

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

**PEIRCE'S ESTHETICS AND THE PROBLEM OF NORMATIVITY**

A Dissertation in

Philosophy

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2008

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## ABSTRACT

The main problem confronting Peirce's theory of normative science is the problem of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. As early as 1902, Peirce was convinced of the need for a third normative science on which ethics and logic must depend for principles under his Comtean classificatory scheme; however, the classification of esthetics as this third science raises two serious objections. The first objection states that ethics and logic cannot be made to depend on esthetics for principles without collapsing both sciences into hedonism. Chapters 1 and 2 engage this first objection. Chapter 1 considers Peirce's early and later arguments against hedonism and argues that the refutation of hedonism requires a phenomenological redescription of pleasure and pain rather than the disassociation of these phenomena from normative science. Chapter 2 then works through Peirce's phenomenology of pleasure and pain and its implications for his theory of normative science. The second objection concedes that esthetics is a theoretical science, but maintains that theoretical esthetics is prenormative rather than normative. Chapter 3 reframes the problem of the normativity of esthetics through this second objection. Chapters 4 and 5 then answer the objection that esthetics is prenormative by giving an account of the esthetic recognition of the *summum bonum* as a conscious and thus deliberately controlled process of habit formation.

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## Introduction

### A. The Problem of the Normativity of Esthetics

Peirce writes in 1907 that pragmatism “is, in itself, no doctrine of metaphysics, no attempt to determine any truth of things. It is merely a method of ascertaining the meanings of hard words and of abstract concepts” (EP2:400). This, he adds, is a statement to which “all pragmatists of whatever stripe will cordially assent.” At the same, Peirce acknowledges that agreement over “the ulterior and indirect effects of practicing the pragmatistic method... is quite another affair” (EP2:400). While the statement that pragmatism is not a doctrine of metaphysics might be something to which every pragmatist will assent, this statement also understates “the ulterior indirect effects” of Peirce’s own brand of pragmatism, *pragmaticism*, on his entire philosophical system, including his evolutionary cosmology and metaphysics.

The pragmatic maxim, as it is formulated both in 1878 and later in 1905, states that the meaning of an idea consists in its conceivable effects and consequences. According to Peirce’s interpretation of this maxim, the highest grade of clearness we can obtain about the effects and consequences of an idea involves the expression of that idea as a *habit* of conduct. As he argues even in “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” “to develop [an idea’s] meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves” (EP1:131). In his cosmological writings Peirce extends this standard of clearness to the study of the evolution of the wider universe: “Empirically, we find that some plants take habits. The stream of water that wears a bed for itself is forming a habit. Every ditcher so thinks of it” (EP2:418). Habit, then, is not an exclusively mental or psychological phenomenon. The meaning of *anything* lies in the set of habits it involves.



Peirce arrives by a different path at this same conclusion through his theory of signs. All meaning is a process of semiosis; that is, it consists in the representation of an object for an interpreter (which, it should be added, may be human but more often is not). However, the ultimate final interpretant of semiosis *cannot* be another sign, otherwise semiosis would be infinitely progressive. It must be a habit of conduct. Peirce concludes in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences”:

[The pragmatist] undertakes to prove by the minute examination of logic that 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, in action or habit of action, would not be signs at all, since they would not... 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 (EP2:388; cf. 4.491).

This same conclusion is reached in a letter to Lady Welby from 1904: “It appears to me that the essential function of a sign is to render inefficient relations efficient,—not to set them into action, but to establish a habit or general rule whereby they will act on occasion” (CP 8.332). Thus, according to Peirce’s theory of signs, semiosis is a process of interpretation, and all interpretation is a process of habit formation.

This account of semiosis as a process of habit formation raises an important distinction between an action, which has efficient causality, and the law, or habit, that governs this action and which has final causality. For Peirce, this is the distinction that makes the difference between his mature pragmaticism and the varieties of pragmatism popularized by James and Schiller. “Pragmaticism” is distinguished from “pragmatism” by the belief that the meaning of an idea consists in *purposive* action, in action governed by the influence of law or habit, rather than merely in brute action (that is, mere reaction). Put differently, in its highest grade of clearness the meaning of anything must be expressible as a conditional statement in the subjunctive mood. It expresses what *would be* the case were certain conditions to be satisfied

rather than what *actually* is the case. Boler states this idea nicely in a discussion of Peirce's example of the hardness of a diamond: "Hardness is not just this present and actual relation which holds between this test and this response, but a general relation that [would hold] for all possible tests and responses of this type" (Boler 98; for a discussion of the relationship between Peirce's pragmatism and his realism, see pp. 14–18).

Peirce's reformulation of his early "pragmatism" as "pragmaticism" importantly coincides with his work on normative science. He addresses the issue of the influence of normative science on his pragmaticism in a letter to James from late 1902.

My own view in 1877 was crude. Even when I gave my Cambridge lectures I had not really got to the bottom of it or seen the unity of the whole thing. It was not until after that that I obtained the proof that logic must be founded on ethics, of which it is a higher development. Even then, I was for some time so stupid as not to see that ethics rests in the same manner on a foundation of esthetics,—by which, it is needless to say, I don't mean milk and water and sugar.

These three normative sciences correspond to my three categories, which in their psychological aspect, appear as Feeling, Reaction, Thought. I have advanced my understanding of these categories much since Cambridge days; and can now put them in a much clearer light and more convincingly. The true nature of pragmatism cannot be understood without them. It does not, as I seem to have thought at first, take Reaction as the be-all, but it takes the end-all as the be-all, and the End is something that gives its sanction to action. It is of the third category (CP 8.255-56).

The idea that normative science enabled Peirce finally to see "the unity of the whole thing" is the thesis of Vincent Potter's study of normative science in *Charles S. Peirce: On Norms & Ideals*, which, even today, stands as the only book-length treatment of this subject. According to Potter, "Peirce's realization of the place of [the normative] sciences put in his hands the capstone which unified all that he had been trying to do more or less successfully for some forty years" (Potter 3). Potter further argues that "Peirce introduces in the pragmatic maxim itself a normative function. The pragmatic maxim is a way of recognizing the reality of the objects of general ideas in their generality. But general ideas 'govern' action; they are really laws of growth, they are

really final causes; they are really normative” (54–55).

More generally, Potter proposes that “for Peirce the categories, the normative sciences, pragmatism, synechism, and ‘scholastic realism’ are of a piece.” (6). Part I of *On Norms and Ideals* examines the relationship between Peirce’s theory of normative science and his pragmatism and doctrine of categories, while Parts II and III are concerned with the relationship between normative science and evolutionary cosmology. Potter’s analysis proceeds from the idea of the importance of purpose, or normativity, at every level of Peirce’s system. For example, in the context of a discussion of cosmology, Potter notes that the universe for Peirce “has an intrinsic and immanent finality which cannot be reduced to the interaction of blind forces” (190). Potter eventually concludes through an analysis of this final causality that “Peirce’s cosmological speculations and his pragmatism come together in a striking way in his evolutionary ideal” (202). This evolutionary ideal is importantly normative.

Once again, the thesis of *On Norms and Ideals* is that the synthesis of the various branches of Peirce’s system finally is achieved, however provisionally, through the idea of normativity supplied by normative science. This interpretation importantly challenges both Murray Murphey’s developmental view of Peirce’s philosophy as dividing into “four major phases” and Thomas Goudge’s view of it as irreconcilably naturalistic and scientific, on the one hand, and metaphysical and religious, on the other hand. Although Potter certainly was not the first commentator to advance a unified interpretation of Peirce’s system,<sup>2</sup> he was among the first to appreciate, and furthermore argue with any rigor, that “the unity of the whole thing” is achieved through the theory of normative science. As I have indicated, Potter reaches this conclusion largely through an analysis of the role of normative science in the reformulation of

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Manly Thompson in *The Pragmatic Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (1953) presents a more or less architectonic reading of Peirce’s philosophy through an analysis of the pragmatic maxim, which is a generalization of the scientific method, as the one “dominant idea” around which everything else revolves (Thompson 262).

pragmatism as pragmaticism. In the letter to James that was cited above, Peirce criticizes his original formulation of the pragmatic maxim for making the meaning of an idea consist in its *actual* effects and consequences. The question of whether this self-criticism is fair or unfair—and it most certainly is unfair<sup>3</sup>—is unimportant here. What matters is that Peirce’s early pragmatism easily lends itself to this interpretation. By contrast, pragmaticism clearly proceeds from the principle that the meaning of an idea lies not in its actual effects, or in brute action, but in the *purposes* governing action. On this mature interpretation of the pragmatic maxim, normative science is a necessary propedeutic for pragmaticism. It should come as no surprise, then, that the pragmatic maxim is rethought by Peirce in his final Harvard lecture as a maxim of normative logic (cf. EP2:241).

Considering the importance of the theory of normative science for the reformulation of pragmatism as pragmaticism, the marginal place occupied by normative science in much of the secondary literature on Peirce is all the more puzzling. Peirce himself deserves some blame for this. It was not until the late 1890s that he recognized normative science as a division of theoretical science, and it was not until 1902 that ethics and esthetics finally were classified as normative sciences. Even then, Peirce never fully embraced the normativity of esthetics in his lifetime or the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on it. However, this should serve as a provocation for commentators to work through the problem of normativity further than Peirce ever did rather than as an invitation to ignore the problem. A guiding principle of Peirce’s theory

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<sup>3</sup> Consider, for example, Peirce’s commentary from 1906 on “How to Make Our Ideas Clear”: “Note that in [the original formulation of the pragmatic maxim] one finds, ‘conceivably,’ ‘conceive,’ ‘conception,’ ‘conception,’ ‘conception.’ ... This employment five times over of derivatives of *concipere* must then have had a purpose. In point of fact it had two. One was to show that I was speaking of meaning in no other sense than that of intellectual purport. The other was to avoid all danger of being understood as attempting to explain a concept by percepts, images, schemata, or by anything but concepts. I did not, therefore, mean to say that acts, which are more strictly singular than anything, could constitute the purport, or adequate proper interpretation, of any symbol. I only mention it to show that the suspicion I myself expressed (Baldwin's Dictionary Article, Pragmatism) after a too hasty rereading of the forgotten magazine paper, that it expressed a stoic, that is, a nominalistic, materialistic, and utterly philistine state of thought, was quite mistaken” (CP 5.402n3).

of inquiry is that interpreters of a philosopher have an obligation to carry out an idea or argument further than that philosopher was capable of doing, regardless of where it may lead. In this spirit, Peirce makes the following appeal to his reader in a manuscript from around 1901: “The time will come when I shall be ready to call my day’s work done, but it will only be because I shall have faith that others will carry it forward all the better for having me out of their way” (MS 873.7). In this respect, Peirce’s theory of normative science imposes an especially large responsibility on interpreters.

While general introductions to Peirce by Hookway, Hausman, and Parker, among others provide excellent overviews of normative science, the analysis of normative science in these works seldom goes beyond a simple exposition of it. Beverley Kent engages in a more probing discussion of the normative sciences in her book *Logic and the Classification of the Sciences*. Yet the focus of her analysis is more narrowly on normative logic, or normative semiotics. As was noted above, Potter is alone in having undertaken a focused study of the importance of the idea of normativity at every level of Peirce’s system. However, as compelling as his thesis is, his argument suffers from a few serious limitations. In the first place, Potter relies predominately on what has been published on the normative sciences in *The Collected Papers*. While he does make use of a handful of unpublished manuscripts, mostly drafts for the Harvard Lectures, he also overlooks several unpublished manuscripts bearing directly on normative science. Once again, even after Peirce had classified esthetics as a normative science in 1903, he continued to have private, and on occasion not so private, reservations over the normativity of esthetics and the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on it. His unpublished manuscripts afford a valuable insight into some of the issues with which he was struggling during these years.

In the second place, Potter fails to adequately address what in my reading is the most

serious problem confronting normative science, namely, the problem of the source of our norms and ideals in phenomenal experience—or put differently, the problem of the grounding of normative science in phenomenology. After the classification of the branches of normative science was settled in Peirce’s “perennial classification” of the sciences,<sup>4</sup> his work on normative science was focused mainly on explaining the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. Peirce was convinced that ethics and logic call for a third science from which they receive principles; however, even as late as 1911, he remained skeptical that esthetics can fulfill the function of this third science: “Logic and ethics, however, seem to me to call for a third science to fulfill their ideas, whether this third can be identified with esthetics or not” (MS 673.13). His reservations over the normativity of esthetics specifically raise the problem of the grounding of ethical and logical principles in a phenomenal world of experience.

Phenomenology describes the world only as it appears “at any time to the mind in any way” (CP 1.186). While normative science is constrained by phenomenology, inasmuch as it observes what *ought* to be the case “wherever the results of phenomenology hold” (MS 693.126–28), it also importantly transcends a purely phenomenological description of the world, inasmuch as what *ought* to be the case, the normative distinction between good and bad, is in no way already immanent in phenomena. It is for the purpose of explaining the source of the distinction between good and bad in a world of phenomenal experience that a third normative science must be posited—“whether this [science] can be identified with esthetics or not” (MS 673.13).

However, the identification of esthetics with this third normative science after 1902 confronts Peirce’s theory of normative science with two serious objections. The first objection states that ethics and logic cannot be grounded in esthetics, or for that matter, in a world of

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<sup>4</sup> Kent, in her exhaustive study of Peirce’s classification of the sciences, refers to the classification adopted by him in 1903 as his “perennial classification.” For a detailed discussion of this classification, see Kent pp. 121-34.

experience at all, without collapsing both sciences into hedonism. Chapter 1 will consider this objection as well as Peirce's early and later arguments against it. I will argue that Peirce ultimately answers the hedonist argument by redescribing the categorial structure of esthetic experience through a phenomenology of pleasure and pain. Chapter 2, then, will attempt to work through this phenomenology and its implications for the classification of the normative sciences.

The objection from the threat of hedonism initially constituted the most serious obstacle to the classification of esthetics as a theoretical and normative science. However, the terms on which Peirce finally answered this objection reinforce a second, and in many respects more philosophically formidable, objection. Though conceding the theoretical status of esthetics, and even the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics, this second objection still rejects the classification of esthetics as a normative science on the grounds that esthetics is prenormative rather than normative.

Potter answers this objection by distinguishing between two conceptions of normative science: as a theory of the *summum bonum* (in the case of esthetics, a doctrine of the beautiful) and as a science of ideals (in the case of esthetics, a doctrine of the admirable *per se*). As soon as esthetics is restricted to the theory of the *summum bonum*, as it is in the "Minute Logic" and other texts (cf. MS 1334 and 1339, for example), it becomes phenomenological rather than normative. Potter resolves this problem of the pre-normativity of esthetics by arguing that the esthetic apprehension of the *summum bonum* always already involves approval and disapproval. On this account, esthetics is normative because "in the case of the ultimate ideal or *summum bonum*...its deliberate adoption is conditioned only by its recognition" (51). Just the recognition of the *summum bonum* implies our approval of it as an *ideal* for conduct, "since refusal to make it one's own would involve the living contradiction of a rational man using his reason in order to

be irrational” (51). Potter’s reading of Peirce’s esthetics, therefore, resorts to a transcendental argument. For “the recognition of the *summum bonum* is a question of comparing experience with the transcendental condition of such an ultimate, namely, that it is such that it can be pursued in any and every circumstance” (51).

In Chapters 4 and 5 I will propose an alternative to Potter’s interpretation by giving an account of normative esthetics as a theory of self-control. I will argue that the adoption of the *summum bonum* as an ideal of conduct is conditioned only by its recognition because the recognition of the *summum bonum* takes place through a *deliberate* process of habituation. One does not first know the *summum bonum* and then make it “one’s own” through the adoption of it as an ideal for the formation of a habit of conduct. The *summum bonum* is precisely “that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*” (EP2:343). This process is a process of habituation. That is, to know the *summum bonum* is *already* to adopt it as a possible ideal of conduct through the deliberate formation of a habit of self-control. As Peirce states in 1906, “this ideal, by modifying the rules of self-control modifies action, and so experience too” (CP 5.402n3). In Chapters 4 and 5 I will answer the objection that esthetics is prenormative by giving an account of the esthetic recognition of the *summum bonum* as a conscious and thus deliberately controlled process of habituation. In this way, I hope to demonstrate that for Peirce ethically and logically normative principles are grounded in a world of phenomenal experience through the mediation of esthetics, without collapsing either ethics or logic into hedonism or psychologism.



## B. Three Views of Normative Science

### 1. Peirce's perennial classification of the sciences

Before proceeding to Chapter 1, I would like to situate my project in a wider context. The problem of the normativity of aesthetics was forced on Peirce by his classification of the sciences. Peirce followed Comte in classifying the sciences according to the relations of principle-dependence among them. According to this classificatory scheme, sciences are ordered by their degree of abstractness. Higher (that is, more abstract) sciences supply lower (that is, less abstract) sciences with principles, while these lower sciences in turn supply higher sciences with facts to be schematized. In the discussion that follows I will consider the place of normative science in Peirce's perennial classification of the sciences. I then will conclude this introduction by distinguishing among three views of normative science according to the different relations of principle-dependence obtaining among normative science and the sciences above and below it in this classification.

As just was noted, under Peirce's Comtean classificatory scheme sciences are ordered according to the degree of generality of their various modes of observation. Peirce explains: "It turns out that in most cases the divisions are trichotomic; the First of the three members relating to universal elements or laws, the Second arranging classes of forms and seeking to bring them under universal laws, the Third going into the utmost detail, describing individual phenomena and endeavoring to explain them" (EP2:258). Not surprisingly, then, his perennial classification contains three main divisions: theoretical science (also called the science of discovery), the sciences of review, and practical science. Since Peirce's efforts at classifying the sciences were focused predominately on the first division, theoretical science, and this is the division to which normative science belongs, I will limit my discussion at the present time to theoretical science.

Theoretical science divides into three parts. Its first part is mathematics. Peirce describes mathematics in his Harvard Lectures as a purely “Conditional or Hypothetical Science” (EP2:144). Mathematics does not observe the world as it actually is, or even as it ought to be or just might be. It is limited to the study of what can be, of what is logically possible, if not in this world under present conditions, then in some hypothetical world. As the most abstract theoretical science mathematics supplies principles to every other science, while being dependent on no other science for principles.

The second part of theoretical science is philosophy. Philosophy, or as Peirce also calls it, cenoscopy, is quite literally the study of *common* experience (hence, the name ceno-scopy). On the one hand, philosophy depends on mathematics for principles inasmuch as its description of common experience must conform to what is hypothetically possible; at the same time, it transcends mathematics inasmuch as its description of *common* experience must also conform to the positive fact of experience. Philosophy itself is divided into three branches: phenomenology, normative science, and metaphysics. All three sciences study common experience, but, as with the divisions among all sciences in the perennial classification, phenomenology, normative science, and metaphysics are distinguished according to the generality of their different modes of observation. Phenomenology describes, in its categorial structure, the positive fact of what appears, or even just *seems*, to be the case (CP 2.197; cf. EP2:147), normative science studies what *ought to be* case, and metaphysics studies what *would be* the case if what is *actually* the case now were carried out to its logical conclusion.

Given that phenomenology is the only science besides mathematics upon which normative science depends for principles, it will be useful to say more about Peirce’s understanding of this branch of philosophy. The following account of phenomenology is offered

in a manuscript from 1904: “the science of Phenomenology asserts that everyman who is sufficiently intelligent to testify to the matter at all will testify that whatever is at any time before his mind has certain features which it describes, and that it is not possible to think these features are not there in what is before our mind” (MS 693a.114–16). The phenomenological method involves three steps: “What phenomenology does is to distinguish certain very general elements of phenomena, render them distinct, and study their possible modes” (MS 693a.118). If we attend to the world only as it appears to us, bracketing for the time being any consideration of what *ought* to be the case or how the world *actually* is, we find that it invariably exhibits three features. First, it exhibits a simple positive presence, and this simple positive presence that is an irreducible feature of all positive experience corresponds to the category of Firstness (the psychological analogue of which is feeling). Second, there is an element of resistance, of reaction, which corresponds to the category of Secondness (the psychological analogue of which is struggle). Third, we find an element of generality or continuity, of mediation, and this feature of positive experience corresponds to the category Thirdness (the psychological analogue of which is habit or law). Every phenomenon exhibits these three categories, even if only degenerately.

The rhetorical advantage of a phenomenological derivation of the universal categories should be clear. A derivation of the categories through formal logic would be all but impossible for someone not trained in mathematics and the logic of relatives to follow. Similarly, Peirce’s demonstration of his three categories through cosmology (for instance, in the 1892 Monist Series) or the special sciences (first instance, in “A Guess at the Riddle”) largely rests on special experience. By contrast, his phenomenological derivation of the universal categories requires us “simply to open our mental eyes and look well at the phenomenon and say what are the

characteristics that are never wanting in it” (EP2:147). This is because the phenomenologist performs experiments that anyone is capable of repeating at anytime. Peirce explains: “Understand me well. My appeal is to observation,—observation that each of you must make for himself. The question is what the *phenomenon* is. We make no vain pretense of going beneath phenomena. We merely ask, What is the content of the Percept? Everybody should be competent to answer that of himself” (EP2:154).

As a result, phenomenology ultimately appeals to the authority of perceptual judgment. The premises in a perceptual judgment are percepts, which are forced upon us through a process of which we are too little conscious to control. Peirce illustrates the *practical* indubitability that the perceptual judgment carries through the following example: “that any man should have a percept similar to mine and should ask himself the question whether this percept be *red*, which would imply that he had already judged *some* percept to be red, and that he should, upon careful attention to this percept, pronounce it to be decidedly and clearly *not* red, when I judge it to be prominently red, *that* I cannot comprehend at all” (CP 5.186). Of course, perceptual judgments are often wrong, such as when the object that I perceive as red turns out to be some other color. However, what I cannot conceive of or comprehend ever doubting in the perceptual judgment is the appearance *qua* appearance—in this example, the *mere appearance* of the object as red. Phenomenology describes the categorial structure of this appearance.

The facts of phenomenology thus carry with them a sort of practical indubitability. It is of course logically possible that the world could appear in its categorial structure otherwise than it does, and, in fact, we will see that an important task of normative science is to increase the control that is exercised over perceptual judgment by studying the different forms of esthetic, ethical, and logical control; however, it is not presently conceivable to us that the world could

appear otherwise than as having three invariable features: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. It is in this sense that Peirce's phenomenology offers an abduction of three universal categories rather than a logical or transcendental deduction of them. These categories are not universal because they are *a priori* necessary conditions for all possible experience. They are universal because they are invariable features of "whatever is before our minds in any sense," of what appears at "every hour and every minute" (CP 8.265; 1.284). Once again, I have devoted so much space here to phenomenology because after mathematics it is the only science upon which normative science depends for principles. Through this dissertation, I hope to resolve certain issues in Peirce's theory of normative science, specifically the problem of the grounding of ethics and logic in esthetic experience, by paying closer attention to the principle-dependence of normative science on phenomenology.

Finally, the third division of theoretical science is special science, or idioscopy. Idioscopy is distinguished from cenoscopy because it observes special experience, experience that is observable only with the aid of special instruments, rather than experience that is common to everyone. It is divided into only two branches: physics and psychics (which encompasses psychology). This dissertation will be concerned with the special sciences only to the extent that psychologism is marked by a failure to respect the distinction between logic, or the study of how we ought to think, and psychology, or the study of how we actually do think. In no way is logic limited by how we actually think; rather, it tells us how we ought to think "wherever the results of phenomenology hold."

## 2. Three views of normative science

One major obstacle confronting any interpretation of Peirce's theory of normative science is that what Peirce wrote on normative science is fragmentary and incomplete. This leads

Murphey at one point to dismiss Peirce's theory of normative science, along with his phenomenology, as "an insignificant sleight of hand." As a way of disentangling the many disparate threads running through Peirce's work on the problem of normativity, it will be useful to distinguish among three views of normative science. In the supplemental syllabus for his 1903 Lowell Lectures, Peirce distinguishes among three parts of normative science: a physiological part, a classificatory part, and methodeutic (MS 478.40–42a).<sup>5</sup> This division supports three distinct, though not necessarily incompatible, views of normative science. Normative science may be conceived either as a physiology of the *summum bonum*, as a classificatory science of good and bad, or as a methodeutic of self-control.

Furthermore, each view of normative science privileges a different relation of principle-dependence between normative science and the sciences above or below it in the perennial classification. First, the conception of normative science as a physiology of the *summum bonum* privileges the standpoint of the principle-dependence of normative science on phenomenology. On this account, normative science studies the laws, or ultimate purposes, governing the relation between phenomena and their proper ends (cf. EP2:197). Peirce advances this view in his fifth Harvard lecture: "there is a most intimate and essential element of normative science which is still *more* proper to it, and that is its *peculiar appreciations*, to which nothing at all in phenomena, in themselves, corresponds. These appreciations relate to the conformity of phenomena *to ends* which are not immanent within those phenomena" (EP2:199, emphasis is Peirce's). More specifically, "esthetics considers those things whose ends are to embody

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that Potter, along with many other commentators on Peirce's theory of normative science, completely overlooks this division of the normative sciences, and normative science as a whole, into three parts. It will become apparent in the course of this dissertation that this marks a serious oversight. Kent is one of the few commentators who pays close attention to the division of normative science into a physiological part, a classificatory part, and methodeutic, with normative esthetics being identified predominately with physiology, ethics with classificatory science, and logic with methodeutic.

qualities of feeling, ethics those things whose ends lie in action, and logic those things whose end is to represent something” (EP2:200). Or as Peirce distinguishes among the three normative sciences in MS 693, esthetics is “the science of the general conditions of a form’s being beautiful,”<sup>6</sup> ethics is the science of the general conditions of an “action’s being well-purposed, or virtuous,” and logic “studies the conditions of truth, or that kind of excellence which may or may not belong to objects considered as representing real objects” (MS 693.126–32).

This account of normative science as the study of the ends or purposes governing phenomena—as a physiological study of the *summum bonum*—speaks both to the principle-dependence of normative science on phenomenology as well as to an application of phenomenological principles in normative science that transcends phenomenology. On the one hand, the hypotheses of normative science, and its reasonings about these hypotheses, must conform to the categorial structure that all phenomena have, as disclosed through phenomenology. As Peirce explains with reference to esthetics in MS 693, esthetics “has to define [the beautiful] not at all with reference to its pleasing A, B, or C, but in terms of these universal elements of experience that have been brought to light by phenomenology” (MS 693.128). It is for this reason that its hypotheses are not *purely* ideal, as the hypotheses of mathematics are. At the same time, normative science goes beyond phenomenology in that it studies “the conformity of phenomena *to ends* which are not immanent within those phenomena” (EP2:199).

Yet normative science is not only, or even primarily for that matter, a physiology of the

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<sup>6</sup> Peirce’s characterization in this manuscript of the end studied by esthetics as the beautiful is at odds with his argument in other texts, including the “Minute Logic” and the 1903 Harvard Lectures, that the esthetically good should not be limited to the beautiful (cf. CP 1.575). The problem of what the esthetically good is will be addressed in subsequent chapters, but is irrelevant for the present discussion. What matters is that on one account normative science is the study of the ends governing phenomena, whatever these ends may be, and that this view of normative science privileges its principle-dependence on phenomenology.

*summum bonum*. It is also a classificatory science. This second view privileges a standpoint immanent to normative science itself. Peirce offers the following account of normative science in his second Harvard lecture: “We may say roughly that a normative science is the research into the theory of the distinction between what is good and what is bad; in the realm of cognition, in the realm of action, and in the realm of feeling, this theory being founded upon certain matters of fact that are open to the daily and hourly observation of every man and woman” (EP2:142). Normative science is conceived here by Peirce as distinguishing between good and bad ends “in regard to representations of truth, *Ethics* in regard to efforts of will, and *Esthetics* in objects considered simply in their presentation” (142–43). By contrast, phenomenology, as we have seen, is “a science that does *not* draw any distinction of good and bad in any sense whatever, but just contemplates phenomena as they are” (143).

Seeing as normative science is “marked off” from phenomenology by what Peirce in one manuscript calls its “emphatic dualism” (MS 326.17a), it should come as no surprise that it is principally a classificatory science. Moreover, to the extent that normative science is conceived through its classificatory part it is principally ethical. But this does not mean that esthetics and logic are not also classificatory or that the only function of normative science as a whole is classificatory. In fact, Peirce argues in his 1903 Syllabus that the view of normative science as a classificatory science, even though it privileges a point of view immanent to normative science itself, also “exaggerates the place occupied by these ideas in these sciences, which is a very eminent place in Ethics, but is less so in Logic, and ought to be quite subordinate in Esthetics” (MS 478.40a). He later argues in a manuscript from 1905 that “the dualistic character of the normative sciences must not be exaggerated. It is not that they are occupied with nothing else, but that this sort of distinction occurs in these sciences at all which distinguishes them from all



other sciences” (MS 1334.36a).

While not precluding the possibility for a normative science of esthetics, this view of normative science as a classificatory science nonetheless contributes to Peirce’s reservations over the normativity of esthetics by reinforcing the objection, discussed briefly above, that esthetics is prenormative. As Peirce observes in a draft for his Harvard Lectures: “There is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment. It is something superadded to the pure esthetic” (MS 310.11–12). This consideration leads him in 1905 to propose that esthetics is either prenormative, or to the extent that it is normative at all, it “can be nothing but a branch of ethics” (MS 1334.36a). This issue will be explored further in Chapter 3. I mention it at this point only to raise the possibility that the first two views of normative science, as a physiology of the *summum bonum* and as a classificatory science of good and bad ends, might be incompatible. My position will not be that they actually are incompatible; however, the appearance of incompatibility does underscore the need for a careful study of the relationship between normative science and phenomenology.

Finally, normative science is a methodeutic of self-control. Whereas the first view of normative science as a physiology of the *summum bonum* privileges the point of view of its principle-dependence on phenomenology, and the second view of normative science as a classificatory science of good and bad privileges a point of view immanent to normative science itself, this third view of normative science as a methodeutic of self-control conceives of it from the standpoint of the principle-dependence of lower sciences on normative science. In MS 478 Peirce defines methodeutic as “a study of the principles that govern the production of [possible good and bad] forms” (MS 478.42a). This account of methodeutic is consistent with Peirce’s analysis of normative science as a theory of habit formation in his Harvard Lectures from earlier

in 1903. First, as was discussed above, normative science is defined through its principle-dependence on phenomenology as the study of the lawful relation between phenomena and ends not immanent in them. However, normative science is not just interested in the mere conformity between phenomena and their ends. Rather, it studies the process through which this happens and, more importantly, the conditions under which this process becomes deliberately controlled. Thus, to the extent that normative science supplies principles to lower sciences, it is a theory of self-control; that is, it studies the conditions for the exercise of control over the formation of habits of feeling, action, and thought.

“The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” further develops this view of normative science as a theory of self-control. First, Peirce defines logic as a “theory of deliberate thinking.” He then goes on to discuss what this view entails: “To say that any thinking is deliberate is to imply that it is controlled with a view to making it conform to a purpose or ideal” (EP2:376). Since thinking is a kind of activity, normative logic, as the theory of the deliberate control of thought, rests on normative ethics, or practics (as it is called here), which is the theory of the deliberate control of action: “The present writer takes the theory of the control of conduct, and of action in general, so as to conform to an ideal, as being the midnormative science” (EP2:377). Finally, both normative logic and ethics rest on the theory of the deliberate control of feeling, or normative esthetics: “If conduct is to be thoroughly deliberate, the ideal must be a habit of feeling which has 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 is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*” (EP2:377–78).

In conclusion, on this third interpretation, normative science is a *methodeutic* of self-control. Conduct conforms to its proper ends through a process of habituation, and normative

science studies the conditions for exercising deliberate control over the formation and modification of habits of feeling, action, and thought. Put differently, normative logic is the theory of deliberately controlled thinking, normative ethics (or practices) is the theory of deliberately controlled action, and normative esthetics is the theory of deliberately controlled feeling.

## **Chapter I. Peirce's Refutation of Hedonism and its Implications for the Classification of Esthetics as a Normative Science**

### A. Introduction: Framing the Problem of the Normativity of Esthetics

Although Peirce was introduced to philosophy through Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, it was not until after 1900 that the normativity of esthetics became a problem for his classification of the sciences. He first publicly recognized the theoretical and normative nature of esthetics in his 1903 Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism. At the same time, he continued to express reservations over the classification of esthetics as a normative science in both published and unpublished versions of these lectures as well as in his Lowell Lectures from later in the same year. Thus, even after classifying esthetics as a branch of normative science, the normativity of esthetics remained, and very much would continue to remain, an open and complicated problem for his classification of the sciences.

Peirce's reservations over the classification of esthetics as a normative science were focused not so much on the normativity of esthetics *per se* as on its implications for ethics and logic under his Comtean classificatory scheme. Specifically, he worried that neither ethics nor logic could be made to depend on esthetics for principles without collapsing both sciences into hedonism. In this chapter I will examine the implications of Peirce's analysis and refutation of hedonism for the problem of the normativity of esthetics. I will begin with an overview of the history of Peirce's views on esthetics. I will then place the objection from the threat of hedonism in the context of other objections to normative esthetics. My position is that a careful consideration of hedonism is essential for a proper understanding of Peirce's esthetics, and that the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics has not been adequately explained because this issue either has been overlooked or, when acknowledged, underappreciated.

## 1. An overview of Peirce's esthetics

Peirce gives a concise history of his views on esthetics in his fifth Harvard Lecture: “As for esthetics, although the first year of my study of philosophy was devoted to this branch exclusively, yet I have since then so completely neglected it that I do not feel entitled to have any confident opinions about it. I am inclined to think that there is such a normative science; but I feel by no means sure even of that” (EP2:200). The development of Peirce's esthetics, then, may be divided into three stages: first, from 1855–57 he devoted himself “exclusively” to the study of esthetics following his introduction to philosophy through Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* (W1:2, 10–12; cf. EP2:527n6); second, from around 1858 to 1902 he “completely neglected” esthetics; finally, around 1902 Peirce recommitted himself to its study when the normativity of esthetics emerged as a problem for his classification of the sciences. This dissertation will be concerned primarily with the third stage in the evolution of Peirce's esthetics. Again, his relationship to esthetics after 1902 is marked by a strong ambivalence. On the one hand, Peirce acknowledges his unfitness for the study of esthetics after neglecting it for several decades.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the problem of the normativity of esthetics, beyond raising just a narrow classificatory problem, would have such far-reaching consequences for his entire philosophical system that it became impossible for him simply to ignore it. I would now like to comment on all three stages in the development of Peirce's esthetics.

Two early manuscripts provide at least some context, however limited, for understanding Schiller's influence on Peirce. First, in an early biographical text dated from 1859–60, Peirce notes that in 1855 he “read Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* and began the study of Kant (W1:2).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In one manuscript Peirce claims that Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* is the only philosophical text he had ever read on the subject. While this remark no doubt exaggerates his neglect of esthetics, it provides some context for the sentiment he expresses in 1903 about not feeling “entitled to have any confident opinions about [esthetics].”

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, Peirce has little to say about Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and what he does have to say about it is

The fact that he encountered Kant only after reading Schiller is significant and will require more attention at a later point. Second, in 1957 Peirce composed a short exegetical essay on a line from the *Aesthetic Letters*, “The Sense of Beauty never furthered the Performance of a single Act of Duty.” This essay is valuable as an early reflection on the relationship between esthetics and ethics. Peirce follows Schiller in concluding that “beauty is in the highest degree fruitful with respect to knowledge and morality.” This idea is explained with the aid of an analogy: “It may be compared to sleep. Sleep, like beauty, puts us in a state of ability to do our duty, but it does not further the performance of it. Sleep is unlike beauty, inasmuch as the latter is an active and the former is a passive state” (W1:12). Peirce then concludes the essay by stating that “Schiller seems to have said everything which can be said [on the subject], and it is difficult to repeat his thoughts, without the splendid language in which he has clothed them recurring to and occupying the mind.”<sup>9</sup>

Schiller argues in his Third Letter that our moral nature can only be realized through “a third character, which might prepare the way for a transition from the rule of mere force to the rule of law, and which, without in any way impeding the development of moral character, might on the contrary serve as a pledge in the sensible world of a morality as yet unseen” (Schiller III.3). This third character is beauty. Beauty thus performs a vital function in his philosophical system by mediating between our sensuous and moral natures. In this regard, Schiller departs significantly from Kant’s aesthetics, in spite of the latter’s influence on him. According to the

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dismissive at best.

<sup>9</sup> Peirce again comments on Schiller’s style much later in 1913: “It was Schiller’s *Aesthetische Briefe*, which made a deep impression upon me. I confess that few of Schiller’s own productions overwhelm me with a sense of their beauty; but I think that, owing to effects of habituation, too much theory, and other accidental causes, in great parts of the country, German’s feeling have become generally blunted to certain elements, while mine have been blunted to others, so that a difference in the appreciation of particular kinds of work does not at all prove that the idea of beauty in general is so essentially different in the two minds that the analysis of its nature in one need be false for the other. But it must be confessed that there is very little of the artist in my make-up; and I detest my own style quite as much as the reader is likely to do; for when I write I am so occupied with trying to get what I think exactly conveyed that I can attend to nothing else” (MS 683.17-19).

*Critique of Judgment*, aesthetic judgment merely reflects upon the subjective conditions for human understanding. While Kant concedes in one appendix that the sense of beauty may be useful for reinforcing the morally good, it is not “through Beauty that man makes his way to Freedom” (Schiller II.5). But this is precisely what Schiller, under the influence of the *Critique of Judgment*, asserts in his *Aesthetic Letters*. After 1900 normative esthetics will fulfill an analogous function in Peirce’s classification of the sciences by mediating between phenomenology, on the one side, and ethics and logic, on the other side. Thus, Schiller’s mark can be seen on Peirce’s mature esthetics even after his years of neglect of this early but important influence.

Following his introduction to philosophy through Schiller, Peirce, again by his own admission, “completely neglected” esthetics for the next forty or so years. In fact, as alluded to above, he even claims in 1913 that Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters* was “the only book I ever read on the subject” (MS 683.17). To the extent that the study of esthetics commanded his attention at all, it was as a practical science or art rather than as a theoretical science. (For example, even though he allegedly did not read another book on esthetics after the *Aesthetic Letters*, in a crossed out line from MS 683 Peirce nonetheless claims to have cultivated a “keen sense of beauty” (MS 683.17).

It was not until after 1900 that Peirce finally recommitted himself to the study of esthetics. According to autobiographical remarks in the 1903 Harvard Lectures, this was precipitated by the classification of ethics as a normative science. Ethics also had been neglected by Peirce before 1900, even if not to the same extent as esthetics. Although Peirce began to rethink the place of ethics in his classification of the sciences much earlier than he would the place of esthetics, Kent notes that ethics was still classified as a practical science in

classifications from 1892 (cf. MS 1336.2–3), 1895 (cf. MS 12.4), and 1898 (cf. EP2:36). Peirce even expresses reservations over the normativity of ethics as late as the “Minute Logic” (1902). He comments the following year in the Harvard Lectures that he was able to accept the normativity of ethics only after taking “refuge in the idea that there was no science of esthetics” (EP2:189). As was argued above, Peirce most of all was worried by the ramifications of the classification of esthetics as a normative science for ethics and logic under his Comtean classificatory scheme.

At the same time, even if initially hardening his stance against the classification of esthetics as a normative science, Peirce’s work on esthetics was also instrumental in finally placing the question of the normativity of esthetics front and center as a problem for his classification of the science. Not long after Peirce took “refuge in the idea that there was no science of esthetics,” he would find himself forced to acknowledge both the normativity of esthetics and the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on it, at least as formal requirements of his classification scheme.

Yet even after esthetics formally was classified as a branch of normative science, Peirce continued to have doubts about its normativity. To cite a few of the more important examples, in the 1903 Harvard Lectures Peirce is still “by no means sure” that esthetics is a normative science (EP2:200). Similarly, he comments in a draft for the syllabus supplementing his Lowell Lectures from later the same year that “whether there is a science of esthetics separate from ethics is [a] question” (MS 478.2a).<sup>10</sup> This issue is raised again in the Lowell Lectures themselves:

As I conceive the matter, [the moralist] has to refer to the esthetician whose business it is to say what is the state of things which is most admirable in itself regardless of any ulterior reason. So, then, we appeal to the esthete to tell us what it is that is admirable

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<sup>10</sup> This statement is open to another interpretation. Peirce might wish to collapse the study of esthetics into ethics (cf. CP 2.198). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, however, this interpretation is possibly even more problematic for the classification of esthetics as a normative science.



without any reason for being admirable beyond its inherent character... If he replies that it consists in a certain quality of feeling, a certain *bliss*, I for one decline altogether to accept this answer as sufficient... I cannot without strenuous proof admit that any particular quality of feeling is admirable without a reason. For it is too revolting to be believed unless one is forced to believe it (EP2:253).<sup>11</sup>

Even as late as 1911 Peirce expresses doubts over the normativity of esthetics in a draft for “A Sketch of Logical Critic”: “Logic and ethics, however, seem to me to call for a third science to fulfill their ideas, whether this third can be identified with esthetics or not” (MS 673.13).

