

Why are Peirce's three categories all necessary?

*Firstness* is necessary in order to understand absoluteness or independence, whether that of abstracts, ordinary as well as extraordinary, or that of concretes functioning objectively.

*Secondness* is necessary in order to understand the relativity or dependence of concretes in one of its two aspects—namely, in their relation to the past, in which they involve the actuality of their predecessor concretes.

*Thirdness* is necessary in order to understand both the relativity or dependence of concretes in the other of its two aspects—namely, in their relation to the future, in which they involve, indeed, *are*, the potentiality of their successor concretes—and the relativity or dependence of ordinary, in distinction from extraordinary, abstracts.

Explanation:

1. If concretes are, in their way, absolute or independent as well as relative or dependent, ordinary abstracts, in contrast with extraordinary ones, are, in their way, relative or dependent as well as absolute or independent.

2. They are relative or dependent because they are related to or dependent upon the contingent. This they are because the intensional classes of concretes in which they, as abstracts, must somehow be embodied or included are not nonempty necessarily, but contingently. Extraordinary abstracts, by contrast, are not thus relative or dependent because the intensional classes of concretes in which they must somehow be embodied or included are not nonempty contingently, but necessarily.

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