. Peirce was still in the midst of transition and, as the editors note, it was not until c1903 that "Peirce came to recognize the nature of the Normative Sciences" (1.573<sup>n†</sup>). The pamphlet supplementing the Lowell lectures of 1903 entitled *A Syllabus of Certain Topics of Logic* (see 1.180-202, 1903) contained a classification scheme which, in its major divisions, was substantially that with which Peirce prefaced virtually all of his subsequent writings in logic and which he thought was "sufficiently satisfactory" as late as 1911 (675.9, c1911). It is this later version which might appropriately be termed Peirce's classification of the sciences.

Before esthetics was even considered as a philosophical discipline, the hedonist argument had prevented Peirce from accepting any dependence of logic on ethics, which led him to the conclusion that ethics was an art. Later, when he steeped himself in the writings of the major ethical philosophers he gradually became convinced of the importance of ethics to logic. As long as he omitted esthetics from the philosophical sciences, he thought he need not admit to hedonism. If, on the other hand, he did include esthetics he would find himself defending the view that ethics, being a special determination of esthetics, must ultimately rest on esthetic feeling. The hedonist reasoning is to the effect that good and bad morals are, in the final analysis, a question of pleasure: Consider the possibility of our desiring something other than pleasure, it is urged. Unless it gave us satisfaction we would not desire it. And what is satisfaction but a feeling of pleasure? Therefore, it is concluded, we can't desire anything but pleasure. It was not until 1903 that Peirce declared the argument to be based on a "fundamental misconception" (5.111, 1903) and that to adopt the view that ethics is, in the final analysis, based on esthetics is not to espouse hedonism.

It is the writings postdating these developments which convey Peirce's account of esthetics as the first of the normative sciences. And by confining this discussion to those subsequent writings some of the confusion is eliminated at the outset, and I believe it is possible to discern the several strands of thought concerning esthetics which were preoccupying Peirce in his later years.

Although the normative sciences are analysed in terms of the three categories, it would be misleading to regard esthetics as a first, ethics as a second, and logic as a third *per se*, as many commentators have attempted to do, thereby attributing to Peirce the view that esthetics

studies feeling, ethics studies action, and logic studies thought. All three normative sciences must be seen as seconds of philosophy. Normative logic (in contrast to formal logic which Peirce consigns to mathematics) is the science of deliberate thought. As such, it is a special case of the science of deliberate action, i.e. ethics. But deliberate action is action controlled to conform to a purpose. Hence ethics is a special case of the science which investigates the *summum bonum*, i.e. esthetics.

The position which esthetics occupies within Peirce's classification of the sciences is of paramount concern precisely because of its connection with ethics and logic.

According to Peirce's classification, then, mathematics is the science which depends on no other. It is followed by philosophy which may appeal to mathematics for principles. Philosophy encompasses all the positive sciences that depend on familiar experience. The first of these is phenomenology which studies universal phenomena in their firstness, i.e. as they immediately present themselves (5.122, 1903; 311.2, 1903). It observes the contents of the phaneron which comprise the collective total of all that is present to any mind in any way or in any sense whatsoever and sorts out the ubiquitous elements into several broad classes.

The normative sciences form the second division of philosophy. As such, they examine familiar phenomena in their secondness, i.e. in so far as we can act upon the phenomenon and it can act upon us (311.2, 1903). Secondness is characterized by struggle and the sense of effort encountering resistance. Now the quintessence of self-control is inhibition and inhibition of action involves effort opposed by resistance. "All direction toward an end or good supposes selfcontrol and thus the normative sciences are thoroughly infused with duality" (283.84, 1905). Clearly the secondness of the normative sciences is not simply the dualism evident in distinguishing good from bad and true from false. At times Peirce merely enjoins us not to exaggerate the importance of such distinctions, but his more consistent view is to recognize that such hard duality belongs to those practical sciences which correspond to and are informed by the normative sciences (602.11, 1903 <08). The normative sciences are heuristic sciences — albeit of practical activities. Yet when it is asked 'in what does the dualistic character of the normative sciences consist?' the obvious answer is that the distinction is between the approved and the disapproved. Peirce thinks that answer will not withstand investigation. In the first place preferences have varying

degrees; and in the second place, we constantly encounter dualism where the question of approval or otherwise does not arise, e.g. ego and non-ego, agent and patient (283.41''-42''", 1905). More importantly, disapproval is not a pure second, according to Peirce. It is 'imputed': The opposition between the approved and the rejected is constituted by the further relation to a 'conditional purpose' (1338.34-5; c1905-06). Hence such distinctions cannot properly be made until a science has determined what is excellent and what conditions must obtain for an object to possess that excellence. Moreover, a theoretical science does not have favourites so it does not declare for one member of a dichotomy (836.[4] n.d.). None of the normative sciences are concerned with actual occurrences in the world, beyond assuming that what phenomenology has discovered to be present to the mind is so. It is not surprising, then, that they refrain from making distinctions. Individual facts are only considered insofar as they are a constant element in the phenomena (8.239, 1904). Appeal to phenomenology is augmented by mathematical reasoning. The first of the normative sciences can appeal to no other science for principles.

