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## The dialogicality of peircean esthetics

### A dialogicidade da estética peirciana

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**Abstract:** This article explores the dialogicality of the *subject-matter* of Peircean Esthetics. Following Herbart, the American pragmatist, in his maturest account (1911), conceives of Esthetics as a science that deals with the two kinds of *tò kalón*, namely with the *nobility of conduct* (realized in action) and with *sensuous beauty* (experienced in art and nature), though he systematically predilects the former, i.e. the study of the conditions of the *imagination* of an ultimate end that is admirable in itself (thus considering the end *esthetically* in its firstness, as a *possible* quality) and which is presupposed in the study of the conditions of its *actualization* as a *summum bonum* (thus considering the end *ethically* in its secondness, as a *norm* grounding *dyadic relations of conformity of self-controlled conduct to it*). As the esthetic (dis)approval of ends reveals the ultimate ground of imagining the unity of a possible practical identity, Esthetics uncovers the conditions of an inner freedom that makes self-governed conduct possible in the first place; not, however, as a transcendental *given*, but as the *result* of pedagogic practices (Sect. I). Next, we analyze how esthetic dialogicality originates from the first-personal stance of the fundamental question it asks: “[W]hat am I after?” (II.1); we differentiate the parties, phases, and presuppositions of this dialogicality (II.2); and analyze the role an ideal – in its methodetic *concretization* as a habit of feeling “grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms” – plays for the semeiotic causality involved in shaping conduct (II.3).

**Keywords:** Dialogue. Esthetics. Ethics. Herbart, Johann Friedrich. Peirce, Charles Sanders. Practical identity. *Synesis*.

**Resumo:** Este artigo explora a dialogicidade do objeto da Estética Peirciana. Seguindo Herbart, o pragmático americano, em seu relato mais maduro (1911), concebe a Estética como uma ciência que lida com os dois tipos de *tò kalón*, a saber, com a nobreza da conduta (realizada na ação) e com a beleza sensual (experimentada na arte natureza), embora predilete sistematicamente pela primeira, isto é, pelo estudo das condições da imaginação de um fim último admirável em si mesmo (considerando assim o fim esteticamente em sua primeiridade, como uma qualidade possível) e que é pressuposto no estudo das condições de sua atualização como *summum bonum* (considerando assim o fim eticamente em sua segundidade, como norma que fundamenta relações diádicas de conformidade de conduta autocontrolada a ele). Como a (des)aprovação estética dos fins revela o fundamento último de imaginar a unidade de uma possível identidade prática, a Estética revela as condições de uma liberdade interior que torna a conduta autogovernada possível em primeiro lugar; não, porém, como dado transcendental, mas como resultado de práticas pedagógicas (Seção I). Em seguida, analisamos como a dialogicidade estética se origina da postura de primeira pessoa da questão fundamental que ela faz: “[O] que estou procurando?” (II.1); diferenciamos os partidos, fases e pressupostos dessa dialogicidade (II.2), e analisamos o papel de um ideal – em sua concretização metodológica como hábito de se sentir “crescido sob a influência de um curso de autocrítica e de heterocríticas” – joga pela causalidade semiótica envolvida na formação da conduta (II.3).



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**Palavras-chave:** Diálogo. Estética. Ética. Herbart, Johann Friedrich. Identidade prática. Peirce, Charles Sanders. *Synesis*.

“Let it be supposed that it could be proved to you that, I will not say for a moment only, but for the entire duration of a millionth of a second, you were to enjoy a simple satisfaction, say that of an agreeable color sensation, with no effects whatever of any kind, and of course no memory of it. Then, since this satisfaction would be perfect and immeasurable, and would be, O Consciousness, you say, a good, at how much would you value it? How many years of purgatory would you be willing to endure for the sake of it? Come, speak up. Would you endure five minutes of toothache?”

(C. S. Peirce)

“The notion of a determinate yet modifiable subjectivity is, in a sense, parallel to that of an independent yet accessible reality.”

(V. Colapietro)

## 1 Introduction

The exegeses offered in this, and two subsequent articles aim at unfolding the dialogicality of the *subject-matter* of Peircean Esthetics. We start out with a synthesis of the maturest account Peirce provides of the two pre-logical normative sciences and the practical sciences related to them in *A Sketch of Logical Critics* (1911): Following J. F. Herbart, the American pragmatist conceives of Esthetics as a science that deals with the two kinds of τὸ καλόν, namely with the *nobility of conduct* (realized in human action) and with *sensuous beauty* (experienced in art and nature), though he systematically predilects the former, i.e. the study of the conditions of the *imagination* of an ultimate end that is admirable in itself (thus considering the end *esthetically* in its firstness, as a *possible* quality) and which, as such, is presupposed in the study of the conditions of its *actualization* as a *summum bonum* (thus considering the ultimate end *ethically* in its secondness, as a *norm* grounding *dyadic relations of conformity of self-controlled conduct to it*). As the esthetic approval or disapproval of ends assumed to be endowed with ‘per-se-admirability’ brings into view the ultimate ground of imagining the unity of a possible practical identity, Esthetics uncovers the conditions of an inner freedom that makes self-governed conduct possible in the first place; not, however, as a transcendental *given*, but as the *result* of pragmatic pedagogic practices (Sect. I). Next, we analyze how the *specific* dialogicality of the subject-matter of Esthetics is built into and originates from the first-personal stance of the fundamental question it asks: “[W]hat am I after? To what is the force of my will to be directed?” (CP 2.198, 1901) (Sect. II.1); we differentiate the parties, phases, and presuppositions of this dialogicality (Sect. II.2); and analyze the role an ideal – in its methodetic *concretization* as a deliberately formed habit of feeling “grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms” – plays for the semeiotic causality involved in shaping our conduct (Sect. II.3). In a subsequent second paper (*Imagination and Synesis: The Mediality of Esthetic Judgment in Peirce*), we will then show that Peirce’s conception of esthetic judgment and Esthetics generally does not – as it is often assumed – *directly* stand in a Kantiano-Schillerian or Hutchesoniano-Shaftesburian tradition. Rather, Peirce in his work on the pre-logical normative sciences *primarily* builds up on and customizes the practical philosophy of Herbart for the architectonic purposes of his semeiotic Logic and the pre-logical sciences it is principle-dependent on (CP 2.120, 1902). Due to the present hermeneutic situation, however – none of Herbart’s philosophical main works have been translated into English – a third paper will be required to unearth *The Herbartian Roots of Peircean Esthetics and Ethics* and thus *complete* the systematic task of the present article.

Now, the *systematic* aim of the present article is to explore a route into Peirce’s conceptualization of the subject-matter, architectonic function, internal articulation and methodology of Esthetics, the existence and importance of which, I believe, has so far gone unnoticed.<sup>1</sup> This conceptual pathway is

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a marked affinity between the approach to and outlook on Peirce’s conception of agency and practical identity taken here, and the approach and outlook developed in V. Colapietro’s work on the role of the “deliberative agent” in Peirce (cf. esp. COLAPIETRO, 1997). To

constituted by the dialogicality that Peirce, at *all* stages of his work on Esthetics, represents as a central feature of the *subject-matter* of this science.

Thus, let the term “dialogicality” denote the structure of cooperation requisite for any “deliberative mediation” (R 498:23, after 1903), i.e. for any process of thinking aiming at the rational formation of some habit of believing;<sup>2</sup> moreover, consider that, according to Peirce, the instantiation of the “form of a dialogue” (R 498:23)<sup>3</sup> necessarily requires two “parties” (ibid.) or “functionaries” (R 500:13, 1911), so that it is requisite that “*even* in solitary meditation” (ibid., my emphasis) there will be “an *utterer* and an *interpreter*” (R 500:13),<sup>4</sup> then the role dialogicality plays for the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics – i.e. for the “deliberate formation” (EP 2:378, 1906) of an “ideal of conduct” (EP 2:377, 1906) that consists in “a habit of feeling which has grown up under the influence of a *course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms*” (EP 2:378, 1906, my emphasis) – must be that of a *specific* instantiation of “dialogic form” (EP 2:402, 1907); a *kind of* dialogicality which might deserve the name “debate of Feeling” (R 646:39, 1910) and is grounded in the faculties of, firstly, imagination – “esthetics studies creations of the imagination” (R 478:35, a.p., 1903) – and, secondly, “*σύνεσις*” (*synesis*), a faculty that might also be “called by the name of conscience” (R 434:26, 1901), if we only add that it represents a *pre-moral* form of conscience that rather denotes a *telic sympathy*, or “immediate appreciation of an end as good or otherwise, *antecedently to having settled the conception of moral good*” (R 434:25, my emphasis).

Consequently, as Peirce finds – and invites us to confirm within our own experience – that “my own meditations *on all subjects* take the dialogic form” (R 610:9, 1908, my emphasis), “esthetic dialogicality” is an invariant feature he ascribes to the subject-matter of the first of his three normative sciences. This is our first thesis.

Exploring the role dialogue plays as a structural property of the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics, therefore, might be of help for better understanding its essential purpose, the systematic connections among its discursive viewpoints and its methodological procedures, inasmuch as the dialogicality in question is not only a feature of its subject-matter as such, but also quite often acts as its mode of philosophical thematization as well. Consequently, we will find that—independently of whether Peirce conceives of the subject-matter of Esthetics as “what it would be that, independently of the effort, we should like to experience” (CP 2.199, 1902), “the one quality that is, in its immediate presence, *καλός*” (ibid.), “the admirable *per se*” (EP 2:142, 253, 1903), “that which is objectively admirable without any ulterior reason” (CP 1.191, 1903), “the general conditions of a form’s being beautiful” (R 693:168-8, 1904), the “fine in itself” (R 288:23, 1905), “the worthy of adoration” (R 1334:38, 1905), “the ideally admirable” (R 283:0166, 1906), “fulfilling our appropriate offices in the work of creation” (CP 8.138n., 1906), “the nature of the *summum bonum*” (EP 2:377, 1906) or “what will delight and fully satisfy you” (R 675:046, 1911) – each and every of the subject-matters denoted by these often coextensive expressions is, in and of itself, dialogically structured and therefore often, though not necessarily, *mise en scène* accordingly.<sup>5</sup>

a certain extent, the present paper and Topa (In press), offer an archeology of Peirce’s conception of the deliberate agent. Moreover, as Aydin (2009, p. 427), suggests, it is important to categoriologically ground the dialogicality and self-control involved in practical identity: “because a person does not completely coincide with his or her actual self, he or she is able to anticipate a future critical self that he or she wants to convince” and which we could, therefore, “call (...) the person’s conscience” (cf. *supra*, II.1.2). This is a very profound remark, even though one might be tempted to rather conceive of the dialogical relatedness to a future self as the condition of self-transcendence et non vice versa.

2 Cf. Topa (2020), West (2015; 2016).

3 Cf. CP 4.6 = R 298:6, c.1907; R 803:3, 1906; R 296:11, 1907; CP 6.481, 1908; NEM 3:886, 1908; R 637:022. Alternatively, Peirce can also speak of something that is “dialogic in form” (CP 6.338, 1909) and, therefore, has “dialogic form” (EP 2:402, 1907).

4 “[S]olitary dialectic is still of the nature of dialogue” (CP 5.546, c. 1908); in R 288:24 (1905) and R 650:27-34 (1910) Peirce reminds us that – “all mediation being in dialogue” – this dialogicality is also at play in evaluative reviews of conduct and the formation of habits of action where an agent giving himself commands, “still [...] acts upon a second person” (R 650:30), when he “intends to act upon himself, – upon his *other* self, the self of the morrow, the self of the next minute or two, the self who meekly takes the rating that the self of the first person administers” (ibid.).

5 Peirce’s earliest treatments of the subject-matter of Esthetics – i.e., the determination of the *summum bonum* – are factually *avant la lettre* taking place in the guise of the classifications of ends he produces between Spring 1900 (R 1429:013 = CP 1.589, April 1900; R 1434:021-026, cf. EP 2:59-60, December 1900) and Fall 1901 (CP 1.579-584 = R 433:12-21; cf. also R 434:29 ff.). In its most elaborate form – to which Peirce,

Our procedure will be that of peeling an onion: Moving backward chronologically, we first explore some central themes of Peirce's maturest account of Esthetics (Sect. I), before we remove layer after layer – passages and contexts in which Peirce deals with Esthetics and the dialogicality of its subject-matter – so as to identify and circumscribe salient features of esthetic dialogicality (Sect. II). In a second paper, we will then show the inadequacy of locating the *main* influence on Peirce's conception of Esthetics generally and of esthetic judgment in particular in e.g., Friedrich Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* and/or Kant's *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* by presenting the outlines of Peirce's highly unusual dialogical theory of esthetic judgment as clear evidence of that. Finally, in a third paper, we will bring to the fore the neglected roots of Peirce's conception of Esthetics by showing how J. F. Herbart's (1776-1841) *Allgemeine Praktische Philosophie* [*General Practical Philosophy*, 1808] and his *Introductory Textbook to Philosophy* [*Lehrbuch zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1813] shaped Peirce's understanding (i.) of Esthetics as a theory treating primordially of *moral*, but also of *artistic* beauty as the two kinds of τὸ καλόν (*tò kalón*), (ii.) of the purely theoretical nature of Ethics, (iii.) of the necessity of grounding the former in Esthetics and (iv.) of the mediatic role of esthetic judgment<sup>6</sup> in (v.) the historico-systematic context of a post-Kantian dialogical – thus: anti-imperativistic and anti-transcendentalist – conception of agency, freedom, moral obligation and normativity in general. In a word: Peirce's normative sciences of Esthetics and Ethics build up on Herbart's work (cf. R 1334:36-38, 1905); and the theory Peirce refers to in the "Harvard Lecture on the Normative Sciences", when he claims that "morality, in the last resort, comes to an esthetic judgment" (EP 2:189, 1903), or when he speaks of "the doctrine that the distinction [of] Moral Approval and Disapproval [is] ultimately only a species [of] the distinction of Esthetic Approval and Disapproval" (EP 2:190) is *Herbart's doctrine*.<sup>7</sup> This will be our second thesis.

Accordingly, we would not be able to fully accomplish the *systematic* task of the present paper, without the exploration of the *historical roots* of Peirce's conception of Esthetics. Our final and third paper will, therefore, be devoted to providing a brief general sketch of Herbart's philosophy,<sup>8</sup> to the

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in 1903, refers back as "sufficiently complete and systematic" to be ready for publication (CP 1.585 = R 1134:01) – this classification takes the form of a categoriologically guided construction of possible ends in a Pascalian triangle that is correlated with coenoscopic common experience (R 1434:024-026). Analogically to the methodology followed in his taxonomies of signs, Peirce thus combines an aprioristic mathematico-constructive approach with an aposterioric reference to "rhetorical evidence" (CP 2.279, 2.333 ff.), if we take this expression here to refer to the manifestations of the *summum bonum* that have articulated themselves in the history of human conscience and conduct (cf. R 434:28-234). The diagrams that put on display Peirce's most elaborate classifications of ultimate ends (cf. R 1434:021-026) have recently been reconstructed and analyzed by Liszka (2021, p. 213-217); Liszka, however, thinks that Peirce "never completed the task" (*ibid.*), without actually specifying why he thinks so, and moreover, without realizing that "the enormous undertaking [...] [that] Peirce never completes" (p. 59) was actually already completed in the "Pearson-review" of December 1900 (EP 2:58-60), as Peirce confirms thrice in later works by confirming his commitment to the discursive version of the classification published in the *Popular Science Monthly* of January 1901 (cf. EP 2:59) at: (i.) CP 1.585 = R 1134:01, 1903, (ii.) CP 8.138 n., 1905, and (iii.) as late as 1911 (EP 2:460). The classification of the *Minute Logic* (CP 1.579-584 = R 433:12-21), thus, is not aborted because Peirce had not completed the task of deducing the *summum bonum*, but rather because of the intricacy and length of its *discursive* representation. In the "Harvard Lecture on the Normative Sciences", Peirce clearly implies that he *could* provide a full "deduction" (EP 2:202, 1903) of the *summum bonum*, if it were not "somewhat intricate, on account of the number of points which have to be taken into consideration" (*ibid.*), so that he "cannot go into details" (*ibid.*), but leaves no doubt that this deduction is actually the core task of the Normative Sciences as a whole, acting as the architectonic foundation of Metaphysics (cf. EP 2:203). It is comprehensible that Liszka (2021, p. 62-63), finds this lecture "puzzling and obscure", as it requires to be read against its Herbartian background to be deciphered; but the lack of interest in the *nature* of the foundational architectonic role the Normative Sciences play as "sciences of mind" (EP 2:199, 1903) by providing an account of the *possibility* of an indeterminate process of approximation of the sign-process to the process of reality, grounded, in turn, in the *possibility* of their "teleological homogeneity" (PAPE, 1993, p. 582; 1989, p. 346-366; cf. e.g. CP 1.204, 1902; R 1343:12, 1903) is hard to reconcile with the self-assured emphasis the Peircean text-corpus of the years 1900-1914 puts on this architectonic dependence. Unsurprisingly, the final reading Liszka (2021, p. 190-198), offers of the *Harvard Lecture on the Normative Sciences* and its "enigmas" is an epistemological one which, however, evades the task of specifying on which grounds Peirce can actually make epistemological assumptions in pre-logical sciences.

