

# The Pleasures of Goodness: Peircean Aesthetics in Light of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

## *Os Prazeres do Bem: A Estética Peirciana à Luz da Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo de Kant*

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**Abstract:** Peirce's comments on aesthetics are brief, enigmatic, and sometimes inconsistent. Peirce scholars understand aesthetics to be the science of the *summum bonum* (the greatest good), and they identify the greatest good as the growth of concrete reasonableness. Without rejecting these claims, more must be said to ground and clarify Peircean aesthetics. This essay argues that Peircean aesthetics can be developed in light of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

**Key-words:** Peirce. Kant. Aesthetics. *Summum bonum*.

**Resumo:** Os comentários de Peirce sobre estética são breves, enigmáticos e, às vezes, incoerentes. Os estudiosos de Peirce entendem que a estética é a ciência do *summum bonum* (*sumo bem*) e identificam o *sumo bem* com o crescimento da razoabilidade concreta. Sem recusar essas alegações, é preciso dizer mais para fundamentar e esclarecer a estética peirciana. Este ensaio defende que a estética peirciana pode ser desenvolvida à luz da Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo de Kant.

**Palavras-chave:** Peirce. Kant. Estética. *Summum bonum*.

In Charles Sanders Peirce's architectonic (or classification of the sciences), aesthetics<sup>1</sup> grounds ethics and logic. However, Peircean aesthetics is not a science of sensuous beauty and art (1998: 460). So, what is it? Peirce's comments are brief, enigmatic, and sometimes inconsistent. This essay argues that Peircean aesthetics can be developed in light of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. First, the location of aesthetics in Peirce's architectonic is reviewed. Second, the received conception of Peircean aesthetics is considered. Third, Kant's main theses in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are briefly summarized. Fourth, Peircean aesthetics is cast in the light of Kant's third critique.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay follows the accepted spelling of aesthetics rather than Peirce's spelling (esthetics).

### Aesthetics in Peirce's Architectonic

Peircean aesthetics must be understood in the context of Peirce's architectonic and according to (a) the principle of dependence and (b) his categories.<sup>2</sup> According to the principle of dependence, for any science S that borrows principles from another science S<sub>c</sub>, S is arranged below S<sub>c</sub> in the architectonic. According to his categories, sciences are arranged in order of firstness, secondness, and thirdness.

In Peirce's architectonic, aesthetics is the first normative science. The normative sciences study the relationship between the ego and the non-ego in its secondness. Hence, aesthetics studies the secondness of the ego/non-ego relationship in its firstness. Only mathematics and phenomenology (also known as phaneroscopy) are arranged above aesthetics. Logic, ethics, and metaphysics are arranged below aesthetics. As such, those three sciences do not lend any principles to aesthetics. Rather, aesthetics lends principles to those three sciences.

As just noted, aesthetics is the first science that studies the secondness of the ego/non-ego relationship. Peirce describes secondness as struggle. Struggle comes in degrees. A high degree of struggle may be called *forcefulness* and a low degree of struggle *yieldingness*. Though Peirce does not recognize them as such, forcefulness and yieldingness can be understood as categories of sorts, constituting two extremes of a continuum of qualitative intensity in secondness.

Forcefulness and yieldingness can be understood from two directions. First, the object (non-ego, to be more general) forces itself upon the ego, and the ego either yields to the non-ego or not. If the ego yields, then the intensity of secondness is minimal. If the ego does not yield, then the intensity of secondness is maximal. Second, the ego forces itself upon the non-ego, and the non-ego either yields to the ego or not. If the non-ego yields, then the intensity of secondness is minimal. If the non-ego does not yield, then the intensity of secondness is maximal.

These two directions of interpretation are two sides of the same coin. There can be no effort where there is no resistance. Likewise, there can be no resistance where there is no effort. In short, the ego and the non-ego are locked in a dyadicism of *interdetermination*.

Moreover, this process of interdetermination is not static. Rather, it is dynamic and occurs over time. At one moment, the struggle may be intense. At another moment, the struggle may subside. Hence, vertical qualitative intensity (the degree of forcefulness at any given moment) may be distinguished from horizontal qualitative intensity (the degree of forcefulness over a given period of time). So, not only are the ego and the non-ego interdetermining, the intensity of their struggle waxes and wanes. In an unsettled process, they *oscillate* between minimal and maximal degrees of forcefulness. The cessation of oscillation in a minimal degree of secondness may be called a state of *quietus*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of Peirce's architectonic, see Kent (1987) and Atkins (2006).