Although by 1911 Peirce was convinced that logic and ethics must be grounded in a third science, from which they receive principles, he was not yet convinced that this third normative science is esthetics.

However, this overview of the development of Peirce’s esthetics is incomplete in one important respect. Even though he had neglected the theoretical study of esthetics for much of his life, it should not be assumed that Peirce was similarly neglectful of esthetics as a practical science or art. As I alluded to earlier, by all accounts he expended a great deal of time and energy in the cultivation of an esthetic attitude, and even as he concedes his unfitness for the theoretical study of esthetics, he frequently appeals to the authority of his own esthetic experience to answer esthetic questions. Consider, for example, his discussion of pleasure and pain from the fourth Harvard lecture:

I am unable to recognize with confidence any quality of feeling common to all *pains*; and if I cannot I am sure it cannot be an easy thing for anybody. For I have gone through a systematic course of training in recognizing my feelings. I have worked with intensity for so many hours a day every day for long years to train myself to this; and it is a training which I would recommend to all of you (EP2:189–90).

He later adds: “It is esthetic enjoyment which concerns us; and ignorant as I am of Art, I have a fair share of capacity for esthetic enjoyment...” (EP2:190; cf. 683.17). Similarly, Peirce claimed to have spent many years, and much money, fine-tuning a palate for Bordeaux wine in order to

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<sup>11</sup> See also, EP2:343, 388 as well as CP 5.402n2? and MS 873.11a.

improve his faculties of observation and discrimination (cf. Kent 150). Therefore, while there is no question that he neglected the theoretical study of esthetics for much of his life, from another perspective Peirce also at times overstates his unfitness for it.

## 2. Objections to the classification of esthetics as a normative science

Peirce's doubts over the normativity of esthetics initially were focused on the threat of hedonism. But before examining this threat any further, I would like to place the objection from the threat of hedonism in the context of two other objections to the classification of esthetics as a normative science. The first objection deals with the classification of esthetics as a theoretical science. As we have seen, normative science is a branch of theoretical science in Peirce's perennial classification. It is a theory of the ends to which conduct *ought* to conform rather than an art of living. The first objection to the classification of esthetics as a normative science argues that esthetics cannot be normative because it is a practical rather than a theoretical science. Peirce's neglect of esthetics following his introduction to philosophy through Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* largely was underwritten by this argument.

The second objection to the normativity of esthetics focuses specifically on the classification of esthetics as a *normative* science. It concedes the theoretical nature of esthetics, but argues that esthetics is prenormative rather than normative. This objection consists of two premises. The first premise states that the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative. To begin with, in the "Minute Logic" Peirce conceives of normative science as "the analysis of the attainment of something of which purpose is an essential ingredient" (CP 1.575). On this account, it cannot be a theory of the *summum bonum*, as is often supposed. Peirce explains: "Now it does not seem to me that [What is good?] is a normative question: it is pre-normative...to ask what is good, not as a means, but in itself; not for a reason, but back of every

reason, is a more fundamental investigation. It is to ask a question which every normative science supposes to be already answered” (MS 432.4). In other words, normative science studies the conditions for the *attainment* of the highest good—“what conditions, whether they be voluntarily or involuntarily fulfilled, have to be satisfied” (MS 432.1)—rather than the highest good itself.

The second premise in the argument that esthetics is prenormative restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. Esthetics is conceived by Peirce, not just in the “Minute Logic,” but in many later manuscripts as well, as “the analysis of that which is admirable without any ulterior reason for being admirable” (MS 1334.38). However, as was established in the first premise, what “renders logic and ethics peculiarly normative is that nothing can be either logically true or morally good without a purpose to be so” (CP 1.575).<sup>12</sup> Thus, Peirce argues that there is “much justice” in the restriction of the term normative science to logic and ethics, since “a thing is beautiful or ugly quite irrespective of any purpose to be so” (1.575). This is not to say that Peirce actually adopts the position that esthetics is a prenormative science, even in the “Minute Logic.” However, he was persuaded by this argument enough to return to it on several occasions (cf. MS 310.10, MS 1334.36f).

I would like to restate both objections, by way of conclusion. The first objection, both logically and chronologically, deals with the classification of esthetics as a theoretical science. Since normative science is a theoretical science, esthetics cannot be a normative science because it is practical rather than theoretical. The second objection focuses specifically on the

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<sup>12</sup> In one undated manuscript Peirce even defines esthetics as the “theory of the unreasonably good,” which he contrasts with ethics as “the theory of the good in *actu*” and logic as “the theory of the good in signs.” This same manuscript also offers an account of normative science that is interesting for its emphasis on the principle-dependence of normative science on mathematics (the study of hypothetical worlds). Normative science is characterized as “the theory of the accord or disaccord of hypothetical states of things with ideals or conceivable ideals” (MS 326.16-17a).

classification of esthetics as a normative science. It concedes that pure esthetics is a theoretical science, but rejects its classification as a normative science on the grounds that esthetics is prenormative rather than normative. This argument consists of two premises. First, it is argued that the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative. Second, pure esthetics is limited to the theory of the *summum bonum*. Both parts of the objection raise the problem of whether the pure (that is, esthetic) theory of the *summum bonum* admits of a normative distinction between good and bad. As was observed above, this consideration partly motivates the third objection from the threat of hedonism, to which I would now like to turn. For it is the idea that pure esthetics eliminates “everything in short belonging to the opposition of ego and non-ego,” in other words, all Secondness, or duality, that leads Peirce to reject it as a ground for ethics and logic: “Now to admit this is not only to admit hedonism, which no man in his senses, and not blinded by theory or something worse, can admit, but also, having to do with the essentially Dualistic distinction of Good and Bad—which is manifestly an affair of Category the Second—it seeks the origin of this distinction in Esthetic Feeling, which belongs to Category the First” (EP2:189).

## B. Peirce’s Refutation of Hedonism

### 1. Early arguments against hedonism

In 1869 Peirce defines hedonism as the “psychological theory that man cannot act without a view to his own pleasure” (EP1:81). Many years later, in 1903, he analyzes this position as involving two premises: “*first*, that it is unthinkable that a conclusion should be drawn from any other reason than that it will be accompanied by a feeling of logicity; *second*, that if all reasoning is determined by our feeling of logicity, there can be no distinction of good and bad reasoning” (EP2:248–49). Hedonism asserts that the only principle or motive from

which we can act is a feeling of pleasure, and then infers from this that no normative distinction between good and bad can be drawn either in the realm of action or the realm of thought. It should be noted that in some contexts Peirce draws a distinction between psychologism and hedonism and restricts the latter position to the theory that we cannot *act* except from a feeling of pleasure. However, since for Peirce thinking is ultimately a species of action, I will treat hedonism, as Peirce does in many contexts, as encompassing both the moral argument that we cannot act except with a view to our own pleasure and the logical argument that we cannot think except from this same psychological principle.

It will be useful to distinguish among four distinct early arguments against hedonism: an argument from psychology, an argument from the logic of induction, an argument from the fact of belief, and an argument from rational hope. These early arguments fail, or at least are deficient, because they do not succeed in refuting hedonism without recourse to psychological facts or principles. Peirce's work on phenomenology would convince him that any refutation of hedonism must begin with a redescription of common experience. Specifically, the refutation of hedonism calls for a new phenomenology of pleasure and pain rather than the disassociation of either phenomenon from ethics and logic. However, before looking at this phenomenological argument, I would like to consider, in some detail, Peirce's early arguments against hedonism, paying special attention to why they fail.

a. The argument from psychology

The argument from psychology tries to invalidate the hedonist argument by demonstrating that it is inconsistent with certain facts of human psychology: "I do not think that the facts bear out the usual opinion [of the selfishness of man]. The immense self-sacrifices which the most willful men often make, show that willfulness is a very different thing from

selfishness” (EP1:81). Peirce proceeds to cite counterexamples that “show conclusively that men do not make their personal interests their only ones, and therefore may, at least, subordinate them to the interests of the community” (EP1:81; cf. EP1:149).

That Peirce quickly disavows this argument should come as no surprise. Not only does the appeal to psychology on which the argument rests compromise his anti-psychologism; but the argument leaves unaddressed what is perhaps the most important premise in the hedonist argument: that the determination of conduct through motives other than one’s own pleasure is psychologically impossible. To be sure, the hedonist argument partly rests on observations about human nature. But the point of these observations is primarily to reinforce a conclusion that the argument has drawn already from other principles. Hedonism establishes the fact that humans *actually* do not act except with a view to their own pleasure from the principle of the psychological impossibility of acting from motives other than pleasure. Peirce states this argument as follows in 1903: “The only motive a man can have is his own pleasure. No other is thinkable. For if a man desires to act in any way, it is because he takes pleasure in so acting. Otherwise, his action would not be voluntary and deliberate. Thus, there is but one possible motive for action that has any motive” (EP2:244; cf. EP2:166).

The argument from psychology tries to invalidate hedonism by citing examples allegedly showing that humans do actually act from motives other than pleasure. However, the facts cited in the psychological argument as counterexamples to hedonism are inconsistent with it only on the assumption that actions from motives other than pleasure are psychologically possible. But this is precisely what is denied in the hedonist argument, and nothing in the psychological argument challenges this point. To the contrary, the facts cited by the argument from psychology as evidence for the possibility of acts of genuine self-sacrifice just as easily lend

themselves to a hedonist interpretation. At best the argument demonstrates that a different interpretation of the motives from which we actually act is possible depending on how the parameters of what is psychologically possible are defined. However, nothing in the argument explains why and how these parameters should be redefined.

b. The argument from the logic of induction

I think it is fair to say that the role of the argument from psychology in Peirce's analysis of hedonism is mainly rhetorical. This is not to say that the interpretation it gives to the facts cited as counterexamples to hedonism is false. To the contrary, Peirce is convinced that acts of genuine self-sacrifice are not only possible, but that we have daily confirmation of this.

Nonetheless, no argument that rests on psychology can be of any help to logic in the refutation of hedonism. Rather, the primary function of this first argument in the discussion is to reframe the refutation of hedonism as a problem for logic rather than psychology. The argument from psychology had tried to invalidate hedonism by appealing to psychological facts showing that human beings *actually* do act from motives other than pleasure. By contrast, the argument from the logic of induction proceeds from logical rather than psychological principles or facts and is concerned with how we ought to act rather than with how we actually do act.

This second argument begins by drawing the very distinction that had been ignored by the psychological argument, between the actual performance of actions from motives other than pleasure and the *possibility* for such actions. Peirce states in 1869: "But just the revelation of the possibility of this complete self-sacrifice in man, and the belief in its saving power, will serve to redeem the logicity of all men" (EP1:81). The same distinction is drawn nearly a decade later in "The Doctrine of Chances": "Now it is not necessary for logicity that a man should himself be capable of the heroism of self-sacrifice. It is sufficient that he should recognize the

possibility of it..." (EP1:149–50; cf. CP 7.329; CE 3:41).

The conclusion that the mere possibility for acts of self-sacrifice is sufficient to redeem human logicality rests on an analysis of the logic of induction. Induction is a kind of inference that moves from parts to whole. For example, from the fact that 3/4 of the beans that have been drawn from a bag are black it can be inferred, according to the logic of induction, that the ratio of black to white beans in the bag is 3 to 1 (cf. EP1:78, EP1:146). This account of inductive validity raises a problem when applied to human inference. Human beings are finite. Yet, according to the logic of induction, for an inference to be valid, it must be repeated, or at least must be capable of being repeated, indefinitely: "we cannot say that the generality of inductions are true, but only in the long run they approximate the truth" (EP1:79). Peirce adds in "The Doctrine of Chances": "An individual inference must be either true or false, and can show no effect of probability; and, therefore, in reference to a single case considered in itself, probability can have no meaning" (EP1:147). Thus, it is only in the indefinite long run that induction approximates the truth.

How, then, can the reasoning of finite beings ever carry with it any claim to inductive validity? How can we ever hope to approximate the truth *in the long run*? This argument leads Peirce to conclude in both articles that the logic of induction necessitates the self-identification of one's interests with the interests of an indefinite community of inquirers. He explains in 1869: "He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively. The social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic" (EP1:81). As long as we act from narrow self-interest, our inferences cannot be valid. And so even if we are not actually capable of acts of self-sacrifice under present conditions, just the revelation of the possibility for self-sacrifice necessitates our adoption of this social principle as a principle for the



determination of conduct.

While this argument, because it rests on logical rather than psychological principles, is more successful than the first one, in other respects it is just as flawed, and for some of the same reasons. What I am calling the argument from psychology had failed because it assumes, rather than proves, the very thing that is denied in the hedonist argument: the possibility for the determination of conduct through motives other than pleasure. The argument from the logic of induction depends on the same assumption inasmuch as it never establishes the fact of the revelation of the possibility of self-sacrifice, but merely draws out an important consequence of it. At the same time, it reasons from this assumption to a different conclusion, and this marks an important difference between the two arguments. The argument from psychology had required this assumption to justify its interpretation of psychological facts as showing that we *actually* do act from principles of self-sacrifice. By contrast, the argument from the logic of induction, as we have seen, rests on logical rather than psychological principles, and logical principles, even at this early date, are normative for Peirce. They tell us how we *ought* to, rather than how we *actually* do, reason. Therefore, in contrast to the argument from psychology, the argument from the logic of induction reasons from the assumption of the possibility for acts of self-sacrifice to the conclusion that we *ought* to act from such a principle rather than that we actually do.

Nonetheless, even though this second argument improves on the first one, it still, once again, assumes too much. It proves that hedonism is inconsistent with the logic of induction because it undermines the grounds for inductive validity. However, this argument will not convince anyone who already denies the possibility for acts of self-sacrifice, as the hedonist does. As long as this premise goes unchallenged, all the argument from the logic induction proves is that human conduct is irredeemably illogical according to the hedonist argument, which

is a consequence that the hedonist is more than prepared to accept.

In addition, the argument from the logic of induction makes another crucial assumption. Even if the possibility for self-sacrifice can be established, it still would remain to be demonstrated that the community of inquirers with which our interests are identified is in fact *indefinite*. However, as Peirce concedes in both 1869 and 1878, this assumption is “entirely unsupported by reason” (EP1:82). He explains: “There cannot be a scintilla of evidence to show that at some time all living beings shall not be annihilated at once, and that forever after there shall be throughout the universe any intelligence whatever” (EP1:82). The third argument against hedonism, what I am calling the argument from rational hope, addresses this issue.

c. The argument from rational hope

The argument from the logic of induction had succeeded in establishing the social principle of self-sacrifice as a requirement of the logic of induction, at least when applied to finite beings. However, it failed to establish that we can ever realistically adopt this social principle. In this regard, the argument from the logic of induction fails both as a refutation of hedonism and on its own terms. First, it fails to address the key premise in the hedonist argument concerning the impossibility of acts of self-sacrifice. Second, even if this point is conceded, it still remains to be shown that the community with which we ought to identify our interests is in fact indefinite. Even if human beings are capable of self-sacrifice, there is no guarantee that our interests can be made unlimited by acting from this principle. The argument from the logic of induction thus rests on two assumptions, neither of which can be justified through logic alone. It makes a normative claim but provides no grounding for this claim in possible experience.

At the same time, Peirce observes “that even though no reason can be given for the

assumption that the community of inquirers to which we belong is indefinite,” it is also the case that “there can be no reason against it” (EP1:150). The third argument against hedonism, what I am calling the argument from rational hope, proceeds from this idea. It may be that belief in the possibility of self-sacrifice and the indefiniteness of inquiry is futile; even so, we have a rational interest in both, since, without the identification of our finite interests with the interests of an indefinite community, human inquiry would be rendered invalid from the start. Thus, Peirce observes that “we are in the condition of a man in a life and death struggle; if he have not sufficient strength, it is wholly indifferent to him how he acts, so that the only assumption upon which he can act rationally is the hope of success” (EP1:81).

The third argument, then, defends as a regulative principle required for all human inquiry what had been assumed in the first two arguments—the possibility for self-sacrifice. Human inquiry cannot go forward without the cultivation of certain social sentiments: “interest in an indefinite community, recognition of the possibility of this interest being made supreme, and hope in the unlimited continuance of intellectual activity.” The third argument thus reaches roughly the same conclusion as the argument from the logic of induction, but it asserts this conclusion only as a rational hope. That is, the hedonist position is rejected not because it is demonstrably false but because it closes off future inquiry. It may very well be the case that we cannot act except with a view to our own pleasure. However, this is not a position that we can adopt as human inquirers without involving ourselves in a performative contradiction.

d. The argument from the nature of belief.

So far Peirce’s arguments against hedonism from “Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic” (1869) have not been differentiated in any respect from his arguments from “The Doctrine of Chances” (1878). However, as close as the two articles are, “The Doctrine of

Chances” does contain an important variation on what I have called the argument from the logic of induction that reflects the influence of Peirce’s theory of inquiry on his logic. The argument from the logic of induction had tried to refute hedonism by establishing the principle of self-sacrifice as a requirement of logic. Induction is a form of probable reasoning, and such reasoning, to be valid, must be capable of being repeated indefinitely. But human beings are finite. Therefore, the logicity of human reasoning can be redeemed only through the identification of our interests with the interests of an indefinite community of inquirers: “He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively. The social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic” (EP1:81). This, in outline, is the second argument against hedonism.

However, in “The Doctrine of Chances” Peirce reaches a subtly different conclusion through the same argument: that logic is rooted in the social principle:

We are thus landed in the same difficulty as before, and I can see but one solution of it. It seems to me that we are driven to this, that logicity inexorably requires that our interests shall *not* be limited. They must not stop at our own fate, but must embrace the whole community. This community, again, must not be limited, but must extend to all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation. It must reach, however vaguely, beyond this geological epoch, beyond all bounds. He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is, as it seems to me, illogical in all his inferences, collectively. Logic is rooted in the social principle (EP1:149).

This idea is developed in the next paper in the series, “The Probability of Induction,” which argues that the principle that “belief tends to fix itself” is a presupposition with which logic begins: “that the rule of induction will hold good in the long run may be deduced from the principle that reality is only the object of the final opinion to which sufficient investigation would lead. That belief gradually tends to fix itself under the influence of inquiry is, indeed, one of the facts with which logic sets out” (EP1:169). This argument should be placed in the context

of Peirce's theory of inquiry as presented in "The Fixation of Belief."

In "The Fixation of Belief" inquiry is conceived as a struggle between doubt and belief, with belief being defined as a preparedness or readiness to act and doubt being defined negatively as the agitation of belief. Inquiry begins when "the irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief" (EP1:114), and terminates with the settlement of opinion, that is, the fixation of belief: "With the doubt, therefore, the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt it ends. Hence, the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion" (EP1:114–15). It is at this point in the article that Peirce famously distinguishes among four methods for fixing belief: the method of tenacity, the method of authority, the *a priori* method, and the scientific method. The scientific method, which is an application of the logic of induction, is defended as the only method for the fixation of belief that is capable of fixing belief in the long run.

The first three arguments had failed to refute the premise in the hedonist argument that the determination of conduct through motives other than pleasure is psychologically impossible. The first two arguments had assumed the psychological possibility of acts of self-sacrifice, while the third argument had defended it as a regulative ideal necessary for the advancement of human inquiry. By contrast, what I am calling the argument from the fact of belief tries to establish, from the fact that "belief gradually tends to fix itself under the influence of inquiry," that acts of self-sacrifice are not just psychologically possible. They are psychologically necessary.

The crucial point in this argument is that the nature of belief is intrinsically social. The social nature of belief can be observed in how the method of authority evolves from the method of tenacity: "This method of fixing belief, which may be called the method of tenacity, will be unable to hold its ground in practice. The social impulse is against it.... This conception, that another man's thought or sentiment may be equivalent to one's own, is a distinctly new step... It

arises from an impulse too strong in man to be suppressed, without danger of destroying the human species” (EP1:116–17). The method of authority and the *a priori* method also fail because they cannot satisfy the social impulse intrinsic to our very nature as inquirers.

On this argument, hedonism is rejected as a form of the method of tenacity. Hedonism states that we cannot act except from the motive of pleasure. But this is demonstrated to be false through an analysis of the nature of belief. The method of tenacity, which tries to fix belief through the brute force of feeling alone, inevitably fails because it violates the social impulse intrinsic to belief. Beliefs fixed through this method increasingly will become unsettled as we are confronted with people who think and act differently than we do, or just through the “outward clash” of experience. For this reason, the method of tenacity is not a viable method of fixing belief over the long run, or even in the short term, because it is inconsistent with our psychological constitution as inquirers, which is social. Our social impulse as inquirers can be satisfied only by a method which refers our interests to the interests of a community of inquirers. Therefore, the scientific method is required as the one method of fixing belief that is consistent with the nature of belief and thus the conditions for human inquiry.

### 3. The failure of the early arguments

The last section distinguished among four arguments against hedonism: an argument from psychology, an argument from the logic of induction, an argument from rational hope, and an argument from the nature of belief. All four arguments fail, or are at least are deficient, because they are unable to refute hedonism without recourse to psychology. They ultimately reduce how we ought to act and think to how we actually do act and think. In this regard, they fail both on their own terms and as arguments against hedonism. Even if the majority of people act from the principle of self-sacrifice, or even just enlarged self-interest, there is no guarantee

that there will not be some people who are psychologically constituted to act from contrary principles.

That the argument from psychology fails on these grounds requires little explanation. For it concedes to hedonism the point that human conduct is wholly explainable by how we are psychologically constituted. As soon as this point is conceded, the whole argument is lost. The argument from induction improves on this first argument by shifting the focus of the discussion from the principles from which we actually do act to the principles from which we ought to act, which are normative rather than psychological. However, while this argument succeeds in proving that hedonism would render human reasoning invalid, what it does not prove, but which it rather must assume, is that the logic of induction applies to human conduct in the first place. The argument from induction had established the social principle of self-sacrifice as a requirement of the logic of induction. This argument ultimately is rejected because neither the possibility for self-sacrifice nor the necessity of human reasoning being saved through it can be established through logic alone.

The argument from rational hope asks us to adopt the social principle of self-sacrifice as a regulative ideal, even though it rests on assumptions that otherwise are unsupported by both possible experience and reason. The possibility for self-sacrifice and “belief in its saving power” are established as practical postulates without which human inquiry could not even hope to approximate truth in the long run: “We are in the condition of a man in a life and death struggle; if he have not sufficient strength, it is wholly indifferent to him how he acts, so that the only assumption upon which he can act rationally is the hope of success” (EP1:81). Though this argument succeeds in respecting the normative distinction between how we ought to act and how we actually do act, the effect of the appeal to some vague hope of success as “the only

assumption on which we can act rationally” is nonetheless psychological. For as Peirce will acknowledge in 1903, the argument assumes that the human mind is constituted in a certain way. As promising as this argument may at first appear, it suffers from the same limitations as the first two arguments. Hedonism must be refuted from normative rather than psychological principles—that is, from principles for the determination of how we ought to act rather than of how we actually do act. As of yet, Peirce still has not succeeded in explaining how we ought to act, in any sphere of conduct, without reducing how we ought to act to psychological motives and principles.

The fourth argument from the nature of belief exemplifies this failure. The argument from induction had established the social principle of self-sacrifice as a requirement of the logic of induction. By contrast, the argument from the nature of belief rests on an account of belief as a fact with which logic begins. It thus attempts to ground the social principle of self-sacrifice in the fact “that belief gradually tends to fix itself.” Even if there is no guarantee that inquiry is indefinite, we are nonetheless required by the intrinsically social nature of belief to adopt the scientific method as the only method that is capable of fixing belief in the long run. Failure to do so is not only illogical; more importantly, it is inconsistent with the conditions under which this question can ever be posed in the first place.

That Peirce would attempt to ground logic in a social impulse is surprising, to say the least, and wholly unacceptable from the standpoint of his critique of psychologism. As Hookway comments: “A first approximation to what is wrong with the 1878 argument is that it grounds a statement about what we *ought* to make the object of our reasonings, in a claim about what we naturally do aim for” (Hookway 53). Peirce raises the same objection to his early theory of inquiry in the 1903 Harvard Lectures:



I do not think it satisfactory to reduce such fundamental things to facts of psychology. For man could alter his nature, or his environment would alter it if he did not voluntarily do so, if the impulse were not what was advantageous or fitting. Why has evolution made man's mind to be so constructed? That is the question we must nowadays ask, and all attempts to ground the fundamentals of logic on psychology are seen to be essentially shallow (EP2:140).

This objection is formulated near the conclusion of the first lecture in the series, "The Maxim of Pragmatism," and the context for the objection is important. Peirce begins the lecture by stating that pragmatism is a "mere" maxim of logic rather than a maxim of speculative philosophy. He then comments that the "utility of the maxim, provided it is only true, appears in a sufficient light in the original article ["How to Make our Ideas Clear"]" (EP2:134–35).

The second half of the lecture is concerned with the question of the truth of the pragmatic maxim rather than with the question of its usefulness: "What is the *proof* that the possible practical consequences of a concept constitute the sum total of the concept? The argument upon which I rested the maxim in my original paper was that *belief* consisted mainly in being deliberately prepared to adopt the formula believed in as the guide to action...But *how do we know* that belief is nothing but the deliberate preparedness to act according to the formula believed?" (EP1:139). The 1878 Popular Science Monthly series, as we saw, had answered this question by "carrying" logic back to a psychological principle, to "an original impulse to act consistently, to have a definite intention," in other words, to fix belief, or settle opinion. It is the psychologism of this answer that Peirce is rejecting in the passage cited above.

As I have argued, Peirce's arguments against hedonism from 1869 and 1878 fail because he is unable to give an account of how we ought to conduct ourselves without recourse to a psychological principle, such as the "impulse to act consistently." These early arguments do not just fail as arguments against hedonism. More importantly, these arguments are unacceptable because they compromise Peirce's anti-psychologism.

That being said, the psychologism of Peirce's early arguments against hedonism is a symptom of an even more serious problem. The arguments from the logic of induction, rational hope, and the nature of belief all attempt to refute hedonism from logical principles by showing that logic, either as a theory of probability or a theory of inquiry, requires that humans *ought* to act from principles other than those attributed to them by hedonism, or from which they already actually act. However, the normative principles from which we allegedly ought to act cannot be accounted for through logic alone and it is at this point in the arguments—when they are called upon to give reasons for their first premises—that they fall back on psychology. What Peirce finally will conclude through his analysis of hedonism is that an account of the principle-dependence of logic and ethics on esthetics must begin with a phenomenological redescription of common experience. The phenomenological argument against hedonism, which I now would like to consider, prepares the way for this project. Phenomenology will open up the possibility for grounding logic in a world of experience without recourse to psychology. Thus, far more is at stake in Peirce's analysis of hedonism than just the refutation of this position.

#### 4. The phenomenological argument

Hedonism, again, is the psychological theory that one cannot act except with a view towards one's own pleasure (cf. EP1:81). It is a form of psychologism because it denies that we can act from principles other than the principles from which we actually act. Peirce's early arguments had tried to refute hedonism by demonstrating that there are normative principles from which we ought to act that are not reducible to the principles from which we actually do act, or even to what is psychologically possible. However, these arguments in the final analysis had failed because they were unable to ground these normative principles in a world of possible experience without recourse to psychology. Peirce's analysis of hedonism through phenomenology offers two main advantages over these early arguments. First, it succeeds as a refutation of hedonism. Second, it will allow Peirce to ground normative principles in a world of common experience without undermining his anti-psychologism. In other words, phenomenology makes it possible for Peirce to affirm the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics without collapsing either science into hedonism.

I now want to consider this phenomenological argument against hedonism. As was stated above, Peirce distinguishes between two premises in the hedonist argument: "*first*, that it is unthinkable that a conclusion should be drawn from any other reason than that it will be accompanied by a feeling of logicity; *second*, that if all reasoning is determined by our feeling of logicity, there can be no distinction of good and bad reasoning" (EP2:248–49). His analysis of hedonism through phenomenology focuses on the first premise in this argument. The reduction of the principles from which we act to a mere feeling involves two category errors. First, it reduces all higher categories to the category of Firstness. Second, it attributes to the category of Firstness an agency that is possible only through the mediation of these higher

categories. Peirce explains in “The Categories Defended”: “What they all assume to be necessary is, on the contrary, impossible. No desire can possibly desire its own gratification; no judgment can judge itself to be true; no reasoning can conclude itself to be sound” (EP2:166). He later adds: “when Sigwart tells me that in reasoning about a logical criterion I have to *rely* upon a feeling of logicity, he puts the cart before the horse in an utterly impossible way. He supposes that I first *feel* that a certain inference *would* gratify my sense of logicity and then proceed to draw it. But I beg to tell him that in no case whatever is it possible to *feel* what *would* happen. We *reason* about what *would* happen and we feel what *has* happened” (EP2:169, emphasis is Peirce’s).

The impossibility of *simple* feeling having the kind of active agency attributed to it in the hedonist argument is discussed subsequently in texts from 1905 and 1906. In 1905 Peirce states that the position of the hedonists is “preposterous, in that they make mere feelings to be active agencies, instead of being merely conscious indications of real determinations of our subconscious volitional beings” (CP 1.333). He reaches the same conclusion the following year in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences”: “A feeling is positively such as it is, regardless of aught else. It refers to nothing but itself. That which consists in feeling does not have to involve any comparison of feelings, or any synthesis of feelings. Properly speaking because a feeling knows nothing but itself, no feeling can have, or even claim, any authority” (EP2:386).

The phenomenological argument, then, refutes hedonism through an analysis of the categorial structure of common experience. Phenomena belonging to the categories of Secondness and Thirdness are not fully reducible to phenomena belonging to the category of Firstness. Likewise, phenomena belonging to the category of Firstness cannot become effective

in the world apart from the mediation of the categories of Secondness and Thirdness (reaction and law). The determination of conduct by a simple feeling is thus a phenomenological impossibility. Actions and thoughts cannot be wholly determined by mere feeling because feeling, which belongs to the category of Firstness, cannot have any real efficacy in the world except through the categories of Secondness and Thirdness. The phenomenological argument employs a quite different strategy for refuting hedonism than the arguments from 1869 and 1878. Whereas these arguments had tried to refute the hedonist argument by establishing, either as a fact of psychology or logic, what hedonism denies—namely, the possibility for the determination of conduct through principles other than the feeling of pleasure—the phenomenological argument establishes the impossibility of what hedonism affirms—namely, the determination of action of conduct through a mere feeling.

Once again, this impossibility is phenomenological rather than logical or psychological. The force of the phenomenological argument derives from the fact that it is inconceivable that the world could appear in its categorial structure otherwise than it does, at this or any time. In other words, it asserts that hedonism is inconsistent with the categorial structure of the world of experience as it “presses in upon every man during every hour of his waking life” (CP 1.577). This argument thus avoids the psychologism of the arguments from the logic of induction and the nature of belief. It does this by distinguishing between the world as it appears and the world as it is actually present to us. Phenomenology asserts nothing about the latter. It only describes the world as it appears “at any time to the mind in any way” (CP 1.186). The hedonist argument must be rejected because it asserts something about how the world actually is that does not in fact conform to the categorial structure of how the world must appear.

## C. The Implications of Peirce's Analysis of Hedonism for his Esthetics

### 1. Implications for normative science

Once again, the refutation of hedonism is not the only, or even the most important, issue at stake philosophically in Peirce's analysis of it. In fact, although hedonism commanded considerable attention from Peirce, he never took it seriously on its own terms. For example, in "The Seven Systems of Metaphysics" he dismisses hedonism as a doctrine that "no man in his senses and not blinded by theory or something worse can admit" (EP2:189). Instead, the objection from the threat of hedonism represents a reduction to absurdity of Peirce's theory of normative science. What concerns him is not so much the hedonist argument itself as the possibility that his own logic and ethics might fall prey to it through the classification of esthetics as a normative science. Therefore, the main philosophical upshot of hedonism through phenomenology lies in the implications of this argument for normative science. I would like to conclude this chapter by discussing these implications.

I have argued that the phenomenological argument succeeds, where the early arguments against hedonism had failed, because phenomenology opens up the possibility that ethically and logically normative principles might be grounded in a world of experience without recourse to psychology. The chief limitation confronting both the argument from the logic of induction and the argument from the nature of belief is that neither argument can account for its own principles without recourse to psychology. In the case of the argument from the logic of induction, the social principle of self-sacrifice cannot be justified through logic alone. Likewise, the argument from the nature of belief tries to refute hedonism by establishing the fact of belief as a presupposition of the logic of induction; but it is unable to justify this assumption except through a belief psychology. In this respect, the argument from rational hope succeeds more than the

arguments from induction and inquiry; but it also adopts a much weaker position and assumes almost as much.

By contrast, the phenomenological argument succeeds in answering the reductionism of the hedonist argument without denying experience as a source for normative principles. As Peirce explains in “Reason’s Conscience,” the normative sciences inquire into how things ought to be “wherever the results of phenomenology hold, for the realization of the end” (MS 693 126–28). Phenomenology thus grounds the normative sciences in a world of common experience by making them conform to what is phenomenologically possible—because it is inconceivable, though not hypothetically (or mathematically) impossible, that the categorial structure of experience could appear otherwise than it does—rather than to what is psychologically possible.

## 2. Implications for esthetics

Something that is assumed, but never quite stated, in the early arguments against hedonism is that the feeling of pleasure admits of no normative distinction between good and bad. Hedonism is the view that we cannot reason or act except from a feeling of pleasure, and it is assumed that the refutation of this view must involve the rejection of pleasure as a principle for the ethical or logical determination of conduct. The phenomenological argument challenges this assumption in two respects. In the first place, the most “manifestly false” fallacy involved in the hedonist argument is not that it reduces the principles from which we act to a feeling *of pleasure*. It is that it reduces these principles to a *mere* feeling, be this a feeling of pleasure or some other feeling. The argument that the only possible principle from which we can act is a feeling *of pleasure* raises a separate issue and involves a different fallacy. As stated above, the hedonist argument consists of two main premises, the first being that we cannot act or think except from a feeling of pleasure and the second being that, if all conduct is wholly determined

by feeling, then there can be no distinction between good and bad (EP2:251). The fallacy involved in the reduction of conduct to a mere feeling of pleasure concerns the second premise.

Peirce states the argument supporting it as follows:

The distinction between a good act and a bad one, if there be any such distinction, lies in the motive. But the only motive a man can have is his own pleasure. No other is thinkable. For if a man desires to act in any way, it is because he takes pleasure in so acting. Otherwise, his action would not be voluntary and deliberate. Thus, there is but one possible motive for action that has any motive; and consequently, the distinction of right and wrong, which would be a distinction between motives, does not exist (EP2:244).

The early arguments had conceded to hedonism, without much objection, this point about a feeling of pleasure not admitting of any distinction between good and bad. They had argued, instead, that pleasure is not the “only possible motive” from which we may act. The silence of these early arguments on this point is not surprising, given that Peirce himself would resort to the same argument to exclude esthetics from normative science as late as 1902 (cf. EP2:189).

The phenomenological argument challenges this assumption by drawing a crucial distinction between pleasure and satisfaction. The central part of “What Makes a Reasoning Sound?” is a phenomenological description of self-control. I passed over this section above in discussing Peirce’s phenomenological argument against hedonism because it bears more on the phenomenological redescription of esthetic feeling made possible through this argument than on the refutation of hedonism itself. For this reason, self-control will be discussed at length in the following chapter, when I attempt to rethink Peirce’s esthetics through his analysis of pleasure and pain. However, it will be useful to say a few things about self-control now in reference to hedonism.

Peirce distinguishes among three esthetic moments in conduct: the quality of feeling accompanying the determination of conduct, the feeling accompanying the judgment that this



action satisfies our resolution for acting, and upon review of this feeling of satisfaction, the recognition that it is pleasurable. The premise in the hedonist argument that a feeling of pleasure admits of no distinction between good and bad is criticized in two respects. First, this argument conflates the feeling of pleasure in the third moment with the feeling of satisfaction from the second moment, or what we feel upon review of a judgment with the feeling accompanying that judgment. It thus conflates two distinct feelings, pleasure and satisfaction. As Peirce observes in 1906, “when hedonists talk of ‘pleasure,’ they do not mean what is so-called in ordinary speech, but what excites a feeling of satisfaction” (CP 5.558–64). Second, the hedonist argument reduces both the feeling of pleasure and the feeling of satisfaction to the quality of feeling accompanying conduct. While a quality of feeling, which is simple, being “positively such as it is...regardless of aught else” (EP2:150), certainly in itself admits of no distinction between good and bad, the feelings of satisfaction and pleasure have an entirely different categorial structure and do admit of such a distinction.

Therefore, the claim that the feeling of pleasure admits of no distinction between good and bad involves two serious category errors. These errors can be corrected only by attending more closely to the categorial structure of the phenomena of pleasure and pain. Thus, as I have argued, the phenomenological argument against hedonism calls for a new phenomenology of pleasure and pain. The next chapter will work through this phenomenology.

## Chapter II. Rethinking Peirce's Esthetics through a Phenomenology of Pleasure and Pain

### A. Introduction: The Need for a Phenomenology of Pleasure and Pain

Chapter 1 attempted to frame the problem of the normativity of esthetics through an analysis of hedonism. Although Peirce was introduced to philosophy through Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, he took up the study of esthetics, both as a theoretical and a normative science, relatively late. This is not to say that he ignored esthetics altogether. As has been discussed, Peirce remained interested in esthetics as a practical science, and in a few places he even draws on his own "capacity for esthetic enjoyment" (EP2:190) and "keen sense of beauty" (MS 683.17) to help resolve esthetic problems. Nonetheless, Peirce, by his own admission, was a "perfect ignoramus in esthetics" for much of his life, at least as far as its theoretical study was concerned, and he might have remained in this condition if the problem of the normativity of esthetics had not been forced upon him by his classification of the sciences.

Three objections to the normativity of esthetics were distinguished in Chapter 2. The first objection dealt with the classification of esthetics as a theoretical science, the second objection dealt with the classification of esthetics specifically as a normative science, and the third objection concerned the problem of the principle-dependence of logic and ethics on esthetics. Chapter 1 focused on the third objection. Peirce's early resistance to classifying esthetics as a theoretical and normative science was underwritten largely by questions over the principal-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics that would be required under his classificatory scheme. Peirce himself concedes as much in the 1903 Harvard Lectures when he comments that once he was "forced to recognize" the principle-dependence of logic on ethics, that he "then took refuge in the idea that there was no science of esthetics, that because *de*

*gustibus non est disputandum*, therefore, there is no esthetic *truth* and *falsity* or generally valid goodness and badness” (EP2:189). Considered on its own terms, hedonism is easily refuted.

What worried Peirce was that his *own* ethics and logic might be charged with hedonism, “which no man in his senses, and not blinded by theory or something worse, can admit,” through the admission of esthetics as a normative science. In other words, the objection from the threat of hedonism thus confronts Peirce with the possibility of a reduction to absurdity of his theory of normative science. More than anything else, this consideration explains his rejection of the normativity of esthetics, even as he found it increasingly hard to exclude esthetics from normative science.

Through his work with phenomenology, however, Peirce comes to understand this objection as resting on a “fundamental misconception”: “To say that morality, in the last resort, comes to an esthetic judgment is *not* hedonism,—but is directly opposed to hedonism” (EP2:189). Peirce’s early arguments against hedonism are flawed in two main respects. First, they fail as refutations of hedonism. But more significantly for my position, these early arguments also fail from the perspective of the classification of the sciences: that is, even if they were to work as arguments against hedonism, the terms on which hedonism is refuted would preclude the classification of esthetics as a normative science. By conceding to esthetics the point that “because *de gustibus non est disputandum*, therefore, there is no esthetic *truth* and *falsity* or generally valid goodness and badness” (EP2:189), these arguments commit Peirce to the position that logic and ethics can be saved from hedonism only through the rejection of the normativity of esthetics.

On this reading, phenomenology helps to facilitate Peirce’s acceptance of the principle-dependence of logic and ethics on esthetics and, as a result, the classification of esthetics as a

normative science. For the phenomenological argument against hedonism succeeds in both respects that the early arguments had failed. First, this argument succeeds in refuting hedonism without recourse to psychology. In addition, it refutes hedonism from principles that do not preclude the principle-dependence of logic and ethics on esthetics; as a matter of fact, as we will see, they require it. Thus, phenomenology performs an essential role in the classification of the normative sciences in that it opens up the possibility that esthetics might be a source for logically and ethically normative principles without surrendering either logic or ethics to hedonism.

