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The use of musement in C. S. Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God".

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UMI
THE USE OF MUSEMENT IN C. S. PEIRCE'S
"A NEGLECTED ARGUMENT FOR THE REALITY OF GOD"

by

Julie Irma La France

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1984

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ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPT OF MUSEMENT IN PEIRCE'S
"A NEGLECTED ARGUMENT FOR THE REALITY OF GOD"

by
Julie Irma La France

This thesis is a critique of "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," a paper written in 1908. Key focus is on Peirce's concept of Musement and its part in reaching the conclusion "God is Real." Peirce calls this method of reasoning, from the wonders of the Universes to the cause of these wonders (God), Retroduction, sometimes called Abduction or the Hypothetical. Retroduction is the process of reasoning from effect to cause. This thesis shows how this reasoning method does not accomplish what Peirce claims it can and that it obscures much of what is truly provocative and interesting.
DEDICATION

This one is for me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Harry A. Nielsen, My Peirce mentor and provider of the best analogies and case examples ever.
Thanks to Mary Lou Byng for taking care of me from the first day of school to the bitter end.
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Hugs to my trusty mother/courier.
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INTRODUCTION

There exist orchids which resemble houseflies (Trichoceros), plants which entrap and eat insects, and rocks which look like gold. There are shells which catch one's eye and get carefully taken home in one's pocket, and feathers which fascinate and get stuck in one's hat. These "fascinators," or items which produce wonderment, awe and the desire to take them home, are the stuff on which Charles Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" is founded. If we take a closer look at the wonders and intricacies of the universe, claims Peirce, we cannot help but conclude that God is Real.

There is a certain kind of orchid which bears a striking resemblance to a common housefly. There is a long furry stem and on the end of the stem is the imposter, that is, the bud which looks like and can be easily mistaken for a fly. Upon seeing this, my reaction was, "Amazing! What an incredible likeness!" There are certain rocks that one can find by the seashore which are pink but have tiny speckles of what looks like gold imbedded in them. Whenever I find a rock such as this, I pick it up, hold it in my hand for a long time, and sometimes take it home. It's not every day that we come across something like the fly/orchid which

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makes us think and wonder about its origin or its purpose or even holds our attention at all. We're not inclined to pick up just any item and take it home with us either. It has to be somehow special. This is the sort of case I think Peirce had in mind when he conceived of and wrote "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God." It is these cases which produce wonderment, or what Peirce calls the process of Musement, that Peirce takes as being the starting point from which one eventually, and inevitably, lands at the conclusion that "God is Real." Moreover, Peirce thought that once that conclusion is reached, one could not possibly think otherwise or be at all doubtful of the conclusion. There is something inviting about Peirce's use of cases which lead us to the conclusion that something or someone far greater than ourselves had to have a hand in the design and/or creation of things. As we look deeper into Peirce's reasoning, though, we find a number of problems.

When I happen upon an extraordinary phenomenon like the orchid, my thoughts can take the form "I suspect that beauty, symmetry, and exquisite detail of this orchid are no accident. I suspect mentality behind them of a steady kind." It is this sort of thinking which Peirce would classify as hypothetical. In this particular case, Peirce envisions us as hypothesizing someone or something behind the scenes of our special item - the orchid or the rock. Now, once I have come to the point of articulating, however vaguely, my hypothesis, I then move into the
deductive stage of the argument. This runs something like this: "I suspect the beauty, symmetry, et al., of the orchid to be no accident and there is a mentality lurking somewhere behind the scenes and, if this is the case, I should expect to find the same attention to detail in other living forms." This is my deductive stage. I've seen so far that there is a variety of forms, rocks, etc., which do seem to have this same attention to detail. I can pick up an assortment of these items and find the same apparent attention and so, according to Peirce, I should conclude that the hypothesis is indeed correct, just as I suspected.

The aim of this thesis is to critically review "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" with key focus on Peirce's use of the concept of Musement and its parts in reaching the conclusion "God is Real." Peirce refers to the method of reasoning, from the wonders of the universe to the cause of these wonders, namely God, as Retroduction, sometimes called Abduction or the Hypothetical. Retroduction is the process of reasoning from effect to cause. My intention is to show that this reasoning method does not accomplish what Peirce claims. More importantly, Peirce's emphasis on Retroduction misses a very important aspect of the N.A. Peirce's emphasis on Retroduction stresses the inferential aspects of the N.A. and Musement, which overshadows what I think are the more fruitful and provocative aspects of Musement, that is, the notion of appreciation. Musement allows us to take in the marvelous in the universe and
appreciate it. The keynote of Musement is appreciation. Inference, and Peirce's emphasis on it, masks the more provocative aspects which Musement offers and, it ultimately, does not belong.

It seems a shame that Peirce spent so much time expounding on the relationship of Musement with inference because I think the more inspirational and fresh part of the N.A. is Musement. Musement is an act in which almost anyone can, and probably has, participated. Introspection and wonderment about the marvelous in nature and its origins are not foreign ideas for most people. I think that because Peirce chose to emphasize the inferential aspect of Musement instead of the "appreciative" aspect, the essay itself was overlooked and few people have ventured to write about the N.A. In my search for secondary reading about the N.A., I was sorely disappointed, and a bit worried, about the fact that so little has been written about the N.A. Moreover, the little that has been written concentrates solely on aspects such as Retroduction, and the "inferential side" of the essay. Few authors dealt with what I think is the meatier and more stimulating side of the essay. Hence, amidst essays and books centered on the N.A., I want to concentrate on the N.A.'s charming and thought-provoking concepts, especially Musement. If I could have my way, I would discard much of the N.A., which is shrouded with excessive definitions and overpowering logical underpinnings, and save Musement and all that allows me to say in
response to it, "Yes, Peirce, that's exactly right. I do think about the wonders of nature. I do muse!"

Now we see how Peirce's N.A. works in one of its most skeletal and more charming forms. As plausible and charming as this argument appears at first glance, one cannot ignore the serious problems which lurk below the surface. For one thing, this argument seems only to work for the exceptional cases which involve very special items found in our universe. Also, although we are able to find the same attention to detail in different forms, that is, rocks, shells and the like, we don't all see the same things. I may not be inspired or spurred to hypothesize by a shell that inspires someone else. Yet, we're all supposed to reach the same conclusion, "God is Real." Peirce's hypothesized God appears to be the Christian God. What happens if I'm not a Christian? Does that exclude me from Musement or will Musement convert me? Some natural phenomena are defective. Some flowers don't bloom properly, for example. What does that say about the creator or mentality behind the creation? Fallibility? Yet another problem is the way Peirce treats his method of reasoning that "God is Real" as if it were a conventional form of reasoning such as deduction or induction.

These are just a few of the questions and problems we'll be tackling as we move into our investigation of Charles S. Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God."
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER I
The Essay Itself

A. Definitions

"A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" begins with a string of definitions for terms such as "Real," "Argument," and "Actuality." Peirce capitalizes these and certain other words throughout the essay when they are used a "terms defined," so that when one comes across a capitalized term in the text, one need only plug in the proper definition which Peirce has provided. In the long run, the extensive word-defining doesn't seem to be particularly helpful.

Peirce does make a distinction between the words "Real" and "Existent" which seems to be a more worthwhile endeavor than his other meticulous definitions. The reasons this distinction is somewhat noteworthy is because it explains why Peirce entitled his essay, "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" as opposed to "A Neglected Argument for the Existence of God." The main thrust of this distinction, in condensed form, runs like this: Peirce prefers the term Reality because he believes it signifies a more direct connection of God to the world than does the term Existence. In other words, Peirce prefers "God is Real" to "God is Existent" because, he claims, statements
about being lack meaning insofar as they have no conceivable effects. For Peirce, conceivable effects are part of what confer being on anything.

In Peirce's view, philosophy should investigate general problems capable of being studied by scientific methods. Problems about existence, according to Peirce, don't fit this description. Another reason that Peirce is reluctant to use the term "existence" in relation to God is because he understands existence as "... the domain of the actions and reactions among finite things in a system, and God is not an object among others in this domain."¹ "Reality" is a better term because he thinks of Reality as "... something having characteristics not dependent for their tenure on anyone's actually thinking them; reality is thus wider than the actual or existence and embraces both the possible and the necessary as well."² There will be a more in-depth look at this distinction as the thesis proceeds.

Peirce writes that if God "Really be," then there should also exist some sort of argument for God's Reality which would be apparent to everyone.³ This argument, then, should have its conclusion "not as a proposition of metaphysical theology" but, rather, as a code of sorts which would be directly applicable to how an individual conducts his or her life.⁴ Peirce calls this argument the "Neglected Argument" or "N.A.", neglected by many serious thinkers when they talk about God. Peirce is troubled by
theologians because he thinks that they ignore the Neglected Argument's influence and importance. They ignore it, he thinks, because they treat it as a mere "Argumentation" or an argument "proceeding upon definitely formulated premises" due to their being too caught up in "current notions of logic."5 "The distinction has its roots in his conception of the relation between instinctive and explicit reasoning by men. He deplores the fact that few theologians mention this distinction and that most of them recognize no other arguments than argumentations."6 They aren't giving the N.A. a fair chance because they are unwilling to accept reasonings which do not fall under the strict auspices of formal logic. Peirce thinks "the problem with religiously trained thinkers is that they understand everything in terms of blacks and whites, in terms of two categories; they recognize no gray areas, and set themselves against the idea of growth."7

Another notion which must be made clear before proceeding deeper into Peirce's essay itself is his understanding of "what there is." Throughout the essay, Peirce refers to God as both creator and coordinator of the three Universes of Experience. These three Universes represent what Peirce perceives and understands to be the three dimensions of "what there is." The first dimension, or Firstness, is the Universe of Ideas or possibilities which consist in their capability of being thought. "The simplest part of something which appears is its firstness.
It is an appearance regardless of past or future. It is instantaneously experienced. Non-conceptual, independent of thought. It is a quality of feeling." The second dimension, or Secondness, is the Universe of the brute actuality of things and facts manifest in action and reaction. Secondness contains an "element of struggle" and "unity of action." "These subjects have being in themselves as firsts, and being in connection with each other: secondness includes firstness." An example of Secondness might be something like the shock of surprise, because Secondness is also "non-mediated and instantaneous." The third dimension, or Thirdness, is the Universe of Signs or active powers establishing connections between things in one Universe and especially between the members of different Universes. Its members are ". . . phenomena which appear to be mediated" and ". . . present to consciousness whenever, for example, someone desires something." Thirdness is ". . . a medium between a Second and a First." A third seeks to attach a quality [a first] to a particular reaction thing [a second]." "The Reality of the universe, its thirdness, is part of the phenomena that is presented as APPEARANCE" because the appearance of reality is the firstness of thirdness.

With the introduction of this very novel way of conceiving "what there is," we see that Peirce is rejecting the model case or paradigm of a good deal of modern empiricism and nominalism. Peirce could not conceive that
either of these schools of thought could ever by themselves explain "what there is" nor could these two schools be combined in a joint effort to explain "what there is." Therefore, he rejected them both. Peirce rejected empiricism because it claimed a domain of given facts, which Peirce didn't see as feasible, and he rejected nominalism because it claimed a possession of a set of concepts and logical forms. Joining these two schools together in any harmonious fashion seemed impossible because they are such polar opposites. Peirce saw this opposition between schools, this polarity, as being inadequate to explain the occurrence of either experience or knowledge of "what there is." But, even closer to Peirce's model of "what there is," Peirce saw that this dyadic paradigm, this inability to come to any common agreement, left out completely the third Universe or what he calls the reality of signs of indicators which show "... intelligible relations between our thought and the world which are already manifest in the experience and knowledge we actually possess."¹⁴ For Peirce, what has been neglected by theologians, empiricists, nominalists and almost everyone else who has ever thought about "what there is" is the idea that there are all sorts of phenomena in our world to show us "what there is." As we go along here, I think it will become clearer what Peirce thinks "there is" and how he comes to his conclusion.
B. Pure Play and Musement

Peirce introduces the terms "Pure Play" and "Musement," and these play an important part in the Neglected Argument. "Pure Play," Peirce defines, as an occupation of the mind which requires the "casting aside of all serious purpose" for a few minutes a day. The mind is doing something, just not anything really serious. Pure Play has no rules, so it is rather like having one's mind wander with no specific purpose or intentions. The thinking process during Pure Play isn't going to lead one to anything specific because it is more like a condition, an aimless condition, than an activity such as solving a problem. However, Peirce goes on to say that Pure Play can take the form of "considering some wonder in one of the Universes, or some connection between two of the three, with speculation concerning its cause." Now, it seems to me that speculation and consideration are serious types of thought, not just letting the mind wander or daydream. Peirce doesn't seem to notice this discrepancy. Peirce gives this more serious type of daydreaming a name, Musement. Musement is an offshoot of Pure Play; that is, it is a specific kind of Pure Play which gets a specific name.

