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Title: Intellectual Gravity and Elective Attractions: The Provenance of Peirce's Categories in Friedrich von Schiller
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Abstract: The paper's methodological prolegomena eschews narrow-gauge nominalistic approaches to Peirce in favor of his own synoptic (synechistic-synergistic) style of constructing his categorial architectonic in dialogue with the major ideas in the history of philosophy. As a "first" case in point, this paper focuses upon the provenance of and convergence with Friedrich von Schiller's Aesthetic Letters in Peirce's earliest Tuism and in his remembrance of Schiller in his mature phase. In-depth exegesis reveals that Schiller's classic contains the seeds of Peirce's trichotomic categorization of experience in three confluent strands of his developing system: 1) his phenomenological category of Firstness—corresponding to Schiller's sense of "pure appearance" in the Spieltrieb, as its plays out in Peirce's prioritizing of abductive inference in inquiry and in the tychastic component of his cosmological metaphysics; 2) Esthetics as the "first" of the Normative Sciences; and, 3) the concept of Pure Play as "Musement" in his 'A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God' (1908) and in 'An Essay toward Improving Our Reasoning in Security and in Uberty' (1913).
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