Whereas Peirce's early arguments against hedonism had made the dissociation of pleasure from logic and ethics a condition for saving both sciences from hedonism, the phenomenological argument calls for a redescription of common experience. The present chapter will consider how Peirce's esthetics is developed through his phenomenology of pleasure and pain.

## B. Peirce's Early Esthetics

What I am calling Peirce's phenomenological argument against hedonism criticizes the hedonist conception of pleasure for two main category errors; that is, what hedonism asserts about the *phenomenon* of pleasure is inconsistent in at least two respects with the categorial structure of experience as it is disclosed through the simple observation of the phaneron, of "whatever is before our minds in any sense" (CP 8.256). In the first place, hedonism conflates two distinct phenomena, pleasure and satisfaction. Second, it reduces both pleasure and satisfaction to mere qualities of feeling. By confounding pleasure and satisfaction, the hedonist argument reduces the phenomenon of pleasure, which, as will be demonstrated, properly belongs to the category of Thirdness, to the category of Secondness. Next, by classifying both pleasure and satisfaction as qualities of feeling, hedonism further compounds the first category error by reducing phenomena properly belonging to the categories of Secondness and Thirdness,

respectively, to the category of pure Firstness. Through this analysis, Peirce concludes that normative esthetics must begin with a new phenomenology of pleasure and pain. Yet before considering Peirce's redescription of these phenomena through phenomenology, it will be useful to situate this project in the context of his early views on pleasure.

### 1. Peirce's early views on pleasure

One of Peirce's more focused discussions of pleasure before 1900 occurs in "A Guess at the Riddle," drafted from 1887–88. Peirce considers Kant's division of the functions of the mind into feeling, knowing, and willing, and notes that Kant had borrowed this scheme "ready made" from Johannes Tetens, with the exception of one important modification he made to the division of feeling. Tetens had classified under the division of feeling "all that is immediately present, or at least the subjective element of it"; however, Kant importantly departs from this classification by limiting the category of feeling to pleasure and pain: "By feelings, as constituting one of the great classes of mental activities, are meant according to Kant and most psychologists feelings of pleasure and pain" (EP1:258). This account of the feelings of pleasure and pain thus misrepresents both what feeling is and the sense in which pleasure and pain are feelings. Peirce explains:

Kant's modification suits his peculiar system better than the truth of nature. There is no good reason for giving such a peculiar place to pleasure and pain; as if they had no resemblance to anything else that we can feel. Pleasure and pain are nothing but secondary sensations, or feelings produced by feelings, whenever the latter reach a certain degree of subjective intensity, that is, produce a certain amount of commotion in the organism. If we could pay attention enough, we should probably recognize that every exertion and every cognition produces pleasure or pain (EP1:258–59).

This passage anticipates Peirce's later work on esthetics in a couple of respects. First, it challenges the restriction of the category of feeling to feelings of pleasure and pain. But more importantly for the present discussion, Peirce classifies pleasure and pain, as he would after

1900, as “secondary sensations, or feelings produced by feelings” rather than as simple qualities of feeling. In other words, already in the 1880s Peirce had begun to reject the idea, advanced here by Kant, that feeling belongs to the category of pure Firstness.

Kant’s division of mental phenomena into the categories of feeling, knowing, and willing is discussed in other texts before 1900. In one undated fragment<sup>13</sup> “pleasure-pain” even replaces feeling as the first category. Similarly, cognition and volition replace knowing and willing as the second and third categories (CP 1.350). In addition, Peirce now attributes the idea that the category of feeling is limited to pleasure-pain to Tetens as well as to Kant. Although, at least in the present context, the accuracy of Kant’s reading of Tetens is unimportant in itself, it is important in light of Peirce’s claim in a text from around 1900<sup>14</sup> that he and Tetens mean the same thing by Feeling (CP 7.540).

In this later manuscript Tetens and Kant are contrasted in terms more consistent with how they had been contrasted in “A Guess at the Riddle.” To provide some context for this discussion, Peirce’s aim is to “review the ideas of the Nineteenth Century.” He begins by asserting that “almost all the philosophers of this century have agreed to name Feeling, Knowledge, and Will...as the three classes of states of mind.” He then observes, as he had in 1887, that “[this classification] is usually attributed to the Father of German philosophy, Immanuel Kant” and that “Kant borrowed it from his master Tetens; but in doing so he quite changed the boundaries of the department of *Feeling*” (CP 7.540).<sup>15</sup> This last point is developed

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<sup>13</sup> See CP 1.350n.

<sup>14</sup> The editors of the *Collected Papers* were unable to determine an exact date for this manuscript but note that “the quotations in 540n8 and 541n9 are from what appears to be an alternative partial draft, Widener IC1-a,b, undated. In this alternative draft it is stated that the paper was originally written to be read to a group that met Sunday afternoons. It is likely that these manuscripts were written about 1900” (CP 7.539n).

<sup>15</sup> Peirce later speculates that Tetens borrowed this division from classical rhetoricians: “For they instruct the orator to begin his discourse by creating a proper state of feeling in the minds of his auditors, to follow this with whatever he has to address to their understandings, that is, to produce cognitions, and finally to inflame them to action of the will. For the rhetoricians, therefore, the triad names three states of mind; and most of the psychologists of our

by Peirce as follows: “Kant, in order to make the enumeration of Tetens fit into his own philosophical system, limited the word Feeling to feelings of pleasure and pain; and the majority of philosophical writers of this century have followed him in this. I think this has been unfortunate, and has hindered the perception of the real relations of [the] triad” (CP 7.541). Once again, Kant’s classification of the categories of mental phenomena hinders “the perception of the real relations of [the] triad” by restricting the category of feeling to pleasure-pain. In this important respect, his classification departs significantly from Tetens’ analysis of feeling, according to which the category of feeling encompasses “whatever is directly and immediately in consciousness at any instant” (CP 7.541, cf. 1.333, from 1905).

At other times, however, Peirce defines pleasure, in terms closer to how it is understood by Kant and the majority of nineteenth century philosophers and psychologists, as a mere quality of feeling belonging to the category of Pure Firstness. For instance, in 1895 he argues that “to speak of a single individual pleasure is to use words without meaning. We may have a single experience of pleasure; but the pleasure itself is a quality. Experiences are single; but qualities, however specialized, cannot be enumerated” (CP 1.341). This tension among Peirce’s early views on pleasure underscores the need for a closer analysis of the phenomenon of feeling. For his conception of feeling evolved over the years, sometimes very subtly, at other times more dramatically. It will be useful, then, to look more closely at what Peirce understands by the category of feeling, as well as at how his understanding of feeling changed, or just shifted, in its focus over the years.

## 2. Primary vs. secondary feeling

In a manuscript from 1872 Peirce draws an important distinction between primary and

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century have considered Feeling, Cognition, and Volition to be three general states of mind” (CP 7.541).

secondary feelings, between “feelings which are caused by previous feelings... according to the laws of the association of ideas” and the “elements of feeling” from which secondary feelings arise (W3:33–34). In another version of this discussion Peirce distinguishes between “incomplex” and “complex” feelings, that is, between “feeling in itself,” which is absolutely simple, and complex feelings, which arise when “a certain complication of feelings [gives] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). Although Peirce understands feeling in both senses, in the 1860s and 1870s he identifies feeling primarily with secondary or complex feelings. For example, in this same 1872 paper he defines feeling as “what is felt at the time it is present to the mind” (W3:36), with secondary feelings constituting “the great body of what are present to the mind (W3:33).

However, the focus of Peirce’s analysis of feeling shifts dramatically in the 1880s as a result of his work on the categories. In “An American Plato” from 1885 feeling is defined as “simple consciousness, the consciousness that can be contained within an instant of time,” “having no parts or unity” (EP1:233).<sup>16</sup> Two years later, in “A Guess at the Riddle,” this simple or immediate consciousness is characterized as the consciousness of Firstness. Finally, in a fragment from 1888 the consciousness of Firstness is identified with quality of feeling. To begin with, *pure* feeling<sup>17</sup> is defined as “consciousness as it can exist in a single instant, the consciousness of all that is immediately present, for which all that is not immediately present is

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<sup>16</sup> As to why this simple consciousness can have *neither* parts *nor* unity, Peirce observes in an undated manuscript contrasting the categories of quality and reaction that “a quality [as opposed to reaction] has no individuality. Two qualities are different only so far as they are unlike. Individuality is an aggressive unity, arising from an absolute refusal to be in any degree responsible for anything else. This a quality cannot have since it is too utterly irrespective of anything else even to deny it. A reaction, on the other hand, is an opposition, or pairedness of objects that are existentially correlative, neither existing except by virtue of this opposition” (CP 7.538).

<sup>17</sup> This expression of course implies that some feelings are impure, but Peirce gives no indication here as to what kind of feeling is impure. However, in “A Guess at the Riddle” pleasure and pain, which “can only be recognized as such in a judgment,” are contrasted with “*true* feeling.” True feeling, also called *passive* feeling, “does not act and does not judge [and] has all sorts of qualities but does not itself recognize these qualities, because it does not analyze nor compare” (CP 1.376).



an absolute blank” (EP1:282). Second, and this is the step that is on occasion implied but never explicitly made in the texts leading up to this fragment, this single, simple, and immediate consciousness is characterized as a quality of feeling. Admitting of no comparison, distinction, or relation, this consciousness is “just a pure indescribable *quale* which is gone in the twinkling of an eye and which bears no resemblance to any memory of it” (EP1:283).

Peirce’s rehabilitation of the term *quale* in this passage deserves comment. The term *quale*, which Peirce of course inherits from medieval philosophy, denotes a thing’s *suchness*, its simple positive presence, which is only derivatively conceived, through a process of hypostatic abstraction, as an atomic property belonging to the thing (that is, as a “quality”).<sup>18</sup> This simple positive presence, or suchness, is what Peirce means by a quality of feeling. As he explains to James in 1903, the quality of feeling is abstracted from the actually present feeling by imagining “that feeling retains its positive character but absolutely loses all relation.” What remains is the “mere sense of quality,” which is “the sort of element that makes red to be *such as it is*, whatever anything else may be” (CP 8.267, emphasis mine). Quality of feeling is similarly characterized as that which is “*such as it is*, whatever anything else may be” or “regardless of aught else” in the Harvard Lectures from that same year.

This conception of quality of feeling is developed further in 1904. In one manuscript Peirce offers various examples of qualities of feeling, ranging from the “color of magenta” to the “sound of a railroad whistle” to even “the quality of the emotion upon contemplating a fine mathematical demonstration.” He then explains what he means by a quality of feeling:

I do not mean the sense of actually experiencing these feelings, whether primarily or in any memory or imagination. That is something that involves these qualities as an element of it. But I mean the qualities themselves which, in themselves, are mere may-bes, not necessarily realized... That mere *quality*, or suchness, is not in itself an occurrence, as seeing a red object is; it is a mere may-be. Its only being consists in the fact that there

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Boler, 78-81.

*might be* such a peculiar, positive, suchness in a phaneron. When I say it is a quality, I do not mean that it "inheres" in [a] subject. That is a phaneron peculiar to metaphysical thought, not involved in the sensation itself, and therefore not in the quality of feeling, which is entirely contained, or superseded, in the actual sensation (CP 1.304).

The quality of feeling is the “peculiar, positive, suchness” of a thing’s presence, which makes it what it is, not in distinction from or comparison with other qualities, but in itself “regardless of aught else.” Again in 1904, Peirce defines the quality of feeling in a letter to Lady Welby as the “simple positive possibility of appearance” (CP 8.329). Likewise, as late as 1913, he defines sensation in one manuscript as the “mere awareness of suchness.” He further describes it as “a present consciousness, or awareness, that has its own suchness, without involving any reference to anything else, without any comparison, without any distinction” (MS 681.8–9). This is consistent with Peirce’s analysis of feeling in papers from 1905, 1907, and 1910 (cf. CP 5.7, CP 1.305, 1.307). In fact, after 1903 whenever Peirce talks about feeling, unless otherwise indicated, it can be assumed that he is talking about the quality of feeling. For example, in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” feeling is defined simply “as whatever is positively such as it is, regardless of aught else” (EP2:386). No distinction is drawn in this passage between quality of feeling and secondary feeling.

That being said, Peirce is also careful to distinguish between quality of feeling and secondary feeling in other passages from this text. For instance at one point feeling is defined as whatever involves “any comparison of feeling or any synthesis of feelings.” In contrast to primary feelings, secondary feelings are “feelings attracting themselves to, and excited by, other feelings (EP2:379). This recalls the account of complex feelings from 1872 as “feelings which are caused by previous feelings...according to the laws of the association of ideas” (W3:33–34). Very importantly for his later theory of signs, Peirce states in 1872 that only secondary feelings can have meaning:

For a feeling to mean anything there must be another feeling which means that it means something, and indeed there must be an indefinite series of these feelings. In other words the present means nothing except so far as it appears to the future... a feeling is not a feeling until there is an infinite series of feelings between that feeling and the present. In other words, thought cannot be comprehended in terms of the feelings which are its ultimate elements,—it is a continuum of feelings, & is related to a feeling as a line to a point (W3:39).

This analysis of the secondary feeling as a sign of the qualities of feeling from which it arises foreshadows Peirce's work on the emotional interpretant from 1907. He states in 1905 that the ultimate meaning of a sign, its final interpretant, may consist "either in an idea predominantly of feeling or in one predominantly of acting and being acted on" (CP 5.7). How a feeling functions as the first, and in some cases only, interpretant of a sign eventually is worked out in a long manuscript, MS 318, from 1907: "The first proper significate effect of a sign is a feeling produced by it. There is almost always a feeling which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign" (CP 5.475). Chapter 4 will focus on Peirce's theory of signs. What is of interest at this point is that the production of secondary feelings is understood as a process of semiosis already in 1872: "A certain complication of feelings may give rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication" (W3:38–39).

It was observed above that Peirce initially identified feeling more with secondary feeling than with quality of feeling. Yet to the extent that he was concerned with feeling in the 1860s and 1870s at all it was usually as a psychological or physiological phenomenon. In fact, many of his discussions of feeling from this period revolve around the dependence of feeling on the "bodily organism" (W1:490f). In a paper from 1879 he comments that "feeling corresponds to nerve-cell activity" (W4:40), and even as late as 1885 feeling is defined as "the consciousness of the excitation of nerve-cells" (EP1:233). As a result, in many contexts feeling is reduced to sensation. For instance, in his 1866 Lowell Lectures Peirce remarks that "every feeling is

cognitive—is a sensation, and a sensation is a mental sign or word” (CP 7.586). Similarly, in 1868 he distinguishes between two kinds of sensation. The first kind of sensation is representative, while the second kind of sensation is a “mere feeling,” which is defined here as “the material quality of a representation [or sign]” (EP1:43).

After 1885 Peirce’s work with the categories forces him to distinguish more rigorously between feeling and sensation. From the standpoint of phenomenology, pure feeling, as we saw, is the simple consciousness of Firstness, the “pure indescribable *quale*,” with neither parts nor unity, and thus admitting of no comparison or distinction. On the other hand, sensation belongs to the category of Secondness, or Reaction (EP1:291). It is “an event in which a feeling is forced upon the mind” (CP 7.543). This is not to say that Peirce’s work with phenomenology is inconsistent with his early analysis of feeling as a physiological or psychological phenomenon. To the contrary, he never denies the dependence of the *actually* present feeling on the bodily organism, or for that matter its correspondence with the actions of nerve cells. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that neither phenomenology nor esthetics observes feeling as it is *actually* present to consciousness, and so neither physiology nor psychology can provide either science with an account of feeling in its categorial structure.

The crucial distinction that is drawn by Peirce after 1885, or I should say clarified, given that Peirce was aware of this distinction long before his work with phenomenology, is between feeling conceived as an element of the phaneron and the feeling that is actually present to us. To recall the instructions Peirce gives to James, the quality of feeling is prescinded from the actually present feeling by imagining “that feeling retains its positive character but absolutely loses all relation.” However, Peirce also concedes that what remains “no longer is exactly what we call feeling. It is a mere sense of quality” (CP 8.267). This “mere sense of quality” is never *actually*

present to the mind. Qualities of feeling are “mere may-bes, not necessarily realized” (CP 1.304). Peirce explains to Lady Welby: “The typical ideas of firstness are qualities of feeling, or mere appearances. The scarlet of your royal liveries, the quality itself, independently of its being perceived or remembered, is an example, by which I do not mean that you are to imagine that you *do not* perceive or remember it, but that you are to drop out of account that which may be attached to it in perceiving or in remembering, but which does not belong to the quality” (CP 8.329). He adds that “the quality of red is not thought of as belonging to you, or as attached to liveries. It is simply a peculiar positive possibility regardless of anything else.”

Again, Peirce did not discover this distinction through his work with the categories; rather, his work with the categories impressed this distinction more strongly upon him, forcing him to pay closer attention to it. This can be seen by contrasting texts from 1894 and 1895. Feeling is defined in a text from 1894 as a state of mind “in which something is present, without compulsion and without reason” (EP2:4–5). This statement is not phenomenologically false, but it does suffer from a certain imprecision, and when Peirce formulates the same idea in 1895 he is careful to add that a feeling is “that which is *supposed to be* immediately, and at one instant, present to consciousness” (EP2:22, emphasis mine). The significance of the phrase, “supposed to be,” can be gleaned from a discussion in a separate text of the distinction between a quality and an occurrence: “A quality is merely something that *might* be realized, while an occurrence is something that *actually* takes place” (CP 7.538).

I would like to conclude this section by drawing out a few implications of this analysis of feeling for Peirce’s views on pleasure and pain. These views are so challenging to disentangle in large part because feeling can be conceived on different categorial levels. This is a function of the interdependence of the three categories. Pure feeling, that is, quality of feeling, is an

analogue of the category of Firstness. At the same time, Firstness is an irreducible element of Secondness and Thirdness, even though it cannot be reduced to these higher categories. Thus, when considering the question of if or in what respect pleasure and pain are feelings, it will be important to pay close attention to what is meant by feeling in a particular context and what categorial structure it has.

As was discussed in the preceding section, in 1887 and again in 1900 Peirce criticizes Kant for restricting the category of Feeling to pleasure-pain. By reducing all feeling to feelings of pleasure and pain, it was argued that Kant had “hindered the perception of the real relations of [the] triad” (CP 5.740). This raises two main issues. First, the limitation of the category of Feeling to pleasure-pain obscures our perception of feeling as an analogue of Pure Firstness (in other words, as quality of feeling). The preceding discussion has been concerned mainly with correcting this misconception. However, the limitation of the category of Feeling to pleasure and pain also hinders “the perception of the real relations of [the] triad” by obscuring our perception of the categorial structure of the phenomena of pleasure and pain, which are classified by Peirce as secondary feelings in 1887 and 1900. The next section will attempt to correct this second misconception by considering how pure Feeling not only belongs to the category of Firstness but also is a constituent element of all higher categories of consciousness.

### 3. Primisense, altersense, and medisense

As we have seen, Peirce rejects Kant’s classification of the categories of mental phenomena because this classification restricts the category of feeling to feelings of pleasure and pain. By doing so Kant “quite changed the boundaries of the department of *Feeling*.” By contrast, Peirce follows Tetens in defining pure feeling (quality of feeling, or the pure indescribable *quale*) as “the consciousness of a moment as it is in its singleness, without regard

to its relations whether to its own elements or to anything else.” He explains: “Take whatever is directly and immediately in consciousness at any instant, just as it is, without regard to what it signifies, to what its parts are, to what causes it, or any of its relations to anything else, and that is what Tetens means by Feeling” (CP 7.540).

Peirce later reworks Tetens classification through his doctrine of categories: “But in my opinion, by a slight modification the triad may be made to stand for three radically different kinds of elements of all consciousness, the only elements of consciousness, which are respectively predominant in the three whole states of mind which are usually called Feeling, Knowing, and Willing” (7.542). The three elements of all consciousness, which replace feeling, knowing, and willing, are primisense (the consciousness of pure feeling, or Firstness), altersense (the consciousness of struggle/reaction, or Secondness), and medisense (“the consciousness of a middle term, or process,” or Thirdness) (CP 7.544).

According to this classification of the elements of consciousness, pure feeling, or primisense, is not just one category of phenomenon; it is an element of all consciousness, including altersense and medisense. Consider Peirce’s analysis of altersense (the consciousness of reaction, or Secondness). Altersense has two modes, sensation and willing, which are distinguished according to the relative predominance of primisense in them: “The difference between them is that Sensation is an event in which a feeling is forced upon the mind; while Volition or Willing, is an event in which a desire is satisfied, that is, an intense state of feeling is reduced” (CP 7.543). Both sensation and willing involve an element of primisense. However, the consciousness of feeling is more predominant in sensation, in which a feeling forces itself upon us, while the consciousness of struggle and reaction is more predominant in willing, in which consciousness exerts itself upon the world.

Similarly, primisense and altersense are irreducibly involved in all medisense, and just as sensation and willing are distinguished according to the relative predominance of primisense and altersense in them, the three modes of medisense are distinguished according to the relative predominance of primisense and altersense in them. Consider the mode of medisense in which primisense is most predominant, abstraction. Abstraction is a process “which breaks one idea away from another.” It thus involves a high degree of *attention* to what makes one thing such as it is regardless of aught else. Peirce explains this idea through the following example:

When we see the little bottle with green crystals, the green idea detaches itself from the remaining ideas, the spicular form, the being bunched together in a little tube, etc. and leads to a thought which is accurately expressed by the sentence "these crystals are green," where the green stands off from the remaining ideas which remain confused together. It is the liveliness of the green idea which brings this about. And in all cases it is the idea which has vigor which spontaneously detaches itself from the rest (CP 7.544).

The separation of one idea from another is brought about by the liveliness of an idea, and in a long digression Peirce distinguishes between two kinds of intensity that a feeling may have:

One is the intensity of the feeling itself, by which loud sounds are distinguished from faint ones, luminous colors from dark ones, highly chromatic colors from almost neutral tints, etc. The other is the intensity of consciousness that lays hold of the feeling, which makes the ticking of a watch actually heard infinitely more vivid than a cannon shot remembered to have been heard a few minutes ago. I shall not stop to discuss the difficult question of what the distinction between those two kinds of intensity consists in, about which three or four opinions are held. I shall simply say that in my opinion the first kind of intensity, distinguishing bright colors from dim ones, is the intensity of feeling-consciousness; while the second kind, distinguishing sensation from imagination, is the intensity of *altersense* or of the assertiveness of the feeling. I shall call this second *vividness* (CP 7.544).

In a paper from 1895 an analogous distinction is drawn between subjective and objective intensity. Objective intensity is understood here as the intensity belonging to a feeling in itself—to borrow Peirce’s example, it is what distinguishes a loud sound from a faint one—while subjective intensity belongs to our consciousness of this feeling, which is either lively or dim (see EP2:22–23).



At this juncture, I would like to comment on the importance of this classification of primisense, altersense, and medisense as the three irreducible elements of all consciousness for Peirce's esthetics. Why devote so much space to a classificatory scheme that is forgotten by Peirce not long after he introduces it?

Kant's restriction of the category of Feeling to the feelings of pleasure and pain raises the two-pronged question of how wide the scope of the category of Feeling is and to what extent, if at all, pleasure and pain might be classified as feelings. Peirce, as we have seen, proposes to modify Tetens' conception of feeling by conceiving of feeling not as its own category of consciousness, but as an irreducible element of *all* consciousness: "by a slight modification the triad may be made to stand for three radically different kinds of elements of all consciousness, the only elements of consciousness, which are respectively predominant in the three whole states of mind which are usually called Feeling, Knowing, and Willing" (CP 7.542). The different modes, or categories, of consciousness are distinguished according to the relative predominance of the consciousness of Firstness (primisense), the consciousness of Secondness (altersense), and the consciousness of Thirdness (medisense) in them. As a result, while pure feeling, the pure consciousness of Firstness, corresponds to the quality of feeling, feeling is nonetheless an irreducible element of all consciousness, including altersense and medisense. In particular, sensation and abstraction are two modes of the consciousness of struggle and process in which primisense is an especially important element. The next section will be concerned with determining the categories of consciousness to which the feelings of pleasure and pain belong through a phenomenology of these phenomena. The preceding discussion hopefully will have provided a framework for this project.

### C. Peirce's Phenomenology of Pleasure and Pain

I will divide Peirce's analysis of pleasure and pain into three parts. First, I will consider his argument for why pleasure and pain cannot be qualities of feeling—in other words, for why they cannot belong to the category of pure Firstness. Next, I will consider his classification of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings. Finally, I will conclude by distinguishing pleasure and pain from other secondary feelings, in particular, the feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

#### 1. Pleasure and pain are not qualities of feeling.

The hedonist argument asserts that the feeling of pleasure is absolutely simple and reasons from this to the conclusion that it admits of no *normative* distinction between good and bad. The good is simply what *actually* produces pleasure and the bad is simply what *actually* produces pain. The question of what we *ought* to desire thus is a question without meaning. For what we ought to desire is simply what already actually does attract us. According to Peirce, this argument involves two premises: “first that it is unthinkable that a man should act from any other motive than pleasure, if his act be deliberate; and second, that action with reference to pleasure leaves no room for distinction of right and wrong” (EP2:149). Peirce's early arguments against hedonism had focused on the first premise and had tried to demonstrate, first through an appeal to facts of human psychology and then more persuasively through the logic of induction and the theory of inquiry, that human beings not only are capable of acting from motives other than pleasure, but that this is a requirement of human logicity—or at the very least a regulative ideal without which inquiry could not continue.

By contrast, the phenomenological argument primarily is concerned with the second premise, which states that the feeling of pleasure admits of no *normative* distinction between good and bad. (Again, hedonism obviously recognizes a distinction between good and bad,

inasmuch as what I desire is *actually* good and what repels me is *actually* bad; but it denies that this distinction can be at all normative for future conduct.) As was argued in Chapter 1, the main fallacy involved in this argument is that it reduces the feeling of pleasure to a mere quality of feeling: “But those who deluded themselves with that fallacy were so inattentive to the phenomenon that they confused the judgments after the act that that act satisfied or did not satisfy the requirements of a standard with a pleasure or pain accompanying the act itself” (EP2:249). Peirce explains in another passage: “All action in accordance with a determination is accompanied by a feeling that is pleasurable; but whether the feeling at any instant is felt as pleasurable in that very instant or whether the recognition of it as pleasurable comes a little later is question of fact difficult to make sure about” (EP2:247). This is what convinces Peirce that the refutation of hedonism calls for a phenomenology of pleasure and pain: “The [hedonist] argument turns on the feeling of pleasure, and therefore it is necessary, in order to judge of it, to get at the facts about that feeling as accurately as we can” (EP2:247).

The first fact about the feeling of pleasure that must be established is that it is *not* a mere quality of feeling. In other words, an important distinction must be drawn between the quality of feeling accompanying an action and the *recognition upon reflection* that this quality of feeling is pleasurable: “in formulating the judgment that the image of our conduct does satisfy our previous resolution we are, in the very act of formulation, aware of a certain quality,—the feeling of satisfaction,—and directly afterward recognize that that feeling was pleasurable” (EP2:247). Peirce here distinguishes among three distinct esthetic phenomena: the quality of feeling, the feeling of satisfaction, and the feeling of pleasure. At present I am concerned with contrasting the quality of feeling and the feeling of pleasure. The position that Peirce adopts in the first Lowell Lecture is that the feeling of pleasure, as a feeling of recognition felt upon the review of

conduct, is reflective in a way that the mere quality of feeling is not and, because of its absolute simplicity, cannot be.

Peirce arrives at the same conclusion in his Harvard Lectures from earlier in 1903 by reflecting upon the phenomena of pleasure and pain themselves. This conclusion is based in the observation that there is no quality common to all pleasure and pain: “these phenomena themselves do not mainly consist in any common Feeling-quality of Pleasure and any common Feeling-quality of Pain, even if there are such Qualities of Feeling” (EP2:190). It should be noted that it is at this juncture in his analysis that Peirce appeals to the authority of his own esthetic education, claiming to have undergone a “systematic training in recognizing [his] feelings” (EP2:189). He explains: “I am unable to recognize with confidence any quality of feeling common to all *pains*; and if I cannot I am sure it cannot be an easy thing for anybody” (EP2:189–90). However, this appeal to authority constitutes a special kind of argument from authority. In fact, there is a sense in which every phenomenological argument resembles an argument from authority in that its force derives from the authority of the phenomenologist’s own observations. That is, the phenomenologist asserts that something must be the case because it is inconceivable, even if not mathematically impossible, that it may ever appear otherwise than it does. For this reason, all phenomenological arguments claim a practical indubitability.

At the same time, the phenomenologist’s observations concern experience that is common to everyone, and to this extent they rest not on the authority of the phenomenologist but on the authority of common experience. The force of a phenomenological argument ultimately derives from this authority, which is by no means infallible. Every phenomenological argument carries with it an invitation to anyone not persuaded by the argument to demonstrate from their own observations of the phaneron that common experience supports a different conclusion. For

this reason, though resembling the method of authority, the phenomenological method as it is practiced by Peirce is an application of the scientific method..

Peirce again denies that there is any quality of feeling common to all pleasure and pain in “The Basis Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” from 1906: “A toothache is painful. It is not pain, but pain accompanies it; and if you choose to say that pain is an ingredient of it, that is not far wrong. However, the quality of the feeling of toothache is a simple, positive feeling, distinct from pain; though pain accompanies it” (EP2:379). Once again, this argument turns on the distinction between the “simple positive feeling,” i.e., the quality of feeling, of the toothache and the secondary feeling accompanying this simple positive feeling. Stated in the simplest terms possible, Peirce’s position, which he arrives at largely through an interrogation of his own feelings, is that the feelings of pleasure and pain are not reducible to the qualities of feeling that they “accompany.”

However, what are pleasure and pain if not qualities of feeling? Peirce is clear both in 1903 and again in 1906 that even though pleasure and pain are not *simple* feelings they are still in any case feelings. As he observes in his fourth Harvard lecture, “the whole phenomenon of pain and the whole phenomenon of pleasure are phenomena that arise within the universe of states of mind and attain no great prominence except when they concern states of mind in which Feeling is predominant” (EP2:190). Both in the Harvard Lectures and in the “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” the observation that there is no quality of feeling common to all pleasure and pain leads Peirce to classify these phenomena as secondary feelings. This constitutes the second insight of his phenomenology of pleasure and pain, to which I would now like to turn.

## 2. Pleasure and pain are secondary feelings.

The first part of Peirce's analysis of pleasure and pain proves only that pleasure and pain are not qualities of feeling. The second part of his analysis offers a positive description of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings. Peirce states in 1905:

We certainly do not think that unadulterated feeling, if that element could be isolated, would have any relation to pain or to pleasure...But perhaps pleasure and pain are nothing more than names for the state of being attracted and that of being repelled by present experience. Of course, feelings accompany them, but under the latter hypothesis no feeling would be common to all pleasures and none to all pains (CP 1.333).

This hypothesis is developed the following year in "The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences": "What, then, are pleasure and pain? The question has been sufficiently discussed, and the answer ought by this time to be ready. They are secondary feelings or generalizations of such feelings; that is, of feelings attaching themselves to, and excited by, other feelings"

(EP2:379). Peirce analyzes pleasure and pain as secondary feelings again in MS 318 from 1907:

"I may mention that I do not recognize pleasure and pain as specific feelings but only as being whatever feelings may stimulate efforts, in the one case to reproduce or continue them, or, as we say, 'attractive' feelings, and in the other case to annul and avoid them, or, as we say, 'repulsive' feelings" (EP2:432).

At the same time, in 1909 Peirce formulates a series of questions that serve as a reminder that the classification of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings is still a live hypothesis for him:

Among more purely psychological questions, the nature of pleasure and pain will be likely to attract attention. Are they mere qualities of feeling, or are they rather motor instincts attracting us to some feelings and repelling others? Have pleasure and pain the same sort of constitution, or are they contrasted in this respect, pleasure arising upon the formation or strengthening of an association by resemblance, and pain upon the weakening or disruption of such a habit or conception? (EP2:438)

While Peirce concedes that this line of questioning is "purely psychological," and thus of limited interest for phenomenology, this does not mean that it only admits of a psychological answer.

To the contrary, Peirce hopes that “psychological speculations will naturally lead on to musing upon metaphysical problems proper,” and eventually to the adoption of a phenomenological standpoint: “Let the Muser, for example, after well appreciating, in its breadth and depth, the unspeakable variety of each Universe, turn to those phenomena that are of the nature of homogeneities of connectedness in each” (EP2:438).

Once again, Peirce had thematized the distinction between quality of feeling and secondary feeling already in the 1860s and 1870s, long before his derivation of the categories through phenomenology (cf. W3:33–39). Yet, as also was discussed above, his interpretation of this distinction during these years was principally psychological and even at times physiological. Through his work on the doctrine of categories from the 1880s Peirce came to classify pure feeling as belonging to the category of Firstness; in fact, feeling becomes the primary analogue for this category. Feeling, so conceived, is the “pure indescribable *quale*”; in other words, it is the *quality* of feeling. By contrast, secondary feeling is distinguished phenomenologically from quality of feeling because it does not belong to the category of Firstness; or, rather, it belongs to the category of Firstness, only the Firstness it exhibits is the Firstness that is a constituent and irreducible element of higher categories.

How feeling can belong at once to the category of Firstness and to a higher category was worked out through the analysis of primisense, altersense, and medisense in the preceding section. In 1872 Peirce characterizes secondary, or complex, feelings as “feeling with meaning.” This idea is developed through a mathematical example. Just as a line is a continuum rather than a mere collection of points, thought is a continuum, as opposed to a mere collection, of feelings. This continuum of feelings has a different categorial structure than the quality of feeling that is abstracted from it by precision. In short, secondary feeling is meaningful, and meaning, as

Peirce demonstrates through his work on the categories after 1885, belongs to the category of Thirdness. A feeling becomes meaningful when “a certain complication of feelings...give[s] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). It is in this sense that thought may be understood as “feeling with meaning. As Peirce explains, “thought cannot be comprehended in terms of the feelings which are its ultimate elements,—it is a continuum of feelings, & is related to a feeling as a line to a point” (W3:39).

This relationship between feeling and thought is worked out further in the *Monist* papers during 1891–93. By this date Peirce already understood feeling primarily as a *category* of phenomenon—as the pure consciousness of Firstness—rather than as a psychological or physiological phenomenon. First, in “The Architecture of Theories” Peirce states that “the one primary and fundamental law of mental actions consists in a tendency to generalization.” The role of feeling in mental action is explained as follows: “Feeling tends to spread; connections between feelings awaken feelings; neighboring feelings become assimilated; ideas are apt to reproduce themselves. These are so many formulations of the one law of the growth of mind” (EP1:291). The third paper in the series, “The Law of Mind,” is concerned with giving an account of this one fundamental law of mental action, the law of mind. Peirce concludes in this paper—or, rather, is “driven to perceive, what is quite evident of itself”—“that instantaneous feelings flow together into a continuum of feeling, which has in a modified degree the peculiar vivacity of feeling and has gained generality” (EP1:330). In other words, every general idea is a continuum of feeling. This conclusion is developed even further in the next article in the series, “Man’s Glassy Essence,” through an example involving the growth of protoplasm. Even a form of life as primitive as protoplasm is governed by the law of mind insofar as it is capable of taking on new habits: “...mechanical laws are nothing but acquired habits, like all the regularities of



mind, including the tendency to take habits, itself; and...this action of habit is nothing but generalization, and generalization is nothing but the spreading of feelings” (EP1:349).

What Peirce demonstrates through his cosmological writings from the early 1890s is that all reactions and processes involve feeling, or Firstness. While this element of Firstness may be more predominant in some phenomena than others—and, in fact, reactions and processes in which Firstness is highly predominate (for example, the growth of protoplasm) will be less stable than processes in which Firstness is less predominant—there is no phenomenon that does not, at some level involve this category, that is, which in no way involves feeling as a constituent element. At the same time, feeling is also not entirely reducible to the category of Firstness. Therefore, Peirce’s cosmology reinforces two important principles of his doctrine of categories: the irreducibility of the category of Firstness in all higher categories, and the irreducibility of these higher categories to the Firstness which is an element of them.

However, the relationship between the categories of Firstness and Thirdness in cognition is even more complicated than this discussion would suggest. This can be appreciated by reconsidering Peirce’s analysis of primisense, altersense, and medisense as the three elements of all consciousness. Primisense, it will be remembered, is the pure consciousness of feeling. Yet it is possible to carry out the consequences of this classification even further and recognize an even deeper recursiveness involving primisense by reflecting on it as an element of the consciousness of struggle/reaction (altersense) and of process (medisense). Besides pure primisense, there is also a form of primisense that is proper to each mode of altersense, sensation and willing, as well as to each mode of medisense, that is, to abstraction, suggestion, and association. Moreover, since all medisense involves the consciousness of struggle/reaction (altersense), there is also a form of primisense that is proper to the altersense that is an element

of each mode of medisense, and so forth.

As one can see, the possibility for the multiplication of forms of primisense is perhaps limitless. In each case the consciousness of feeling manifests itself differently by virtue of its having a different categorial structure. This is not to say that the different forms of primisense do not also share a common categorial structure. They do inasmuch as they are all forms of the consciousness of Firstness. At the same time, they also are not reducible to one another. Unfortunately, Peirce does not carry out his analysis of primisense, altersense, and medisense any further than he does in this one manuscript from around 1900. The value of this classification in the present context is that it provides a more nuanced way of thinking about the phenomena of pleasure and pain as belonging both to the category of Firstness and to higher categories—in the case of pleasure, as both a feeling and a form of cognition. I now will consider how pleasure and pain are distinguished categorially from other secondary feelings.

### 3. The distinction between pleasure/pain and satisfaction/dissatisfaction

The preceding section considered the classification of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings. The third part of Peirce's analysis of these phenomena examines the categorial structure of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings. This problem is best approached by contrasting pleasure and pain with satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Peirce distinguishes between pleasure and satisfaction as follows in MS 873:

Almost every moralist outside the ranks of the hedonists has remarked that those philosophers confound two different things, pleasure and satisfaction. Pleasure is a special quality of organic feeling: satisfaction is the conception of conformity to an end... The hedonists, however, seem to have in mind as desirable the state of mind of a man who has just successfully achieved some object of effort. But in raising this to the rank of a universal ultimate aim, they are conceiving human desires as susceptible, in themselves, of complete accomplishment. Now that is not the truth... Complete satisfaction is an absurdity, owing to the nature of our ultimate aim (873.7–8a).

Even though pleasure is at this date still understood by Peirce as a quality of feeling, the distinction that is drawn here between pleasure and satisfaction is an important one for normative esthetics. Satisfaction is described in this manuscript as the feeling felt upon the conformity, or in the case of dissatisfaction, the disconformity, between conduct and its end. It thus consists in the consciousness of reaction and belongs to the category of Secondness.

By contrast, pleasure will be conceived by Peirce in 1903 as “a peculiar mode of consciousness allied to the consciousness of *making a generalization*, in which not Feeling, but rather Cognition, is the principle constituent” (EP2:190). This is not to say that pleasure is not a feeling, that is, a form of the consciousness of Firstness. As was quoted above, Peirce in the same paragraph observes that pleasure and pain “concern states of mind in which Feeling is predominant.” However, pleasure is not the *pure* consciousness of Feeling. It is not a quality of feeling. Rather, it is the consciousness of feeling as a constituent element of genuine Thirdness. In Peirce’s words, it is a form of consciousness “belonging to the category of Representation though representing something in the Category of Quality of Feeling” (EP2:190). It is the representation of “the Firstness that truly belongs to a Thirdness in its achievement of Secondness” (MS 310.9).

Likewise, pain does not simply belong to the category of Secondness. It does not consist simply in the consciousness of feeling as an element of all struggle or reaction. As Peirce understands it in 1903, pain is “a Struggle to give a state of mind its *quietus*” (EP2:190). However, whereas pleasure is felt upon the formation or strengthening of a habit, pain is felt “upon the weakening or disruption of such a habit or conception” (EP2:438). Therefore, in contrast to pleasure, which is the consciousness of Firstness as a constituent element of *genuine* Thirdness, pain is the consciousness of Firstness as a constituent element of *degenerate*

Thirdness, specifically, that mode of degenerate Thirdness in which Secondness still prevails.<sup>19</sup>

The feelings of pleasure and pain, then, both properly belong to the category of Thirdness. To once again quote “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences,” “the feeling of pain is a symptom of a feeling which repels us; the feeling of pleasure is the symptom of an attractive feeling” (EP2:379). Note that pleasure is not itself a feeling of attraction, nor is pain itself a feeling of repulsion; rather, pleasure and pain, respectively, are what we feel upon review of a feeling of attraction or repulsion. Pleasure is the consciousness of what attracts us *upon review*, while pain is the consciousness what repels us *upon review*. Thus, Peirce concludes in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” that “feelings are pleasurable or painful according to the kind of action which they stimulate,” (EP2:379). Pleasure and pain likewise are defined the following year as “whatever feelings may stimulate efforts, in the one case to reproduce or continue them, or, as we say, ‘attractive’ feelings, and in the other case to annul and avoid them, or, as we say, ‘repulsive’ feelings” (EP2:432). For this reason, the feelings of pleasure and pain are normative in a way that the feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction are not and, furthermore, cannot be. This is because satisfaction and dissatisfaction are effects of the determination of our nature through the *actual* conformity or disconformity of conduct to an end. Pleasure and pain, by contrast, arise through the comparison of conduct with a general ideal, with an end to which feeling ought to, but might not actually, conform. In other words, they arise through the determination of *future* conduct.