Peirce claims that Musement will eventually lead to the Neglected Argument, hence it becomes apparent that this offshoot of Pure Play really can lead somewhere. Musement isn't just daydreaming or letting one's mind wander. Musement seems to be a more sophisticated and higher-level
thought process than mere Pure Play. William H. Davis says,"Peirce elaborates on musement, saying that he does not mean by it what we would call reverie -- an aimless, imbecilic wandering of the mind. But rather a more or less careful thought, lacking only a determined direction or purpose. Peirce likens it to play where one has a lively exercise of one's powers. Reverie doesn't have enough discipline."\(^7\)

Musement is an opening up of the mind and heart of a person to some wonder in one of the Universes or the meditation of the cause of some relation between any two Universes. For Peirce, "Musement (is) a free method of free reflection . . . an endeavor to avoid prejudice at the outset of a question and to let as many aspects of the question as possible play on the mind of the seeker. The aim is in part to break through the half-conscious censorship that the mind exercises and to contemplate reality with fresh and unprejudiced wonder."\(^8\) Musement is wonder pure and simple, looking at wonders and wondering who's to be thanked! This ultimately leads to the idea of God as creator of the universes. "Musement is free and receptive to what is before us and is guided by the purpose of setting aside all serious and specific purpose so as to be given over to wonder and speculation 'on the whole.'"\(^9\)

Like Pure Play, it is my impression, Musement lies somewhere in between letting one's mind wander and concentrated thought. It is a rather difficult state of mind to imagine. Peirce tells us that Musement, be it an
activity or a state of mind, is prompted by some phenomenon, some tangible object. This "something" spurs one into the play of Musement. It isn't something planned. An example of how this might be something like this: We are hit with an impression, such as the beauty of a feather; the impression then turns our thoughts to "attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into lively give and take of communion between self and self." Hence, we move from a state of supposed passive thought to a state of fairly sophisticated dialectic with ourselves. It is a pretty complicated scheme which Peirce has set before us.

Now we are at the point of lively musing. This has a rather jolly sound to it; nothing too serious, nothing too specialized. In fact, Peirce doesn't want one to get too specialized in fear that "Play" will get converted into scientific study. Hence, one is in a rather strange state, an abyss between daydreaming and serious study. From here, one moves higher up the ladder of thought, each rung representing a more sophisticated thought process. If one goes too far up the ladder, Peirce warns, one gets into scientific study and that "cannot be pursued at odd half hours." There is, then, a rather tenuous border which one cannot cross if one intends to remain a proper Muser. At the same time, Peirce encourages the use of all sorts of reasoning in Musement just as long as one doesn't get into any really serious reasoning. Again, how much is too much?
Isn't "just a little" too much to keep us in the musement league? It is as if he wants just enough reason to keep from "imbecilic wandering of the mind" but not enough to make one too serious. Peirce reminds us that "... the Player should bear in mind that the higher weapons on the arsenal of thought aren't playthings but edge tools."22 Granted, but at the same time, Peirce tells us that one should use logical analysis in Musement. This seems like a contradiction at first, but I'm not sure it is. I suspect what Peirce is getting at is that once Musement lands us on the hypothesis of God's reality, we can then, and only then, apply the edge-tools.

Peirce grants that people have varied ways of thinking and so it is impossible to tell in what direction one's thought might go in a particular situation. This seems to be a bit of a contradiction to his earlier statements which claim that once one is struck by a particular phenomenon or impression, and musement starts, a whole series of other thoughts will follow leading us all ultimately to the hypothesis of God's Reality. Despite his description of this process he writes, "a brain endowed with automatic control, as a man's indirectly is, is so naturally and rightly interested in its own faculties that some psychological and semi-psychological question would doubtless get touched ..." during the course of Musement."23 I cannot help but wonder where Peirce gets this sort of information. He states so matter-of-factly
that one's mind works in a particular way or that humans do certain things as an automatic response to being human, that I cannot help but wonder how he came to such bold conclusions. The mention of "automatic control" implies that we as human beings have a built-in interest in our faculties about which we can hardly help wondering. Peirce, in fact, does discuss the matter of human beings interested in their own faculties in one of his 1868 papers which we will look into later.

Peirce presents the above "observations" and "conclusions" about a person's musing from what he calls a psychological perpective. He writes, "psychological speculations will naturally lead one to musing upon metaphysical problems proper, good exercise for a mind with a turn for exact thought . . . ."24 This is a rather strange comment again because he is talking about "exact thought" in the same sentence with Musement, and the two supposedly don't mix. This is also strange in that it sounds like one must be a trained thinker, not a plain old layperson, to be able to be a successful Muser. Could Peirce really have intended to be so discriminatory?

C. Musement to the Hypothetical

Peirce maintains that in our musings we will inevitably end up at a hypothesis of God's Reality. He says that sooner or later the "idea of God's Reality will . . . be found an attractive fancy which the Muser will develop in
various ways." The more one muses about the idea of God's Reality, the more the rest of one's self and one's mind will respond to the hypothesis. One form into which this hypothesis develops, claims Peirce, is an ideal for life. It is interesting that Peirce should call the idea of God's Reality an "attractive fancy" because he gives this "fancy" a tremendous amount of power, the power to shape one's life. This is yet another problem manifest in the N.A. which will be treated more deeply later.

"The hypothesis of God is a peculiar one," says Peirce, and I am inclined to agree with him. He says that it is peculiar because "it supposes an infinitely incomprehensible object, although every hypothesis, as such, supposes its object to be truly conceived in the hypothesis." It is peculiar also because the hypothesis must be conceived as "vague yet as true so far as it is definite, and as continually tending to define itself more and more, and without limit." Here again we need the word "peculiar" because we are stuck in the position of claiming that the Universes are definite, yet Peirce claims that these features cannot be attributed to God. However, he claims at the same time that it will, according to the hypothesis, be less false to speak (of God as being definite) than to represent God as vague. His reasoning behind this is rather thin. I suspect that he thinks that it is better to think of God as definite because of his concept of God and his own personal experience with Musement. God has to have some
sort of definition, though vague, so that his hypothesis can pass the tests which other hypotheses pass. We'll find out later that this doesn't work, but for now, let's take a look at a model case of Musement to see how Musement is supposed to work and whether or not it does.

An example of the process of coming to the conclusion "God is Real," or musing to the hypothesis of God, might to like this. I am on a quiet, leisurely stroll in the foothills of the Black Forest in West Germany on a bright yet brisk Fall day. My mind is miles away from daily pressures, school work, deadlines, and the like, and I am soaking in the magnificent scenery. The leaves have begun to turn colors, the sky is a vibrant cadet blue and there is a slight sparkle to everything because there has been a touch of frost. As I am walking, I spy a golden feather which hasn't been ravaged by the weather or covered by the falling leaves. It is as if the feather was left there especially for me to find. Now, the impression that the feather has on me is supposed to turn into attentive observation. This seems to make sense to the extent that when I pick up the feather, I might look at it very closely, noticing how evenly the barbs line up along the shaft, how vibrant the colors are, or how soft it is. This observation proceeds to musing. This might go something like this: I begin to wonder how the bird lost its feather, what kind of bird it belonged to, and whether or not I should keep this little tidbit of nature. This doesn't seem unreasonable.
because it seems that this sort of conversation with oneself happens with some regularity, but Peirce thinks that from this point we should arrive at the hypothesis of God. This is where the issue gets fuzzy.

I may indeed, during my musing and speculation, begin thinking about God. I might say to myself, for example, "This feather is so exquisite that it is an obvious instance of God's fabulous craftsmanship. Only God could be responsible for this beauty, this excellence!" This is exactly what Peirce says will happen and it is in fact a feasible line of thought and speculation, but one which, it seems to me, need not flow from the initial item of speculation. For example, I may be charmed by a feather I find and never think more of it than that I like the color of it. God may never occur to me. I might not get that contemplative. There is no deduction here. There seems to be no compelling reason to attribute the beauty and excellence of the feather to God, though I might feel so compelled if I had a pre-established concept of God as Creator. Then I might come to think about God, but hardly likely as a first time discovery of God, and definitely not as an inevitable conclusion from my observations. In the Neglected Argument, Peirce goes on as if his personal background had nothing to do with his landing on the hypothesis "God is Real." Peirce starts out with the concept of God as Creator and his argument is shaped around this. Take away his Christian background and the path from
the object of observation to his hypothesis is no longer so smooth.

In support of my claim that the compellingness of the hypothesis and the hypothesis itself go out the window if the preconception of "God as Creator" is denied, more evidence comes into play if we take yet another look at Musement. In the aforementioned example of Musement, a golden feather was what spurred one into Musement. This need not be the case though. In fact, although X might be charmed by a feather, Y may get the same feeling from a smooth gray rock or an unbroken sand dollar. In either case, the way Peirce has everything set up, X and Y both end up with the hypothesis of God. Through different phenomena, then, one can come up with the hypothesis of God. If this is the case, then it should follow that each person winds up with a "sublime mentality" for all, one which changes with the new 1984 production of Musement-inducers. The reasons that this doesn't happen is because Peirce has already established a particular God as the end product of Musement. In other words, "God as Creator" comes first and then the arguments for "God as Creator" follow. With the concept of the Christian God being the pre-established conclusion to his argument, one has no choice if one follows the rules of reasoning back to the cause (yet another important concept in the N.A. to be seen soon), but to come to this conclusion. The self-designed or changing God cannot be a conclusion unless one eliminates Peirce's "God
the Creator" which, incidentally, seems to be a Christian God. It appears that both Peirce's concept of God and his way of setting up his argument by reasoning back to the cause, are the essential points of the N.A. As we study this backward reasoning, called both Retroduction and Abduction, we will see even better what an odd phenomenon it is and how it fits into this whole scheme.

Peirce maintains, going on his personal experience and friends' experiences with Musement, that anyone who is able to control his or her attention "as to perform a little exact thinking" will come to the conclusion that any individual who "considers the three universes in light of the hypothesis of God's Reality," and continues to reflect "with scientific singleness of heart" may get to the point of actually "loving and adoring" a strictly hypothetical God. Consideration of something in light of the hypothesis of God seems to me to be the equivalent of considering anything while, simultaneously being a believer in God. To look at it in another way: A. "I believe in God;" and B. "I think this yellow feather is extraordinarily detailed." When laid out in this fashion, A and B seem to be almost completely exclusive of each other or, at least, not of the same sort. Thus far, then, we start out believing in God's Reality and we perceive the phenomena which we find on our mental travels as "flags" or "beacons" and these call our attention to God's Reality or remind us of it. This is where, I think, the tenuous
connection between A and B comes in. This is Retroduction, or reasoning from effect to cause. The effects are the flowers and feathers found along our ways, and the cause of these effects is God. If I believe, in the first place, that God is "causer" of such things as feathers and the like, just reversing the order, going from effect to cause, is unproblematic. What is problematic is i) if one doesn't believe in God as "causer" to start with, the "effects" will not lead to God; and ii) if one does believe in God, one isn't necessarily going to be drawn to the idea of God as Causer when one finds an interesting feather.

The first problem, that of a non-believer standing-in in the believer's part of the scheme, poses some interesting questions. For example, would a non-believer even be able to Muse if he or she couldn't carry it through to the conclusion that God is Real? Isn't coming to this particular conclusion essential for properly done Musing? Yes. Unless one believes in God from the start, musement doesn't work. What sort of proof or test is that which only allows persons with a particular perception to use it? That, though, sounds as if Musement is a tool to be used, although Peirce distinctly expresses that Musement is the act of letting one's mind wander. One's mind just does a sort of automatic shift from thoughtlessness to reveling in the conception of God's Reality. Rather tricky mental maneuvering.
The person who has a well-formed conception of God has a different story. Let's look at a particular case. Barbara believes in God and is a Christian, just as Peirce does and is. Barbara is relaxing, watching the moon rise in the sky and the stars begin to appear. She is awestruck by this whole scene. At this point, it seems to me that Barbara could proceed in a couple of different directions. Barbara might indeed say to herself, "This is absolutely beautiful. God most certainly had a hand in all of this glory." This, I think, is a perfectly feasible and realistic response for a believer in God. This, though, isn't the only feasible and realistic response someone like Barbara might have. She might, in fact, begin thinking about the wonders of the solar system and how it works. She might think about the astronauts who have been to the moon and travelled through the stars. Yet another response might be, "How lovely! It's such a pleasure to come home at the end of the day and see the peaceful-looking skies." These are but three reactions, none of which is equivalent to "God is Real." Does this mean that Barbara hasn't really been Musing or, perhaps, that she was Musing, but somehow incorrectly? I suspect that Barbara just might not have been in the right mood for thinking about God. Something just wasn't right to lead her to thinking about God. The problem then lies with Peirce insisting that the road from musement always ends with God. One can muse about just
about anything, and it doesn't necessarily lead to any conclusions at all!

