

THE SACRED DEPTHS OF NATURE
AN ONTOLOGY OF THE POSSIBLE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF PEIRCE AND
HEIDEGGER

by

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

LEON NIEMOCZYNSKI, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Philosophy, presented on December 5th, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: THE SACRED DEPTHS OF NATURE: AN ONTOLOGY OF THE POSSIBLE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF PEIRCE AND HEIDEGGER

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Douglas R. Anderson

This dissertation carries out a study of the American pragmatist C.S. Peirce and constructively applies his thought to a religious understanding of nature called “ecstatic naturalism,” a philosophy developed by Robert S. Corrington that conjoins American pragmatism and Continental phenomenology. In this project I explore how the modality of possibility functions in the disclosure of a “divine life,” that is, the life of a developing cosmos taken to be sacred in its continual processes of evolutionary growth and transformation. Possibility, found in Peirce’s category of experience known as “Firstness,” provides organisms with the ontological conditions required for any immediately felt qualitative experience—experience that is the site for potential religious experience. “Religious” experience here means the ecstatic contraposition of finite being before “infinite” being. I consider infinite being first as an honorific sheer availability of being (potential or possible being: *becoming*) and then in terms of how inquiry may reveal nature to be an encompassing infinite that locates and situates finite organisms. It is my thesis that, as it is found in Peirce’s category of Firstness, possibility serves as a ground for the disclosure of this infinite, “the divine life,” by enabling its presence to come forward as a *feeling of the sacred*— a feeling found when inquirers muse over nature and establish beliefs about the universe in which they are situated. To the end of

making these claims more concrete, I draw on figures such as the German existential phenomenologist Martin Heidegger, and the German idealist F.W.J. Schelling so as to identify how possibility may serve as a ground (*Abgrund*) for divine disclosure, and to identify understandings of existence that take nature to be a sacred life of φύσις (phusis), dynamically revealing and concealing before finite and situated organisms.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, and to my wife.

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CHAPTER ONE

A PEIRCEAN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

“The word ‘God,’ so capitalized’ (as we Americans say), is *the* definable proper name, signifying *Ens necessarium*; in my belief Really creator of all three Universes of Experience.”

--C.S. Peirce, CP 6.453¹

This dissertation is an essay in the philosophy of religion. My focus is on the concept of possibility and its connection to a feeling of the sacred. The conceptual significance of this study hinges on the importance of developing ideas shared by American pragmatism and Continental phenomenology. I hope to animate discourse between these two traditions, as well to uncover and elucidate points of connection available for discussion between the two traditions within the general field of ontology. The purpose of this chapter is to serve as a general introduction to my study, and to discuss the scope and method of the treatise. I also identify what philosophical currents I resist and from what currents I draw. I explain my thesis, discuss general terminology, and establish my philosophical position on the philosophers involved.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Let me begin with a set of claims that describe my project. What will follow will be a working out of the details of these claims.

“Firstness” is one of three fundamental categories of experience according to the American pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce.² It is my claim that “Firstness” is a ground of phenomenological feeling and ontological possibility that eludes direct inspection, but can nevertheless be felt as disclosing a *sacred* dimension of human experience. The “sacred” is defined in this study as the *felt presence* or *power* of what is divine, holy, or god-like.³ Traditionally “the sacred” has been associated with specific places, objects, or ritual practices—for example, a sacred site, a sacred stone or tree, or a particular sacred blessing. Such places, objects, or practices are deemed sacred because they manifest the presence or power of the divine.⁴ Etymologically, “sacred” descends from the Latin *sacrum*, which refers to the gods and anything that brings about their power.⁵

I would like to broaden the traditional understanding of how one might encounter the sacred, placing its felt power very near to the human being in the course of experience. What I would like to suggest is that one might live in a world that is capable of becoming sacred. Perhaps the sacred might be found not just in human crafted objects or ritual practices, but also in the *workings* of nature itself. That is, nature’s workings—given certain circumstances—may appear sacred to the human being. These workings of nature include the great cosmological narrative of the universe: its billions of years of evolution, its vast reaches of space, and the scientific laws governing its bodies. With this picture of the sacred in mind, one might stand in awe of and with humility before the powerful workings of a vast universe, and thus one might feel a religious and cosmic connection to the universe honoring it as divine. That feeling of the sacred, I think, is available to each individual: a majestic, mysterious, and beautiful power may be felt,

prompting one to listen to the workings of nature, motivating one to act religiously in a dynamic and transforming universe.

Already I am working with the supposition that what is divine may appear sacred to the human being, rather than subsist in a completely hidden form. Mircea Eliade titled an appearance or manifestation of the divine a “hierophany”—an appearance of the divine in a sacred form.⁶ The Greek word for sacred is ἱερός, or “hieros.”⁷ The term “hierophany” was established to allow one to distinguish sacred phenomena from “everyday” or ordinary nature, although “everyday” or ordinary nature might become sacred, manifesting the divine depending on circumstance.⁸ Things are thus arguably capable of standing out in their hierophanic sense of meaning, which is critical for Eliade’s analysis of religious symbolism and structural hermeneutics. Drawing attention to the idea that nature’s workings may appear sacred is meant to show that I do not claim nature to be synonymous with the divine. I only mean to suggest that given certain circumstances or events, the divine might appear in the workings of nature, and might be felt as a sacred power or presence within the course of human experience.⁹

In this study, I associate the divine’s *felt presence* or *power*, denoted by the term “sacred,” with the *felt power of possibility*, denoted by Peirce’s category of Firstness.¹⁰ I do so because, for Peirce, it is the power of possibility found in Firstness that impels the evolution of the cosmos through allowing for the birth of novelty, growth, and change, both in nature and in the history of human culture.¹¹ In my view, experiences of Firstness allow for one to encounter a form of divinity that I opt to call “the divine life.” “The divine life” translates to Peirce’s concept of God and the evolution of the cosmos, or as Peirce put it, “the creative act of God is all that has brought about and *is bringing about*

the whole universe of mind and matter in all its details [emphasis mine.]”¹² It is my thesis that, as it is found in Peirce’s category of Firstness, *possibility* serves as a ground of disclosure for the divine life by enabling its presence to come forward as a *feeling of the sacred*— a feeling found when inquirers muse over the cosmos in which they are situated. Musing over nature, on Peirce’s view, begins when some surprising phenomenon disrupts one’s beliefs about the world. In order to come to terms with the phenomenon and move belief back into a settled state, the individual will begin a process of inquiry known as “abduction” and venture forth a range of possible explanations so as to account for the phenomenon at hand, thus “repairing” the disturbed belief. It is my claim that as beings inquire and find their beliefs challenged, disrupted, or more generally stimulated within the course of experience, it is within the process of re-establishing or “re-attuning” those disturbed beliefs to the *source* of their disruption—the cosmos or “nature”—that a transcendental or “religious” contrast may be felt between what is *finite* and what is *infinite*, or what is an individual and limited part of nature and what is the endless reality of nature which is not itself any single part. Thus, it is on the basis of possibility that beings may freely inquire, fix beliefs, and come to see themselves as part of an infinite cosmos.

“Abduction” is Peirce’s term for the consideration of possibilities such that one might suggest a plausible hypothesis for a phenomenon. Peirce described abduction as beginning in feeling and wonder, a process that is “the dark laboring, the bursting out of conjecture, the remarking of a smooth fitting to the anomaly, as it is turned back and forth like a key in a lock.”¹³ In its simplest form, Peirce stated that “abduction is, after all, nothing but guessing.”¹⁴ Perhaps one might say that abduction is a “feeling out” of what

is possibly true of the world. Inasmuch as one abductively considers the divine—itself initially presented as a possibility—a disclosure of a sacred dimension of human experience may be felt. Put differently, inasmuch as the divine life expresses itself as the power of possibility given from within the category of Firstness, and as that power is given over and felt within abduction, a sacred dimension of human experience appears.¹⁵

During the process of abduction, the inquiring being is considered finite because it is “constrained” by an infinite cosmos before it. Here a “constraint” simply refers to how the *force of experience* impinges upon the human being’s fixed beliefs and practices to suggest what is “true” of the world.¹⁶ For Peirce, and for Martin Heidegger, the other major philosopher utilized toward the end of this dissertation, a “truth” is simply how things are given and presented within experience. As the world suggests its truths, inquiring beings must acclimate to the force of experience in order to successfully make their way in the world, but not without adding to their own sense of self or beliefs in the process. As the inquirer adjusts to the cosmos in which it is located, the inquirer—here read organism, creature, human being, or *Dasein*—continues to gain a sense of the whole in which it is located: it gains a sense of the infinite. Such is, I think, a humbling experience as finite beings adjust to a universe suggesting *its* truths. In this way, the feeling of finitude before an infinite cosmos found within abductive inquiry is similar to the feeling of awe and humility found in religious experience. Peirce spoke of this attitude in the following way:

Changes of opinion are brought about by events beyond human control...it became apparent that nature would not follow human opinion, however unanimous...human opinion must move to nature's position. That was a lesson in

humility. A few men...began to see that they had to abandon the pride of an opinion assumed absolutely final in any respect, and to use all their endeavors to yield as unresistingly as possible to the overwhelming tide of experience, which must master them at last, and to listen to what nature seems to be telling us.¹⁷

Thus, the challenges and mysteries of a vast cosmos may, at least from time to time, remind human beings of their finitude when nature is considered in its totality, reality, and magnificence. Along with the burden of finitude comes the opportunity for growth, as does the opportunity for learning and self-transcendence so that one may have the blessing of entering into a greater communion with, and understanding of, nature.

My project involves the central claim that the attunement of inquirers' beliefs to an infinite and encompassing cosmos constitutes what is called an "ecstatic" event.¹⁸ An "ecstatic" event is where one gains a sense of the infinite in an act of partial self-transcendence. In that sense, then, the ecstatic event is *trans-being*: it is only partially temporal; one stands "outside" of one's own finitude only temporarily, or momentarily, within ordinary daily life, yet one may gain a sense of what infinite reality extends beyond them. This sense of ecstasy, of a feeling of going beyond ordinariness, is "transcendental" in that it is *extra/ordinary* which means it is *beyond* ordinariness yet remains still in touch with it. In this way, human beings are connected to the whole world, that is, the infinite cosmos, yet practically dwell in a finite everyday life. "Event" is of course a technical term, and I will develop its meaning as this project develops. However, I must warn the reader that I will not relate the ecstatic event so much to temporality—its momentary character—as I will relate it to its ontological character of revealing the difference between the finite and infinite. To embark on a full explanation of an event ontology or the concept of temporality would unduly complicate the major

focus of the project, which is Peircean Firstness.¹⁹ I use the term *ecstatic* simply to indicate an eclipse of self-finitude within the disrupted situation. Badiou comes to mind here in that I am discussing an “ontology of the situation.”²⁰ The ecstatic event is an ontological situation found both in Peirce’s account of abduction and Heidegger’s account of thinking about Being, as I will claim.

Experiencing the category of Firstness allows for ecstatic moments to occur within abduction. Yet, one must be prepared to see the sacred character of experience presented in those moments. A disposition of “receptivity” toward the ecstatic event is therefore required. “Receptivity” here means a disposition of awaiting or anticipating—where the universe is “accepted” but not without “passion or exultation in the spirit.”²¹ I follow the American pragmatist William James’ idea that being “receptive” means being open to whatever experience may bring, or “agreeing with the scheme,” as he put it. James described this mode of receptivity as the “Stoic rising to the Christian warmth of sentiment.”²² James clearly noted what an idea of receptivity means when he quoted Marcus Aurelius, “Everything harmonizes with me which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early nor too late, which is in due time for thee. Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring, O Nature.”²³ To be receptive means being prepared to see the divine, or suggestive, plausible hypotheses in general, appearing in the sacred space of what is possible as given in Firstness.

The notion that a receptive disposition allows one to either await or anticipate the divine’s appearance within sacred nature is not so far from Heidegger’s concept of *Gelassenheit*, or the comportment towards beings that allows Being to appear in its full and undisturbed nature. Heidegger described this comportment in his text, “Conversation

on a Country Path About Thinking” (published in 1959, together with a “Memorial Address” that Heidegger delivered in 1955 on the occasion of the 175th birthday of composer Conradin Kreutzer.)²⁴ Strangely, however, many scholars believe that Heidegger’s call for a receptive disposition is something completely “passive”—and play to terms such as *Wächter* or *Gelassenheit* as if the disposition Heidegger spoke of is some free-form letting-things-be that requires little or no effort. The appropriation of the sacred requires a distinctive effort and disposition for engaging beings so that nature, or in Heidegger’s language, “be-ing,” can hold sway—where “be-ing” (hyphenated, sometimes spelled as *Beyng*, [*Seyn*]) is meant to indicate Being’s reappropriated mode as a time-space site for an appearance of Beyng’s truth and the divine.²⁵ It is important to note that Heidegger’s guidelines for the appropriation of the event of Beyng’s truth constitute no strict active-passive division, although being prepared to encounter the divine does involve significant preparation.²⁶ For example, receiving the “gift” of Beyng and the appearance of the “last god”—one of Heidegger’s terms for the divine—requires actively “holding oneself within the essential sway of truth.”²⁷ Holding oneself open to truth is an engaged and demanding effort, and certainly by no means is it a completely passive form of receptivity. This disposition, and the terms surrounding it, will be explained in more detail within the third and fourth chapters of this project.