6 Preserving Peirce's predilected spelling, we reserve the use of the term *esthetics* to the Peircean conception of this science, and use the term *aesthetics* and its cognates more broadly to refer to the philosophical discourse and systematic concern that developed in the wake of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) with its conception of an autonomous, genuinely *philosophical* science of aesthetics. Kant's theory of the beautiful and sublime – presented under the title of a "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" – constitutes the subject-matter of the first part of a work that, as it is well known, in its second part deals with the "Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment" as another mode of "reflective judgment" (AA 20:243, 5:250; cf. 5:482n.) in which a "reflective power of judgment" (AA 5:296) is exerted.

7 Thus Trendelenburg (1856, p. 4), remarks (my translation and emphasis): "Herbart's outlook on Ethics distinguishes itself from the outlook of all other systems by subordinating the moral elements to the aesthetical, so that, accordingly, practical philosophy is a part of aesthetics."

8 As comprehensive monographic accounts of Herbart's philosophical thought in English are a desideratum, the reader may refer to Beiser (2014, p. 89-141), Kim (2015) and De Garmo (1895).

analysis of the influence of Herbart's conception of Esthetics and Ethics on Peirce's mature normative thought in general, and on Herbart's conception of the dialogicality of the subject-matter of Esthetics in particular. As Herbart's philosophical works have never been translated into English, this is a somewhat arduous, though necessary task, as the following synoptic account Herbart gives of his science of *General Aesthetics* may indicate. Note that the following passage stems from a work Peirce refers to, translates passages of and quotes from *as early as* 1866 (cf. W 1:484, 1866; W 2:57n., 1867):

The beautiful and ugly, especially the praiseworthy and the blameworthy owns an original obviousness due to which it is clear without being learned and demonstrated. This obviousness, however, does not always pervade adjacent representations, which – partially accompanying, partially produced by the representation of the beautiful or ugly itself – interfere. As a consequence, it often remains undetected; often it is felt, but not discriminated; often it is deformed by confusions and erroneous explanations. It is, therefore, needful to be thematized and displayed in its original purity and determinateness. To accomplish this task in all completeness, and to arrange in order the concepts of patterns (ideas), which are partially immediately pleasing, partially mediately adduced for avoidance of the displeasing, is the subject matter of General Aesthetics; upon which the different Doctrines of Arts – providing direction as to how, when a determinate material is given, a pleasing whole can be formed through the conjunction of esthetic elements – are to repose. The business of the introduction to Aesthetics consists in removing the first difficulties that occur when the different series of concepts that are here under consideration get tangled up. The business, therefore, is the logical one of analysis and arrangement. Now, firstly, the beautiful in its most general sense (the καλόν, which comprises underneath it the morally good) is located in a series of other concepts that also express a preferring and dismissing; it is from these that it [the beautiful] must be separated.<sup>9</sup>

## 2 Fundamental characteristics of esthetics in Peirce's maturest accounts

In the first section of this paper, we will consider some of the most fundamental characterizations Peirce gives of the normative science of Esthetics and its subject-matter in his maturest accounts, composed in 1911.

### 2.1 “A sketch of logical critics” (1911)

As Peirce, in the drafts of his last essay *An Essay toward Reasoning in Security and Uberty* gives pride of place to the history of early British moral philosophy from Hobbes to Shaftesbury (R 683:19-26, 1913), but deals only *en passant* with Esthetics (R 683:17-19, 037), his last *substantial* account of the pre-logical normative sciences is to be found in *A Sketch of Logical Critics* (Rs 673-677, 1911). This group of manuscripts contains a number of highly interesting passages on the *Critical, or Normative Sciences* (EP 2:459) in general, on the pre-logical disciplines of Esthetics and Ethics in particular, and, moreover, on the often mentioned (CP 1.281, 1902; EP 2:147, 198, 1903; EP 2:376, 1906) though rarely thematized *practical sciences* said to be relating to them, which Peirce here sketches by describing (i.) a “supreme art” (R 674:9) of “liberal education” (R 674:5-9) corresponding to “practical ethics” (R 675:049), and (ii.) preliminary exercises for the esthetic education of infants (R 674:9-11).

<sup>9</sup> Introductory Textbook to Philosophy, § 81 = SW 1:124, translation mine.

### 2.1.1 The normative realm and the categoriological aspects of the ideal

*Horizontally*<sup>10</sup> differentiating the three Normative Sciences as modes of intrinsically motivated *and* self-controlled activity “relating respectively to how our Feelings, our Energies, and our Thoughts should be *self-directed*” (EP 2:459, my emphasis), Peirce, on an assorted page, concisely writes that Esthetics “instead of occupying itself chiefly with sensuous beauty ought to *seek to define those ideals* to which we should desire ourselves to conform, in order to find ultimate satisfaction” (R 675:071, my emphasis), while Ethics “should discover how endeavour should be self-governed in order to attain its ideal goal, without any idea of *a law imposed from without*” (ibid., my emphasis). Whereas *Esthetics*, thus, has almost nothing in common with a “silly science of Esthetics, that tries to bring us enjoyment of *sensuous beauty*” (EP 2:460, 1911, my emphasis; cf. R 684:18, 1913; R 1334:38),<sup>11</sup> but rather aims at nothing but the determination of the *nature* of the ultimate attractors of our pursuits, Ethics is introduced as a general theory of self-governed conduct fit for attaining an autonomously chosen ideal end *we find inherently motivating to pursue for us*, but which Esthetics needs to have already identified *an sich*, i.e. in *the firstness of the per-se-admirability of its nature as a possible in feeling*, not in *the secondness of its being pursued as an existent in self-controlled conduct* (cf. CP 2.199, 1902; R 1334:38-39, 1905), thus allowing for the conceivability of a reality of the *summum bonum* or “ideal goal” that might – metaphysically – turn out to be such independently of our desiring it.<sup>12</sup> Although Peirce, as soon as Spring 1902, claims that the science of Esthetics has been “handicapped by the definition of it as the theory of beauty” (CP 2.199), it is only in later manuscripts that a classification of its domain is made explicit, in which *sensuous beauty (experienced in nature and art)* and the *nobility of conduct (realized in human action)*, are, as the following quote from 1906 clearly shows, explicitly classified as species of a higher *genus*, here referred to as “the ideally fine”:

*Beauty, or what is admirable in sensuous presentation, is degraded from its rightful dignity if it be not recognized as a special case of the ideally fine, in general. If a writer sees fit to consider that special variety of the ideally fine which is more or less realizable in the conduct of life, in connection with the theory of the control of conduct, and call the whole ethics, the present writer has no strenuous protest to make. The essential points are that there must, in the first place, be [i.] a study of the ideally fine in general; there must be [ii.] a study of that special determination*

10 The Normative Sciences are differentiated *horizontally*, whenever the three realms are anchored in the basic modes of coenosopic presentation (feelings, volitions/energies, thoughts), so as to be conceived of as *coordinated* realms of normativity; they are differentiated *vertically*, whenever their architectonic principle-dependence is thematic and the objects of the Normative Sciences are thus no longer regarded extensionally as coordinated realms, but rather intensionally as analytical moments of the phenomenon of normativity. Finally, whenever the three Normative Sciences are considered as “phases of the *summum bonum*” (CP 1.575, 1901), i.e., as stages of the manifestation and apprehension of the *summum bonum*, these are considered *developmentally*, thus metaphysically, as “phases of one and the same process of the growth of reasonableness” (CP 5.4, 1900).

11 As we will see in Topa (In press), Peirce’s aversion against the consideration of artistic beauty as a subject-matter of the normative science of Esthetics is prefigured in Herbart’s thought and becomes quite explicit after 1904 – “I certainly could not admit that esthetics, in the sense of the science of sensuous beauty, is one of the three normative sciences” (R 1334:38), he first thinks and then crosses out in 1905. – but had, however, already been part and parcel of his anti-modernistic programmatic position in the *Minute Logic*, according to which “Esthetics (...) has been handicapped by the definition of it as the theory of beauty” (CP 2.199, 1902). It is, thus, difficult to understand how Liszka (2021, p. 11), can claim that Peircean Esthetics is “not too far off the mark” of Santayana and Baumgarten who are both emphasizing the *sensuous* aspect of our experience of the beautiful as based on our ability to perceive value and “judge perfections and imperfections sensibly”, as Liszka thinks Baumgarten defines aesthetics in § 452 of his *Metaphysik*. (As a matter of fact, Baumgarten (2005) in § 452 of his *Metaphysik* (1766) – or, to be precise: of G. F. Meier’s translation of the originally Latin *Metaphysica* (1739) – does not define what *aesthetics* is, but rather speaks of the faculty of judgment (*Beurtheilungsvermögen*) as being a “cognition of the perfection or imperfection of things” (*Vollkommenheit oder Unvollkommenheit einer Sache*) that is either “sensuous” (*sinnlich*) or “intellectual” (*verständlich*), so that taste (*Geschmack*) is defined as “the capacity to judge sensibly” (*Fertigkeit sinnlich zu beurtheilen*), Critic (*Critic*) as “the art of judging in the broadest sense” (*die Kunst zu beurtheilen in der weitesten Bedeutung*), the critic (*Kunstrichter*) as “the one who has the capacity to distinctly judge on perfection and imperfection” (*Fertigkeit von den Vollkommenheiten und Unvollkommenheiten deutlich zu urtheilen*) and, finally, Critique (*Critic*) as the “science of the rules of distinct judgment (*Wissenschaft der Regeln der deutlichen Beurteilung*). It is only in the “Prolegomena” to his *Aesthetica* (1750-1758), § 1, that Baumgarten (2007, p. 16), introduces the term “aesthetics” and defines it as “the science of sensuous cognition”: “AESTHETICA [...] est scientia cognitionis sensitivae”; translations mine). For Peirce, Esthetics as the theory of the nobility of conduct is essentially anchored in imagination (cf. CP 2.199, 1902; R 478:35, a.p., 1903), not in perception.

12 “It is not because the True, the Beautiful, and the Good seem admirable to us that we are to think them the quasi-purpose of the universe, but because this purpose everywhere pervading Creation, naturally crops out too, in the shaping of human reason.” (R 1343:29, a.p., 1903).

of this ideal, which is required to make it an ideal of selfcontrolled action, that, conformity to which will constitute selfcontrolled conduct. There must be [iii.] a theory of such action of selfcontrol as is needed to bring about this conformity. Next [...] it will be acknowledged that thought has its ideal, and approaches conformity by means of selfcontrol. In all of that together is contained the subject of study of Logic, Ethics and Esthetics, however the lines of demarcation between them be drawn. (R 283:0165-6, my emphases and additions in square brackets, 1906; cf. R 683:17-19).

Thus, in the domain of the study of normativity, there is firstly a science we may call “Esthetics” or “axiagastics” (R 1334:38); other philosophers – from the Plato of the *Symposion* and *Phaedrus* to Shaftesbury<sup>13</sup> and Herbart (R 1334:36, 1905) – may tend to conceive of as a *part of* Ethics. Quite independently of this, however, there is an architectonic task that necessarily needs to be tackled, namely that of “a study of the ideally fine in general”, or of the “*nature of the summum bonum*” (EP 2:377, 1906 first emphasis mine) considered in itself, i.e., independently of its relation to anything else, thus: in its firstness. Besides the task of *Esthetics*, then, “there must be a study of that special determination of this ideal, which is required to make it an ideal of selfcontrolled action” (my emphasis); this special determination is of such a kind that it allows us to conceive of the “ideally fine, in general” *not* in itself, but as an *end*, thus as something that – inasmuch as it *ought to be* realized in action – is conceived of as that, “conformity to which will constitute selfcontrolled conduct” (R 283:0166, 1906), i.e. as that which makes the ideally fine the correlate of a relation of conformity, consequently thinking it as determined by something else and accordingly considering it in its secondness. *Esthetics*, therefore, is the theory of the ideal in its firstness; *Practics* – as Peirce will call the second normative science (EP 2:377, 1906) in the final version of R 283 – is the “the theory of the conformity of action to an ideal” (my emphasis) that, as such, studies the ideally fine in its secondness or realizability as an existent. Thirdly, there is ordinary *Ethics* (understood in the sense in which Peirce uses the term in the final version of R 283 = EP 2:377): A discipline that does not – as *Practics* does – study the basic normative *relation* of the conformity to an ideal that thus *becomes* an end by entering a dyadic relation of conformity, but rather studies the kind of *action* requisite for the realization of an ideal that *ought to be* realized as the end of the occurrence of events of a determinate type. This theory is different from *Practics*, because a “theory of such action of selfcontrol as is needed to bring about this conformity”,<sup>14</sup> must be “limited to a particular ideal, which, whatever the professions of moralists may be, is in fact nothing but a sort of composite photograph of the conscience of the members of the community” (EP 2:377, 1906), so that “[t]he science of morality, virtuous conduct, right living, can hardly claim a place among the heurctic sciences” (ibid.). Or, in other words: as ordinary Ethics stands and falls with the practical task of giving guidance to those who aspire to realize an ideal end, the conception of this end (and of the means requisite for its actualization) will always be the product of a particular historical time, a specific cultural setting and, last but not least, the class-interests of those promoting such theories (cf. Rs 435-437, 1898). Still, as such theories deal with the rules of the prescription of such action that is fit to contribute to the realization of an ultimate end, the maxims of ordinary Ethics deal with the ideal in its thirdness, i.e., as something (a habit of action representable in a maxim qua dici-sign) that ought to govern the realization of a First (the end) in Seconds (concrete action). Finally, inasmuch as thought is essentially of a “purposive character” (R 283:0167), Logic, in general, is based on the specification of the *kind of* conformity obtaining between thinking and its ultimate end.

Accordingly, the three Normative Sciences offer (i.) an *esthetic* prescisive thematization of the ideal in its firstness (concerning *the nature of the summum bonum* as an ideal state or quality endowed with

13 Cf. the fine portrait of Shaftesbury's influence on Peirce in Liszka (2021, p. 24-28).

14 The wording “theory of such action of selfcontrol as is needed to bring about this conformity” (R 283:0167) from the assorted pages is preferable to the highly confusing phrase “so far as ethics studies the conformity of conduct to an ideal” (EP 2:377), inasmuch as this would seem to mean – watch the indefinite article, however! – to ascribe to ordinary Ethics the very task that, in the sentences before, had been ascribed to *Practics*.

per-se-admirability): “I would throw the study of the *summum bonum* over to esthetics, of which it would become the chief problem, in the form, What quality of anything is it that is fine in itself without any ulterior reason?” (R 288:23, 1905); (ii.) a prescisive *practical* thematization of the ideal in its secondness (concerning *the conditions of the realizability of the ideal* as a norm to which action is dyadically related in a relation of total, partial or nil conformity): “The problem of ethics [...] [is] the study of the general conditions for making the fine existent [...]” (R 288:23); and (iii.) an *esthetical, ethical* and *logical* thematization of the ideal in its operative thirdness (concerning its mediation as a habit of feeling, action and thought governing the performance of concrete self-directed, self-controlled and self-governed conduct in conformity with a determinate end): “The chief agency for the actualization of the fine must be the action of self-control. As soon, therefore, as we come to see that reasoning, the primary and indeed the principal subject of logic, is precisely self-controlled thought, the applicability to it of ethical theory becomes credible, to say the least.” (R 283:23, 1906).

### 2.1.2 On becoming self-directed, self-controlled and self-governed: the arts and politics corresponding to the pre-logical normative sciences

As we have already started to see, Peirce, in his last account of the Normative Sciences in *A Sketch of Logical Critics* (Rs 673-677, 1911) no longer limits himself to speaking of “selfcontrol” as he had done since the mid-1890s (R 409:025, 1894; EP 2:24, 1895), so as to conceptualize that particular feature which qualifies certain events as intentional purposive acts (R 1343:28-31), but rather expands his terminology by introducing the notions of *self-directedness* and *self-governance*.