<sup>3</sup> The reader will notice a close parallel in this account to J.G. Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*.

### The Received Conception of Peircean Aesthetics

Peirce scholars understand (a) aesthetics to be the study of the greatest good and (b) the greatest good to be the growth of concrete reasonableness.<sup>4</sup> These claims are not in significant dispute. However, for four reasons this account is not cut and dry.

1) In 1902, Peirce associates *ethics* with the study of the *summum bonum*: “the *summum bonum* [...] forms the subject of pure ethics” (1931–58: 1.575). Even his 1903 comment that “ethics [...] must appeal to esthetics for aid in determining the *summum bonum*” (1998: 260) is ambiguous. Does ethics involve the *summum bonum* because it determines the *summum bonum* for itself or because ethics utilizes the *summum bonum* derived from aesthetics? His comment in 1906 is similarly ambiguous: “ethics involves [...] the nature of the *summum bonum*” (377). On the one hand, Peirce may mean that ethics derives the *summum bonum* from aesthetics. On the other hand, he may mean that ethics needs assistance from aesthetics but the discovery of the *summum bonum* is unique to ethics.

2) Furthermore, it is not clear what the growth of concrete reasonableness is. Peirce’s comments are enigmatic. He writes, “the pragmatist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*, which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*” (343). This comment is obscure. What kind of evolutionary process? How are the generals embodied? In what does this destiny consist? Is it static or dynamic? And why is that destiny reasonable? Peirce goes no further. Instead, he writes, “There is much more in the elucidation of pragmatism that might be said to advantage, were it not for the dread of fatiguing the reader” (344).

3) Fortunately, Peirce scholars have endeavored to clarify what he means by the growth of concrete reasonableness. Unfortunately, they articulate Peircean aesthetics either (a) in the context of Peirce’s evolutionary metaphysics<sup>5</sup> or (b) through his logic (also called semeiotics).<sup>6</sup> While aesthetics certainly informs these sciences, aesthetics appears *before* logic and metaphysics in the architectonic. Consequently, aesthetics can lend principles to metaphysics and logic. However, aesthetics cannot derive principles

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<sup>4</sup> For a smattering of examples among many, see Potter (1967: 33), Turrisi (1986), Parker (1998: 129–130), and Lefebvre (2007: 326).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Turrisi (1986) elucidates the growth of concrete reasonableness through Peirce’s evolutionary metaphysics.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Smith (1972) endeavors to understand Peirce’s aesthetics through his semeiotics. Kent (1976) also uses Peirce’s pragmatism and his considerations on the problem of evil to elucidate his aesthetics. As such, she fails to establish the science on its own grounds but does so in reference to logical (pragmatism is a logical maxim) and metaphysical considerations. Moreover, Kent borrows a sub-division from Peirce’s idioscopic sciences (nomological, classificatory, and methodological) to render clear her understanding of Peircean aesthetics. Yet, she provides no reason for thinking that this subdivision is justified on Peirce’s architectonic principles (for reasons beyond the purview of the current essay, the present author does not think it is justified). Kent’s apparent reason for doing so is to reconcile Peirce’s comments that (a) aesthetics studies the admirable in itself (nomological) and (b) studies the deliberate formation of admirable habits

from them. Thus, Peircean aesthetics must derive its principles from elsewhere than these disciplines, for by the principles of Peircean architectonics the doctrine that the growth of concrete reasonableness is the *summum bonum* cannot be ascertained in aesthetics if the proof for it lies in logic or metaphysics. Yet, if this is so, no one has succeeded in showing how the doctrine that the *summum bonum* is the growth of concrete reasonableness is discovered in aesthetics.<sup>7</sup>