B. SCOPE OF PROJECT

According to the editorial note written by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss in Volume 6 of Peirce’s *Collected Papers*, a predominant view is that no strict division exists between Peirce’s ontology and cosmology. Hartshorne and Weiss wrote, “Though

his [Peirce's] architectonic prescribes a separate treatment for ontology and cosmology, he never actually separated them."²⁸ I view Peirce's ontology and cosmology as mutual explanatory factors when accounting for the origins of nature and reality. Therefore, because nature and reality are, in part, made of Firstness and because Firstness involves possibility, I begin by examining possibility as it is found in Peirce's ontology and cosmology. One might have just as easily begun with a discussion about Peirce's phenomenology or theory of abduction while relating Firstness to themes in the philosophy of religion. However, beginning with Peirce's ontology and cosmology seems to be the most efficient route because it is within Peirce's explanations of reality and nature that one most clearly detects a working theism. Thus, I begin by focusing upon Peirce's metaphysics, concentrating on issues such as possibility and the evolving cosmos. I then relate those themes to Peirce's account of abduction. To close my study, I employ the philosophy of Heidegger to aid where Peirce's tendency to concentrate on scientific issues and methodology leaves one wanting a more detailed ontological account. Although Peirce did have a sense of the ontological origins of possibility at work within his system, he did not completely think through how those origins enable the categories of experience or the processes of abduction in which the divine may come forward as a feeling of the sacred.

By speaking of ontological origins, I mean to point to the "depths" or zones of intelligibility and order "below" the organized perspective of the human being. Peirce maintained that the reasoning processes of consciousness that function in abduction work themselves down into the most basic or "deep" dimensions of nature. So, to the standpoint of a polyp, for example, the world appears chaotic and unruly yet does contain

intelligibility and a degree of order.²⁹ To the standpoint of the human being, the world appears to exhibit a greater degree of order viewed as generality and law. Thus, more generality and order exists for the human being than could be detected at the level of the polyp. In Peirce's ontology, then, there are conceptions of mentality needed for abduction that can drop "downward" into "lower" orders of creation as well as forms of mentality that "ascend" "upward" toward more concrete generalities. As Peirce explained,

We may, therefore, say that a world of chance is simply our actual world viewed from the standpoint of an animal at the very vanishing point of intelligence. The actual world is almost a chance-medley to the mind of a polyp. The interest which the uniformities of Nature have for an animal measures his place in the scale of intelligence.³⁰

And in the words of Robert Corrington,

[T]here is an incremental ratio of order that is manifest in the relation between a finite and an infinite mind. The infinite mind of God must have an unlimited sense of the order of the universe, while the finite human mind remains limited in its understanding of the scope of order within the world...Peirce correlates order with intelligence in an evolutionary context that sees all of creation as underway toward more intelligence and hence more order.³¹

Perhaps one could put the point in a poetic manner as Emerson did, "Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can draw; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens."³²

What is it that resides at the depths of these lower orders of creation, allowing for the possibility of any ordering *to be* at all? In the most basic respect I am asking of

Peirce, “What power makes possibility possible?” Could there be a creative power working upward from the depths of nature producing unruly mentality fit for organization? What is this power at work in the sacred depths of nature? Peirce’s categories tell one how nature is organized and evolves, but he does not account for the depths of nature’s emergence in any detailed way. Put differently, Peirce outlined the categories that function to organize the orders of nature and their evolutionary development, but he did not discuss the “depths” or conditions which seem to *permit* the process of a creatively evolving cosmos in its more basic respects. As the evolving cosmos is claimed to be a divine life, discerning whatever power that upswells from nature’s depths and ensures the divine life’s own development is critical. With these questions in mind, it is my contention that Peirce provides the organizing categories of experience, while philosophers such as Heidegger provide a way to think about their enabling ontological conditions.³³ Both philosophers point to the felt sacred character of experience in their analyses of possibility.

Throughout this study I will use Corrington’s perspective of ecstatic naturalism to develop and broaden Peirce’s scientific philosophy to include discussion about the philosophy of religion.³⁴ Ecstatic naturalism also provides valuable categorial tools related to an ontology of the possible as it is found in Peirce and Heidegger. Heidegger’s connection to the philosophy of religion and ontology here is primarily limited to his attempt to consider the evasive yet sustaining ground of Being as well as his work on the German Idealist, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling.³⁵ Mention of Schelling is brief, however, it was from Schelling that Heidegger and Peirce drew many of their ideas—and it is from Schelling as well that Corrington draws many of his ideas,

especially the notion that there is a ground of possibility presenting the sacred. Thus, I employ the philosophies of Heidegger and Corrington, specifically their Schellingian moments, in a constructive interpretation and development of Peirce's philosophy of religion. Peirce's strongest Schellingian moment might be quoted from a letter he wrote to James. In it, Peirce wrote, "My views were probably influenced by Schelling—by all stages of Schelling, but especially by the *Philosophie Der Natur*. I consider Schelling as enormous; and one thing I admire about him is his freedom from the trammels of system, and his holding himself uncommitted to any previous utterance. In that, he is like a scientific man. If you were to call my philosophy Schellingianism transformed in the light of modern physics, I should not take it hard."³⁶ Heidegger's debt to Schelling is no less apparent. As Heidegger wrote, "Schelling is the truly creative and boldest thinker of this whole age of German philosophy. He is that to such an extent that he drives German idealism from within right past its own fundamental position....The treatise [Schelling's treatise on human freedom] shatters Hegel's *Logic* before it was even published."³⁷

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

A. THE CATEGORY OF FIRSTNESS AND RELATED PERSPECTIVES

Peirce's category of Firstness is the guiding thread in this project. So as to be clear, the *ontological* or *modal possibility* found in Firstness is what I call "Firstness-possibility." "Firstness-possibility" relates to Peirce's ontology and cosmology. The reader may associate Whitehead's and Hartshorne's process theism or Buchler's process metaphysics with this aspect of Peirce's thought if it is helpful.³⁸ Other philosophers'

ideas that resemble Peirce's ontology and cosmology may be the Catholic cosmological and evolutionary philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, or the Hindu evolutionary philosopher and poet Sri Aurobindo.³⁹ These figures will not be explicitly dealt with in this project, but they are in the background.

The *phenomenological feeling* found in the conscious experience of Firstness is what I call "Firstness-feeling." "Firstness-feeling" corresponds to Peirce's phenomenology and theory of abduction. The reader may associate the hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology of religious feeling found in figures such as Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade, and Paul Ricoeur with this aspect of Peirce's thought.⁴⁰ James' notion of a "pure consciousness" or Husserl's views on conscious experience and feeling might be helpful to keep in mind here as well.⁴¹ Again, while these thinkers are not explicitly dealt with, it may be helpful to keep in mind that they are in the background. I shall provide specific qualification of Peirce's ontology and cosmology in Chapter Two. I shall provide specific qualification of abduction and its relationship to the feeling of Firstness in Chapter Three.

B. THE CATEGORIES AND "THE DIVINE LIFE"

Peirce hinted from time to time that the developing reality of the universe is the reality of God. For example, he claimed that, "The starting-point of the universe, God the Creator, is the Absolute First; the terminus of the universe, God completely revealed."⁴² Peirce also wrote that, "I look upon creation as going on and I believe such vague idea as we can have of the power of creation is best identified with the idea of theism."⁴³ He wrote in a letter to Edward C. Hegeler, co-editor of *The Monist*, that, "To look out my

window is to praise God,” indicating that nature is representative of God’s creating it.⁴⁴ And finally, Peirce correlated the on-going creation of the universe, and of time itself, directly with the activity of God: “Do you believe this Supreme Being [God] to have been the creator of the universe? Not so much *to have been* as to be now creating the universe. . . . I am inclined to think. . . that the process of creation has been going on for an infinite time in the past, and further, during *all* past time, and further, that past time had no definite beginning, yet came about by a process which in a generalized sense, of which we cannot *easily* get much idea, was a development.”⁴⁵ Although these claims amount to a general description of Peirce’s “cosmotheism,” as I call it, much is still lacking.⁴⁶ One needs to know what is motivating these claims. I hope the reader will permit me to slowly uncover more specific evidence outlining why I turn to Peirce’s ontology and cosmology with respect to Firstness, although Peirce himself did not explicitly offer his own doctrine describing the correlation between God, the universe, and the categories outright. Why I believe that Peirce implied the universe to be an evolving divine life will be explored in the next chapter. For now, however, I would like to formulate Peirce’s general religious attitude about God and the universe, and how I approach that attitude in this dissertation.

The idea that one may interpret Peirce’s cosmos as a developing divine life places his thought next to that of Hegel. Hegel’s claim was that the development of history is the unfolding of Absolute Spirit or Mind [*Geist*.] The unfolding of Absolute Spirit is identified with God, whose end goal of complete and true spiritual fulfillment is determined from the beginning of time. Hegel clarified this idea in the preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807): “The beginning, the principle, or the Absolute, is at first

immediately enunciated. . . . Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is.”⁴⁷ Yet, Peirce’s cosmos cannot be necessarily determined like Hegel’s Absolute because he claimed that possibility is a real mode of being which is part of the universe. Thus, for Peirce, ultimate starting-points and absolute ends are only regulative. Possibility affords the ontological indeterminacy required so that the universe exists as a process of continual growth and transformation. To speak of an absolute end result for some completed state of the universe presupposes an eschatological temporality for being, something Peirce asserted as a hypothetical. As Peirce said,

Metaphysics has to account for the whole universe of being. It has, therefore, to do something like supposing a state of things in which that universe did not exist, and consider how it could have arisen. However, this statement needs amendment. For time is itself an organized something, having its law or regularity; so that time itself is a part of that universe whose origin is to be considered. We have therefore to suppose a state of things before time was organized. Accordingly, when we speak of the universe as "arising" we do not mean that literally. We mean to speak of some kind of sequence, say an objective logical sequence; but we do not mean in speaking of the first stages of creation before time was organized, to use "before," "after," "arising," and such words in the temporal sense. But for the sake of the commodity of speech we may avail ourselves of these words.⁴⁸

Because the divine life is not a closed system marching towards a predetermined absolutely necessary end, I take the universe to be without “boundary” in its nature. I express this idea by identifying the divine life not only with the universe traditionally understood, but also with a “continuum” of reality that is nature whose “edge” is an ever-receding horizon of being. That is, the divine life may also be described as *the infinite*: something inexhaustible in its being. This idea will be explained in further detail in

Chapter Three. For now I would like to note how the categories, as modes of being, express how possibility, actuality, and generality function within a continuum of nature which is the divine life in its infinite nature. The divine life is “infinite” so long as possibility, found in the category of Firstness, functions to impel its continual growth and transformation.

Certainly one might ask whether “the divine” is “God” or if the “divine” in the divine life represents the God of a specific doctrine, creed, or religion. Because this is an essay in “the philosophy of religion,” I do employ the term “religion” as religion has a concern with “the divine.” But, what is “divine” other than the developing life of the cosmos, and how does religion relate to it? I employ the term “religion” as James used it. In his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) religion means, “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine.”⁴⁹ Here I interpret “divine” to be the power of the innumerable forms of divinity that may appear and relate directly to anyone’s experience, Christian or otherwise. Such a power may directly relate to an individual through being felt in experiences of possibility.

One way to experience the power of possibility found in the divine life is to inquire, muse, awe, and wonder—that is, one may probe into what is possible by virtue of the power of possibility to do so. Put differently, the freedom of inquiry is an experience of possibility in that one is capable and free to ask questions. This is why abduction, being a free process of inquiry, may open dimensions of experience where human thought can encounter the divine if it is able to do so. One might choose the divine as the object of one’s own “greatest concern,” to use the phrase from Paul Tillich.⁵⁰ Certainly

someone's greatest concern might not include *the* divine, as in the God of classical metaphysics. But, as Heidegger expressed, "the divine draws the god near."⁵¹ That is, "God" *just is* the innumerable powerful forms that individuals take to have important affect in their lives. As such, the idea of God is essentially vague because the divine is plural and innumerable in form.

C. THE DIVINE AS A VAGUE IDEA

Considering God under the vague idea of "the divine" is not necessarily a challenge to the importance of the term "God." A vague idea of God does not foreclose the meaning of its interpretation for different perspectives, different cultures, or different religious world-views. As Vincent Potter points out, a vague idea of God might be fruitful: "Indeed this vagueness acts as a corrective to anthropomorphism by negating the limitations of human experience and classification in the infinite reality. In a word, it is vagueness which allows our notions to be about God."⁵² Simply referring to God as part of the "the divine" may even enable fresh approaches and novel ideas to spring forth from its consideration—ideas not typically conceived within traditional Western religions.⁵³ Perhaps I should not venture so far as to construe the divine simply as "God" or "gods" so-called, because those terms may come too close to claiming the divine is a person, an entity, or an object within a pre-ordained understanding. The danger of thinking about the divine as God in the strict sense of the term may negate other forms of its expression that are equally honored, respected, and worshipped. For example, for some, the divine may be a life, a process, an ideal, or a state of existence.

In terms of metaphysics, claiming the divine is God could potentially *limit* it to the classification of an object or substance *to be* named at will. Jacques Derrida gave such a critique in his essay, “On the Name” (1995.)⁵⁴ Derrida wrote that in the vocabulary of the heart, the divine’s presence may be felt and understood, but perhaps not articulated *as* a name. Derrida claimed that many names may be assigned to the divine, but no one name *per se* is adequate to describing the divine *per se*. The title “God” might not do justice to these alternate understandings of the divine, many of which pray to, adore, and worship the divine’s power. Such alternate approaches and understandings may exist in harmony and are thus not necessarily antithetical in approaching the divine. For example, a Unitarian may marry a Buddhist and both may worship and pray together, honoring the power of the divine in their shared life. Both simply pray to and honor the power of the divine as it is found in their experience of it.