Aside from an early introduction to Whately's *Logic*, Peirce's initial encounter with philosophy was through esthetics. In 1855,<sup>4</sup> throughout the entire year, he examined various works on the subject, concentrating particularly on Schiller's *Aesthetische Briefe* which had impressed him profoundly. Thereafter Peirce neglected the study completely, attributing his disinterest to the 'feeble' nature of writings on the subject (2.197, c1902; 5.129, 1903; 310.4, 1903; 687.17, n.d.; S80.11, n.d.).

Peirce disclaimed any artistic talent of his own (683.18, n.d.), yet he was not without esthetic discrimination. His father had assiduously imparted a sensuous and esthetic discrimination in its broadest aspect and, in particular, he had encouraged a delicate refinement of palate. This last stimulated the younger Peirce to devote two months and considerable money to the acquisition of a near-professional discernment of Médoc wines (619.5, 1909).

Neither artistic sensibility nor esthetic appreciation are necessary to the scientific study of esthetics, — still less to the determination of what that study is about. However, we can conclude from the foregoing that Peirce investigated the science early in his life, that he was never indifferent to the subject matter, although no contemporary work had inclined him to further study even after he had recognized its very considerable importance to logic. Presumably, then, he did not feel confident that

this particular science could be viewed in terms of the activities of those who pursue it.<sup>5</sup> This being so, Peirce's discussion of that science must receive at least some of its impetus from other sources. In fact, Peirce has at least three more or less conflicting elements which received his allegiance at various times.

In accordance with his declared procedure (5.146, 1903; 311.11-16, 1903; 312.46', 1903), Peirce presents innumerable disconnected discussions as well as some which attempt to draw the disparate views into coherent and consistent statements. The result is that his accounts of esthetics are permeated with anomalies and sometimes with bizarre assertions. This continues until 1910 when the last major difficulty is resolved.

On the one hand, Peirce develops an increasingly clear idea of the sort of science esthetics must be if it is to harmonize with his architectonic development, and on the other hand, he is encumbered by several convictions which prevent a coherent and univocal account. Chronology is of only partial value here just because, in examining esthetics from one of these positions, Peirce had not always divested himself of the other ideas.<sup>6</sup> Because it was not until 1910 that Peirce reversed his opinion on one significant preconception, he himself did not give a thoroughgoing unified presentation. However, a reconstruction of that position requires only a certain amount of selectivity facilitated by hindsight; we have merely to disqualify those assertions which stem from the rejected views.

I propose first, to identify the elements of Peirce's thought which I believe underlie the confusion; second, to examine the various different positions Peirce adopted as a consequence of one or more of those elements; third, to indicate Peirce's resolution; and finally, to reconstruct the coherent view which emerges from the residual.

As already suggested, a close study of the evolution of Peirce's classification of the sciences reveals that the ordering of the normative sciences generally, and of esthetics in particular, up to and including 1902 was so very much in the formative stage that it will be wiser to seek out Peirce's position from subsequent writings.<sup>7</sup> No dearth of material results from this limitation notwithstanding commentators' fondness for remarking on the paucity of writings on the subject.

#### 1. Ruling Preconceptions

The first element concerns the position occupied by esthetics within the classification scheme. That position suggests a number of characters

esthetics might be expected to have.<sup>8</sup> It is a positive theoretical science of course. And since it succeeds phenomenology, the discoveries of that science, with some help from mathematics, will provide the fundamental principles for esthetics. Precisely what those principles are must be determined. Since it belongs to the second division of philosophy, esthetics will possess a fundamental dualism in common with all the normative sciences. And as the first of the normative sciences it will reflect the category of firstness in some distinctive manner. One of Peirce's difficulties was to decide in what that firstness consists. Ultimately esthetics contributes principles to ethics and logic.

The second element which influenced the examination of esthetics is Peirce's conviction with regard to the problem of evil. Peirce had accepted the solution of Henry James, Sr. in *Substance and Shadow*, that God approves of evil as such, not because it is the only way to achieve his purposes (which would be inconsistent for an omnipotent being) but because he finds evil admirable *per se*. Evil is something we mortals should struggle against and (per impossible) should endeavour to understand as being laudable in itself (5.402<sup>n3</sup>, 1905; 8.263, 1905; 330.4-5, n.d.). Given God's perspective we might discern that everything is good (283.43" ", 1905); but from those lesser pinnacles to which man might aspire, comprehension of such an ultimate good must remain inaccessible (6.479, 1908; cf. 1334.20-21, 1905). Indeed, to presume to define God's purpose could be interpreted as sacrilege (8.263, 1905). This has implications for the status of the good and bad, of the fine and vulgar. The relation of pleasure and pain to good and evil is also at issue.