#### D. Rethinking Esthetics through Phenomenology

As I have argued, Peirce’s phenomenology of pleasure and pain helps to answer the objection from the threat of hedonism to the classification of esthetics as a normative science.

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<sup>19</sup> See Peirce’s discussion of the two degenerate modes of Thirdness in the Harvard Lectures (EP2:161).

This issue has been addressed at length in Chapter 1 and again in the present chapter, but it is of such importance for normative esthetics that it is worth rehearsing one final time. The objection from hedonism states that the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics, which would be required by the classification of esthetics as a normative science under Peirce's classificatory scheme, commits ethics and logic to hedonism. Peirce's phenomenology answers this objection by showing that hedonism involves two serious category errors. Finally, the preceding discussion tried to correct these errors through a redescription of the phenomena of pleasure and pain. This analysis consisted of three parts. First, it was argued that the feelings of pleasure and pain are not mere qualities of feeling. Second, pleasure and pain were classified as secondary feelings. Third, pleasure and pain were distinguished in their categorial structure as secondary feelings from other secondary feelings, namely, the feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

However, on a few occasions Peirce carries out his analysis of pleasure and pain one step further and proposes that these phenomena do not just admit of a normative distinction between good and bad; the esthetically good and bad are pleasure and pain, or are at least are analogous to them. According to this argument, the feeling of pleasure, far from precluding the possibility for a normative science of esthetics, is the proper object of this science.

Peirce first advances this controversial hypothesis following his analysis of pleasure and pain as secondary feelings in the fourth Harvard lecture:

This [that Pleasure is a peculiar mode of consciousness allied to the consciousness of making a generalization] may be hard to make out as regards the lower pleasures, but they do not concern the argument we are considering. It is esthetic enjoyment which concerns us; and ignorant as I am of Art, I have a fair share of capacity for esthetic enjoyment; and it seems to me that while in esthetic enjoyment we attend to the totality of Feeling—and especially to the total resultant Quality of Feeling presented in the work of art we are contemplating—yet it is a sort of intellectual sympathy, a sense that here is a Feeling that one can comprehend, a reasonable Feeling. (EP2:190)

This argument is developed a few years later in the "The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative

Sciences”: “Esthetic good and evil are closely akin to pleasure and pain. They are what would be pleasure and pain to the fully developed superman” (EP2:3279). It should be noted that in this passage Peirce asserts only that the esthetically good and bad are analogous, *akin*, to pleasure and pain. In addition, they are not akin to what is actually pleasing or painful to anyone, but only “to the fully developed superman” (EP2:379). This point speaks to what was established in the last section about the normative structure of the phenomena of pleasure and pain. These feelings arise through the determination of future conduct rather than through the actual conformity of conduct to an end. As Peirce explains, “feelings are pleasurable or painful according to the kind of action they stimulate” (EP2:379). He elaborates: “In general, the good is the attractive,—not to everybody, but to the sufficiently matured agent; and the evil is the repulsive to the same” (EP2:379). The distinction Peirce draws here between what is *actually* pleasing or displeasing and what would be pleasing or displeasing upon review to the “sufficiently matured agent” answers his fear in the 1903 Lowell Lectures that the identification of pleasure with the esthetically good would entail that “all 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 to consciousness” (EP2:254).

Peirce draws the same distinction between what is actually pleasing to us now and what would be pleasing upon due reflection in other places. In a draft for the syllabus supplementing the 1903 Lowell Lectures he states that the esthetically admirable “is not a question of pleasing any particular person. [It] is what *deliberate* reason must admire” (MS 478.36a, emphasis mine). Similarly, in a manuscript from the following year Peirce argues that esthetics “has to define [the beautiful], not at all with reference to its pleasing A, B, or C, but in terms of these universal elements of experience that have been brought to light by phenomenology.” Peirce adds that

“unless this can be done, and it can be shown that there are certain conditions which would make a form beautiful in any world, whether it contained beings who would be pleased with such forms or not, there is no true normative science of esthetics” (MS 693.128–32).

Still, the hypothesis—and it cannot be regarded as anything but a hypothesis at this point—that the esthetically good and bad are analogous to the feelings of pleasure and pain is not without its problems. In fact, in *Logic and the Classification of the Sciences* Beverley Kent argues that Peirce ultimately rejected this hypothesis. Her analysis relies mainly on a manuscript from 1910 in which Peirce comments on advances in anesthesiology: “The discovery of anesthetics posed a dilemma to 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 ends without pain. Yet humans are so constituted that they cannot consider pain other than evil” (MS 649, cf. Kent 159). This leads Peirce to the conclusion “that pain is not *per se* evil,” which Kent interprets as evidence that Peirce had abandoned the analogy between pleasure and pain and the esthetically good and bad.

Though persuasive on some points, particularly on the matter of Peirce’s rejection of Henry James Sr.’s solution to the problem of evil, Kent’s interpretation is flawed on many levels. First, her use of MS 649, upon which her interpretation is entirely dependent, is highly problematic. As illuminating as Peirce’s remarks on anesthesiology are, it is hard to imagine how they can have any bearing on his theory of normative science without compromising his anti-psychologism. Under his Comtean classificatory scheme, normative science can in no way depend on psychology or physiology for its conception of the esthetically good. Peirce is convinced of this as much as he is convinced of anything. As I have argued, the esthetically good is not what is actually pleasing to us now, but what *would be* pleasing to the sufficiently

matured agent. Physiology and psychology are of no help in determining the latter. Thus, Peirce's conception of the esthetically good as pleasure cannot be rooted in a physiology or psychology of pleasure; it must be rooted in a phenomenology of the normative structure that any feeling of pleasure or pain must have, regardless of its object. It is in this respect that the esthetically good and bad are akin to the feelings of pleasure and pain. Furthermore, as long as this conception of the esthetically good and bad is consistent with the results of phenomenology—with what must hold good in any world—it makes no difference that what is actually pleasing or displeasing to us now might be altered through anesthesiology.

Second, Kent ascribes much importance to the late date of MS 649, which was drafted in 1910, four years after “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” and seven years after the 1903 Harvard Lectures. However, she overlooks other manuscripts dated even later than MS 649. For instance, in MS 53, which, according to Robins, is from 1912, Peirce defines the esthetic quality belonging to mathematical ideas as a “pleasurable quality”: “There is one esthetic quality that all mathematicians unite in extolling, because its beauty is due to its economy. They call it ‘elegance,’ meaning that pleasurable quality which results when driven to use a novel principle” (MS 53). Even more significantly, in a manuscript from 1913 entitled “A Study of How to Reason Safely and Efficiently,” Peirce observes that the distinction between pleasure and pain “seems to give rise to the distinction between the beautiful, or attractive, and the repulsive” (MS 681.6). He adds that “there is certainly a particular pleasure and a particular esthetic quality in fruitful reasoning” and concludes from this that:

in view of this fact I do not see how any student of reasoning at all worthy of this twentieth century can leave unstudied the question of the logical value of this esthetic quality of reasoning, at least. Moreover, in an age of the world in which excessive sentimentalism seems to many strong minds to be threatening the welfare, perhaps the perpetuation, of the human race, it strikes me that it would be almost criminal for a student of reasoning to neglect the duty of inquiring just how far a reasoner ought to be



influenced by the *beauty or pleasurableness* of this or that opinion (MS 681.7–8, emphasis mine).

Both MS 53 and MS 681 show that Peirce continued to advance the hypothesis that the esthetically good and bad are at least related to pleasure and pain in manuscripts dated after MS 649. Thus, I think Kent is misguided in the importance she ascribes to Peirce's disavowal of Henry James Sr.'s solution to the problem of evil for his esthetics. There is nothing to prevent Peirce from asserting that pleasure and pain are akin to the good and bad in one realm but not in another.

That being said, even if Peirce had abandoned the entire analogy between pleasure and pain and the esthetically good and bad, this would not diminish the importance of his analysis of these phenomena for his esthetics. For, as we have seen, through this analysis he demonstrates two important principles. First, not all feelings are reducible to mere qualities of feeling (that is, pure primisense, or the consciousness of pure Firstness). In the second place, some feelings are reflective and to this extent admit of a normative distinction between good and bad ends. This second principle is especially important for the development of Peirce's esthetics. For it is through his analysis of the normative structure of the secondary feelings of pleasure and pain that Peirce comes to appreciate the normative structure of esthetic experience. Therefore, even if the esthetically good and bad are not pleasure and pain, Peirce's analysis of these phenomena is nonetheless important for his esthetics because esthetic experience shares a common categorial structure with them. The next chapter will examine the categorial structure of esthetic experience in more depth.

### III. The Problem of the Pre-Normativity of Esthetics

#### A. Reframing the Problem of the Normativity of Esthetics through the Objection that Esthetics is Prenormative

In the Introduction I distinguished among three views of normative science: as a theory of the *summum bonum*, as a theory of the distinction between good and bad ends, and, third, as a theory of self-control. That is, normative science may be conceived through its principle-dependence on phenomenology, through the “emphatic dualism” that sets it apart from phenomenology and all other sciences, or through the principle-dependence of practical science and other less abstract sciences on it; or through its physiological part, its classificatory part, or as a methodeutic.

Furthermore, each view privileges a different branch of normative science. The normative science in which the dualism intrinsic to it is most pronounced is ethics. Thus, on the account of normative science as a classificatory science, principally concerned with the distinction between good and bad ends, ethics is the normative science “*par excellence*” (cf. EP2:201). However, this view also “exaggerates the place occupied by these ideas in [normative science], which is a very eminent place in Ethics, but is less so in Logic, and ought to be quite subordinate in Esthetics.” Peirce explains: “The true principal purpose of these sciences is the Classification of possible forms. But this must be founded on a study of the Physiology of those forms, their general elements and parts and modes of action” (MS478.40–42). On this account of normative science as a *physiology* of the *summum bonum* it is in normative esthetics that “we ought to seek for the deepest characteristics of normative science, since esthetics, in dealing with the very ideal itself whose mere materialization engrosses the attention of practics [ethics] and of logic, must contain the heart, soul, and spirit of normative science” (EP2:379). Finally, both the

physiological and classificatory parts of normative science “should be followed up by a study of the principles that govern the production of [good and bad] forms” (MS 478.40–42). According to this third view, normative science fulfills its highest vocation as a methodetic of self-control and is principally logical.<sup>20</sup> Peirce explains: “[esthetics] is evidently the basic normative science upon which as a foundation, the doctrine of ethics must be reared to be surmounted in its turn by the doctrine of logic” (EP2:143).

However, while this interpretation resolves certain tensions in Peirce’s theory of normative science, it raises problems of its own, and the Introduction concluded with a set of questions focused around the problem of the relationship among the different parts of normative science. Specifically, how is the view of normative science as a physiology of the *summum bonum* related to the view of normative science as a classificatory science or a methodetic? This question raises the problem of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. In Chapters 1 and 2 this problem was framed through an analysis of hedonism. Chapter 1 argued that the refutation of hedonism calls for a phenomenological redescription of the feelings of pleasure and pain, and on the basis of this argument Chapter 2 then attempted to rethink Peirce’s esthetics through phenomenology. While Peirce did not regard hedonism as a serious philosophical threat on its own terms, it is precisely for this reason that he took hedonism so seriously as an objection to his classification of the normative sciences. The argument that the classification of esthetics as a normative science collapses ethics and logic into hedonism amounts to a reduction to absurdity of his theory of normative science. Not surprisingly, then, Peirce’s early work on normative science was centered on answering this objection by showing

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<sup>20</sup> As will be seen, normative logic is conceived pragmatically by Peirce after 1902 as a theory of the formation of habits of conduct through a process that is deliberately controlled. The pragmatic maxim, which is a maxim of normative logic, states that the highest grade of clearness we can obtain with respect to an idea consists in the translation of that idea into a rule for the formation of habits of conduct.

that the assertion of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics does not commit either science to hedonism. Yet, the refutation of hedonism through phenomenology provides only a negative solution to this problem. It opens up the possibility that esthetics might supply principles to ethics and logic, without undermining them as normative sciences, but stops short of giving a positive account of the principle-dependence of either science on esthetics.

Three objections against the normativity of esthetics were formulated in Chapter 1. The first objection states that esthetics is a practical science or art rather than a normative science. This objection is not just concerned narrowly with the classification of esthetics as a normative science; rather, it challenges the classification of esthetics as a theoretical science, too. The second objection that was considered concedes that esthetics is a theoretical science but argues that it is prenormative rather than normative. This objection will be examined more closely in the discussion that follows. The third objection focuses on the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. Once again, this objection states that neither science can be made to depend on esthetics for principles without committing the whole theory of normative science to hedonism.

It was argued in Chapter 1 that the objection from the threat of hedonism is ultimately a variation on the first objection. It challenges the normativity of esthetics by reducing esthetic feeling to a mere quality of feeling and thereby denies the possibility for a theoretical science of esthetics. Peirce successfully answers this objection by showing through a phenomenological analysis of pleasure and pain that pleasure is a secondary feeling “allied to the consciousness of *making a generalization*, in which not Feeling [Quality of Feeling], but rather Cognition, is the principal constituent” (EP2:190). Therefore, the feeling of pleasure properly belongs to the category of Thirdness rather than to the category of pure Firstness. It is a mode of cognition, a

way of knowing the world, rather than the simple and immediate consciousness of the present as present, of the moment “as it is in its singleness, without regard to its relations whether to its own elements or to anything else” (CP 7.540).

However, the argument through which Peirce defends normative science against this objection undermines the normativity of esthetics in another respect by reinforcing the objection that esthetics is a prenominative science. In Chapter 1 the objection that esthetics is prenominative was understood as involving two premises: the first premise states that the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenominative, while the second premise restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. The argument that esthetics is prenominative is stated as follows in the “Minute Logic”: “Now it does not seem to me that [What is good?] is a normative question: it is pre-normative...to ask what is good, not as a means, but in itself; not for a reason, but back of every reason, is a more fundamental investigation. It is to ask a question which every normative science supposes to be already answered” (MS 432.4). This leads Peirce to the conclusion that esthetics is prenominative: “For that which renders logic and ethics peculiarly normative is that nothing can be either logically true or morally good without a purpose to be so...On the other hand, a thing is beautiful or ugly quite irrespective of any purpose to be so. It would seem, therefore, that esthetics is no more essentially normative than any nomological science” (CP 1.575).

The argument that esthetics is prenominative thus reaches, albeit through a different principle, a conclusion analogous to the one reached by the hedonist argument, namely, that esthetic feeling admits of no normative distinction between good and bad. In the hedonist argument this conclusion follows from the fact that the esthetically good is limited to what is actually pleasing to us, while the esthetically bad is what is actually displeasing. Although

feeling admits of a distinction between good and bad, this distinction is not normative. The objection that esthetics is prenormative reaches a similar conclusion. However, it does not derive this conclusion from the principle that the feeling of pleasure is insufficiently reflective to allow for the possibility of controlled deliberation over future conduct, but from the principle that it is *nothing but reflective*.

The argument that theoretical esthetics is prenormative is not confined to Peirce's early work on esthetics in the "Minute Logic," as is sometimes supposed. In fact, after the objection from the threat of hedonism had been answered, this consideration is largely responsible for his "lingering doubt as to their being any true normative science of the beautiful" (EP2:201). For instance, in 1905 Peirce comments, "I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea." This leads him to speculate that esthetics "can be nothing but a branch of ethics" (MS 1334.36). As problematic as this hypothesis is for his classification of the sciences, MS 1334 and other manuscripts suggest that Peirce took it more seriously than might be assumed and that its role in the argument is not merely rhetorical.

For example, in a variant on this discussion from MS 1334, he follows Johann Herbart in subsuming esthetics under ethics:

If we are to admit only two normative sciences, the first of these, which for convenience we call ethics, relating to control of the existent, or say to actualization, and the second to thought, then that first, ethics, must have two sections, the one on the ultimate aim, or *summum bonum*, which will be the same as esthetics, if esthetics is not to be confined to sensuous beauty, but is to relate to the admirable and adorable generally, while the other, which may be called *critical ethics* treats of the conditions of conformity to the ideal (MS 1334.38a).

In a third version of this discussion the whole theory of the *summum bonum* is subsumed under esthetics: "[Ethics] has only two parts according to me; for I turn the whole question of the

*summum bonum* over to *axiagastics*, called esthetics, thus making ethics to depend upon esthetics as many others have done” (MS 1334.40a). *Axiagastics* is defined as “the science of the adorably admirable,” and consists in “the analysis of that which is admirable without any ulterior reason for being admirable” (MS 1334.38). By contrast, ethics is characterized in the same manuscript as “the Science of self-control” and is described as performing two functions, neither of which is physiological: “The first is to describe the operation of self-control...the other part [critical ethics]... tells to what conditions conduct must conform in order to be right” (MS 1334.40a). Ethics and logic are similarly contrasted with esthetics as a science of ideals in MS 1339 (cf. 1339.4a, 12). Peirce explains:

Reasoning is self-controlled thought; and thus Logic is directly dependent on Ethics, or the science of self-control, in general. But self-control depends upon the comparison of what is done with an ideal admirable *per se*, without any ulterior reason. Now the science of that which is admirable without an ulterior reason is Esthetics. Thus Ethics is an application of Esthetics as much as Logic is an application of Ethics (MS 1339.13).

It is precisely because the whole problem of the *summum bonum* is subsumed under esthetics that ethics and logic must depend on it for principles. There is a sense, then, in which the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics has the effect of isolating esthetics from the whole of normative science. This renders the status of esthetics quite precarious. For the same argument through which the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics is established would appear to vindicate the objection that esthetics is a prenormative rather than a normative science.

As we have seen, Peirce comes very close to conceding this objection on more than one occasion. Besides the examples cited above, in draft for “A Sketch of Logical Critic” (1911) he comments that “as usually conceived [esthetics] certainly stands quite apart from the other pair [ethics and logic]” (MS 673.13). Although Peirce does not deny the normativity of esthetics in

this manuscript, he does not fully embrace it either: “The designation ‘normative science,’ meaning a science of what ought to be, was at first limited to ethics and logic. But logic and ethics, however, seem to me to call for a third science to fulfill their ideas, *whether this third science can be identified with esthetics or not*” (673.13, emphasis mine; cf. S673.2). Peirce’s description of what this third science must do helps to explain his ambivalence over its identification with esthetics: “This third study would have for its purpose to make our ideals, our aim conform to what sufficient experience, consideration, and human development generally would tend to make them conform” (673.13). In other words, this third science, in order to “fulfill” the ideas of ethics and logic, must be more than just a *physiology* of the *summum bonum*, as it is “usually conceived.” It must also be a classificatory science and a methodeutic.

In light of Peirce’s account of esthetics in other texts it is understandable that he would have reservations over the fitness of esthetics for both tasks:

Now that which I am deliberately prepared to bring about without any ulterior reason, that is to say, without any ulterior reason at all, must be something that appears to be decidedly esthetically good...But for me to try to bring about, or create one state of things is to try to bring the opposite state of things to naught. In pure esthetics, the one state of things may have its beauty and the opposite state of things may have its beauty. But to strive for one is to strive against the other, so that here I am brought to a dualism. I cannot pronounce one state of things good for me to strive for without *ipso facto* pronouncing the opposite state of things good for me to flee from. There is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment. It is something superadded to the pure esthetic and which, in a sense, is not rational (MS 310.11–12).

It will be recalled that this same line of reasoning had led Peirce to speculate in MS 1334 that esthetics is a branch of ethics, that it is not a normative science apart from the mediation of ethical principles.<sup>21</sup> As I have been arguing, the main alternative to the subsumption of esthetics under ethics is the classification of esthetics as a prenormative science. What is at issue, again,

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<sup>21</sup> Peirce writes: “Moreover, I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea. Esthetics, therefore, can be nothing but a branch of ethics” (MS 1334.36).



in the objection that esthetics is prenormative is whether it exhibits the requisite duality to be classified as a normative science. If it does not, which is the conclusion toward which Peirce is inclined not just in the “Minute Logic,” but in much later manuscripts as well, then it would appear that we are left with only two options regarding its classification: either it is a subdivision of another branch of normative science, most likely ethics; or it is prenormative.

Therefore, an important reason for Peirce’s lingering doubts over the normativity of esthetics after 1902—after the objection from the threat of hedonism had been answered—is that pure esthetic experience would not appear to be sufficiently dualistic to admit of a *normative* distinction between good and bad. Once again, Peirce argues in MS 310 that it admits of no such distinction, and the same conclusion is reached in many other texts, beginning with the “Minute Logic”: “In order to state the question of esthetics in its purity, we should eliminate from it, not merely all consideration of effort, but all consideration of action and reaction, including all consideration of our receiving pleasure, everything in short, belonging to the opposition of the *ego* and the *non-ego*” (CP 1.575). Peirce adds that we do not have “in our language a word of the requisite generality to express the idea of the esthetically good.” He eventually borrows from Greek philosophy the word *kalos*, which should not be translated as “the beautiful” because “one mode of being *kalos* essentially depends upon the quality being unbeautiful” (CP 1.575). In other words, what Peirce objects to in the word beauty is that it implies a distinction between the beautiful and the unbeautiful. That is, this would introduce a dualism foreign to pure esthetic experience.

At the same time, in answering the objection that esthetics is prenormative, it is not necessary to show that the main problem with which esthetics is concerned is the distinction between good and bad ends, nor even that this distinction plays an important role in it. For as we

have seen, even as normative science is set apart from phenomenology by its dualism, the conception of normative science as narrowly classificatory also “exaggerates” the role of this dualism in it: “The dualistic character of the normative sciences must not be exaggerated. It is not that they are occupied with nothing else, but that this sort of distinction occurs in these sciences at all which distinguishes them from all other sciences” (MS 1334.36; cf. MS 478.40a). Likewise, in the Harvard Lectures Peirce states that one of the more “widely spread misconceptions of the nature of normative science...is that the chief, if not the only problem of normative science is to say what is *good* and what *bad*, logically, ethically, and esthetically” (EP2:199). Thus, for the purpose of my argument it will suffice to show *that* pure esthetic experience admits a normative distinction between good and bad. This is what the objection that esthetics is prenormative denies.

## B. A Phenomenology of Pure Esthetic Experience

### 1. The principle-dependence of esthetics on phenomenology

The preceding discussion raised the problem of whether esthetics exhibits the requisite duality to be classified as a normative science. The argument that esthetics is prenormative denies that it does, and Peirce is sympathetic to this position in the “Minute Logic,” among other texts. From this perspective pure esthetic experience excludes “everything in short, belonging to the opposition of the ego and non-ego” (CP 2.199). It excludes not only all instances of effort, struggle, and action and reaction—every phenomenal instance of Secondness—but even phenomena that are usually regarded as purely esthetic, for example, beauty and pleasure. Peirce develops this argument further in MS 310. Beauty and pleasure cannot be purely esthetic phenomena because “for me to try to bring about, or create one state of things is to try to bring

the opposite state of things to naught...to strive for one is to strive against the other, so that here I am brought to a dualism” (MS 310.11). As Peirce observes in 1906, “the feeling of pleasure is the symptom of an attractive feeling. Attraction and repulsion are kinds of action. Feelings are pleasurable or painful according to the kind of action which they stimulate” (EP2:379;cf. EP2:438). According to this argument, pleasure cannot be a purely esthetic phenomenon because, as a feeling of attraction that stimulates us to action, it exhibits “something superadded to the pure esthetic,” namely, duality (MS 310.11).

But in what does pure esthetic experience consist if not in the admiration of the beautiful or a feeling of pleasure? Even as Peirce continues to have doubts over the normativity of esthetics, he never doubts the fact of its principle-dependence on phenomenology. As was argued above, the objection that theoretical esthetics is prenormative is so compelling largely because esthetics is related so intimately to phenomenology. For instance, in MS 478 Peirce states that esthetics “ought, with the aid of observations of its own, to rear its own ideal...directly upon the principles of Phenomenology” (478.34a). In another place he concedes that he is “not well acquainted with this science [esthetics]; but it ought to repose on phenomenology” (CP 1.191). Thus, the classification of esthetics as a normative science partly satisfies a formal requirement of Peirce’s classification of the sciences. Peirce even acknowledges in one unpublished fragment that “unless my whole analysis of Phenomenology is entirely wrong, I can tell what [the three normative sciences] are” (S80). To this extent, in classifying esthetics as a normative science he merely follows “the majority of writers” who recognize three normative sciences “upon the ground that they correspond to three fundamental categories of objects of desire” (CP 1.573). It is upon this foundation that the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics is established in the Harvard Lectures:

In short, ethics must rest upon a doctrine which, without at all considering what our conduct is to be, divides ideally possible states of things into two classes, those that would be admirable and those that would be unadmirable, and undertakes to define precisely what it is that constitutes the admirableness of an ideal. Its problem is to determine by analysis what it is that one ought deliberately to admire *per se* in itself regardless of what it may lead to and regardless of its bearings upon human conduct. I call that inquiry *Esthetics*, because it is generally said that the three normative sciences are logic, ethics, and esthetics, being the three doctrines that distinguish good and bad; *Logic* in regard to representations of truth, *Ethics* in regard to efforts of will, and *Esthetics* in objects considered simply in their presentation (EP2:142–43).

Note Peirce’s admission that he calls the third normative science esthetics because “it is generally said that the three normative sciences are logic, ethics, and esthetics,” which distinguish good and bad, respectively, in regard to the “representation of truth,” “efforts of will,” and “objects considered simply in their presentation.”

The principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics, then, is required in the first place by the principle-dependence of normative science as a whole on phenomenology under Peirce’s classificatory scheme. In fact, at this point Peirce is more convinced that his classification of the sciences calls for a third normative science upon which ethics and logic depend for principles than he is that this third normative science is esthetics. However, this account of the normativity of esthetics fails to explain how ethical and logical principles are incipient already in esthetic experience; rather, it begins with logic and then reasons back, first, to the phenomenological priority of the ethically good and, second, to the phenomenological priority of the esthetically good. The logically good must be a species of the ethically good because thought is a kind of action, Secondness is irreducible in all Thirdness; and the ethically good must be a species of the esthetically good because we cannot inquire into the ultimate end of action without first giving an account of what “reasonably recommends itself in itself.” Firstness is phenomenologically prior to and irreducible in all Secondness and Thirdness.

Instead, what is needed is an account of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on

esthetics that begins with esthetic experience, rather than reasoning back to it from ethical and logical principles, and then proceeds to show how esthetic experience, as it is “open to the daily and hourly observation of very man and woman,” grounds both ethics and logic. Potter comes close to giving such an account when he observes that “in the case of the ultimate ideal or *summum bonum*, of course, its deliberate adoption is conditioned only by its recognition, since refusal to make it one’s own would involve the living contradiction of a rational man using his reason in order to be irrational” (Potter 51). But his explanation for why the “deliberate adoption” of the *summum bonum* is conditioned only by its recognition resorts to a transcendental argument that is inconsistent with Peirce’s pragmatism: “The recognition of the *summum bonum* is a question of comparing experience with the transcendental condition of such an ultimate, namely, that it is such that it can be pursued in any and every circumstance. Thus when the pursuit of an ideal is rendered impossible it cannot be ultimate ” (51). I will approach this problem from a different angle by considering Peirce’s analysis of pure esthetic experience.

## 2. Pure esthetic experience

Chapter 2 concluded with a phenomenological analysis of the feelings of pleasure and pain. It was argued that contrary to what is supposed in the hedonist argument, the feeling of pleasure is not a mere quality of feeling. It is a *secondary feeling*, and as such is a mode of the “consciousness of making a generalization” properly belonging to the category of Thirdness. On a few occasions Peirce draws an analogy between this feeling of pleasure and esthetic feeling, and in this section I will explore this analogy further.

The first distinction that must be drawn is between esthetic feeling and quality of feeling. It will be remembered from Chapter 2 that the quality of feeling is the “pure indescribable *quale*” (EP1:283). It is “a present consciousness, or awareness, that has its own suchness, without

involving any reference to anything else, without any comparison, without any distinction” (MS 681.8); or as Peirce explains in a letter to James, it is “the sort of element that makes red to be *such as it is*, whatever anything else may be” (CP 8.267). The pure quality of feeling is thus an analogue of pure Firstness. It is “an instance of that kind of consciousness which involves no analysis, comparison or any process whatsoever...which has its own positive quality which consists in nothing else, and which is of itself all that it is, however it may have been brought about” (CP 1.307).

The main fallacy involved in the hedonist argument lies in reducing the feeling of pleasure, first, to a feeling of satisfaction and, second, to a quality of feeling. From this the argument concludes that, as a quality of feeling, the feeling of pleasure, or any feeling for that matter, admits of no normative distinction between good and bad, better or worse, ends. The good is *simply* what pleases, the bad is *simply* what is painful, and neither feeling is sufficiently conscious (cf. CP 1.310) to admit the possibility for the exercise of deliberate self-control over future conduct. That is, we are not capable of forming a conception of what we *ought* to desire that is not already thoroughly determined by what actually pleases or displeases us.

An important premise in Peirce’s refutation of hedonism through phenomenology states that the feeling of pleasure does not have the categorial structure of a mere quality of feeling. It is a secondary feeling and belongs to the category of Thirdness. As we have seen, primary and secondary feelings were distinguished by Peirce as early as 1872. Secondary, or complex, feelings are “feelings which are caused by previous feelings [which at some level are “incomplex” feelings or elements of feelings]...according to the laws of the association of ideas” (W3:33-34). The simple, immediate feeling—the pure, indescribable quality of feeling—is not meaningful. Feeling becomes meaningful only when “a certain complication of feelings may

give rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). Peirce explains: “For a feeling to mean anything there must be another feeling which means that it means something, and indeed there must be an indefinite series of these feelings... In other words, thought cannot be comprehended in terms of the feelings which are its ultimate elements,—it is a continuum of feelings, & is related to a feeling as a line to a point” (W3:39). This is consistent with his analysis of secondary feeling in the 1900s as “the emotion of the *tout ensemble*” (CP 1.311), or as the generalization of more primary feelings (EP2:190, 379).

Esthetic feeling is a feeling in this sense. It is a secondary feeling. As quoted above, and here Peirce is identifying esthetic feeling with pleasure, it is “a peculiar mode of consciousness allied to the consciousness of *making a generalization*, in which not Feeling, but rather Cognition, is the principle constituent.” Esthetic feeling is a form of cognition because it consists in the generalization, the association, of more primary feelings. However, it is also a form of feeling to the extent that what it represents, what it generalizes, is “something in the Category of Quality of Feeling” (EP2:190).

But it is not enough to distinguish esthetic feeling from the quality of feeling. It also must be distinguished from other secondary feelings. Esthetic feeling is understood in the Harvard Lectures as arising when “a multitude of parts [are] so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality...*no matter what the particular quality of the total may be*” (EP2:201, emphasis mine). That there is no quality common to all esthetic feeling is what distinguishes esthetic feeling from other secondary feelings. On this point, once again, Peirce draws an important analogy between esthetic feeling and pleasure: “I am unable to recognize with confidence any quality of feeling common to all *pains* [or pleasures]...these phenomena do not mainly consist in any common Feeling-quality of Pleasure

or any common Feeling-quality of Pain, even if there are such Qualities of Feeling” (EP2:189–90). Thus, he concludes that it would be “a great mistake to suppose that the phenomena of pleasure and pain are *mainly* phenomena of feeling” (EP2:189, emphasis mine). (It should be noted that Peirce is not here denying that pleasure and pain are feelings; as quoted above, pleasure and pain “arise within the universe of states of mind and attain no great prominence except when they concern states of mind in which Feeling is predominant” (EP2:190). His point is that feeling, in the sense of a *quality of feeling*, is not the only element of either phenomenon.)

It will be useful at this juncture to consider Peirce’s analysis of the emotional interpretant from 1907 (which will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter): “The first proper significante effect of a sign is a feeling produced by it. There is almost always a feeling which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign, although the foundation of truth in this is frequently very slight” (CP 5.475). This concept is explained through a musical analogy: “Thus, the performance of a piece of concerted music is a sign. It conveys, and is intended to convey, the composer’s musical ideas; but these usually consist merely in a series of feelings” (5.475). According to Peirce’s doctrine of signs, all cognition is a process of semiosis, involving the interpretation of a sign in some third term, that is, the representation of an object for an interpretant. But while every interpretant is *potentially* a sign for future semiosis, not every interpretant is *actually* itself a sign. Some interpretants are feelings or actions, emotional or energetic interpretants. In fact, the ultimate logical interpretant cannot be a mere sign (5.491). It must be a habit. Semiosis must terminate in “the embodiment [of signs] in something else than symbols” (EP2:388; cf. MS 1334.42), otherwise it would be infinitely progressive.

While I am not suggesting that every emotional interpretant is an esthetic feeling, the



esthetic feeling is for Peirce the emotional interpretant *par excellence*, which explains why he develops the idea of the emotional interpretant through analogies with art. The esthetic feeling is the paradigmatic case of the emotional interpretant because through it we reflect upon the process through which secondary feelings arise, through which “a certain complication of feelings [gives] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). In other words, we reflect upon the very conditions under which feeling first becomes meaningful. Peirce develops this idea of esthetic feeling as a process of reflection in his account of esthetics as *axiagastics*, or the science of “what is worthy of adoration,” in MS 1334: “I hold that the science must consist in the analysis of that which is admirable without any ulterior reason for being admirable, or in other words, the analysis of what it is that excites that feeling akin to worship that fills one’s whole life in the contemplation of an idea that excites this feeling” (1334.39a). Esthetics is here defined as the contemplation of an idea, the idea of that which is eminently worthy of worship or adoration—that which is admirable without any ulterior reason. And what is eminently worthy of worship is nothing but the idea that excites this same feeling of worship or adoration. This account of the relationship between esthetic feeling and the idea that is the object of its admiration involves a circularity that will be addressed at a later point. What I hope to have established right now is that esthetic feeling is conceived, from one perspective, as the contemplation of the process through which this same feeling arises.

More must be said, however, about how secondary feelings function as signs. No sign can signify apart from a quality of feeling. All signs, even thought-signs functioning at the highest level of abstraction, are irreducibly iconic. Icons are distinguished from other signs, indices and symbols, because they do not just involve a quality of feeling. They signify *through* this quality of feeling. A statue is an example of an iconic sign. The statue of a famous person

functions as a sign by virtue of resembling this person, and it resembles this person because it has certain qualities in common with her. Feelings, to the extent that they are significant apart from higher signs, are iconic signs; that is, they signify through a quality of feeling.

Consider the example of a loud noise that wakes someone up at night from a heavy sleep. The “first proper significate effect,” that is, the first interpretant, of the loud noise will be an emotional interpretant, very likely a more or less vague feeling of danger. Even though this feeling may manifest itself differently depending on the situation, there is nonetheless a quality common to all feelings of danger, and it is through this common quality that it is able to function as an interpretant for the loud noise, apart from the production of higher interpretants, such as an energetic interpretant (for instance, the act of jumping out of bed) or a logical interpretant (for instance, the hypothesis that an intruder has shattered a window).

However, if there is no quality of feeling common to all esthetic feeling, how is it possible for the esthetic feeling to function as an interpretant for other feelings? How is anything ever cognized through this feeling? The answer to this question requires that we distinguish two phenomena that frequently are conflated, even at times by Peirce: the esthetic quality and the esthetic feeling. Peirce comments in the fourth Harvard Lecture that in esthetic experience “we attend to the totality of Feeling,” or, more precisely, to “the total resultant Quality of Feeling” imparted to it (EP2:190). This “total resultant quality of Feeling” is the esthetic quality. The esthetic quality is distinguished from other qualities of feeling because it is not identified with any particular quality; rather, as was seen above, any object the parts of which are related so as to impart a “positive simple immediate quality,” which is the esthetic quality, “to their totality” is esthetically good, “no matter what the particular quality of the total may be” (EP2:201).

A draft for this lecture further illuminates the categorial structure of the esthetic quality.

It will be remembered from Chapter 2 that the mere quality of feeling is an analogue for pure Firstness. The esthetic quality is also an instance of pure Firstness, only it is an instance of the Firstness that is irreducible in genuine Thirdness rather than pure Firstness as it is in itself, prescinded from Secondness and Thirdness. 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” (MS 310.9).

Esthetic feeling was distinguished above from other secondary feelings by virtue of the fact that there is no quality common to all esthetic feeling. However, this point must be revisited now that a distinction has been drawn between the esthetic quality and other qualities of feeling. For the statement that there is no quality common to all esthetic feeling is somewhat misleading. There is a quality common to all esthetic feeling, only this quality is not particular in the way that the qualities common to other secondary feelings are. It is an esthetic quality. What the esthetic feeling cognizes, interprets, through this esthetic quality—which is any simple, immediate, positive quality imparted to a totality of Feeling—is the process through which a totality of feeling, regardless of the particular quality imparted to it, becomes significant, that is, capable of signifying through a quality of feeling. However, even this conception of esthetic experience is still too narrow. The esthetic feeling does not just reflect on the process through which a feeling becomes significant; more generally, it reflects on the process through which an idea, or general rule, is instantiated phenomenally in a feeling in the first place. To quote MS 310 again: the esthetic quality is “the impress of a Reasonableness that creates.”

The influence of Kant (through the mediating influence of Schiller, as always) on Peirce’s esthetics is unmistakable on this point. For Kant esthetic feeling is a form of reflective

judgment. The harmonization of the faculties of the imagination and understanding is a universal and necessary condition for cognition in any being for whom knowledge consists in the correspondence of a concept and an object presented through sensuous intuition. The esthetic feeling is an effect of the harmonization of these two faculties (or of the mediation of the sensuous drive and the formal drive through the play drive, in the case of Schiller). Through it we thus reflect on an important subjective condition for human cognition. For Peirce esthetic feeling is similarly reflective. Moreover, just as for Kant this feeling reflects on a universal and necessary condition for all cognition, the esthetic feeling for Peirce does not just express a condition for the enjoyment of works of art or natural beauty. Through it we reflect on feeling as a constituent element of all reasoning, of all genuine Thirdness. In fact, esthetic feeling plays such a vital role in reasoning of all kinds that Peirce in one manuscript remarks that he does not “see how any student of reasoning at all worthy of this twentieth century can leave unstudied the question of the logical value of this esthetic quality of reasoning” (MS 681.7–8).<sup>22</sup>

The role of esthetic feeling in abduction deserves special consideration. As Peirce understands it in 1878, hypothetic inference, or abduction, is a process through which a “single conception” is substituted for “a complicated tangle of predicates attached to one subject” (EP1:199; cf. EP1:42). This process is always accompanied, in varying degrees of intensity, by “a peculiar sensation belonging to the act of thinking that each of these predicates inheres in the subject,” and this sensation is analogous to esthetic feeling:

In hypothetic inference this complicated feeling so produced is replaced by a single feeling of greater intensity, that belonging to the act of thinking the hypothetic conclusion. Now, when our nervous system is excited in a complicated way, there being a relation between the elements of the excitation, the result is a single harmonious

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<sup>22</sup>Peirce further explains that “in an age of the world in which excessive sentimentalism seems to many strong minds to be threatening the welfare, perhaps the perpetuation, of the human race, it strikes me that it would be almost criminal for a student of reasoning to neglect the duty of inquiring just how far a reasoner ought to be influenced by the beauty or pleasurableness of this or that opinion” (681.8).

disturbance which I call an emotion. Thus, the various sounds made by the instruments of an orchestra strike upon the ear, and the result is a peculiar musical emotion, quite distinct from the sounds themselves. This emotion is essentially the same thing as an hypothetic inference, and every hypothetic inference involves the formation of such an emotion (EP2:198–9).

All reasoning involves the substitution of such “a single feeling of greater intensity” for a “complicated tangle” of feelings (EP1:199). The esthetic quality of course is not the same as this single feeling. In hypothetic inference the simple immediate quality imparted to a complicated feeling is always particular. By contrast, in esthetic experience we are led to reflect on the process through which a simple immediate quality is imparted to any totality of Feeling “no matter what the particular quality of the total may be” (EP2:201).