Peirce viewed the divine in the way just mentioned, although he did use the term “God” rather than “the divine.” In an April 9th, 1893 letter written to his good friend Paul Carus, Peirce stated, “The essence of true religion involves catholicity. It must embrace in its sympathy the Christian, the Boudist [sic], the Jew, the Pagan,—every discerner of God. The pest of religion is emphasizing two penny ha’ penny differences.”⁵⁵ Thus it is apparent that by “God,” Peirce meant something very broad in definition that included a multifaceted idea of what God may be for “every discerner.”

D. THE CATEGORIES AND THE SACRED: FIRSTNESS-FEELING

Firstness is “feeling” when looked at as an element of experience. Peirce wrote, “The free is living; the immediately living is feeling. Feeling, then, is assumed as

starting-point.”⁵⁶ Feeling is a way of disclosure of the sacred, or in the words of Douglas R. Anderson, “*Feeling* is important for religious experience insofar as we may encounter God’s reality *in a feeling*.”⁵⁷ For example, the divine may manifest in different ways producing different feelings such as awe, joy, mystery, or ecstasy. The power of a tornado may produce non-craven fear, the enigma of the distant stars may mystify, or the joy of communal congregation may enable individuals to partially stand outside of their own individuality and feel the power of community as they witness the power of shared worship. All of these feelings could be considered feeling the power of the divine within various *sacred* dimensions of feeling. That is, the power of the divine may take on a certain quality of feeling as it manifests in a sacred realm of human experience.

Why do I call Firstness a sacred dimension of human experience? Peirce described Firstness as “possibility,” “power,” “freshness,” “life,” “freedom,” or “the free that which has not another behind it determining its actions.”⁵⁸ It is also “something *other* than the mind’s creation”; it is “active,” “present,” and “an immediate consciousness.”⁵⁹ He summarized Firstness in the following way:

The idea of the absolutely first must be entirely separated from all conception of or reference to anything else; for what involves a second is itself a second to that second. The first must therefore be present and immediate, so as not to be second to a representation. It must be fresh and new, for if old it is second to its former state. It must be initiative, original, spontaneous, and free; otherwise it is second to a determining cause. It is also something vivid and conscious; so only it avoids being the object of some sensation. It precedes all synthesis and all differentiation; it has no unity and no parts. It cannot be articulately thought: assert it, and it has already lost its characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else. Stop to think of it, and it has flown! What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own existence -- that is first, present, immediate, fresh,

new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it.⁶⁰

So as to better characterize Firstness and its connection to the sacred, it is to the aforementioned descriptions I would add the aspect “numinous.” Numinous (from the Latin, *numen* meaning “to nod” or “the will, command, or power of a deity”) was a term introduced by Rudolf Otto in his work, *The Idea of the Holy* [*Das Heilige*] (1917.)⁶¹ As Otto used the term, it roughly translates to what is felt to be “sacred,” “god-like,” “divine,” or “holy” in its creative and sustaining power.⁶² Otto further characterized the numinous as “irreducible to any other,” “elementary,” “vague,” “non-conceptual,” “eluding the conceptual way of understanding,” “creature-feeling,” “over-powering,” “felt-objective,” and “primary immediate datum of consciousness.”⁶³ For Peirce, experiences of Firstness-feeling tend to remain unknown because Firstness is, at least partially, non-rational, vague, and unarticulated. It is *dim*, though in moments of ecstatic presentation can become *bright*.⁶⁴ I choose to adopt Otto’s term because the experience of Otto’s God is similar to Peirce’s experience of reality in Firstness. “Numinous” concerns God as Otto described it, “Firstness” points to the nature of a reality, how the two are experienced is the same.

E. THE CATEGORIES AND THE DIVINE LIFE: FIRSTNESS-POSSIBILITY

Firstness-feeling relates to Firstness-possibility because, as a general category, Firstness sustains and “finds” the other categories both in their modalities and consciously experienced qualities. The different categories gain their identity through an interaction with Firstness. Peirce wrote, “Firstness is the mode of being which consists in

its subject's being positively such as it is regardless of aught else. That can only be a possibility. For as long as things do not act upon one another there is no sense or meaning in saying that they have any being, unless it be that they are such in themselves that they may perhaps come into relation with others."⁶⁵ Without the category of Firstness there would be no Seconds or Thirds to be felt.⁶⁶ As Firstness is the first quality of feeling, freedom, spontaneity, and immediacy, it founds all else. It is the creative actuation or "event" which produces "sequences of Seconds" that are mediated by Thirdness.⁶⁷ Firstness does not depend on anything and is the undifferentiated *creative* source for what is because all else is generated from *its* possibilities.⁶⁸ To say Firstness is "numinous" is to say that it is a felt power of possibility, one that remains unseen as a "thing" in experience. Firstness is "no-thing" because it is possibility, not an actuality in the sense of an existent thing in a Seconded world. As no-thing, Firstness is not directly seen in its power—it is *felt*, and such a feeling is real and of a reality. The reality felt is the power of possibility impelling the divine life. Experience of Firstness is, in Peirce's words, "what the Presocratics wondered at."⁶⁹

I should identify that my starting point is a consideration of "the divine" rather than a starting point that begins with the "traditional" God of philosophy. I say this because I follow a metaphysics that places possibility within the divine's nature, a move denied by "traditional" metaphysics looking at the God of philosophy. The God of philosophy is most often interpreted as eternal, unchangeable, or as a Supreme Being; the uncaused cause of the universe, and the highest value or perfection. The God of philosophy might be personalized and said to possess the attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnibenevolence. Kant defined such a God as the *original being*

[*ens originarium*] that exists “standing in community with no other being,” the *highest being* [*ens summum*] that is the greatest reality and greatest being, and the *being of all beings* [*ens entium*] that is the being from which everything else is derived.⁷⁰ I establish a difference between the traditional God of philosophy and “the divine” because much of the philosophy I employ and deal with in this dissertation, for the most part, does not speak of God in ways typically conceived. John Caputo wrote, for example, “The talk about God and religion in contemporary continental philosophy bears almost no resemblance to what passes for traditional ‘philosophy of religion’....[one is not discussing] the God of metaphysical theology....So who, or what, comes next?”⁷¹

One alternative to the traditional God of philosophy might be to understand the divine in terms of “the possible.” Understanding the divine in terms of the possible means that possibility is freed from the traditional metaphysical idea that it is something lower or imperfect that requires actualization. Possibility is not always a “potency” that is excluded from God. Specifically, my approach begins from two backgrounds that commonly modify the notion of possibility inherited from the metaphysics of the traditional God of philosophy. Those two backgrounds are Continental phenomenology and American pragmatism. As John R. Williams commented in his “Heidegger and the Americans” (1977), the attitude of Continental phenomenology rests alongside the American pragmatists’ attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct the divine-human relationship with an alternative perspective on possibility existing at the fulcrum.⁷² So as to make my position about possibility and the divine clear, I will briefly describe the characteristics of the traditional God of philosophy in terms of possibility and actuality, primarily through an examination of Aristotelian Scholasticism. I will then cite Peirce

and Heidegger, the two major philosophers operative in the dissertation, and show how their views differ from the traditional approach. Such will allow me to freely discuss possibility and the divine with the appropriate qualifications stated.

In the traditional Western canon, God is thought of as *actus purus* or pure act and actuality. Aquinas and the Scholastics translated the Aristotelian concept of *dunamis* and *nous dunamei* to mean *potentia* and *intellectus possibilis*, respectively.⁷³ All agreed that these ontological states were not “the” divine. The Scholastic God was self-causing, self-thinking act lacking nothing, completely perfect and without potentiality whatsoever. Aquinas explicitly stated, “God is pure act without any potentiality whatsoever.”⁷⁴ The fact that finite beings actualize or *become* was taken by the Scholastics to be a deficiency. The Scholastic view states that God does not lack existence, and that God’s complete existence is complete and pure actuality.⁷⁵ Finite or impartial beings lack existence in the sense that they possess potential to fulfill. One may summarize this position by looking at Aquinas’ view of God’s essence and existence. Aquinas wrote that because God’s essence and existence are identical in terms of simple actual being; one could add nothing more to God.⁷⁶ God is completely full, as in completely actual, with no potential to fulfill or no more actuality to become.⁷⁷ If a being contains more possibilities to actualize, on the view of Scholastics, then that being could not be God. The philosophers whom I employ and analyze within the current project have a different view about the nature of God, especially regarding possibility and actuality.

Heidegger, for example, made the claim that “possibility stands higher than actuality.”⁷⁸ In a letter written to Jean Beaufret (the “Letter on Humanism” 1946/47), Heidegger remarked that, “Being as an element is the ‘quiet power’ of the loving potency

of the possible.”⁷⁹ Elsewhere Heidegger referred to the “quiet power of the possible” as resting in Being itself.⁸⁰ In Richard Kearney’s words, “this new assignment for Being’s own power of considering possibility is more topological than anthropological.”⁸¹ That is, possibility is not found just within the range of the finite being’s freedom, but is also found within Being itself. Being conceived of as possibility (the ‘may be’) or [*das Mögliche*] marks a moment where Heidegger thought not so much in the standard existential-transcendental perspective of *Being and Time* (1927), but in a more unequivocally Being-centered way.⁸² Heidegger stated that, “Being itself, which in its loving potency [*das Mögend*] possibilizes [*vermag*] thought and thus also the essence of man, means in turn his relationship to Being.”⁸³ Heidegger continued that, “When I speak of the ‘quiet power of the possible’ I do not mean the *possible* of a merely represented *possibilitas*...rather, I mean Being itself, which in its favoring presides over thinking and hence over the essence of humanity, and that means over its relation to Being.”⁸⁴ Some commentators go so far as to interpret Heidegger as equating the possibility of Being with “the sacred” or “the divine.”⁸⁵ Nonetheless, Heidegger’s letter to Beaufret, in conjunction with his *Beitrag* laudation of Schelling’s view that the God of Exodus 3:14 is “the possibility of Beyng” [*Seyn wird/Seyn-könnende*] certainly supports the idea that possibility is admitted into the divine as a power, and the divine is, at least for Heidegger, not *actus purus*. In Frank Schalow’s words, Heidegger recognized “the attempt to think God in terms of process” and as appearing before creatures as possibility.⁸⁶ That is, Heidegger’s consideration of the divine comes close to that of Schelling’s and process theology—and most importantly comes close to Peirce’s conception in like manner—by

virtue of the fact that Heidegger viewed Being as a life or process in the event of concealing and revealing before the finite human being or *Dasein*.

Here the question is whether possibility is to be admitted into the reality of God. Heidegger admitted possibility into the nature of the ground he considered, which is Being. Peirce, the major philosopher of this study, would not be so quick to dismiss *actus* in favor of *potentia*—himself a realist of the Scholastic stripe. But Peirce did admit possibility into the nature of God. As Anderson notes, “Clearly Peirce’s God is active as well...God must actively bring qualities into a state of secondness...God may not know what He is going to create until He creates it.”⁸⁷ Whether or not this possibility is of God’s own nature will be discussed in Chapter Two. Briefly, however, it is on Peirce’s view that both modes of being-possible and being-actual are equally real, and possibility is lacking only in existence, *not in its reality*. The end result is that God is the form of an actual “growing” reality whose reality consists in the evolution of possibility into actuality. This growing God is part of an evolving cosmos in which human beings live and perceive the divine nature of the cosmos.⁸⁸ Peirce wrote, “Some of us are evolutionists; that is, we are so impressed with the pervasiveness of growth, whose course seems only here and there to be interrupted, that it seems to us that the universe as a whole, so far as anything can possibly be conceived or logically opined of the whole, should be conceived as growing...this is just what we find in nature. It does not answer the purpose to say there is diversity because God made it so, for we cannot tell what God would do, nor penetrate his counsels. We see what He does do, and nothing more. For the same reason one cannot logically infer the existence of God; one can only know Him by direct perception.”⁸⁹ One can see, therefore, that Peirce’s God is difficult to grasp

because, as Corrington expresses, it “contains process and nonprocess elements” found within the evolving universe.⁹⁰

III. PEIRCE’S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. TWO CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON PEIRCE’S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: THEOSEMIOTIC (HEGEL, SCHOLASTICISM) OR ECSTATIC NATURALISM (SCHELLING, SPECULATIVE METAPHYSICS)

In her *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce* (2006), Anette Ejsing notes two major philosophical branches that have developed dealing with Peirce’s philosophy of religion. The two branches of Peirce’s philosophy of religion are the “theosemiotic” of Michael Raposa, and the “ecstatic naturalism” of Robert Corrington.⁹¹ Raposa uses “theosemiotic” to refer to the process by which the self becomes attuned to the traces of the divine signmaker in the world where there is connection between person and theosign.⁹² Raposa’s general claim is that if Peirce’s semiotic is already theosemiotic, then everything is potentially a sign of God’s presence. Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism is, “a philosophical dialogue between Continental phenomenology on the one side and classical American pragmatism on the other. The metaphysical perspective of ecstatic naturalism is anti-supernaturalist while remaining open to the religious dimensions of nature as these dimensions are manifest in the ‘sacred folds’ of nature (semiotic orders with special numinous power).”⁹³ According to Ejsing, Raposa’s work relies too heavily upon medieval Scholasticism when interpreting Peirce’s philosophy of religion.⁹⁴ Ejsing claims the work of Corrington remains within the realm of espousing a speculative Schellingean metaphysics when interpreting Peirce’s

philosophy of religion.⁹⁵ Ejsing acknowledges that both Raposa and Corrington offer unique and groundbreaking insight into Peirce's thought, but she sees her work as a theological alternative to both as it "approaches Peirce's philosophy of religion on the basis of experiential and believing encounters with the Judeo-Christian God of promises."⁹⁶ Ejsing's study concludes that most of the existing Peirce philosophy of religion literature would either fall under the scope of concern covered by Raposa, who draws more from the young Hegel and Scholasticism, or Corrington, who draws more from Schelling.⁹⁷