The third element derives from Peirce's pragmatism. Its distinctive feature is that it seeks an end. And the popularized versions of the theory had made action the ultimate end for pragmatism. Peirce reports that he had himself "entertained a suspicion that such was the character of pragmatism and [that he had] almost abandoned the principle, on that account" (284.4, c1905; see also 8.256, 1902; 329.16 & .20, c1904; 5.433, 1905). His reactionary response to that misconception was an inordinately severe (subsequently tempered) assessment of his early articles and a brief flirtation with a fourth grade of clearness (later recognized as merely a more adequate understanding of the third grade of clearness).<sup>9</sup> Peirce's new understanding of pragmatism makes the *summum bonum* consist in a process of evolution in which the existent increasingly embodies those generals that are recognized as reasonable

(329.20, c1904; 5.433, 1905; 284.4, c1905; 5.402<sup>n3</sup>, 1905). Such a conception has at least an impress of thirdness, and its precise relation to esthetics is of considerable moment to Peirce.

The task of discovering the *summum bonum* has generally been allocated to the first of the normative sciences. Peirce's quandaries of 1902 (e.g. at 1.575-7, c1902; 2.197, c1902) were caused by his early uncertainties. But even when his views had appeared to be established, uncertainty is expressed once more: Esthetics is reduced to a branch of ethics on the grounds that there can be no criticism of an idea in itself (1334.36 adjacent insert, 1905). The lines of demarcation between the normative sciences are not important, Peirce tells us (1.574, 1905; 283.35''", 1905), but from the point of view of ordering the sciences according to his categories, they do indeed have significance. However, in another manuscript (902.R9.7, 1910) Peirce observes that when one of two divisions is further bifurcated, it is often found that the resulting three divisions are of equal weight. If ethics is divided in this way, ethics and esthetics might be accorded equal status even on this occasion. It remains to be seen whether criticism of an idea in itself *is* an appropriate characterization of esthetics.

Meanwhile, we shall consider what implications the three preconceptions have for the investigation of the *summum bonum*.

## 2. Effects of Preconceptions

Phenomenology has shown that there are three indecomposable elements in the phaneron, which suggests that an adequate ultimate end would need to integrate all three categories in a way that permitted their distinctive characters to be expressed. We shall see that discussions of the *summum bonum* appropriate to pragmatism have taken account of the categories in this way. The same consideration may have influenced the suggestion that

an object, to be esthetically good, must have a multitude of parts so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality; and whatever does this is, in so far, esthetically good, no matter what the particular quality of the total may be. (5.132, 1903)

Phenomenological findings may also have inspired the statement that the esthetic quality is



the total unanalyzable impression of a reasonableness that has expressed itself in a creation. It is a pure Feeling but a feeling that is the Impress of a Reasonableness that Creates. It is the Firstness that truly belongs to a Thirdness in its achievement of Secondness. (310.9, 1903)

It becomes easier to understand why Peirce tries to characterize esthetic quality in these ways when it is realized that Peirce is caught between two possible ways in which the ultimate end for esthetics might be characterized by firstness. On the one hand, it might refer to what it is that is fine in general in itself and without any other reason (1.191, 1903; 1.611, 1903; 5.130, 1903; 288.23-5, 1905). (This opinion would cohere with the fundamental dualism, characterizing the normative sciences, of an esthetics which discovers laws relating feelings to that end). On the other hand, the firstness of the ultimate end might be that quality which is fine in its immediate presence (2.199, c1902; 1334.36, 1905). I believe it is in attempting to relate the findings of phenomenology to the second alternative that Peirce produced the two obscure passages quoted.

Indeed, a number of difficulties arise with the second alternative. If the *summum bonum* is a quality of feeling Peirce would be maintaining that logic is founded on feeling. Obviously, whatever quality of feeling constituted the *summum bonum* it could not be such as to admit of excess. Hence no particular quality of feeling will do, for any given feeling may cease to satisfy after a time although the quality of the feeling remains the same. Peirce admits that pleasure is the only possible state that is perfectly self-satisfied, but he finds the "unrestrained gratification of a desire" abhorrent. "It would be the doctrine that all the higher modes of consciousness with which we are acquainted in ourselves, such as love and reason, are good only so far as they subserve the lowest of all modes of consciousness" (1.614, 1903). Moreover, it ignores the findings of phenomenology. By making esthetic pleasure a sort of "intellectual sympathy" (5.113, 1903) Peirce contrives to make it more acceptable.

In another recourse, Peirce attempts to reconcile the present position with the pragmatic ideal: It is the refusal to grant that the esthetic ideal must be a static result. By admitting process, Peirce is no longer limited to a self-satisfied ideal. He can now adopt an end that will always anticipate an improvement in its results. Such is the growth of reason:

"The essence of Reason", Peirce maintains, "is such that its being never can have been completely perfected. It always must be in a state of incipency, of growth" (1.615, 1903). However, with this solution we have rejected the second alternative and embraced the first, for the *summum bonum* is no longer a quality of feeling.