Making Peirce’s use of these three terms a bit more coherent, we might say that the structural analogy between the goodness of the individual and the political state he *en passant* alludes to in Platonic figures of speech might best be articulated by saying that truly *self-governed* conduct presupposes both a lower order inhibitory *self-control* of action (the conditions of which are studied by heuristic Ethics)<sup>15</sup> and a higher order desiderative *self-directing* of the agency (the conditions of which are studied by Esthetics) towards “those ideals to which we *should* desire ourselves to conform, in order to find ultimate satisfaction” (R 675:071, 1911 my emphasis; cf. SS:112, 1909).

Accordingly, the fundamental task of *practical* esthetic education or pedagogy consists in facilitating the emergence and growth of intrinsically motivated agency by cultivating the sense of beauty as the origin of *all* valuational judgments, and thus as the *conditio sine qua non* of the freedom of an agency that is not transcendently grounded in a Kantian “intelligible character”<sup>16</sup> as a noumenal *given*, but rather a concrete pragmatic *result* of involving young humans in interactive pedagogic practices, as the following insightful passage explains:

What shocks me in the ethical treatises is that they say that a man is *bound* by the rules of morality. It surprises me that men brought up in the light of Christianity should hold such opinions: even if such are their opinions, I should think that their desire that the young man about them should be attracted by the beauty of the kind of conduct that they themselves admire would suggest to them the policy of concealing such views. For a man who is bound is a slave, and a man who thinks he is bound is bound; and the behaviour of a slave is not particularly beautiful. No doubt children must have a government imposed upon them; and there are many men who either

15 “[S]elf-control of any kind is purely *inhibitory*. It originates nothing” (EP 2:233, 1903); “[T]he secret of Ethics proper [...] lies in the analysis of the operation of self-control” (R 288:077, 1905). Note, however, that *infra*, sec. 3.3, we will see that and how Peirce’s conception of self-control, after 1903, is going through significant revisions that make it impossible to take the earlier identification of inhibition and self-control to be Peirce’s last word. I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees to have made me aware of this inconsistency, which points to the necessity of closely studying the development of Peirce’s conception of self-control after the *Lowell Lectures*.

16 Kant had, already in the CPR, distinguished the terms “empirical character” and “intelligible character”, so as to consider the causality of a free agent “from two points of view”; namely, “as the causality of a thing in itself”, which “is intelligible in its action”, and “as the causality of an appearance in the world of sense” (A 538/B 566).



owing to a too rigid or otherwise unfortunate training never do come too [sic!] full psychological maturity. But a normal young man judiciously brought up will have been led to meditate upon the beauty of certain kinds of conduct, and will desire to give his own that character, as fast as it comes entirely into his own hands. Of course, he will find his wayward impulses too violent; and then he will begin to see that he needs a strict self-government. Now comes a practical ethics to his aid. He establishes this government; and *then he is* bound. But only by his free and reasonable act, which is world-wide apart from being bound by nature. (R 675:48-9; cf. EP 2:459-60, 1911).<sup>17</sup>

This passage – in which we also learn something important about the ancient Greek roots of Peirce’s conception of slavery<sup>18</sup> – illustrates in a straightforward manner the basic Peircean distinctions between Esthetics, heurctic Ethics and ordinary practical Ethics: Firstly, note how the higher order *esthetic meditation* on “the beauty of certain kinds of conduct” to which a young person “will have been led” (cf. EP 2:377) is distinguished from a resulting lower order *resolution* to shape one’s character and conduct in accordance with the preferred model of conduct identified in the esthetic meditation. Thus, only when, (i.) on the basis of the contemplation of esthetic ideals, (ii.) a desire to form a resolution to act in accordance with a determinate ideal pattern of conduct arises, does (iii.) the need for a “strict self-government” (*including* both “legislative” self-directing *and* “executive” self-control as its non-prescindable presuppositions), based on a “practical ethics”, come into play. Such *practical* ethics does *not* – as heurctic ethics does – rest on “so much of experience as presses in upon every man during every hour of his waking life” (CP 1.577, 1901), but rather “makes heavy drafts upon wisdom, or the knowledge which comes by reflection upon the total experience of a lifetime, as well as upon a learned acquaintance with the structure of the society in which one lives” (*ibid.*).

Accordingly, esthetic judgment precedes, and the formation of a resolution to strive for the practical realization of the ideal the valuation pronounces to be ultimately desirable, constitutes both the abstract necessity of corrective monitoring and inhibition through self-control and, consequently, the concrete condition of possibility of an agent’s being in the first place *bound* by moral judgments reflecting the moral customs<sup>19</sup> of a specific community. This Peircean state of being bound, however, is not the consequence of a heteronomous or transcendental imperativistic necessitation through an external norm-authority, submission to which (whether demanded by the will of God, the Leviathan, tradition, or the form of our maxims) constitutes moral agency, but rather the result of an intrinsically motivated pragmatic choice of means. Self-government, practical identity and moral obligation are thus taken to be the *result of* an agent’s “free and reasonable act” (R 675:49, 1911), which is quite the opposite of conceiving of moral agency as a *given* grounded in our being “bound by nature”.

No wonder young men are wild! Shame upon them if they did not resent such a pretension. God has created every man *free*, and not “bound” to any kind of conduct but that which he freely selects. It is true that he finds he cannot be satisfied without

17 In this passage we can hear the tenor of Herbart’s criticism of a conception of duty as a state of being bound (*Gebundenheit*) based on the superiority of one will over another (cf. SW 1:571; SW 2:51; SW 8:8-9, 10-11).

18 Cf. Arendt (1957, p. 12-13; 28-37; esp. p. 31, emphasis mine): “What all Greek philosophers, no matter how opposed to *polis* life, took for granted is that freedom is exclusively located in the political realm, that necessity is primarily a prepolitical phenomenon, characteristic of the private household organization, and that force and violence are justified in this sphere because they are the only means to master necessity – for instance, by ruling over slaves – and to become free. *Because all human beings are subject to necessity, they are entitled to violence toward others; violence is the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the freedom of world.* This freedom is the essential condition of what the Greeks called felicity, *eudaimonia*, which was an objective status depending first of all upon wealth and health. To be poor or to be in ill health meant to be subject to physical necessity, and to be a slave meant to be subject, in addition, to manmade violence. This twofold and doubled “unhappiness” of slavery is quite independent of the actual subjective well-being of the slave.”

19 Accordingly, the terms (i.) “doctrine of rights and duties” (contradistinguished from “ethics proper” qua “[p]ure ethics, philosophical ethics” (CP 1.577) in 1901), and (ii.) ordinary “ethics” (being the “usual second member of the trio [of normative sciences]”, which is “nothing but a sort of composite photograph of the conscience of the members of the community” and is contradistinguished from “practices”, or “the theory of conformity of action to an ideal” (EP 2:377)) in 1906, correspond to what Peirce (iii.) refers to as “practical ethics” (R 675:49) in 1911.

a firm and stiff government over his impulses; but then it is a self-government, instituted by himself to suit himself; – copied, it is true, largely from the government his parents wielded when he was a child, but only continued because he finds it answers HIS OWN purposes, and not in the least because he is “bound” in any proper sense whatever [...]. (EP 2:459, 1911).

Note how this way of grounding the normativity of moral judgments in aesthetic ones is, in every detail of its articulation and terminology, in perfect syntone with the exposition Herbart gives of the origin of moral obligation:

When out of the first, will-less valuations [*willenlosen Werthbestimmungen*] which immediately arise in the thought of some possible volition, an actual resolution [*Vorsatz*] has created itself, [when] furthermore [the intent] not to give any room to any unpraiseworthy motions of the will [*Willensregung*] [has created itself]: thereupon the henceforth ensuing desires [*Begierden*] and actions [*Handlungen*] give occasion to compare them with the resolution. And by being found to be more or less in conformity [*angemessen sein*] [with the resolution], a moral judgment comes into being. That resolution, namely, is an imperative will [*gebietender Wille*]; the question arises, whether it should be followed; and the degree of this obedience [*Maß des Gehorsams*] is the degree of the moral value [*sittlicher Wert*]. Hence, aesthetic judgment precedes; in moral judgments, however, the former is silently presupposed, without being considered separately. (*BCP*, § 45 = *SW* 2:74, all additions in brackets and translation mine).

This Herbartian conception of the genesis of practical identity and moral obligation that we have just seen transpiring from Peirce’s sketches of practical Ethics, however, necessarily needs to be placed in a broader context that is programmatically circumscribed by and closely related to what Douglas Anderson identifies as “the politics of fixing belief” and aptly frames within the historico-evolutionary “slow transaction between instinct and inquiry”.<sup>20</sup> Now, in our specific context, the analogous urgent need to bring into sharper relief *a political dimension of becoming self-governed* arises, as soon as we focus on the nature and mechanism of the most fundamental effect the practical *esthetic* science – which Peirce in *A sketch of logical critics*, introduces as a precondition for learning the “supreme art” of “liberal education” (cf. R 674:5-11, 1911) – is designed to bring about. This fundamental effect is *emotional* and consists in imparting an “intense disgust with one *kind of life* and warm admiration for another [kind of life]” (EP 2:460, my emphasis); it thus aims at bringing about sympathy and antipathy, or rather, more precisely: an *ineradicable* identification with one βίος (*bíos*) and a correspondingly profound abhorrence of another way of life.

We have already seen what the *ethical* purpose of bringing about such a fundamental emotional effect consists in: It consists in creating the emotional conditions under which a pupil may unfold “HIS OWN purposes” (EP 2:459, 1911), so as to establish a moral commitment grounded on the results and reviews of his innermost processes of apprehending – by meditating on and eventually desiring the actualization of – a *summum bonum*. The *moral* aim of a Peircean practical esthetic pedagogy, therefore, is that of initiating and fostering the growth of an *inner freedom* that acts as the necessary and sufficient subjective condition for, firstly, *considering* esthetic ideals through the apprehension of which we can in the first place start to reflect on and compare between ideals of self-directedness as possible practical identities, so as to then, secondly, become capable of *predilecting* the actualization of a determinate esthetic ideal end in self-controlled inhibitory moral conduct that eventually normatively binds us to determinate imperatives. And, so far, Peirce is, again, in perfect syntone with what Herbart conceives of

<sup>20</sup> Anderson (1997, p. 232).

as the aim of all education, namely: “To ensure that the pupil may find himself as selecting the good and rejecting the evil – this or nothing is education of character!” (PS 1:275, translation mine).

The imperatives of a Peircean *practical* ethics, however, can only be purely hypothetical or “hypothetico-categorical” (i.e., categorical under the condition of a commitment to a determinate *summum bonum*), but *never* full-fledged, *universally* valid categorical imperatives. The reason for this becomes clear, if we now consider more closely the *political* purpose of the inner freedom that constitutes the fundamental condition of self-directed and self-controlled moral conduct, which, as such, is “open to criticism” (CP 7.77 = R 603, ca. 1905), thus self-corrective, *ergo* perfectible. This inner freedom is ultimately grounded in the expressive behaviour of educators proclaiming aesthetic judgments of taste, through which a fundamental binary emotional branding is inflicted, inasmuch as the imparting of “intense disgust with one kind of life and warm admiration for another” (EP 2:460) cannot but follow a drastic logic of exclusion and political contraposition of “us” and “them”.<sup>21</sup> Peirce’s practical Ethics and its esthetic pedagogic prerequisites, accordingly, are by no means intended to be universal, but rather outspokenly elitarian. This is so, because Peirce’s conception of *liberal* education *needs to* postulate that this kind of education, as it is reserved for the free, exclusively “befits those who, belonging to the upper of the two main classes of society, *are to be* free to govern themselves and to take what consequences may befall them” (R 674:8, 1911, my emphasis), whereas “the poor [...], the virtual slaves [...] and every individual of the lower stratum, as long as in it he is, is forced to live to do the will of some one or more of the upper stratum” (R 674:8-9, 1911). The political suppression of the many, thus, is seen as the unavoidable condition for the necessary flourishing of the “developmental teleolog[ies]” (EP 1:331, 1892) of the few, inasmuch as no other method of belief-fixation but “the method of authority” can clear the “path of peace” (EP 1:122) that is requisite for the sake of the continuity and ongoing specialization of social cooperation through which the growth of scientifico-technical and moral-religious culture (cf. EP 1:116-8) can be alimented and steered by “the slow process of percolation of forms [...] [that] will ultimately affect the conduct of life” (EP 1:28) and is, therefore, cultivated by the few who are not “intellectual slaves” (EP 1:118), but rather scientists, men of action, or both. Peircean humanity, accordingly, is neatly split into two classes which, however, are *both* functionally necessary for the progress of civilization as a whole: There must be the many, the “mass of mankind” (EP 1:118, 121) guided primordially by instinctive beliefs, which, essentially being “intellectual slaves”, may not work out their own developmental teleology, but rather take on, multiply and evolve the forms and habits imposed on them “with secular slowness and the most conservative caution” (EP 2:29, 1898). And there must be the few, i.e., “everyone of the higher stratum, [who] is free to realize whatever ideal he may, working out his own self-development, under his own governance, [though nonetheless being] subject to such penalties as there are certain to be, if he fails to govern himself wisely” (R 674:9, 1911). From this point of view, thus, practical Peircean Ethics is ultimately a function of the historical growth of reasonableness in which the *creative* cultural processes driven by intellectual inventiveness and variation (contributed by the higher class and culminating in scientific inquiry), and the *assimilative* processes of mere instinctive reproduction (contributed by the lower class) necessarily need to be related, integrated and cemented in a determinate hierarchy, the paradigmatic expression of which is the Peircean conception of the relation of scientific inquiry and societal praxis (cf. EP 2:34-41, 1898).<sup>22</sup>

Accordingly, it is not “the mere swarming and copulation of human beings” (R 1343:28, a.p.; EP 2:142, 1903) driven by the selfish “suicultural instinct” (R 1343:35); it is not the “Multiplicamini” (EP 2:57, 1901) of fertility; it is not, we might say with Hannah Arendt, in embodying the “kind of life”

21 This *practical* esthetic point of view, however, ought to be compared to the *theoretical* one, from the stance of which “[a]ll esthetic disgust is due to defective insight and narrowness of sympathy” (EP 2:272, 1903).

22 For an “inclusivistic reading” of Peirce’s socio-political ideas, emphasizing outlooks rooted in his agapism and his conception of Christianity, cf. Aydin (2009, p. 436-438).

(EP 2:460) or βίος of *animal laborans*,<sup>23</sup> in which the necessity of reproducing ourselves biologically dominates an archetypical mentality the stereotype cyclical action-patterns of which know nothing of progress and ambitions that go beyond the pleasures of consumption; rather, it is in embodying *homo faber*<sup>24</sup> – i.e. that little God in us which, although unable to create *ex nihilo*, at least knows how to do so *ex substantia* – through which the child *in fabricando* creates in itself a first aesthetic glimpse of a world of pure forms it will later affectionately call *theōria*:

The study of this supreme art may begin very early, – say, perhaps, at the age of five. Yet there is one thing else that one must have begun to learn before one possibly can begin the supreme art. It is that some things [are] admirable *per se*. With some handsome building blocks, a child of three will, with a little aid, begin to notice that. After he has begun to see that, and to learn that one must see in order to be *sure* of liking, and also that one can see with one’s mind’s eye, the building blocks may be multiplied so that more ambitious performances may be undertaken. Also, handsome square tiles of about four colors, small for his little hands, and in large numbers, so that a large figure may be built up from them. Later, these tiles must be varied in shape, and ultimately may have figures upon them. The idea is to give him more materials as he learns to subdue more to an idea partially created in advance and developing as the actual building is realized. (R 674:9-10).