4) Finally, in 1903 Peirce acknowledges that he is “a perfect ignoramus in esthetics” (1997: 197) and that he does “not feel entitled to have any confident opinions about it” (211). He is even hesitant to consider aesthetics a science: “I am inclined to think there is such a normative science; but I feel by no means sure even of that” (211). 1904’s “Reason’s Conscience” indirectly reveals that Peirce is uncertain as to how aesthetics informs the system of the sciences. He proposes to show that “the problems of logic cannot be solved without taking advantage of the teachings of Mathematics, of Phenomenology, and of Ethics” (1976: 4, 193). Curiously, of the sciences prior to logic Peirce omits only aesthetics, implying either (a) that he has no clear conception of how aesthetics informs logic or (b) aesthetics does not importantly contribute to solving logic’s problems. However, (b) is implausible because aesthetics is the first normative science and appears before logic in the architectonic. Hence, it does lend principles to logic. Rendering (a) more plausible as a reason for the omission is the fact that Peirce’s comments on aesthetics are so brief, enigmatic, and inconsistent as to be virtually useless.<sup>8</sup> This is not to deny that he has a genuine insight into the normative sciences, but whatever insight Peirce does have is exceedingly dim.

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(classificatory and methodological). The author’s position is that the latter does not properly belong to aesthetics. This is because the deliberate formation of admirable habits is, first, a willing against one’s self and, second, must conform to some ideal derived from what is admirable in itself. Hence, the author believes that the deliberate formation of habits belongs to ethics, for (a) ethics studies the admirable in its secondness and (b) willing against oneself is degenerate secondness. Finally, both Smith (29) and Kent (278) fail to fully appreciate that Peirce’s response to the hedonist problem (to be discussed below) is to realize that aesthetic pleasure is a state and not a feeling. One cannot assume, on the basis of Peirce’s categories, that just because aesthetics is the first normative science that it must be about feelings anymore than one can assume that because phanerescopy is the first philosophical science that it must only study feelings.

<sup>7</sup> This is not to deny that turning to logic and metaphysics can helpfully elucidate Peircean aesthetics. In the author’s opinion, Turrisi (1986), Kent (1976), and Smith (1972) all helpfully elucidate aesthetics. Rather, the claim is that Peircean aesthetics must be established on its own grounds and in accordance with his architectonic. This has not been accomplished.

<sup>8</sup> Kent also notes that Peirce’s statements in the Collected Papers are confused and inconsistent (1976: 263) and stresses that she “is not claiming that [her] account was ever presented by Peirce in quite [her] way” (278).

### **Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment**

Because of these problems and because turning to Kant is frequently helpful for elucidating Peirce's philosophy, perhaps turning to Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* can shed light on Peircean aesthetics. Although Kant discusses art in the third critique, even a cursory reading of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* reveals that his comments on art are secondary to the larger problem he addresses in the book. Kant's primary interest is in the nature of *reflecting judgments*.

Reflecting judgments are distinguished from determining judgments. Determining judgments are those in which one is in possession of a concept and then applies that concept to intuitions (presentations of a sensory manifold). Or, to state it slightly differently, in making determining judgments one is subsuming a particular under a concept already in possession. Kant addresses the nature of determining judgments in his *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Reflecting judgments, in contrast, occur when one has an intuition but must *create* a concept on its basis. Or, to state it slightly differently, in making reflecting judgments one is creating a concept in order to subsume a particular.

Kant makes this distinction between determining and reflecting judgments because he recognizes that numerous concepts mediate between his universal categories and intuitions. Crucially, these mediating concepts are the ones employed in the empirical sciences. For example, the principle that every event has a cause is known *a priori*. However, there are various kinds of causes. Both hand-production of an object and generation are kinds of causes. Also, there are various kinds of generation, among them sexual reproduction and crystallization. Yet, how does one discover these intermediary concepts? They are not known *a priori* but only *a posteriori* by means of reflecting judgments.

The creation of these concepts is a technique or an art. Kant explains, "The reflecting power of judgment thus proceeds with given appearances [...] not schematically, but *technically*, not as it were merely mechanically [...] but *artistically*, in accordance with the general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system" (2000: 20, 214). These concepts enable the inquirer to find his or her way in the labyrinth of intuitions and the possible empirical laws that govern nature.