Another difficulty arises if the esthetic ideal is the immediately present quality: There can be no criticism since simple qualities are neither good nor bad, they merely are. Peirce approaches this dilemma in a variety of ways. On one occasion he allows that as long as an aim is consistently pursued it cannot be criticized (5.132-3, 1903). If carried through to ethics this would be to grant the egotist an ethically coherent position.<sup>10</sup> In another approach Peirce argues that it is only because of our limited sympathies (478.41, 1903) or because we introduce moral considerations, imagining ourselves acting in accordance with the ideas or regarding them as unsuitable for some purpose (5.127, 1903; 310.5-7, 1903), that we make discriminations. The esthetic ideal, rather, should be deliberately admired in itself no matter where it leads (5.36, 1903). In yet another approach, Peirce grants that pleasantness and unpleasantness are qualities of feelings but they are secondary feelings. "The question whether a feeling is pleasant or the reverse, is the question whether it attracts or repels; so that pleasantness and unpleasantness are, immediately, characters of the action which the feeling excites" (283.35'-6', 1905). Accordingly, it is possible to distinguish between the attractive and the repulsive. Effort and resistance must be involved, and in this context Peirce appears to think that herein lies the dualism of esthetics. However, the same sort of dualism is unlikely to characterize ethics and logic, and the requisite secondness must have its parallel in all the normative sciences.

Finally, the second alternative has been one of the sources for much agonizing over the appropriate term with which to express the relevant quality. 'Beauty' is considered altogether unsatisfactory, and 'fine' is a poor stand-in; the French 'beauté' or 'beau' are a little more appropriate, according to Peirce, but only the Greek 'καλός' or even 'αγαμαι' express the requisite generality and include the unbeautiful within their scope (2.199, c1902; 310.5, 1903; 1334.39, 1905).<sup>11</sup>

Many of the difficulties just described are also generated by Peirce's conviction that the solution to the problem of evil is that found in *Substance and Shadow*. If evil is perfection in God's eyes, which is the *Substance and Shadow* solution, then the esthetic ideal will need to

include the unbeautiful, making this preconception a contributor to Peirce's terminological difficulties. Now, since everything is good on this view, there *is* no discrimination between the fine and the vulgar. But we could not see that everything is good unless we possessed the vision of God (283.43" ", 1905), which we don't — making the *summum bonum* beyond our comprehension anyway. Peirce tries to provide a little more insight by maintaining that esthetic good and evil are pleasure and pain viewed from the vantage point of the "fully developed superman." Then, with his view that pleasure and pain are secondary feelings symptomatic of the attractive and repulsive, he makes an unwarranted leap to the assertion that the good is what appears attractive to the "sufficiently matured agent" (5.552, 1905). Even so, this brings us no nearer to the ultimate end.

From the point of view under discussion the *summum bonum* cannot be limited to the human mind (5.128, 1903). Nor is there reason to think that any ultimate end for us is endorsed by a celestial mind (5.119, 1903; 5.536, c1905). In these circumstances Peirce thinks we should try to understand that the occurrence of evil is good. "Man comes to his normal development only through the so-called *evil passions*, which are evil, only in the sense that they ought to be controlled, and are *good* as the only possible agency for giving man his full development" (330.[4] n.d.). By the operation of self-control we may develop a *summum bonum* which will enable us to participate in God's creation to the extent that he permits (5.402<sup>n3</sup>, 1905). This is assuming "that in the long process of creation God achieves his own being" (313.20, 1903) which is, it seems, the esthetic ideal. Self-control is to be employed to combat evil although it is not clear how evil is to be identified (unless it is equated with pain). If we succeed we would be "fulfilling our appropriate offices in the work of creation. Or to come down to the practical, every man sees some task cut out for him. "Let him do it," Peirce enjoins, "and feel that he is doing what God made him in order that he should do" (8.138<sup>n4</sup>, 1905). Unabashed by the implication that everyone ought to admire just what he will admire, Peirce assures us that those who suffer as a consequence can take comfort by telling themselves that "the secret design of God will be perfected through their agency" (6.479, 1908). The difficulty in discovering an ultimate end to which man might aim would seem to be insuperable.

The foregoing is in strong contrast to the pragmatist's position. To begin with, pragmatism concerns intellectual concepts and a concept can

only enter the mind as a general term or symbol. Symbols are derived from human conventions so they "cannot transcend conceivable human occasions" (288.143, 1905; see also 5.553, 1905). Although Peirce is willing to extend pragmatism to extra-terrestrial minds they must be minds that operate with symbols. As for God, since he is a disembodied spirit he is not likely to have a consciousness (6.489, c1910). Hence, "we cannot so much as frame any notion of what the phrase 'the performance of God's mind' means" (6.508, 1905).

On this view, the *summum bonum* must be accessible to the human mind and must concern itself with human purposes. It should not be construed that the end for man must satisfy the desires of any particular individual, however. In this context 'human' means "belonging to the communion of mankind" (8.186, c1903).