Echoing central ideas of Herbart’s ideas on aesthetic education, which the founder of scientific pedagogy had been developing since his early programmatic anti-transcendentalist essay “Über die ästhetische Darstellung der Welt als Hauptgeschäft der Erziehung” [*The Aesthetic Presentation of the World as the Chief Business of Education*, 1804], Peirce here unmistakably indicates that we should not be too surprised to find his conception of heurctic Esthetics and of the *summum bonum* it studies to reflect the predilection of his practical esthetic pedagogy with the genesis of the practical identity of little constructors. The “free development of the agent’s own esthetic quality” (EP 2:203), thus we might expect, might be *more* a matter of understanding things in the light of ideas, and *less* of developing our ideas with a view on our capacity to care for others: “[W]hat is man’s proper function if it be not to embody general ideas in art-creations, in utilities, and above all in theoretical cognition?”<sup>25</sup>

### 3 Peircean accounts of the dialogical structure of the subject matter of esthetics

Our primary aim in the second part of this paper is to philologically substantiate the claim that the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics is *essentially* dialogical. In the process of adducing textual evidence, we moreover aim at identifying and circumscribing the parties (3.1), the performative structure and praxeological presuppositions (3.2) and the purpose of this dialogicality (3.3)

23 Cf. Arendt (1957, p. 79-135).

24 Cf. Arendt (1957, p. 139-144).

25 EP 2:443 (1908); the conflict between “our triumphant road to wooing things” (W 1:112, 1863) and the interests of “the broad field of humanity and social destiny” (ibid.) is already present in *The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization*, at the end of which Peirce, for the first time, articulates his vision of the *summum bonum*; not, however, as a Kantian “greatest happiness [...] connected in the most exact proportion with the greatest degree of moral perfection” (AA 5.130), but rather as consisting in the scientific revelation of the “endless perfectibility” (W 1:114) of creation as a moral process to which man as co-creator can contribute: “In proportion as the person practices a true ethics and is animated by the purpose behind Nature at large, in that proportion will it be possible for his reasonings to become scientifically logical” (L 75:12, 1902). At first sight, Peirce’s elitarian scientocratism might seem to be at odds with agapism and its principle to “[s]acrifice your own perfection to the perfectionment of your neighbour” (EP 1:353, 1893). Note, however, that the central passage of the text, in which three modes of the agapastic development of thought are differentiated, introduces us to a *hierarchy* of modes of apprehending an “immediate attraction” for an “idea itself” (EP 1:364); namely, firstly its mimetico-emotional apprehension *by the masses*, secondly, its instrumentalo-volitional apprehension *by the man of action*, and, thirdly, its intellectual apprehension *by the divinator of nature* (ibid.). For a detailed analysis of the intimate architectonic relation between “Evolutionary Love” and “Fixation of Belief”, cf. Topa (2016).

### 3.1 The parties of esthetic dialogicality

#### 3.1.1 A sketch of logical critics (1911): the fairy and the boy

In the general context of sketching a practical pedagogy that corresponds to the pre-logical normative sciences (cf. *supra*, 2.1.2), Peirce – in a passage in which he delves deeper into heuritic Esthetics by contrasting his understanding of its subject-matter with that supposedly operative in Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters* – surprisingly decides to tell us a little fairy tale:

I should have been glad if Schiller, with his fondness of allegory, – provided it was frigid enough, – had, for once used that means, or any other, for considering *what it can be that is fit to excite the admiration, devotion, and passionate research of an immortal soul*. I wish he had imagined a fairy godmother to have said to her godson: “I will grant you a single wish and only that one. It shall be [a] definite one, a conceivable one; and if it is such, no matter what it may be, it shall be granted. Now take a year to think it over. At the end of a year, I will return, and if you are not yet prepared to say *what will delight and fully satisfy you* though all other desires be frustrated, then I will give you another year to consider it, and so on from year to year for a certain number of years. How many I had better not divulge.” If Schiller had then gone on to narrate how the young man, scared and sobered by the tones in which the fairy intimated that no other wish than the one he asked would ever be granted, set himself to consider *what would suffice to fill his life with joy* he would have produced a work on a subject which I should confess was worthy to engage the study that should occupy the first, the initial place in the trio of normative sciences. But it would not be “Spiel” nor “Spieltrieb” that the young man would be considering. It would still be Beauty; beauty, however, of the kind *that fills the soul brim-full*. (R 675:15-16, my emphases; cf. R 310:7-9, 1903, for an earlier version of this fairy tale and CP 1.583, 1901, for the earliest variant with a “malevolent fairy”).

In this passage, the specific dialogical form pertaining to the subject-matter of Esthetics is put into sharp relief. That which Esthetics aims at understanding – namely what it is that “will delight and fully satisfy” an agent, so as to “suffice to fill his life with joy” by “excit[ing] the admiration, devotion, and passionate research of an immortal soul”, – this subject matter is *in itself* dialogically structured and engendered.

Note, however, that the reason for this is not that we need to ask questions and give tentative answers so as to make any progress in understanding the subject-matter of Esthetics. If this were the case, we would simply be claiming that Esthetics is dialogically structured and engendered, because “thinking always proceeds in the form of a dialogue” (CP 4.6 = R 298:6, 1906) and “all thought is dialogue” (R 283:139, 1905). This, however, is not the point. The salient point is rather that due to its specific contents the *subject-matter of Esthetics* has a particular dialogical form that is constitutive of it. To make this specificity obvious, we may note, is actually the whole purpose of the particular *mise en scène* Peirce here opts for: The subject-matter of Esthetics – that which this science deals with – is dramatic and momentous because our answer to the question of Esthetics will fundamentally determine and impact *who* we are. Not, however, insofar as we are parts of the furniture of this universe, and not in the sense in which the *results of* specialized scientific inquiries such as those carried out in biology, psychology or medicine may have an impact on us by influencing our life. Rather, the subject-matter of Esthetics is different from that of any other science (with the exception of Ethics), not just because the *results of Esthetics* have an impact on me (and you), but rather because our very capacity of engaging *in asking* the question of Esthetics fundamentally determines *who* we are in the doing of our deeds. What is at stake in asking this question, therefore, is our practical identity.

This identity, however, can only arise and become thematic if a specific form of dialogicality is instantiated. A form of dialogicality that allows me to face myself and deal with me not as part of the furniture of the world in a third person perspective, but as the doer of my deeds in the first-person perspective, without which specific perspectivity any commitment to the wish I shall finally express would not be possible in the first place.

What the fairy wants the boy to accomplish is not a *report* on the most attractive design of life he can conceive.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the fairy-godmother aims at bringing about her godson's commitment to an ideal of conduct by seeing him solemnly express a wish that reflects a specific form of judgment. As the form of this judgment consists in someone's saying that *this individual entity* (namely, the quality  $\psi$ ) has a *certain valuational property* (namely, to "delight and fully satisfy" him, so as to "suffice to fill his life with joy" by "excit[ing] the admiration, devotion, and passionate research of an immortal soul") *on no other ground but the sheer appreciation* of the quality  $\psi$ , – as this judgment has such a non-cognitive form in which the judgment, instead of a predicate-term, rather relates a feeling (KdU, § 36 = AA 5:288) to a singular term (KdU, § 8 = AA 5:215): it is an *aesthetic judgment*, "by means of which", Kant observes, "the subject feels itself as it is affected by the representation", while, thus he adds, "nothing at all in the object is designated" (KdU, § 1 = AA 5:204).

As we will see in the third paper "The Herbartian Roots of Peirce's Conception of Esthetics and Ethics", Peirce and Herbart agree with Kant on the first point (concerning the subject's feeling of itself in aesthetic judgments by referring a representation to the faculty of pleasure and displeasure), though not on the second (concerning the lack of objectivity of judgments *of taste* which, for Kant – though not for Herbart and Peirce – have only an "aesthetic universal validity" (KdU, § 8 = AA 5:215), which means that such judgments do not ascribe a predicate *to a whole class* but rather *to everyone judging* (AA 5:214) and thus merely express the normative claim that everyone *ought to* join in the appreciation of a representation that, consequently, has only a "subjectively universal validity" (ibid.)). Abstracting from the differences between Kant, Herbart and Peirce in this regard, however, there is one fundamental commonality: in judgments of taste a determinate self-relation and reflective attentiveness is established, which both for Herbart<sup>27</sup> and Peirce constitutes a form of *pre-moral* conscience.

### 3.1.2 Chapter IV on ethics (1901): imagination and pre-moral synetic conscience in axiological self-questioning

Peirce introduces the conception of a pre-moral (cf. R 434:12) kind of "synetic conscience" (R 434:25) that is grounded in the faculty of σύνεσις (*synesis*) (R 434:18-23) in the course of his work on "Chapter IV. Ethics" of the *Minute Logic*. Whereas in R 433 he still uses the term "consciousness" to denote that faculty which in the process of "self-questioning" (CP 1.579 ff.) is supposed to be cross-examined, so as

26 The first personal stance involved in aesthetic judgment is much emphasized by Kant and at one point of the "Deduction of Judgments of Taste" sharply contraposed to the third-personal stance of empirical judgment. Thus, a report on my inner state ("Indeed, my imagination and understanding are engaged in a harmonious play since I started perceiving this object") is not a judgment of taste, as it does not constitute expressive behaviour assuming itself to be legitimate in its appeal to others for their consent: "Thus it is not the pleasure but the universal validity of this pleasure perceived in the mind as connected with the mere judging of an object that is represented in a judgment of taste as a universal rule for the power of judgment, valid for everyone. It is an empirical judgment that I perceive and judge an object with pleasure. But it is an *a priori* judgment that I find it beautiful, i.e., that I may require that satisfaction of everyone as necessary" (KdU, § 37 = AA 5:289).

27 For Herbart this "particular kind of conscience" (*eigene Art des Gewissens*, BCP, § 45 = SW 2:75) is a conscientiousness that is at work in all the (fine and lower) arts. It consists in "testifying to the degree of diligence adopted in exerting the art" (*Zeugnis von dem Grade der angewandten Sorgfalt in Ausübung der Kunst*, ibid.) and is the result of processes of review, in which aesthetic judgments on our productions give rise to self-criticism which, in turn, leads to the formation of new resolutions and to a vigilance on our adherence to them. It is, thus, essentially this vigilance or circumspection monitoring the norm-conformity of poietic activities in general (and of those based on recently acquired habits in particular) which Herbart conceives of as a "particular kind of conscience" that is pre-moral: "But whoever is not a practitioner of a specific art, does not worry [about the degree of diligence adopted], because from his aesthetic judgments concerning this specific class of objects, no resolutions, hence no conscience arises" (ibid.). Accordingly, things stand differently with moral conscience properly speaking, inasmuch as our vigilance on the adherence of our volitions to our valuations and resolutions cannot be neglected as any pre-moral form of conscientious circumspection might be: "Volition cannot be given up, as it is the seat of mental life" (ibid.), Herbart writes echoing Aristotle's insight that *phronésis* – other than *téchne* – cannot be forgotten (NE, VI, 5, 1140 b 29).

to produce a classification of ultimate ends, the later R 434 shows that Peirce was, for several reasons, unhappy with his first, aborted attempt to produce a *discursive* representation of a classification of ends he had, however, already *diagrammatically* completed in December 1900 (EP 2:58-60; R 1434; cf. LISZKA, 2021, pp. 214-215). To remedy these defects, he, among other things, starts a new manuscript (R 434) with the end of that paragraph of R 433, in which he had sketched the coenoscopic methodology of a “direct self-questioning” (R 433:11-12) that does not rest on any results of the special science of psychology, and attaches a long footnote to this paragraph (cf. R 434:12-26) which, essentially, deals with the ethics of terminology and the history of the concept of conscience, so as to – ultimately quite inconclusively – try to justify the very specific meaning he attaches to it: “It will be seen that *synesis* is the precise faculty to which I make appeal” (R 434:20, emphasis added). As a consequence of this redesign of the second part of the “Chapter on Ethics” – which part doubtless has the argumentative aim of determining the *summum bonum* (cf. CP 1.575; R 432:4, 1901), – Peirce no longer uses the term “consciousness” (CP 1.580-584), but rather “conscience” (R 434:26) to denote that faculty of valuation which in the process of axiological self-questioning acts as the “witness” (R 434:27) and can be identified with “our own heart and conscience” (ibid.).

As the “consciousness” of R 433 resp. the “conscience” of R 434 represent “the ultimate *source of evidence* on these questions” (R 434:26, my emphasis) concerning “the classification of objects which it is natural to regard as *good*, that is, desirable, in themselves” (ibid.), the replacement of the term “consciousness” with the term “conscience” indicates that Peirce saw the need to refine and improve his understanding and account of this source. This becomes particularly clear when we see that Peirce in R 434 – in line with the long prefatory footnote on the history of the term – actually uses the term “conscience” as a place-holder for the faculty of *synesis*, to which Aristotle refers in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>28</sup>

The term *synesis*, thus, is doubtless chosen to provide us with a more precise understanding of the coenoscopic nature of the valuation the interrogated witness – formerly called “consciousness” – can contribute. Accordingly, the very question “what we do or do not desire” (R 433:12), for Peirce, is a question that could not be answered from the third-personal stance of psychology, physiology or neuroscience, without, first and foremost, taking into consideration the first-personal stance, i.e. without having recourse to those judgments underlying both *my* “unreflectively pronounce[d]” (R 434:27) first-order valuations and those reflective second-order valuations pronouncing “what we should, *on full deliberation*, be content to take as a good” (R 434:28, my emphasis). It is, thus, precisely at the end of the following quotation that Peirce, in R 434, adds the footnote on the ethics of terminology in general and the history of the concept of conscience in particular:

Psychology might, it is true, discover that there is no way whatever in [which] certain things could become objects of desire; but it can only make such a discovery by relying upon direct self-questioning, as to what we do or do not desire, and such premisses of psychology are here precisely the conclusions of which we are in quest. So we must make up our minds to rely entirely upon self-questioning, with here and there perhaps some secondary aid from psychology. (CP 1.579 = R 433:11-12).

In a useful simplification, we might thus say that Peirce introduces the conception of *synesis* in order to specify *to whom* we actually *should* appeal if we want to learn “what we do or do not desire” (R 433:12). It is certainly not to consciousness in general that we should appeal to answer questions of this kind, but rather, so Peirce comes to understand, to “synetic conscience” (R 434:25), i.e. to a specialized form of valuational attentiveness that functions as an “immediate appreciation of an end as good or

28 Cf. NE, 1103 a5 (Book I); 1142 b34, 1143 a26, 1143 a34 (Book VI); 1161 b26 (Book VIII), 1181 a18 (Book IX).

otherwise, antecedently to having settled the concept of moral good” (ibid.), and thus constitutes a pre-moral form of conscience that, as such, *esthetically* judges *imaginings*<sup>29</sup> of ultimate ends.

Two reasons make it incumbent on the exegete of these earliest Peircean texts on pre-logical normative science to emphasize the *esthetic* and *imaginative* dimension of the process of axiological self-questioning therein envisioned. Firstly, note that although in Peirce’s process of self-questioning the faculty of *synesis* plays the dialogical role of the “mendacious witness” (R 434:27) interrogated by “the Head as the jury” (R 434:28), it nonetheless is the exclusive privilege of “synetic conscience” (R 434:25) as the “sole witness” (R 434:28) to value what is presented to it. The role of the cross-examining intellect, therefore, is restricted to dialectically determining the sequence in which imaginings of practical states of affairs corresponding to conceptions of ultimate ends are presented to *synesis* by dialectically soliciting the gradual articulation of her implicit normative outlook. Accordingly, it is the imagination guided by the intellect which, in this *mise en scène*, acts as the projector, while *synesis* plays the dialogic role of the assessor. Secondly, a closer consideration of Peirce’s motivation to put *synesis* *in lieu* of consciousness in this role may not abstract from the fact that, although Peirce in Fall 1901 is – for reasons not to be considered here – not yet ready to introduce the normative science of Esthetics in his architectonic of philosophical inquiries, but rather assigns the task of determining the *summum bonum* to “pure Ethics” (CP 1.575 ff.), yet both the *pre-moral status* ascribed to conscience qua *synesis* (cf. R 434:12) or “synetic conscience” (R 434:25) and the *character of the valuation* performed by it, indicate that Peirce is already implicitly conceiving of the valuation *synesis* performs as an esthetic one. Thus, in his remarks on the Aristotelian use of the term we read: “Synesis is not a very frequent word. In Aristotle, it is *applied to the moral sense only in a particular application*. In general, it seems to mean an immediate perception of an individual existing object, but *not a sense perception*, but rather a sympathetic appreciation” (R 434:19, my emphases). Such *sympathetic appreciation* of an *individual* thing *imagined*, however, cannot result from anything but from *esthetic* judgment.

This becomes clearer, if we now, as Peirce suggests, inquire into the particularity of the application the faculty of *synesis* has “to the moral sense” in Aristotle. What does this possibly mean? In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the term *synesis* – that is mainly translated as “understanding” in English (Ross, Thomson), “*Verständigkeit*” (Dirlmeier, Gigon, Rolfes) in German,<sup>30</sup> or “*senno*” in Italian – is introduced at the end of Book I (NE, 1103 a5-10) where it is classified as a dianoetic virtue and thus listed along with “Wisdom” (*sophia*) and “Prudence” (*phronesis*) while contraposed to ethical virtues such as “Liberality and Temperance” (*eleutheriotes, sophrosyne*). In contradistinction to any of the ethical virtues, *synesis* is not part of a man’s character (*ethos*), but rather a mental attitude (*hexis*); it is, we thus might say in a first step, a habit of thinking or mode of attention.