Yet why should it be supposed that nature is specified at all? In other words, why should anyone think that there are intermediate forms into which nature divides and that can be known? Kant argues that the doctrine of intermediate forms is a necessary presupposition for the power of judgment and the progress of inquiry. The progress of empirical knowledge presupposes that nature can be understood. Consequently, the power of judgment is based upon the principle that "Nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, in behalf of the power of judgment" (20, 216). Only on the supposition that nature can be rationally understood according to determinate laws and concepts is reflecting judgment possible.

How is the mind enabled to know these intermediate forms? That is to say, how are they postulated at all? Kant argues that one is enabled to know intermediate forms through the faculty of the imagination brought into agreement with the understanding in an act of judgment. He writes, "The imagination (as a productive cognitive faculty) is [...] very powerful in creating [...] another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it" (5, 314). The imagination is able to apprehend the intuitions, which are synthesized in an act of comprehension about which a judgment is made (20: 220). Such judgments

are enabled through the free play of the imagination and the understanding, as they are not bound by any determinate rules of cognition (5, 217).

Why do no determinate rules of cognition bind the play of the imagination and the understanding? They are unbound precisely because they are reflecting judgments aimed at creating a concept. In other words, there is no concept already in place to govern the play of the imagination and the understanding.

At this point, a further distinction between two kinds of reflecting judgments, aesthetic judgments and teleological judgments, is necessary. Aesthetic judgments are reflecting judgments that are merely subjective. They require no determinate concept of an object. In aesthetic judgment, the mere agreement of imagination and understanding suffices. Therefore, aesthetic judgments are not cognitions but feelings (5, 203). However, in teleological judgments, the agreement is judged objectively. Consequently, teleological reflecting judgments are about a natural end, the purposive intermediate forms of nature's specification (20, 221). In teleological judgments, although the creation of the concepts is not subject to any rules, it is nevertheless required that future intuitions of nature be recurrently consistent with those concepts. Thus, such judgments are cognitions (20, 221).

The agreement of the imagination and the understanding in any kind of reflecting judgment results in pleasure. Pleasure is the maintenance of agreement between the imagination and the understanding: "*Pleasure* is a *state* of the mind in which a representation is in agreement with itself, as a ground, either merely for preserving this state itself [...] or for producing its object" (20, 231). Such pleasure is brought about by the genius: "The mental powers, then, whose union (in certain relation) constitutes *genius*, are imagination and understanding" (5, 316). Genius is the power to imaginatively create concepts in reflecting judgments that bring the imagination into agreement with the understanding.

One is liable to make the mistake of thinking that pleasure is a feeling. However, Kant stresses that pleasure is a state and not a feeling. When the imagination and the understanding actively reach agreement, there is no tension between them. This results in a judgment of beauty, in the case of aesthetic judgments. The maintenance of this beauty may be called aesthetic pleasure. In the case of teleological judgments, in which there must also be an agreement with the natural object, there is astonishment (in the incompatibility of intuitions and concepts) or admiration (in the continual recurrence of their compatibility) (5, 365). The continual recurrence of the agreement with the natural object may be called intellectual pleasure. With intellectual pleasure, one is in a state in which there is no shock, no astonishment.

On what grounds can the normativity of reflecting judgments be ascertained? Is the pleasure itself proof of the normative goodness? That is, does normativity reside ultimately in the pleasure? Or is the pleasure only an *indicator* of its goodness? Kant understands the architectonic of knowledge — the fully articulated specification of the natural forms — as a regulative ideal of systematic knowledge (5, 381). The sciences must proceed on the assumption of systematicity, and the continual admiration of the agreement of concepts and intuitions grounds the adequacy of empirical scientific claims. In this way, normativity does reside ultimately in pleasure (keeping in mind Kant's specific understanding of pleasure as the maintenance of agreement between the imagination and the understanding).

With a general review of Kant's third critique in place, Peircean aesthetics may now be cast in its light.



### Peircean Aesthetics in a Kantian Light

If one hopes to make good sense of Peirce's claim that both ethics and logic rest on the normative science of aesthetics, inquiry must start elsewhere than with Peirce's brief, enigmatic, and sometimes inconsistent statements. A reasonable proposal is to begin with Schiller's *Aesthetische Briefe*, which Peirce studied with his friend Horatio Paine nearly 50 years before Peirce acknowledged aesthetics to be a serious discipline. While one cannot doubt that Schiller influenced Peirce, it is reasonable to concur with Martin Lefebvre that "it would be false to claim that [Peirce] steadfastly held to Schiller's views on esthetics (or art) for some fifty years — there seems to be no textual evidence to support such a view" (2007: 342n5).