Peirce enjoins us to adopt the end which careful deliberation convinces us would satisfy without any ulterior reason. He sees neither selfishness nor Epicureanism in seeking an end which will best satisfy one since one cannot be moved by an impulse other than one's own. Man is free, capable of reasoning, and is possessed of an apparently endless capacity to exert self-control in determining his action. Only time interferes with his deliberations prior to action. It would be wise then to spend time in deciding this supreme question (649.19-21, 1910). Peirce uses several devices to help us grasp the full meaning of the project.

In one of these, a fairy grants us a dream which shall in fact last a fraction of a second, but will appear to be just as vast and as complex as we wish. It will be entirely dissociated from any of our previous or subsequent experience. No detail will remain in our memories and no subsequent effects will occur. All that we will retain is a "perfectly unanalyzable impression of its totality" (310.7, 1903).<sup>12</sup> Would one choose a dream of a delightful sensation or of pure bliss? Peirce thinks not:

"On the contrary, it must be a dream of extreme variety and must seem to embrace an eventful history extending through millions of years. It shall be a drama in which numberless living caprices shall jostle and work themselves out in larger and stronger harmonies and antagonisms, and ultimately execute intelligent reasonablenesses of existence more and more intellectually stupendous and bring forth new designs still more admirable and prolific." And if the fairy should ask me what

the *denouement* should be, I should reply, "Let my intelligence in the dream develope powers infinitely beyond what I can now conceive and let me at last find that boundless reason utterly helpless to comprehend the glories of the thoughts that are to become materialized in the future,<sup>13</sup> and that will be *denouement* enough for me. I may then return to the total unanalyzed impression of it." (310.8-9, 1903; see also 675.15'-16', 1911)

Another device involves the consideration of two possible ends: One of these has seemed preeminently satisfactory for fifty-nine years but in the sixtieth year, when intellect and capacity for enjoyment are failing (although logic and memory remain sound) a thorough and impartial review of those fifty-nine years shows the aim to have been an empty mockery which has thwarted any pursuit of genuine value. With the other possible aim the reverse is the case. For fifty-nine years it has been the source of frustration and misery, while in the sixtieth year it turns out to be thoroughly satisfying only because of an increased understanding of what is satisfactory: The ability to evaluate reasons has not altered, so the change in the sixtieth year must be due to some factors receiving more (or some) value that they had not formerly been given. Peirce thinks the latter end is to be preferred even if one's demise coincides with the discovery. To find the end which no amount of further deliberation would alter is what matters: The *summum bonum* is what one would conclude after thoroughgoing consideration. Hence, what the man actually felt about it for the greater part of his life is not relevant (649.22-4, 1910).

Both devices suggest that the completely satisfactory aim will be one that evolves and comes to its full meaning only in the distant future. Accordingly, the pragmatist makes the *summum bonum* consist in a "process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody a certain class of generals which in the course of the development show themselves to be reasonable" (329.20, c1904; see also 5.433, 1905).

Such an ideal succeeds in incorporating all three of the Peircean categories. This is even more clearly evinced in another manuscript where the *summum bonum* is said to be "the continual increase of the embodiment of the idea-potentiality" (283.103, 1905). The contribution of action to that process should not be overlooked. According to Peirce,

signs which should be merely parts of an endless viaduct for the transmission of idea-potentiality, without any conveyance of it into anything but symbols, namely, into action or habit of action, would not be signs at all, since they would not, little or much, fulfill the function of signs; and further, that without embodiment in something else than symbols, the principles of logic show there never could be the least growth in idea-potentiality. (283.103-4, 1905; see also 284.4, c1905)

In potentiality there is firstness; in embodiment there is secondness; and in idea there is thirdness. Consequently, the 'growth of concrete reasonableness' provides an ideal to encompass all three elements in the phaneron. Self-control in the acquisition of habits is the method by which the pragmatic ideal is to be attained.

### 3. Resolution

Although in quite different ways, growth through self-control is common to both the pragmatic approach and that linked to *Substance and Shadow*. Is a synthesis of these two views possible?

A flaw in *Substance and Shadow*, Peirce remarks as early as 1903,

is that it represents the desire of God to confer independence upon that which is most opposite to Himself to be a special peculiarity of God. But God has no whimsies nor pet weaknesses: it is on the contrary the essential nature of Purpose that it cannot be directed toward itself but develops itself in Creating. (478.19'-20', 1903)

This allows Peirce to accommodate the pragmatic evolutionary ideal:

Our ideas of the infinite are necessarily extremely vague and become contradictory the moment we attempt to make them precise. But still they are not utterly unmeaning, though they can only be interpreted in our religious adoration and the consequent effects upon conduct. (8.262, 1905)

— and that, Peirce maintains, is pragmatism.