According to Peirce, it's inevitable that Barbara conclude that God is Real. One problem with this is that Barbara already believes that God is Real. Thus, to reach this conclusion again would be nothing new. If she does come to the conclusion again, that God is Real, perhaps she is just reaffirming her faith. There's nothing wrong with that. What is wrong is that Peirce is insistent that one cannot help but reach that conclusion, that God is Real, whether it be for the first time or the thirtieth.

What can the hypothesis "God is Real" do for me? What does this hypothesis have to offer? Can any clear experiential consequences be deduced from the hypothesis "God is Real?" These questions prompt Peirce to bring in the notion of vagueness. Peirce says that "Logicians have been at fault in giving Vagueness the go-by, so far as not even to analyze it."^29 Peirce writes, "By all odds, the most distinctive character of the Critical Common-sensist, . . . lies in his insistence that the acritically indubitable is invariably vague."^30 This is another way to say that all of our most fundamental and indubitable ideas are vague and, claims Peirce, the moment we try to state them in definite terms, we are likely to misstate them and fall prey to error and contradiction. Consistent with this, "Peirce regarded the idea of God . . . as necessarily vague and, hence, found definite theologies to be suspect."
On the other hand, he (Peirce) thought that atheists were in reality belying their own subconscious belief through failure to distinguish between the vague context of this belief and the too definite propositions of whatever theology they were acquainted with."31 Peirce just could not bear the thought that someone claimed non-belief in God. No matter why the notion of vagueness has been brought in the picture, or has been ignored, it is still rather mysterious how one is to get from musing about the beauty of a feather to arriving at the conclusion that God is Real, to relating it all to one's everyday experiences. We are entering the realm of religion here, but not everyone is immersed in this realm. This is where the problem lies.

According to Peirce, God's Reality commands an enormous influence "over the whole conduct of life of its believers."32 How is it that the hypothesis of God's Reality has the power to affect my life and my day-to-day experiences? I do not see how the hypothesis "God is Real" can affect my life in one way or another unless, previous to musement, God and religion already had an influence on my life. To start out as a non-believer in God and then to Muse to the Hypothesis that God is Real sees unlikely enough, but them to assume that this hypothesized God is going to have any influence over the Muser's life seems totally preposterous. It's like starting out with a completely blank slate and coming up with from that, a
completely new way of carrying on with one's life. The hypothesis lacks substance.

The God in the hypothesis "God is Real," for Peirce, is the Christian God. Why a Christian God? Why Christianity at all? The only way Christianity could have entered this scenario at all is if Peirce had begun with the Christian God. In other words, the only way the God in "God is Real" could come out being a Christian God is if Peirce had a well-formed conception of Him before he ever began to Muse. Musement could realistically bring one to the hypothesis that there is some sort of creative power present in the universe which has the power to create such things as feathers and rocks; some sort of creative causer of effects. What sort of meaning would a force such as this have for my life? It might contain a very important meaning or influence for us, but it would be one very different than what we think of when we think of a Christian God and all that goes along with being a believer in God.

In the N.A., Peirce embarks on a discussion of the Neglected Argument's logicality. He outlines the different stages of well-conducted and complete inquiries, shows where the logical validity of the reasoning (which characterizes each of the main stages of inquiry) lies, and points out where the N.A. fits in a complete inquiry into the Reality of God. The latter endeavor is divided into two parts: How the N.A. should fit that place and what its logical place is. "Every inquiry whatsoever takes rise in the
observation, in one or another of the three Universes, of some surprising phenomenon, some experience which either disappoints an expectation, or breaks in upon some habit of expectation of the inquiritus; and each apparent exception to this rule only confirms it."33 "The inquiry begins with pondering these phenomena in all their aspects, in search of some point of view whence the wonder shall be resolved."34 Eventually, the inquirer comes up with what he or she thinks is plausible, that which he or she thinks is a possible explanation. For Peirce, "plausibility" can range in degrees, from the rather ho-hum declaration that something might be an answer, to the "uncontrollable inclination to believe."35 What happens in the mind of the inquirer between the moment of the first sighting of the phenomenon and the acceptance of the hypothesis is quite a variety of mental contortions, maintains Peirce. The investigating, the searching, the comparing, etc., are all parts of this mental process of inquiry which leads the inquirer to estimate the Plausibility of the hypothesis. "Plausibility . . . has to do with the strength with which the hypothesis forces itself upon the inquirer. It doesn't have anything to do with the confirmation or the probability of a hypothesis."36 For Peirce, the Plausibility here is the supposed force or power which the hypothesis seems to possess in itself. The hypothesis is so plausible that one cannot help but choose it. This is the First State of
Inquiry, or Retroduction, also known as Abduction or the Hypothetical.

Peirce claims, "weight is added to the plausibility of the hypothesis, because it is both instinctive and anthropomorphic." Peirce claims that the reason that scientists are successful in their pursuits is because there is some sort of natural affinity between human nature and the nature of the universe. That scientists and reasoners continue to gain knowledge is, for Peirce, great evidence in support of this supposed affinity. This is an interesting move, but I don't know if it can really stand as evidence for his claims. It is because of all this that Peirce claims that an anthropomorphic and instinctive hypothesis concerning the universe is closer to the truth than others; it is more plausible. "In Peirce's mind, the character of the hypothesis of God was very important in considering its correctness; its character as something instinctive and anthropomorphic lends great support to the notion that it is correct." Hence, the stronger the feeling, the more plausible the hypothesis.

Peirce says that "retroduction does not afford security. The hypothesis must be tested." Peirce holds, though, for testing to really qualify as being logically valid, it must begin in a different way than those
of Retroduction. This is the catch. It calls for investigation of the hypothesis itself, as opposed to the investigation of the phenomenon, which Retroduction calls for. Testing requires "a muster of all sorts of conditional experiential consequences which would follow from its truth." This sort of reasoning is the Second Stage of Inquiry, or Deduction. Peirce divided Deduction into two sections. The first step is to make the hypothesis as lucid and distinct as is possible. Whereas Retroduction can go wrong due to lack of experiential consequences, Deduction cannot. Deduction must move in a straight and restricted path to reach a true conclusion. All one must do is follow particular steps which will lead, eventually, to the right conclusion. From Deduction, or the act of "collecting consequents of the hypothesis" we are led to Peirce's Third Stage of Inquiry. The question which arises at this stage, and which will be investigated more closely later, is whether one can make legitimate deductions from the statement, "God is Real." Whether we can or cannot do this, the next stage Peirce presents is Stage III. The object of Stage III is to figure out to what extent the consequents of a hypothesis make sense, whether it needs a minor adjustment or two which won't change the gist of the argument, or whether the whole thing must be abandoned altogether. Peirce claims that Kant's picture of the validity of Deduction is quite accurate. Peirce maintains that Deduction operates exclusively with "Pure Ideas attaching
primarily to Symbols and derivatively to the other sides of our own creation." Because we are capable of explicating our own meaning from these, Deduction becomes valid. Induction, on the other hand, may get us into trouble, cause us to err, but it will, if carefully done, lead us to the level of being Inductively certain. This is the sort of certainty we have when we say something such as, "When $X$ happens, sometimes $Y$ will happen and sometimes $Y$ will not." Peirce says that, "neither Deduction nor Induction contributes the smallest positive item to the final conclusion of the inquiry." He claims that all they (logicians) do is explicate (deduction) and evaluate (induction). Peirce sees the bridge between the two to be Retroduction, or 'instinctive reason.' Retroduction has the power to add something new, new concepts to a picture of inquiry, where Deduction and Induction lack this power. Retroduction is more slack than the other methods of reasoning.

What sort of validity can be attributed to Retroduction? Peirce maintains that it isn't likely that an individual would be able to guess correctly, when choosing hypotheses, first time, every time. It is this notion of guessing, an act we humans haven't quite perfected, which distinguishes us from our animal counterparts who act instinctively. He claims that to get close to this 'animal instinct' sort of accuracy, one needs a well-prepared mind. Peirce reminds us of an essential feature in the concept of
discovery, namely, that "man's mind must be attuned to the truth of things in order to discover what he has discovered. It is the very bedrock of logical truth." In other words, one has to have some sort of insight, perhaps, into what one is looking for. To discover something requires some real searching and pursuit in hopes of coming up with something in particular. This isn't a random procedure, but a planned-out search. The better choice is going to be one which is chosen at the end of a well-thought-out plan.

Peirce also follows Galileo's path of *il lume naturale*, which prescribes choosing the simplest hypothesis as the best hypothesis. Galileo does not mean simpler in the sense of being *logically* simpler, according to Peirce, but simple in the sense that it is in some way easier and more natural to the "hypothesis-chooser." It is the hypothesis suggested by *instinct* which is preferable. He says that we have a supposed natural leaning or inclination which is in accordance with nature and it is this inclination which gives us a bit of added insight when it comes to making hypotheses. This sounds rather "hokey." It sounds like we are all equipped with a special feature which can gives us inside information or special tips on hypothecating. This would be rather handy. Perhaps this "natural bent", as Peirce calls it, isn't as mysterious as it sounds. Perhaps this ability to be fairly good "hypothecators" comes from the years of practice we get at this sort of activity as we grow up and become better.
problem-solvers. When we are very young, we are not particularly good at hypotheating. We haven't developed the skills which go along with weighing X against Y. As we get older and meet with more situations which require deliberation and then hypothesis, we gain experience. I think this shows us that the idea of having a "natural bent" toward nature, which gives us an edge on guessing, is clearly misguided. Peirce, it seems, feels the need to get instinct into the picture but there is something risky about putting valid inference in the same league as instinct. Peirce wants to make a clear demarcation between perceptual judging and hypotheating in the Neglected Argument, and I am inclined to think that a clear demarcation cannot legitimately be made. This is a definite problem for the Neglected Argument.

In "Three Cotary Propositions," Peirce claims that perceptual judgement and abduction overlap, that is, that all perceptions are hypotheses with greater or lesser degrees of justification. Now, if this third cotary proposition is to be taken seriously, and I think it should be, then Peirce's "Neglected Argument" takes a beating. Peirce claims in the N.A. that there is an overlapping of perceptual judgement and abduction. An example should make the conflict clearer. Suppose I say, "I think I see my friend Barbara sitting on the far side of the restaurant, but it is so poorly lighted in here that I am not positive; I think it is Barbara though." This statement can be taken
two ways: as a hypothesis or a report of an unclear or vague perceptual judgment. According to the third cotary proposition, whether this statement is taken as a hypothesis or as a perception report makes no difference. They both come to the same thing. In either of the cases, I can, barring unusual circumstances, find out whether or not it is Barbara sitting across the room. I can confirm my hypothesis or perception report by looking closer, going over to her table, or yelling out her name.

This is not the case, though, in the "Neglected Argument" because, it becomes clear in this particular essay, abduction and perception are not equals. They do not come to the same thing. We will see why. Peirce has the argument set up so that we receive all the vague signs of God through acts of Musement and are then left with the vague hypothesis of God or "God is Real." "... our awareness of certain features of the universe constitute a vague perception of God." This seems straightforward enough, but the problem comes in when we try to take the final step from our hypothesis or perceptual report to a confirmation. It doesn't work. Peirce claims that direct perception of a communication with God is possible, this hypothesis being the result of one's deep study or musement about the "physico-psychical universe." If this is the case, though, then we should be able to make some checks and conclude one way or another that X is God. The whole dimension of confirmation so well illustrated in the third
cotary proposition goes out the window in the case of the N.A. We just go from our vague signs to a vague hypothesis and that's it. Yet another problem inherent in the N.A.

Now that we've had an overview of what is contained in "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," we see that there are varied areas of shading, some shedding more light than others. Now we will move along to see if these areas can be more clearly illuminated.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 492.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., ¶ 456.


9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 336.


16 Ibid.


18 O'Connell, "C.S. Peirce," p. 36.


21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., ¶ 461.

23 Ibid., ¶ 462.

24 Ibid., ¶ 463.

25 Ibid., ¶ 465.

26 Ibid., ¶ 466.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., ¶ 467.

29 Peirce, "Issues of Pragmaticism", Volume 5, ¶ 446.

30 Ibid.


33 Ibid., p. 469.

34 Ibid.


42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., ¶ 472.
44 Ibid., ¶ 474.
45 Ibid., ¶ 475.
46 Ibid., ¶ 476.


49 Peirce, "Three Types of Reasoning," Volume 5, ¶ 162.

CHAPTER II

The N.A.: Its Inconsistencies and Conflicts with Peirce's Previous Works

A. Cartesianism and Scholasticism: Peirce's Retreat

In 1868, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" was published in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy. This essay was meant as a broad prescription for how to philosophize economically in the twentieth century. The essay begins by providing four glosses of Cartesianism and Scholasticism and then goes on to describe what he thinks are the pitfalls of the Cartesian and Scholastic efforts. I think that by looking at this essay it will become clearer what Peirce is up to philosophically, and how well Peirce's Neglected Argument fits in, or doesn't fit in, with his prescription.