Neither can Peircean aesthetics be a theory of art. Peirce criticizes any "silly science of Esthetics, that tries to bring us enjoyment of sensuous beauty" (1998: 460).<sup>9</sup>

Finally, understanding Peircean aesthetics in the context of Peirce's architectonic requires beginning elsewhere than with his evolutionary metaphysics or logic. Peirce's architectonic principles entail that, while aesthetics may inform both metaphysics and logic, it derives no principles from those sciences.

In contrast to these approaches, the remainder of this essay argues that Peircean aesthetics can be developed in light of Kant's third critique. Proof of this claim is forthcoming in two ways. First, there is such a significant overlap between Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and Peircean aesthetics that the latter can be substantially modeled on the former.<sup>10</sup> Second, the Kantian-Peircean account of aesthetics clarifies the received conception of Peircean aesthetics while remaining faithful to aesthetics' place in Peirce's architectonic.

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Lefebvre acknowledges this, but he maintains that "this is not to say that one cannot use Peirce's esthetics to investigate a number of issues that have been significant in the tradition of Western art theory" (330). While this is certainly true, it can shed no light whatsoever on Peircean aesthetics. To the contrary, it amounts only to the application of Peircean ideas to the theory of art. In this sense, it is a matter of practical aesthetics, one might say. Also, Lefebvre examines in what ways art is admirable, but in Kantian terms admirableness belongs to teleological judgments alone, not aesthetic judgments. If Peirce's terminology is consistent with Kant's, this explains why Peirce is not interested in the conception of aesthetics as beauty. Lefebvre quotes the Century Dictionary definition of admirableness, in which Peirce does closely relate admirableness and beauty. However, this definition was written c.1889, before Peirce had given serious thought to aesthetics as an important discipline in his architectonic. In 1903's "What Makes a Reasoning Sound?" Peirce reveals his dissatisfaction with the answer from philosophers of aesthetics that the admirable is the beautiful. Peirce is dissatisfied because such a doctrine devolves into the claim that the admirable is a mere feeling: "I cannot without strenuous proof admit that any particular quality of feeling is admirable without a reason. For it is too revolting to be believed unless one is forced to believe it" (1998: 253).

<sup>10</sup> The claim here is not that Peirce was modeling his aesthetics on Kant's but that, given Peirce's failure to fully develop aesthetics, Kant can be a source on the basis of which Peirceans may model his aesthetics. To the author's knowledge, there is no clear textual support that Peirce had Kant's third critique in mind while developing his aesthetics. However, given Peirce's great appreciation for Kant, it would be surprising if Peirce were not familiar with the central ideas of Critique of the Power of Judgment.

## Peirce and Kant

Peirce understands aesthetics to be a positive science. It contributes something to one's knowledge of the universe that no other science does. The key lies in identifying what that positive contribution is. For Peirce, aesthetics is the first science that mediates between what merely manifests itself to the ego (phenomenology or phaneroscopy) and what is real regardless of whether or not anyone thinks it (metaphysics and the special sciences). Consequently, aesthetics plays a crucial role in the systematicity of knowledge. Only with assistance from aesthetics can anyone hope to arrive at knowledge of the real.

Here is glimpsed the first significant overlap between Peircean aesthetics and Kant. For Kant, the primary principle of the power of judgment is that nature itself specifies its general laws into empirical ones in such a way that the power of judgment can know them. This affirms that nature must be such as to be amenable to one's judgments if one is to have any knowledge of nature. As Peirce notes, one would never be able to detect the regularity of nature (and hence engage in the scientific enterprise) "if there were not an affinity between our mind and Nature's" (1998: 24). Peirce would later articulate the same point in terms of *il lume naturale*: "unless man have a natural bent in accordance with nature's, he has no chance of understanding nature, at all" (444).

The case for making headway in Peircean aesthetics through Kant will be further strengthened if more connections between Peircean aesthetics and Kant can be ascertained. Two more crucial observations justify making a definite connection between Kant and Peirce. So, the first significant overlap between Kant and Peirce is the claim that nature must be amenable to the mind.