I would amend Ejsing's mild criticism that Raposa's work draws too heavily on medieval Scholasticism. I do not see that as a problem, given that Peirce himself thought of his philosophy as Scholastic realism, drawing heavily, for example, from the medieval philosopher John Duns Scotus.⁹⁸ As Peirce put it, "The works of Duns Scotus have strongly influenced me. If his logic and metaphysics, not slavishly worshipped, but torn from its medievalism, be adapted to modern culture...I am convinced it will go far toward supplying the philosophy which is best to harmonize with physical science."⁹⁹ It is my contention, rather, that Raposa leans too far toward a young Hegelian or Roycean construal of Peirce. Raposa's construal focuses on the scientifically social aspects of community, evolution, and a panentheism of love. Although Peirce's philosophy of religion does admittedly resemble the scientific and social aspects of Hegel's and Royce's philosophy in the aspects upon which Raposa chooses to focus, and while there is much focus on Peirce's God of absolute mind and its socially objective communal features, Raposa says little about Peirce's vague God of common sense, or the depths of experience which provide for that vagueness in the form of possibility. Analysis of the

depths of experience is critical for Peirce's philosophy of religion, I believe. I do not reject Raposa's theosemiotic, but question the basis from which it operates.¹⁰⁰ I believe Raposa's claim that Peirce saw his religion as "a religion of science" or a "scientific theism" performing theosemiotic may neglect other resources that are available in Peirce's religious thought. I do think there is more to Peirce's philosophy of religion than scientific theism.¹⁰¹

B. ECSTATIC NATURALISM'S VIEW ON PEIRCE'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Consequently, I have chosen to utilize aspects of Corrington's ecstatic naturalism while engaging in a Peircean phenomenology of the sacred. I do so because Peirce emphasized Thirdness and conceptual mediation, making it is easy to overlook Firstness and its non-rational depth structure providing for the *possibility* of the theosemiotic.¹⁰² As Corrington notes, "There is a strong sense of the irrational in Peirce's conception of God. If the manifest God of evolution is the locus of Thirdness and concrete reasonableness, the depth dimension of God is located in the irrational, self-othering ground [*Urgrund*] of nothingness."¹⁰³ Corrington's language will take some deciphering, though for now it is sufficient to say Corrington claims that, on Peirce's view, God is both rational and non-rational in different respects. For Corrington, Peirce's God was manifest in *all* orders of experience, not just in a "Thirded" order of generality as Absolute Mind to come.¹⁰⁴ That is, for Peirce, God appears through/in all three categories of nature, not just the anticipated God of generality to come in Thirdness. As Corrington explains,

[Peirce's] failure to work out the full ontology of the divine stems, at least in part, from his overemphasis on rationality. The stress on Thirdness made it difficult for him to probe into the irrational depths of nature naturing, even though he had a growing sense these depths were laying at the heart of his cosmology. In radicalizing the Peircean legacy, we must let the shock of the ontological difference enter into the divine life...Theosemiotic, the core method lying at the heart of Peirce's semiotic theory, must itself enter into the momentums of the ontological difference.¹⁰⁵

I would differentiate Corrington's project from my own by our different emphases. His work emphasizes the nature of God; mine will emphasize the sacred features of Firstness.¹⁰⁶ My work also differs from Corrington in that I examine Firstness in its connection to an ontological ground of possibility. I use Heidegger's hermeneutic and existential phenomenology as an interpretive tool to accomplish my task, whereas in the work of Corrington, resources in systematic and doctrinal theology such as Barth, Bultmann, and Pannenberg are prominent toward other ends.¹⁰⁷ Peircean Firstness from a Heideggerean angle of vision is not so much an issue for Corrington as is an examination of the nature and characteristics of God.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND PERSPECTIVE: ECSTATIC NATURALISM AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

A. NATURE AND KINDS OF NATURALISM

There are a number of ways one may read Peirce's philosophy. One might read Peirce and take him to be a logician. Another might read Peirce and take him to be a mathematician or scientist. Understanding Peirce as an "ecstatic naturalist" entails placing his thought closer to semiotic phenomenology, the study of signs and the

description of natural phenomena appearing before conscious experience, and distancing his thought from scientific naturalism and its associated viewpoint of “scientism,” the idea that perspectives maintaining only scientific claims can describe nature meaningfully.¹⁰⁸ As Corrington summarizes this understanding, “Peirce’s approach to nature is one that seems to vacillate between a bare descriptive naturalism that stresses habit and the growth of law, and an ecstatic naturalism that points to the self-transforming potencies within the heart of nature. I am convinced that Peirce was an important precursor of ecstatic naturalism and that he gained some fundamental insights into the elusive depths of nature. Unfortunately, contemporary understanding of nature is marred by an inability to find either the generic or the ecstatic.”¹⁰⁹ By “naturalism” I mean the rejection of any supernatural transcendence for a God beyond the most encompassing categories: nature for Corrington, the reality of nature for Peirce, and Being for Heidegger. Corrington provides the reader with an eloquent summary of how one might interpret “naturalism” and “nature.”

To begin with, there are some interesting complexities around the twin concepts of nature and naturalism. For the educated public, the term naturalism refers to a perspective that veers toward some kind of materialism, a belief in the exhaustive correlation of chance and law, a tendency toward a mind/brain identity thesis, an emergentism vis-à-vis consciousness (and the corollary rejection of panpsychism), perhaps an instrumentalism about the purely pragmatic role of thought or reason, a rejection of so-called supernaturalism, and a methodological monism that shies away from first person or internal reportage in favor of an event and behavior driven model for adaptationism. From the outside this form of naturalism may seem truncated, slightly polemical, norm driven, and somewhat removed from nature in its fuller sense.¹¹⁰

Certainly Peirce was a philosopher and scientist interested in nature, and he did chiefly value logic, mathematics, and scientific method. Collectively these methods could be grouped under the title of “naturalism” because they do not appeal to supernatural measures such as divination or revelation to achieve their insight, but rather appeal to “natural” processes of thought such as human reasoning and logical formulation. Peirce was a scientist who had an interest in the natural world no doubt, but he was not a scientific naturalist in any traditional sense of the term. I claim a very unique form of inquiry animated his investigations into nature—one that is *ecstatic* rather than narrowly “scientific” or “naturalist.” That is, Peirce’s viewpoint recognized the self-transforming power of nature, and as such, he maintained a healthy respect for the divine within his philosophy.¹¹¹ In viewing Peirce as an *ecstatic naturalist*, one can move to a much more encompassing perspective that does not mute or downplay the role metaphysics plays in his scientific and religious outlook. In order to show why I believe this is true, I first need to make a distinction between “scientific naturalism” and “ecstatic naturalism.”

In light of Peirce’s own scientific background, some commentators focus on his dealings with method, science, logic, and mathematics through the understanding that Peirce was himself a natural scientist and that he maintained the perspective of “scientific naturalism.”¹¹² This is understandable given that Peirce described himself as “saturated through and through with the spirit of the physical sciences.”¹¹³ However, in the sense I am referring to, “scientific naturalism” is synonymous with positivistic philosophy or “sense data” empiricism.¹¹⁴ This particular brand of naturalism seeks to describe entities in experience found in the natural world, but a “natural” world, as opposed to the “supernatural” world. In this specific formulation, scientific naturalism may be inflated

into scientism, first in its postulation of a binary opposition between what is natural and the supernatural, and second, in its privileging of the natural over the supernatural by *excluding* what is not immediately visible to the senses in favor of what is immediately sensed. While there was nothing outside of experience or “supernatural” for Peirce, the “natural world” was not to be looked at as a world made up of materiality and efficient causality alone, nor was the natural world limited to a world of concretely sensed data standing ready for data-collection. Describing his attitude toward sense data empiricism, Peirce stated that he pronounced “English sensationalism to be entirely destitute of any solid bottom.”¹¹⁵ I believe Peirce had a more holistic vision of nature, and his “scientific” philosophy acknowledged a robust world full of intangible, yet very real, ontological processes, connections, and relationships. Stated in different terms, Peirce was a “realist” about kinds of reality that are not physical.

I believe that it is reasonable to say that Peirce did not succumb to scientism given his broad angle of vision about what was to be open for inquiry; his famous dictum being, “do not block the way of inquiry!”¹¹⁶ However, in some respects, Peirce’s philosophy may resemble the outlook of scientific naturalism given some recent interpretations of his statements.¹¹⁷ One reason Peirce’s philosophy does not succumb to scientism, I think, is because he aimed to question the whole of reality and whatever that reality might present as a truth within experience, regardless of one’s predilections of what the truth should be.¹¹⁸ For example, Peirce wrote, “If we are to define science, not in the sense of stuffing it into an artificial pigeon-hole where it may be found again by some insignificant mark, but in the sense of characterizing it as a living historic entity...as such, it does not consist so much in *knowing*, nor even in ‘organized knowledge,’ as it does in diligent inquiry into

truth for truth's sake, without any sort of axe to grind...In short, it is no longer the reasoning which determines what the conclusion shall be, but it is the conclusion which determines what the reasoning shall be."¹¹⁹

Among Peirce's wide scope of questioning were the intangible forces of reality, or the "non-visible" ontological features and "conclusions" of experience that may not be readily apparent to the naked eye, despite what the laboratory may claim to detect. James coined this perspective "radical empiricism"—that is, the idea that "any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system."¹²⁰ One example of an ontological feature of the non-visible universe, according to Peirce, would be the power of insight. He stated,

However man may have acquired his faculty of divining the ways of Nature, it has certainly not been by a self-controlled and critical logic. Even now he cannot give any exact reason for his best guesses. It appears to me that the clearest statement we can make of the logical situation -- the freest from all questionable admixture -- is to say that man has a certain Insight...*An Insight, I call it, because it is to be referred to the same general class of operations to which Perceptive Judgments belong.* This Faculty is at the same time of the general nature of Instinct, resembling the instincts of the animals in its so far surpassing the general powers of our reason and for its directing us *as if we were in possession of facts that are entirely beyond the reach of our senses* [emphases mine].¹²¹

The connection is that, as scientism studies the empirical effects of instinct, it might have trouble explaining the apparent sentience or "insight" that establishes it. It would seem that insight is entirely "beyond the reach" of the senses, but nevertheless establishes instinctual behavior. One example of this might be species migration. In the case of species migration, insight occupies the same class of operations that perceptive (sensing) powers occupy because insight provides the "know how" for that species—for example

when bees know exactly how and when to build certain pieces of their communal hive, or when flocks of birds understand how to navigate landscapes in their migrational patterns. In these cases, the powers of insight direct and guide perceptual judgment and remain a viable means for survival. Although an insect's or animal's instinctual behavior may be the only means to discern the force of insight, insight makes for a reality of instinctual behavior, capable of observation within nature.

For Peirce, then, “the invisible”—which, in the examples just mentioned, was claimed to be a form of insight represented through the force of instinctual behavior—occupies a very *real* place within observable nature. Because Peirce held a very broad view of nature that would include insight and other elusive phenomena as objects of meaningful scientific inquiry, Corrington rightly argues for a rejection of the perception that Peirce was a “scientific naturalist” and defends instead the claim that Peirce foreshadowed ecstatic naturalism. This rejection is necessary, says Corrington, to avoid viewing Peirce's philosophy simply on the “ontic” level of scientifically natural descriptions, to use the phrase from Heidegger. Here, Emerson can be used to succinctly summarize Corrington's critique of the ontic level of scientific description versus an ecstatic level of lived-experience. For example, Emerson wrote of the difference between those who handle and classify nature, versus those who extol relationships and processes in nature:

Mayne Reid was the great writer of books of out-of-door adventure. He was forever extolling the hunters and field-observers of living animals' habits, and keeping up a fire of invective against the ‘closet naturalists,’ as he called them, the collectors and classifiers, and handlers or skeletons and skins....What is their deduction of metaphysical attributes but a shuffling and matching of pedantic

dictionary-adjectives, aloof from morals, aloof from human needs, something that might be worked out from the mere word ‘God’ by one of those logical machines of wood and brass which recent ingenuity has contrived as well as by a man of flesh and blood. They have the trail of the serpent all over them....Verbality has stepped into the place of vision, professionalism into that of life.¹²²

That is, as an ecstatic naturalist, one may widen one’s own angle of vision so as to consider nature in its vastness of relationships and processes, rather than limiting inquiry to the calculable or directly evident. In this way one attempts to *experience* nature rather than merely label it. Such is the beginning point for this study in terms of how I approach Peirce: not as natural scientist, but as a philosopher important for the viewpoint of ecstatic naturalism.

B. DEFINITION OF ECSTATIC NATURALISM

Ecstatic naturalism, in Corrington’s words, is “that moment within naturalism when it recognizes its self-transcending character...[it] is ecstatic insofar as it stands outside of itself....recognizing the utter vastness of nature.”¹²³ Nature here means,

the genus of which the sacred is a species....strictly speaking, nature is beyond all genera and cannot be located within a higher genus....the crucial point here is that nature per se cannot be conceived in any but the *most* elliptical way. It is impossible to give a definition of nature. To define nature would be to locate it within a genus with a specific difference. What genus would this be?....nature is the sheer *availability* of whatever is.¹²⁴

Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism conjoins semiotics and phenomenology to show how nature has religious traits when approached with a “Peircean realism in religion and in science.”¹²⁵ Thus, ecstatic naturalism affords the possibility of a religious realism in

that the sacred might be “folded into the nature within which we live”—that is, the divine life is said to express itself in the very orders and creations of the natural world.¹²⁶

Longing to connect with the divine in its totality, human beings dwell “between the powers of origin and the world” separated by what Corrington calls (following Heidegger and Schelling) an ontological “abyss.” Individuals long to traverse this abyss but cannot get across: “We long to rejoin these powers but cannot get across. We can understand our longing, and thereby understand something of what we miss...but we cannot become whole with our ground.”¹²⁷ Thus beings dwell in a nature created, yet seek to connect with nature’s creating power felt to be at work within nature.