The most substantial account of *synesis*, however, is to be found in Book VI., where it is dealt with as one of the intellectual virtues that is related to *variable* things, hence to objects of a knowledge that is not theoretical and, moreover, rather practical than technical, inasmuch as it does not consist in a poietic knowledge of production, but in a *practical* mode of knowledge related to particulars (1143 a29). As Peirce therefore indicates (R 434:19), *synesis* in a second step needs to be considered as part of that broader structure of faculties (cf. NE, VI, 9-11) – comprising, among others, practical wisdom (*phronesis*), good deliberation (*euboulia*) and considerate judgment (*gnome*) – the exertion of which constitutes the practical knowledge of the *phronimos* who, by considering all aspects pertinent to the case and thus arriving at a reasoned decision through deliberation, understands what ought to be done.

For understanding [*synesis*] is concerned not with things that are eternal and immutable, nor with any and everything that comes into being, but with matters

<sup>29</sup> The role of imagination is not thematized in the “Chapter on Ethics” of the *Minute Logic* (Rs 432-424). A close reading, however, confirms that when Peirce e.g., speaks of “the state of things last imagined” (R 433:19), this implies that the representation of ultimate ends judged by *synesis* is formed by the faculty of imagination.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Wolf (2007, p. 267).



that may cause perplexity and call for deliberation. Hence its sphere is the same as that of prudence [*phronesis*]; but understanding and prudence are not the same, because prudence is imperative [since its end is what one should or should not do] and understanding only makes judgments. [...] Understanding, then, is neither the possession nor the acquisition of prudence; but just as the act of learning is called understanding when one exercises the faculty of scientific knowledge, so too in exercising the faculty of opinion for the purpose of judging about another person's account of matters within the scope of prudence [...], the act of judging is called understanding. (NE 1143 a4-15; additions in brackets mine).

Sharing the attentiveness and general orientation of *phronesis* towards that which is conducive to the ethically good and thus expected to be considered by a competent agent, *synesis* also deals with those matters that arise doubts concerning what ought to be done and thus “call for deliberation”. Accordingly, *synesis* – like *phronesis* – relates to deliberation concerning what is good and advantageous, but not, however, as *phronesis* relates to these, namely imperatively (*epitaktiké*) and from a first-personal stance, as a faculty that forms reasoned *decisions* with a constant view on the agent's ultimate ends, but rather critically (*kritiké*), as it is not exerted with the aim of determining *what ought to be done*, but rather “for the purpose of *judging* about another person's account of matters within the scope of prudence” (my emphasis), i.e. for the sake of comprehending and assessing the suitability of the practical reasons of *others*. *Synesis* thus looks at the same as *phronesis*, but from a different, second-person perspective.

For Gadamer, therefore, *synesis* is primarily the capacity to have “insightful understanding” (*einsichtsvolles Verstehen*)<sup>31</sup> and to enter the practical standpoint of others as easily as those who are good at quickly learning theoretical matters.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly Peirce, who like Gadamer traces the transferal of the term from the sphere of cognition to that of praxis by first referring us to “*De Anima*, 410 b3” (R 434:19), surmises that Aristotle “implicitly [derives σύνεσις] from συνίημι, to apprehend meaning” (ibid.).

In Peirce's reconstruction of the Aristotelian usage of the term, *synesis*, therefore, is fundamentally a capacity to empathetically apprehend and value the practical reasons of others; not, however, with a view on the moral goodness or badness of the acts these reasons might determine, but with an eye on how these reasons *harmonize* in the broader picture. Aristotle makes this very clear: the object of *synesis* is the “account of matters within the scope of prudence” someone gives; the judgment it passes, therefore, does not concern the moral goodness or badness of the reasons presented for pursuing this or that end, but rather how these reasons *fit* in the overall practical standpoint from which someone acts. It does, so to say, not attend to practical reasons vertically with a view on the resulting act, but transversally with an aesthetic view on how these reasons harmonize with who someone is, what other aims she has and what she generally aspires to.

*Synesis*, therefore, “is applied to the moral sense only in a particular application” (R 434:19), inasmuch as it does not – as *phronesis* does – *morally* assess the “vertical” relation between practical reasons and conduct, but rather contributes an *aesthetic* valuation of the “transversal” (dis)harmony obtaining between the practical identity of an agent and the reasons he states on particular occasions. Thus, when Aristotle in Book X. blames the sophists for failing to understand the silliness of their idea to write the constitution of a city state “by making a collection of the laws that have been most highly approved”, he blames them for speaking “as if the actual selection did not call for understanding (*synesis*), and as if a correct judgment were not the crucial factor, just as it is in musical questions” (1181 a 16-19), thus for neglecting that the *nómoi* of a *pólis* must both ring together and resonate with the *éthos* of a community.

31 Gadamer (1991, p. 379).

32 Cf. Gadamer (1991, p. 378-379; 391-392).

Clearly then, it is the *critical empathy* with which *synesis* brings into view whether or not the practical reasons an agent presents in a specific context form an aesthetic whole with his other ends and general aspirations that convinced Peirce to conceive of “the ultimate source of evidence” (R 434:26) on which axiological self-questioning must rely as that faculty that from a second-personal stance contributes a pre-moral esthetic valuation to practical knowledge.

I propose to call that phase of the mind to which we make appeal, the *Conscience*, although it is not precisely moral conscience, since we go back to a stage of thought before we have developed the idea of morality. We are not to ask ourselves what we *ought* to do, but whether we are, on the whole, deliberately content to regard a given end as good in itself regardless of its consequences. (R 434:12-13).

As a further generalization of the meaning, I think we may allow ourselves to speak of *synetic conscience* to mean an immediate appreciation of an end as good or otherwise, antecedently to having settled the conception of moral good. (R 434:25).

Thus, upon closer inspection, the intellectual virtue denoted by the Aristotelian conception of *synesis* fits perfectly in the role of that capacity of the mind that – due to the perspectivity built in it and its peculiar balance of empathetic immediateness and critical distanciation – is assigned the task of esthetically judging the images of ultimate ends which a categoriologically guided imagination draws, so as to devise a taxonomy of ultimate ends, at the top of which the *summum bonum* shall find its place. Note, however, that the synetic conscience operative in Peircean axiological self-questioning does not empathetically apprehend and critically judge how the practical reasons *someone else* gives *factually* (dis)harmonize with who she is, what other aims she has and what she ultimately aspires to. Rather, it apprehends and judges the (dis)harmony a *self-questioning* inquirer *imagines* to obtain between (i.) the practical identity of an agent implied in the acceptance of a certain good as being the “sole ultimate good independently of any ulterior result” (CP 1.580), on the one hand, and the implicit normative expectations that “the Head as the jury” (R 434:28) manages to “torture [...] out” (CP 1.580) of pre-moral synetic conscience. Accordingly, the practical “state of things supposed” (CP 1.584) in positing each of the three conceptions of the *summum bonum* discussed in “Chapter IV. Ethics” (CP 1.582-584), is a consequence of how the actualization of a specific ultimate end determines a corresponding practical identity: imagining “the simple satisfactions of the moment” (CP 1.582) to be the sole—and thus: supreme—good, for which we would be willing to renounce everything else, presupposes an agent who is either in a “state of perfect satisfaction or perfect dissatisfaction” (CP 1.582), without any memory or knowledge of these states, as such memory would have no purpose for an agent like a “mosquito” (ibid.) whose *summum bonum* consists in nothing but totally isolated occurrences of simple satisfactions of the moment. The first conception of the *summum bonum* thus correlates with the total discontinuity of a mode of action that starts anew in every moment and thus has no capacity of forming wishes, as the very occurrence of such mental states requires the capacity to differentiate between two moments and to conceive of a specific relation to be brought about between them through determinate acts. Next, imagining the “perfect and prompt satisfaction of every instinct [to be] the only ultimate good” (CP 1.583), presupposes an agent that – as “whatever wish he should conceive should be instantly gratified” (ibid.) – does not merely *feel* isolated satisfaction and dissatisfaction, but rather *experiences* a determinate relation between the *unsatisfactoriness of a former moment* and the *satisfactoriness of a later moment* as being grounded both in his faculty of wishing (that things lacking satisfactory properties will instantly take them on) and his faculty of subsisting (as a substrate the temporal persistence of which allows for the alteration of its states). As a being successfully aspiring to the immediate and complete gratification of its instincts, however, is incapable of experiencing failure, of critically modifying its

wishes and of thus turning them into objects of second order volitions, the adherence to which establishes a reflective distantiation of the agent from itself, – Peirce refers to the practical identity implied in this conception of the *summum bonum* as an imbecile and the corresponding practical state of things as a “state of imbecility” (ibid.) that “consciousness herself could [not] have the face to pronounce [...] good” (ibid.). Taking into consideration the sheer coenoscopic necessity of the “provision for satisfying future instinctive desires” (CP 1.584) and thus, again, imagining a practical reality and identity of an agent implied by this conception of the *summum bonum*, we eventually progress to Peirce’s racist version of Arendt’s *animal laborans*: the practical reality of a person for which the supreme good lies in a happiness procured by being “busily engaged in providing for his next day’s wants”, thus Peirce thinks, is a state that could only fulfill “creatures zoologically human” (ibid.), i.e. *slaves* with which *we* – inquirers into the mysteries of pre-logical pre-normative science – share our biology, but not that specific mentality of *creatores-ex-substantia* which makes us *culturally* human as thinking beings: “But how is it with you, my Consciousness? Would you think it was reason enough for the creation of heaven and earth that it put you, or any other individual, into this condition of working for your living?” (CP 1.584).

Guided – though never replaced – by the cross-examining intellect, synetic conscience, in “passing in review every one of the general classes of objects which anybody could suppose to be an ultimate good” (CP 1.581), not only esthetically judges the determinate state of things and practical identity<sup>33</sup> praxeologically implied in each conception of an ultimate end presumably endowed with per-se-admirability, but also involves and relates to the self-questioning subject as such. Accordingly, there is not only an objective pole (the reference to an *object of favour*, characterized as relatively or supremely good or bad) to be considered in judgments of taste, but also a subjective pole, consisting in a particular self-relation, in which the self-questioner – in the act of imaginatively proposing an ideal of conduct – discovers and faces itself as a who attracted by this or repelled by that ultimate end, thus experiencing itself as an esthetic *subject of favour* that agrees or disagrees with the valuations of a dialectically guided synetic conscience.

Now, this thematization of the subjective pole of the synetic conscience of ultimate ends, i.e. the emergence of a self of self-questioning *in* self-questioning *as* the subject of favour, is precisely what – first by Herbart, then by Peirce – is described in the following two passages, in which the same fundamental dialogical relation between imagination (the *subject of favour*) and the esthetic judgment of moral sense (*synesis*) is envisioned from the neighboring stances of two kinds of an intuitionistic moral realism, of which the first is absolute and static, thus dogmatic, while the second is fallibilistic and dynamic, *ergo* perfectibilistic:

The image of the will is bound, in the way peculiar to images, to the will-less judgment that emerges in the apprehender. And the volitioner is exposed to the sight of himself, in which, along with his image, his verdict on himself is at once generated. This judgment is no will and cannot command. But as censoring it may be heard on and on. (SW 8:11).

There is no ultimate source of evidence on these questions [concerning the classification of ultimate ends of conduct] than our own heart and conscience, if I may be permitted to call this *synesis*, or faculty of direct appreciation, by the name of conscience. But

33 It is important to see that the elaborate sketch Peirce gives of the “man of science” in the “Pearson-review” (EP 2:58 f.) is a sketch both of the *practical state of things* and the *practical identity* implied in the final and true conception of the *summum bonum* qua “that living reason for the sake of which the psychical and physical universe is in a process of creation (*religionism*)” (EP 2:59); cf. the diagrammatic representations of the classification of the “Pearson-review” in the drafts (R 1434) and their accurate rendering in Liszka (2021, p. 214-215), with “religionism” (p. 215) at the top of a reversed Pascalian triangle of ultimate ends. Note that Peirce in the “Pearson-review” explicitly confirms that “the motive that actually inspires the man of science, if not quite that, is very near to [being the only ethically sound motive which is the most general one],- nearer, I venture to believe, than that of any other equally common type of humanity” (EP 2:60).

we are by no means to think that the utterances of this faculty are infallible. On the contrary, nobody needs to be told that nothing is more insincere or ignorant of itself than the human heart. It is a dull and mendacious witness that needs to be cross-examined closely, in order to extract from it the real truth. [...] We are, therefore, to take the Heart as sole witness, but the Head as the jury. (R 434:26-28, 1901).

On the basis of what has emerged so far, the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics is essentially dialogical, because in those esthetic judgments on the morally fine that Peirce is almost exclusively interested in after 1905, a first-personal stance and the self-relation corresponding to it necessarily need to be established, so as to allow for that process of axiological self-questioning without which no knowledge of our desires could ever be obtained. In this process of self-questioning, practical states of things and an underlying practical identity of the agent are imaginatively conceived as the practical consequences constituting the pragmatic meaning implied in a specific conception of an ultimate end. It is thus the (dis)harmony of the pragmatic meaning of a definite conception of an ultimate end, on the one hand, with the conception of the *summum bonum* which the process of self-questioning articulates as that ideal of conduct the pre-moral sense of synetic conscience gradually discovers to be contained in it, that forms the subject-matter of esthetic judgments in axiological self-questioning. The parties this dialogue essentially requires – whether represented by a godson and his fairy godmother, by the imagination and a synetic conscience (dialectically guided by the intellect), by “the Head as the jury” (R 434:28) and the “Heart as sole witness” (ibid.) – are ultimately that of a suggester of ultimate ends and an assessor of their value. Accordingly, whenever the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics is at stake, we will see it involving the cooperation of a suggester and an assessor without which no esthetic judgments concerning τὸ καλόν can arise.

### 3.2 On definition or the analysis of meaning (1910): phases and presuppositions of judgment of taste

In one of several drafts (Rs 641-650, November 1909 to August 1910) of a paper aiming at clarifying the phenomenon of meaning by relating it to the operation of definition, Peirce, in a context in which his focus is actually on the nature of negative terms, writes:

Lastly, and to my mind almost conclusively, when I have debated in my own mind what things are truly beautiful, – a debate of Feeling, pure and simple, that is to say, of *trying on* different judgments, and then feeling which *fits* the best, much as a beautiful woman might try on two costumes before her glass, – I always decide that *everything* is beautiful, if it be looked upon with truthful eyes, *provided* always that it be itself free from every kind of *false pretense*; and yet that proviso must be taken in a sense that only True Feeling can appreciate; for it often surpasses my power of analysis to detect and put my finger on the falsity. If this be anywhere near the truth, if the fine, the admirable, *le beau*, be anything like sincerity in this respect, then it is clear that it is only the absence of ugliness. (R 646:39-40).

We immediately note that the particular nature of the pivotal questions of Esthetics (such as “what things are truly beautiful”?) is, again, *mise en scène* in a “dramatic context”, so as to project, exteriorize and highlight the structure and perspectivity built into that intimate internal dialogue in which we cultivate our habits of feeling (EP 2:377-8; cf. *infra*, 3.3), determine the hierarchy of our ends (R 434:26) and review our actions and ideals (EP 2:247-248). The new scenery, however, is more mundane, as the parties of the dialogue are not a fairy and a boy, but rather a person and their mirror image, and the decision to be taken will not impact a whole life, but only someone’s look for an evening. As the terms

“the fine, the admirable, *le beau*”<sup>34</sup> that Peirce uses to refer to that which is “truly beautiful” indicate, the kind of beauty referred to here, however, is *not* sensuous beauty. Note that the imagery of a beautiful woman trying on costumes before her glass is introduced for two reasons. Firstly, to illustrate the phases of esthetic judgment. Secondly, to exemplify a subtle moment generally involved in the formation of judgments of taste and the appreciation of the beautiful reflected in them.

Accordingly, there are two quasi-dialogical processes related to each other in this passage: Firstly, there is a self-questioning concerning “what things are truly beautiful” which is characterized as a “debate of Feeling”; secondly, there is the comparison between this “debate of Feeling” and the trying on of clothes in front of a glass. This comparison is *playfully* mediated by the – brilliant – metaphor of “*trying on* different judgments”. There is something analogous in the self-questioning concerning that which is “truly beautiful” qua being admirable in itself and which, adopted as an ideal of conduct, would constitute a determinate *practical identity*, on the one hand, and the contemplation of our looks in a mirror constituting a determinate aesthetic *persona*, on the other hand. Now that which is analogous, is that in both cases the “trying on” of something – “judgments” in the former, “costumes” in the latter case – acts as the motor of a “debate of Feeling”, i.e., as the motor of a process of esthetic belief formation which aims at answering the question “which *fits* the best”. The upshot of such a reflective process of esthetic belief formation is a judgment of taste which, as such, expresses how something appeals to our feelings. Accordingly, what Esthetics deals with – its subject-matter – is “a debate *of feeling*” (my emphasis), thus not a debate in which opposing *arguments* are put forward to overcome those of an opponent in terms of their cogency qua logical truthfulness, but rather conflicting *feelings* are expressed to decide for one of several options competing for our favour in terms of their sincerity or esthetic truthfulness. Claims are compared, though obviously not in exactly the same way.