On this account of esthetic experience, the esthetically good is nothing but the process through which experience becomes esthetic. As Peirce argues in MS 1334, what is admirable apart from any ulterior reason is anything that “excites that feeling akin to worship that fills one’s whole life in the contemplation of an idea that excites this feeling” (MS 1334.40). In other words, the esthetically good is a form of contemplation. More precisely, it is the contemplation of the process through which feeling is moved to such contemplation. Or considered from the standpoint of the object of esthetic feeling, “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” (EP2:201). This objective account of the esthetically good, as the property of an esthetic object, is actually much closer to the subjective account of the esthetically good that is presented in MS 1334 and other texts than might be supposed. For what makes an object good is not the particular quality imparted to it but the mere fact that its parts are “so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality [the esthetic quality] to

their totality.” The esthetic quality is not literally imparted to the object—after all, Peirce emphatically rejects the identification of the esthetic quality with any particular quality belonging to the object; rather, it belongs to the presentation of the object in esthetic feeling.

This interpretation is supported by Peirce’s discussions of esthetics in the Harvard lectures. In the first lecture esthetics is characterized as distinguishing between good and bad in regard to “objects considered simply in their presentation” (EP2:143). In the second lecture, “On Phenomenology,” Peirce further explains that esthetics studies “what is good and bad...in the realm of feeling,” while ethics and logic study the good and bad in the realm of action and thought, respectively (EP2:147). The three normative sciences all study the same object; however, they study this object in different realms. To study an object simply in its presentation, in its simple, immediate presence, is to study that object in the realm of feeling. As Peirce states in Lecture IV in the context of a discussion of art: “in esthetic enjoyment we attend to the totality of Feeling...to the total resultant Quality of Feeling presented in the work of art we are contemplating” (EP2:190). He goes on to describe this totality of Feeling as “a sort of intellectual sympathy, a sense that here is a feeling that one can comprehend, a reasonable feeling” (EP2:190). This is the esthetic feeling.

Furthermore, given Peirce’s position that pure esthetic experience excludes any distinction between ego and non-ego, there is a sense in which it is misleading to even talk about an esthetic object. Everything that might distinguish subject and object, everything that might constitute an object over and against a subject, must be eliminated from consideration. In pure esthetic experience we attend to the phenomenon only in its simple immediate presence, and the simple and most immediate (though never unmediated) way in which anything appears is as feeling. For the same reason, esthetic feeling cannot merely be subjective either. Even as Peirce

agrees with Kant's esthetics to the extent that esthetic feeling is reflective and the "object" of this reflection is the esthetic feeling itself; they disagree about the phenomenal character of this feeling. For Kant it expresses a merely subjective condition for human understanding. By contrast, for Peirce the esthetically good is not anymore subjective than it is objective. Through esthetic feeling we do not just reflect on a condition for understanding the world—the process through which feeling becomes cognitive; more importantly, we reflect on a universal condition for appearance as such, that is, on feeling as the first irreducible element of, the first realm in which, anything *might* appear phenomenally at all. As Peirce asserts in a manuscript from 1911, "our feelings are the exclusive vessels in which all our information is brought to us" (MS 671.9a).

### C. Normative Esthetics as a Classificatory Science

#### 1. Restatement of the objection that esthetics is prenormative

The first part of this chapter argued that once the objection from hedonism had been answered, Peirce's "lingering doubt" over the normativity of esthetics was motivated by the objection that esthetics is prenormative. This objection, again, consists of two parts: first, it denies that the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative; second, it restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. More generally, this objection raises the problem of whether pure esthetic experience even admits of a normative distinction between good and bad. In other words, it raises the problem of whether esthetics is in any sense a classificatory science. The classificatory part of normative science, as described in MS 478, studies the distinction between good and bad. For esthetics to be classified as a normative science, it must be shown that it has a classificatory part. It is not enough, however, just to establish that a distinction between good

and bad is drawn in esthetics. It must be shown that this distinction is normative for future conduct.

This problem is symptomatic of a deeper tension between phenomenology and ethics that is by no means peculiar to Peirce's classification of the sciences. For example, in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* this tension gives rise to the famous Third Antinomy. Kant dissolves this antinomy and secures a foundation for freedom and morality only by insisting upon a rigid distinction between phenomenology and moral philosophy, between a phenomenal world, which is governed by natural law and is thus deterministic, and a noumenal world, which is governed by moral law, under which we are free (in the sense of being autonomous, that is, self-legislating or self-determining). While this solution to the antinomy allows Kant to embrace both natural philosophy and moral philosophy, without diluting the laws of either, the cost to the latter is enormous: for it has the effect of exiling morality from the world of experience.

More recently, questions over the relationship between phenomenology and ethics have been addressed to the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. For example, in *The Question of Ethics* Charles Scott argues that from the perspective of Heidegger's phenomenology "Being is beyond values and valuing and puts ethics as such in question" (Scott 189). The closest thing to an ethical principle which Heidegger's phenomenology supports is the idea of "letting beings be." Heidegger explains: "How is this essence of freedom to be thought? That which is opened up, that to which a presentative statement as correct corresponds, are beings opened up in an open comportment. Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be."

As I have argued, the debate over the principle-dependence of ethics on esthetics confronts Peirce's theory of normative science with a similar set of issues. The view of esthetics



as prenormative is not in itself problematic. This becomes a problem for Peirce's classification of the sciences because the transition from phenomenology to ethics is carried out through esthetics. If esthetics is unfit to fulfill this role, then normative science must be grounded in phenomenology through another science.

## 2. The arguments against a classificatory science of esthetics

### a. There is no normative distinction between esthetic goodness and badness

The argument for why our contemplation of the esthetically good in esthetic feeling is not normative was laid out in Part A, so I will limit myself here to a restatement of its main points.

Peirce originally formulates this objection in the "Minute Logic":

For that which renders logic and ethics peculiarly normative is that nothing can be either logically true or morally good without a purpose to be so. For a proposition, and especially the conclusion of an argument, which is only accidentally true is not logical. On the other hand, a thing is beautiful or ugly quite irrespective of any purpose to be so. It would seem, therefore, that esthetics is no more essentially normative than any nomological science (CP 1.575).

In another version of this discussion from a separate draft Peirce states that "to ask what is good, not as a means, but in itself; not for a reason, but back of every reason, is a more fundamental investigation. It is to ask a question which every normative science supposes to be already answered" (MS 432.4). From this it is concluded that the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative. The *summum bonum* is what is admirable in itself apart from any ulterior reason. However, normative science, as it is conceived here, does not study what is admirable in itself. Instead, it studies the claim that what is admirable in itself makes on us, the purpose through which conduct is made to conform to it.

Although Peirce has doubts over whether the theory of the *summum bonum* belongs to normative science, he consistently distinguishes between the theory of the *summum bonum* and

the theory of conditions under which conduct conforms to it. For instance, in MS 693 he distinguishes between two parts of normative science: the first part inquires into what the ultimate purpose governing conduct is (which may or may not be the *summum bonum*); the second part inquires into the “general conditions that must hold good...for the realization of [this] end” (MS 693a). In other texts (cf. MS 478, MS 1334), Peirce further divides the second part of normative science into a classificatory part, which studies “the general distinction of the good and bad” or “the classification of possible [good and bad] forms,” and methodetic, which studies “the principles that govern the production of such forms” (MS 478.40–42a). In other words, the part of normative science which studies the “general conditions that must hold good for the realization of the end” is divided in this manuscript into the study of the conditions under which conduct conforms to its proper ends and the study of the process through which this happens. The salient point here is that both questions are distinct from the question of what this proper end is in the first place.

Peirce similarly distinguishes among three normative questions in the “Adirondack Summer School Lectures” from 1905 (MS 1334). However, in contrast to MS 478, which recognizes a physiological part of all three normative sciences, the theory of the *summum bonum* is subsumed in this manuscript under esthetics, while ethics and logic are understood as sciences of self-control, each consisting of two parts. The “critical” part of ethics and logic, which is essentially classificatory, inquires in “to what conditions conduct must conform in order to be right.” The other part “describe[s] the operation of self-control” and thus fulfills the same function as what Peirce calls methodetic in MS 478. Again, the important development here involves the restriction of esthetics to the question of what the *summum bonum* is, and, conversely, the exclusion of physiology from ethics and logic. MS 1339 carries this

classificatory principle one step further and characterizes logic as nomological (that is, as the study of the principles or laws for the production of good forms of conduct), ethics as classificatory (that is, as the classification of *possible*<sup>23</sup> forms of conduct as good or bad), and aesthetics as descriptive (that is, as a physiology of what is good in itself).

As was argued above, even though Peirce continues to classify aesthetics as a normative science, it is not yet clear how aesthetics can be normative apart from the mediation of either ethics or logic. The issue here is not that aesthetics recognizes no distinction between good and bad. The account of aesthetics with which we presently are concerned allows for the possibility that it does. The problem is that it is not clear that the distinction between good and bad, as it is occurs in aesthetics, is at all normative. To quote Christine Korsgaard in *The Sources of Normativity*, normative standards “do not merely *describe* a way in which we in fact regulate our conduct. They make *claims* on us; they command, oblige, recommend, or guide...When I say that an action is right I am saying that you ought to *do* it; when I say that something is good I am recommending it as worthy of your choice” (Korsgaard 8–9). Although the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is certainly not a descriptive study of how we actually are affected by things, it also is not yet clear how it commands or obliges us in the manner that normative standards must.

This discussion raises an important distinction between two ideas of the *summum bonum*: as what is admirable in itself, apart from any ulterior reason, and as the ultimate aim or purpose governing conduct. The latter is obviously normative. We cannot recognize an aim as ultimate without at some level feeling the force of the ought, as Kant would say, even if we choose to disregard it. The expulsion of the theory of the *summum bonum* from normative science in the “Minute Logic” follows from the identification of the *summum bonum* with the admirable in

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<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that the classificatory part of normative science studies the classification of *possible*, as opposed to *actual*, forms of conduct. The difference between normative science and practical science hinges largely on this distinction.

itself. That is, what normative science “supposes to be already answered” is not the question of what aims or purposes are ultimate—this problem without question belongs to normative science as far as Peirce is concerned—but the question of what the admirable in itself is, with reference to which a purpose and aim may be recognized as ultimate.

It is the normativity of this question over which Peirce has lingering doubts. If esthetics is nothing but a theory of the *summum bonum*, how could it ever fulfill the basic functions of normative science? Even if the importance of the distinction between good and bad for normative science has been exaggerated, as Peirce argues it has been (cf. EP2:199, MS 478.40, MS 1334.36–37a), it nonetheless still must be shown that a truly normative distinction between good and bad, one that is regulative for future conduct, is drawn in esthetics. And as we have seen, Peirce continues to have reservations over whether this is the case long after the “Minute Logic.” Even as late as 1911, in a draft for “A Sketch of Logical Critic,” he acknowledges that ethics and logic call for a third normative science, but he is not yet convinced that this third normative science is esthetics. And given the functions that this third normative science must perform, his reservations over the normativity of esthetics at this stage are understandable as long as esthetics is limited to the theory of the *summum bonum*: “This third study would have for its purpose to make our ideas, our aim conform to what sufficient experience [as opposed to behavior or thinking], consideration, and human development generally would tend to make them conform” (MS 673.13).

Once again, whether or not esthetics can fulfill these functions depends on whether a truly normative distinction between good and bad can be drawn at the level of pure esthetic experience. As was quoted above, in a draft for the 1903 Harvard Lectures Peirce argues that the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is not normative for the reason that “I cannot pronounce

one state of things good for me to strive for without *ipso facto* pronouncing the opposite state of things good for me to flee from.” This leads esthetics to a dualism which “does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment” (MS 310.11–12). Note that this passage leaves open the possibility for an esthetic distinction between good and bad. MS 310 does not exclude all duality from esthetics, just a duality that would require us to comport ourselves in such a way that we strive for one thing and against another. But it is for this very reason that Peirce had concluded that esthetics is prenormative in the “Minute Logic”—because “a thing is beautiful or ugly quite irrespective of any purpose to be so,” that is, apart from our striving after it or not (CP 1.575).

b. There is no esthetic goodness or badness

The first argument against a classificatory science of esthetics concedes that there may be an esthetic distinction between good and bad but denies that this distinction, at least as it is contemplated in pure esthetic experience, is normative. Instead, this distinction is merely descriptive, even phenomenological. The second argument challenges the normativity of esthetics in a more profound way. For it not only denies that esthetics draws a normative distinction between good and bad; the second argument denies even that esthetics admits of a distinction between good and bad at all. As Peirce acknowledges in the 1903 Harvard Lectures: “I am seriously inclined to doubt there being any distinction of pure esthetic betterness and worseness. My notion would be that there are innumerable varieties of esthetic quality, but no purely esthetic grade of excellence” (EP2:202). In what follows I will examine the arguments that lead Peirce on occasion to adopt the position that there is no pure esthetic goodness or badness.

To begin with, in the 1903 Harvard Lectures the idea that there is no esthetic goodness is forced on Peirce by his description, which I have characterized as phenomenological, of pure

esthetic experience. Once again, the esthetic feeling is distinguished from other secondary feelings because there is no quality of feeling common to all esthetic feeling. Any simple, immediate quality of feeling imparted to a totality is esthetic “no matter what the particular quality of the total may be.” This means that there “will be various esthetic qualities, that is, simple qualities of totalities...” (EP2:201). This statement requires further comment. Peirce does not deny that the esthetic quality is a particular quality, just that the particular character of the simple, immediate quality imparted to a whole makes a difference as to whether a quality is esthetic or not.

It is this feature of esthetic feeling, that, on the one hand, the esthetic quality represented in it is *innumerably* various and, on the other hand, that any simple immediate quality imparted to a totality is esthetic regardless of its particular character, that leads Peirce to conclude that there is “no purely esthetic grade of excellence” (EP2:201). For on this account of esthetic feeling “whatever does this [imparts a simple immediate quality to a totality] is, in so far, esthetically good, no matter what the particular quality of the total may be.” This applies even to things which might actually disgust us: “If that quality be such as to nauseate us, to scare us, or otherwise to disturb us to the point of throwing us out of the mood of esthetic enjoyment, out of the mood of simply contemplating the embodiment of the quality...then the object remains nonetheless esthetically good, although people in our condition are incapacitated from a calm esthetic contemplation of it” (EP2:201). Peirce makes this same point in a draft for this lecture: “I believe that that Glory shines out in everything like the sun and that any esthetic odiousness is merely Unfeelingness resulting from obscurations due to our own moral and intellectual aberration” (MS 310.9). Finally, this “opinion” is stated even more bluntly in the Lowell Lectures: “all esthetic disgust is due to defective insight and narrowness of sympathy” (MS

478:40).

By way of an example, Peirce notes that the Alps at one time affected people differently than they do now. The Alps did not impress people with “a sublime sense of operative Thirdness” but were dreaded as “nightmare terrors.” He explains: “The oppressive sense of Secondness was there, while their minds were not awake to the Thirdness” (MS 310.10; cf. EP2:201). This example raises two important issues. First, it suggests that an esthetic education consists not so much in fine-tuning one’s powers of discrimination, as is often supposed, but in overcoming this tendency, in correcting “defective insight” and broadening “narrowness of sympathy” by perfecting a capacity for feeling that has been obscured as a result of certain “moral and intellectual aberrations.”<sup>24</sup> This is done by “throwing” oneself back into a “pure naïve state”: “I venture to think that the esthetic state of mind is purest when perfectly naïve without any critical pronouncement, and that the esthetic critic founds his judgments upon the result of throwing himself back into such a pure naïve state,—and the best critic is the man who has trained himself to do this most perfectly” (EP2:189). In effect, what Peirce is arguing is that esthetic disgust, the very distinction between the esthetically good and bad, arises as a result of an inability to remain in a purely esthetic mood. Far from being a form of esthetic feeling, disgust is a symptom of a certain “unfeelingness”; in other words, it is quite literally the mark of a non-esthetic attitude.

This brings me to my second point. We are prevented from reposing in an esthetic attitude whenever a certain duality, what Peirce characterizes as an “oppressive sense of

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<sup>24</sup> Peirce at one point distinguishes among three faculties required for phenomenology: a faculty of observation, a faculty of discrimination, and a faculty of generalization. On this account of esthetics, an esthetic education is concerned with perfecting the faculty of observation and the faculty of generalization, but has very little, if anything, to do with the faculty of discrimination. This touches on a difference between normative and applied esthetics for Peirce. Normative esthetics reflects on the form of esthetic experience, the conditions under which any feeling becomes cognitive/significant; by contrast, applied esthetics studies how particular feelings are differently cognitive/significant. The task of discriminating among the innumerable various esthetic qualities is thus a problem for applied rather than normative esthetics.

Secondness,” intrudes on esthetic experience. I cannot declare something good, at least in a normative sense, “without *ipso facto* pronouncing the opposite state of things good for me to flee.” Thus, Peirce concludes that “there is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment” (310.11). This sharp dualism, this “element of Secondness, of Reaction,” is something “superadded to the pure esthetic,” and is what distinguishes esthetic and ethical experience (310.12). As Peirce argues in the published version of this lecture, “the morally good will be the esthetically good specially determined by a peculiar superadded element” (EP2:201). The element superadded to esthetic experience that specially determines ethical experience is Secondness, or Reaction, which is precisely what must be eliminated from all consideration in a purely esthetic mood (CP 2.199).

This line of reasoning reinforces the idea, advanced in MS 1334 among other places, that all approval and disapproval of conduct is essentially ethical; or put differently, we cannot pronounce something good or bad in any sense without adopting an ethical point of view. For the approval or disapproval of conduct always involves the intrusion of a sharp dualism into esthetic experience that is inherently non-esthetic and prevents us from reposing in an esthetic mood.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as Peirce argues in the Lowell Lectures, “no form is esthetically bad, if regarded from the strictly esthetical point of view, without any idea of adopting the form in conduct” (EP2:272). The distinction between good and bad, even a merely descriptive one (since on this account it is not possible to recognize something as good without striving for it, or at least feeling as if one ought to do so), always carries with it the idea that we ought to adopt

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<sup>25</sup> Peirce reaches a similar conclusion, though through a slightly different argument, in the 1903 Harvard Lectures: “Ethics—the genuine normative science of ethics, as contradistinguished from the branch of anthropology which in our day often passes under the name of ethics— this genuine ethics is the normative science *par excellence*, because an *end*—the essential object of normative science—is germane to a voluntary act in a primary way in which it is germane to nothing else. For that reason I have some lingering doubt as to there being any true normative science of the beautiful” (EP2:201).



what is good as a possible form of conduct. But to do this is to assume an ethical rather than an esthetic attitude. As Peirce puts it, the “squeamishness” we feel over things that repel us “results from a contemplation of them as possible qualities of our own handiwork—but that is a *moral* and not an *esthetic* way of considering them” (EP2:199). An idea appears good or bad only when we consider *conceivably* doing something with it (cf. 1334.36).

This argument yields two conclusions. First of all, there can be no *pure* esthetic goodness or badness. Second, to the extent that esthetics can be regarded as a normative science at all—and the first idea casts doubt on whether it can be regarded as normative in any sense—esthetics is normative only through the mediation of ethics. That is, any misconceived notions we might have of the esthetically good or bad arise only through the superaddition of an element of Secondness or Reaction, which is principally ethical, to esthetic experience. This is why Peirce considers subsuming esthetics under ethics in the “Adirondack Summer School Lectures” (1905): “I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea. Esthetics, therefore, can be nothing but a branch of ethics” (MS 1334.36). Or as Peirce comments in a draft for a “Sketch of Logical Critic” (1911): “Is esthetics [a normative science]? One would say no if everything is already perfectly beautiful” (S673.2). For if everything is esthetically good, even if it might not actually appear so to us now (due to our defective insight), nothing can be esthetically good in a normative way. If we attend to phenomena in their simple presentation, there is no good and bad, there is only appearance.

As was stated above, this argument diverges from the first argument considered because it denies that esthetics recognizes even of a descriptive distinction between good and bad; that is, it denies that esthetics allows for any recognition of good or bad whatsoever. This is because the

distinction between good and bad can never be purely descriptive, which is precisely why Peirce argues in the Harvard Lectures that nothing can be good or bad phenomenologically (cf. EP2:198–99). Any pronouncement that something is good, or even just the recognition of the good in itself, makes a normative claim; that is, it involves the approval or disapproval of it as a possible form of conduct. And we cannot approve or disapprove of an idea without striving for or against another idea, without adopting it or rejecting it as a possible form of conduct. Any claim that something is good immediately confronts us with a duality which removes us from a purely esthetic, or phenomenological, attitude. At this moment esthetic experience becomes ethical.

Although both arguments thus agree that we have no normative conception of the esthetically good, they disagree as to when and how the idea of the good in itself becomes normative. The first argument allows that a descriptive distinction between good and bad might precede, at least phenomenologically, our approval/disapproval of these ideas as possible forms of conduct. The second argument denies that a purely descriptive distinction between good and bad is even possible. The recognition of the *summum bonum* involves the approval of it; and there can be no approval of an idea without doing something with it, that is, adopting it as a *possible* form of conduct, even if we ultimately choose not to act on this idea (cf. MS 1334.36). As Peirce observes in the Harvard Lectures: “But the instant that an esthetic ideal is proposed as an ultimate end of action, at that instant a categorical imperative pronounces for or against it” (EP2:202). This statement once again raises an important distinction between the theory of the *summum bonum* and the theory of the ultimate aim or purpose governing conduct. Peirce has no doubt that the latter question is normative. The issue here is whether the pure theory of the *summum bonum* is normative or prenormative, and if it is normative, whether it can be “proposed

as an ultimate end of action” apart from the mediation of ethics. Peirce would appear to conclude in the 1903 Harvard Lectures that this cannot be the case, inasmuch as “at that instant a categorical imperative pronounces for or against it.”<sup>26</sup>

One implication of this argument for normative science as a whole is that normative goodness is negative. Beings for whom there is no incongruity between how things actually are and how they ought to be (such as gods and angels, to borrow Kant’s examples) would have no need for normative science. Peirce argues in 1905: “It is the bad that is the positive idea; and the good is merely that from which the bad is absent.” He then qualifies this statement by adding that this is not “so in general; but it is so from the point of view of the normative sciences. The right is the matter of course; the wrong is the marked character” (MS 1334.36). The same negative account of normative goodness is presented in the fifth Harvard Lecture. First, a distinction is drawn between quantitative goodness, which is the degree to which something attains goodness, and negative goodness, which is “freedom from fault” (EP2:199; cf. EP2:191). Normative science is not concerned with the former kind of goodness, with the question of what phenomenon “is *good* and what *bad*, logically, ethically, and esthetically; or what degree of goodness a given description of phenomenon attains” (EP2:199). Rather, it studies negative goodness.

This view of normative science as being concerned with negative goodness leads Peirce, through a separate argument, to the same conclusion that he had reached by way of his phenomenological analysis of esthetic feeling: that “it is impossible to say that there is any appearance which is not esthetically good,” and, moreover, to attempt to do so is to adopt “a

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<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that Peirce means something different than Kant by a categorical imperative. A categorical imperative for Peirce expresses an aim that can be “adopted and consistently pursued.” Such an aim is a good aim. Conversely, a bad aim is an aim that cannot be pursued consistently, which makes Peirce’s statement that “the only moral evil is not to have an ultimate aim” somewhat tautological. A good aim is by definition one that is ultimate, inasmuch as it must be capable of being adopted and pursued consistently.

*moral* and not an esthetic way of considering [things] (EP2:199).” As Peirce concludes a few paragraphs later: “All there will be will be various esthetic qualities; that is, simple qualities of totalities not capable of full embodiment in the parts, which qualities may be more decided and strong in one case than in another” (EP2:201). These various esthetic qualities, the simple, immediate qualities imparted to a totality, are good or bad only from an ethical point of view that sees them as “possible qualities of our own handiwork” (EP2:199).

At the same time, this same argument leaves open the possibility that the idea of esthetic goodness might be salvaged in another respect, as quantitative goodness. Although the idea of an esthetic form of quantitative goodness would not by itself be sufficient for establishing esthetics as a classificatory science, since normative goodness is negative rather than quantitative, it suggests a way of rethinking esthetics as a theory of the *summum bonum*. For the arguments against there being an esthetic distinction between good and bad do not just challenge esthetics as a classificatory science; just as importantly, they raise serious questions about the status of esthetics as a physiology of the *summum bonum*. If there is no purely esthetic form of normative goodness, if the notion of normative goodness arises only through the mediation of ethics, then in what sense can pure esthetics even inquire into the *summum bonum*, into that which is good in itself without ulterior reason? If the distinction between good and bad is intrinsically ethical, then what principles, normative or even prenormative, does esthetics supply to ethics and logic? Prior to this discussion it had been possible to fall back on the idea that the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative, i.e., descriptive, even if it is not normative. However, the status of esthetics even as a purely descriptive theory of the *summum bonum* is now uncertain in light of the second argument.

### 3. The case for a classificatory science of esthetics

The arguments from the last section confront Peirce's theory of normative science with the following dilemma: either esthetics is a branch of ethics, inasmuch as it is normative only through the mediation of ethics; or esthetics is prenormative. However, the second argument casts doubt on the possibility for even a prenormative theory of the *summum bonum*. For this reason, it would seem to require that esthetics must be a branch of ethics.

This hypothesis is not without its force. First, it is consistent with the spirit of Peirce's pragmatism, which makes the meaning of an idea consist in its *conceivable* effects. In the second place, Peirce approached the classification of the sciences mainly as a heuristic tool. Science is a social enterprise, and the main justification for a classification of the sciences is that dialogue among sciences might be facilitated by disentangling the relations of principle-dependence among them. In practice there is no sharp line of demarcation even among the normative sciences. Peirce explains in "The Basis of Pragmatism in the Normative Sciences": "Esthetics, Practics, and Logic form one distinctly marked whole, one separate department of heuretic science; and the question where precisely the lines of separation between them are to be drawn is quite secondary." (EP2:378). There is no problem, then, with asserting both the autonomy of esthetics in principle, as a branch of normative science, and at the same time that it cannot be practiced except through the mediation of ethics (or practics, as Peirce calls it in 1906). That is, pure esthetics, esthetic experience as it conceived through the classification of the sciences, can be prescinded from ethics and logic, just as Firstness can be prescinded from Secondness and Thirdness; however, it can never be dissociated from ethics and logic, anymore than Firstness can be dissociated from the other two categories.

However, this account of the normativity of esthetics is also not without its problems. To

address the second point first, esthetics is not the study of Pure Firstness; it studies Firstness as a constituent element of genuine Thirdness. For this reason, the analogy with the categories is misleading inasmuch as a pure study of esthetics is more feasible in practice than this analogy allows. More importantly, as persuasive as this reading is, it still does not account for the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. A normative science of esthetics is needed precisely because ethically and logically normative principles cannot be grounded in a world of common experience (that is, in the phaneron) through ethics and logic alone. While the problem of the normativity of esthetics might be resolved by classifying it as a branch of ethics, this does not answer the question that made the normativity of esthetics a problem for the classification of the sciences in the first place, namely, that ethics and logic are incapable of giving an account of the source of their own principles. This source is partly phenomenological, but it cannot be exclusively phenomenological because the normative ideas of good and bad transcend phenomenology.

Therefore, the problem of the normativity of esthetics cannot be dismissed as only a classificatory problem. For it concerns the foundation of the normativity of normative science itself. This problem, again, confronts us with a dilemma. The first side of the dilemma states that the theory of the *summum bonum* is principally normative. The recognition of the *summum bonum* already conditions our approval and adoption of it as a possible form of conduct. The second side of the dilemma states that the theory of the *summum bonum* is principally prenormative. The *summum bonum* is that which is good without any ulterior reason, and nothing is normatively good without a purpose to be so. For this reason, the theory of the *summum bonum* must be prenormative. In either case, the normativity of esthetics is problematic. If the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative, then esthetics is clearly not a

normative science so long as it is restricted to this theory. On the other hand, if the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative, it is unclear how it could be normative apart from the mediation of ethics. The pragmatic upshot of this dilemma is as follows: Peirce is convinced that ethics and logic “call for a third companion to fulfill their *raison d’être*” (S673.2); at the same time, he has reservations over whether any science, including esthetics, can fulfill this function.

Again, as appealing as it might be to subsume esthetics under ethics, and establish the normativity of esthetics through this route, this approach would not address the problem of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics. In fact, it would render the normativity of esthetics even more problematic in this regard. I suggested at the conclusion of the last section that the possibility for an esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* might be established by rethinking esthetic goodness as quantitative goodness. Quantitative goodness, as was discussed above, consists in the degree to which something attains goodness. At first glance, this idea of goodness would appear to be more foreign to normative esthetics than even negative goodness. However, the 1903 Harvard Lectures suggest a different interpretation. After concluding that esthetic goodness cannot be negative, Peirce remarks: “All there will be will be various esthetic qualities; that is, simple qualities of totalities not capable of full embodiment in the parts, which qualities may be more decided and strong in one case than in another. But the very reduction of the intensity may be an esthetic quality; nay, it *will* be so” (EP2:201). The fact that the increase or reduction in intensity of the embodiment of the esthetic quality in a totality of feeling *is itself an esthetic quality* possibly supports an account of esthetic goodness as quantitative.

I would like to propose another avenue for resolving the problem of the normativity of esthetics. In this chapter I have explored the possibility for a classificatory science of esthetics. The main obstacle to such a science is the argument that pure esthetic experience admits of no

normative, or possibly even prenormative, distinction between good and bad. However, as Peirce underscores on many occasions in the Harvard Lectures, conduct can be good or bad only to the extent that we are capable of exercising control over it. Therefore, the problem of the normativity of aesthetics might be resolved by exploring the possibility for an esthetic theory of self-control. The part of normative science that studies the conditions under which conduct can be made to conform to the *summum bonum* through a process that is deliberately controlled is methodetic, and the branch of normative science in which methodetic is most prominent is normative logic, or semiotics. For this reason, Chapter 4 will once again reframe the problem of the normativity of aesthetics through an examination of Peirce's theory of signs.



## Chapter IV: Semiotics as Normative Science

### A. Introduction

In the Introduction three views of normative science were distinguished according to the different relations of principle-dependence holding between normative science and the sciences above and below it in the classification of the sciences. The first two chapters focused primarily on the principle-dependence of normative science on phenomenology. Phenomenology studies the world as it is “open to the daily and hourly observation of every man and woman.” It is then the job of normative science “to evolve the general conditions that must hold good, wherever the results of phenomenology hold, for the realization of the end” (MS 693.126). On this reading, normative science is principally (which is not to say exclusively) a theory of the *summum bonum*. Before normative science can give an account of the process through which phenomena conform to their proper ends, it must first inquire into “what the purpose [governing phenomena] shall be” (MS 693.128). Peirce was convinced by 1903 that normative ethics and logic cannot answer this question without the help of a third science upon which they must depend for principles. Traditionally, esthetics has been classified as this third science. And yet, as we have seen, even though Peirce was introduced to philosophy through Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters*, he resisted the classification of esthetics as a normative science for many years. Even as late as 1911, Peirce continued to have doubts over “whether this third [science] can be identified with esthetics or not” (MS 673.13).

Chapters 1 and 2 had framed the problem of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics through the objection that the classification of esthetics as a normative science would commit both sciences to hedonism. Peirce ultimately answers this objection by appealing

to phenomenology. The objection from the threat of hedonism involves two main fallacies, or category errors. First, it reduces the feeling of pleasure, which belongs to the category of Thirdness, to a feeling of satisfaction, which properly belongs to the category of Secondness. Second, it further reduces the feeling of pleasure to a mere quality of feeling, to the category of pure Firstness. Peirce corrects both fallacies by establishing through a phenomenology of pleasure and pain that “pleasure is a peculiar mode of consciousness allied to the consciousness of *making a generalization*, in which not Feeling, but rather Cognition, is the principle constituent” (EP2:190). In this way, he is able to refute the objection from the threat of hedonism without denying that the feeling of pleasure, or feeling in general, is a source for normative principles.

Although Peirce thus succeeds in answering one objection to the classification of esthetics as a normative science, his argument against the first objection raises a second objection, namely, the objection that theoretical esthetics is prenormative. This objection consists of two parts: first, it states that the theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative; second it restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. Both parts of the objection raise the question of whether the pure (that is, esthetic) theory of the *summum bonum* admits of a truly normative distinction between good and bad. Peirce on more than one occasion reaches the conclusion that it does not. To cite once again his argument from the “Minute Logic”: “to ask what is good, not as a means, but in itself; not for a reason, but back of every reason, is a more fundamental investigation. It is to ask a question which every normative science supposes to be already answered” (MS 432.4). Following this line of reasoning, Peirce is led to the conclusion that the pure theory of the *summum bonum* is prenormative and that esthetics, because it is nothing but a theory of the *summum bonum*, also must be prenormative.

While the “Minute Logic” by no means represents Peirce’s mature theory of normative science, the view that theoretical esthetics is prenormative also is not confined to this text. For example, in a draft for his fifth Harvard lecture, Peirce adopts this position that pure esthetic experience excludes all Secondness and thus precludes the possibility for any esthetic distinction, normative or even prenormative, between good and bad: “there is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment” (MS 310.11). Likewise, in a manuscript from 1911, Peirce asks, “Is esthetics one of them [a normative science]?” and answers that “one would say no if everything is already perfectly beautiful” (S673.2). Chapter 3 cited many more texts in which Peirce appears sympathetic to this argument.

The objection that pure esthetic experience admits of no normative distinction between good and bad confronts Peirce’s theory of normative science with a dilemma: Either pure esthetic experience excludes such a distinction, in which case there can be no classificatory science of esthetics, rendering theoretical esthetics prenormative; or normative esthetics is a branch of ethics. As we have seen, Peirce comes close to embracing the first horn of this dilemma in MS 310 when he argues that the distinction between good and bad involves a dualism which is foreign to pure esthetic experience; it “is something superadded to the pure esthetic.” This argument denies the very possibility for a normative science of esthetics, leading Peirce to the conclusion that “there will be no such thing as esthetic goodness” (EP2:201). For to claim otherwise would be to adopt “a *moral* and not an *esthetic* way of considering [things]” by viewing good and bad as “possible qualities of our own handiwork” (EP2:199). In light of this argument, it is no wonder that Peirce still “would have some lingering doubt as to there being any true normative science of the beautiful” (EP:201). This doubt will linger so long as normative esthetics is limited to the theory of the *summum bonum*.

On the other hand, Peirce comes close to subsuming esthetics under ethics in a manuscript from 1905: “I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea” (MS 1334.36). This leads him to consider the possibility that esthetics “can be nothing but a branch of ethics.” The alternative, as just discussed, is that theoretical esthetics is prenormative. However, neither side of the dilemma addresses the problem that had necessitated the classification of esthetics as a normative science, namely, that ethics and logic “call for a third science to fulfill their ideas” (MS 673.13). The subsumption of esthetics under ethics resolves the issue of the normativity of esthetics, but it does not resolve the issue of the principle-dependence of ethics on esthetics. It thus fails to answer the very question that had made the normativity of esthetics an issue for Peirce’s classification of the sciences in the first place. On the other hand, the view of esthetics as the pure theory of the *summum bonum* resolves the issue of the principle-dependence of ethics and logic on esthetics, but not in a way that fulfills the ideas of either science. For on this interpretation the principles that ethics and logic receive from esthetics are not normative.

Chapter 3 concluded by exploring one possible avenue for dissolving this dilemma. As Peirce will understand it, the normative distinction between good and bad is a function of self-control. That is, conduct can be good or bad only to the extent that it is controllable. The pragmatic maxim makes the meaning of an idea consist in its conceivable effects and consequences, and the highest grade of clearness we can obtain in our apprehension of the effects and consequences of an idea involves the expression of that idea as a habit of conduct. Viewed pragmatically, from the standpoint of the principle-dependence of lower sciences on it, normative science is a theory of habit formation. That is, under the pragmatic maxim, which

Peirce reformulates in 1903 as a maxim of normative logic, the adoption of an aim or purpose as ultimate entails the formation of certain habits of conduct. According to this view, normative science is responsible for studying the conditions under which conduct *deliberately* conforms to its proper ends through a process of habituation. It is a theory of self-control.

For this reason, Chapter 3 had proposed that the problem of whether pure esthetic experience admits of a normative distinction between good and bad (whether pure esthetics has a classificatory part) might be resolved by inquiring into the possibility for an esthetic form of self-control. This approach raises two separate questions. First, is the esthetic recognition of the *summum bonum* controllable? Second, is it controllable apart from an act of effort or will, that is, apart from the mediation of ethics? The part of normative science that inquires into the phenomenon of self-control is methodeutic, and the branch of normative science to which methodeutic principally belongs is logic, or more precisely, semiotics, since for Peirce normative logic is semiotics.<sup>27</sup> According to Peirce's theory of signs, a sign consists in the representation of an object for an interpretant. In an important manuscript from 1907 Peirce defines an interpretant as the "proper significate effect of a sign" and distinguishes among three kinds of interpretants (cf. CP 4.475). The proper significate effect of a sign can be a feeling, an action, or a thought (that is, an emotional, energetic, or logical interpretant). In this chapter I will argue that Peirce's analysis of feeling as the first proper significate effect of a sign supports two important conclusions. First, it establishes that some habits, namely, habits of feeling, are formed through the interpretation of a sign in a feeling, without the production of any higher interpretant. Second, it establishes that the formation of all habits of action and thought involves the mediation of habits of feeling; in other words, all habit formation has an irreducible esthetic dimension.

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<sup>27</sup> This issue will be addressed in greater depth below.

Before examining Peirce's analysis of the emotional interpretant any further, however, I will begin by offering a brief overview of his theory of signs. I will then argue that semiosis is a process of habituation and that Peirce provides an account of the esthetic dimension of this process through his analysis of the emotional interpretant as mediating the production of all higher interpretants. The last part of this chapter will be concerned with working out some of the implications of this reading of Peirce's theory of signs for his esthetics.

## B. Peirce's Theory of Signs

### 1. An overview

I will follow T.L. Short in dividing the development of Peirce's theory of signs into four stages: an early theory of signs dating from 1866–73; a period from 1873–85 during which Peirce mostly ignored the study of signs; a period from 1885–1903 during which he made several important revisions to his early theory; and the systematic exposition of his mature semiotics, beginning around 1903. I want to underscore that by following Short in distinguishing among four distinct stages in the development of Peirce's theory of signs, I by no means wish to suggest that his early and later views are essentially incompatible, nor that he ever presented a complete and comprehensive doctrine. This is certainly not Short's position, and it is also not mine. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that Peirce's theory of signs evolved dramatically between the 1860s and the 1900s, and I will comment on those developments that bear most directly on normative science in the following brief overview.

As Short observes, Peirce originally had conceived of semiotics "exclusively as a domain of thought." In 1868 Peirce demonstrates that all thought is in signs through the following argument: "Plainly, no other thought [except thought in signs] can be evidenced by external

facts. But we have seen that only by external facts can thought be known at all. The only thought, then, which can possibly be cognized is thought in signs. But thought which cannot be cognized does not exist. All thought, therefore, must necessarily be in signs” (EP1:24). The conclusion that all thought “must necessarily be in signs” is required by Peirce’s denial of “certain capacities claimed for man”—most importantly, the capacity for introspection. All thinking, even so-called intuition,<sup>28</sup> is inferential and involves the interpretation or representation of one thought in another. Thus, logic, which is the study of the laws governing thinking, is the study of the laws governing the interpretation of one thought in another. It is the study of signs.

In “On a New List of Categories,” Peirce distinguishes among three classes of representations according to the different ways in which a sign may be related to its object: a representation may be related to its object through a quality (or a likeness), through a correspondence in fact (or an index), or through a general sign (or a symbol) (EP1:7). He further distinguishes among three classes of symbols, or general signs: symbols which signify through reference to a quality, or terms; symbols which signify through reference to an object (and which are either true or false), or propositions; and symbols which signify through reference to an interpretant (and which are either valid or invalid), or arguments (EP1:8). Lastly, the entire study of signs is divided into three parts—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—following this classification of symbols (cf. CP 2.229). Grammar studies the “formal condition of symbols

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<sup>28</sup> Peirce’s later theory of perceptual judgment will rehabilitate, to an extent, the power of intuition. However, as Peirce will come to understand it, intuition is not non-inferential, but is a form of inference of which we are so little conscious and, as a result, over which we exercise so little control, if we exercise any control over it at all, that its inferential structure is hidden from us. Murphey is generally dismissive of Peirce’s phenomenology, but his characterization of the distinction between intuition and inference is very insightful on this point: “By dividing the processes of the mind into involuntary inferences which cannot be controlled, and voluntary inferences which can be controlled, Peirce is able to harmonize the conflicting elements of his cognitive theory. In respect to the involuntary inference, the argument of 1868 still applies: there is no first sense datum because no such datum can be specified, and the percept must be regarded as constructed or ‘inferred’ although by processes not subject to control” (Murphey 372). Thus, the distinction between intuition and inference is recast as a distinction between two forms of inference, an unconscious and therefore mostly uncontrollable form of inference (the perceptual judgment) and a conscious and therefore controllable form (the logical judgment).

having meaning,” or the relation of symbols (general signs) to their grounds. Logic studies the “formal conditions of the truth of symbols,” or the relation of symbols to their objects. Finally, rhetoric studies the “formal conditions of the force of symbols,” or the relation of symbols to an interpretant (EP1:8).