Since the *summum bonum* for pragmatism is of an evolutionary nature whose denouement may be approached asymptotically but might never be reached, there is some credibility to the suggestion. Further-

more, we evidently have some affinity to God or to nature for we have been able to discover laws which enable us to predict with fair success. It would seem, then, that the end for man could ultimately coincide with the end for God (5.119, 1903; 8.211-12, c1905). However, this is not an adequate resolution to the difficulties arising out of the *Substance and Shadow* solution to the problem of evil. That God should delight in evil remains an enigma and must impede any attempt by man to posit a viable end for himself that cannot be construed as a blasphemous endeavour to define God's purposes. Consequently, Peirce rests with the unsatisfactory resolution in which man creates an ideal that is not fully his (8.263, 1905; 5.402<sup>n3</sup>, 1905; 6.479-80, 1908).<sup>14</sup>

Fortunately, that is not the last word. In 1910 Peirce re-examines the relationship of pleasure and pain to the problem of evil.

The discovery of anaesthetics posed a dilemma for those who believed in an omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent God — creator of an intelligible universe —, for it now seemed evident that the universe could have been created and could have accomplished its end without pain. Yet we are so constituted that we cannot consider pain otherwise than as an evil (649.32, 1910).

Many reacted by rejecting anaesthetics, Peirce remarks, on the grounds that God had explicitly stated that women should suffer in child birth and so, by analogy, all pain should be endured (649.30, 1910).<sup>15</sup>

The only recourse, Peirce maintains, is to regard the idea that pain is *per se* evil as illusory. After all, what is it about pain that constitutes it an evil? Consider the two alternatives: either it is the quality of feeling itself, or it is because it is a feeling we are impelled to avoid. The masochist is one who has an impulse to seek pain, and some are known to rejoice in the pain inflicted on a limb that has been instrumental in committing an offense, so it cannot be the latter. On the other hand, it is because of the widespread use of anaesthetics that we are less accustomed to see pain and find its occurrence more intensely repugnant than formerly. Moreover, pleasure and pain, Peirce thinks, are signs of satisfactions and wants. As such, they function well when used intelligently, but it would be a mistake to confuse them with the wants they signalize. They are very susceptible to change and "do not, *in themselves*, carry any sound *Reason* for acting one way, influential as they are in the purely Brutal mode, but are only *rational* motives as being veridical signs of real needs" (649.29, 1910). Peirce concludes that pain is not, as such, evil.

Pain *per se* is nothing but a Feeling or class of pure Feelings, and as such involves no relativity, duality, or plurality whatever. It is nothing more than what it seems to be and it seems to be nothing but a Quality *sui generis*. But the ideas of Good and Evil have essentially reference to [an]<sup>16</sup> indefinite End for which they are Good and Evil. Thus they only apply to things in their relations to ends. (649.37-8, 1910)

And if pain is not *per se* evil, Peirce's former conclusion — that God's willingness to permit pain (which we necessarily regard as evil) can only mean that God loves evil — no longer holds. The existence of pain, taken by itself, proves nothing one way or the other about the problem of evil.

No reference to *Substance and Shadow* occurs in that context, but it was no mere fleeting insight because the opinion was forcefully reaffirmed subsequently (683.26, [1913?]). Moreover, the following footnote occurs in another manuscript:

Three books from the study of which I have profitted [sic] concerning morality and otherwise are Henry James the First's "Substance and Shadow," "The Secret of Sw[ed]enborg," and "Spiritual Creation." The fact that I have been unable to agree with much, not to say *most*, of the author's opinions while not quite confident of my own has, no doubt, increased their utility to me. Much that they contain enlightened me greatly. (675.16 fn, [c1911])

Peirce has finally renounced the *Substance and Shadow* solution to the problem of evil, and he need no longer posit an end known only to an inscrutable deity.

There is just one more difficulty that needs to be resolved before a coherent account of the science of esthetics is possible.

Is the *summum bonum* to be an immediate feeling or an ideal deliberately adopted for its own sake and without any ulterior reason? We have seen the conundrums Peirce confronts when he accepts the former. Yet if we accept the pragmatist's answer to the latter, which we now seem entitled to do, in what sense do we have an end appropriate to a science which enables us to discriminate among creations of the imagination and feelings generally? If Peirce was correct in maintaining that the



normative sciences discover laws relating ends to feeling in the case of esthetics, to action in ethics, and to thought in the case of logic, the task of esthetics cannot be confined to the discovery of a *summum bonum* such as is posited by pragmatism.

The answer to this difficulty does not get big billing I am afraid, for it is concealed in an alternative sequence to a manuscript. However, that manuscript is one that is of considerable importance to this topic. Here Peirce maintains that "there must be a theory of the *beau*, the Fine, the ideally admirable. Beauty, or what is admirable in sensuous presentation, is degraded from its rightful dignity if it be not recognized as a special case of the ideally fine, in general" (283.35''-6''', 1905). This allows Peirce to incorporate into esthetics both the pragmatic ideal and a special determination of that ideal appropriate to the discrimination of feeling.

A criticism that might be directed against such a procedure is that the ideally admirable in general, because of its evolutionary character, might be thought to be appropriately pursued by a science prior to esthetics. Within the classification scheme as Peirce has it, it would need to be a division of phenomenology. Alternatively, it might be subsumed under a more general study which encompasses both phenomenology and the present study. Three reasons for moving it to the first division of philosophy are that there is no element of secondness involved in its investigation,<sup>17</sup> it provides the essential principle to all three normative sciences, and it receives its data from all three. On the other hand, if investigation of the *summum bonum* is a task confined to the first division of esthetics, these reasons are not very cogent.