We are in a better position now to follow Peirce’s suggestion to think through the analogy between trying on costumes and trying on judgments. Some additional reflection on common experience, however, is still expected from us by our author, who so much wished he “possessed that mastery of the pen and of expression [...] which writing in dialogue demands” (R 610:8, 1908): What do we actually do when we try on something in front of a mirror, so as to decide between costume *A* and costume *B*? And, logically prior to this procedural question: which conditions need to be met, so as to guarantee a reliable outcome of the procedure?

As we had already seen in the fairy-tale Peirce recounts in 1911, the first condition that needs to be met is that there is an overarching *praxis of review* (the yearly ritual of inquiring about the formation of a wish, the trying on of clothes in front of mirrors before leaving the private sphere and taking on a certain social persona, the habitual reviews<sup>35</sup> of our actions and beliefs concerning what it is really worth striving for in life, ritualized forms of confession etc.). Then, embedded in the structure of this praxis, there needs to be the potentiality of unfolding a *shared positionality* like that offered by a “theatre of discussion” (CP 4.243, 1902). A shared positionality in the sense of a determinate communicative setting in which the *participants* engaging in the dialogue can both, as *parties*, play their respective roles in accordance with their interests – as jury *vs.* witness, fairy *vs.* boy, mirror-image *vs.* critical judgment, projector *vs.* assessor – while at the same time interacting as *parts* of a whole with the same end in view. The specific dialogicality of the subject matter of Peircean Esthetics, therefore, necessarily requires *practices of review* in which the actualization of the potentiality of *shared positionality* allows for the assuming of *dialogical roles* in a debate. A debate, however, in which we found feelings rather than arguments to be proposed.

34 As *le beau*, in 1905, is taken to express that which “excites that feeling akin to worship that fills one’s whole life in the contemplation of an idea that excites this feeling” (R 1334:39), we seem entitled to doubt that Peirce conceives of it as a silly form of sensuous beauty.

35 Cf. EP 2:247-8 where Peirce distinguishes, firstly, “three self-criticisms” concerning the relation of the remembered “image” of an act performed to (i.) the “previous resolution”, (ii.) “my general intentions”, (iii.) “my ideals of conduct fitting to a man like me” and, secondly, the practice that “a man will from time to time review his *ideals*”; cf. Herbart’s justification of his use of the word “image” (*Bild*) in the context of aesthetic valuations of the will and the emphasis on temporality as a condition for the emergence of a judging “I that lies deeper” than recent conglomerations of representations which it thus can contemplate and disinterestedly judge “like a spectacle [*Schauspiel*]” (SW 2:90).

But, as a quite obvious question arises at this point, there still seems to be a last bit of work our dialogical author wants us to contribute to his train of thought: If we are now to try on judgments or costumes in such a context of esthetic valuation, so as to judge which “*fits* the best” – what exactly does this practically imply, and what does it actually mean that something *fits* us? Although a costume or suit – normally – does not alter the general physiological structure of our body, it nonetheless brings about a modified configuration of its parts by stressing some and suppressing other relations, both on the static and dynamic level of appearance. These modifications can be such that on the basis of one and the same “multitude of parts” different relationings of the parts – “so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality” (EP 2:210) – will also impart different positive simple immediate qualities to their totality. Accordingly, a certain costume or suit will bring about a different total aesthetic effect by accentuating and contrasting some, harmonizing and integrating other relations predetermined by the general structure of my body. Note that the same might be said about a life as a totality of acts that – disillusioned about the suitability of the ultimate aim *F* – starts to reinterpret and redirect itself with a view on the new long-term ultimate aim *G*, thus modifying the relations of the parts and imparting a different aesthetic quality to its totality.

I took a walk alone last night / I looked up at the stars / To try and find an answer in  
my life / I chose a star for me / I chose a star for him / I chose two stars for my kids  
and one star for my wife / Something made me smile / Something seemed to ease the  
pain / Something about the universe and how it’s all connected.<sup>36</sup>

To be trying on and comparing different clothes or different judgments concerning an ultimate end, accordingly, can be compared and has the same deep structure inasmuch as in both cases we are comparing total esthetic effects as resulting from different configurations of the same parts. Moreover, this trying-on goes through the same stages: there is a *phase of musement*, of taking in and reflecting on the basic esthetic effect of the totality perceived or imagined, followed by a *phase of tentative commitment* exploring the consequences of this potential choice (by putting ourselves in various postures and, so to speak, posing in future situations), finally there is *the phase of provocation* (lat. *provocare*: ‘to call someone out’), the being called out to judge by the challenge of comparing our different tentative commitments in feeling and eventually deciding *on the basis of a criterion* which is, again, of the nature of a feeling: “Something made me smile / Something seemed to ease the pain” in Sting’s scenario; a “proviso [that] must be taken in a sense that only True Feeling can appreciate” in Peirce’s.

There are certainly more prerequisites for an *esthetic self-commitment* to a *social persona* or to an *ideal of conduct*. Note, for example, how important it is to keep the individual phases separate in that specific situation before our glass, on which Peirce invites us to reflect carefully : in order to commit ourselves esthetically by deciding which dress “*fits* best”, we must first *complete* our musement on and the tentative commitment to dress *A* (followed by that on dress *B*), before we can move to the *phases of provocation* and *esthetic self-commitment*. And whoever has bought clothes with their children and noticed all the rules of methodical aesthetic appreciation these little human beings break, so as to immediately jump to an esthetic self-commitment before any of the other phases has been properly considered – let alone be completed – will immediately assent to the proposition that trying on a costume or a suit is not a children’s game, but rather an art, originally cultivated especially by those whose profession is to make fitted clothes. As a consequence of growing into such esthetic practices of review, we have learned to suppress the desire to promptly refuse dress *B* because it seems to first and foremost lack this or that property of dress *A*. We have acquired this habit, because to act as unmethodologically as children do, would mean to agitate, to

<sup>36</sup> Sting’s “I am so happy, I can’t stop crying” (Track 6 on the album *Mercury Falling*, 1996) illustrates the reconfiguration of a multitude of parts into a new esthetic whole on the level of practical identity with all the sophistication and depth popular music can offer, whenever it taps into the well of common experience with sincerity.

interrupt or to contaminate with interest a “debate of Feeling” before it can actually start by comparing two carefully apprehended and disinterestedly judged *totalities of feeling*.

Esthetic judgments of taste aim at a *completed, non-agitated, disinterested* apprehension of a totality of feelings that prepares for and aims at overcoming the penultimate phase of provocation or “esthetic doubt”, so as to eventually be ready for the esthetic self-commitment to this or that shoe, suit, rhyme, act, ideal, or way of life. Still, there is one question we have not answered yet and for the sake of which Peirce had ultimately introduced the comparison between trying-on-judgments and trying-on-costumes, namely: How do we actually know “*which fits the best*” (my emphasis)?

As Peirce immediately clarifies, we do not actually *know*, but rather *feel* “*which fits the best*”, inasmuch as esthetic discrimination “often surpasses my power of analysis to detect and put my finger on the falsity”, so that the ultimate criterion of the ascription of the predicate “beautiful” does not consist in an additional – deeper, more accurate, focused or comprehensive – consideration of the object, but rather in a reflection on the “sincerity” of my reasons for liking it. As this is the only way to rule out provocation by “false pretenses” and guarantee the integrity of our judgments of taste and the esthetic commitments ensuing from them, *beauty* turns out to actually be a negative term that denotes the property of something to be free from fault (cf. EP 2:199, 201; KdU, § 15; SW 8:37-40; ITP, § 91 = SW 1:138-9).

[W]hen I experience repugnance at the experience of anything, an inward voice seems to admonish me that I am not making a pure esthetic judgment, but am distracted therefrom by consideration of the *unsuitability* of the object for some purpose. (R 310:6, 1903).

That we are capable of *failing* to look upon the object of esthetic valuation with truthful eyes by letting narrow points of view and false pretenses – expectations I project on the object (“That’s a suit by Boglioli!”) or interests the object stirs up in me (“I am *so* tall with *these* shoes!”) – distort our judgment, implies that there are also untruthful esthetic judgments. Accordingly, there must be a certain form of *conscience* involved in esthetic judgment, the lack, suppression or failure of which accounts for the possibility of erroneous aesthetic judgments (cf. KdU, § 8 = AA 5:216); there must be a form of pre-moral conscience that, as we have seen, Peirce, in the “Chapter on Ethics” of the *Minute Logic* refers to as “*synesis*” (R 434:26, 1901) or “synetic conscience” (R 434:25).

Conscience and the demand to base esthetic judgments on a totality of feelings given in a completed, non-agitated, disinterested apprehension that is sincerely valued, therefore, are strictly correlated, inasmuch as the silence of the former is the *only* criterion we have to judge whether we have properly moved through the phases of esthetic valuation and whether our judgment of taste is not, as Kant would describe it, “impure” (AA 5:225), i.e. contaminated by appetitive, instrumental or moral interests.

Accordingly, even though Kant does not deem it necessary to assume the involvement of a form of conscience in judgments of taste, he just stops one step short of doing so, when he grounds *the claim* to objectivity of a publicly expressed judgment of taste *in* the subject’s reflection on her grounds of certainty: While, on the one hand, the semantic claims to objective reference in judgments of taste – that “speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things” (KdU, § 7 = AA 5:212) – can be transcendently reconstructed in terms of a normative appeal<sup>37</sup> to a “subjectively valid universality” (KdU, § 8 = AA

37 “For he must not call it beautiful if it pleases merely him” (KdU, § 7 = AA 5:212): Using the conceptual instruments of analysis we have at our disposition today, the normative appeal Kant hears expressed in the predicate “beautiful” as a “universal subjective validity of satisfaction, which we combine with the representation of the object that we call beautiful” (KdU, § 9 = AA 5:218) is not part of the propositional contents of a judgment of taste, but rather belongs to its performativity as a form of *proclamative expressive behaviour* of speakers believing themselves “to have a universal voice, [...] [that] lays claim to the consent of everyone” (KdU, § 8 = AA 5:216). A constant speech-act-theoretical sensibility is involved in the construction of the pragmatic framework Kant needs in the “Analytic of the Beautiful” to differentiate the appreciation of the beautiful from other modes of appreciation (*Wohlfellden*) and the judgmental practices these are embedded in.

5.215), which – in the very performativity of judging – postulates to be ultimately grounded in a *sensus communis aestheticus* (KdU, § 8 = AA 5:216; cf. §§ 18-22, § 40), the subjective grounds of certainty to be *performatively* entitled to such appeal and register of speaking with a “universal voice”, on the other hand, cannot be related back to anything else but to a reflection on the purity of my reasons to judge something ‘beautiful’, i.e. these cannot be grounded in or justified by anything else but the – as we might say with Peirce and Herbart – *conscientiousness* of my reflective abstracting from whatever may contaminate the judgment:

Whether someone who believes himself to be making a judgment of taste is in fact judging in accordance with this idea [of speaking with a universal voice] can be uncertain; but that he relates it to that idea, thus that it is supposed to be a judgment of taste, he announces through the expression of beauty. Of that he can be certain for himself through the mere consciousness of separation of everything that belongs to the agreeable and the good from the satisfaction that remains to him; and this is all for which he promises himself the assent of everyone: a claim which he would also be justified in making under these conditions, if only he were not often to offend against them and thereby make an erroneous judgment of taste. (KdU, § 8 = AA 5:216)

As aspiring to (inter)subjective universal validity only, judgments of taste, according to Kant, are not capable of being erroneous (*irrig*) because – by claiming that  $x$  is  $P$ , when  $x$  is not – they fail to have an objective referent that makes them true, but rather because they can fail to meet the subjective condition for ascribing the predicate “beautiful” in the first place; the condition namely, that once I have sorted out all grounds of my appreciation of the aesthetic representation that lie in its agreeableness, usefulness or moral goodness, there is still a reason left for my appreciative proclamation of its beauty. And as it is *in this* that I might be mistaken – namely *in assuming* that the “conditions” for having proper reasons for my appreciation are fulfilled, – judgments of taste are not and cannot be objectively wrong *qua false* because of the lack of a referent, but rather performatively wrong *qua erroneous*, i.e., wrong *qua being mistaken about my entitlement to perform a specific act*. Erroneous judgments of taste, therefore, are *irrig*, because an agent assumes himself to be doing something (i.e., “believes himself to be making a judgment of taste”), while he does something else, e.g., thinks he expresses a judgment of taste while he actually states a sensuous preference or moral verdict.<sup>38</sup>

For Peirce, however, the test of my entitlement to a judgment of taste has an additional complication, inasmuch as it cannot rely on the result of an operation that testifies to the purity or impurity of the reasons involved, without also assuming the procedural conscientiousness of this operation, i.e., without assuming that its procedures have not been violated, and the grounds of the resulting judgment are, therefore, genuine and sincere. We will later (cf. AUTHOR, 2022b) see that Peirce in his emphasis on the procedural formality of esthetic judgment is not following Kant, but rather Herbart with his emphasis on the concept of a “completed presenting” (*vollendetes Vorstellen*) and the differentiation between desire (*Begierde*) and taste (*Geschmack*) as the fundamental distinction that allows Herbart to conceive of the objectivity of aesthetic judgments in general and of moral taste in particular, inasmuch as the former is characterized by the experience of feelings of pleasure and pain which, as presentations, do not represent something external to them, but are rather characterized by the collapsing of *that which is intended in feeling* (*das Gefühlte*) with *the feeling* as such (*das Gefühl*), whereas judgments of taste are characterized by their reference to an objective correlate of valuation that can be represented independently of the valuation (cf. APP, Introd., sect. I = SW 8:11-24).

<sup>38</sup> On Kantian erroneous judgments of taste, cf. Allison (2001, p. 107).



### 3.3 The methodetic aspect of esthetic dialogicality: *The Basis of Pragmatism in the Normative Sciences* (1906):

What has, so far, been said about Peirce's accounts of the subject-matter of Esthetics, points us to a conception of the specific dialogicality involved in it, which – its synetic normativity, praxeological conditions and procedural phases notwithstanding – seems to be that of a boundary case of communication. A boundary case that – no matter how much the internalization of dialogic form may shape it – seems primarily rooted in the reflective self-relation of the subject of esthetic judgment. Of course, we have seen that in its judgmental activity an active and a passive party of the dialogue – a suggester of imaginations and an assessor of their meaning (dialectically guided by the elenctic abilities of the cross-examining intellect) – are cooperating to bring into view, value and classify presumable ultimate ends constitutive of practical states and identities. But the instantiation of this specific kind of dialogicality in esthetic judgment does certainly not alleviate the impression that, after all, axiological self-questioning cannot be anything but the echo of a social practice that factually takes place in a secluded mind. Accordingly, while “rationality ought [...] to be purely objective” (CP 2.156, 1902), and “morals half subjective, half objective” (ibid.), “taste” has the property of “being purely subjective” (ibid.).

Now if we look for a passage in the Peircean text-corpus which, on the one hand, confirms the structural role of dialogicality in and for the subject-matter of Esthetics, but, on the other hand, also stresses the necessity of real social interaction in the process of forming ideals of conduct, then, so at least it seems, we certainly have to take cognizance of the following passage, in which Peirce, in January 1906, defines the subject-matter of Esthetics as follows:

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 heterocriticisms; and the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*. (EP 2:377 f. = R 283:43, 1906).

Esthetics, thus Peirce seems to claim here, is the theory of the deliberate formation of ideal habits of feeling. These are engendered both in solitary dialectic (i.e. in “a course of self-criticisms”); but also, so it seems, in full-fledged processes of dialogical communication (i.e. in “a course of [...] heterocriticisms”) which, taken together as belonging to one and the same series of criticisms of habits of feeling, aim at something that Schiller, in his *Aesthetic Letters*, calls “developing our capacity of feeling” (*Ausbildung des Gefühlsvermögens*, XIII.2) and actually defines the cultural task of safeguarding the sensuous drive from the meddling of the formal drive in its sphere, while “developing our capacity of reason” (ibid.) defines the complementary civilizational task of preserving the individual from the power and grip of the sensuous and affective (ibid.). The ultimate aim of this process of sentimental education would, thus Peirce indicates, consist in acquiring the taste or esthetic sense of discrimination of the “fully developed superman” (EP 2:379) who has ultimately learned what to be attracted by and what to be repelled from in veridic feelings of pleasure and pain. As the immediately following historical remark indicates, however, Peirce can only sympathize with the conception of Esthetics as a theory of the formation of taste, if moral taste is included and the structural commonality it shares with artistic beauty as the other mode of *tò kalón*, is considered in a comprehensive theory of esthetic valuation:

It is true that the Germans, who invented the word, and have done the most toward developing the science, limit it to *taste*, that is, to the action of the *Spieltrieb*, from which deep and earnest emotion would seem to be excluded. But in the writer's opinion, *the theory is the same whether it be a question of forming a taste in bonnets or of a preference between electrocution and decapitation, or between supporting one's family by agriculture or by highway robbery*. The difference of earnestness is

of vast practical moment; but it has nothing to do with heurctic science. (EP 2:378, third emphasis mine).