1. False Doubts

The first illness Peirce notes as a pitfall in philosophy is the notion of pretend doubts or make-believe doubts. Peirce sees this as a problem which plagues Cartesianism. Descartes got so carried away with his scheme of doubting everything that he forgot to doubt a few very important features about himself, such as his knowledge of both French and Latin. It just doesn't make sense to doubt everything. There are particular cases when doubt is
occasioned, such as when we're not sure about someone's honesty, and then that person tells a questionable story. This is an occasion when doubt comes into play, because we're not really sure what we should make of the situation. Doubts also creep in with various irritations such as wondering whether some bodily symptom like constant headaches or swollen joints is serious. But to doubt everything is both impossible and, more important I think, a fruitless sort of endeavor. The world already gives us enough hints of reality to overcome any momentary doubts. There's enough in our given world to keep us doubt-free in our relationship in the world. As Peirce says, "a person may, it is true, in the course of his studies, find reason to doubt what he began believing; but in that case he doubts because he has a positive reason for it, and not on account of the Cartesian maxim. Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts."¹

2. Introspection and Public Scrutiny

In addition to dislike of pretended doubts, Peirce has yet another criticism of Descartes. This criticism is that Descartes allows the individual thinker to outrank the public. Peirce is inclined to think that this should be just the opposite; the public should outrank the individual. The use of personal conviction to determine truth will not hold water. The public must be involved. Merely saying that X is true because I believe it is true, won't wash. As Peirce says, "... to make single individuals absolute
judges of truth is most pernicious." To figure out what is true, one must be willing to lay one's beliefs before the public eye. The public should be given its chance to take a few whacks at the proposed truth. We need other minds involved in looking at ideas. It does us no good to hold an idea as being clear if no one else will agree with us. We have to be daring enough to put our ideas out for public scrutiny. Doing this leaves us wide open for criticism which can be uncomfortable and perhaps painful, but for Peirce, this is essential. Peirce says, "The distinction between an idea seeming clear and really being so, never occurred to [Descartes]. Trusting to introspection, as he did, even for a knowledge of external things, why should he question its testimony in respect to the context of our minds?" Peirce holds that introspection isn't good enough when it comes to testing our ideas and making them clear. Peirce feels very strongly about this point, and I think it is a very important one. Whether he carries it as far as this in the Neglected Argument is debatable because it looks as if his insistence on this point gets softened in the N.A. We shall take a look at this question up ahead.

3. Scientific Method and Belief

Peirce's third point is that "philosophy ought to imitate the successful sciences in its methods, so far as to proceed only from tangible premises which can be subjected
to careful scrutiny, and to trust rather to the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusiveness of any one." Peirce wanted none of this. Rather, claimed Peirce, all must be dependent on thought and inquiry. If philosophy is a scientific endeavor, then it is not immune to revision in the way that math is. Science is committed to a method, he claims, and not a belief. Peirce sees this as a very important distinction. This is yet another strong point in Peirce, but one which loses its punch when the N.A. comes into play.

4. The Utterly Unknowable

The final point upon which Peirce touches is the idea that one can never claim that anything in the universe is utterly unknowable. Peirce encourages us to shun moves in our philosophical doings that may trap us into saying that anything in the universe is utterly unknowable, simple, or unanalyzable. Peirce says that we can have no conception of the utterly uncognizable. In his essay, "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," Peirce tells us that experience gives us no occasion to speak of anything as being as being utterly unknowable and so we must be leery of those who claim knowledge of an unknowable. For Peirce, the utterly unknowable is a non-concept and so to the extent that it may crop in philosophical projects, these projects are flawed and get us into trouble. Peirce prefers a re-examination of known concepts. Peirce goes as far as
to say that cognizability and being are synonymous terms. Again, this is a turn for the better as far as making a change in philosophical endeavors, but a problem in the N.A. as we shall see later.

B. Scientific Investigation and the N.A.

Peirce presents these Cartesian hindrances to philosophy, then tells us that they cannot be regarded as certain. This strikes me as a gesture of non-dogmatism on Peirce's part. He sees that there are norms for going from premises to conclusions, that there is "a process of cognition" which falls under the heading of **Valid Inference**, and he wants to home in on this process. This is a departure from a lot of philosophers such as Augustine and Plato. Peirce "logicizes" our mental doings with patterns of inference. He does this by giving us an outline of three basic types of valid inference, Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis. We'll start with Deduction.

1. Deduction

Peirce assumes that we all come equipped with a textbook version of deduction and so proceeds to other types, but, an example will likely be helpful.

All marbles from Bag A are yellow
This pile of marbles is from Bag A
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This pile of marbles is yellow
One notes that with Deduction, the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. True premises must produce a true conclusion to make a valid deduction. An invalid deduction can produce both a true and false conclusion from true premises. Induction, on the other hand, tells a different story.

2. Induction

Peirce says that we might call Induction, "statistical argument," and that "... in the long run, it must afford pretty correct conclusions from true premises." An example of Induction goes like this:

This random sample of marbles is from Bag B
This sample shows 10% green marbles
The whole contents of Bag B are about 10% green marbles

With induction we get probable and approximate conclusions following from the premises. Peirce says, "the function of an induction is to substitute for a series of many subjects a single one which embraces them and an indefinite number of others." 6

3. Hypothetical

The final type of valid inference is the Hypothetical. It goes like this:

The marbles in this loose pile are all green
But all the marbles from Bag A are green
I guess the ones in this pile are from Bag A
Peirce gives us a very distinct model for scientific investigation, a model of what he considers ordinary hypothetical inference. One starts out with a puzzling fact, something which startles our everyday thinking, happens unexpectedly, or strikes us as unusual. For example, when we come home from school and notice that there is water dripping from the ceiling of the living room, we become puzzled by this occurrence for various reasons, but mainly because water is not supposed to be coming through the ceiling, nor has it ever done it before. To quiet this puzzlement, we begin to ask a few questions, such as, "Why is the water coming through?" or "Where is the water coming from?" The fact that it happens to be raining that day won't do as a possible explanation because the leak is in the first floor ceiling of a two-story house. Besides, the water seems much too warm to be rain. The fact that it is warm indicates that the water may be coming from one of the hot water pipes or an overflowing bathtub. I begin to speculate about all the probable causes of the leak. This is the process of hypothesating. If I suspect an overflowing bathtub or sink, I then can deduce that a trip upstairs will confront me with a tub or sink brimming over and faucets open. This is the deductive step. I then have to make an empirical check to see what, in fact, is causing the leak. This is the testing step. This is where I compare evidence with experience. If the bathtub is not overflowing, the bathtub is no longer a candidate. This
stage is testing my previous hypothesis, and as the test proves the hypothesis to be incorrect, the hypothesis is no longer valid. Now, if I look at the pipes that go to the bathtub, which are hidden in a closet, and I find that there is a crack in one of them which is leaking water, it is safe to conclude that one of my hypotheses was correct.

The reason for this summary of Peirce's model of scientific inquiry is that I want to see if it is applicable to his Neglected Argument. Peirce, I think, believes that the N.A. is in conformity with his model of scientific investigation and hypothetical inquiry. I'm not so sure it is. It's not clear whether Peirce has tried to "pull a fast one" on us or he has, in fact, done it to himself. I suspect that the latter is true. This should become clear once we've made a comparison of the N.A. with his scientific investigation model. Can Peirce really come up with genuine deductions and, if so, will these deductions truly be of the same type as in the scientific set-up?

Let's start with the idea that one might, say, during a stroll on the beach, come across a sand dollar and begin to muse about it. Peirce, I think, wants to say that this stage of being charmed by some aspect of the three Universes is much like being puzzled about something such as the leaky ceiling. In other words, the stage of finding something puzzling and finding something which strikes our fancy are the same sort of finding. Right from the start then I think we've got problems. First of all, the connection between
being puzzled and being charmed seems contrived because the two seem quite different. First of all, puzzlement occurs when something unexpected happens or when something out of the ordinary occurs. For example, if Bob has been arriving home from work at 5:00 p.m. for the past five years and one night he doesn't show up, one's expectations about Bob's behavior are not met and one begins to wonder about his whereabouts. There is an element of expectation here because there is an established routine.

Being charmed while on a stroll, though, has a different flavor to it. We are merely walking along, not thinking about anything in particular, when we are struck, say, by the beauty of a sunset. Now, it seems to me that sunsets aren't particularly puzzling. I don't get thrown way off course if I happen upon a sunset. I know enough about sunsets not to find them particularly surprising. I may be awed by the sunset, but puzzled? If the sunset had happened in the midst of a snowstorm, I might be puzzled, but I don't think I'd be alarmed. More than likely, I'd be charmed. If these two events, the snowstorm and the sunset did occur together, I might search for an explanation. I imagine that the conclusion that I'd most likely reach would be a meteorological or astronomical one, but not likely a divine one. Occurrences such as this can be investigated in all sorts of scientific literature which deal with weather. Peirce doesn't talk about doing this sort of deductive/inductive reasoning when he's talking about coming up with
scientific conclusions drawn from charming phenomena. Peirce has us "musing" instead. These phenomena, apparently, present no questions about their scientific origins or why they're there. This sort of questioning is not appropriate for the set-up which Peirce sets out for us with Musement. If Musement about a sunset is supposed to be the same process as scientific investigation, inquiry and questioning, I don't see the connection. There are lacking the elements of puzzlement and unmet expectations. Those elements key to reasoning and inquiry are inappropriate for Musement.

Another problem here is this. Peirce would say that we see a sunset, are charmed, begin musing and eventually and inevitably end up with the hypothesis of an "Infinitely Incomprehensible object," that is, God. Once we've come up with this God hypothesis, it wins our heart and so it seems to us the most plausible explanation. But the question is, "Explanation of what?" We must keep in mind that what Peirce is after is the explanation or account of the marvelous in nature. This is a key point, the key word being "explanation." An explanation doesn't seem to be a suitable response for the marvelous in nature. Peirce is trying to use the "marvelous" as a take-off for a more logically tough explanation. Explanation takes away the "marvel" in "marvelous." Peirce's preoccupation with inference keeps shining through. Peirce is after "explanation" and he assumes that explanation is the natural course
to take. With this in mind, it becomes clearer to see whence Peirce's conclusions come. Without the puzzlement over something right from the start, there is no need to search for any sort of explanation for anything. Just because we see a sunset doesn't mean that we're destined to find an explanation for it. Why find an explanation for a sunset anyway? It lacks the puzzling character necessary to prompt inquiry.

Even if we did come up with the "God Hypothesis" as being the best explanation or hypothesis we could come up with, how do we manage when we get to the inductive stage of valid inference? When I get to induction, I have to take my explanation or hypothesis and compare it with experience. How do I do this? How does one test the hypothesis, "God is Real"? According to Peirce, the meaning of the proposition "God is Real" should be found in its "logical and experimentally testable consequence." Well, in scientific inquiry, such as biology presents, if I want to check out some hypothesis I have about cells, all I might need to do is to put those particular cells under the microscope. If that's not enough, if I need to get closer, then I use the electron-microscope. The point is, there is equipment and there are ways of going about scientific testing and experiment. I can accumulate particulars about the cells I am investigating. But, again, what about the "God is Real" hypothesis? I don't know how to test this one out. What sort of tests should I conduct? Do I look closer
at the sand dollar or feather or sunset which led me to this hypothesis? It seems doubtful that a close-up look at a feather under a microscope is going to get me any closer to a test or proof which will be conclusive. If my inference can't pass this inductive test, I don't have a very good hypothesis. We have no clear idea of the difference between how a feather would look, a) if God were Real and b) if God were not.

Actually, it's not the case here that this particular hypothesis can't pass a test. Rather, it is that the hypothesis "God is Real" isn't even a real hypothesis. If "God is Real" is a hypothesis, I should then be able to ask and answer the questions, "Hypothesis or explanation of what?" The problem is that I cannot answer this question precisely because the supposed hypothesis isn't a hypothesis at all. I cannot finish the query "Hypothesis of ________" because there isn't anything to go in the blank, although Peirce would say that the phrase can be completed as such, "hypothesis or explanation of what is marvelous in nature." Again, Peirce's preoccupation with explaining. Peirce is assuming that we are all trying to explain what is marvelous in nature and that an explanation will naturally lead to God. He misses the point that "explanation" is inappropriate. One doesn't say all in one breath, "Ah! Look at this marvelous feather. Explain it to me! Peirce thinks that "God is Real" can be inferred from that which we find marvelous in the universe. This determination to
make this an inferential process is Peirce's downfall. "What is marvelous in the universe" is too heavily based on personal preference and appreciation to hold up to any tests, even if tests were appropriate.

Nothing can be deduced from the hypothesis "God is Real" that would lend itself to experimental investigation. It is impossible to predict what the conduct of an Ens Necessarium would be. The main reason why the present hypothesis cannot be verified like any other hypothesis is that Peirce maintains that the category of Secondness or existence which involves some form of reaction between two things cannot be applied to God, who is pure Firstness. In a 1906 paper, Peirce writes:

I will also take the liberty of substituting "reality" for "existence." This is perhaps overscrupulousity; but I myself always use exist in its strict philosophical sense of "react with the other like things in the environment" . . . . I define the real as that which holds its characters on such a tenure that it makes not the slightest difference what any man or men may have thought them to be, or even will have thought them to be.