The “abyss” [*Abgrund*] constitutes a key distinction for ecstatic naturalism, and for my dissertation. However, to understand what this concept means, I need to introduce three other key terms, including: “nature naturing” [*natura naturans*], “nature natured” [*natur naturata*], and “the ontological difference.” Simply put, the “abyss” is the difference between “nature naturing” and “nature natured.” Corrington explains this difference by relating it to Heidegger’s “ontological difference.” He writes,

Within nature there is a fundamental divide that remains the most basic divide that can be experienced by thought. This divide is that between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. When Heidegger developed his own version of this ontological difference, he contrasted the idea of *a* being with that of Being itself...Ecstatic naturalism reacts to this insight into the ontological difference but radicalizes and broadens it to open up the even more basic divide between the potencies of *nature naturing* and the attained and emerging orders of *nature natured*.¹²⁸

Nature naturing is thus viewed as nature creating itself out of itself alone, and *nature natured* is taken to be the temporary natural constructions of nature that classify meaningful “orders” of the world.¹²⁹ Corrington maintains that “the world (*nature natured*) locates the sacred...the sacred is in and of nature...the sacred is the holy of nature”¹³⁰ The difference between nature’s creating and what nature creates is the “ontological difference,” or the difference between some *thing* and *that which allows or makes for things in general*, which is not a “thing” itself. Citing Heidegger’s definition of the ontological difference, it is “the ‘not’ between beings and Being...[where] the difference as the ‘not’ between beings and Being is in no way merely the figment of a distinction made by our understanding (*ens rationis*.)...It is not only a unique ‘kind’ of ground, but the *origin of ground in general*....As this ground...it is the *abyss of ground* [Ab-grund].”¹³¹ With this difference in mind, ecstatic naturalism takes on Peirce’s categories of nature as “they are meant to be both phenomenological and metaphysical.”¹³²

In contrast to scientific naturalism traditionally understood, ecstatic naturalism does not fail to engage the ontological relationships that comprise reality, especially the ontological difference. In fact, ecstatic naturalism welcomes these dynamic dimensions of nature as meaningful paths of inquiry. Corrington summarizes these points by stating,

Nature cannot be characterized by any single metaphor or conceptual scheme. Its vastness and sheer multiplicity belie our attempts to frame a compelling and adequate metaphysics that would somehow open out the ultimate essence or train contour of nature. Human efforts to delineate nature mirror the natural processes whereby any part of nature remains oblivious to the full scope of the innumerable

orders that eclipse it. All of philosophy is a form of naturalism if by ‘naturalism’ is meant the recognition of the utter indefiniteness and plenitude of nature....Ecstatic naturalism is the formalization of our natural piety before the world.¹³³

C. ECSTATIC NATURALISM AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Ecstatic naturalism is a perspective that seeks to understand Peirce’s thought in light of contemporary philosophy. Corrington writes, “Peirce’s stress on continuity and on the ubiquity of developmental Thirdness within an evolutionary nature is ignored, while his anti-Cartesianism and his theory of scientific inquiry are privileged. The assumption is that Peirce stopped doing anything of lasting value after the 1870s and that he failed to become fully postmodern.”¹³⁴ How is one to understand Peirce in light of postmodernism, especially if Heidegger may be considered something of a postmodern philosopher within the Continental tradition? Does the perspective of ecstatic naturalism provide a hint how to answer this question? The answer lies in understanding that classical pragmatism insists that human inquirers, organisms, or *Dasein*, are fully part of nature. It is the goal of ecstatic naturalism to uncover the dynamic dimensions of that nature with respect to the human being. In terms of method and perspective, ecstatic naturalism highlights the phenomenological and metaphysical elements of Peirce’s philosophy without losing sight of the fact that a person is always a being-in-the-world, as Heidegger suggests and as Corrington reminds his readers.¹³⁵ By highlighting the fact that human beings are immersed within a dynamic nature, thus eschewing supernatural and foundational claims on nature alike, ecstatic naturalism brings human beings closer to the various histories, formations of truth, and discursive practices that comprise a consistently changing, but nevertheless meaningful universe, that is not at all

incompatible with the postmodern tradition's view of the universe. In essence, ecstatic naturalism brings Peirce into conversation with the Continental tradition as well as with its postmodern concerns, especially as those concerns are found in the hermeneutic and phenomenological currents. Methodologically, ecstatic naturalism allows for one to interpret Peirce in light of Heidegger with a wider range of conceptual tools not available within the at-times dense Peircean or Heideggerean vocabulary. It seems that between two thinkers who employ extremely dense and difficult terminology, ecstatic naturalism sheds light on both Peirce and Heidegger's philosophy and locates both philosophers in the contemporary setting.

With this in mind, I should discuss two general ideas about Peirce that I interpret from reading Corrington's ecstatic naturalism. The first idea is that the universe, conceived of as "nature," has the potential to seize one ecstatically, thus allowing for a presentation of the sacred in experience as numinous feeling.¹³⁶ Such a potential resides "within" nature. The second idea is that Peirce's analysis of reality should be interpreted to mean that nature exists as a "continuum," where there is a real but never absolute difference among continua.¹³⁷ Put differently, disjunctive relationships: breaks, fissures, alterity, or difference in general, are included in a total continuous reality of nature.

With regard to the first idea, that nature has the potential to seize one ecstatically by means of possibility, one must keep in mind Peirce's emphasis on an evolving universe and the power of possibility alive in it. I interpret ecstatic naturalism as regarding possibility as alive not only at the "fringes" of experience in terms of where the process might be going, or its "whither," but also at the place "from where the process came," or its "whence."¹³⁸ The fringes of experience are associated with a "more-to-

come” and the origins of experience are associated with a “not-yet.”¹³⁹ Peirce argued that possibility always operates in the universe as a process-element, even as a latent power. Peirce wrote that possibility means “something as yet undeveloped, since not presenting itself in actually objectified form, but capable of doing so at some future time, when all the conditions of its realization occur: latent, potential being. This implies capacity for realization; and, if this capacity be taken in an active sense, connotes some inherent tendency to actuality.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, possibility is the power of a “whence”—an origin, which is always directed towards its “whither”—tending towards the future in actuality.

Interestingly, Corrington borrows the language of whence and whither from Heidegger and Schelling, and it is no secret that Peirce’s ideas about a dynamic evolutionary cosmos in process were affected by Schelling too.¹⁴¹ For example, Peirce claimed his Schellingianism as follows, “I have begun by showing that tychism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind.”¹⁴² Peirce’s idea that a chaotic nothingness gave rise to infinitesimally habit-forming tendencies seems very close to Schelling’s first “divine potential” (the first of three) found in the theo-cosmology of Schelling’s *Freiheitschrift*. For example, Peirce wrote,

Even this nothingness, though it antecedes the infinitely distant absolute beginning of time, is traced back to a nothingness more rudimentary still, in which there is no variety, but only an indefinite specific ability, which is nothing but a tendency to the diversification of the nothing, while leaving it as nothing as it was before....The primal chaos is a state of most intense feeling, although, memory

and habit being totally absent, it is sheer nothing still. Feeling has existence only so far as it is welded into feeling. Now the welding of this feeling to the great whole of feeling is accomplished only by the reflection of a later date. In itself, therefore, it is nothing; but in its relation to the end it is everything.¹⁴³

Acknowledging the real power of possibility means re-situating the vagueness of possibility into view so that its power to present the sacred may be recognized and experienced. This “place” of the possible is a “space” where a diverse number of relationships may present themselves, including an appearance of the divine life felt as the numinous aspect of Firstness. I view ecstatic naturalism as addressing these issues while developing Peirce’s theory of a continuous universe.

The second idea—the insight that nature exists as an externally boundaryless continuum that contains real difference—means the same power of possibility that impels the infinite process of cosmological development is found within the process of abduction, though in a finite or different respect. Peirce associated an ontological ground of difference with Firstness in its ability to enable semiotic predication, mentioned in his discussion of “ground” in the 1867 essay, “On a New List of Categories.”¹⁴⁴ I believe that ecstatic naturalism explores Peirce’s concept of ground in its most profound semiotic dimensions. As I hope to show, and as Corrington indirectly suggests, it is the concept of “ground” that relates Peircean Firstness to the power of possibility, or what I interpret as the ontological ground of origin found in Peirce’s ontology and cosmology. I use Heidegger’s interpretation of Schelling to make sense of Peirce’s concept of “ground,” and this, I believe, is the key not only in understanding the development of the divine life, but in understanding the appearance of the sacred. Corrington also understands Peirce’s

concept of ground through a Schellingean inspired Heideggereanism and comments on its properties,

Ecstatic naturalism transforms Peirce's own account of continuity to include absolute breaks and fissures within the infinite continua of nature. That is, nature is the seedbed of continua but is not itself a superorder of continuity...on a deeper level, the pragmatist concept of continuity, when joined with Peirce's elusive concept of 'ground', prepares the way for analysis of the even more elusive concept of 'betweenness'...the ultimate enabling condition emergent from the space opened out by the ontological difference. It will be shown that the 'unthought' (to use a term from Heidegger) in Peirce is precisely this inner dynamism of the ontological difference as manifest in the various betweenness of structures.¹⁴⁵

Corrington's claim amounts to saying that the human being is fully encompassed within a continuum of nature that contains its own disjunctive relationships, in addition to conjunctive relationships. Disjunctive relationships have their place in the continuum, but according to Peirce, these relationships could never be *absolute*.¹⁴⁶ On Corrington's view, differences found among the continuum have their ultimate source: a creative and potent origin-point of feeling, possibility, and power that makes for the cosmic generation and experience of nature. Corrington associates this creative ground with Heidegger's ontological difference and with Peirce's semiotic ground of possible predication.

Matched with Firstness, the ontological difference becomes a creative ground responsible for allowing the divine to come forward as the sacred, experienced in numinous feeling. In my view, Corrington does not fully account for appearances of the divine manifest in this feeling, especially as abduction is a critical means to appropriating that feeling. It is my view that abduction is a viable means by which humans may appropriate the sacred through experiences of Firstness.

As I interpret it, the ontological difference constitutes a differential ground of power and possibility (for Heidegger and Schelling that difference constituted a type of freedom, or the power to imagine a situation or object different or otherwise than it is); it is condition and point of origin allowing for all things or situations possible. Moreover, the power of this origin may be felt directly in experience through Peircean abduction. This seems to go against Corrington's view of the ontological difference, where the concept of origin is associated with unconscious activity that is detected by psychoanalysis, and not abduction. Thus, rather than focusing on Heidegger, Corrington tends to follow figures such as Carl Jung and Julia Kristeva.¹⁴⁷ I agree with Corrington that if the ontological difference is a power for possibility and not a thing, then it might not be easily brought into view as things in experience are brought into view, and therefore it does remain "unthought" as he correctly suggests. However, this is not to say that the ontological difference cannot be felt and examined through means other than those of psychoanalysis.¹⁴⁸ For example, while one may not be able to consider the feeling of possibility as easily as one would consider a pen or pencil while holding such objects, surely pens and pencils, while wielded, may be felt to possess different possibilities or powers (such as the power to serve as a paperweight or a prying tool) and this feeling is in no way completely *hidden* from immediate conscious experience, but is rather primarily encountered in everyday experience. I would claim that it is a latent power in agreement with Corrington, but it is certainly not so hidden that the specialized knowledge of the psychoanalyst must unveil it. Invoking a "hermeneutics of suspicion," to employ the phrase as Ricoeur used it, I believe that one may experience possibility as it

is something primarily felt in everyday life—it need not be teased out through psychoanalytic means.¹⁴⁹

On this point, it seems Corrington shies from the power of possibility and its relationship to feeling when interpreted as a ground for experience.¹⁵⁰ Corrington writes of the dangers in how the ontological difference points “backward” towards itself as an empowering source, “if we confine nature naturing to the dimension of origin; it loses its forward momentum and becomes a demonic power. It would function only to secure general and opaque features of the world, and could serve to reinforce a conservative or even reactionary social theory.”¹⁵¹ Corrington is referring to Heidegger’s political affiliation during the 1930s and how that affiliation affected his esteem for the power of origin—for example, the potential for a people—and for the importance of feeling: socio-politically interpreted as “tradition,” “history,” “past,” “beginning,” “home,” *et cetera*. On Corrington’s view, the ontological ground of difference, when esteemed as a power of origin, has the ability to negatively influence human beings in the social and political worlds through offering itself as “irrational” feeling. One might crave and worship this feeling in religious sentimentalism or abuse it in violent political irrationalism. In the language of Heidegger, when ground is taken as a source or origin of power, it is felt to be essentially mysterious [*das Geheimnisvolle*] and Corrington is wary of how these features of Firstness, when lauded, play out in the socio-political world. I believe Heidegger is crucial in discerning this ground, but I will not address how the power of origin plays out in his political philosophy. I employ Heidegger’s philosophy towards the close of this study simply to elucidate Peirce’s ontology when considering the conditions that allow for nature’s growth.