The second significant overlap is between their two theories of pleasure. In 1902's "Minute Logic" Peirce connects aesthetics and pleasure. He writes, "in order to state the question of esthetics in its purity, we should eliminate from it, not merely all consideration of effort, but all consideration of [...] our receiving pleasure, everything in short, belonging to the opposition of the *ego* and the *non-ego*" (1931-58: 2.199). However, this passage is not clear. Is Peirce affirming that aesthetics has nothing to do with secondness? Or is he affirming that the oppositional tension of secondness reaches *quietus* in aesthetics?

Peirce clarifies his conception of pleasure in 1903's Harvard *Lectures on Pragmatism*. He moves from a consideration of aesthetics to a clarification of the nature of pleasure. Peirce denounces the understanding of pleasure as a feeling, according to the category of firstness. He writes, "It is a great mistake to suppose that the phenomena of pleasure and pain are mainly phenomena of feeling" (1997: 198). Rather, he maintains that pleasure and pain are instances of secondness and the striving for a state of *quietus*: "[pleasure and pain] mainly consist [...] Pain in a Struggle to give a state of mind its *quietus*, and [...] Pleasure in a peculiar mode of consciousness allied to the consciousness of *making a generalization*, in which not Feeling, but rather Cognition, is the principal constituent" (198).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> At the position of the ellipses in this quote, the editor Patricia Ann Turrisi has inserted "in." However, the author believes the passage reads more naturally — pausing after the word "consists" and emphasizing the word "Pain" — as defining Pleasure and Pain (hence the capitalization of the terms).



Three points must be drawn out here. The first point is that Peirce identifies pleasure as a cognition. On the surface, this seems inconsistent with Kant's theory of aesthetics, which he maintains is not cognitional. While this is true of aesthetic judgments (viz. that they are not cognitions), it is not true of teleological judgments. For Kant, teleological judgments are cognitions. Specifically, they are cognitions of the intermediate forms. This fits with Peirce's conception of aesthetics. As has already been noted, Peirce distances his conception of aesthetics from the "silly" science of sensuous beauty. Rather, he identifies it as a science making a positive contribution to knowledge.

The second point is that Peirce understands this mode of consciousness to be allied to *making* a generalization. This accords with Kant's understanding of reflecting judgments as creating generals under which to subsume particulars. This act of creating a general with the aim of making objective claims about nature is a cognition. Specifically, it is a teleological reflecting judgment.

The third point is that Peirce understands pleasure to be a *state of quietus* that emerges from a struggle. This struggle must be between the ego and the non-ego, as is evident in the above "Minute Logic" quote. Aesthetics, purely, is divorced from the struggle between the ego and the non-ego. The aesthetic state is that which has reached *quietus*, or pleasure. This doctrine is akin to Kant's affirmation that pleasure is a state of continually recurring agreement between the imagination and the understanding in judgment. As noted above, in teleological reflecting judgments this also requires agreement with the natural object.

The third significant overlap between Kant and Peirce is that both identify the aesthetic state as admirable. Kant understands teleological reflecting judgments to be admirable if they are pleasurable (i.e. if there is agreement among the imagination, the understanding, and nature) and astonishing if there is no such agreement. The study of admirableness is also how Peirce describes aesthetics. In 1905, he considers replacing his science of aesthetics with the science of axiagastics, the science of the admirable. In 1911, when he rejects the silly conception of aesthetics as the science of sensuous beauty, Peirce defines aesthetics as "passionate *admiring* aspirations after an inward state that anybody may hope to attain or approach, but of whatever more specific complexion may enchant the dreamer" (1998: 460, emphasis added).

Three significant points of overlap between Peircean aesthetics and Kant's account of the power of judgment (especially of teleological reflecting judgments) have now been ascertained. First, they both aim at the systematic and architectonic articulation of the categories and forms as a comprehensive theory of nature. Second, they both aim at the agreement of the ego and the non-ego in reflecting judgments, and they identify the continual recurrence of this agreement as a state of pleasure. Third, they both identify the state of reaching this agreement as admirable. These overlaps are so significant as to merit the claim that Peircean aesthetics can be significantly modeled on Kant's critique of the power of teleological judging. In short, Peircean aesthetics is the science of the admirableness of generalizations based upon their continually recurrent agreement with the objects of nature, and the maintenance of their agreement is a state of pleasure.