However, "... the effects of the second peculiarity of the hypothesis are counteracted by a third, which consists in its commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers." He refers to the hypothesis as finding a response in every part of the human mind for its beauty, its supplying of an ideal of life and its "satisfactory" explanation of man's entire environment.
Unfortunately, Peirce does not get specific about his views in this paper and so we are left to try to figure out his "true" meaning all by ourselves. This view, though, does parallel his repeated contention that the pragmatic principle shows that a conception has value in so far as it serves the self-controlled growth of life. A conception serves the growth of man's life to the extent to which it enables him to regulate his conduct in contact with his environment. For Peirce, then, ordinary concepts possess a certain value in this respect and, if this is the case, then the idea of God which enables a man to explain his origin and the origin of the world and to pursue an ideal of life, has an importance for the growth of man's life beyond that of any other concept.

C. Peirce vs. Descartes (vs. Peirce)

There are yet more connections between Peirce's "Four Incapacities" and the Neglected Argument. When reading the N.A. it seems clear to me that Peirce has a tremendous amount of real enthusiasm for his project. I think Peirce really believes he is onto something with the N.A., that he's finally come up with a plausible and logically sound argument for God's Reality. I think that some of this enthusiasm may, though, have blinded him to some of the problems with the argument, some problems which stem from not following his own advice on how to make ourselves clear.
and sharp thinkers. Peirce's enthusiasm has softened his usual tough-mindedness.

One problem which I think hampers the N.A. is that Peirce doesn't follow his own advice about letting the public get involved. I think that Peirce's "method" for coming to the hypothesis of God's Reality is one which excludes the public. He seems to forget that such concepts as God and Deity are borrowed words, and as a result, he cannot make private claim to them. Words such as God and Deity are fraught with all sorts of meanings; meanings which have been developed throughout history. There is God as overseer of all, there is God the Savior, God the Creator, and, most primarily, especially for Peirce, God the Father of Christ. We need some specific cases to get clearer on this notion.

In Peirce's set-up, I might, for example, find along the way of a stroll various tidbits of natural phenomena such as leaves, feathers, shells and so forth which lead me to the hypothesis of God's Reality. What is curious about this notion is that I might be charmed by an orange scallop shell, whereas someone else may not even notice the shell and, instead, be thrilled by a smooth grey rock which didn't even catch my eye. Is it true, then, that we can all get good feelings about different phenomena and all come to the same conclusion? Yes, I think this is exactly what it comes down to. There is a vast variety of phenomena out there which have the capability to make us muse. It would seem
that if there are so many different sorts of
museum-provoking phenomena, that there would be close to
an equal number of self-designed Gods. In other words, it
seems by Peirce's example, that through different phenomena,
each person could end up with a hypothesis of God, each
hypothesis being separate, private, and self-designed.
Peirce would object to this because it would allow each
person to have his or her own god with no conformation or
denial from anyone else. If Peirce is going to stick to his
idea that one must allow one's opinions and beliefs to be
challenged, then the idea of self-designed gods won't hold
up. I think that Peirce has a very specific God in mind
when he talks about people coming to the conclusion that
"God is Real." I think he's thinking about the Christian
God about whom he has very strong convictions. What is
difficult to grasp here, then, is how one starts with a rock
or a shell and ends with a full-fledged concept of a
Christian God.

I think a key here is that one doesn't get started in
this process of moving from shell or feather to God if one
doesn't have a fairly well-formed concept of God to begin
with. Peirce presents this idea of coming to the conclusion
that God is Real as if all one need do is become charmed by
some phenomenon or another and then one will automatically
begin thinking about one's place in the universe and how
spectacular the world is. Then God will inevitably come
through as being behind it all. It sounds as if one can
start out as a blank slate, go through this process of Musement, and end up a believer. I think that as we progress, through the N.A. and reexamine the concept of Musement it will be revealed that we cannot possibly start out with nothing and end up with this rather specialized notion of God. Let's take a look at yet another form that the act of Musement might take and see if perhaps we can get a new perspective on what is and is not a reasonable result of Musement.

After having a long, hard day where nothing seems to be going right, we sometimes have a revelation; a revelation that, despite it all, things aren't as bad as they seem. For example, some days are fraught with all sorts of encounters with impolite, non-cooperative people, machines which won't function properly, and just plain feelings of loneliness or sadness. As we walk home from our tough day, feeling a bit sorry for ourselves perhaps, we see the sun setting in the sky—a fabulous sunset of oranges, pinks, and reds. The sight of this wonderful natural phenomenon fills us with a good feeling and makes us think to ourselves, "I guess my life isn't so bad after all. It's things like this (the sunset) that restore my faith in mankind." I think this sort of dialogue is very enlightening because it gives us a different perspective on what may have really been behind Peirce's thinking. The idea of restoration of one's faith, I think, is an important one. It's important because to be a true restoration, there must be something which
needs to be fixed, an original which needs to be put back in its original form. One's faith in mankind, for example, can really be shattered during a particularly bad day, but the important part of this is that there is a faith to begin with. It is this original faith which gets renewed when something special like a sunset comes along to make the unpleasantness of the day disappear. I think that this is the sort of event which best illustrates how one can be quite moved, by some natural phenomenon or good act by someone, to feel that one's existence isn't so bad and that, in fact, something or someone more powerful than we might have something to do with it all. It is this sort of example which gives Peirce's concept of Musement bit more substance.

This is but one case. One might just be out for a walk and come across a particularly beautiful tree and think to oneself, "Yes, something much more powerful and creative than me must have created this fantastic piece of nature." In this case, nothing bad has happened previous to this event that makes one feel as if one's faith has been restored. On the contrary, in this case the person is merely reaffirming what he or she already believes. In both cases, there is the concept of previous belief or faith. This isn't a first-time occurrence. The particular event might be a first-time thing, but the belief itself was something the person already had and is now reaffirmed. These particular cases also show us a way to see how Peirce
could come up with the idea of being moved from something like the sunset or the tree to thinking about one's existence and one's place in the whole universe. When one starts out with at least some shred of a belief or faith in oneself and others, for example, restoration can occur. Do these cases help us with the problem of having private and self-designed gods? I'm not sure.

It seems to me that Peirce did not intend for us to end up with private gods. In fact, I feel sure that he thought that it was a natural thing for one to end up with his notion of a Christian God. I don't think it really occurred to Peirce that anyone would come up with anything else. I don't think Peirce was trying to show us that God actually exists in the sense that some philosophers were trying to do. I think he was after something a bit different. He wanted to show that God, and I think perhaps religion, play a significant part in one's life. It may not always be obvious and we may not be outward worshippers, etc., but the elements of Christian doctrine, if we are Christians, are a part of us which pops up on us sometimes very unexpectedly. It is these special times, when God's presence becomes more prominent, that Peirce is trying to show as proof that God is Real, not exists, but is Real and plays an important role in people's lives.

Along with God usually goes some sort of religion or prescription of how to conduct one's life. Peirce thinks that once one has come up with the hypothesis of God, one is
going to be so smitten by it that one will want to rearrange one's whole lifestyle and conduct around it. Peirce says that the ultimate test of the hypothesis "God is Real" . . . "must lie in its value in the self-controlled growth of man's conduct of life."\textsuperscript{12} Well, if we assume that the hypothesis is something that we actually believed in the first place, then we already have a set prescription to follow or at least some sort of prescription to guide us. But, what if we are starting out as Peirce seems to have us doing, with a blank slate which magically turns into the hypothesis that God is Real? Is a hypothesis, a product of Musement, the sort of thing one bases one's conduct and way of life on? What sort of example can a hypothesis of God's Reality, which I just came across via vicarious musing, set for me to follow? If each of us can come up with the hypothesis that "God is Real" with little more effort than musing, what sort of God and religion could I possibly come up with? There seems to be more to "finding God" than just letting one's mind wander until it hits upon God. If I'm supposed to be able to derive a God from a few thoughts about the beauty of a sunset, what sort of God could I possibly come up with except one which I had previously known about? One cannot make up a truly meaningful prescription for one's lifestyle in a manner of a few minutes. This, I think, brings up again the whole idea that one is really reaffirming what one already knows or experienced or believes when one comes to the so-called
hypothesis that God is Real. I think that those who come to this conclusion already had a fairly well-formed concept of God in the first place. I think that what is really the case here is that the thinking and musing over a phenomenon sparks some part of us which often gets neglected throughout our very busy lives. These times when Musement is sparked seem to me to be times when something is telling us to slow down and reflect on our lives as a whole and not just a little piece of it. I don't think Peirce thought of Musement as something that would provoke reflection, but instead he saw it as something which brought on a new and undoubtable belief. This is a shame because I think the "reflective aspect" is most enlightening.

Peirce didn't find his set-up problematic mainly because, I suspect, that the God which Peirce thinks we will all reach anew as a result of our supposed valid inferences is the Christian God. The Bible gives us a clearly drawn picture of God and the ways in which we should conduct our lives and I think Peirce assumes that all of this automatically goes along with the word "God." If we take Peirce at face value with all the treasurers personally found, we're supposed to end up with Peirce's concept of the Christian God and we're also supposed to be rid of any doubts we might have about deities and their Reality. No matter how invisible a deity may be, Peirce claims that His power and mentality have been around for us to see in things that he has made. "... his everlasting power and
deity—however invisible—have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made."\(^{13}\) We have no excuse for doubting the existence of the deity because it is self-evident in the world. \(\ldots\) through the grandeur and beauty of creatures we may, by analogy, contemplate their Author."\(^{14}\) I contend that this is not possible in the way Peirce says. I contend that one must still have a prior notion or belief or faith or inkling that God has something to do with one's life before one can say that all of what surrounds us is an illustration of His Reality. There is much around us we don't see until it is pointed out to us and sometimes we still don't see it. We still need guidance. And, sometimes, we don't believe what we see.

In his essay, "What is Christian Faith?", Peirce writes, \(\ldots\) it is absurd to say that religion is a mere belief. Religion is a life, and can be identified with a belief only provided that belief be a living belief—a thing to be lived rather than said or thought."\(^{15}\) This shows, I think, that Peirce doesn't think that belief in God can be separated from religion. It seems he forgot this connection in the N.A. If Peirce really does take this connection seriously, and I suspect he does, this is more fuel for my argument that one cannot jump from the suspicion that there is a greater mentality responsible for the universe and that the little proofs around are enough to substantiate the suspicion. There is too big a leap from being a blank slate to being a full-fledged believer in God
with all that Peirce says goes with believing in God, that is, a life.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., ¶ 391.

4 Ibid., ¶ 265.

5 Ibid., ¶ 275.

6 Ibid.


10 Ibid., ¶ 495.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., ¶ 480.


14 Ibid. Wisdom xiii:5.

CHAPTER III

A Glimpse at Peirce's Religious Thinking and Writing

For the most part, Charles Peirce is not thought of as a religious thinker. In fact, his doctrine of God has scarcely been studied at all. A good deal of Peirce's philosophy reveals only a fragmentary and unfinished glimpse of his religious thinking. He "... did not pursue his ideas in a sufficient inviting and rounded form to win the interest and understanding of the general public."\(^1\)

Although Peirce was preoccupied a good deal of his life with the problem of God, it was not until toward the end of his life (1908) that he actually devoted a whole essay to a proof of God. It is this essay to which this thesis is devoted, although I cannot ignore the other perspectives which become apparent through Peirce's constant references to them in unexpected places. Despite the fact that almost all of Peirce's references to God have been in a fragmentary form, their importance both for the interpretation and evaluation of the N.A. cannot be ignored. Getting a better idea of Peirce's strong Christian background may make it clearer as to why he was so adamant about the N.A.

It is surprising to many that Peirce showed any interest in theistic problems because theism was considered to be somewhat inconsistent with Peirce's own principles. Peirce's image as "father of pragmatism" seems to overshadow
the extensive theistic interest which is scattered throughout his more "popular" work. This surprise about Peirce's interest in theism "... might appear to have some truth had Peirce found pragmatism possible as a method of logic that had no implications in other philosophical spheres. The proof, however, is all to the contrary, that he began to realize early in his career that to pursue epistemology to its ultimate issue was to discover that one had been presupposing a metaphysics."² Peirce, in fact, keeps various disciplines, e.g., epistemology and phenomenology, linked together in his thinking. Hence, instead of avoiding the God question, Peirce makes frequent reference to it. Peirce also possessed a very personal sense of God which is quite apparent in his work and also a factor in his desire to design a more than purely intellectual approach to God. Peirce wanted to establish a living relationship between man and man's creator, God.