D. THE “GROUND” OF DISCLOSURE FOR THE DIVINE

How do experiences of nature reveal the divine? Under what conditions might one say that the divine can be experienced in its sacred form? In my project I argue that possibility is a ground of disclosure for the divine. I claim that such an experience occurs in the venturing of hypotheses on the basis of possible guesses to be put forth by the inquiring organism during the process of abduction. When hypotheses are confirmed at some future point in time, there is an ecstatic moment that mirrors the structure of religious eschatological anticipation of a truth to come or of a truth to be revealed. While Peirce did not explicitly discuss such a basis of possibility for a disclosure of the divine in his theory of abduction, he did discuss the concept of what conditions are required for the disclosure of truth, and this is to be found in his semiotic theory. I cite Peirce from 1866 making a correlation between his semiotic triad and the Christian trinity. It is his mention of a ground of possibility that is most relevant:

Here, therefore, we have a divine trinity of the object, Interpretant, and ground...In many respects this trinity agrees with the Christian trinity...The Interpretant is evidently the Divine *Logos* or word; and if our former guess that a Reference to an Interpretant is to be right, this would also be the Son of God. *The ground, being that partaking of which is requisite to any communication with the symbol, corresponds in its function to the Holy Spirit* [emphasis mine.]¹⁵²

The “ground” is thus prior to any Interpretant, and makes for any interpretation as it corresponds to the other two structures of reality. That is, the ground is *required* for communication between Interpretant and object. In Peirce’s language, the Holy Spirit is requisite for Father and Son to honor separate (different) yet communicable (same)

identities to one another. The Holy Spirit stands as a ground of difference between Father and Son, but also remains part of the same reality, which is the reality of the Trinitarian God. The worldly communication and development among the parts of the Trinitarian God occurs for Peirce most tangibly within acts of love, as he wrote in his essay, “Evolutionary Love” (1893.)¹⁵³ In a sense, this ground allows for one to encounter the divine life in its sacred appearance, in addition to functioning as a semiotic mediator honoring the identity and difference of the categories. Could it be from within this ground of difference that the divine draws its power in order to manifest itself in sacred form before the Interpretant? I make note of Corrington’s suggestion that, “God lives within the heart of this ontological difference and is stretched between the orders of nature.”¹⁵⁴

Never becoming a sign or Interpretant itself, the elusive ontological ground of difference snakes its way “in-between” the categories of experience from within a generating ground of Firstness. Yet difference is also found mediated *within* the categories. The categories allow for the Interpretant to catch a mediated and indirect glimpse of the divine life by mediating difference through symbolic form, although difference is never a mere symbol itself. Ontological difference here means pure and full possibility: possibility for a real world in its spontaneity and life. That is, the ontological difference, while appearing mediated through icon-index-or sign (symbol), is still a *real* (not nominal) difference between identities. In this way, difference is not empty or blank, but is pregnant and “germinal” with the meanings that it antecedently gives.¹⁵⁵ As Peirce explained,

We start, then, with nothing, pure zero. But this is not the nothing of negation. For not means other than, and other is merely a synonym of the ordinal numeral second. As such it implies a first; while the present pure zero is prior to every first. The nothing of negation is the nothing of death, which comes second to, or after, everything. But this pure zero is the nothing of not having been born. There is no individual thing, no compulsion, outward nor inward, no law. *It is the germinal nothing, in which the whole universe is involved or foreshadowed. As such, it is absolutely undefined and unlimited possibility -- boundless possibility.* There is no compulsion and no law. *It is boundless freedom* [emphases mine.]¹⁵⁶

If difference were a nominal construction, its result would be an empty no-thingness (as in having no identity or a blank identity, incidentally the criticism leveled against Schelling by Hegel), but would also literally be reduced to nothing at all. *It would not be a reality.* There would be no possibility for positive identity *as such*. If difference were blank and empty—that is, if difference were itself without an identity, then Firstness would be reduced to a titled fiction contrary to its powerful feeling because even *fiction* would then have no power to affect anything at all in a real or positive sense. Peirce always recognized the existence, at least as an ultimate possibility, of a differential ground of possibility concomitant with the potential for convergences upon truth; and Heidegger, though crossing out Being to indicate its hidden power to negate beings as a totality, similarly maintained that disclosures of truth would be possible within alethiaological discourse.¹⁵⁷ Neither philosopher thought difference and its relationship to Being was a powerless nominal fiction.

To conclude, the perspective of ecstatic naturalism honors the ground of ontological difference, but it does not succumb to reducing the non-actuality of Firstness to a sort of absence that allows for the infinite play of an infinite number of sign-substitutions in completely arbitrary manner. The infinite growth and signification of

semiotic meaning crystallizes into temporary structures and organizations that are always “on-the-way” towards new crystallizations of “truth,” which simply means the fulfillment of the sign’s function. These truths phenomenologically present themselves within an infinite process of semiosis among hermeneutic communities of inquiry and take real effect among the communities’ participants. Careful attention is needed to anticipate, detect, and report the appearances of truth(s), some of which may include sacred and divine realities. As Corrington explains,

The ontological tight rope we are forced to walk is very thin. On the one side is the abyss that leads to the object that lies ‘outside’ of the sign, while on the other side lies the abyss that swallows up...and devours all objects (a species of postmodernism.)...But this is a far cry from the forms of infinite semiosis that will be exhibited by ecstatic naturalism...clearly, the balancing act asked of though is one that calls for intense phenomenological concentration.¹⁵⁸

The scope of my project does not permit me to perform a thorough investigation of ecstatic naturalism because that would constitute an investigation in itself. In the absence of its full investigation, then, I ask the reader to recognize the general importance of this kind of naturalism when thinking about Peirce, and to keep its importance in mind as I proceed.

V. ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

In this first chapter, “A Peircean Philosophy of Religion,” I have offered a summary of my argument and shown how Peirce foreshadowed ecstatic naturalism. In addition to having provided a general introduction to Peirce’s philosophy of religion and

its terminology, I provided a review of the literature, and identified what philosophical currents of the subject I resist and from what currents I draw. I have also attempted to outline Peirce's philosophy of religion within the view of the ecstatic naturalist perspective.

Chapter Two, "The Evolving Cosmos," explores how possibility is related to the divine life, or Peirce's cosmos. First, I examine Peirce's categories insofar as they structure nature and *are* nature inasmuch as each category is taken to be a universe of experience and mode of being. Second, I describe how Peirce's doctrine of the categories that arises in his phenomenology engages possibility. Third, I discuss the reality of possibility and question how what is sacred might be included within the continuum of nature. Fourth, I examine how possibility stretches through a continuum of nature and animates the cosmos as part of the divine life. I then analyze the implications of Peirce's continuum of nature for his cosmology and religious metaphysics, especially as the continuum of nature may be interpreted to be the developing life of God.

In Chapter Three, "Abduction and the Ecstatic Event," I define Peirce's account of abduction and the role it plays in his theory of inquiry, logic, and reasoning. I then look at how the process of abduction begins in the disturbance of Firstness-feeling, and how Firstness-feeling tends toward more generalized states of mind in the "continuum of nature." I argue why abduction is important for discussions about religious feeling while focusing on the characteristics of an attunement to nature. And finally I examine Peirce's essay "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (1908) drawing out the difference between the finite and infinite through a discussion of the numinous feeling experienced in the ecstatic event.

Chapter Four, “The Sacred Depths of Nature,” serves as a conclusion to my project, adding emphasis to my thesis by illuminating key preceding points and issues. I do so by approaching Peirce through Heidegger’s 1936 lecture on Schelling, identifying Heidegger’s Schellingean inspired themes as they pertain to Peirce with the perspective of ecstatic naturalism serving as background for my interpretation.¹⁵⁹ I suggest that if one can relate Heideggerean Being in any significant way to the Peircean divine life, then it is reasonable to claim that one can situate Peirce and Heidegger more closely together given a mutual Schellingean claim that an ontological difference is responsible for nature’s unfolding and truth-disclosure. Making this claim helps identify how possibility and feeling both function in Firstness as it operates within a Peircean philosophy of religion.

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* Vols. 1-8, edited by Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, A.W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931, 1958.) Hereafter cited as CP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, edited by Nathan Houser, Christian Kloesel, and Jonathan R. Eller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.) Hereafter cited as EP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles S. Peirce, *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. 6 volumes, edited by Max Fisch, Christian Kloesel, and Nathan Houser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-2008.) Hereafter cited as W followed by volume and page number. Also, *The Charles S. Peirce Papers*, Microfilm edition, Harvard University Library Photographic Service, 1966. Hereafter cited as MS with catalogue manuscript and page number.

² Introductory descriptions of Firstness may be found in: CP 1.300-317, CP 1.358, CP 1.412, and CP 1.530.

³ For more characterization of the term “sacred” as I will use it in this dissertation, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, translated by Willard Task (New York: Harcourt, 1957), 47; and Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*, translated by John Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923.) I do not follow Eliade’s dualistic split between the real world (profane) and the *really* real world. However, I do find viable his inclusion of the sacred in the realm of what is phenomenologically felt by the human being in religious experience. Also see Douglas Allen, “Mircea Eliade’s Phenomenological Analysis of Religious Experience,” *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 52, No. 2 (April, 1972): 170-186.

⁴ John D. Dadosky, *The Structure of Religious Knowing: Encountering the Sacred in Eliade and Lonergan* (New York: SUNY, 2004), 21-24. Also see Merold Westphal, “Phenomenology and Existentialism,” in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999), 144. Westphal discusses the ways in which the religious “object” (often generalized as the sacred or the holy) is given to the religious subject. He characterizes the existential prerequisite for what it means to be religious, especially as the subject encounters the sacred from the phenomenological and existential viewpoint.

⁵ Valpy, F.E.J., *An Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language* (London: Red Lion Court, 1928), 414. *Sacer* is the nominative singular form - *sacrum* is neuter derivative form. This is a purely Latin word with Latinum roots. Marylinn Lawrence Moore has aided me in recovery of specific etymological variations. She notes the following of the word “sacred”: from the verb *sacren* “to make holy” (c.1225), from O.Fr.

sacer (c.1200), from Latin *sacrare* "to make sacred, consecrate," from *sacer* (gen. *sacri*) "sacred, dedicated, holy, accursed, enchanted" from *saceres*, which Valpy connects to the base root "bind, restrict, enclose, protect." Nasalized form is *sancire* "make sacred, confirm, ratify, ordain." A sacred cow is an "object of Hindu veneration," from 1891; fig. sense is first recorded 1910, from Western views of Hinduism. *Sacred* also relates to *desmos* in Greek – to bind, or a powerful binding spell—having the power of the gods, enchanted, spellbound. Correspondence based with Marilyn Lawrence Moore, June 2nd, 2008. Dadosky explores the etymology and meaning of "sacred" in his *The Structure of Religious Knowing*, 23-24.

⁶ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 414.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

⁹ In other words, my thesis operates within the understanding the Peirce is not a pantheist, as his God is not synonymous with nature, but is a part of it. Such makes Peirce a *panentheist*. For discussion about Peirce's panentheism, see John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.) Peirce's God manifests in, and through, the categories of experience

¹⁰ Cf. C.S. Peirce "On a New a New List of Categories" (1867) and later revised in "On Phenomenology" (1903) and "The Categories Defended" (1903.)

¹¹ Probably the most authoritative monograph written on Peirce's evolutionary philosophy is Carl Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993.) In it, Hausman goes into great detail discussing Peirce's cosmos as it relates to the perspective of realism and an evolving sort of truth or generality. Another text one might consult for a discussion about Peirce's evolutionary philosophy is Peter Turley, *Peirce's Cosmology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977.) This text does not so much discuss issues about realism as it does discuss Peirce's evolving cosmos and the ontology explaining it.

¹² Peter Turley, *Peirce's Cosmology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977), 110.

¹³ EP 2.441.

¹⁴ CP 7.219.

¹⁵ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 5-8.

¹⁶ Constraints posed from the world can either be internal or external, or some combination of both as when "outer" challenges getting repositioned as "inner" challenges within the psyche. Cf. EP 2.151.

¹⁷ CP 5.384.

¹⁸ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, translated by Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum Press, 2005), 81.

¹⁹ It was in *Being and Time* (1927), Section 69c, that Heidegger introduced an ecstatic schema in order to indicate the *that towards which* ecstatic moments carry the individual. Heidegger drew this articulation so as to establish a new and radical understanding of time within the history of philosophy. On Heidegger's view, because human beings are temporal beings, one can be carried off in any one of three "ecstases": past, present, or future. Together, these three dimensions of past, present, and future open up a horizon of time and a world for *Dasein*, so it is possible to understand the Being of beings. In this project for the sake of brevity and clarity, I relate Heidegger's concept of "ecstatic" to horizons of possibility and reality, but not necessarily to horizons of temporality. Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Krell (California: Harper & Row, 1993), 229-234 and *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962), 364, 377.

²⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 20-37.

²¹ William James, from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "Circumscription of the [Religious] Topic," in *The Writings of William James*, edited by John McDermott (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1977), 744. Anette Ejsing connects the theme of being receptive to the divine with the concept of anticipation. She constructs of a Peircean theology of anticipation in her *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce: Princeton Theological Monograph Series* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2006.) I should like to thank Dr. Ejsing for her comments and criticisms on various drafts of this dissertation.

²² *Ibid.*, 744.

²³ *Ibid.*, 744. And Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 258 and 260.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (Harper and Row, 1969), 58-91.

²⁵ "Heidegger uses the eighteenth-century orthography of *Sein*, i.e., *Seyn*, in order to indicate that, when he writes *Sein*, he means the way *Sein* is grasped metaphysically and, when he writes *Seyn*, he means the way *Sein* is no longer grasped metaphysically." Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, translators foreword, xxii. This distinction is not entirely consistent, though when equaling *Seyn* with be-ing, in most cases, the meaning remains the same. Cf. *Contributions to Philosophy*, 50-51, 124, 132, and 330. I should note that some Heidegger scholars (such as Martin Weatherston, most notably among them) rightly maintain the spelling of be-ing as *Seyn* in order to indicate this remarked difference.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 186 and 191.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 186, 191.