The first portion of this essay's task is now complete, viz. to show that there is such a significant overlap between Peirce and Kant on aesthetics that the former can be modeled on the latter. Now, the second task must be addressed: Can this view clarify the received conception of Peircean aesthetics while remaining faithful to aesthetics' place in Peirce's architectonic?

### Clarification of the Received Conception of Peircean Aesthetics

As noted above, the received conception of Peircean aesthetics is (a) that aesthetics is the science of the *summum bonum* and (b) that the *summum bonum* is the growth of concrete reasonableness. It is now possible to evaluate these claims in a Kantian light in order to clarify the received conception of Peircean aesthetics.

If the concepts utilized in reflecting judgments were innate, then neither ethics nor logic would be necessary. Why? Ethics and logic would not be necessary because the ego would never be in a struggle with the non-ego. There would be no *quietus* to achieve. Consequently, the *summum bonum* only becomes a *summum bonum* in the context of a struggle between the ego and the non-ego. Prior to that, it is mere pleasure. (In fact, it is even questionable whether it is *recognized as* pleasure.)

This clarifies Peirce's apparently ambiguous comments that, on the one hand, ethics looks to aesthetics for the *summum bonum* but, on the other hand, the *summum bonum* is the subject of ethics. On the one hand, struggle aims to reach a state of *quietus*, in which the ego and the non-ego are no longer at odds, in which they are no longer in oscillation. That a state of *quietus* is admirable in itself is discovered aesthetics. On the other hand, this *quietus* is not achieved in aesthetics. To the contrary, only in ethics and logic is it realized that this ideal state is an *ideal* at all. That is to say, only in ethics and logic is it realized that *quietus* must be striven for, that self-control in conduct and in thought should strive for a state of *quietus*.

Peirce's claim that the dualism of the normative sciences is "softened almost to obliteration in esthetics" (379) now makes sense, for in the admirable aesthetic state the struggle between the ego and the non-ego has reached *quietus*. They are no longer in tension; they are no longer in oscillation. To the contrary, the ego and the non-ego are harmoniously interdetermined. Crucially, this insight is not grounded in any psychological propositions. Rather, it is rooted in the very nature of secondness and of judgments. If one is to have knowledge of nature, then there must be an agreement between judgments and nature. When there is no such agreement, a struggle between the ego and the non-ego ensues.

This elucidates Peirce's claim that the *summum bonum* is the growth of concrete reasonableness. The achievement of concrete reasonableness cannot be understood as a state of inactivity. Rather, concrete reasonable grows and is maintained through the harmonious indetermination of the ego and the non-ego. On the one hand, it is concrete, for there is perfect agreement between the ego and the presentation of the non-ego. On the other hand, it is reasonable, for the concepts of the ego are properly general so as to understand the non-ego. In this state, the struggle, the secondness, reaches a minimal intensity. The state of *quietus* is in stark contrast to the most nasty and brutish state in which the struggle is maximal. In this latter state, there is no understanding but merely a forceful, chaotic struggle to bring judgments into harmony with nature.

The admirableness of the state of *quietus* is not justified by any insights from evolutionary metaphysics or logic. Rather, the admirableness is justified by the very nature of secondness and its degrees of forcefulness and yieldingness in relationship to the aim of attaining knowledge. The category of secondness and its subcategories of forcefulness and yieldingness are discovered in phenomenology. The aim of attaining knowledge is essential to the normative sciences as such. Hence, the present account remains true to Peirce's architectonic and to his categories.

Finally, how aesthetics grounds the normative sciences in Peirce's architectonic is now clear. As Peirce notes, his theory is exactly contrary to hedonism (1997: 197), which locates normativity in the *feeling* of pleasure. In contrast, Peirce's conception of normativity is grounded in the struggle for a *state* of pleasure.<sup>12</sup> This is the agreement of the faculties of understanding and imagination in reaching determinate concepts by which to subsume (and hence understand) nature.