A. Direct Experience/Argument Dyad

Throughout history, philosophers have filled many pages with their attempts to resolve a tension which they thought existed between direct experience and argument in discourse about God and His existence. Philosophers continue to do this today as the problem continues to present itself in new forms. Much time and effort has been expended by philosophers working on self-sufficient arguments for the existence of God. Some were and are determined to show that
it is necessary for a person to actually experience the presence of God in order to establish God's existence, whereas others were and are determined to show that a purely rational demonstration through argument is the only way to prove God's existence. There was much skepticism about each others' positions. There was skepticism concerning the viability of classical theistic arguments and skepticism stemming from the criticism of thinkers such as Hume and Kant. Various forms of pietism existed, which stressed an immediate relation to God with no connection to any sort of rational demonstration.

Kierkegaard claimed that one can never argue to existence of God nor can one prove God's existence by meeting Him in a leap of faith. Along the same line, "... theologians of encounter sought to interpret the relation of the individual to God exclusively on the I-Thou model of personal relationships that have a self-authenticating character and are not to be confused with knowledge about the persons involved nor with argument of any sort."³

Those who criticize this approach have, conversely, insisted on the difficulties which are brought about when one supposes completely immediate experience and on the requirements of inference and interpretation for articulating any experience whatsoever. The oddity about the conflict between those who insist on the rejection of argument in favor of encounter, and those who criticize encounter by calling it non-self-sufficient apart from the
argument and interpretation, is that each side assumes that there is no other alternative but the one of either direct, immediate experience or argument. It is as if the truth resides in the total negation of that which is directly opposite to what one is trying to maintain. The problem with this sort of polarity is that there seems to be little in one's meaningful relations which falls completely into one category or the other with no overlapping grey areas. Very little is categorized as either immediate perception or rational construction alone. The two seem to overlap and "howsoever they are related, the two are always present together, nor do the admittedly special circumstances that attend discourse about God radically alter that togetherness." 4 Peirce addresses a similar polarity problem in his essay titled "Three Cotary Propositions," claiming that perception and valid inference, namely abduction or retrodution, overlap each other and cannot be separated naturally.

One reason that formal, rational demonstrations of divine existence which are out of touch with any experiences from which the idea of God might spring are problematic, is that they can never have the religious significance that seems to be or perhaps needs to be of central concern when delving into questions about God. William James in The Will to Believe and Blaise Pascal in Pensees both insist that this is the case. The existence of God is an abstract notion with "... no more concreteness than that possessed
by the 'I' of Descartes when he expressed the certainty that it exists without yet knowing what it is." It seems reasonably clear that no amount of reasoning about the existence of God can, even with the clearest possible premises allowed in this sort of argument and the most controlled and explicit principles of inference, alone bring the reasoner into a relation of love, reverence, faith; these being some important aspects of religion. Hence, fancy rational demonstrations lack the important element of religious significance and, therefore, cannot close the gap between the poles, not that merely closing the gap would assure resolution. Neither immediacy-of-God nor God-by-inference is sufficient if it is taken exclusive of the other. There is no progress with the perpetuation of the polar opposition in which each side fights very hard to maintain its own exclusive stand.

Where does one go from here? It appears that some compromise and re-evaluation of the situation is essential. Perhaps if one begins to look at experience's rational development as an expression of the meaning of that experience and inseparable from it, instead of as a lifeless conceptualization in logical space, then one can see something new and get somewhere. Further, argument cannot work as a substitute for experience, therefore causing it to be unnecessary. William James, for example, didn't think that rational argument had much force when it came to God. Conceptual elaboration and argument, for James, was
secondary to feeling, will and faith. In contrast to this, in fact in complete opposition with it, are those thinkers who offer revamped versions of the Ontological Argument without the tradition which necessitates experience in order to understand what must be meant by the one talking about God. Hence, one is still faced with this dyad, this impasse. It seems that we need to look at the problem from a different perspective. We need to envision the problem as other than an either/or situation. This is not just an easy way out. On the contrary, it is a way of starting anew with an age-old problem by looking at it from a fresh perspective. It appears, at first glance from this new perspective, that both sides of this dyad, that is, direct experience and argument, really overlap and neither can be taken exclusively as the right approach for getting to God. Peirce "... possessed personally a very real sense of God that was a factor in his refusal to accept a merely intellectual approach to God; it lead him instead to stress the possibility of a living relationship between man and His maker."^6

B. Three Arguments for the Reality of God

Although almost all of Peirce's references to God are fragmentary, one can piece together what seem to be three arguments or proofs for the reality of God. These arguments can be broken down as follows: i) God can be directly perceived, ii) God's reality is apparent from the finality
(purposivness) of the universe, and iii) God's reality is arguable from man's instinct to believe in Him. A brief run-through of these three should equip us to go on to Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God."

1. Direct Perception

In Peirce's 1892 paper, "The Law of the Mind," he held that there is such a thing as direct perception of God. Later, in an 1896 paper Peirce reiterated the previous direct perception claim by writing, "Where would such an idea, say that of God, come from, if not from direct experience? . . . as to God, open your eyes—and your heart, which is also a perceptive organ—and you will see him." One objection which is inherent in this position is that it makes atheism, or non-belief in God, virtually impossible. If God is right there before everyone's eyes, why doesn't everyone see Him? Peirce would likely respond that it is often the case that we do not see what is right before our eyes. In fact, he does write, "facts that stand before our face and eyes and stare us in the face are far from being, in all cases, the ones most easily discerned." Another way to state this is that Peirce maintains that the facts are always there and evident, and one just needs to know how to interpret them.

Another problem with Peirce's stand is his use of the word perception. If perception is to be restricted to the notion of sense data (God) bombarding the senses of the
know, it is virtually impossible to give any meaning to Peirce's affirmation of an incorporeal being. In fact, Peirce does not use perception in such a narrow sense. This becomes evident when one comes across Peirce's choice of terms which are to be equivalent to perception, e.g., direct experience and heart. These terms indicate a broader sense of perception than merely sensory perception. These other terms include undeveloped reasonings and reflections on former experiences.

Unfortunately, one still does not have a clear explanation of how God is revealed in direct experience. Peirce gives hints of what he is after, but never gives a straightforward account. For example, Peirce writes, "The manifold diversity or specialness, in general, which we see whenever we open our eyes, constitutes it (the universe's) liveliness, or vivacity. The perception of it is a direct, though darkling, perception of God." This text shows what lies behind Peirce's contention.

For Peirce, God is the supreme Firstness or Spontaneity and He is involved in a particular way in a particular Firstness. As Peirce wrote, "The starting point of the universe, God the Creator, is the Absolute First." This is an unusually straightforward note connecting God and Firstness in its pure forms. There are some tests in which, although not as explicitly as the above, the particular description of Firstness presented can apply in a strict sense only to God. For example, he writes, "By a feeling, I
mean an instance of that kind of consciousness which involves no analysis, comparison or any process whatsoever.

which has its own positive quality which consists in nothing present during a lapse of time. It is wholly and equally present at every moment of that time. This seems to be a description which, taken literally, best applies to the mode of being and knowledge of a being that has all its reality at once. Peirce envisions God as the supreme Firstness of the universe. Despite Peirce's position, one must continue to pursue the answer to the question of how God is revealed in direct experience. There is no straightforward answer, but perhaps some semblance of an explanation can be had by looking closely at the general logic of Peirce's procedure while, at the same time, keeping in mind the tentative nature of these conditions.

James O'Connell writes that "Peirce should be led to hold that this perception of God has a two-fold aspect:

i) a direct perception of the spontaneity of nature, insofar as the spontaneity that throbs through all nature originates from and depends on the divine spontaneity;

ii) a more indirect perception insofar as the act of seeing the spontaneity of nature immediately and concommitantly evokes in our minds the notion of the first and supreme spontaneity."

These two aspects of perception can be illustrated by comparing how Peirce claims to know God by looking at the world around him much in the way we claim to know people by looking at the world around us. An example of the first
aspect: to know Jane Doe means to know various things about
the world around her. In fact, it is these things which
make Jane Doe who and what she is. In other words, in order
to talk about and claim knowledge of Jane Doe, one must talk
about, for example, what she looks like, where she lives,
what sort of food she likes, and who her parents are. One
cannot know who a person is without making reference to the
outside world. If I walk into some's home for the first
time, for example, I almost immediately begin to form an
impression about the person who lives there. The
furnishings give me a direct acquaintance with the
homeowner, assuming either that the homeowner decorated the
house him- or herself, or the interior designer implicitly
followed the homeowner's tastes in decoration. The
homeowner's personality and mind seem present in all that is
in the house. One's financial position is also reflected by
one's surroundings. Peirce envisions the reading or
discernment of the world, which puts us into immediate
contact with God's presence, to be of the same ilk as
reading Jane Doe from her surroundings.

An example of the second aspect of perception: the
existence of the home furnishings and knick-knacks with
their unified character refer us constantly to the existence
of the person to whom they belong. This is not done
consciously through deductive reasoning; it is as if the
person is constantly understood to be chooser and owner of
the furnishings. One must now work out these analogies
further to see if and how the considerations that are contingent on them fit closely into Peirce's conceptions of the relations between the universe and God.

"The spontaneity that is encountered in the world and that is responsible for its variety results from a pure spontaneity that lies at the origin of all spontaneity."\(^{13}\) Another way to express this is to say that God is continually creating the world. According to Peirce, we cannot suppose that the process of creation and evolution ". . . began elsewhere than in the utter vagueness of completely undetermined and dimensionless potentiality (God) . . . . In short, that if we are going to regard the universe as a result of evolution at all . . . (the) very first and fundamental element that we have to assume is a Freedom, or chance, or Spontaneity, by virtue of which the general vague nothing-in-particular-ness that preceded the chaos took a thousand definite qualities."\(^{14}\) The fundamental idea is that the derived universe comes from the underived Spontaneity. This idea, though, needs the clarifications that evolve from Peirce's further uncovering of evidence of spontaneity which he thinks is evidence in favor of his argument. Peirce's problem is that if God is recognized in the spontaneity of the world, it is because this recognition is intimately related to the understanding of God as the Creator of the world. Peirce suggests that the spontaneity evident in the working of the human mind makes a good model from which to work. As Peirce's doctrine
of categories became more careful and methodical, more and
more emphasis was put on Firstness as the spontaneity of the
mind. He relates this spontaneity to God, the pure
Firstness.

Peirce also argues that the capacity of reason to
fabricate gods depends on the connection of reason with the
source of the universe. He asked, for example, "to believe
in a god at all, is not that to believe that man's reason is
allied to the originating principle of the universe?"¹⁵
Peirce states this in yet another way:

We start . . . with nothing, pure zero.
But this is not the nothing of negation
. . . this pure zero is the nothing of
not having been born . . . . As such,
it is absolutely undefined and unlimited
possibility . . . . It is boundless
freedom."¹⁶

What Peirce seems to be getting at through these
passages is that he can see no possible source of
spontaneity in the universe, especially the spontaneity of
the human mind, other than a personal God who was the
creator of all that exists. In other words, "there is a
causal connexion between the limited forms of spontaneity
and God as the unlimited and creative Firstness."¹⁷ We
can understand this causal connection directly provided that
our minds are properly attuned to the logic of the
universe.¹⁸ This seems almost definitely to be Peirce's
thesis, but it is weak in that not all the factors involved
in such causality have been worked out.
2. Finality of the Universe

Another way to arrive at a belief in the reality of God comes through in various texts where Peirce discusses the finality or purposiveness of the universe and the harmony that is inherent in it. He wrote that "a genuine evolutionary philosophy . . . is so far from being antagonistic to the idea of a personal creator that it is really inseparable from that idea." He remarks later that the results that evolution had led to could not be explained by mere chance because "there had not been time enough." As a result, the universe may be seen as a "... great symbol of God's purpose, working out its conclusions in living realities."20

"The mutual adaptation between things in the universe is seen at its highest in the mind as it performs its work of interpreting." What this means is that Peirce thinks that a person is born with a capacity to frame a hypothesis which makes it possible to understand the world and predict its behavior in order for him or her to act harmoniously in the world. The key idea which underlies Peirce's understanding of the adaptation of the mind and the world is that all scientific explanations of natural phenomena are hypotheses claiming that there is something in nature to which human reason is analogous. All scientific successes in their applications to human convenience are witnesses. Peirce also maintains that scientific discoveries make it possible for us to predict what the
course of nature will be, and this is conclusive proof that we can catch a tidbit of God's thought. What he seems to be getting at here is that if the mind and the world are suitably adapted, it is due to their both being derived from the same spiritual source—"God as Creator." This God as Creator source explains how he can say that the end of speculative science is "knowledge of the truth."  

What is implied by this reasoning is that any other solution that might be suggested would have to maintain that "the teleology of the mind in the universe is due to mere chance." To maintain, though, that the analogy between the mind and the universe, which allows the actively spelled-out hypotheses of science to predict results of the observation of nature, consists in mere chance is, according to Peirce, the same as calling "the infinitely unlikely and the absurd to explain the highest operations of the universe." Hence, the conclusion from finality of purposiveness is inclusive in what he believes he perceives in the living variety of the universe.