At this stage, Peirce limits the study of signs to the study of symbols (the representation of an object through a general sign). He explains: “[the rules of logic] have no immediate application to likenesses or indices, because no arguments can be constructed of these alone, but do apply to all symbols” (EP1:7–8). In a text from 1906 he comments on the considerations that finally convinced him to enlarge the scope of semiotics to encompass the study of all signs:

Accordingly, in my early papers I limited logic to the study of this problem [symbols]. But since then, I have formed the opinion that the proper sphere of any science in a given stage of development of science is the study of such questions as one social group of men can properly devote their lives to answering; and it seems to me that in the present state of our knowledge of signs, the whole doctrine of the classification of signs and of what is essential to a given kind of sign, must be studied by one group of investigators. Therefore, I extend logic to embrace all the necessary principles of semeiotic, and I recognize a logic of icons, and a logic of indices, as well as a logic of symbols; and in this last I recognize three divisions: *Stecheotic* (or stoicheiology), which I formerly called Speculative Grammar; *Critic*, which I formerly called Logic; and *Methodeutic*, which I formerly called Speculative Rhetoric (CP 4.9).

Peirce makes the same point in a paper from 1911: “Since...the conduct of reasoning is the ultimate aim of the logician, as such, I used to think that he should recognize the Symbol as the object of his study, and this only as regards its relation to the object it represents...yet today I do not think that the whole investigation of signs in general is too much.” (EP2:461). The expansion of semiotics to include the study of all signs marks the first important development in Peirce’s theory of signs.

In the second place, after all but ignoring the study of signs from 1873–85, Peirce’s work on the index from 1885 marks a second important development in his theory of signs. In “On a



New List of Categories” an index is classified as a kind of representation. It is a representation that relates to its object through “a correspondence in fact” (EP1:7). But in 1885 Peirce defines the index as purely denotative: “The index asserts nothing; it only says ‘There!’ It takes hold of our eyes, as it were, and forcibly directs them to a particular object, and there it stops” (EP1:226). This analysis of the index is important for two reasons. First, it suggests that not all signs are conceptual; but, more importantly, it rescues semiotics from the conclusion that semiosis is either an infinitely regressive or progressive process. As Short comments: “...If the index is directly connected to its object, then so is the cognition, through the index it contains. Thus, a cognition does not have to be the interpretant of a preceding cognition in order to have an object” (Short 221).

Finally, after 1900 Peirce worked out a more comprehensive theory of signs and, to this end, invested a great deal of time and energy in classifying the different kinds of signs. His most enduring classification of signs is found in MS 478. Three semiotic trichotomies are distinguished, with the first trichotomy classifying signs according to the different ways in which a sign is in itself, with the second trichotomy classifying signs according to the different ways in which a sign is related to an object, and with the third semiotic trichotomy classifying signs according to the different ways in which a sign may be related to an interpretant. This classification of all signs according to how a sign is in itself, how a sign is related to an object, and how a sign is related to an interpretant will be discussed in greater depth below.

## 2. The sign-relation

As early as 1866 Peirce had conceived of the sign-relation as irreducibly triadic. In a text from that year he distinguishes “three relata—sign, object, interpretant—of a single, triadic relation” (W1:466). In many contexts Peirce explains what a sign is through his doctrine of

categories. For example, in the 1903 Syllabus he defines a sign as “a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its *Object*, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its *Interpretant*, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands to the same object” (EP2:272–73). In other contexts, a sign is understood more psychologically through an analysis of its effect on an interpreter. For instance, in a letter to Lady Welby from 1908 Peirce defines a sign as “anything which is so determined by something else called its object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former” (EP2:482). Likewise, a sign is defined in a letter to James from the following year as “something determined by something else, its Object, and itself influencing some person in such a way that that person becomes thereby mediately influenced or determined in some respect by that Object” (EP2:497). What is important is that on both accounts the sign-relation is triadic. A sign may be more or less degenerate, as when it is related to an object through a mere quality of feeling or an index; however, semiosis is always an irreducibly triadic process.

The second term in the sign-relation is the object. According to the categorial definition of a sign just given, the object is a “Second” that determines a “Third,” an interpretant, by standing in relation to, that is, through the mediation of, a First, the sign. However, this conception of the semiotic object focuses only on one respect in which a sign is related to an object. In a letter to Lady Welby from 1906 Peirce draws an important distinction between a dynamical and an immediate object in order to reconcile the “apparently conflicting truths” that the object that begins semiosis is both independent of the sign that represents it and “nothing but what the sign represents it to be” (EP2:478). The dynamical and immediate objects are distinguished again in another text from the same year: “We have to distinguish the Immediate

Object, which is the Object as the Sign itself represents it, and whose Being is thus dependent upon the Representation of it in the Sign, from the Dynamical Object, which is the Reality which by some means contrives to determine the Sign to its Representation” (CP 4.536). Thus, the semiotic object is not only the immediate object that a sign represents to an interpretant. It is also the dynamical object that determines a sign to stand in a particular relationship to an interpretant in the first place.

Finally, the third term in the sign-relation is the interpretant, which Peirce defines in 1907 as “the proper significate effect of a sign” (CP 4.475). He gives the same account of the interpretant as the effect of a sign in a letter to Lady Welby from the following year: “I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else called its object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former” (EP2:478). The interpretant is never related directly to an object. It is only related to an object through the mediation of a sign.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, this process of interpretation is ongoing in that every interpretant is potentially, though not always actually, a sign for future semiosis.

Peirce presents two main trichotomies of interpretants in the 1900s. Under the first trichotomy, every act of interpretation involves an immediate interpretant, which is the interpretability of a sign, a dynamical interpretant, which is the actual effect of a sign on an interpreter, and a final interpretant, which is how a sign would be interpreted in the long run. The final interpretant is that “which *would finally* be decided to be the true interpretation if consideration of the matter were carried so far that an ultimate opinion were reached” (CP 8.184). It is important to note that the final interpretant does not represent how a sign *actually* is

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<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that the relationship between sign and object, in both directions, is also highly mediated. Both the determination of the sign by an object and the representation of an object by a sign are mediated by a final interpretant, even if this interpretant is only potential rather than actual.

interpreted. As Short nicely characterizes it, the final interpretant is “the ideal interpretant that would be formed in light of all possible information bearing on the interpreter’s purpose” (S1 521). By contrast, under the second trichotomy interpretants are classified according to whether the proper significate effect of a sign is a feeling (emotional interpretant), an action (energetic interpretant), or a thought (logical interpretant).

The relationship between these two trichotomies of interpretants has been a source of rich philosophical debate in recent years, and the different critical perspectives on their relationship will be surveyed below. While my argument in this chapter will focus mainly on the second trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants, its success will depend largely on how the relationship between the two trichotomies is interpreted.

### 3. The three semiotic trichotomies

I will conclude my overview of Peirce’s theory of signs by looking at his classification of signs. In a few places, Peirce distinguishes among ten distinct trichotomies of signs, but it will suffice for my purposes here to consider the three semiotic trichotomies from which these ten trichotomies are generated, namely, the classification of signs according to the character or quality that a sign may have in itself, according to how a sign may be related to its object, and according to how a sign may be related to an interpretant. According to the first semiotic trichotomy, a sign is either a mere quality (qualisign), an actual existent thing (sinsign), or a law (legisign). Under the second, and more famous, trichotomy, signs are distinguished according to the relation in which they stand to an object. A sign can be related to an object through its likeness to that object, in which case it is an icon, through its connection to that object, in which case it is an index, or by virtue of its being interpreted as a sign for that object, in which case it is a symbol. Finally, under the third semiotic trichotomy, a sign is related to an interpretant either

through the representation of a quality (rheme), through the representation of the actual existence of an object (proposition), or through the representation of a law (argument) (EP2:291–92). It will be necessary to refer back to all three semiotic trichotomies at later points in this chapter.

One important feature of this classificatory scheme is that the lower classes of signs in each trichotomy can be prescinded from the class or classes of signs above them. At the same time, no sign can *actually* function as a sign apart from the classes of signs above it in each trichotomy. Consider the first semiotic trichotomy. Qualisigns are signs that are mere qualities and which signify through a relation of similarity. Yet a mere quality cannot actually function as a sign without first being embodied in an actually existing thing. Now Peirce is careful to note that a qualisign's embodiment in an actually existing thing does not change its character as a sign. Rather, this is only a condition for its being *actually* significant (cf. EP1:291). For example, an icon is a sign that signifies through the common quality it shares with its object—the statue of a famous person is an iconic sign for that person by resembling her. And yet an icon is *actually* determined to stand in such a relationship to an object only through the mediation of an index—assuming it has been competently sculpted, a statue directs our attention (in other words, points) to one person rather than another—even though it does not signify *through* an index.<sup>30</sup>

Conversely, in each semiotic trichotomy the character of all higher classes of signs depends on the class or classes of signs beneath them. An index is a sign that signifies through its being connected to or directly affected by an object. Yet, an index can signify through such a relation only if it has some quality in common with the object to which it is related. Every index

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<sup>30</sup> This, incidentally, is what distinguishes a statue from a monument. A monument signifies through an indexical relation, that is, by pointing to its object, while a statue usually signifies through an iconic relation, that is, by resembling or sharing a common quality with its object. The exception would be abstract or modern sculpture, which is more often symbolic than either iconic or indexical.

involves an icon. While an index does not signify merely through this icon, an icon is nonetheless an irreducible element of every indexical sign relation. Consider how a flag functions as an indexical sign. A flag is an indexical sign for the direction of the wind because the wind causes it to blow in a certain direction. However, it could not function subsequently as an indexical sign for the wind if not for the relation of similarity between its direction and the direction of the wind. The flag of course does not signify only through this relation of similarity. Nonetheless, the common quality the flag shares with the wind—or, more precisely, that the wind imparts to it—is an irreducible element of the indexical relationship between flag and wind in this example. An analogous relationship holds even between higher and lower classes of signs in different trichotomies. For example, every argument involves propositions and terms, and a term (or a rheme) is iconic.

This relationship of principle-dependence between higher and lower classes of signs is of considerable consequence for Peirce's esthetics. For it means that all signs, even thought-signs, cannot be significant apart from a quality of feeling or a relation of similarity—which again is not to say that all signs are reducible to such a relation. Once again, legisigns do not signify only through qualisigns, just as symbols do not signify only through icons, nor arguments only through rhemes. Nevertheless, a qualisign is an element of every legisign, even if only “degenerately,” an icon is an element of every symbol, and every argument is comprised of terms and propositions.

### C. Normative Semiotics

#### 1. Normative semiotics as a theory of habit formation

As was discussed above, for Peirce logic is only “another name for semiotics,” the formal

study of signs. Thus, it should come as no surprise that semiotics must be rethought after 1900 following the classification of logic as a branch of normative science. Initially, however, Peirce classifies semiotics as belonging to only the first part of normative logic, speculative grammar, which is the “analysis of what kinds of signs are absolutely essential to the embodiment of thought” (EP2:257). He explains:

Before it is possible to [study critic or methodeutic] in any rational way, the first thing that is necessary is to examine thoroughly all the ways in which thought can be expressed. For since thought has no being except in so far as it will be embodied, and since the embodiment of thought is a sign, the business of logical critic cannot be undertaken until the whole structure of signs, especially of general signs, has been thoroughly investigated (EP2:256).

It is not until 1904 that Peirce fully incorporates semiotics into his classification of the branches of normative logic. Normative logic is once again divided into three parts, speculative grammar, speculative critic, and speculative rhetoric, or methodeutic (as it is called in 1903). Speculative grammar studies “the ways in which an object can be a sign,” speculative critic studies “the ways in which a sign can be related to the object independent of it that it represents,” and speculative rhetoric studies “the essential conditions under which a sign may determine an interpretant sign of itself and of whatever it signifies” (EP2: 326–27). Under this classification, then, semiotics belongs to the whole of normative logic, with the first part of normative semiotics studying the character of signs in themselves, with the second part studying the relation of signs to their objects, and with the third part studying the relation of signs to their interpretants.

In light of the classification of semiotics as a normative science, it becomes necessary to rethink what semiotics is. Peirce defines normative semiotics in 1910 as “the science of the principles of how thought ought to be controlled, so far as it may be subject to self-control” (MS 655.26; cf. Kent 19). This view of normative semiotics as “the science of the principle of how thought ought to be controlled” is rooted in an analysis of normative science as a theory of habit

formation. Normative science studies the relation of phenomena to ends not immanent in them: “...*aesthetics* considers those things whose ends are to embody qualities of feeling, *ethics* those things whose ends lie in action, and *logic* those things whose end is to represent something” (EP2:197). The process through which phenomena are made to conform, consciously or unconsciously, to their proper ends is a process of habituation. Hence, normative science, at least from the standpoint of the principle-dependence of lower sciences on it, is a theory of habit formation.

Nonetheless, this conception of normative science is still too imprecise. Normative science is not just a general theory of the formation of habits of conduct. It studies the formation of habits of *right* conduct—the conformity of conduct to ends proper to but not actually immanent in it—and as Peirce underscores time and time again, conduct can be right or wrong, good or bad, only to the extent that it is controllable. Hence, normative science is a theory of the formation of habits of conduct through the conscious, voluntary, and critical (in one word, deliberate) adoption of the ends proper to right conduct. In short, it is a theory of self-control. Esthetics is the theory of the formation of habits for the control of feeling, ethics is the theory of the formation of habits for the control of action, and normative logic, or normative semiotics, as Peirce asserts in 1910, is the theory of the control of thought, that is, “the science of the principles of how thought ought to be controlled, so far as it may be subject to self-control” (MS 655.26).

Yet this account of normative semiotics is potentially misleading. It is not misleading because it is false, but, rather, because it may give one the false impression that the classification of semiotics as a normative science, and thus the idea of normative semiotics as a theory of habit formation, was carried out merely to satisfy a formal requirement of the classification of the



sciences. After all, if logic is only “another name for semiotics,” as Peirce had believed is the case as early as 1866, then the classification of semiotics as a normative science would be necessitated under Peirce’s Comtean classificatory scheme once it is determined that the logically good is a species of the ethically good.

The classification of semiotics as a normative science, however, is not only a formal requirement of the classification of the sciences. More importantly, it is an outcome of the evolution of Peirce’s theory of signs.<sup>31</sup> It will be remembered that Peirce initially was led to conceive of logic as belonging to the study of signs by his observation in the 1860s that all thinking is in signs. All thought is inferential, consisting in the representation, that is, the interpretation, of one thought in another. But the restriction of semiotics to the study of symbols, or thought-signs, condemns Peirce’s early theory of signs to the view that semiosis is infinitely regressive and progressive. I think Short has convincingly argued that Peirce’s work on the index provides a solution to the problem of the infinite regressiveness of semiosis: “...If the index is directly connected to its object, then so is the cognition, through the index it contains. Thus, a cognition does not have to be the interpretant of a preceding cognition in order to have an object” (Short 221). Since symbols are irreducibly indexical—inasmuch as they cannot signify apart from some connection to an object, even if they do not signify *through* this connection—all semiosis involves a reference to an object that is partly external to semiosis (the dynamical object).

In a similar fashion, Peirce’s work on normative science helps to resolve the problem of the infinite progressiveness of semiosis through the idea of the ultimate final interpretant as a habit of conduct. As Peirce explains in 1904: “A symbol is something which has the power of

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<sup>31</sup>Incidentally, this raises the question of the influence of the theory of signs on the classification of logic as a normative science. I will not address this question here, but it is certainly worth acknowledging.

reproducing itself, and that *essentially*, since it is constituted a symbol only by the interpretation. This interpretation involves a power of the symbol to cause a real fact” (EP2:322). This argument is carried out further in 1906: “...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” (EP2:388). Thus, Peirce’s theory of signs is rescued from the view that semiosis is infinitely progressive precisely through the idea of the final interpretant of semiosis as a habit of conduct. Peirce argues in 1907:

I do not deny that a concept, proposition, or argument may be a logical interpretant. I only insist that it cannot be the final logical interpretant, for the reason that it is itself a sign of that very kind that has itself a logical interpretant. The habit alone, which though it may be a sign in some other way, is not a sign in that way in which that sign of which it is the logical interpretant is the sign (CP 4.491).

He then concludes: “Consequently, the most perfect account of a concept that words can convey will consist in a description of the habit which that concept is calculated to produce” (CP 4.491).

On this interpretation, the classification of semiotics as a normative science does not just satisfy a formal requirement of Peirce’s classification of the sciences. More importantly, it satisfies a requirement of his pragmatism and marks a philosophically important transformation of his whole theory of signs. If the final interpretant of all semiosis, including semiosis that takes place through thought-signs, or symbols, is a habit of conduct, then all interpretation is ultimately a process of habituation. For as Peirce explains in a letter to Lady Welby from 1904: “It appears to me that the essential function of a sign is to render inefficient relations efficient,—not to set them into action, but to establish a habit or general rule whereby they will act on occasion” (CP 8.332). Therefore, for Peirce semiotics must be more than just a theory of signs; it is a theory of habit formation, and in its higher forms even a theory of self-control (cf. Savan

63). Later in this chapter I will examine the esthetic dimension of semiosis—understood as a process of interpretation and thus as a process of habituation.

## 2. Critical perspectives on Peirce's interpretant

As was discussed above, Peirce distinguishes between two main trichotomies of interpretants. The first trichotomy classifies interpretants as dynamical, immediate, and final, while the second trichotomy classifies interpretants as emotional, energetic, and logical. Much of the recent scholarship on Peirce's conception of the interpretant has been focused on the relationship between these two trichotomies. In the first place, James Liszka has argued that the two trichotomies are the same or at least analogous. He contrasts this interpretation with two other interpretations. The first alternative, which is adopted by T.L. Short, conceives of the two trichotomies as distinct, though complementary, classifications of interpretants. I will postpone discussion of this interpretation until below. The second alternative conceives of the emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants as "species" of the dynamic interpretant. In other words, the second trichotomy of interpretants is a subdivision of the second division of the first trichotomy. Liszka criticizes this reading both because it reduces the effect of the interpretant to its actual, or dynamic, effect and because it ignores the fact that in many contexts Peirce explains the immediate and final interpretants according to their effects on an interpreter. In short, this interpretation is guilty of confounding "a feeling, action, or thought *as an* interpretant and the emotional, energetic or logical interpretant *as types* of interpretants" (21, emphasis is Liszka's).

By contrast, Liszka himself adopts the position that the two trichotomies are the same or at least analogous: "The alternative... is to suggest that either Peirce was experimenting with various terminologies for three basic types of interpretants, or that these terminologies complement one another" (24). One serious consequence of this interpretation is that the

trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants ultimately is reduced to the trichotomy of immediate, dynamical, and logical interpretants. Liszka acknowledges as much when he describes the first trichotomy as classifying the three types of interpretants “in [the] most general sense” (26).

Lalor’s position is a variation on the second alternative from above, with the difference that for Lalor the second trichotomy is not just a subdivision of one class of interpretants, but is a special determination of the whole first trichotomy: “My thesis is that the emotional/energetic/logical is a special case of the immediate/dynamical/final one. More specifically, the 1906 trichotomy reflects the concrete case, the human experience of semiosis, while the 1909 trichotomy is more abstract and lends itself to a characterization of semiosis generally” (Lalor 3). Put differently, the first trichotomy is a generalization of the second trichotomy.

Finally, Short adopts the position that the two trichotomies are fundamentally distinct, even if complementary. While he concedes that Peirce never fully worked through the relationship between the two trichotomies of interpretants, and thus that the alternatives to his interpretation, particularly Lalor’s formulation of the second alternative, are not without force, he argues that the preponderance of textual evidence supports the interpretation of the trichotomies as fundamentally distinct. First, in Peirce’s correspondence with Lady Welby from 1904 he separately presents both trichotomies without giving any indication that either trichotomy is reducible to the other (Short 496; cf. CP 8.332, 337–39). Later, in a notebook from 1906, Peirce states that the dynamic interpretant—the actual effect produced by a sign on an interpreter—can be a feeling, act, or habit (Short 498; cf. MS 339). This suggests that some dynamic interpretants are emotional or logical interpretants under the second trichotomy of interpretants.

In addition to this textual argument, Short also makes the more pragmatic argument that his interpretation of the two trichotomies as fundamentally distinct would render Peirce's theory of signs more intelligible and complete than either alternative. For "to abandon either trichotomy... would be to lose sight of an important aspect of Peirce's semeiotic: either its reach or its grasp" (Short 495).

This interpretation of the two trichotomies as fundamentally distinct leads Short to draw a quite provocative conclusion: not all final interpretants are logical interpretants, and, conversely, some emotional and energetic interpretants are final interpretants. As Short explains: "In Peirce's semeiotic actions and feelings are seen as interpretants, occurring within the same semeiotic structures that give thoughts their intentionality" (Short 515). He then concludes: "One of the great achievements of Peirce's semeiotic is to have rescued action and feeling from the category of the utterly dumb, and to have done so without turning them into mouth-pieces for ratiocination" (Short 516). Thus, Short's interpretation is of considerable consequence for Peirce's theory of normative science and, specifically, for his esthetics. I will conclude this chapter by developing two implications of this interpretation for normative esthetics. First, I will argue that in some cases habits of feeling are formed only through the production of an emotional interpretant; in other words, the production of an emotional interpretant is a distinct grade of habit formation. In the second place, I will argue that all habits of action and thought involve the formation of habits of feeling; in other words, the production of an emotional interpretant is the first stage in a wider, and continuous, process of habituation. This means that all semiosis, to the extent that it must be conceived as a process of habituation, is irreducibly esthetic.

## D. Normative Semiotics and Esthetics

### 1. Introduction

The preceding section attempted to rethink normative semiotics as a theory of habit formation through an analysis of the first trichotomy of immediate, dynamical, and logical interpretants. Semiosis is a process of interpretation. That is, the proper function of a sign consists in the representation of an object for an interpretant. However, a sign cannot have as its final interpretant only another sign; otherwise, semiosis would be infinitely progressive. As Peirce argues in 1906: "...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" (EP2:388). All interpretation ultimately involves the production of a habit of conduct, even if only virtually. In other words, all interpretation is a process of habituation. Peirce explains: "I do not deny that a concept, proposition, or argument may be a logical interpretant. I only insist that it cannot be the final logical interpretant, for the reason that it is itself a sign of that very kind that has itself a logical interpretant. The habit alone, which though it may be a sign in some other way, is not a sign in that way in which that sign of which it is the logical interpretant is the sign" (CP 4.491). Although every interpretant is potentially a sign for future semiosis, and the final interpretant of some semiotic processes is nothing but another thought-sign, the pragmatic maxim requires that every sign have as its ultimate final interpretant a habit of conduct.

By contrast, my analysis of the esthetic, and to a lesser extent ethical, dimension of semiosis will rest largely on the second trichotomy of interpretants. An interpretant, as defined by Peirce in 1907, is the "proper significate effect of a sign," and he distinguishes among three

significate effects that a sign properly may have: first, a sign may be embodied—that is, interpreted—in a feeling through the production of an *emotional interpretant*; second, a sign may be embodied in an effort or action (in the narrow sense) through the production of an *energetic interpretant*; and, third, a sign may be embodied in a thought (again, in the narrow sense) through the production of a logical interpretant.

In what follows I will work through the implications of this second trichotomy of interpretants—once again, understood as distinct and autonomous from the first trichotomy—for normative esthetics. First, I will argue that the interpretation of a sign in a feeling is one grade of habit formation. In other words, new habits can be formed and old habits can be modified through the production of an emotional interpretant alone, apart from the production of an energetic or logical interpretant (the interpretation of a sign in an effort or thought). Second, I will argue that this first grade of habit formation (habit formation through the production of an emotional interpretant) is the first stage in a wider and continuous process of habituation. On this interpretation, the second trichotomy of interpretants not only classifies the different ways in which a sign may be embodied in an interpretant; even more importantly, it is a classification of three different forms of habituation.

As I have discussed in various contexts now, Peirce's work with normative science impressed upon him, at times almost against his will, the idea that logic and ethics depend on esthetics for principles. From the standpoint of the principle-dependence of lower sciences on normative science, normative science is a theory of habit formation. According to this view, the theory of the formation of good habits of effort and thought rests on the theory of the formation of good habits of feeling. It is this irreducible esthetic dimension of all habit formation that I hope to capture through an analysis of the role of the emotional interpretant in semiosis.

## 2. Objections to this interpretation

My position that habits of feeling and action are formed and modified through the production of an emotional or energetic interpretant in some cases apart from the production of a logical interpretant invites two potentially serious objections. I would like to formulate and respond to these objections before proceeding any further with my analysis of the emotional interpretant.

First, it might be objected that my characterization of the production of emotional and energetic interpretants as grades of habit formation is guilty of a category error. Habit belongs to the category of Thirdness. It is general. As Peirce argues in “The Law of Mind”: “Habit is that specialization of the law of mind whereby a general idea gains the power of exciting reactions. habituation is a process of generalization” (EP1:328). By contrast, feeling and effort properly belong to the categories of Firstness and Secondness. How, then, can habits be formed just through the production of an emotional or energetic interpretant? This objection is posed by both Lalor and Liszka to Short’s analysis of the emotional and energetic interpretants as final interpretants, and my position is even more susceptible to it. Secondly, in MS 318 Peirce states that habit is “the essence of the logical interpretant” (CP 4.486). But if this is the case, then how can habits be formed through the production of an emotional or energetic interpretant alone, without the production of a logical interpretant.

In answer to this second objection, it must be remembered that the context for the discussion of habit in MS 318 is an analysis of pragmatism. Pragmatism is a tool for ascertaining the meaning of *intellectual* concepts only, which according to the pragmatic maxim consists in their conceivable effects and consequences. For this reason, Peirce’s analysis of habit formation in this text is focused on habit as the proper significate effect of an intellectual



concept. Since intellectual concepts are general in reference, their final interpretant must be a logical interpretant. However, Peirce also clearly states that not all habits are logical interpretants. In fact, habit is not even an exclusively mental phenomenon: “empirically, we find that some plants take habits. The stream of water that wears a bed for itself is forming a habit” (CP 4.492). Thus, it does not follow from the fact that habit is the essence of the logical interpretant that all habits are logical interpretants.

In answer to the first objection, a distinction must be drawn between habituation as a process, or habit-change, and habit as the result of this process.<sup>32</sup> Although feeling or action in itself lacks the generality belonging to a habit, the *process*<sup>33</sup> through which a sign is embodied in a feeling or an action is general. If this process weren't general, how could meaning ever be generated through it? How could it be interpretive? The position that I am advancing is not that emotional and energetic interpretants (interpretive feelings and efforts) are in themselves habits, but that the process through which they are produced—the embodiment of a sign in feeling or effort—is a process of habituation from which new or modified habits may *result*, in some cases without the production of a logical interpretant.

Likewise, a distinction must be drawn between a habit that is merely the result of a semiotic process, and a habit that functions as an interpretant for a sign (in other words, is its “proper significate effect”). In processes of semiosis where a new habit is produced or an old habit is modified through the production of an emotional or energetic interpretant alone, this new or modified habit does not itself function as an interpretant for the sign. A habit only functions as the interpretant for a sign through the production of a logical interpretant. In fact, this is precisely what distinguishes a logical interpretant from an emotional or energetic interpretant. In

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<sup>32</sup> T.L. Short argues that this distinction between habit and habit-change is sometimes muddled by Peirce himself in MS 318 (499-500).

<sup>33</sup> It should be recalled that process is one of the primary analogues of Thirdness.

the case of the former, a new or modified habit is not just the result of interpretation; a sign is interpreted in it.

### 3. The esthetic dimension of semiosis

Peirce defines habit in MS 318, as he had in 1878, as a readiness to act: “Habits differ from dispositions in having been acquired as consequences of the principle...that multiple reiterated behaviour of the same kind, under similar combinations of percepts and fancies, produces a tendency—the *habit*—actually to behave in a similar way under similar circumstances in the future” (CP 4.487). Different grades of habit are distinguished by the process through which they arise. For this reason, any discussion of habit presupposes an account of habit-change. In MS 318 Peirce describes habit-change as the “modification of a person's tendencies toward action” (CP 4.476), and identifies three distinct causes of habit-change. First, habits can be modified through the involuntary force of experience. Second, they can be modified through a muscular exertion of the will on the outer world. Third, habits can be modified through a mental exertion of the will on the inner world (cf. CP 4.476). More often than not, habit-change consists simply in the reinforcement or erosion, the strengthening or weakening, of old habits rather than in the production of new ones. Peirce explains: “Habits have grades of strength varying from complete dissociation to inseparable association... [and] the habit-change often consists in raising or lowering the strength of a habit” (CP 4.477).

Peirce’s analysis of habit-change provides the strongest evidence for my reading of the trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants as a classification of different forms of habituation. Habits can be modified *just* through the involuntary force of experience, and this process I am arguing in some cases consists semiotically only in the production of an emotional interpretant—the interpretation of a general rule in a feeling. This is not to say that the brute

force of experience is sufficient for the formation of *every* habit of feeling. Critically formed habits of feeling require a degree of self-control that is only possible through the formation of habits of effort and thought. Nonetheless, some habits of feeling can be formed just through the interpretation of a sign in a feeling, without the production of an energetic or logical interpretant.

Once again, in the context of this discussion the primary meaning of the interpretant is as the “proper significate effect” of a sign. This account of the interpretant privileges the point of view of the sign. By contrast, from the point of view of an interpreter, the interpretant consists in a modification of consciousness:

Although the definition [of semiosis] does not require the logical interpretant (or, for that matter, either of the other two interpretants) to be a modification of consciousness, yet our lack of experience of any semiosis in which this is not the case, leaves us no alternative to beginning our inquiry into its general nature with a provisional assumption that the interpretant is, at least, in all cases, a sufficiently close analogue of a modification of consciousness to keep our conclusion pretty near to the general truth (CP 4.485).

Consciousness is understood here phenomenologically rather than psychologically as “that congeries of non-relative predicates, varying greatly in quality and in intensity, which are symptomatic of the interaction of the outer world...and of the inner world” (CP 4.493).<sup>34</sup>

According to Peirce, the phenomenologically first way in which consciousness is modified is through the brute force of experience apart from an exertion of effort or will. This process consists semiotically in the production of an emotional interpretant. While the modification of consciousness through the brute force of experience certainly involves an element effort and thought, inasmuch as the force of experience is met with a certain resistance, this element of effort or thought does not yet function as an interpretant for any sign. As I have argued, this is what distinguishes habit-change through the production of an emotional interpretant from habit-change through the production of an energetic or logical interpretant.

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<sup>34</sup> Peirce distinguishes between inner and outer functionally in terms of the degree of self-control that is exercised over experience.

I now would like to look more closely at Peirce's analysis of the emotional interpretant in MS 318:

The first proper significate effect of a sign is a feeling produced by it. There is almost always a feeling which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign... This 'emotional interpretant,' as I call it, may amount to much more than that feeling of recognition; and in some cases, it is the only proper significate effect that the sign produces (CP 4.475).

Peirce illustrates what an emotional interpretant is through a musical example: "The performance of a piece of concerted music is a sign. It conveys, and is intended to convey, the composer's musical ideas; but these usually consist merely in a series of feelings. If a sign produces any further proper significate effect, it will do so through the mediation of the emotional interpretant, and such further effect will always involve an effort" (CP 4.475). This analysis of the emotional interpretant is important for Peirce's esthetics for two main reasons. First of all, it establishes that "in some cases, [a feeling] is the only proper significate effect that the sign produces." In the example of listening to music, the musical performance is said to be embodied usually "merely in a series of feelings." Second, this analysis of the emotional interpretant establishes that a sign cannot produce any further significate effect except through the mediation of a feeling functioning as the significate of effect of that sign. Thus, energetic and logical interpretants are irreducibly esthetic. Again, it must be underscored that even though the *actual* production of an emotional interpretant always involves effort and thought, in the instances of habit-change now being considered, the emotional interpretant is nonetheless the only *significate* effect of the sign. In other words, a sign is interpreted exclusively in a feeling, or a series of feelings, rather than in an action or a thought—or even in the new or modified habit produced through this process.

On this account, an emotional interpretant is a feeling of recognition, "which we come to

interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper significate effect of a sign” (CP 4.475). Recalling Peirce’s musical example, this feeling of recognition might be a feeling of pleasure; or it might be a feeling of displeasure. In both cases, the interpretation of the musical performance in a feeling of recognition involves the modification of consciousness. Consciousness, as was discussed above, is here understood as an association, a congeries, of feelings. The first proper significate effect of the musical performance consists just in the strengthening or weakening of this association. That is, the phenomenologically first way in which consciousness is modified is just through its being focused or defocused, strengthened or weakened, through a feeling of recognition. As I have argued, this process is understood semiotically in terms of the production of an emotional interpretant.

To further develop Peirce’s musical example, some educators and clinical psychologists have argued that music—for example, the music of Mozart—can facilitate the formation of habits of feeling conducive to their pedagogical and therapeutic ends. The principle behind playing Mozart after a traumatic event or before an exam, or loud music during an interrogation, is that our rudimentary habits of consciousness can be either strengthened or weakened through the production of an emotional interpretant. Atonal music, on the other hand, often produces a very different effect that can be useful in breaking up old habits of feeling. As I have been arguing, the interpretation of a sign in a feeling, or in a series of feelings, is already a process of habituation, apart from the interpretation of this feeling in an effort or thought. Habit is a readiness to act, and already in the feeling of recognition (an emotional interpretant) resulting from the interaction of the inner and outer worlds, from the brute force of experience upon consciousness, consciousness is focused or defocused in such a way that we come to comport ourselves differently to the world. It is worth restating that the new or modified habit produced

through this process becomes an interpretant for the sign only through the production of a logical interpretant. At the same time, a new habit can be formed or an old habit modified through the production of an emotional or energetic interpretant alone.

This example also reinforces the role that the emotional interpretant can play in the formation of habits of effort and thought. The educator hopes that Mozart will not just contribute to the formation of habits of feeling conducive to learning by focusing a student's consciousness, but, furthermore, that these modified habits of feeling will have the effect of facilitating the formation of new habits of effort (for example, good study habits) and habits of thought (for example, good habits of inference). Likewise, the use of loud music in interrogation is guided by the principle that the erosion of habits of feeling might have the further effect of breaking a suspect's resolve (by undermining certain habits of effort) and principles (by compromising certain habits of thought).

#### 4. Conclusions

Normative science, from the perspective of the principle-dependence of lower sciences on it, is a theory of habit formation; more precisely, it is a theory of the formation of habits for the deliberate control of conduct. As was argued in the Introduction, this view of normative science privileges the standpoint of the third part of normative science, methodetic. The present chapter has aimed at offering an account of normative science as a theory of habit formation through an analysis of Peirce's theory of signs. All semiosis for Peirce is a process of interpretation; however, the ultimate final interpretant of this process cannot be a thought-sign. While every interpretant is potentially a sign for future semiosis, the pragmatic maxim, which states that the highest grade of clearness an idea can have involves the formation of a habit, makes the final interpretant of any process of semiosis a habit of conduct. This means that all

semiosis is at least virtually a process of habituation.

In the preceding section I examined the esthetic dimension of this process through a discussion of the trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants. Peirce reaches two important conclusions through his analysis of the emotional interpretant as the first proper significate effect of every sign. First, in some cases the only proper significate effect of a sign is an emotional interpretant; that is, in some semiotic processes a sign is interpreted, or embodied, only in a feeling. Second, all higher interpretants (energetic and logical interpretants) involve the production of an emotional interpretant. Put differently, every energetic interpretant is irreducibly esthetic, while every logical interpretant is irreducibly esthetic and ethical.

This analysis of the trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants has important ramifications for Peirce's esthetics. To begin with, it suggests that the production of an emotional interpretant is sufficient for the formation or modification of *some* habits of conduct, namely, habits of feeling.<sup>35</sup> That is, some habits of feeling are formed or modified through the production of an emotional interpretant alone. In addition, this analysis establishes that the production of an emotional interpretant is necessary for the formation of all habits of conduct. All habit formation has an irreducible esthetic dimension. To recall Peirce's musical example: "...the performance of a piece of concerted music is a sign. It conveys, and is intended to convey, the composer's musical ideas; but these usually consist merely in a series of feelings. If a sign produces any further proper significate effect, it will do so through the mediation of the emotional interpretant..." (CP 4.475).

I would like to conclude this chapter by commenting on the significance of this analysis

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<sup>35</sup> Once again, the production of an emotional interpretant is not sufficient for the formation of *all* habits of feeling. In fact, Peirce argues in "The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences" that in higher stages of evolution the formation of habits of feeling is subjected to higher degrees of self-control through the exercise of ethical and logical control over this process (cf. EP2:378).

of the emotional interpretant for the dilemma raised in Chapter 3. The objection that esthetics is prenormative confronts normative science with the following dilemma: either esthetics is prenormative, or it is normative only through the mediation of ethics and logic. This dilemma results from the argument that theoretical esthetics admits of no normative distinction between good and bad. Although Peirce resists this argument to the extent that he continues to classify esthetics as a normative science in his perennial classification of the sciences, as we have seen, he continues to have doubts over the normativity of esthetics. The argument that the distinction between good and bad is “something superadded to the pure esthetic” (MS 310.12; cf. S 673.2) underwrites these doubts. On the one hand, normative science is distinguished from phenomenology by its dualism; on the other hand, the esthetic apprehension of the *summum bonum* would appear to exclude “not merely all consideration of effort, but all consideration of action and reaction, including all consideration of our receiving pleasure, everything in short, belonging to the opposition of the *ego* and the *non-ego*” (CP 1.575; emphasis is Peirce’s). As long as esthetics is restricted to the theory of the *summum bonum*, its status as a normative science is highly questionable.

Chapter 3 had failed to establish that normative science has a classificatory part; instead, given that for Peirce the normative distinction between good and bad is a function of self-control, Chapter 3 proposed that the objection that esthetics is prenormative might be answered by thinking about esthetics as a theory of the formation of habits of self-control. The branch of normative science in which methodetic achieves the most prominence is logic, or normative semiotics. In this chapter I have argued that Peirce’s classification of interpretants according to the three ways in which an interpretant functions as the proper significate effect of a sign supports an account of the esthetic dimension of habit formation. First, some processes of



habituation are exclusively esthetic; that is, some habits of feeling are formed only through the interpretation of a sign in a feeling, or the production of an emotional interpretant. Second, all processes of habituation have an irreducible esthetic dimension.

On this interpretation, normative esthetics is a theory of the control of the formation of habits of feeling. This is the account of normative esthetics that Peirce advances in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences”: “If conduct is to be thoroughly deliberate, the ideal must be a habit of feeling which has 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 is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*” (EP2:377–78). Similarly, in a manuscript from 1910 Peirce argues that normative esthetics, ethics, and logic study “how Feeling, Conduct, and Thought ought to be controlled supposing them to be subject *in a measure*, and only in a measure, to self-control, exercised by means of self-criticism, and the purposive formation of habit, [as] common sense tells us they are in a measure controllable” (MS 655.24; emphasis is Peirce’s). In the final chapter of this dissertation I will attempt to reconcile this account of normative esthetics as a methodetic of self-control with the account of normative esthetics, advanced in Chapter 3, as a physiology of the *summum bonum*.

## V. An Esthetic Theory of Self-Control

### A. Introduction

Peirce states in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” that the esthetic ideal that ought to govern conduct “must be a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms.” From this he concludes that “the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*” (EP2:379). Peirce offers the same interpretation of normative esthetics as a theory of self-control in a manuscript from 1910, in which he describes esthetics, ethics, and logic as studying “how Feeling, Conduct, and Thought ought to be controlled supposing them to be subject *in a measure*, and only in a measure, to self-control” (MS 655.24). Chapter 4 explored the possibility for an esthetic theory of habit formation through a discussion of Peirce’s theory of signs. Two conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the trichotomy of emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants. First, some habits are formed just through the interpretation of a sign in a feeling, that is, through the production of an emotional interpretant. Second, the production of an emotional interpretant mediates the formation of all habits of conduct; that is, all habit formation has an irreducible esthetic dimension. On this interpretation, to the extent that esthetics is a methodeutic of the deliberate formation of habits of self-control, it studies the conditions under which new habits for the control of conduct arise through the embodiment of a general rule in a feeling.