²⁸ CP 6.v.

²⁹ CP 6.406.

³⁰ EP 1.176.

³¹ Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 45.

³² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson: An Organic Anthology*, edited by Stephen Whicher (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 168.

³³ For more on the conditions that sustain inquiry or any form of identity that is to be found as a subject of inquiry, one might consult Martin Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity" in *Identity and Difference*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 32. Heidegger's relationship to the philosophy of religion, especially to a philosophy which considers "the divine" or "the holy" is indeed complex. Several key secondary sources exist such as: Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger's Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002); Jan Robinson and John Cobb, *The Later Heidegger and Theology: Discussions Among German and American Theologians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979); Frank Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 2001); Ben Vedder, *Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion: From God to the Gods* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006) and John R. Williams, *Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion* (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1979.)

³⁴ For Corrington's specific understanding of Peirce's connection to a philosophy of religion, see Robert Corrington, "Peirce and the Semiosis of the Holy" *Semiotics 1990*, edited by Haworth, Deely, & Prewitt (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991.)

³⁵ Specifically as outlined in Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*, translated by Parvis Emad & Kenneth Mally (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999) and Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985.)

³⁶ As cited from Joseph Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), 203.

³⁷ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 4 and 97.

³⁸ Cf. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948); Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996);

³⁹ Cf. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper Perennial 1975); Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Wisconsin: Lotus Press, 1990.)

⁴⁰ Cf. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, translated by Willard Task (New York: Harcourt, 1957); Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, translated by and edited by David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, edited by Don Ihde, translated by Willis Domingo et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974.)

⁴¹ William James, *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, edited by John J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988.)

⁴² EP 1.251.

⁴³ CP 5.402. Also see, MS 674.15 and Peter Turley, *Peirce's Cosmology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977), 110.

⁴⁴ C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 5 of 6, folder 1893. Letter to Edward Hegeler dated 1893, May 19.

⁴⁵ CP 6.505.

⁴⁶ Incidentally, the term “cosmotheism” is not far from Peirce’s own term “cosmic philosophy” which referred to the study of a divine, developing, universe-wide mentality at work in the universe. See his review of John Fiske’s *The Idea of God as Affected by modern Knowledge* (1885), W 5.260-262. Peirce also referred to his own philosophy as a “Cosmogonic Philosophy.” He wrote, “Such are the materials out of which chiefly a philosophical theory ought to be built, in order to represent the state of knowledge to which the nineteenth century has brought us. Without going into other important questions of philosophical architectonic, we can readily foresee what sort of a metaphysics would appropriately be constructed from those conceptions. Like some of the most ancient and some of the most recent speculations it would be a Cosmogonic Philosophy,” EP 1.297.

⁴⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 11.

⁴⁸ CP 6.214.

⁴⁹ James, “Circumscription of the [Religious] Topic,” 744.

⁵⁰ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 47, 82.

⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, translated by Keith Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000), 151.

⁵² Vincent Potter, “Vaguely Like a Man: The Theism of C.S. Peirce” in *God Knowable and Unknowable*, edited by R. Roth (New York: Fordham University Press, 1973), 249.

⁵³ Cf. Vincent Potter, “Vaguely Like a Man: The Theism of C.S. Peirce” in *God Knowable and Unknowable*, edited by R. Roth (New York: Fordham University Press, 1973.)

⁵⁴ As cited by John Caputo, *The Religious* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001), 201. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by G. C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.)

⁵⁵ C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 5 of 6, folder 1893. Commentators have argued whether Peirce initially wrote “the best” of religion or “the pest” of religion. For example, scholars debate in the *Peirce Project Newsletter*, Volume 2, No. Summer 1995: “it is not clear that ‘pest’ is the correct word. It may be--Peirce made no correction here on the galley. Clearly the first letter of the word has been altered in Peirce's original letter and the typesetter took the intended letter to be ‘p,’ but it is not so obvious on our copy. The alteration, which appears to change a ‘p’ to a ‘b,’ or vice versa, raises the possibility that the first letter is ‘b,’ making the intended word ‘best’--but that does not work in context. Probably the word Peirce wanted is ‘rest’--this is supported by the fact that someone, possibly but not clearly Peirce, inserted an ‘r’ above the altered first letter. This little textual crux can probably be cleared when we next visit Southern Illinois University where we can examine the original.” After my own careful examination of the original document, it is my conclusion that Peirce used heavier ink in downward strokes to correct the drafts of his letters. The original word written in light ink was “best.” The correction, written in darker ink, was “pest.” Thus, the passage should read, “The pest of religion is emphasizing two penny ha' penny differences.”

⁵⁶ CP 6.584.

⁵⁷ Douglas R. Anderson, “An American argument for belief in the reality of God” *Philosophy of Religion* 26 (1989): 110.

⁵⁸ Firstness is connected to the “power” of assimilation or habit-taking faculty of Thirdness. See CP 1.351. Also see, “The Principles of Phenomenology” in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, edited by Justus Buchler (New York; Dover, 1955) and in “On Phenomenology” in EP 2.145. I have used Buchler’s edited volume on Peirce as a supplement when necessary due to the fact it is more portable than the *Collected Writings or Writings*.

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- ⁵⁹ Charles S. Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, edited by Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955) 78-85.
- ⁶⁰ CP 1.357.
- ⁶¹ Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, 5-8.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 5-8.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8-11, and Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane*, 8-10.
- ⁶⁴ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 77.
- ⁶⁵ CP 1.25.
- ⁶⁶ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 128.
- ⁶⁷ EP 1.234.
- ⁶⁸ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 87.
- ⁶⁹ CP 1.373.
- ⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*, translated by Allen Wood and Gertrude Clark (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), 44.
- ⁷¹ John Caputo, *The Religious* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 3.
- ⁷² John R. Williams, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion* (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1979), 139.
- ⁷³ Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 83.
- ⁷⁴ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles: Books I-III*, translated by Anton C. Pegis, J.F. Anderson, and Vernon J. Bourke (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 1.3-4.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, SCG 1.21-22.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, SCG 1.21-22.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, SCG 1.21-22.
- ⁷⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 221.
- ⁷⁹ Cited from Kearney's translation in *The God Who May Be*, 91. Capuzzi and Gray's translation reads, "As the element, Beins is the 'quiet power' of the favoring-enabling, that is, of the possible." Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" translated by Frank A. Capuzzi, in *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeil (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 241-242. Kearney translates "favoring-enabling" as "loving."
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.
- ⁸¹ Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 91.
- ⁸² Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 242.
- ⁸³ As translated by Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 93.
- ⁸⁴ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 242.
- ⁸⁵ Cf. Kearney's commentary on the "Letter on Humanism" in Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 91-93.
- ⁸⁶ Frank Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 104.
- ⁸⁷ Douglas R. Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (Netherlands: Kluwer, 1987), 97.
- ⁸⁸ EP 2.438.
- ⁸⁹ CP 6.613.
- ⁹⁰ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 172.
- ⁹¹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 139-147.
- ⁹² Michael Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.) I should like to thank Dr. Raposa for his wonderful insight and gracious commentary on my work—and for offering to me eloquent and informative correspondence over the past year regarding Peirce's religious thinking.
- ⁹³ As quoted from Corrington on his faculty website, <http://www.users.drew.edu/rcorring/>, accessed January 24, 2008. See also, Robert S. Corrington, *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992); Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993); Robert S. Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Robert S. Corrington, *Nature's Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.)
- ⁹⁴ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 8.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 8, 158. Specifically Ejsing argues Corrington does not account for God's reality in His entirety, as he does not emphasize God's divine will in his Peircean theology of divine potentialities (*die Potenzen*.)

⁹⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁷ The body of literature on Peirce and religion is few and far between. As it stands there are just four book length manuscripts that deal directly with the topic: Donna M. Orange's *Peirce's Conception of God: A Developmental Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Michael Raposa's *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Robert S. Corrington's *Introduction to C.S. Peirce, An: Philosopher, Semiotician, and Ecstatic Naturalist* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993); and Anette Ejsing's *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2006.) Apart from dissertations, there are only a few dozen articles and a few chapters in anthologies or in the Peirce *Transactions* dealing with Peirce and religion. I do not, at least visibly in this work, deal with Donna Orange's manuscript *Peirce's Conception of God: A Developmental Study*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) which is primarily a work in philosophical theology that approaches Peirce from a specifically Judeo-Christian standpoint. However, I tend to agree with Ejsing's own statement on page 138 of her book *Theology of Anticipation* that "Peirce's theological position is more generally religious than specifically Christian." On the topic of philosophical theology I should like to thank Dr. Jed Delahoussaye for inspiring my passionate interest in the subject, for it was under his direction and guidance of nearly a year that I found a love of study for such philosophers ranging from Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, to John Duns Scotus and John Scotus Eriugena during his Medieval philosophy and Natural theology seminars, and more recently for inspiring my own passion and research into the theologies of Karl Jaspers and Paul Tillich. Further characterization of the Peirce religion literature is found in Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 138 and in Raposa's excellent bibliography in his *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

⁹⁸ For an introductory discussion on Scholastic Realism by Peirce, see CP 5.93-101. See also, "Fraser's *The Works of George Berkeley*" (1871), EP 1.83-106 and Nathan Houser, "Introduction," EP 1.xxviii.

⁹⁹ CP 1.6.

¹⁰⁰ Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, 86, also Peter Ochs, "Theosemiotics and Pragmatism," *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 72, No. 1. (Jan. 1992): 59-81.

¹⁰¹ At times in Raposa's work, it appears that he treats Peirce exclusively as a young Hegelian owning a "religion of science." By focusing on Peirce's apotheosizing of reason and condemnation all forms of nominalism and metaphysical skepticism, Raposa perhaps inadvertently de-emphasizes the non-rational in Peirce's metaphysics. Raposa has indicated to me in correspondence that I am correct in attributing to him Roycean and young Hegelian leanings.

¹⁰² Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 208.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 208.

¹⁰⁴ Where Corrington speaks of a Peircean "category," he often uses the terms "order" or "dimension of experience" synonymously.

¹⁰⁵ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 208-209. It is for this same reason I defer Raposa's theosemiotic to the ontological difference as thought about by Heidegger.

¹⁰⁶ See Robert Corrington, "My Passage From Panentheism to Pantheism," *The American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* Vol. 23, No. 2 (May 2002): 129-153.

¹⁰⁷ Recently Corrington has expressed to me that his work also currently draws upon resources such as Kant (especially the concept of sublimity), Schopenhauer, and Dewey.

¹⁰⁸ Obviously I cannot enter into a full-scale description of how I take phenomenology to operate within this project, but only can direct the reader to the resources and main lines of thought that characterize my understanding of it. With that said, I mention the following brief list of phenomenological resources. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996); Herbert Speigelberg, "Husserl's and Peirce's Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 17. No. 2. (Dec., 1956): 164-185; Herbert Speigelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994); Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988); Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, translated by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Row, 1964);

Frederik Stjernfelt, *Diagrammatology: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics* (New York: Springer, 2007); and Thomas Seebohm, Robert Corrington and Carl Hausman, *Pragmatism Considers Phenomenology* (Washington D.C.: CARP and University Press of America, 1987.) This list is by no means exhaustive, but should provide the reader with a basic familiarity with the lines of phenomenology that I identify with as constituting the general character of the discipline.

¹⁰⁹ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, xii.

¹¹⁰ Robert Corrington, "Evolution, Religion, and a Capacious Naturalism: A Response to *The Evolution of Religion: Stories, Theories, & Critiques*," Unpublished Manuscript, email correspondence to Leon Niemoczynski, dated June 11, 2008.

¹¹¹ Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, x.