As we shall see in this subsection and in the second article of this series (cf. TOPA, In press), however, Peirce does not conceive of the dialogical criticism *by* others as an ingredient of the process of forming habits of feeling and, moreover, does only agree with Schiller with a view on the broad historic-civilizational role of the esthetical as a medium of self-perfectioning (cf. R 288:22, 1905; EP 2:460, 1911) that is foundational for the growth of reason, though not on the question which kind of representations and cultural activities ought to dominate this medium. Accordingly, the ideal Peirce assumes to be gradually manifesting itself in the deliberate formation of habits of feeling is not the political ideal of the “bestow[ing] freedom by means of freedom” (XXVII.9) of Schiller’s “aesthetic State” (ibid.), but the semeiotic ideal of a “continual increase of the embodiment of the idea-potentiality” (EP 2:388) in the co-evolution of scientific inquiry and reality.

It is important to note that *The Basis of Pragmatism in the Normative Sciences* (R 283) was written in a phase of transition in which Peirce had already published two of his three famous articles on pragmatism in *The Monist* – namely *What Pragmatism Is* (April 1905) and *Issues of Pragmatism* (October 1905) – but not yet decided which approach to take in the third article devoted to the proof of pragmatism, for the sake of which, in the *Prolegomena to an Apology of Pragmatism* (October 1906), he eventually opted to center his argumentation on the system of Existential Graphs. Due to the intense work of these years on many architectonic levels, the definition of Esthetics Peirce gives in this text, is the result of an ongoing process of refining the theory of self-control and deliberate conduct (cf. Rs 447-454, esp. EP 2:245-251, 1903; EP 2:337, 1904; R 288:22-33; EP 2:347-349, 1905) which Peirce had been working on since the *Harvard Lectures of 1903* (cf. EP 2:188, 200 f.; but cf. R 409:025, 1894), in order to prove that – because “reasoning *is* a species of controlled conduct and as such necessarily partakes of the essential features of controlled conduct” (EP 2:249, 1903) – Logic is a specialization of Ethics and principle-dependent upon it, inasmuch as “the phenomena of reasoning are, in their general features, parallel to those of moral conduct” (ibid.) and a “perfect mirror of ethical self-control” (EP 2:337).

Once Peirce’s definition of Esthetics as a theory of the deliberate formation of habits of feeling is seen to be placed in this overarching architectonic strand of analysis, two things immediately become clear. Firstly, we see that this definition and the paragraph in which it is situated need to be read as part of a full articulation of what it means to claim that Logic is a normative science. Now Logic is a normative science, because “the theory of deliberate thinking” (EP 2:376) is a theory of “an active operation” (ibid.), which – qua deliberate – “is controlled with a view to making it conform to a purpose or ideal” (ibid.), so that, inasmuch as its subject-matter (“the control of thinking with a view to its conformity to a standard or ideal”, EP 2:376) is a special case of the subject-matter of normative Ethics or “Practics” (“the control of conduct, and of action in general”, EP 2:377), the science of the former (Logic) is also a “special determination” of the latter (normative Ethics). Accordingly, normative Logic and Ethics and their respective subject-matters relate to each other as the particular relates to the general; still, however, none of them can say anything about the question what “the ideal itself, the *summum bonum*” (EP 2:377) is, although an answer is clearly presumed in defining Logic as the normative science of “the control of thinking with a view to its conformity to a standard or ideal” (EP 2:376). Secondly, it becomes clear that the Normative Sciences as a whole are regarded as “an indispensable preliminary, propaedeutic, and prolegomenon to Metaphysics” (EP 2:376), i.e., as a necessary preparation and orientation that is subservient to the purposes of that science which studies “the most general features of reality and real objects” (EP 2:375). Consequently, the formation of habits of feeling Peircean Esthetics theorizes must be subservient to the task of comprehending the basic structures of whatever we can cognize and scientifically inquire into.

Moving into the respective paragraph in which our *locus classicus* is situated, we next notice that Peirce's definition of Esthetics is best understood as a concise analysis of the conditions of "thoroughly deliberate" or self-governed conduct, i.e. of a kind of conduct that, qua self-directed, originates in the agent (*supra*, 2.1.2); not, however, as an impulsive reaction will do (lacking the moment of thoughtful consideration in the weighing of practical reasons), and not as an ordinary intentional act which "simply prepares one's conduct by creating a habit in advance" (R 288:31) will do (lacking the directedness towards a specific ideal and self-improvement generally), but rather through a form of preparation as part of which "the manner in which the process of preparation shall be conducted has itself been prepared in advance" (R 288:31), so that "thoroughly deliberate conduct" would be a kind of conduct in which self-control is able to act on itself. The definition of Esthetics, therefore, is situated in an immediate argumentative context in which the conditions of a kind of conduct are analyzed that insofar as it is deliberate is rational. We are thus defining Esthetics with a view on speaking about "the fundamental characteristics which distinguish a *rational* being" (cf. EP 2:337, Summer 1904, my emphasis). Or, as Peirce then puts it in *Issues of Pragmaticism*: "But the secret of rational consciousness is not so much to be sought in the study of this one peculiar nucleolus [of habit-taking], as in the review of *the process of self-control* in its entirety" (EP 2:347, 1905, my emphasis). "[T]horoughly deliberate conduct", therefore, is conduct that is (i.) the result of having consciously formed a habit so as to ensure that future action will have determinate characteristics and, therefore, (ii.) is "controlled with a view to making it conform to a purpose or ideal" (EP 2:376), which control, however, (iii.) is itself open to be criticized and might not only lead to a revision of the conduct, but to a review of the ideal. In another manuscript predating and preparing *Issues of Pragmaticism* Peirce, in April 1905, develops this idea of the application of self-control to itself in a more detailed general picture of this crucial operation:

[I]f one blames oneself, one proceeds to analyze and to determine wherein one erred, by comparison either with one's resolutions or with one's ideal. One considers how the errors might be avoided. One resynthesizes, and enacts another proposed line of conduct before the imagination, perhaps several. When one's selection is made one rehearses in imagination the future performance again and again, as if one were committing it to memory, putting particular stress on the passages where one is liable to be surprised by a sudden impulse. Perhaps one says to oneself (all mediation being in dialogue,) Why did I not behave as I intended to behave and how am I to make sure of doing so next time? Or perhaps one says: I acted as I had resolved to act. How did I ever come to suppose such conduct would meet my approbation? [...] All self-control is affected by self-preparation. Its essential parts are four viz.; 1st, the review of past conduct, 2nd; esthetic valuation of that conduct, 3rd; analytic criticism, 4th; synthesis and imaginative rehearsal of proposed future conduct tending to create a habit of so behaving. [...] But in my description I mixed the second order of self-control with the first. For there are different orders of self-control, without counting the simple inhibition of an impulse by a habit as self-control at all. The first order of self-control simply prepares one's conduct, by creating a habit in advance. In the second order, the manner in which the process of preparation shall be conducted has itself been prepared in advance; and this must have been the case when one deliberately sets oneself to the task of impressing a line of conduct upon oneself by iterations of the lesson, etc. Other orders are suggested by the two questions following the description. (R 288:28-31, 1905).

Much of what Peirce writes here, can be related back to the theory of self-control developed in the first *Lowell-Lecture of 1903* (EP 2:245-251). But there seems to be one essential new thought which might be clarified as follows: If there is an order of self-control in which "the manner in which the process of preparation shall be conducted has itself been prepared in advance", and if each process of preparation

essentially has the four essential components listed above, then conduct performed in accordance to the second order of self-control is conduct that has prepared its (i.) review, (ii.) esthetic valuation, (iii.) analytic criticism, and (iv.) its imaginative rehearsal. It is a kind of conduct that, therefore, is performed with a view on a determinate mode of evaluation of which it knows it will be answerable to. It, therefore, at least in part, *is* whatever it is qua something *being addressed* to this habit of evaluation. It is not a simple intentional act. *It is an act that awaits an answer.* A communicative act, therefore.

Now, for the occurrence of such “thoroughly deliberate”, self-governed or rational conduct, – thus Peirce further explains in the paragraph in which our definition of Esthetics is located, – it is not sufficient that an ideal of conduct is *somehow* present to the mind of an agent (like e.g. the feigning of benevolence might be an essential part of the sadism involved in the efficiency of a torturer); rather this ideal must have three properties: Firstly it must be *of the nature of a habit*, secondly this habit must find its actualizations in the *occurrence of determinate feelings*, and thirdly these habits must have been formed in a determinate way, namely *deliberately*. As Peirce explains, this means that they must have “grown up under the influence of a course of self-criticisms and of heterocriticisms”, i.e. they must have gradually reached their maturest form through an interconnected series of dialogical acts aiming at the perfecting of the habit, in which criticisms of two kinds – referred to as *self-criticism* and *heterocriticism* – time and again lead to (i.) dissatisfaction and (ii.) judgmental “self-reproach” (EP 2:337), (iii.) an analysis of the errors committed, and a (iv.) synthetic process aiming at an improved reconfiguration of our conduct that is rehearsed in imagination and thus becomes a virtually habitualized, i.e. a possible part of our second nature, so that the occurrences of feelings resulting from the actualization of the habit can gradually “approximate indefinitely toward the perfection of that fixed character, which would be marked by entire absence of self-reproach” (ibid.).

Now a habit is an acquired *pattern* of feeling, doing, making or thinking that regularly becomes actualized when a certain triggering condition is satisfied or the proper occasion arises, i.e., a habit is a law-like “tendency [...] to behave in a similar way, in similar circumstances” (EP 2:413, 1907). Feelings, in contradistinction, are radically different *aspects* of mental phenomena. Broadly speaking, they constitute that specific aspect or class of states of mind (EP 2:4, 1894) – or rather, that class of *qualities* of such “psychosis, or state of mind” (EP 2:320, 1904) – in which not only the *qualities* of sensations (EP 2:4, 2:150, 1903) are *presented*, but also the *quale-characters* of: needs (EP 2:246, 1903), desires (EP 2:60, 1900), passions (EP 2:499, 1909), attitudes (EP 2:287, 1903), states of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (EP 2:169, 1903), self-evaluations like “feeling[s] of self-reproach” (EP 2:337, 1905) and “achievement of a difficulty” (EP 2:385, 1906). Finally, we find that even the qualities of all second order feelings of the pleasurable attractivity or painful repellence of any possible kind of first order feeling are also present in feeling. Such second order feelings, however, are only insofar of the nature of a feeling as these are immediately present and unintelligible in themselves (EP 2:153, 1903); not, however, inasmuch as these “may stimulate efforts” (EP 2:432, 1907) and, consequently, are not merely whatever they are independently of anything else, but – qua stimulating – in their relatedness to something else as well. Peirce nicely summarizes his theory of feeling in a manuscript of the late 1890s in which he introduces the term “quale-consciousness” to denote what all feelings have in common:

The *quale*-consciousness is not confined to simple sensations. There is a peculiar *quale* to *purple*, though it be only a mixture of red and blue. There is a distinctive *quale* to every combination of sensations so far as it is really synthetized – a distinctive *quale* to every work of art – a distinctive *quale* to this moment as it is to me – a distinctive *quale* to every day and every week – a peculiar *quale* to my whole personal consciousness. I appeal to your introspection to bear me out in this. (CP 6.223 = R 941, 1898).

After these clarifications, let us now go back to our analysis of the definition of Esthetics Peirce gives in 1906: As far as the immediate context to which it belongs is concerned, this definition is situated

in a paragraph in which Peirce aims at further clarifying the subject-matter of Esthetics by considering the role it plays in rational conduct. And in the broader systematic context of the preceding paragraph – introducing the triad of Normative Sciences and contradistinguishing its pre-logical members from ordinary ethics – Peirce had already briefly adumbrated this subject-matter as “the theory of the ideal *itself*, the nature of the *summum bonum*” (EP 2:377, first emphasis added), i.e. as the theory of the *nature* of the *summum bonum* in so far as it is considered as an ideally self-determined state that – by prescinding from its being the second relative in a dyadic relation of conformity – is not considered as an ideal *for action* in its actualizability, but rather *an sich*, as “the ideal itself” in its conceivability. Now in our immediate context, the overarching expository aim clearly consists in bringing into sharper relief *how* such an ideal actually relates to the existent when it enters a dyadic relation of conformity, i.e., how it *acts* when it *becomes* and *appears as* an ideal *in* our conduct. How are ideals incarnated? – this is the question. The answer to this question is given by distinguishing the different roles a “motive of action” and an “ideal of conduct” play in human activity:<sup>39</sup> “Every action has a motive; but an ideal only belongs to a line of conduct which is deliberate” (EP 2:377, 1906).

Deliberate agents do not simply *react* to the specific situations in which they – qua mere *agentia*, i.e. qua sheer producers of mental and physical effects – are necessarily part of a network of causal relations; accordingly, their activities cannot be fully grasped by limiting our conceptual view of them to that of an *explanandum* consisting in the occurrence of a certain act-event which is to be explained by collocating it within a network of causes in which we presume to be something we call a “motive” and ascribe to it the explanatory role of being *the* dominant efficient force to which the act-event relates as its effect. Deliberate agents are also engaged in long-term series of actions that form a unity, *not* because of a causal concatenation in which one act-event in a chain of act-events causes another in the very same way in which, presumably, the falling of one domino causes the falling of the next, but rather because these acts *sequentially* aim at and contribute to bringing about the same (e.g. all contribute to writing a paper entitled *The Dialogicality of Peircean Esthetics*), inasmuch as they are *homotelic* (the property of acts to have the numerical same constitutive end and thus be logically related to each other in thought), and/or because they transversally aim at bringing about whatever they bring about in the same characteristic way (e.g. a certain general way of doing things without a hurry and of never treating others impatiently), insofar as they are *homogeneous* (the property of acts to result from the numerical same cause of their goodness and thus be related to each other in feeling).

An ideal of conduct, being conceptual in nature, accordingly, has these two basic formal features. Firstly, its *homotelic generality*, which depends on the quantity of individual acts it integrates and the maximum of which, as Herbart puts it eloquently, is based on “a resolution that must be such, so as to bring about coherent action that can be viewed as one single deed” (SW 8:29); or, in Peirce’s words: “the only satisfactory aim is the broadest, highest, and most general possible aim” (EP 2:253, 1903; cf. EP 2:60, 1901), so that “[a]n aim which *cannot* be adopted and consistently pursued is a bad aim” (EP 2:202, 1903) and “[t]he only moral evil is not to have an ultimate aim” (ibid.), i.e. to live a life that is not lived as an answer to the question of Esthetics. Secondly, an ideal of conduct has a *homogeneous totality*, which depends on the amount of virtuous characteristics the actualization of an ideal is capable of instantiating: “The admirable ideal cannot be too extremely admirable. The more thoroughly it has whatever character is essential to it, the more admirable it must be” (EP 2:253). The product of both formal features gives us its efficient *esthetic quality* (cf. EP 2:202-3), which is highest when the most general possible aim is pursued by actualizing the totality of virtuous characteristics, and lowest when the most particular possible aim is pursued by actualizing none of the virtuous characteristics action may have: “the unrestrained gratification of a desire, regardless of what the nature of that desire may be” (EP 2:253; cf. EP 2:59, R 1434:022, 25-27 = Liszka, 2021, p. 214-215; CP 1.582, 1901).

39 This is also noted by Aydin (2009, p. 432), who, moreover, brings into view the Aristotelian action-theoretical horizon in which Peirce is arguing here.