3. God's Reality from Man's Instinct to Believe

That God's reality is arguable from man's instinct to believe in Him is probably the strongest of Peirce's arguments for the reality of God: the strongest in that this is the approach he most stressed toward the end of his life. This approach makes evident Peirce's distrust of reasoning in affairs that have important practical
consequences. Peirce maintains that in ethics, for example, a person rarely or ever meets with disinterested scientific reasoning because philosophers almost always end up with reasoning that reflects their own values. For Peirce, reasoning about God is subject to the same weakness. Therefore, we are better off to trust to our instincts and to instinctive reactions which are built upon the essential nature of our being. Peirce asserts that if a man considers the universe and also regards the universe of the mind:

the idea of there being a God over it all of course will be often suggested; and the more he considers it, the more he will be enwrapt with Love of this idea. He will ask himself whether or not there really is a God. If he allows instinct to speak, and searches his own heart, he will at length find that he cannot help believing it.

We will see more of Peirce's reasoning on this point when we look closely at his argument about musement, but his argument here is that given particular favorable circumstances, a person will inevitably come to accept the reality of God. This acceptance is a result of one's feeling for one's own nature. For Peirce, in order for man's nature to function, God must necessarily be presupposed. What underlies all of this is the notion that the operations of man are meaningful. Peirce maintains that the idea of God springs from a person's existential situation. In other words, one cannot help grasping God as the "... Maker of the Universe and as the Love that
influences man's conduct, especially the conduct that is disinterested pursuit of truth."  

C. The Neglected Argument

Peirce offers us a different perspective from which to argue for the reality of God in "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God." The essay has interesting features which include the development of the notion of Musement and a model in which direct experience and argument are related in fuller detail what has been discussed in the three previous arguments. In some ways, though, it becomes apparent again that Peirce failed to ground the reasoning of this essay in his general philosophy as well as one would expect him to do.

The Neglected Argument consists of three arguments, although it is not overtly obvious as one reads Peirce's essay. The three arguments which he outlines are these: i) the Humble Argument in which Musement produces a conviction of God's reality; ii) an argumentation, one of Peirce's defined terms, which consists in a reflection on the implications of the Humble Argument; it is argued that the acceptance of a belief in God comes from somewhere within ourselves and, as such, is as basic as our claims to have any knowledge at all; and iii) an argumentation to the effect that the inquiry for which the Humble Argument provides the initial hypothesis, leads to the exhibition that all inquiry presupposes the reality of God.
1. The Humble Argument

For Peirce, the Humble Argument is the most important of the three arguments because, he claims, it leads to a "truly religious Belief in His Reality and His nearness." Peirce claims that this conviction takes a very active part in influencing a person's conduct. Peirce, for example, wrote about his living conviction as springing from "honest, sincere, and unaffected...meditation upon the idea of God." What is strange here is that Peirce doesn't develop this argument any further. It starts out with a lot of enthusiasm, but just sort of peters out. Despite this, I think the Humble Argument is Peirce's favorite because of his conviction of its validity and importance. He believes sincerely that the idea of a Creator happened spontaneously once the universes of experience were reflected upon through meditation and it carried its own conviction.

I hesitate to label this sort of proof as simplistic from a scientific philosophical viewpoint because I think that the argument can be developed in a more detailed way than Peirce did. The argument needs be completed, for example, by carefully working out the divine attributes of God. He did in some places attempt to make explicit the present proof, but he didn't really do it until he arrived at the third argument, which he considered to be a totally new and separate argument. The third argument seems to
solidify the kind of conviction that one is supposed to have according to the first argument.

2. Belief from Within

The second argument is built upon the conviction which comes as a result of meditation on the idea of God in the Humble Argument. For Peirce, if one perceived the force of this second argument, one would "... make it such a presentation of universal human nature as to show that a latent tendency toward belief in God is a fundamental ingredient of the soul ... simply the natural precipitate of meditation upon the origin of the ... Universes." What Peirce is after here is to show that one's belief in God, which will appear once one gives oneself over to musement, or free meditation, is rooted in one's very nature. Hence, if one accepts "human nature," one must accept all that goes with it, all the "fundamental ingredients." The value of these ingredients is dependent upon what one is and can do. The true value of the argument for Peirce, it seems, is to substantiate and confirm "mental operations which the Humble Argument actually and actively lives out." In other words, argumentation cannot provide conviction by itself with no lived religious experience.

There is a variety of objections to the two arguments, but we will focus on only a few. One objection is that the hypothesis of God may indeed by a natural one which suggests
itself to the mind of someone immersed in Western tradition where theism is an important element, but what about the person from another tradition? What about the person who is a part of a society where the idea of a monotheistic creation hasn't even been formulated? Peirce couldn't possibly maintain that a member of a society of this type could arrive at the hypothesis of one God, a Creator, even if that person did give him- or herself over to the act of musement. Peirce, in fact, admitted that before certain hypotheses could be thought of, a certain development in thought was needed. This admission restricts the number of people qualified to profit from musement. However, it does not affect the essentials of the argument any more than does the fact that some people are incapable of elaborating a hypothesis under any everyday, ordinary circumstances, let alone the possibility of forming a valid hypothesis of the sort formed by those with a scientific background and training. Peirce's response to this objection was that mental development and background prevented many people from seeing some of the most blatant and obvious facts of the universe. This isn't a particularly convincing response. If he were to say that sometimes people don't see what is "right before their eyes" because perhaps they aren't looking for the right thing or they don't know what they're supposed to see, then I might be persuaded to go along with him. I'm not quite sure what Peirce has in mind when he says "mental development and background" but I suspect he
means that we all come equipped one degree or another of capability to form hypotheses. Some do it better than others. The better equipment one has, the better chance one has of forming good hypotheses. Some people may never be able to form the hypothesis that God is Real. Again, the problem is caused in Peirce's imposition of "hypothesis" in a place it needn't be.

3. Presupposition of God's Reality

The third argument is the most prominent in the "Neglected Argument" essay. The Humble Argument appears as the first step of scientific inquiry. The Humble Argument is the "Abductive" or "Retroductive" stage in which an explanation is spelled out as a tentative explanation of phenomena. In ordinary scientific investigation, two steps would follow necessarily from the first step. These steps are i) to draw conclusions from the hypothesis and ii) to attempt to verify them through experiment. This procedure, though, doesn't work in Peirce's set-up. Peirce, in fact, makes note of a few respects in which the hypothesis of God differs from an ordinary scientific hypothesis. He writes, "In the first place, the Plausibility of the hypothesis reaches an almost unparalleled height among deliberately formed hypotheses." Hence, it is so difficult to doubt God's reality once the hypothesis has been formed that there "... is great danger that the investigation will stop at this first stage, owing to the indifference of the Muser to
any proof of it.33 It is this initial plausibility, according to Peirce, which argues solidly in favour of the truth of the hypothesis. Further elaboration of this point will come later.

Peirce's occupation with contrasting the God hypothesis with a scientific hypothesis emphasizes how Peirce is especially concerned to highlight the relations between the doctrine of God and the existence of scientific research. Therefore, although it is impossible to draw experimental consequences from the hypothesis, there is compensation in the character of the hypothesis as a whole. The carrying out of any sort of research at all is made meaningful, for Peirce, by the reality of God. God is not directly justified in any particular experiment, but if any experimentation is done at all, it is due to one's belief, implicitly or explicitly, that scientific research is meaningful. The only alternative to accepting a search for truth is to completely renounce any research done by total skeptics. As we have found, skepticism for Peirce is not an acceptable philosophical alternative. One must remember, though, that it is the reality of God that justifies a person's efforts in each field of research. Peirce could hardly deny that many people search for scientific truth with great sincerity and without previous acceptance of God. It is an inherent feature of Peirce's position to maintain that the attitude of these people betrays a presupposition
of God. I don't think that Peirce can get away with this.

We have seen several aspects of what Peirce positively conceived God to be. Although he never went about the elucidation of the nature of God in a systematic way, he did make scattered references to it in different parts of his writings. This may be a result of the unsystematic character of a good deal of his work, but it seems like some of this lack of a systematized character comes as a result of Peirce's extreme distrust of man's ability to know a great deal about God. Despite his enthusiastic defense of anthropomorphism, Peirce acknowledged that none of our ideas could be applied to God in a literal sense. He was quick to point out the dangers of attempting to make our ideas of God overly precise. This warning seems to reflect an era when a generally "low standard of theology was driving more and more scientists to agnosticism." Peirce remarked, "So, then, the question being whether I believe in the reality of God, I answer, Yes. I further opine that pretty nearly everybody believes this, including many of the scientific men of my generation who are accustomed to think that belief is entirely unfounded. The reason they fall into this extraordinary error is that they precide (or render precise) the conception, and in doing so, inevitably change it." He says later, "when anybody undertakes to say precisely what that order [of the universe] consists in, he will quickly find he outruns all logical warrant." This is a
wonderful example of Peirce's absolute belief in God and his virtual disbelief that someone might not believe in God (although he practically states that not everyone has the capacity to do so via the hypothesis route).

Peirce calls God the *Ens Necessarium*: he is the only being who is fully real. This being is the Creator or Maker of all that is real. The creative activity which is an inseparable attribute of God "... has been going on for an infinite time in the past, is going on now, and will continue for an indefinite period in the future." This emphasizes the difficulty inherent in the reconciliation of creation and the absence of change in God. Peirce also claims that with creation, omnipotence in a vague sense is an attribute of God which goes hand in hand with creative activity.

Peirce maintained that a person can predicate the concept of "mind" analogously with God, but not the concept of "consciousness." One must limit the latter to its connection with a physical brain because God is a "disembodied spirit." God is omniscient "in a vague sense." He maintains, "God's knowledge is something so utterly unlike our own that it is more like willing than knowing ... . For this thought is creative." How he knows this, I am not sure. According to Peirce, attributing purpose to God is essential if we are to understand His activity, yet we must reject such "purposiveness" insofar as it involves change as it is in us. Peirce made very
little comment on what a divine mode of knowing involves, one reason being that God has an "intuitive omni-science superseding reason." 41 God is "pure mind." He has His being out of time because all that is destined to think is fully in its being at any and every previous time. In "endless" time, God is destined to think all that He is capable of thinking, according to Peirce. It is amazing that Peirce can write so much about a God which he claims is infinitely incomprehensible.

Peirce also discusses, in rather strange terminology, even further implications of God's divine mode of being and thought. He writes, "Order is simply thought embodied in arrangement . . . ." 42 This seems to mean that thought which is considered to be real in any other way is above such order and, therefore, may be called "super-order." Order and uniformity are particular varieties of this super-order. Pure mind is creative of thought and insofar as it is manifested in time, it bears a relation to mental habit analogous to the relation that super-order bears to uniformity law. Pure mind alone is able to think the state of nothingness from which, in time or out, results all that exists.

A state in which there should be absolutely no super-order whatsoever would be such a state in nility. For all Being involves some kind of super-order. For example, to suppose a thing to have any particular character is to suppose a conditional proposition would express some kind of super-order, as any formulation of a general fact does. 43
Peirce seems to be talking about divine transcendence and the divine freedom in creation. So, according to Peirce, the spontaneity of the being of the divine mind and the freedom that the mind's decisions enjoy, come through the play of hypothetical as distinct from deductive logic. Because of this, Peirce denies that the divine mind is subject to any order of conditional propositions.

Considering Peirce's teaching that one can get into direct contact with God and that God is an infinite mind, it is natural that Peirce should hold a belief in divine providence. "Human beings are the children of God," and God's attitude towards human beings is "best summed up as love." We do not know "his scrutable purposes, nor can we comprehend His Plans," but, in general, God is perpetually creating us . . . our spiritual reality. Peirce wholeheartedly accepts the doctrine of the unfailing loving kindness of God to human beings. According to Peirce, one must accept all of this, no matter how difficult it might be (even though he doesn't think it is difficult) in order to have a close relationship with God.
ENDNOTES


4 Ibid., p. 490.


8 Ibid., ¶ 162.

9 Ibid., ¶ 613.


11 Ibid., ¶ 307.


13 Ibid., p. 29.


87
18 Peirce, "The Logic of Continuity," Volume 6, ¶ 189.
19 Ibid., ¶ 157.
22 Peirce, "The Categories in Detail," Volume 1, ¶ 316.
23 Ibid., ¶ 239.
25 Ibid.
27 O'Connell, "C. S. Peirce," p. 34.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., ¶ 487.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., ¶ 488.
33 Ibid.
35 Peirce, "Answers to Questions Concerning My Belief in God," Volume 6, ¶ 496.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., ¶ 506.
38 Ibid., ¶ 508.
39 Ibid.
41 Ibid.