#### 4. The Emergent View

It is now time to reassess the discipline as it remains when purged of the rejected aspects. First let me reaffirm that I am not claiming the following account was ever presented by Peirce in quite this way. What I am suggesting is that, given more time, Peirce would certainly have reformulated his account in some such manner: It is all to be found in his writings.

The classification of the sciences provides the framework into which a coherent science must fit. Esthetics, I need hardly repeat, is a positive theoretical science in which the phenomenon is examined in the light of our ability to interact with it; herein lies the fundamental dualism shared with all the normative sciences. As the first of the normative sciences it examines the phenomenon in its firstness. Further, esthetics subdivides into a nomological, a classificatory, and a methodological department.

Assuming that the general ideal is a study for esthetics, its investigation will be the very first task for that science. The findings of phenomenology will provide the fundamental principles; and Peirce's own studies in that field indicate that the general ideal must take account of the three indecomposable elements of the phaneron. The distinctive firstness of the ideal is that it should satisfy in itself and without reference to any ulterior reason.

Could unalloyed bliss or the unrestrained gratification of desire be such an ideal? Bliss fulfills the last requirement but being a state of pure feeling it gives no expression to the second and third categories. Peirce maintains that the only ideal that would comply with both requirements is an ideal that is continually evolving. The creation of the universe is just such an end but is not one that man might pursue directly, and the normative sciences are concerned with the phaneron insofar as we can act upon it and not just as it can act upon us. The pragmatic ideal of the "continual increase of the embodiment of the idea potentiality" acknowledges that the phaneron does force itself upon us; and Peirce has noted that the human mind must have some affinity with nature so that we have reason to hope that the pragmatic ideal, which *is* pursuable by man, might eventually coincide with the final creation. If, Peirce declares,

it be conceivable that the secret should be disclosed to human intelligence, it will be something that thought can compass. Now thought is of the nature of a sign. In that case, then, if we can find out the right method of thinking and can follow it out — the right method of transforming signs — then truth can be nothing more nor less than the last result to which the following out of this method would ultimately carry us. (5.553, 1905)

Moreover, the pragmatic ideal gives expression to all three categories.

In addition to investigating the general ideal, the first and nomological division of esthetics must also study that special determination of the general ideal which applies to phenomena in their firstness. Whether this will involve an examination of the physiology of the immediately contemplated (1334.36, 1905), of creations of the imagination (478.34', 1903), of possible forms (478.41, 1903), or of all three will no doubt depend on how the specific ideal is understood.

The second and classificatory division investigates the conditions of conformity to the ideal and is where dualism is most pronounced.

The methodological division studies the principles that govern the production of the esthetic object — i.e., the immediate feeling, the creations of the imagination and/or the possible forms. The way in which the esthetic ideal is fostered, according to Peirce, is through the cultivation of habits of feeling. The term 'habit' here is intended to have a broader sense than that currently employed. Peirce invokes Aristotle's usage referring to any enduring state which consists in the fact that under circumstances of a certain kind a person or thing would tend to behave in a definite way (S104.[12-13] n.d.; see also 673.14-15, c1911). It is common knowledge that we can exert quite extensive control over our habits so that a perfected method might facilitate their alteration. The deliberate acquisition of habits of feeling which have "grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of hetero-criticisms; and the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling" (1.574, 1905) is the task of the third division of esthetics.

That study is an important propaedeutic for both moral and logical self-control and is crucial for the pragmatic ideal. But it is not just the methodetic branch that has such significance. Because each of the normative sciences concerns a particular aspect of the general ideal, each will continually rectify and add content to the others, and in so doing augment our understanding of the general ideal. On the practical level, the intellectual purport of a symbol can be subjected to constant re-evaluation by the interplay of an application of esthetics, ethics and logic. This suggests that the normative sciences themselves will be constantly evolving. Indeed, Peirce remarks a tendency, characteristic of the entire system, for sciences to merge into the sciences immediately preceding them. The multi-directional interaction between the sciences in terms of principle - and data-dependence indicates an evolutionary development which, if true, would seem to vindicate the pragmatic ideal (or something very like it) as the only adequate *summum bonum*.

Peirce intended his classification scheme to be a natural classification of the sciences of which there can be only one. Although it may be continually changing it will be governed by the same principles. If he is correct his scheme will set off a given science in relation to other sciences and just in so doing it will exhibit the chief facts and real affinities of the different sciences to the extent that they are open to

scientific investigation (1334.9-10, 1905). Peirce is careful not to claim that the absence of a classification scheme will prevent discoveries being made sooner or later. Nevertheless, he believes it is more than a mere convenience. A systematic study of preceding sciences will hasten problems in the direction of their final solution. Consequently, it is essential to progress (448.47-8, 1903; 601.17", 1903 > <08; 8.297, 1904). Once a science is positioned in the scheme it will not only display what sort of science it is, but it will reveal which sciences must be appealed to for principles, which for problems, data, etc. and which for alternative methods. And it will indicate the different standards of certainty for the several sciences. This is expected to have a salutary effect on the economy of time, money and energy (4.242, c1902). Little wonder then that Peirce thought a science of logic which ignored its filiation to ethics and esthetics would be a puny enterprise.