Yet how do we reconcile this view of normative esthetics with Peirce’s account of it in other texts, for instance, the “Adirondack Summer School Lectures,” as the study of the “adorably admirable,” “of that which is admirable without any ulterior reason for being

admirable” (1334.38–39)? This raises the problem of how esthetics can be at once a physiology of the *summum bonum* and a methodeutic of self-control. In Chapter 3 this problem was framed through the objection that theoretical esthetics is a prenormative science. It was argued that before esthetics can be classified as a normative science it first must be shown that it admits of a *normative* distinction between good and bad, even if this distinction achieves no great prominence in it. Chapter 3 then presented arguments for why esthetics admits of no such distinction. The first argument that was considered concedes the possibility for an esthetic distinction between good and bad, yet denies that this distinction is normative. The second argument that was considered denies even that esthetics admits of a prenormative distinction between good and bad. Under the pragmatic maxim, belief is a preparedness to act. It is a habit of conduct. Thus, just the recognition of the *summum bonum* already conditions our approval, and ultimately our adoption, of the *summum bonum* as a possible form of conduct.

Chapter 3 concluded by proposing that the objection that esthetics is prenormative might be answered by reflecting on self-control as a condition for the normative distinction between good and bad ends. Chapter 4 then took the first step toward an esthetic theory of self-control by examining the relationship between Peirce’s theory of signs and his theory of normative science. First, it was argued that normative semiotics is a theory of habituation. All semiosis is a process of interpretation, consisting in the representation of a sign for some third term, an interpretant. However, semiosis, on Peirce’s account, cannot be infinitely progressive, and this means that the ultimate interpretant of any act of semiosis must be a habit of conduct rather than merely another sign. In other words, semiosis is a process of habituation. I then argued that semiosis, conceived as a process of habituation, has an irreducible esthetic dimension. The first proper significate effect of any sign, even symbols or thought-signs, is an emotional interpretant, and this

emotional interpretant mediates the production of all higher interpretants.

Two conclusions pertaining to the role of emotional interpretants in habituation were drawn from this analysis. First, as already has been stated, the production of an emotional interpretant is necessary for the formation of all habits of conduct, including habits of action and reasoning. Second, the production of an emotional interpretant is sufficient in some cases for the formation of habits of feeling. This does not mean that habits of feeling formed through the production of an emotional interpretant involve no action or thought. Of course they do. At the same time, not all habits are expressed *through* action or thought. Some (but not all) habits of feeling are embodied only in feeling. This is what distinguishes habits formed only through the production of an emotional interpretant from habits formed through the production of energetic or logical interpretants (habits of action and thought, or habits of feeling formed through moral or logical criticism).

To recall Peirce's musical example, the feeling of pleasure that is felt upon hearing a piece of music is an emotional interpretant. It is an example of the interpretation of a sign (in this example, the piece of music) in a feeling (the feeling of pleasure). At the same time no feeling *actually* can function as an interpretant for a sign apart from action or thought. This is not only a phenomenological impossibility; for Peirce to claim otherwise also would be inconsistent with his assertion that all semiosis is irreducibly triadic.<sup>36</sup> However, although the feeling of pleasure felt upon hearing a piece of music involves elements of reaction and thought, in this example the feeling alone functions as an interpretant for the music.

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<sup>36</sup> Consider Peirce's analysis of qualisigns, icons, or rhemes from 1903. Qualisigns, icons, or rhemes cannot actually function as signs except through their embodiment in action or thought; and yet this does not affect their nature as signs. For instance, Peirce observes about the qualisign that "it cannot actually act as a sign until it is embodied; but the embodiment has nothing to do with its character as a sign." Similarly, he observes about the icon, which is a sign that signifies through a quality or qualities it has in common with its object, that "unless there really is such an Object, the icon does not act [as] a sign; but this has nothing to do with its character as a sign." Furthermore, "anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it" (EP2:291f).

This analysis of the formation of habits of feeling through the production of an emotional interpretant lays the groundwork for an esthetic theory of self-control. For Peirce the theory of the *summum bonum* cannot be separate from the theory (that is, methodetic) of the conditions under which conduct conforms to this *summum bonum* through a deliberate process precisely because it is through a process of habituation—though, as we will see, through a process of habituation that is abductive rather than inductive—that we come to apprehend the *summum bonum* at all. As I indicated in Chapter 3, to this extent I agree with Potter that “in the case of the ultimate ideal or *summum bonum*...its deliberate adoption is conditioned only by its recognition” (Potter 51). Where my interpretation disagrees with Potter’s is on the question of how the deliberate adoption of the *summum bonum* is conditioned only by its recognition. According to Potter, “the recognition of the *summum bonum* is a question of comparing experience with the transcendental condition of such an ultimate, namely, that it is such that it can be pursued in any and every circumstance” (Potter 51). By contrast, I am arguing that the *summum bonum* is recognized by habituation, and that this process is primarily abductive. On this issue, my reading agrees more with Hookway’s analysis of the role of sentiment in self-control. In an article entitled “Sentiment and Self-Control” Hookway proposes that “once we recognize the role of sentiments in self-control, the need for a systematic account of our right to rely upon sentiments emerges” (Hookway 217). The normative sciences are responsible for providing such a theory, and an important insight of normative esthetics is that “our values and ideals, ethical and logical, are revealed in ‘sentimental judgments’.” At the same time, even though Hookway, following David Savan, thus conceives of sentiment as a form of cognition, he does not go far enough, in my opinion, in his analysis of this process. Specifically, he does not conceive of this process as a process of habituation.

In this respect, Peirce's theory of normative science is more Aristotelian than Kantian. In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argues that not all fundamental principles are apprehended through the same process: "Some fundamental principles can be apprehended by induction, others by sense perception, others again by some sort of habituation, and others still by other means" (1098b.3–5). For Aristotle it is through habituation that we apprehend the first principles of the moral life, the virtues. I will argue that it likewise is through a process of habituation that we apprehend the *summum bonum* for Peirce.

My discussion of this problem will begin by considering Aristotle's account of virtue as habit in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in order to provide a wider philosophical context for my argument. Next, I will consider Peirce's analysis of abduction as a process of habituation and will argue that esthetic feeling is a case of abductive inference. This raises the issue of whether control can be exercised, in any degree, over the formation of habits of feeling through the production of an emotional interpretant alone. In the final part of this chapter I will argue both that esthetic feeling is a form of self-control and that this form of self-control is purely esthetic.

## B. Habit Formation and Abduction

### 1. Aristotle on the apprehension of first principles through habituation

In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle distinguishes among several different ways of apprehending first principles. He states that "some fundamental principles can be apprehended by induction, others by sense perception, others again by some sort of habituation" (1098b3-5). It is by habituation that we apprehend the fundamental principles of ethics, the virtues. This idea must be placed in the context of Aristotle's account of the highest good as happiness. Happiness is established as the highest good through two distinct arguments. The

first argument rests on an appeal to popular conceptions of the highest good. Happiness is the highest good because it is the one end that is pursued for its own sake, while also being that for the sake of which everything else is good. Aristotle arrives at this conclusion after observing that everyone seems to pursue happiness, even while not everyone has the same conception of what happiness is (1097a15).

Yet this account is by itself inadequate. As Aristotle acknowledges, “to call happiness the highest good is perhaps a little trite, and a clearer account of what it is, is still required” (1097b21). This “clearer” account of the highest good is grounded in a psychology of the rational soul. In contrast to Aristotle’s first argument, which had appealed to popular conceptions of the highest good, his second argument proceeds from what is clearest by nature rather than with what is clearest to us. The first premise in this argument is that everything has a proper function. In the case of humans, the proper function of being human is that function belonging to the rational part of the soul. Thus, the highest human good must be “an activity of the soul in conformity with a rational principle or, at least, not without it” (1098a7). In the second place, a thing’s proper function is not defined simply as the performance of the activity intrinsic to its highest part. A thing, in order to fulfill its proper function, must perform this activity according to a high standard. For example, the proper function of a harpist is not just to play the harp but to play the harp well; or the proper function of a shipbuilder is not just to build a ship but to build a ship that will float. Similarly, Aristotle argues that the highest human good must be “an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue” (1098a15). That is, it consists in the performance of the activity proper to the rational part of the soul according to a standard of excellence. This is what Aristotle understands by happiness.

This second account of the highest good establishes an important relationship between

the highest good and virtue. The highest good is an activity of the soul (happiness). Human conduct conforms to this highest good (that is, we become happy) by living a life of virtue, by performing our proper rational function according to a standard of excellence. Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* inquires further into the relationship between the highest good and virtue by giving an account of what virtue is and how it is acquired. Aristotle distinguishes among “three kinds of things found in the soul”: emotions/appetites, capacities, and habits [*hexis*].<sup>37</sup> Virtue belongs to the third class of things found in the soul. It is a habit. We have *by nature* emotions and appetites as well as the capacity to be affected by these emotions and appetites in different measures under different conditions. We become virtuous by determining the proper mean of a particular emotion or appetite, in being affected neither too little nor too much by it. Someone who consistently is affected by an emotion or appetite in the appropriate measure forms good habits, or is virtuous, while vice is the excess or deficiency of an emotion or appetite.

For instance, the virtue corresponding to the emotion of fear is courage. A person who consistently finds the mean in the way of fear—that is, is affected neither too little nor too much by this emotion—is courageous. Conversely, someone who is affected too much by fear exemplifies the vice of cowardice, while recklessness is constituted by a deficiency of fear.

Book II thus establishes that the fundamental principles of ethics, the virtues, are apprehended through a process of habituation. But how do we apprehend the nature of the highest good itself (the *summum bonum*)? Through what process do we apprehend the rational principle to which the mean relative to us must conform? Aristotle begins the *Nicomachean*

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<sup>37</sup> The translation of *hexis* as habit is of course problematic (cf. Sachs). Ostwald, whose translation I have cited here, translates *hexis* as characteristic, while Sachs translates it as “active condition.” Both alternatives in most contexts would be preferable to “habit,” but, unless otherwise indicated, I will follow the Scholastic tradition in translating *hexis* as habit. My reason is that an “active condition” is precisely what Peirce means by habit, and so habit is in many respects the best translation of *hexis* for a discussion of Peirce’s theory of normative science, even if it is not always the most faithful translation in other contexts. It should be remembered, however, that what both Peirce and Aristotle mean by habit is an *active* condition, a *preparedness* to act (what Peirce also calls a belief).



*Ethics* by inquiring into the usefulness of a theoretical study of ethics for the good life.

Assuming that it is possible to have knowledge of the highest good, he asks: “Will not the knowledge of this good, consequently, be very important to our lives? Would it not better equip us, like archers who have a target to aim at, to hit the proper mark?” (1094a23-26). At the same time, Aristotle also argues that knowing the good and doing good are two different things. That is, contrary to the assertion of Socrates/Plato in the *Republic*, knowledge of the good is under no condition sufficient, or even always necessary, for being virtuous.

This dilemma leads Aristotle to reflect on the methodology of ethics. The main limitation of ethics is that its subject, the good life, presents “so much variety and irregularity” that it does not admit of the same exactitude as other sciences. Aristotle draws two important conclusions from his analysis of the limitations of ethics. First, “we must be satisfied to indicate the truth with a rough and general sketch” (1094b22). This principle is underscored through an analogy with art: “A carpenter and a geometrician both want to find a right angle, but they do not want to find it in the same sense: the former wants to find it to the extent to which it is useful for his work” (1098a28-30).<sup>38</sup> Second, and more importantly for my argument in this chapter, the study of ethics, even its theoretical study, requires experience in a way that the study of other subjects does not (cf. 1095a1, 1103a30).

The preceding discussion of how we acquire virtues (for example, courage or self-control) through a process of habituation establishes the importance of experience in applied ethics, in hitting the mark, to borrow Aristotle’s archery metaphor. But what role, if any, does experience play in the recognition of the *summum bonum* itself, in the apprehension of happiness as the highest good in the first place? Aristotle’s first account of the highest good as happiness,

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<sup>38</sup> It is at this juncture in Book I that Aristotle distinguishes among different modes of apprehending fundamental principles.

which had been set aside earlier as being unclear and “a little trite,” is important for answering this question. The argument had followed the order of knowledge rather than the order of nature by appealing to popular conceptions of the highest good. The highest good is happiness, it was argued, because if we consider the ends at which people actually aim, happiness is the one thing that everyone seems to desire for its own sake. On this account, the first way in which we come to know the highest good is importantly by way of examples of what people actually already desire. Although this may be inadequate as a scientific account of the highest good, a clearer account of it is possible only because happiness already has been disclosed as the highest good through such examples. For it is the perception that happiness *seems to be* the one end for the sake of which everything else is done that initially suggests to Aristotle the hypothesis that the highest good is happiness.

As stated above, for Aristotle human conduct conforms to the highest good (that is, we become virtuous) through a process of habituation. This process consists in determining the mean in the way of an activity, in being affected neither too little nor too much by an emotion or an appetite. In the next section, I will argue that the apprehension of the highest good itself, which initially takes place through examples, is also a process of habituation. However, in contrast to the acquisition of virtue, which, as will be argued, is a process of habituation having the logical form of an induction, the apprehension of the highest good through examples is a process of habituation having the logical form of an abductive, or hypothetical, inference. I now would like to reconsider Peirce’s theory of abduction in connection with this argument.

## 2. Abduction is a process of habituation

In 1878 Peirce recognizes two forms of ampliative reasoning, induction and hypothesis (or abduction, as it later would be called). Hypothesis adds to the premises of an argument by

producing the *sensuous* element of thought,” while induction contributes its “*habitual* element” (EP1:199). Peirce explains:

A third merit of the distinction [between induction and hypothesis] is, that it is associated with an important psychological or rather physiological difference in the mode of apprehending facts. Induction infers a rule. Now, the belief of a rule is a habit. That a habit is a rule active in us, is evident. That every belief is of the nature of a habit, in so far as it is of a general character, has been shown in the earlier papers of this series. Induction, therefore, is the logical formula which expresses the physiological process of formation of a habit (EP1:198).

Thus, habit formation is understood by Peirce in 1878 as an exclusively inductive process. This idea is reflected in his cosmology from the same period. For instance, in “Design and Chance” from early 1884 Peirce describes physical laws as “habits gradually acquired by systems.” This process is explained in terms of the logic of induction. For “the main laws of cerebation and particularly the formation of habits” are explicable by the “principles of probability” (EP1:223), and these principles, it will be recalled from Chapter 1, derive their validity from the logic of induction (cf. EP1:78f, EP1:147f). Thus, the evolution of the physical laws of the universe is a process of habituation having the logical form of an inductive inference: “For every kind of organism, system, form, or compound, there is an absolute limit to a weakening process. It ends in destruction; there is no limit to strength of the objects remaining. System or compounds which have bad habits are quickly destroyed, those which have no habits follow the same course; only those which have good habits tends to survive” (EP1:223). Habit formation is similarly characterized as a strengthening and weakening process in a manuscript from the following year (cf. EP1:243).

Although this evolutionary cosmology challenges Darwin on some points, one is nevertheless struck by the extent to which it adopts a Darwinian standpoint. As Peirce himself acknowledges in 1884, “Darwin’s view is nearer to mine. Indeed, my opinion is only Darwinism

analyzed, generalized, and brought into the realm of Ontology” (EP1:222). However, by the 1890s Peirce’s evolutionary cosmology becomes less narrowly Darwinian. In particular, the influence of alternative evolutionary theories, especially Lamarckism, can be seen in the new conception of habit formation that begins to emerge. For instance, in “Evolutionary Love” Peirce distinguishes among three “modes of evolution”: evolution by “fortuitous variation” (or *tychasm*), by “mechanical necessity” (or *anancasm*), and by “creative love” (or *agapasm*). The first two forms of evolution are identified with Darwin and Spencer, respectively, while the third form of evolution, *agapasm*, is attributed to Lamarck and is characterized as “evolution by the force of habit”:

Now it is energetic projaculation...by which in the typical instances of Lamarckian evolution the new elements of form are first created. Habit, however, forces them to take practical shapes, compatible with the structures they affect, and in the form of heredity and otherwise, gradually replaces the spontaneous energy that sustains them. Thus, habit plays a double part; it serves to establish the new features, and also to bring them into harmony with the general morphology and function of the animals and plants to which they belong...this account of Lamarckian evolution coincides with the general description of the action of love (EP1:360–61).

The idea that habit performs a dual function in evolution, that it both “serves to establish the new features,” as well as “to bring them into harmony with the general morphology and function of the animals and plants to which they belong,” suggest that habit formation is simultaneously an abductive and inductive process. To the extent that habituation consists only in the harmonization of new elements with old structures, it is primarily inductive. But the process through which these new elements are established in the first place is importantly abductive.

By the 1900s Peirce comes to view abduction as fulfilling an even more important role in inquiry of every kind. Whereas in the 1870s induction had been classified, along with abduction, as a form of ampliative reasoning, Peirce now claims that induction “adds nothing” to the premises of an argument. Abduction is the only form of reasoning that increases our knowledge

of the world: “Underlying all such principles there is a fundamental and primary abduction, a hypothesis which we must embrace at the outset, however destitute of evidentiary support it may be” (EP2:107). The importance of the logic of abduction for pragmatism is stated even more forcefully in the 1903 Harvard Lectures, where the pragmatic maxim—the maxim guiding the whole theory of inquiry—is rethought as a maxim belonging to the logic of abduction. This has important implications for Peirce’s analysis of habit formation.

As was discussed above, Peirce had claimed in 1878 that the inference of a rule is always through induction. Induction, he had argued, produces the habitual element of thought, while hypothesis only produces its “sensuous element.” This in large part accounts for the relative weakness of hypothesis as a form of inference (EP2:198). The 1903 Harvard Lectures challenge this early account of habit formation as an inductive process. First, abduction now is conceived as the inference of a rule, as a way of apprehending generals. This point will be addressed further below. Second, Peirce’s theory of perceptual judgment provides the logic of abduction with a grounding in the world of experience. In fact, Peirce concludes the fifth Harvard lecture by stating that “generality, Thirdness, pours in upon us in our very perceptual judgments, and all reasoning, so far as it depends on necessary reasoning, that is to say, mathematical reasoning, turns upon the perception of generality and continuity at every step” (EP2:207). This statement gives rise to three “cotary propositions.” The first cotary proposition states that “nothing is not in the intellect that is not first in the senses”; the second proposition states that “perceptual judgments contain general elements”; finally, the third cotary proposition, which is the one that is of most interest for my argument, states that “abductive inference shades into perceptual judgments without any sharp line of demarcation between them” (EP2:226–27). That is, perceptual judgments “are to be regarded as an extreme case of abductive inferences, from which

they differ in being absolutely beyond criticism” (EP2:227).

This analysis of habit formation as both abductive and inductive is carried out even further in Peirce’s later writings. In MS 318 from 1907 Peirce observes that “the iteration of the action is often said to be indispensable to the formation of a habit,” and then proceeds to argue that “a very moderate exercise of observation suffices to refute this error.” The following experiment is offered as evidence that iteration is not necessary for the formation of every habit:

A single reading yesterday of a casual statement that the "shtar chindis" means in Romany "four shillings," though it is unlikely to receive any reinforcement beyond the recalling of it, at this moment, is likely to produce the habit of thinking that "four" in the Gypsy tongue is "shtar," that will last for months, if not for years, though I should never call it to mind in the interval. To be sure, there has been some iteration just now, while I dwelt on the matter long enough to write these sentences; but I do not believe any reminiscence like this was needed to create the habit; for such instances have been extremely numerous in acquiring different languages (CP 5.477).

Later in MS 318, Peirce distinguishes among three causes of habit-change: habits can be modified through the involuntary force of experience, through a muscular exertion on the outside world (effort), or through a mental exertion on the inner world (will). The formation of habits without any reiteration, that is, according to the logical formula of abduction, corresponds to the first kind of habit-change, habit-change through the involuntary force of experience. According to the third cotary proposition from the Harvard Lectures, perceptual judgment, which is “a judgment *absolutely forced upon my acceptance*...by a process which I am utterly unable to control and consequently am unable to criticize,” is a limiting case of abductive inference (EP2:210, emphasis mine).

Peirce comments further on this process in the seventh Harvard Lecture: “It is true that the different elements of the hypothesis were in our minds before; but it is the idea of putting together what we had never before dreamed of putting together which flashes the new suggestion before our contemplation” (EP2:227). This explanation is more or less consistent with his

analysis from 1878 of hypothetic inference as a form of reasoning that “substitutes for a complicated tangle of predicates attached to one subject, a single conception... a single feeling of greater intensity” (EP1:198–99). The main difference between these early and later accounts of abduction concerns the interpretation that Peirce gives to this process. As was observed above, in 1878 abduction (or hypothesis) is understood as contributing only the sensuous element of thought, while the habitual element is formed through induction. By contrast, in 1903 abduction is understood as producing the habitual element of thought as well.

Furthermore, even though not every habit is formed *only* through abduction, all habituation, even habituation according to the logical formula of induction, has an abductive moment. Thus, the claim that iteration is “indispensable” for habit formation is wrong in an even more profound way than is acknowledged by Peirce in MS 318. Not only is iteration not necessary for the formation of every habit, namely, habits formed through abduction by the involuntary force of experience; it is also insufficient for the formation of habits through induction. For regardless of how many times someone repeats an activity it does not become habitual until the moment that the unity of that activity is grasped; and our apprehension of this unity, of the activity as embodying a general law, is irreducibly abductive. Put differently, it is only through abduction, through a flash of insight that is perceptual, that we put together “what we had never before dreamed of putting together.” This is the case for Peirce even with habits that are formed primarily through mechanical repetition, as when something is learned by rote memorization.

I raise these issues here because Peirce’s revisions to his theory of abduction in the 1900s, particularly with respect to how abduction is distinguished from induction, have ramifications for his theory of normative science. As we have seen, in the 1870s and 1880s all

habituation is understood as obeying the logical formula of induction. Induction supposedly contributes the habitual element of thought, while abduction only contributes its sensuous element. Peirce's mature logic of abduction from the 1900s departs significantly from this early theory of inquiry by rethinking abduction as a process of habituation. According to the title of the seventh Harvard Lecture, pragmatism is a maxim of the logic of abduction. And the pragmatic maxim, it will be remembered, makes the meaning of an idea, in its highest grade of clearness, consist in the production of at least a virtual habit of conduct.

### 3. Esthetic feeling is a form of abduction

The preceding section considered the development of Peirce's views on the logical form of habit formation. In 1878 and 1884 Peirce had understood habit formation as exclusively inductive in its logical form. However, by the 1900s Peirce modifies his theory of habit formation on this point. Not only is the process through which new habits are formed essentially abductive; some habits are formed exclusively through abduction. In this section I will carry out this analysis of abduction as a process of habituation one step further by arguing that for Peirce the *summum bonum* is recognized esthetically through such a process of habituation having the logical form of an abductive inference.

Esthetic feeling was analyzed in Chapter 3 as a form of cognition, as a way of knowing the world. Specifically, in esthetic feeling we reflect upon the conditions under which feeling becomes significant, and by significant, Peirce means interpretive. Peirce reflects on this process in an early manuscript from 1872 in which he argues that “for a feeling to mean anything there must be another feeling which means that it means something”—in other words, which serves as an interpretant for that first feeling. Such a feeling arises when “a certain complication of feelings [gives] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39).



This process corresponds to what Peirce in 1868 and 1878, among other texts, calls hypothetic inference. First, in “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities” from 1868 Peirce characterizes hypothetic inference as the substitution “for a great series of predicates forming no unity in themselves, a single one,” as “a reduction of a manifold to unity” (EP1:34). This process then is explained through an analogy with esthetic feeling, in this case with the “sense of Beauty”:

That a sensation is not necessarily an intuition, or first impression of sense, is very evident in the case of the sense of beauty... When the sensation beautiful is determined by previous cognitions, it always arises as a predicate; that is, we think that something is beautiful. Whenever a sensation thus arises in consequence of others, induction shows that those others are more or less complicated... The sensation of beauty arises upon a manifold of other impressions (EP1:42).

Peirce, as we have seen, draws the same analogy between hypothetic inference and esthetic feeling in 1878. Hypothetic inference is described as substituting “for a complicated tangle of predicates attached to one subject, a single conception” (EP1:199). This process always is accompanied by “a single feeling of greater intensity,” which is compared to the musical feeling, or emotion,<sup>39</sup> produced upon hearing a piece of music. Peirce explains: “This emotion is essentially the same thing as an hypothetic inference, and every hypothetic inference involves the formation of such an emotion” (EP1:199). Note that esthetic feeling is related to hypothesis in two ways. First, esthetic feeling is “essentially the same thing as” a hypothetic inference. Second, every hypothetic inference results in the formation of “such an emotion,” of an emotion that is analogous to the emotion produced upon hearing a piece of music.

The analogy Peirce draws in 1868 and later in 1878 between abduction and esthetic feeling is consistent with his phenomenological analysis of esthetic feeling in 1903. As was discussed at length in Chapter 3, in his 1903 Harvard Lectures Peirce develops the view of

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<sup>39</sup> In this text an emotion is defined as any single feeling that replaces a complicated feeling: “Now, when our nervous system is excited in a complicated way, there being a relation between the elements of the excitation, the result is a single harmonious disturbance which I call an emotion” (EP2:199).

esthetic feeling as the consciousness of “a multitude of parts so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality.” The quality thus imparted to a totality is the esthetic quality, and “whatever does this is...esthetically good, no matter what the particular quality of the total may be” (EP2:201).

So far I have characterized the relationship between hypothesis/abduction and esthetic feeling as one of analogy. However, as we have seen, their relationship is more complex than this: esthetic feeling both resembles a hypothetic inference, and it is produced through such an inference. That is, it is both a case of hypothetic inference in its own right and plays an essential role in the formation of every hypothesis. This dual relationship between esthetic feeling and hypothesis corresponds to two different aspects of sensation: “The sensation, so far as it represents something, is determined, according to a logical law, by previous cognitions; that is to say, these cognition determine that there shall be a sensation. But so far as the sensation is a mere feeling of a particular sort, it is determined only by an inexplicable, occult power; and so far, it is not a representation, but only the material quality of a representation” (EP1:43).<sup>40</sup> Understood in the first sense as a representative feeling, sensation is a form of hypothetic inference. Yet, the second sense of sensation as the material quality of a representation underscores a crucial difference between sensation and hypothetic inference; in other words, it underscores why they are only analogous.

Consider Peirce’s discussion of emotion. (Again, while there are important differences between emotion and sensation, it is their similarities that interest Peirce here.) Emotion, to the

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<sup>40</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 2, Peirce does not always rigorously distinguish among emotion, sensation, feeling, and other related phenomena in his early writings. This is the case with the analogy he draws in 1868 and 1878 between sensation and hypothesis. Peirce illustrates this analogy through examples involving emotion, sensation, and feeling without commenting, except briefly in passing, on the differences among these phenomena. To borrow Peirce’s terminology from 1900, what these phenomena have in common is that they are all modes of consciousness in which *primisense*, or the consciousness of Firstness, predominates, even if not in the same degree. The fact that emotion, sensation, and feeling proper are all instances of the consciousness of Firstness is the important point in the analogy he draws between sensation/emotion/feeling and hypothetic inference.

extent that it functions like a hypothesis, is importantly different from an “intellectual hypothesis.” Peirce explains this difference as follows: “we have reason to say in the case of the [intellectual hypothesis], that to whatever the simple hypothetic predicate can be applied, of that the complex predicate is true; whereas, in the case of an emotion this is a proposition for which no reason can be given, but which is determined merely by our emotional constitution” (EP2:44). The distinction Peirce draws in this passage between an “intellectual hypothesis” and an emotion is important. For he wants to distinguish emotion from hypothesis without undermining the analogy that has been established between them. In the context of the entire Cognition Series, this analogy is even more important because through it Peirce demonstrates that sensation has an inferential structure—in other words, that we have no power of intuition, that we have no immediate knowledge of the external world.

At the same time, he also must be careful not to undermine his account of hypothetic inference by exaggerating the analogy between it and sensation/emotion/feeling. Thus, as we just saw, he distinguishes between two aspects of sensation. Sensation is inferential to the extent that it is determined *according to* a logical law; however, it is importantly distinguished from other forms of hypothetic inference because it is not determined *through* this law. That is, it “has no relation of reason to the thoughts which determine it,” but, rather, “is determined by the constitution of our nature” (EP1:45, 43). Even though sensation has the logical form of a hypothetic inference, it resembles only the weakest class of hypothesis, “reasoning from definition to definitum.” This is because a sensation is determined by the constitution of our nature rather than through a rule of reason. It has the logical form of a hypothetic inference but is not determined *through* this form. Its major premise is arbitrary. In this respect, sensation is importantly different from the feeling accompanying an intellectual hypothesis. Peirce explains:

“That which distinguishes both sensations proper and emotions from the feeling of a thought, is that in the case of the two former the material quality is the made prominent, because the thought has no relation of reason to the thoughts which determine it, which exists in the last case and detracts from the attentions given to the mere feelings” (EP2:45).

This raises the issue of the role of self-control in reasoning. In 1903 Peirce defines reasoning precisely in terms of self-control: “Any operation which cannot be controlled...is not of the nature of rational inference,—is not reasoning. Reasoning essentially involves self-control” (EP2:188).<sup>41</sup> In fact, perception is distinguished from reasoning precisely because it is a form of inference over which we exercise little or no control (cf. EP2:210). Therefore, the analogy Peirce establishes in 1868 and 1878 between esthetic feeling and hypothesis, however illuminating, is insufficient as an account of esthetic feeling as a case of abductive inference. To restate my position, I am arguing that the recognition of the *summum bonum* conditions are adoption of it as an ideal of conduct because we apprehend the *summum bonum* through a process of habituation having the logical form of an abductive inference. However, the fact that our apprehension of the *summum bonum* takes place through a process of habituation having the logical form of an abductive inference is by itself insufficient for establishing that this process is normative. More importantly, it must be demonstrated that self-control can be exercised over this process, even if it so happens that we are not actually capable of exercising control over it now due to our psychological constitution. The preceding discussion has established that esthetic feeling is a process of habituation having the *form* of an abductive inference. The next section will address the issues of whether this process is controllable and, if it is controllable, whether the form of self-control that is exercised over it is purely esthetic.

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<sup>41</sup> Incidentally, it is the fact that reasoning essentially involves self-control that leads Peirce to the conclusion that the logically good is a species of the morally good.

## C. An Esthetic Theory of Self-Control

### 1. Habit formation and self-control

In 1902 Peirce distinguishes between two senses of habit, a narrow sense, which limits habit to “acquired habits” and excludes natural dispositions, and a wider sense, which encompasses “any general describable character” (CP 5.538). Normative science is concerned with acquired habits, with the “modification of a person’s tendencies toward action” (CP 4.476). More precisely, it studies the conditions under which habits are formed through a process that is deliberately controlled. In short, it studies the formation of habits of self-control—esthetics in the realm of conscious feeling, ethics in the realm of voluntary action, and logic in the realm of critical thought, or reasoning.

As was discussed in Chapter 4, Peirce distinguishes among “three classes of events causative of habit-change.” The first way in which a habit may be formed or modified is through the involuntary force of experience. Peirce cites the efficiency of surprise “in breaking up associations of ideas” as an example of habit-change through the involuntary force of experience. This is also an example of a case of habit-change requiring no repetition of an action. In other words, the formation of habits through the involuntary force of experience is exclusively abductive in its logic form. Second, a habit may be formed or modified through a muscular exertion on the outer world, or through effort. Finally, a habit may be formed through a mental exertion on the inner world, or through will.

The second and third forms of habit-change, habit-change through effort and will, are clearly subject to the exercise of self-control, as far as Peirce is concerned. This is not to say that in every instance we exercise control over the formation of habits through these causes; nonetheless, it is at least in principle possible to increase the control we exercise over either

process through a concentration of effort or will. However, it is not clear that habits formed through the first cause, through the involuntary force of experience, are at any level controllable. Peirce's theory of perceptual judgment sheds some light on this problem. The perceptual judgment is for Peirce an instance of the formation of a habit (perception results in a belief and belief is a preparedness to act) through the involuntary force of experience. A percept is something forced upon consciousness apart from an act of effort or will. In Peirce's example of the perceptual judgment that a chair is yellow, I can resist this judgment by closing my eyes, or turning my back, but as soon as I reopen my eyes, or turn around, I am confronted again by the brute fact of the yellowness of the chair. Peirce observes that "once apprehended, [the percept] absolutely compels assent" (CP 7.627). In fact, it is of the very essence of the perceptual judgment to compel absolutely through the force of experience: "All that I can mean by a perceptual judgment is a judgment absolutely forced upon my acceptance, and that by a process which I am utterly unable to control and consequently am unable to criticize" (EP2:210).

However, even as perceptual judgment is for Peirce an instance of habit-change through the involuntary force of experience—in fact, it is the classic example of this kind of habit-change—at the same time it is also a limiting case of abductive inference. The fact that perceptual judgment has the logical form of an abductive inference opens up the possibility that a degree of control, however slight, might be exercised over this process. Once again, reasoning is distinguished from intuition because it is conscious and therefore controllable. Abductive inference usually involves only a small degree of control; but as a form of reasoning, it is controlled nonetheless. Thus, the fact that perceptual judgment is a limiting case of abductive inference suggests that it also might be a limiting case of self-control.

Nonetheless, in his seventh and final Harvard lecture Peirce reaches the conclusion that

“the contents of the perceptual judgment cannot be sensibly controlled now, nor is there any rational hope that it ever can be” (EP2:240–41). This is consistent with his argument from earlier in the lecture that “the perceptive judgment is the result of a process...not sufficiently conscious to be controlled” (EP2:227). Yet a discussion of optical illusions from this same lecture demonstrates that even though the process through which the perceptual judgment is formed is perhaps not controllable, we can exercise control over the perceptual judgment itself: “The first time [the optical illusion] is shown to us, it seems as completely beyond the control of rational criticism as any percept is; but after many repetitions of the now familiar experiment, the illusion wears off, becoming first less decided, and ultimately ceasing completely” (EP2:228). It is this phenomenon that suggests to Peirce that perceptual judgment is a limiting case of abduction: “If the percept or perceptual judgment were of a nature entirely unrelated to abduction, one would expect that the percept would be entirely free from any characters that are proper to *interpretation*, while it can hardly fail to have such characters if it be merely a continuous series of what discretely and consciously preformed would be abductions” (EP2:229). While the process through which perceptual judgments are formed may not be controllable, a degree of control, however infinitesimal, is exercised over the perceptual judgment itself. An optical illusion works only as long as I am unconscious of it, and as soon as I become conscious of it, the illusion vanishes. For this reason, Peirce observes that “proofreaders get high salaries because ordinary people miss seeing misprints, their eyes correcting them” (EP2:229).

According to this illustration, consciousness is a necessary condition for self-control: self-control can be exercised only over conduct that is conscious. It is clear to Peirce that habit formation through an exertion of effort or will is conscious and, therefore, at least in principle controllable. But habits are more often acquired through the involuntary force of experience.

Again, perception is an example of the modification of our tendencies through this cause—the percept is something forced upon me and which I cannot deny, at least without reflecting upon it further. However, it is not clear that habit-change through the involuntary force of experience is sufficiently conscious to be controllable.

Peirce comments on the role of consciousness in self-control in 1907: “It seems to me that [consciousness] exercises a real function in self-control, since without it, or at least without that of which it is symptomatic, the resolves and exercises of the inner world could not affect the real determinations and habits of the outer world” (CP 4.493). Consciousness is defined in this context as a “congeries of non-relative predicates” (that is, qualities of feeling) resulting from the interaction of the “inner” and “outer” worlds (CP 4.493). The first thing that should be noted about this definition of consciousness is that inner and outer are distinguished functionally in terms of the control of experience. The “outer world” is “the world of those causes that are exceedingly compulsive upon the modes of consciousness,” while the “inner world” consists of whatever is *directly* controllable, either through effort or will. In the second place, although consciousness is necessary for certain forms of control, it is not necessary for all control. In fact, experience is largely controlled through primal instincts and inhibitions that are thoroughly unconscious. Already at the cellular level there is a certain resistance to the compulsiveness of experience, and this resistance is a form of control. Even inanimate objects exhibit a degree of control. For example, a rock that is heated by the sun resists the sun, so to speak, inasmuch as the rock does not melt below a certain temperature.

In a text from 1905 Peirce enumerates several different grades of self-control according to the degree of control that is exercised over control in them:

To return to self-control, which I can but slightly sketch, at this time, of course there are inhibitions and coordinations that entirely escape consciousness. There are, in the next



place, modes of self-control which seem quite instinctive. Next, there is a kind of self-control which results from training. Next, a man can be his own training-master and thus control his self-control. When this point is reached much or all the training may be conducted in imagination. When a man trains himself, thus controlling control, he must have some moral rule in view, however special and irrational it may be. But next he may undertake to improve this rule; that is, to exercise a control over his control of control. To do this he must have in view something higher than an irrational rule. He must have some sort of moral principle. This, in turn, may be controlled by reference to an esthetic ideal of what is fine. There are certainly more grades than I have enumerated. Perhaps their number is indefinite (CP 5.533).

The most primitive forms of control, for instance, the control of experience through instinct or inhibition, take place through processes that are not themselves entirely conscious and therefore are not controllable. Humans are distinguished from nonrational animals, as well as from rivers and rocks, which it will be remembered also for Peirce acquire habits in the widest sense of that term, by this capacity for self-control, for the control of control.

Normative science does not just study the conditions under which conduct is controlled; it studies the control of self-control, that is, the conditions under which control might be exercised over the formation of habits for the control of conduct. The passage cited above identifies the control of conduct “by reference to an esthetic ideal of what is fine” as one grade of the control of self-control. The question that must be answered is whether this esthetic grade of self-control is itself amenable to the exercise of control. Peirce indicates in the text cited above that “there are certainly more grades [of self-control] than I have enumerated” and that “perhaps their number is indefinite.” However, he does not elaborate on what these other grades of self-control are. I have argued that the discussion of optical illusions provides one example of the control of the formation of habits through the involuntary force of experience. But this establishes only that the perceptual judgment is controllable and not that perception itself can be controlled. It is only *after* I am fooled by the optical illusion that I become sufficiently conscious to correct my perception of it, and Peirce remains skeptical that self-control can ever be

exercised over perception, or sensation, itself.

The example of optical illusions raises a further problem for normative esthetics. Though the phenomenon of the optical illusion possibly establishes that a degree of control is exercised over perceptual judgment, if not perception itself, this does not establish that control is exercised over this process apart from an act of effort or will. It will not suffice to show only that control can be exercised over the formation of habits through the involuntary force of experience. More importantly, it must be shown that the form of control that is exercised over this process is purely esthetic. The next section will be concerned with this problem.

## 2. The fixation of attention

I would like to quickly summarize my argument up to this point. The view of normative esthetics as a theory of the formation of habits of self-control may be reconciled with the view of it as a theory of the *summum bonum* through an analysis of how the mere recognition of the *summum bonum* conditions our adoption of it as an ideal of conduct. My position is that this is the case because the recognition of the *summum bonum* takes place through a process of habituation having the form of an abductive inference. Although Peirce initially conceived of habit formation as an exclusively inductive process, he eventually came to understand it as importantly abductive. In abduction a “single feeling of greater intensity” is substituted “for a complicated tangle of predicates attached to one subject” (EP1:198–99). Peirce explains this process through an analogy with esthetic feeling. Esthetic feeling is abductive inasmuch as it is the consciousness of “a multitude of parts so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality” (EP2:201). However, while esthetic feeling has the logical form of an abductive inference, it is not clear that any control is exercised over it, and in this respect the analogy between esthetic feeling and abduction breaks down.

In the last section I considered the perceptual judgment as an instance of habit-change through the involuntary force of experience. Peirce shows through a discussion of optical illusions that a degree of control, however slight, is exercised over perceptual judgment. This example raises the question of whether perceptual judgment, or any instance of habit formation through the force of experience, is controllable through a form of self-control that is purely esthetic. For the purpose of answering this question, I would like to recall Peirce's classification of primisense, altersense, and medisense as the three elements of all consciousness.<sup>42</sup> Even though this classification is not used by Peirce outside of one undated manuscript, it is consistent with his mature phenomenology and provides a useful apparatus for thinking about the categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as the three phenomenologically universal constituents of all consciousness. Primisense corresponds to pure Firstness, to the immediate consciousness of the present. Consider the sensation of a green bottle: "Were that greenness to fill my whole field of vision, while I became momentarily deaf, lost my skin-sensations, and my memory, it would be a total feeling" (CP 7.543). This immediate consciousness of the present as present, however, is not itself conscious. It becomes conscious only through the mediation of higher categories of consciousness, namely, altersense (the consciousness of reaction, or Secondness) and medisense (the consciousness of process, or Thirdness). It is the primisense, or feeling-consciousness, belonging to these higher categories of consciousness that is important for my argument.