If we thus follow Peirce on the basis of his categoriological classification of ultimate ends and ensuing types of action, then the sentence “Every action has a motive; but an ideal only belongs to a line of conduct which is deliberate” (EP 2:377, 1906) fundamentally differentiates between (i.) actions that have a motive *and* are *not* part of a line of conduct that is deliberate, (ii.) actions that have a motive *and* are part of a line of conduct that is *not* deliberate, (iii.) actions that have a motive *and* are part of a line of conduct that *is* deliberate. Actions of the third kind (e.g. writing a particular difficult part of the paper “The Dialogicality of Peircean Esthetics” on this weekend, because I know I will be quite undisturbed), thus, are not only part of a temporally unfolding network of efficient causes and effects, but also parts of a whole, the – sequential and/or transversal – unity of which is of a conceptual nature: “Every ideal is more or less general. It may be a complicated state of things. But it must be a single ideal; it must have unity, because it is an idea, and unity is essential to every idea and every ideal” (EP 2:253). In contradistinction, acritic actions of the second kind (e.g., again losing my temper due to accumulated frustration in a situation that absolutely does not legitimate such a harsh reaction) are part of a dynamically unfolding network of efficient causes and effects, and belong to a whole the unity of which, however, consists in a merely negative exclusion from that whole (a Kantian infinite judgment, so to speak). Actions of the first kind, finally, are only part of a dynamically unfolding network of efficient causes and effects and do not belong *to a whole* the unity of which is conceptual, although the action as such will be motivated by a more or less transient intention or plan which I am forced to form exclusively due to the particular circumstances I am in.

On the backdrop of this clarification, it is evident that when Peirce proceeds and says that: “[t]o say that conduct is deliberate implies that each action, or each important action, is reviewed by the actor and that his judgment is passed upon it, as to whether he wishes his future conduct to be like that or not” (EP 2:377).

Here, Peirce is clarifying the difference between non-deliberate, more or less *acritic* action of the second and deliberate, more or less *rational* action of the third kind. Unsurprisingly, this differentiation of categories of conduct is based on the concepts of deliberation, review and moral judgment, i.e., on their resulting or not resulting from the weighing of practical reasons that is self-critically reviewed in the light of our (dis)satisfaction with our actions. Actions that belong to a line of conduct that *is* deliberate, thus, have been *re-viewed* (brought *into an image*), judged and felt to be esthetically reproachable, analytically criticized, synthetically modified in imagination and their future actualizations eventually approved to be desirable. Of such reviews *of conduct* – in the first *Lowell Lecture of 1903* Peirce distinguishes three kinds of “self-criticisms of single series of actions” (EP 2:248), framing the valuation of the act in increasingly enlarged perspectival contexts of synetic conformity that are correlated with the *depth of the feeling* the valuation gives rise to, so as to consider (i.) “whether my conduct accorded with my resolution” (EP 2:247), (ii.) “whether it accorded with my general intentions” (ibid.), (iii.) “how the image of my conduct accords with my ideals of conduct fitting to a man like me” (ibid.) – are coenoscopically doubtless continuous with and often enough accompanied by even more comprehensive and emotionally “*deeper*” (EP 2:247) *reviews of ideals*. In such reviews, the objects of self-criticism are not “single series of action”, but the totalities to which such series homotelically and/or homogeneously belong:

In addition to these three self-criticisms of single series of actions, a man will from time to time review his *ideals*. This process is not a job that man sits down to do and have done with. The experience of life is continually contributing instances more or less illuminative. *These are digested first not in the man's consciousness but in the depths of his reasonable being.* The results come to consciousness later. But meditation seems to agitate a mass of tendencies and allow them more quickly to settle down so as to be really more conformed to what is fit for the man. (EP 2:248; second emphasis mine).

We cannot here dwell on the psychological model of the sedimentation of experience in strata of apperceived masses of representations that Peirce borrows from Herbart (cf. SW 2:92),<sup>40</sup> but rather

40 The importance of Herbart's psychology for Peirce has, so far, only been recognized by Bellucci (2015).

focus on highlighting the continuous, primordially emotional, almost subconscious character of these processes of review, the results of which “come to consciousness later”, i.e. in a review of conduct that will be performed *after* we have already acted in accordance with the modified ideal.

Accordingly, in the paragraph under consideration here, in which Peirce, in 1906, gives a definition of Esthetics by framing it in a discourse on the conditions of rational – i.e. self-governed, thus self-controlled and self-directed, – conduct, we hear him say that the modified ideal of a deliberate agent “is the kind of conduct *which attracts him upon review*” (EP 2:377, my emphasis), thus characterizing the specific causality of an ideal in “shaping one’s own conduct” (EP 2:248) as the result of an – at least in part unconsciously formed – esthetic judgment to which corresponds “an almost purely passive liking for a way of doing things” (ibid.), i.e. an esthetic disposition to appreciate the presence of determinate properties of our conduct which thus acts, not as an efficient cause, but rather as an expectation we commit ourselves to be fulfilling by *devoting* our acts to it.

Ideals and their reviews, therefore, do not (and cannot) aim at causally determining our actions to be different in this or that respect, but rather determine the range of emotional interpretants future esthetic judgments on our conduct will refer to, by preparing conduct with a view on its being answerable to this specific valuation, i.e. by incorporating self-control in the guise of a determinate aspect under which an act will be evaluated and the image of its doer esthetically judged. Accordingly, ideals determine acts by devoting them to an emotional interpretant, and it is this devotional act – the internalization of the pre-communicative act of explicitly turning to, opening up and caring for someone – that superinduces semeioticity and meaning on them and makes “thoroughly deliberate conduct” contingent upon the actualization of a habit of feeling to which our action is devoted.

His ideal is the kind of conduct which attracts him upon review. His self-criticism followed by a more or less conscious resolution that in its turn excites a determination of his habit, will, with the aid of the sequelae, *modify* a future action; but it will not generally be a moving cause to action. It is an almost purely passive liking for a way of doing whatever he may be moved to do. (EP 2:377).

Thus in these sentences immediately preceding the definition of Esthetics, Peirce is combining his elaborate theory of self-controlled deliberate conduct he had presented in the first *Lowell Lecture of 1903* (EP 2:245-251) with his newer conception of an order of self-control in which an action is prepared by incorporating into it a determinate plan of self-preparation and valuation and addressing it to a determinate intended emotional interpretant (R 288:28-31, 1905), in order to thus prevent the confusion of two kinds of causality shaping our conduct, namely: “a motive to action” (EP 2:377) or “efficient agency, whose very existence consists in its acting when and where it is” (EP 2:245), on the one hand, and “an ideal of conduct” (ibid.) or “general mental formulation” (EP 2:245), on the other hand, so as to prevent the confusion of “two objects belong[ing] to different categories” (EP 2:377), namely the categoriological mode of Secondness belonging to motives of action with the mode of Thirdness belonging to the semeiotic causality of ideals of conduct.

As we reach the final sentences preceding the definition of Esthetics, a question comes back we have been circumventing so far: What is the meaning of the term “heterocriticism”? Is this a “criticism *by others*” (my emphasis), as e.g., Bruce Wilson recently assumed he may take for granted,<sup>41</sup> or rather a criticism *of others*, as the remainder of the paragraph and other passages<sup>42</sup> (among them all the solitary self-criticisms of the first *Lowell Lecture of 1903* [EP 2:247 f.]) strongly indicate, in which no *hetero* ever appears).

41 Wilson (2015, p. 302).

42 “If another’s act may be condemned by such a [moral] judgment, apart alike from my imagining myself in his place, and also from my feeling myself bound to blame him, – which may be doubted, – the conscience is to apply to the mixture of judgment, feeling etc. which makes up the act” (R 434:23-4).

Of course, one may think that inasmuch as heterocriticism without self-criticism (e.g. the expressive behaviour of the fairy without any self-corrective activity of the boy, cf. *supra*, 3.1), on the one hand, would be like the promulgation of laws without there being executive organs to enforce adherence in concrete conduct, whereas self-criticism without heterocriticism (i.e. the esthetic meditations – or rather: meanderings – of the boy without any emotional, energetic or logical guidance from the fairy), on the other hand, would be like spasms of “moral terrorism” (EP 1:122, 1877), sanctioning an agent without any legislative justification. We might, therefore, say that heterocriticism without self-criticism is powerless, thus lacking secondness and determinateness of reference to something that can be modified, while self-criticism without heterocriticism is pointless and lacks thirdness and definite meaning. And indeed: I might understand without any doubt *that* you really do not want me to do  $\varphi$  and will obey, although I am totally clueless as to your reasons, while I might also understand in the most minute details *what* it is that you want me to accomplish in doing  $\gamma$  and still refrain from carrying this act out. Accordingly, there is obedience without understanding, but also understanding without obedience. The first is analogous to the *hollowness* of self-criticism without hetero-criticism, the second to the *debility* of hetero-criticism without self-criticism.

But as the passage in its totality clearly shows, Peirce – who was never too fond of “the quite impertinent criticism of outsiders” (EP 2:202, 1903) – is rather thinking of heterocriticisms as an agent’s criticism of *other* agents. In such criticisms I potentially go through exactly the same stages we have just followed, thus, with necessity, moving from the *moral judgment of hetero-criticism*, to the *esthetic judgment concerning the attractivity (ugliness) of the underlying hetero-ideal* and, maybe, proceeding to the *hypothetical judgment of the resolution* to express my criticism, until we might even reach an *imperative determination of the will* to do so on a determinate occasion. What counts more than this parallelism, however, is the moral status of heterocriticism qua criticism of others, inasmuch as my own acts can conform or fail to conform to my heterocriticisms, which thus prolong or interrupt my “lines of conduct” in the way those of the righteous and the hypocrite do. In other words: an agent’s heterocriticisms do determine “the agent’s own esthetic quality” (EP 2:202 1903), while my being criticized by others does not determine how the sum of my deeds composes a totality the quality of which is irreducible to every single act: the εὐδαιμονία of my βίος.

As a close reading shows, this interpretation is confirmed by the last sentence preceding the definition of Esthetics:

It is an almost purely passive liking for a way of doing whatever he may be moved to do. Although it affects his own conduct, and nobody else’s, yet the quality of feeling (for it is merely a quality of feeling) is just the same, whether *his own conduct* or that of *another person real or imaginary* is the object of the feeling, or whether it be connected with the thought of any action or not. 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 heterocriticisms; and the theory of the deliberate formation of such habits of feeling is what ought to be meant by *esthetics*. (EP 2:377 f., my emphases).

Peirce here with all desirable clarity enounces that although an ideal factually affects only the esthetic judgments of the person judging, nonetheless the range of the emotional interpretant determined by the ideal and addressed by the act to be judged is the same, independently of whether the criticism is a self-criticism, a criticism of real or imagined others, or a criticism of the quality of feeling as such. If I find serenity attractive as an ideal of action, I will find the same quality of feeling attractive in your conduct that I find attractive in my conduct. And if I abstract from its being embodied in conduct, it still has a definite unity and structure I can speak about, refer to in feeling and – *like*.

If we split Peirce’s definition of Esthetics in two halves, then the first half states the general domain of discourse in which Esthetics is situated: Esthetics deals with a specific set of conditions of rational



– i.e., self-governed, consequently self-directed and self-controlled, thus self-critical – conduct. The specificity of the esthetic conditions consists, as we have seen, in their being related to the feelings by which esthetic judgments on conduct are accompanied and the role these play in shaping our actions as evaluative habits, inasmuch as they act as future emotional interpretants to which acts are addressed. Esthetics thus deals with the most fundamental aspect of ideals, because it considers such concepts of the homotelic or homogeneous totality of our actions as mediators through which we come to *imagine* – i.e., bring the memory of our conduct and thus ourselves into a picture – and feel – i.e., like or dislike – ourselves as the doers of our deeds. It thus deals with habits of feeling as that which enables us to conceive of ourselves as totalities or practical identities. Integrating the second half of the definition, the subject-matter of Peircean Esthetics is then the deliberate formation of rational habits of feeling through which we can come to imagine ourselves as practical identities – and feel – i.e., like or dislike – ourselves as the doers of our deeds.

We thus witness again how the self in esthetic judgment splits itself into a projector and an assessor, so as to constitute a specific dialogical form in processes of self-criticism that are constantly accompanied by debates of feeling. Moreover, we found that this dialogicality was characterized as an internal process of review that led us (i.) from a *moral* self-criticism *concerning the conformity of an act to an ideal*, adherence to which is expected by the agent (“each important action, is reviewed by the actor and [...] his judgment is passed upon it, as to whether he wishes his future conduct to be like that or not”), to (ii.) *esthetic* judgments the subjective side of which determines the range of emotional interpretants as the parameters of future self-reviews (“His ideal is the kind of conduct which attracts him upon review”), and ended (iii.) with a *resolution*, that (iv.) *determined the will* to modify future action, which, thus Peirce added, is also facilitated by the “sequelae”, i.e. the negative aftereffects of the suboptimal act criticized.

In closing this section, we may note how the same splitting of the self into a projector and an assessor of “the image of my conduct” (EP 2:248), moreover the same grounding of an imperative on a moral judgment, and of the latter on an esthetic judgment is prefigured in the following central passage of Herbart’s “Introduction” to his *General Practical Philosophy*, in which its author aims at adumbrating his conception of “General Aesthetics” (SW 8:11) *by differentiating between the role two kinds of causality play in the determination of action:*

Physical violence may by inhibition influence the strength of the will; but duty knows only too well that it is not within her powers to coerce. Thus, one may completely keep away from the will its strength, its activity, and all degrees of its possible action and reaction in conflict with an opposed force and strength; you may let go the thought of its actuality as something that can make itself felt in reality: – what remains? Its mere *What*, – its *image*! The image of the will is bound, in the way peculiar to images, to the will-less judgment that emerges in the apprehender. And the volitioner is exposed to the sight of himself, in which, along with his image, his verdict on himself is at once generated. This judgment is no will and cannot command. But as censuring it may be heard on and on, – until, maybe, a newly generated will forms the resolution to modify the former will in accordance with the judgment. This resolution is a commandment, and the modified will appears as obeying. Both together as autonomy. (SW 8:10-11).

## Abbreviations

TCSPS *Transactions of the Charles Sanders Peirce Society*.

*In citations from and references to Schiller’s works the following abbreviations are used:*

**AEM** *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, followed by letter and paragraph number; edited and translated by Wilkinson, E. M. & Willoughby, L. A., Oxford, 1982.

*In citations from and references to Herbart's works the following abbreviations are used:*

**SW** *Johann Friedrich Herbart's Sämmtliche Werke* [J. F. Herbart's *Complete Works*], 12 vols., followed by volume and page number; G. Hartenstein (ed.), Leipzig, 1850-1852.

**APP** *Allgemeine Praktische Philosophie* [General Practical Philosophy, 1808], in: SW 8:3-212.

**BCP** *Kurze Encyclopädie der Philosophie* [Brief Cyclopedia of Philosophy, 1831], in: SW 2:3-381.

**ITP** *Lehrbuch zur Einleitung in die Philosophie* [Introductory Textbook of Philosophy, 1813], in: SW 1:3-336.

**PS** *Pädagogische Schriften* [Writings on Pedagogy], followed by volume and page number, 2 vols., ed. by O. Willmann, Leipzig, 1880.

*In citations from and references to Kant's works the following notations are used:*

**AA** *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, followed by volume and page number; 28 vols., ed. by *Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin 1910 ff., from vol. 1-22; ed. by *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, Berlin 1955 ff., from vol. 23-28.

**KrV** *Critique of Pure Reason*, followed by reference to the paginations of the A- and/or B-Edition; tr. and ed. by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, Cambridge, 1998.

**KdU** *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, followed by reference to the chapter, and/or to the pagination of vol. 5 of the *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA); tr. and ed. by P. Guyer & E. Matthews, Cambridge, 2000,

**KpV** *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. and ed. by M. Gregor, Cambridge 1997, followed by reference to the chapter, and/or to the pagination of vol. 5 of the *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA).

*In citations from and references to Peirce's works the following notations are used*

**CN** *Contributions to The Nation*, followed by volume number and page number; 4 vols, Ketner, K. L. & Cook, J. E. (Eds.), Lubbock, Texas 1975–1987.

**CP** *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, followed by volume number and paragraph number; 8 vols., vols. 1-6 Hartshorne, C. & Weiss, P. (eds.), Cambridge Mass. 1931-1935; vols. 7-8, Burks, A. (ed.), Cambridge Mass. 1958.

**EP** *The Essential Peirce*, followed by volume number and page number, vols. 1-2, Bloomington, 1998.

**NEM** *The New Elements of Mathematics*, followed by volume number and page number, vols. 1-4, ed. by C. Eisele, The Hague, 1976.

**R** *Manuscripts of Charles S. Peirce in the Houghton Library of Harvard University*, followed by manuscript number and page number, as identified in: Robin, R. (1967): *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, Amherst, and in: Robin, R. (1971): *The Peirce Papers: A supplementary catalogue*, in: *TCSPS*, vol. 7, pp. 37-57. Page numbers prefixed with a zero do not refer to Peirce's pagination, but to the numbers stamped on each page of the microfilm edition of the Harvard manuscripts.

**SS** *Semiotics and Significs. The Correspondence Between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, ed. by C.S. Hardwick, Bloomington, 1977, followed by page number.

**W** *Writings of Charles S. Peirce. A Chronological Edition*, vols. 1-8, Bloomington, 1982 ff., followed by volume number and page number.

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