The normative sciences bridge phaneroscopy and metaphysics by bringing the struggle between the ego and the non-ego into an aesthetic state of *quietus*, or agreement. Aesthetics recognizes the state of *quietus* to be what is admirable in itself. This is determined by the very nature of judgments and the mutual interdetermination of the ego and the non-ego. The science of ethics strives to bring the ego and the non-ego into a state of *quietus* in conduct. The science of logic strives to bring the ego and the non-ego into a state of *quietus* in thought.

### Three Objections Considered

Three objections may be raised against this account of Peircean aesthetics. First, what of the insane man who seamlessly incorporates his experiences with his insanity? In this case, the struggle between the ego and the non-ego is minimal, but one would not want to concede that this person has reached an admirable state.

This is, indeed, a difficult objection. However, it can be met by maintaining that a person can lack sensitivity to the struggle between the ego and the non-ego. What this means is that even though the non-ego resists the ego, the ego is so turned in upon itself, so enveloped in itself, that it is insensitive to the non-ego's forcefulness. Indeed, this seems to be what happens in cases of insanity, wherein no fact can penetrate the fortress into which the ego has taken refuge. Consequently, one does not even know what to say to the insane man because he is, on the whole, unreachable. Precisely because of his insensitivity, he is unable to make the transition from what is apparent to him to what is the case apart from him. Hence, the question of normativity never even arises for him.

The second objection is to maintain that the *feeling* of pleasure must have something to do with aesthetics. Indeed, is not pleasure *by definition* a feeling?

In reply, the feeling is, indeed, consequent on reaching a state of *quietus*. However, the feeling is only an epiphenomenon, a symptom, or an accompaniment of the achievement of *quietus*. Conceivably, one could reach a state of *quietus* (i.e. a state in which the struggle between the ego and the non-ego is minimal) but this state not be accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. On the Peircean account, the person would still be in a pleasurable state, even if he does not feel the pleasure. The feeling of pleasure is the icing on the cake — it is an indicator that one has reached a state of *quietus*. However, the pleasure itself is the state in which *quietus* is reached. It is this state that grounds normativity, not the feeling that accompanies reaching this state.

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<sup>12</sup> Peirce is clear that the feelings of pain and pleasure are mere accompaniments, or "symptoms," of the activity between the ego and the non-ego (1998: 379).

Finally, it may be objected that this position endorses subjectivism and makes the success of inquiry to consist in whatsoever pleases the subject. However, it should now be clear that this objection does not succeed. Were the concepts of reflecting judgments not adequate to nature — i.e. if nature were not specified according to the ego's created concepts — then there would be no agreement between the ego and the non-ego and a struggle would ensue. Hence, the achievement of *quietus* depends as much on the non-ego as it does on the ego.<sup>13</sup>

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Book description. The Critique of the Power of Judgment (a more accurate rendition of what has hitherto been translated as the Critique of Judgment) is the third of Kant's great critiques following the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Practical Reason. This translation of Kant's masterpiece follows the principles and high standards of all other volumes in The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. This volume, first published in 2000, includes: the indispensable first draft of Kant's introduction to the work; an English edition notes to the many differences The Pleasures of Goodness: Peircean Aesthetics in Light of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment. Richard Kenneth Atkins. *Cognitio* 9 (1):13--25 (2008). Authors. Richard Kenneth Atkins. Boston College. Abstract. The Critique of Judgment (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*), also translated as the Critique of the Power of Judgment, is a 1790 book by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Sometimes referred to as the "third critique," the Critique of Judgment follows the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and the Critique of Practical Reason (1788). Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment is the third critique in Kant's Critical project begun in the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Practical Reason



Kant's Aesthetics. The Judgment of the Beautiful. Kant's early work was in the tradition (although not dogmatically even then) of the great German rationalist philosopher Leibniz, and especially his follower Wolff. But by the 1760s, he was increasingly admiring Leibniz's great rival Newton, and was coming under the additional influences of the empiricist skepticism of Hume and the ethical and political thought of Rousseau. The basic, explicit purpose of Kant's Critique of Judgment is to investigate whether the "power" (also translated as "faculty" and we will use the latter here) of judgment provides itself with an a priori principle. The Pleasures of Goodness: Peircean Aesthetics in Light of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment. Richard Kenneth Atkins. *Cognition* 9 (1):13--25 (2008). Authors. Richard Kenneth Atkins. Boston College. Abstract.