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#### NOTES

1. C. S. Peirce. *Collected Papers*, vols 1-6, ed. Hartshorne and Weiss (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931-35); vols 7-8, ed. A. W. Burks, 1958. I observe the conventional decimal notation for indicating volume and paragraph number. Decimal notation is also used to indicate manuscript number and page number. Prime and double prime ('), (")', etc. indicate alternate sequences. In both cases the decimal notation is followed by the date of writing wherever possible.

2. Those scholars who have taken Peirce seriously with regard to the relation of esthetics to logic, have failed to view that relationship within the whole context of the classification of the sciences, and almost all have overlooked the hierarchical structure based on Auguste Comte's principle for ordering the sciences.

3. For a chronological account of these schemes together with an analysis of pertinent developments in Peirce's thought, see chapter 3 of my "Logic in the Context of Peirce's Classification of the Sciences", PhD thesis (Waterloo: University of Waterloo, 1975).

4. Professor Max Fisch, who has made a number of invaluable suggestions to this paper, notes that the Harvard Class Book entry is more proximate and therefore can be presumed to be more accurate than the 1856 date given in manuscript 310 (see Thomas A. Goudge, *The Thought of C. S. Peirce*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1950, p. 349).

5. Peirce defines a science in terms of the activities of the group of investigators who undertake that science, but in the case of both logic and esthetics he has

expressed dissatisfaction with the state of those disciplines on occasion, e.g. 675.12'-14', [c1911].

6. Professor Potter has developed a chronological exposition. He has remarked the confusion and has revealed many of Peirce's contradictory assertions. Vincent G. Potter, *Charles S. Peirce On Norms & Ideals* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1967). See particularly p. 127 n. 12.

7. In his early classification schemes Peirce had considered ethics to be a practical science which removed it from philosophy altogether. In 1902 he was only just deciding that both ethics and esthetics were theoretical sciences. It is only after some vacillation, then, that Peirce regarded all three sciences as together comprising the normative sciences — the mid-division of philosophy.

8. I have said that the differentiating idea which determines the divisions within the hierarchical ordering of Peirce's classification of sciences, is in accordance with his three categories. Evidence supporting that contention abounds but its exposition needs a wider context. An abbreviated indication of the relation of esthetics to other sciences is possible, however. It is a science (which is a third — 3) pursuing knowledge for its own sake (a first — 3.1) from experience available to everyone (a second — 3.1.2) inasmuch as we can act upon it and it upon us (a second — 3.1.2.2) with regard to phenomena in their immediate presentation (a first — 3.1.2.2.1).

9. In another context some argument would be needed to support that claim. Almost everything said concerning the evolution of Peirce's thought in the present discussion could be added to substantiate that point. I merely note that mention of a fourth grade of clearness (5.3, 1901: 8.176<sup>n3</sup>, 1902; L75.68, 1902) and more ambiguous mention of an additional grade of meaning are limited to the years 1901-3, while in later manuscripts (e.g. 620.18, 1909; 649.1-2, 1910) Peirce admits only three grades, commenting that he was late in coming to a definite conception of the third grade.

10. It is the ethical requirement of universalization that creates the ethical egoist's dilemma and Peirce seems to dispense with that requirement here.

11. The word 'axiagastics', which Peirce suggests as an alternative name for the science of esthetics, is derived indirectly from 'ἀγαμαι' (1334.39, 1905).

12. Here Peirce attempts to give expression to the phenomenological requirement (that the ideal should reflect all three categories) while at the same time positing an ideal that is an immediate quality (see p. 271 above). The evolutionary character of the ideal asserts itself nonetheless.

13. Unhappily, this is somewhat ambivalent. I do not believe Peirce was expressing the hope that boundless reason should turn out to be utterly hopeless, nor do I believe that he was expressing a conviction that it inevitably would be so. I think he intended to indicate that, because of the limitations of his present experience, boundless reason could not, in the very nature of the case, reveal a meaning which has not yet materialized and so is not accessible to thought.

14. Walter P. Krolkowski has examined the footnote at 5.402 in "The Peircean Vir," *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Second Series,

edited by E. C. Moore and R. S. Robin. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), pp. 257-270.

15. A minister of the church is quoted as saying that anaesthetics was "a decoy of Satan which though speciously offering to bless women, will in the end rob God of the deep and earnest cries for help that rise to Him in the time of their trouble" (649.31, 1910).

16. Peirce cannot have intended both of his two inserts to remain standing in the text. I have deleted the less legible 'something less,' and allowed 'End' to stand.

17. This was the difficulty that prompted Peirce to subsume esthetics under ethics (p. 269 above), but that does not resolve the problem.