Altersense has two modes, sensation and willing. Sensation is distinguished from pure feeling because it involves an element of struggle or resistance. In the above example, the sensation, or perception, of the green of the bottle has a certain assertiveness; it forces itself on an observer quite against her will, and this consciousness of reaction pervades the sensation of it.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Chapter 3

Conversely, though involving an element of struggle, sensation is distinguished from willing because primisense is the predominant element in sensation. Peirce explains: "The difference between them is that Sensation is an event in which a feeling is forced upon the mind; while Volition or Willing, is an event in which a desire is satisfied, that is, an intense state of feeling is reduced. In Sensation, a feeling is forced upon us; in Willing, feeling forces its way out from us" (CP 5.543). This account of sensation is interesting in the present context for a couple of reasons. First, it underscores that sensation is a case of the modification of consciousness through the involuntary force of experience. Unlike in willing, where consciousness is modified through an exertion on the inner world, in sensation consciousness is modified through the compulsiveness of a percept on it. Second, although sensation is a mode of altersense (the consciousness of reaction/struggle), it is a mode of altersense in which primisense still predominates. An observer is conscious of the compulsiveness of the percept through feeling rather than through effort or will.

However, besides immediate consciousness (pure primisense) and sensation, there is a third form of feeling-consciousness, and this is attention. Attention, which is a mode of medisense, is distinguished phenomenologically from the other two modes of medisense, suggestion and association, because, much like sensation is a mode of altersense in which primisense predominates, attention is a mode of medisense in which primisense is still the dominant element. Peirce gives the following account of attention in 1900:

All consciousness of a process belongs to this *medisense*. It has several varieties. In the first place there is a separative process, the centrifugal tendency of thought, by which any idea by following out its own development becomes separated from those with which it is connected. We see this in attention. When we see the little bottle with green crystals, the green idea detaches itself from the remaining ideas, the spicular form, the being bunched together in a little tube, etc. and leads to a thought which is accurately expressed by the sentence "these crystals are green," where the green stands off from the remaining ideas which remain confused together. It is the liveliness of the green idea which brings this

about. And in all cases it is the idea which has vigor which spontaneously detaches itself from the rest (CP 7.544).

Both sensation and attention are cases of the modification of consciousness through the involuntary force of experience. This is not to say that sensation and attention involve no effort. We have already seen that this is not true in the case of sensation, and it is also not true in the case of attention. However, even though both sensation and attention involve an element of effort, or *altersense*, in the form of resistance, in neither case is consciousness modified through effort. In the case of sensation, consciousness is modified through the compulsiveness of a percept on us, while in the case of attention it is the liveliness of the percept that separates it from other percepts. Thus, in both sensation and attention consciousness is modified through the production of an emotional interpretant, or the embodiment of a sign in a feeling.

An early account of attention is found in “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities” (1868). Two things in this account deserve comment. First, attention is understood here as a form of induction. As Peirce explains, “attention is roused when the same phenomenon presents itself repeatedly on different occasions, or the same predicate in different subject... Thus attention is an act of induction...” (EP1:46). Second, this process results in the formation of a habit: “Attention produces effects upon the nervous system. These effects are habits, or nervous associations. Habit arises, when, having had the sensation of performing a certain act, *m*, on several occasions *a*, *b*, *c*, we come to do it upon every occurrence of the general event, *l*, of which *a*, *b*, and *c* are special cases.” (EP1:46). In fact, Peirce even concludes that all habit formation is “necessarily connected with attention or abstraction” (EP1:47). Through induction a rule is inferred from the repeated occurrence of an event. This rule is a habit. While attention does not by itself increase our knowledge—that is, it is not a form of induction that is ampliative—it is instrumental in the process through which knowledge is increased inductively

through habituation.

Peirce develops this account of attention further in a text from 1895. Every inference involves three steps.<sup>43</sup> The first step “consists in bringing together certain propositions which we believe to be true, but which, supposing the inference to be a new one, we have hitherto not considered together, or not as united in the same way” (EP2:22). The result of this process, which Peirce calls “colligation,” is a conjunctive proposition, or “a proposition with a complex icon.” The next steps in inference involve “the contemplation of that complex icon, the fixation of the attention upon a certain feature of it, and the obliteration of the rest of it, so as to produce a new icon” (EP2:22).

The first thing that should be observed in this analysis of attention is that both the object and the result of attention are icons. The fixation of attention begins with the contemplation of a complex icon, and the result of this process is the production of a “new icon.” An icon, it will be remembered from Chapter 4, is a sign that signifies through a quality of feeling. All signs, including indices and symbols, are irreducibly iconic, meaning that they signify by a quality of feeling, even if not always through one. This quality of feeling, which, again, is the immediate consciousness of the present as present, can have different degrees of intensity. In particular, Peirce distinguishes between the objective and subjective intensity of a feeling: “Besides the *objective intensity*, which distinguishes a loud sound from a faint one, there is a *subjective intensity*, which distinguishes a lively consciousness of the sound from a dull consciousness of it” (EP2:22). It is not uncommon for a feeling with low objective intensity to have a high degree of subjective intensity. For example, the creaking of a house has such low objective intensity that under normal circumstances it will not rise to the level of consciousness; however, after

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<sup>43</sup> Inference is defined here as “the conscious and controlled adoption of a belief as a consequence of other knowledge” (EP2:22).

watching a horror movie this same sound might acquire such high subjective intensity that it keeps someone awake all night.

Once again, immediate consciousness (pure primisense) is not itself conscious. Feeling becomes conscious only through the mediation of higher categories of consciousness, altersense and medisense. This happens in the fixation of attention through an increase in the subjective intensity of a feeling.

The action of thought is all the time going on, not merely in that part of consciousness which thrusts itself upon attention, but also in those parts that are deeply shaded and of which we are too little conscious to be much affected by what takes place there. But when, in the uncontrolled play of that part of thought, an interesting combination occurs, its subjective intensity increases for a short time with greater rapidity. This is the phenomenon which constitutes the fixation of the attention (EP2:23–24).

Most feeling has such low subjective intensity that it entirely escapes consciousness. As Peirce observes in the Harvard Lectures, “our logically controlled thoughts compose a small part of the mind, the mere blossom of a vast complexus which we may call the instinctive mind” (EP2:241). In the fixation of attention a feeling of low subjective intensity “increases rapidly in subjective intensity” and through this process becomes conscious.

The fixation of attention, then, can take two forms, depending on whether attention is fixed on a feeling with a high or low degree of subjective intensity. In some cases, attention is fixed on a feeling that already has a high degree of subjective intensity. Peirce’s account of attention in 1868 applies to this form of attention: “By the force of attention, an emphasis is put upon one of the objective elements of consciousness” (EP1:46). In this way, an already lively feeling becomes even livelier through the fixation of attention. This first form of attention plays an important role in memory. For instance, someone might remember a name by repeating it, or a face by picturing it from time to time. In other cases, however, the object of attention is a feeling having such a low degree of subjective intensity that it escapes consciousness altogether.

Peirce observes that “feelings of such low subjective intensity as usually to pass unnoticed act upon one another, undergo transformations in a thinking process, and excite emotions and voluntary actions...” (EP2:23). In this second form of attention, the intensity of these “feelings of such low subjective intensity as usually to pass unnoticed” is increased enough that they finally are brought to consciousness.

The first form of attention, although important, is of little help in answering the question of whether control can be exercised over the first kind of habit-change through a form of self-control that is purely esthetic. Although the fixation of attention on an idea already having a high degree of subjective intensity is certainly controllable, it is controllable through an act of effort or an exertion of will. The second form of attention is the form that is important for my argument. As just explained, this form of attention is focused on “feelings of such low subjective intensity as usually to pass unnoticed” (EP2:23). Such feelings rise to the level of consciousness only when “in the uncontrolled play of [the uncontrolled] part of thought, an interesting combination occurs, its subjective intensity increases for a short time with greater rapidity” (EP2:23). In the next section I will argue that the fixation of attention through contemplation constitutes a form of self-control distinct from the control of conduct through effort or will. Rather, it is a purely esthetic form of self-control. In fact, esthetic feeling for Peirce consists precisely in contemplation, and the control of the formation of habits of self-control through this process is what he understands by an esthetic education. As Peirce proposes in 1903: “I venture to think that the esthetic state of mind is purest when perfectly naïve without any critical pronouncement, and that the esthetic critic founds his judgments upon the result of throwing himself back into such a pure naïve state,—and the best critic is the man who has trained himself to do this the most perfectly” (EP2:189).



### 3. Contemplation as a form of self-control

Three kinds of habit-change have been distinguished. Habits may be formed or modified through the involuntary force of experience, through a muscular exertion on the outer world (effort), or through a mental exertion on the inner world (will). Normative science studies the conditions under which deliberate control may be exercised over the formation of habits of feeling, action, and thought; in other words, it studies the conditions under which habits of conscious feeling, voluntary action, and critical thought may be formed. As far as Peirce is concerned, it is evident that control can be exercised over the formation of habits through effort or will. He is skeptical, however, that control can be exercised over the first kind of habit-change—habit-change through the involuntary force of experience.

Peirce's theory of perceptual judgment leads him to draw precisely this conclusion in his 1903 Harvard Lectures. The perceptual judgment is formed as a result of a percept being "absolutely forced upon my acceptance...by a process which I am utterly unable to control and consequently am unable to criticize" (EP2:210). Thus, Peirce must conclude that "the contents of the perceptual judgment cannot be sensibly controlled now, nor is there any rational hope that it ever can be" (EP2:240–41). At the same time, the perceptual judgment is a limiting case of abductive inference, and this opens up the possibility that it also might be a limiting case of self-control, since all reasoning, even abduction, "essentially involves self-control" (EP2:188). Peirce demonstrates that a degree of control, however slight, might be exercised over the perceptual judgment through a discussion of optical illusions. However, this raises a further question. In the correction of an optical illusion is control exercised over perceptual judgment through an exertion of effort or will (in other words, is this a case of the second or third kind of habit-change), or is control exercised over perceptual judgment in some instances through a form

of self-control that is purely esthetic.

As was discussed above, in a manuscript from 1905 Peirce identifies several distinct grades of self-control (CP 5.533). The most primitive grade of control involves the control of conduct through “inhibitions and coordinations that entirely escape consciousness.” Rational animals are distinguished from nonrational animals by their capacity for self-control, for the control of control. According to Peirce, higher grades of self-control, including the control of control through a moral principle, are controlled “by reference to an esthetic ideal of what is fine” (CP 5.533). In other words, they are controlled through a form of self-control that is esthetic. Yet, in what degree, if at all, is the control of control by reference to an esthetic ideal itself controllable? More importantly, is this process controlled through an act of effort or will, or through some other cause?

The fact that it is only by reference to an esthetic ideal that we are able to exercise control over moral and logical forms of self-control suggests that this process is not reducible to either an act of effort or will. Peirce, however, offers no account of whether or how control is exercised over our recognition of this “esthetic ideal of what is fine” and makes only a vague reference to a possibly “indefinite” number of grades of self-control. It was for the purpose of resolving this issue that his analysis of attention in other texts was considered. Two forms of attention were distinguished. In the first form attention is fixed through an act of effort. By contrast, in the second form attention is fixed on a feeling having such a low degree of subjective intensity that it mostly escapes consciousness. In both forms, the fixation of attention results in the *deliberate* production of a new habit (cf. EP1:46); however, I will argue that in the second form control is exercised over the formation of a habit not through an act of effort but through an “act” of contemplation. This act of contemplation, I will further argue, constitutes a form of self-

control importantly distinct from the control of conduct through effort or will. It constitutes a form of self-control that is purely esthetic.

Before commenting further on contemplation as a form of self-control, it should be restated that in both forms of attention the intensity of a feeling is increased through the liveliness of the feeling itself. Attention is a case of habit-change through the involuntary force of experience. In the first form of attention, attention is fixed on a feeling that already has a high degree of subjective intensity. Similarly, in the second form of attention the subjective intensity of a feeling is increased “when, in the uncontrolled play of [the ‘little conscious’] part of thought, an interesting combination occurs” (EP2:23). Nonetheless, we exercise a degree of control over this process through attention. As Peirce comments in his fourth Harvard Lecture, “if we can criticize [perceptual judgment] at all, as far as I can see, that criticism would be limited to performing it again and seeing whether *with closer attention* we get the same result” (EP2:191, emphasis mine). The important question for Peirce’s esthetics is whether in contemplation control is exercised over the production of a habit through a form of self-control that is purely esthetic—that is, which is not reducible to an act of effort or will.

The first issue that must be addressed is whether contemplation is in fact, as I have been asserting, a form of self-control. Once again, Peirce’s discussion of optical illusions provides an example of the control of habit-change through the involuntary force of experience: “The first time [the optical illusion] is shown to us, it seems as completely beyond the control of rational criticism as any percept is; but after many repetitions of the now familiar experiment, the illusion wears off, becoming first less decided, and ultimately ceasing completely” (EP2:228). In this example, control is exercised over the perceptual judgment largely through the first form of attention, in which “attention is roused when the same phenomenon presents itself repeatedly on

different occasions” (EP1:46). For it is only “after many repetitions” (EP2:228), by “performing [the judgment] again and seeing whether with closer attention we get the same result” (EP2:191), that the optical illusion is corrected.

To this extent, an optical illusion is corrected through an act of effort. However, it is not *only* corrected through an act of effort. In this example the simple repetition of the perceptual judgment is not by itself sufficient for the exercise of control over the perceptual judgment. Of course, in some cases perceptual judgment is corrected simply by performing a judgment over again. However, in such cases it would not be corrected through an act of self-control.

Perceptual judgment is corrected through a controlled and deliberate process only by “performing it again and seeing whether *with closer attention* we get the same result” (EP2:191, emphasis mine). Although the act of performing the judgment again involves the first form of attention exclusively, the process of “seeing whether with closer attention we get the same result,” of “paying now closer attention,” involves the fixation of attention through contemplation.

Peirce conceives of contemplation in 1895 as “using our self-control to seclude us from the forcible intrusion of other thoughts and in dwelling upon the interesting bearings of what may lie hidden in the icon, with a view of causing its subjective intensity to increase” (EP2:24). This process begins with the contemplation of a “complex icon.” Through the contemplation of this complex icon, that is, by “dwelling upon the interesting bearings of why may lie hidden in [it],” attention is fixed “upon a certain feature of it” (EP2:22), and the result of this process is the production of a new icon. An icon, once again is a sign that signifies through the representation of a quality of feeling. That being said, it bears repeating that it is not *through* contemplation, anymore than it is through effort or will, that the subjective intensity of a feeling is increased in

the contemplation of it. Peirce is very clear on this point. How then is control exercised over this process through contemplation?

It will be recalled from the last section that for Peirce self-control presupposes consciousness. To quote MS 318 again, “[consciousness] exercises a real function in self-control, since without it, or at least without that of which it is symptomatic, the resolves and exercises of the inner world could not affect the real determinations and habits of the outer world” (CP 4.493). The first significant effect of the interaction of the outer and inner worlds (the world of what we control and the world of what is “exceedingly compulsive upon the modes of consciousness”) is always an emotional interpretant. In its most rudimentary form, this emotional interpretant is nothing more than a “feeling of recognition”—a feeling “which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign” (CP 4.475). As Peirce had argued in 1872, incomplex feeling, what in other contexts he calls primary feeling or a quality of feeling, is absolutely simple and therefore not itself conscious. To quote a later manuscript: “there is no consciousness in it because it is instantaneous. For we have seen already that feeling is nothing but a quality, and a quality is not conscious...” (CP 1.310; cf. 1.318). Feeling becomes conscious only when “a certain complication of feelings [gives] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). On my interpretation, this feeling that is a sign of a “complication of [incomplex] feelings” is what Peirce means by a feeling of recognition. Understood semiotically, it is an emotional interpretant.

In Chapter 4, I argued through an analysis of the emotional interpretant as the first proper significant effect of a sign that the interpretation of a sign in a feeling of recognition is a process of habit formation. In the present chapter I am arguing that control may be exercised over this process through an act of contemplation. Once again, the fixation of attention through

contemplation consists in “using our self-control to seclude us from the forcible intrusion of other thoughts and in dwelling upon the interesting bearings of what may lie hidden in the icon, with a view of causing its subjective intensity to increase” (EP2:24). The result of this process is the production of a new icon that functions as a sign for what “may lie hidden” in a more complex icon. Thus, the fixation of attention through contemplation involves the production of a feeling of recognition, a feeling “which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign [in this case, what lies hidden, and thus escapes consciousness, in a more complex icon]” (CP 4.475). Although the intensity of a feeling having low subjective intensity is not increased through contemplation, our consciousness of this process, and thus our capacity for exercising control over it, is increased through this mode of attention. Therefore, not only is consciousness necessary for all forms of self-control—as Peirce asserts it is in MS 318; in some cases it is by itself sufficient for the exercise of self-control, namely, in the fixation of attention through contemplation. It is through contemplation that we exercise self-control over the formation of our most rudimentary habits of feelings (habits of consciousness or recognition).

Consider, once again, the process through which an error in perceptual judgment is corrected in attention. In perceptual judgment a percept is forced upon consciousness. This process is unconscious and thus beyond control. However, as has been shown, according to Peirce’s theory of perceptual judgment, we can exercise a degree of control over the result of this process, the perceptual judgment (cf. CP 7.636n), through attention. In the example of the correction of an optical illusion, it is possible to grasp the illusion by fixing one’s attention on it. This is done “by performing it again and seeing whether *with closer attention* we get the same result” (EP2:191). The perceptual judgment is not corrected in this example just through the

repetition of it. The illusion is ultimately something I must “see.” As Peirce observes, “when we so perform it again, paying now closer attention, the percept is presumably not such as it was before” (EP2:191). In this section I have argued both that this process of “seeing whether with closer attention we get the same result” takes place through contemplation and that the fixation of attention through contemplation constitutes a distinct form of self-control. In the next section I will argue that contemplation constitutes a form of self-control that is purely esthetic.

#### 4. Esthetic feeling and self-control

I want to begin by considering two objections to the preceding account of attention as a form of self-control. Both objections are based in unpublished later manuscripts and complicate the interpretation I have given of the phenomenon of attention. The first objection concedes that attention is a form of self-control, but argues that it is not purely esthetic. Even when fixed through contemplation, attention always involves effort. This objection is suggested by a passage from MS 330 in which Peirce argues that “controlled attention” is a condition for *all* forms of self-control: “And let anything be actively self-controlled and it must be done with *controlled attention*” (MS 330.1, emphasis is Peirce’s).<sup>44</sup> He then observes that “attention involves *effort* and effort is action.”

Whereas this first objection only denies that attention is purely esthetic, the second objection denies that attention is even a form of self-control. This objection is suggested by MS 681 from 1913. In this manuscript Peirce identifies attention, sensation, and habit as the three “undecomposable” modes of consciousness.<sup>45</sup> The question of whether attention is a form of self-control is answered as follows: “Self-control involves something more [than attention]. But

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<sup>44</sup> Robin indicates no date for this manuscript, but Parker dates it 1906.

<sup>45</sup> It should be added that Peirce also distinguishes a variety of different modes of attention, sensation, and habit-taking.

this something more is so radically different, that I must postpone the consideration of it until we come to consider the third great department of consciousness [habit-taking]” (MS 681.12–13). At the same time, even though self-control is “radically different than attention,” attention is nevertheless a necessary condition for it: “We shall find that just as Attention involves Sensation...so this ‘something more’ that is specially prominent in all self-control, including particularly controlled attention, essentially supposes Attention, very much as Attention supposes Sensation, while it is itself something every bit as different from Attention as Attention is from Sensation” (MS 681.13). Unfortunately, Peirce never elaborates further on this “something more” that distinguishes attention and self-control, as promised. However, his discussion of attention in MS 330 and other texts suggests that what is missing from attention, at least so far as it is fixed through contemplation, is effort or altersense (the consciousness of Secondness). Both objections, then, raise the issue of the role of effort in attention. According to the first objection, attention cannot be purely esthetic because it “involves *effort* and effort is action,” while according to the second objection attention cannot be a form of self-control because self-control requires something more, and this “something more” is effort.

I will address the objection that attention cannot be purely esthetic because it involves effort first. Even though in the fixation of attention through contemplation attention is not fixed through effort, it should not be assumed that this form of attention does not involve any effort. To the contrary, Peirce’s analysis of primisense, altersense, and medisense establishes that effort, or Secondness, is an irreducible element of every form of consciousness. Even though attention is a mode of medisense in which primisense predominates, altersense (the consciousness of reaction/struggle) is nonetheless a constituent element of it. In attention the subjective intensity of a feeling increases through its own liveliness, or through the liveliness of other feelings.



Altersense is exhibited here just in the compulsiveness of this feeling on consciousness, and this element of resistance is exhibited even in the fixation of attention through contemplation.

However, while effort is an element of all attention, in contemplation attention is not fixed *through* effort. This situation is roughly analogous to how the production of every emotional interpretant involves effort and thought, but not always in such a way that this effort and thought are interpretive. Similarly, an icon cannot *actually* function as a sign apart from an index, but no icon signifies through an index (cf. EP2:291). By the same principle, there is no problem for Peirce in asserting that contemplation both involves an element of effort, or Secondness, and is nonetheless purely esthetic. In fact, it is precisely because contemplation is purely esthetic that the second objection arises. This objection again states that contemplation cannot be a form of self-control because self-control requires effort, and while contemplation may involve effort, it does not take place through effort. I think my analysis of contemplation as a form of self-control in the last section is sufficient for establishing that Peirce, at least in certain texts, admits a purely esthetic form of self-control. In the first place, in 1905 he both recognizes an esthetic grade of self-control—the control of control “by reference to an esthetic ideal of what is fine”—and insists that logical and moral grades of self-control are controlled through it. This second point is significant because, although Peirce does not explain whether or how this esthetic grade of self-control is itself controlled, the fact that logical and moral grades of self-control are controlled through this esthetic grade of self-control suggests that it is not reducible to an act of effort or will. This raises the possibility that this form of self-control might be purely esthetic.

In the second place, as we have seen, consciousness is a necessary condition for all self-control, “since without it, or at least without that of which it is symptomatic, the resolves and exercises of the inner world could not affect the real determinations and habits of the outer

world” (CP 4.493). The control of habit-change through effort (a muscular exertion on the outer world) or will (a mental exertion on the inner world) presupposes consciousness. I argued through an analysis of contemplation that in some cases this event of consciousness alone is sufficient for self-control. This is the case when self-control is exercised over habit-change just through the production of a feeling of recognition, “which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign” (CP 4.475).

Esthetic feeling is a form of self-control in this sense; it is a form of the fixation of attention through contemplation. Peirce defines esthetics in a manuscript from 1905 as “the analysis of what it is that excites that feeling akin to worship that fills one’s whole life in the contemplation of an idea that excites this feeling” (MS 1334.39a). This account of esthetic feeling as “the contemplation of an idea” recalls the discussion of esthetic enjoyment in the fourth Harvard Lecture as “a sort of intellectual sympathy, a sense that here is a feeling that one can comprehend, a reasonable feeling” (EP2:190). In a separate text from 1903 beauty is similarly defined as the satisfactoriness of something “upon mere contemplation” (CP 4.368). Pure feeling, the quality of feeling, is not conscious. Feeling becomes conscious only when “a certain complication of feelings [gives] rise to a feeling which is a sign of that particular complication” (W3:38–39). The feeling produced through this process, and which functions as a sign for the complication of the feelings from which it arises, is a feeling of recognition, a feeling “which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign” (CP 4.475). What we contemplate in esthetic feeling is the process through which feeling becomes capable of functioning as an interpretant, as the “first proper significate” effect of a sign, in the first place. This act of contemplation is a purely esthetic form of self-control.

As was seen earlier, in 1868 and 1878 Peirce classifies sensation/emotion as a form of

hypothetical inference: “When our nervous system is excited in a complicated way, there being a relation between the elements of the excitation, the result is a single harmonious disturbance which I call an emotion. This emotion is essentially the same thing as an hypothetic inference, and every hypothetic inference involves the formation of such an emotion” (EP1:199). At the same time, this emotion, which is explained in both 1868 and 1878 through an analogy with esthetic experience, is distinguished from other hypothetic inferences because it is determined by the constitution of our nature rather than through a rule of reason. As Peirce argues, it is “a proposition for which no reason can be given, but which is determined merely by our emotional constitution” (EP1:44). While sensation has the logical form of a hypothetic inference, it is not, strictly speaking, a case of hypothetic inference because it is neither controlled nor controllable.

Nonetheless, although the percept “cannot be sensibly controlled now, nor is there any rational hope that it ever can be,” it was shown through a discussion of optical illusions that the perceptual judgment is controllable through the fixation of attention. It is the capacity for the control of control through the conscious production of a feeling of recognition that is cultivated through an esthetic education. In fact, Peirce claims in his 1903 Harvard Lectures to have undergone just such a “systematic course of training in recognizing my feelings.” He adds: “I have worked with intensity for so many hours a day every day for long years to train myself to this; and it is a training which I would recommend to all of you” (EP2:190). Specifically, Peirce recommends this course of training for the phenomenologist: “What we have to do, as students of phenomenology, is simply to open our mental eyes and look well at the phenomenon” (EP2:147). To this extent, the philosopher must emulate the artist. Whereas “ordinary people” perceive snow as white or grey, the artist sees “that the shadows are not grey but a dull blue and that the snow in the sunshine is of a rich yellow.” This “rare faculty...of seeing what stares one

in the face, just as it presents itself, unreplaced by any interpretation, unsophisticated by any allowance for this or for that supposed modifying circumstance,” which is in artists and proofreaders more or less by nature, is what must be cultivated by “ordinary people” through an esthetic education (EP2:147).

Peirce discusses the role of attention in an esthetic education in a manuscript from 1911. He begins by observing, much as he had in his 1903 Harvard Lectures, that “artists are much better observers of their feelings generally, than are ordinary people.” This is the case, he explains, because ordinary people “are apt rather to cultivate inattention to [their feelings] than attention.” Through this argument, Peirce concludes that “the modification of feeling by habits of allowances is a very important phenomenon in all judging by feeling.” This discussion importantly reinforces two points from Peirce’s analysis of an esthetic education in his 1903 Harvard Lectures. First, it is possible to modify feeling through the formation of new habits, in this case, “habits of allowances.” Second, control can be exercised over this process through the cultivation of attention to one’s feelings—or as Peirce describes his own esthetic education in 1903, “through a systematic course of training in recognizing [one’s] feelings.” In this systematic course of training, attention to one’s feelings is cultivated not through effort or will, which is not to say that an esthetic education does not involve effort or will, but through a purely esthetic form of self-control—through contemplation. Esthetic feeling is a form of contemplation in this sense; in fact, it is exemplary of this form of contemplation because through it we contemplate “what it is that excites that feeling akin to worship that fills one’s whole life in the contemplation of an idea that excites this feeling” (MS 1334.39a). In the conclusion to this Chapter I will address how this account of esthetic feeling as a form of self-control answers the objection that esthetics is prenormative.

## 5. Conclusions

Peirce concludes in “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences” that normative esthetics is a theory of the formation of deliberately controlled habits of feeling. I began this Chapter by raising the problem of how this view of esthetics might be reconciled with the view that is advanced in other texts of esthetics as a theory of the *summum bonum*. Potter resolves this problem by arguing that “in the case of the ultimate ideal or *summum bonum*...its deliberate adoption is conditioned only by its recognition” (Potter 51). However, he reaches this conclusion through the transcendental argument that “the recognition of the *summum bonum* is a question of comparing experience with the transcendental condition of such an ultimate, namely, that it is such that it can be pursued in any and every circumstance” (Potter 51). By contrast, in this chapter I have argued that the deliberate adoption of the *summum bonum* is conditioned only by its recognition because the recognition of the *summum bonum* is a deliberately controlled process of habituation.

I would like to briefly restate the main steps in my argument before addressing the issue of how it both resolves the problem formulated at the beginning of this Chapter and answers the objection that esthetics is prenormative from Chapter 3. First, it was argued that habit formation, at least in some forms, is exclusively abductive. Second, I argued through the analogy that Peirce draws between esthetic feeling and hypothetic/abductive inference that esthetic feeling is a process of habituation having the logical form of an abductive inference. Finally, I argued through an analysis of the fixation of attention through contemplation that esthetic feeling is a deliberately controlled process of habituation and that control is exercised over this process through a purely esthetic form of self-control (through contemplation rather than through effort or will).

On this account, the esthetically good is a deliberately formed habit of feeling. It is a process of self-control. This is not to say that the conception of the esthetically good as either the admirable in itself or as pleasure is false. Both of these conceptions, however, are incomplete inasmuch as they only represent one aspect of the esthetically good. Kent distinguishes among three distinct conceptions of the good in Peirce's esthetics: as an admirable quality, as a feeling of pleasure, and as an aim that can be consistently pursued in the long run. Kent ultimately rejects all three conceptions of the esthetically good as flawed, but in doing so she overlooks how they complement one another by each representing a different aspect of the esthetically good: the conception of the esthetically good as that "one quality that is, in its immediate presence, *kalos*" (CP 2.199) represents the esthetically good in its Firstness; the conception of the esthetically good as pleasure represents it in its Secondness, in terms of the dualism of good and bad; and the conception of the esthetically good as a habit of self-control represents it in its Thirdness, as the first stage in a process of evolution.

That being said, Peirce eventually embraces the view of the esthetically good as a process of self-control as being most consistent with his pragmatism. At the conclusion of "What Pragmatism Is" (1905) he states that "the pragmatist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*" (EP2:343). In "Consequences of Pragmatism" from the following year Peirce describes the esthetic stage of this process in more detail:

As for the ultimate purpose of thought, which must be the purpose of everything, it is beyond human comprehension; but according to the stage of approach which my thought has made to it...it is by the indefinite replication of self-control upon self-control that the *vir* is begotten, and by action, through thought, he grows an esthetic ideal, not for the behoof of his own poor noddle merely, but as the share which God permits him to have in the work of creation (CP 5.402n3).

This analysis of the esthetically good as a process of self-control resolves the problem raised at the beginning of this Chapter of how the view of esthetics as a methodetic of self-control may be reconciled with the view of it as a physiology of the *summum bonum*. As I have argued, esthetics is at once a theory of the *summum bonum* and a theory of self-control because it is through a process of habituation—that is, through the formation of deliberately controlled habits of feeling—that we first apprehend the *summum bonum*.

Likewise, this account of the esthetically good as a process of self-control answers the objection from Chapter 3 that theoretical esthetics is prenormative. Once again, this objection consists of two parts: first it denies that the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative; second, it limits esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. Chapter 3 tried to answer this objection by showing that esthetics is not limited to the theory of the *summum bonum*. By contrast, in this Chapter I have tried to answer the objection by showing that the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is normative. This was established through an analysis of esthetic feeling as a deliberately controlled process of habituation. For Peirce the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative because the *summum bonum* is recognized through the formation of deliberately controlled habits of feeling. It is a process of self-control.

However, this argument proves only that the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is normative. It does not yet prove that esthetics is normative apart from the mediation of ethics. In 1903 Peirce argues that pure esthetic experience admits of no *normative* distinction between good and bad because the dualism intrinsic to normative science is foreign to pure esthetic experience. He explains: “I cannot pronounce one state of things good for me to strive for without *ipso facto* pronouncing the opposite state of things good for me to flee from. There is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment” (MS 310.12).

This same argument leads Peirce in 1905 to subsume the theory of the *summum bonum* under ethics: “I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea.

Esthetics, therefore, can be nothing but a branch of ethics” (MS 1334.36).

The argument that esthetics can be normative, if it is normative at all, only through the mediation of ethics is answered through the analysis of contemplation as a purely esthetic form of self-control. Peirce had argued in MS 310 that the dualism between good and bad is something “superadded” to esthetic experience because “to strive for one is to strive against the other.” The problem here is not that the distinction between good and bad is dualistic but, rather, that good and bad must be adopted as ideals of conduct through striving or effort. Esthetics is subsumed under ethics in MS 1334 according to the same logic: “I do not see how there can be any rational approval or disapproval of a mere idea in itself and therefore I think there can be no esthetics until something is to be *done* with the idea” (MS 1334.36). Peirce’s analysis of contemplation establishes that an ideal can be adopted as a possible form of conduct “in itself,” without *striving* for one thing and against another, or *doing* anything with the idea. As argued above, esthetic feeling is a form of self-control in this sense. This form of self-control is purely esthetic—and this is the crucial premise in the argument—because through it control is exercised over conduct through contemplation rather than through effort or striving. While this process involves effort, in contemplation control is not exercised over conduct through effort; rather, conduct is controlled through the production of a feeling of recognition, “which we come to interpret as evidence that we comprehend the proper effect of the sign” (CP 4.475).



## Conclusion

In the Introduction I situated the problem of the normativity of esthetics in the context of the reformulation of pragmatism as pragmaticism. In the wake of James' popularization of pragmatism in the late 1890s, Peirce had worried that his original formulation of the pragmatic maxim at the very least lends itself to the nominalistic interpretation that brute action, or mere reaction, is "the be-all." By contrast, pragmaticism "takes the end-all as the be-all, and the End is something that gives its sanction to action. It is of the third category" (CP 8.255–56). Thus, normative science, which, as we have seen, studies the conditions under which ends might be deliberately adopted through a process of habituation, plays an important role in the development of pragmaticism. As originally formulated by Peirce in 1878, the pragmatic maxim states that the meaning of an idea consists in its conceivable effects and consequences. In 1903 this maxim is restated as a maxim of normative logic: "The elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action; and whatever cannot show its passports at both those two gates is to be arrested as unauthorized by reason" (EP2:241).

Chapters 1 and 2 addressed the issue of how "the elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception" through an analysis of the principle-dependence of normative esthetics on phenomenology. First, Chapter 1 framed the problem of the normativity of esthetics through the objection from the threat of hedonism. This objection rejects the classification of esthetics as a normative science by arguing that pure esthetic experience cannot be a source for ethically and logically normative principles without reducing ethics and logic to hedonism. Through his work with phenomenology Peirce becomes convinced that this objection

rests on a “fundamental misconception.” As he argues in his fourth Harvard Lecture, “to say that morality, in the last resort, comes to an esthetic judgment is *not* hedonism,—but is directly opposed to hedonism” (EP2:189). Far from requiring the dissociation of the feelings of pleasure and pain from ethics and logic, the objection from the threat of hedonism calls attention to the need for a new phenomenology of these phenomena.

Next, Chapter 2 attempted to reconstruct a phenomenology of pleasure and pain from Peirce’s early and later writings. Chapter 3 then offered an account of pure esthetic experience on the basis of this phenomenology. Although the esthetic study of the *summum bonum* transcends phenomenology inasmuch as the distinction between good and bad ends is in no way already immanent in the phaneron, esthetics at the same time is constrained by what phenomenology discloses about the categorial structure of experience. Peirce explains in 1904: “[Esthetics] has to define [the beautiful], not at all with reference to its pleasing A, B, or C, but in terms of these universal elements of experience that have been brought to light by phenomenology. Unless this can be done, and it can be shown that there are certain conditions which would make a form beautiful in any world, whether it contained beings who would be pleased with such forms or not, there is no true normative science of esthetics” (MS 693.126–128). In this way, the normativity of esthetics first of all is established through a description of the categorial structure of esthetic experience.

While this appeal to phenomenology is successful in defending the classification of esthetics as a normative science against one objection, the objection from the threat of hedonism, at the same time it reinforces a quite different, and in some ways more philosophically formidable, objection—the objection that theoretical esthetics is prenormative. This objection consists of two parts: first, it denies that the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative; second,

it restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*. Chapter 3 had tried to answer the second part of this objection, which restricts esthetics to the theory of the *summum bonum*, by showing that esthetics is a classificatory science as well as a physiology of the *summum bonum*. However, it was unable to do this through a phenomenology of pure esthetic experience alone (the failure of this strategy is not surprising considering that the distinction between good and bad is not already immanent in phenomena). Instead, the same phenomenological argument through which the first objection had been answered now leads Peirce to the conclusion that pure esthetic experience admits of no normative or even prenormative distinction between good and bad. Peirce explains in MS 310: “In pure esthetics, the one state of things may have its beauty and the opposite state of things may have its beauty...[But] I cannot pronounce one state of things good for me to strive for without *ipso facto* pronouncing the opposite state of things good for me to flee from. There is a sharp dualism here which does not exist in the state of pure esthetic enjoyment” (MS 310.11–12). This argument is very succinctly restated in a draft for “A Sketch of Logical Critic” from 1911: “Is esthetics one of them [a normative science]?...One would say no if everything is already perfectly beautiful” (S673.2).

Given this argument, in Chapters 4 and 5 I proposed to answer the objection that esthetics is prenormative by addressing the first part of the objection, which denies that the theory of the *summum bonum* is normative. First of all, in Chapter 4 it was argued through a discussion of Peirce’s theory of signs that all habit formation has an irreducible esthetic dimension and that some habits (habits of feeling) are formed just through the embodiment of a general rule in a feeling, or the production of an emotional interpretant, independently of the production of either an energetic interpretant or logical interpretant (that is, the embodiment of this general rule in an effort or thought). In the second place, Chapter 5 offered an interpretation of pure esthetic

experience as a deliberately controlled process of habituation. On this account, the esthetic theory of the *summum bonum* is normative because the recognition of the *summum bonum* takes place by habituation through the formation of deliberately controlled habits of feeling. In fact, Peirce ultimately concludes that the *summum bonum* is nothing but a deliberately controlled process of evolution (EP2:343–44). At the same time, esthetics is also not merely a branch of ethics because the control that is exercised over this process is purely esthetic. This second point was established through an analysis of contemplation as a form of attention.

Through both arguments I hope to have shown how for Peirce ethically and logically normative principles are grounded in a phenomenal world of common experience through the mediation of esthetics. In other words, I hope to have shown how deliberately controlled habits of effort and thought enter “at the gate of perception” through the formation of deliberately controlled habits of feeling. For as Peirce concludes in a manuscript from 1911: “The modification of feeling by habits of allowances is a very important phenomenon in all judging by feeling. Our feelings are the exclusive vessels in which all our information is brought to us” (MS 671.9a). On this account, normative esthetics is the study of the modification of habits of feeling through a deliberately controlled process of habit formation.

Once again, this analysis of Peirce’s esthetics agrees on several fronts with Potter’s reading. In particular, it agrees with Potter’s argument that esthetics is normative because “in the case of the ultimate ideal or *summum bonum*...its deliberate adoption is conditioned only by its recognition” (51). Yet, as I have discussed now at length, Potter reaches this conclusion through the transcendental argument that “the recognition of the *summum bonum* is a question of comparing experience with the transcendental condition of such an ultimate, namely, that it is such that it can be pursued in any and every circumstance” (51). By contrast, I have argued that

the adoption of the *summum bonum* as an ideal of conduct is “conditioned only by its recognition” through an analysis of esthetic feeling as a deliberately controlled process of habituation. To this extent, my interpretation of Peirce’s esthetics gives more weight to the influence of Aristotle on Peirce’s theory of normative science than to the influence of Kant.

Finally, according to the restatement of the pragmatic maxim as a maxim of normative logic that was quoted above, normative principles, in order to be “authorized by reason,” must not only show their passport “at the gate of perception”; they must also “make their exit at the gate of purposive action” and show their passport at this gate, too (EP2:241). In Chapter 4 it was argued that habits of feeling can be formed through the production of an emotional interpretant—through the embodiment of a general rule in a feeling of recognition—alone, apart from the production of either an energetic or logical interpretant. But in addition to being a form of habituation in its own right, the formation of habits of feeling is also the first stage in a wider process of habituation. In “The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences,” Peirce concludes that “the esthetic ideal must be a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticism and of heterocriticisms” (EP2:378). Likewise, in “Consequences of Pragmaticism” from the same year he concludes that “*by action, through thought, [one] grows an esthetic ideal, not for the behoof of his own poor noddle merely, but as the share which God permits him to have in the work of creation*” (CP 5.402n3, emphasis is mine).

The final two chapters of this dissertation were focused on establishing both that some habits of feeling are formed through a purely esthetic grade of self-control and that the *summum bonum* itself is recognized esthetically through such a process. At the same time, it must be remembered that this is only the first stage in a much wider process of evolution, which “in its

higher stages...takes place more and more largely through self-control” (EP2:344). Just as ethically and logically normative principles must enter at the gate of perception through the mediation of normative ethics, esthetically normative principles must “exit at the gate of purposive action” through the mediation of normative ethics and logic, and eventually practical science. Though esthetics of course can in no way depend on ethics and logic for principles under Peirce’s Comtean classificatory scheme, it nonetheless must be remembered that it is only “by action, through thought,” or “under the influence of a course of self-criticism and of heterocriticisms,” that esthetically normative principles become *actually* effective in the world.

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