43 Ibid.


46 Peirce, "Notes of Scientific Philosophy," Volume 1, ¶ 143.

CONCLUSION

A. Chapter Review

In Chapter I we introduced Peirce's notions of "Pure Play" and "Musement." We discovered that Pure Play is an occupation of the mind which requires casting aside any serious thought. Pure Play is letting one's mind wander with no specific purpose or intentions. Musement is a more serious type of Pure Play, an offshoot of Pure Play. Musement leads us, eventually and inevitably, to conclude that "God is Real." Musement is more sophisticated than just letting one's mind wander. It is, rather, opening one's mind to soak in the wonders of the universe and embark on a dialectic with ourselves. This dialectic leads us to question whether or not there is a power or mentality behind the wonders which we find around us. I like this part because it seems to be a perfectly feasible sort of action. Many a person has an experience of one sort of another which makes him or her think about the possibility of a power or mentality lying behind it all.

Complications arise when Peirce decides that this contemplation of the universe will lead to a hypothesis, the hypothesis that "God is Real." The more one muses about the idea of God's Reality, the more one's self and one's mind will respond to the hypothesis. Peirce's insistence that our process of moving from effect to cause, and the process of hypothecating God's existence, is what gets him into
trouble. It is the placing of the inferential mechanisms such as Retroduction or the Hypothetical on top of uncomplicated and thought-provoking concepts like Musement, which take away the allure of Musement.

What can the hypothesis "God is Real" do for me? Well, when one thinks of "God is Real" as a hypothesis, it is virtually impossible to think of what influence "God is Real" could have on my life. Experiential consequences don't seem to be able to be deduced from such a hypothesis. The hypothesis "God is Real" does not inspire images after which one might model one's life.

In Chapter II we explored the inconsistencies, as well as the consistencies, that the N.A. has with some of Peirce's previous work, especially his 1868 paper, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities." We found that although Peirce wants to guard against false and make-believe doubts, he falls into the trap in the N.A. We found also that in addition to the dislike of false doubts, Peirce dislikes the idea that one can claim to have knowledge of something, hold something to be true, without our ever exposing that belief or knowledge for public scrutiny and criticism. This dislike also seems to get overlooked in the N.A.

Peirce thinks that philosophy should imitate the "successful sciences" in its methods insofar as they proceed from tangible premises which are subject to scrutiny. If philosophy is considered to be a scientific endeavor, then it is capable of being revised. Science is committed to a method, not a belief, and Peirce thinks this is an important
significance, but he also felt that direct experience isn't concrete enough a basis upon which to ground an argument for God's existence. One has to combine the two to get a proper perspective on the problem.

We outlined the three arguments for the Reality of God. They are i) God can be directly perceived; ii) God's Reality is apparent from the finality of the Universe; and iii) God's Reality is arguable from man's instinct to believe in Him. With a brief description of these, we were equipped to examine even further the "Neglected Argument for the Reality of God."

The N.A. offers a different perspective from which to argue for the Reality of God. It offers us the notion of Musement and a model in which direct experience and argument are related in fuller detail than any of the three aforementioned arguments offer. The N.A. consists of three arguments: i) The Humble Argument in which Musement produces a conviction of God's Reality; ii) an argumentation which consists in a reflection on the implications of the Humble Argument; and iii) an argumentation to the effect that the inquiry for which the Humble Argument provides the initial hypothesis, leads to the demonstration that all inquiry presupposes the Reality of God.

The Humble Argument is the most important for Peirce because he claims it leads to a truly religious belief in God and his relationship with man. The Humble Argument, in its purest form, that is, as an instrument or proof that
God's Reality sprang spontaneously from man's contemplation of the universes, is probably the most provocative part of the N.A. It's this part which offers one so much to think about because it is the sort of experience (as contemplating one's universe) which many of us have had.

Peirce's second argument is built upon the conviction which results from meditation on the idea of God in the Humble Argument. What Peirce claims here is that one's belief in God, which will appear when one Muses, is rooted in one's very nature. This argument is supposed to substantiate and confirm the mental doings which the Humble Argument lives out. One cannot have conviction through argumentation without any lived experience.

The problems with these arguments are many, but the major objection is that the hypothesis of God may indeed be a natural "conclusion" for one of Western tradition and theism, but for someone not of this tradition, what happens? What about those who aren't good at forming hypotheses? It becomes questionable as to whom specifically can benefit from Musement. I suspect that anyone can muse, although I also suspect we all will muse about different things. If Peirce had eliminated the idea of "hypothecating" completely in this instance, he'd be much better off. He wouldn't be stuck with some of the problems which he's created for himself.

The third argument is the most prominent in the N.A. The Humble Argument and Retroductive Stage spell out a
tentative explanation of phenomena around us. If this were an ordinary first stage in scientific investigation, two steps would necessarily follow. The first would be the drawing of conclusions from the hypothesis; and the second would be the attempt at verification through experiment. However, since this is not an ordinary first step, the next two steps do not follow. For one, Peirce claims that the particular hypothesis is so highly plausible, much more than any ordinary hypothesis, that one would be tempted not even to carry out any further investigation. This plausibility, according to Peirce, argues solidly in favour of the truth of the hypothesis.

Peirce is constantly preoccupied with contrasting the God hypothesis with an ordinary scientific hypothesis as an attempt to emphasize his belief in the close relation between the doctrine of God and the existence of scientific research. Although he cannot draw experimental consequences from the hypothesis, he feels somehow consoled, I think, by the character of the hypothesis as a whole. God is not directly justifiable in any particular experiment, but, if any experimentation is done at all, claims Peirce, it is due to one's belief that scientific research is meaningful.

B. Finale

When I started this project, my main idea was to perform a strict analysis and critique of "A Neglected
Argument for the Reality of God" with special emphasis on Peirce's use of the concept of Musement.

There was something charming about the Neglected Argument when I was first introduced to it. There was something which made me say, "I like this! Peirce might just have something here!" It was just this charm which lured me into doing a more complete investigation, to see if Peirce really did have something new or revolutionary. As my investigation got more involved, as mentioned before, it became apparent that what Peirce was up to was more complicated and involved than I was initially aware. Peirce was introducing some interesting and fresh ideas with underpinnings difficult to grasp. So, more in-depth investigation was the next logical step. What happened was that, as the investigation wore on, the argument began to unravel and the charm began to get confusedly meshed with Peirce's preoccupation with logical inference. I went full circle with the N.A., that is, from being charmed to being disillusioned, back to being charmed. Despite the problems in the N.A., I still have a bit of a fondness for it.

When first introduced to the N.A., there seemed to be something inherently good about it, something obviously good, perhaps just overlooked. Peirce felt very strongly that what he was offering in the N.A. was something indeed obvious, just overlooked and, hence, unappreciated. Peirce's notion of Musement is what attracted me the most. When I tried to imagine what Musement would really be like,
it was quite attractive. The idea of thinking about the wonders of the universe and thinking about what might lie behind these wonders, some power or mentality, was very appealing to me. It seemed like a fresh basis upon which to base an argument for the Reality of God.

At first, for me, Musement appeared to be a very clever explanation of how I might arrive at the concept of God. It didn't seem too far-fetched that one's mind could levitate to thinking about God as a result of letting one's mind wander a bit and soaking in the wonder of the universe. This seems so easy and uncomplicated. Uncomplicated, that is, before I realized how involved the N.A. really is. Musement struck me as right somehow at the first look or two, maybe because there have been times when I have been caught up in the aura of wonderment about natural phenomena which surround me. Taken at the level of contemplating something like a leaf or a flower and then beginning to think that there might be a greater mentality than that of a human responsible for the beauty or excellence of the leaf or flower, the idea of Musement doesn't seem outrageous. This is the charm of the Neglected Argument. This is what attracted me to the N.A. at first and what, despite the beating it takes after inspection, keeps me from disregarding it completely. The charm that Musement radiates has its place, perhaps an important one, but Peirce has obscured this by his insistence of matching up Musement with Inference.
Being enchanted by the N.A., I decided that I should dig deeper to see if what looked good upon first glance really had the potential it seemed to promise. Unfortunately, the charm faded and the so-called logic became confusing. The initial critique of the essay itself showed that Peirce was really presenting some rather strange new terms and ideas and was putting them together in an attempt to make the "charming" somehow more legitimate. Peirce needed to give us some sort of system in which to fit the charming activity called Musement, I think, in order to make Musement somehow more "tough-minded." Peirce's reputation for being a tough-minded logician preceded him, and I think he felt that he couldn't present new ideas such as those presented in the N.A. essay without having the tough-minded back-up behind his ideas. Unfortunately, as my search went on, it became more and more apparent to me that Peirce's systematizing and logicizing was just padding; padding to make the use of Musement somehow more legitimate despite the fact that Musement has a lot to offer on its own. Whether Peirce applied this padding consciously or not, I cannot tell.

Sometimes, it seemed to me that Peirce had to know that the N.A. couldn't possibly hold up to the sort of rigorous testing he was used to applying to philosophical problems and ideas. Peirce made multiple bold statements with no apparent back-up. He offered the concept of abduction which doesn't seem to work very well and seemed
unnecessary, and he went against what seem to be some of his cardinal rules about doing effective philosophy. This all made me wonder whether Peirce really believed that he was offering something tough and new, or whether he knew in the back of his mind that his reasoning really wasn't all there, but that he felt so strongly about legitimizing his strong belief in God that he ignored his weak reasoning and sweeping statements.

I spent my time, at first, trying to analyze what Peirce's defined terms were about, how they fit into the whole scheme, and what sort of scheme he was actually after. I made careful note of definitions and distinctions between some specially defined words such as Argument and Argumentation. Once I felt adequately armed with these definitions, I began to tackle the rest of the argument. What struck me as strange at the end was that I hadn't really gotten a chance to use my well-prepared artillery. The elaborate word-defining seemed rather wasteful.

When I finished reading the N.A. many times, I had to ask whether or not the Neglected Argument said any more than what various biblical passages express, expressions such as: "... His everlasting power and deity—however invisible—have been there for the mind to see in the things He has made,"¹ or "... through the grandeur and beauty of creatures we may, by analogy, contemplate their Author."² These passages are biblical examples, and very possibly the basis for Peirce's concept of Musement and the
underpinnings of the N.A. These biblical passages have little to do with our, shall we say, capacity for reason, and much to do with our capacity for appreciation. These passages tell us that it is our capacity for appreciation which fans away doubts about God's Reality, and not a reasoning mechanism of any kind. To bring in the element of reasoning here is to bring in machinery too big and sophisticated for the job. The big machinery of reasoning isn't necessary when the smaller machinery will do. When starting with biblical passages which demonstrate one's idea of theory, the big guns of reasoning are out of place. They overwhelm the "appreciative" aspects of Musement.

Peirce has a reputation for being a truly tough-minded logician. His works, such as "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" and other of his papers published in 1868, are fine examples of Peirce's genuine dedication to doing philosophy in a no-nonsense manner with a healthy respect for logic. Unfortunately, the N.A. lacks the muscle that so many of his other works have. What Peirce attempts to pass off as a truly logical argument would be squelched almost immediately by any sufficiently armed logician. The N.A. just wouldn't be able to pass any logical test and, I fear, were Peirce to seriously apply any of his own tests to the N.A., the N.A. would surely fail. Again, Peirce would have been better off leaving off the fight for valid inference and concentrating on the "appreciative" side of the N.A. It seems much more fruitful.
Perhaps Peirce was saying to non-believers and skeptics, "You're all entirely too serious! Put down your work for a minute and let's take a walk! There's some stuff out there that will really impress you!" Perhaps Peirce is offering a sort of tonic to skeptics. Maybe he's inviting them to put aside all their serious endeavors for a moment or two so that they might take in what Peirce seems to think is too often taken for granted, that is, Nature. Perhaps he's telling a skeptical audience to momentarily put aside all that they take as true and important and sophisticated, and let nature do the impressing for awhile. The skeptical audience, for Peirce, may be so tied up in "non-nature" that they've become blinded to what Nature has to offer them in an answer to questions concerning God's Reality. I think Peirce should have pursued this line of thought.

It's unfortunate that Peirce couldn't accept it as a tonic. The preoccupation with inference gives the argument no more credit, and I am quite certain that it couldn't hoodwink a true skeptic. I am inclined to think that a skeptic might even take that walk away from his or her work for a moment if Peirce wasn't somehow trying to pass off the N.A. for something more than it is.

If Peirce was trying to tell us in "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" that rationality can be flexible enough to sanction a belief in Good, I think he succeeds but in a very confusing and complicated way. Perhaps if he'd started with the statement, "Rationality can
be flexible enough to sanction a belief in God," and gone on from there to talk about Musement in a form pure and uncomplicated with methods of logical inference, he might have attracted a larger and more appreciative audience. I think "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" has been unjustly overlooked, perhaps because it is a difficult and confusing piece, or perhaps because Peirce isn't thought of as having a stance one way or another about God. I don't think the N.A. deserves the neglect it has had since its writing. There are too many fruitful and thought-provoking ideas and concepts, particularly Musement, which deserve extensive and sensitive investigation.
END NOTES


2 Ibid., Wisdom xiii:5.
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VITA AUCTORIS

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