¹¹² In my view, Peirce has narrowly been placed in the category of "scientific" philosopher. Moreover, an insular understanding of "logic" surrounds his philosophy. For an example, in Thomas A. Goudge, *The Thought of C.S. Peirce* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), Goudge develops the thesis that there are "two Peirce's": the "sturdy" empirical pragmatist, and the "questionable" transcendentalist. Others, such as Manley Thompson, have stressed the pragmatic and empirico-scientific elements in Peirce's writing. See Manley Thompson, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.) Review of the literature, even in its contemporary formulation, indicates that Peirce is still firmly placed in a tradition that lauds science, logic, and mathematics without regard to anything else present in his thought. While it is true that Peirce's philosophical developments of the scientific and mathematical traditions are indeed crucial and important, it is my contention that much of the current literature neglects the rich resources in Peirce's thought that could contribute to other disciplines such as ethics, theology, art, or religion, or other perspectives and traditions such as postmodernism or Continental philosophy. To characterize the traditional view of Peirce, for example, Max Fisch (one of Peirce's eminent biographers and himself a Peirce scholar) wrote, "It is not sufficiently recognized that Peirce's career was that of a scientist, not a philosopher; and that during his lifetime he was known and valued chiefly as a scientist, only secondarily as a logician, and scarcely at all as a philosopher. Even his work in philosophy and logic will not be understood until this fact becomes a standing premise of Peircian studies." From Max Fisch, *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, Second Series*, edited by Moore and Robin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), 486. Thinking about Peirce primarily as a scientist and *not as a philosopher* truncates opportunity to explore his philosophy in ways other than the scientific—that is, seldom does one explore Peirce's thought as having a philosophy of religion, ethics, or otherwise. Another example of the bias to understand Peirce "scientifically" can be found in the editors' introduction to the *Essential Peirce*: "Every volume of Peirce's writing should perhaps contain the warning: 'Let no one enter here who is ignorant of logic, mathematics, and the history of science.'...for without such knowledge it is not possible to penetrate fully the depths of Peirce's metaphysics." EP 1.xxxii. While I understand that scientific method and the subjects of scientific investigation were indeed important for Peirce, certainly he did have other concerns than those limited to the realm of scientific inquiry. And certainly, while a training in logic and mathematics might be helpful for someone studying Peirce, it is by no means required. Peirce did say, after all that "I do not need to be told that science consists of specialties. I know all that, for I belong to the guild of science, have learned one of its trades and am saturated with its current notions. But in my judgment there are scientific men, all whose training has only served to belittle them, and I do not see that a mere scientific specialist stands intellectually much higher than an artisan. I am quite sure that a young man who spends his time exclusively in the laboratory of physics or chemistry or biology, is in danger of profiting but little more from his work than if he were an apprentice in a machine shop." CP 7.65. And, "I should be the very first to insist that logic can never be learned from logic-books or logic lectures... The impression is rife that success in logic requires a mathematical head. But this is not true. The habit of looking at questions in a mathematical way is, I must say, of great advantage, and thus a turn for mathematics is of more or less service in any science, physical or moral. But no brilliant talent for mathematics is at all necessary for the study of logic." CP 7.69-70. Those who have undergone training in Continental philosophy, for example, detect concerns within Peirce's philosophy other than those praised by the "sturdy" scientist or logician. Neil Gross, for example, has studied the socio-intellectual context in which Peirce was raised through the lens of Emil Durkheim's 1913-1914 lectures on pragmatism. Reading

books and journal articles from that period indicates the ideas of the Anglo-American pragmatic philosophers, especially Peirce and his associations with Bergsonian spiritualism and process thought, would have come to take on religious connotations for many French intellectuals who read them. Gross also makes the interesting connection between Peirce and modern theologians such as Maurice Blondel and Eduard Le Wroy, who wrote extensively about human action. The connection being that, within the contemporary literature, Peirce's currency for the philosophy of religion is mostly taken from philosophers trained in *Continental philosophy*, or at least philosophers who are aware of French intellectual development and how it led to the postmodern tradition. Those Continentally trained philosophers then build the bridge to America pragmatism seeing in Peirce the embryo of many postmodern themes—and these themes step beyond the domain of mathematics and science. Corrington's indebtedness to the postmodern French tradition, for example, is through the psychoanalysis of Julia Kristeva. And David Ray Griffin has explored Peirce's connection to postmodernism, as has Floyd Merrel. Finally, Jacques Derrida—perhaps postmodernism's most notorious philosopher—has admitted his high regard for Peirce; having read Peirce's papers at Harvard and commenting how Peirce's "indefiniteness of reference" surpassed even that of Saussure. See Neil Gross, "Durkheim's Pragmatism Lectures: A Contextual Interpretation," *Sociological Theory* Vol. 15, No. 2 (July, 1997): 126-149, and Robert S. Corrington, "Peirce's Ecstatic Naturalism: The Birth of the Divine in Nature," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (May 1995): 173-187 and Robert S. Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 133. Also, David Ray Griffin "Introduction" and Peter Ochs "Charles Sanders Peirce" in *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy: Peirce, James, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne*. edited by David Ray Griffin (New York: SUNY, 1993), Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis in the Postmodern Age* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), Jeffrey Barnouw, "Peirce and Derrida: 'Natural Signs' Empiricism Versus 'Originary Trace' Deconstruction," in *Poetics Today* Vol, 7:1 (1986): 78-94, and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by G.C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), especially 48, 49, & 336.

¹¹³ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 1-3, See also CP 1.3-14.

¹¹⁴ Philosophical schools exemplifying this picture of the world would be logical positivism, or much earlier in philosophical history, the empirical thinking of John Locke and similar British empiricists who focus on sense data as the ultimate criterion for reality and truth. For a pointed criticism of the insularity of this kind of naturalism, see John Dewey, "Nature in Experience," in *The Essential Dewey* Vol I, eds. Hickman and Alexander (Bloomington: IUP, 1998), 155 especially.

¹¹⁵ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 2.

¹¹⁶ CP 1.135.

¹¹⁷ Cf. S. Morris Eames, *Pragmatic Naturalism: An Introduction* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 3-9, 16-22.

¹¹⁸ See for example his essay on phenomenology in the first volume of the *Collected Papers*.

¹¹⁹ CP 1.43-58.

¹²⁰ James, "A World of Pure Experience" in *The Writings of William James*, 195.

¹²¹ CP 5.173.

¹²² Cited from William James, "Philosophy (Lecture XVIII from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*) in *Pragmatism and Religion*, edited by Stuart Rosenbaum (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 75.

¹²³ Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 18-19.

¹²⁴ Robert Corrington, *Nature's Religion* (Maryland, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 3.

¹²⁵ Robert Neville, Foreword in *Nature's Religion*, xiii.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁹ Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 5, 18-19, 23.

¹³⁰ Corrington, *Nature's Religion*, 8.

¹³¹ Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Ground" in *Pathmarks* translated and edited by William McNeill (Cambridge University Press: 1998), 97 & 134.

¹³² Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 5.

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- ¹³³ Ibid., 16.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid., 4.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., 4-6.
- ¹³⁶ See CP 5.589.
- ¹³⁷ See CP 1.171 and CP 1.362, also CP 6 “The Continuum.”
- ¹³⁸ Corrington, *Nature’s Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit*, 142.
- ¹³⁹ Corrington, *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism*, 141.
- ¹⁴⁰ CP 6.365.
- ¹⁴¹ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 109.
- ¹⁴² CP 6.102. Relevant influence from Schelling is also mentioned in CP 6.605.
- ¹⁴³ CP 6.612-13.
- ¹⁴⁴ EP 1.1-11.
- ¹⁴⁵ Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 7.
- ¹⁴⁶ Characterizing the impossibility of absolute disjuncture in the continuum, Peirce explained that, “If the succession of images in the mind [images or ideas that are part of a same nature, yet which are distinct in the sense that they may be conceptually different] is by discreet steps, time for that mind will be made up of indivisible instants. Any one idea will be absolutely distinguished from every other idea by its being present only in the passing moment...[The] resemblance of ideas implies that some two ideas are to be thought together which are present to the mind at different times. And this never can be, if instants are separated from one another by absolute steps.” MS Number 377, “Time and Thought.” Cited from Matthew Moore, “The Genesis of the Peircean Continuum,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* Vol. 43, No. 3 (2007): 428-429.
- ¹⁴⁷ One articulation of this view is found in Corrington’s section “The Unconscious of Nature” in *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 48*52.
- ¹⁴⁸ Elusive to propositional and logical analysis, Firstness still may be *indirectly known* as it is *directly felt*. Here of course one must broaden the concept of what “knowledge” means. Thus, following Buchler, for example, judgment need not take the form of a thought or a proposition, but may be embodied in action or the organizing and arranging of materials. In defining “knowledge” of Firstness, there may be “emotional,” “energetic,” or “performative” communication of knowledge about Firstness rather than strict logical analysis of it. Still, special means are not required to interpret “knowledge” of Firstness nor detect it *as a feeling*. In this case Firstness would be phenomenologically self-evident to the “experiencer” (or “proceiver,” in Buchler’s terms.) I am pointing to the fact that Firstness can be self-expressive in first person experience. See Beth Singer, *Ordinal Naturalism: An Introduction to the philosophy of Justus Buchler* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983), 42.
- ¹⁴⁹ Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.)
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 190-191.
- ¹⁵¹ Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, 139.
- ¹⁵² W 1.503.
- ¹⁵³ CP 6.287, Chapter Eleven “Evolutionary Love.”
- ¹⁵⁴ Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, 37.
- ¹⁵⁵ CP.6216-217.
- ¹⁵⁶ CP 6.217.
- ¹⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, “On the Question of Being” in *Pathmarks* translated and edited by William McNeill (Cambridge University Press: 1998), 291-323.
- ¹⁵⁸ Corrington, *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*, 90-91.
- ¹⁵⁹ The view that the sacred is already a part of nature is a view held by Robert Corrington and the animating force that led to the ideas behind this dissertation. While I do not explicitly discuss in this work Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism, his philosophy remains the lens through which I view both Peirce and Heidegger, and it is to his philosophical outlook that I am most indebted. I should like to thank Dr. Corrington for his review and support of my work, as well as for being a creative source of inspiration.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLVING COSMOS

“I look upon creation as going on and I believe such vague idea as we can have of the power of creation is best identified with the idea of theism.”

--C.S. Peirce, CP 8.138¹

I claimed in the previous chapter that Peirce’s ontology and cosmology—his “cosmotheism”—accounts for an evolving universe that he implied to be the becoming life of God. As Peirce put it, “a genuine evolutionary philosophy, that is, one that makes the principle of growth a primordial element of the universe, is so far from being antagonistic to the idea of a personal creator that it is really inseparable from that idea.”² Elaborating on this claim poses its difficulties and challenges, and one must take care in constructively interpreting what Peirce thought about the divine. I quote Charles Hartshorne and William Reese at length in order to describe the situation and introduce what of Peirce’s God will be my focus.

Peirce’s reflections about God are fragmentary. The whole of his thought with its vigor and freshness seems to strain against arrangement into a single coherent system...the case is more critical with respect to his concept of God....Peirce was primarily concerned with logic and cosmology; these required much of his lifelong energy. Again, Peirce deeply believed that the path of future philosophy demanded of one a consuming interest in research, particularly of the laboratory variety....Peirce greatly distrusted the reasoning of theologians and the philosophy of the seminary which was very likely, he felt, to be armchair philosophy. But perhaps the most important consideration bearing upon the idea of God was his belief that practical matters must rest upon instinct....All this being so, Peirce’s thinking about God could not well have resulted in a single consistent doctrine....One cannot properly render definite what are essentially indefinite

themes concerning God; but Peirce's categories did, after all, become the three universes; and we are tempted to suggest that a definite concept could have been reached through relating the idea of God to his modes of being....[For Peirce] growth or development is essential in God....Peirce states that God is 'the only philosophical answer' capable of explaining the development of potentiality in the universe and that the universe—at least in this respect—may be termed 'the mind of God.'³

My focus will thus be establishing why Peirce's ontology and cosmology afford a useful angle of vision so as to discern how one may claim that the cosmos is a developing divine life, and that Peirce hinted as much in his philosophy. Or, as Peirce summarized the idea, "The starting-point of the universe, God the Creator, is the Absolute First; the terminus of the universe, God completely revealed."⁴ It is my contention that Peirce did not interpret the cosmos just to be a reflection of divinity and of "God's mind"—a view shared by most panentheists—but that he thought the cosmos was an ever-becoming life, infinite in its character. Peirce intimated that the divine was an ever-becoming life due to the ontological feature of *possibility* present within it, a mode of being responsible for the divine's freedom to grow and continually transform in a creative process that tends toward, but does not necessarily reach, a future state of God revealed, or "mind....at last crystallized in the infinitely distant future," as he put it.⁵ In this chapter, I would like to discuss how finite beings are able to relate to the divine life in its *reality of becoming*, or what I call "the continuum of nature." Given that Peirce described a universe thought to be evolving toward a state of "crystallized mind," the divine could thus be said to exist as a "*continuum*" whose origins are indefinite and vague, and whose ends tend toward the reasonable and concrete. If the cosmos is developing toward a perfected state, one might ask if it will ever achieve that state, thus making for an eschatological completion of its

life. Peirce answered to this question, “It always must be in a state of incipency, of growth....The creation of the universe....is going on today and never will be done.”⁶

Prominent in this discussion is identifying the nature of the cosmos (explaining reality’s categorial structure and a method for discerning that structure), as well as exploring how the ontological mode of possibility is necessary for the cosmos to grow and evolve. In this chapter I first explain Peirce’s categories because the categories structure nature and are natural modes of experiencing nature. Second, I discuss the method of phenomenology, Peirce’s doctrine of the categories and the method necessary for engaging the reality of possibility. Third, I look at the ontology of possibility to answer the question of how it functions within nature and is involved with the divine life. Fourth, I explain how the reality of nature is ordered into an ontological “continuum,” a reality composed of degrees of existence from depths of possibility to goals of concrete reason and generality. Finally, I synthesize these points through a discussion of Peirce’s ontology-cosmology making the case that, indeed, the evolving cosmos could be interpreted as a divine life within Peirce’s philosophy.

I. CATEGORIES

A. DOCTRINE OF THE CATEGORIES

Peirce began outlining the foundation for his categories early on in his philosophical career.⁷ He published an initial formulation of his categories in “On a New List of Categories” (1868) in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*.⁸ In this paper Peirce developed a triadic structure of primal categories

responsible for the organization and character of experience.⁹ “A *Category*,” Peirce wrote, “bears substantially the same meaning with all philosophers. For Aristotle, for Kant, and for Hegel, a category is an element of phenomena of the first rank of generality.”¹⁰ Peirce believed his categories are universal insofar as each category belongs to every phenomenon. Each category is a *kind* of experience, and is also a logically irreducible *structure* of experience. In Peirce’s words, “The *list of categories*....is a table of conceptions drawn from the logical analysis of thought and regarded as applicable to being.”¹¹

Peirce felt affinity with the likes of Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel and was tremendously influenced by those philosophers’ theories of the categories. For example, Peirce noted Kant’s influence upon him: “I devoted two hours a day to the study of Kant’s *Critic of the Pure Reason* for more than three years, until I almost knew the whole book by heart, and had critically examined every section of it.”¹² About Hegel’s importance for his own philosophy Peirce mentioned, “My philosophy resuscitates Hegel, though in a strange costume.”¹³ Peirce wanted to expand upon the categorial philosophies of Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel by reinterpreting their theories in their most universal, real, and pervasive features. Peirce’s major criticism of earlier formulations of categories was that those formulations were “too nominalistic.” He claimed that, “Kant was a nominalist; although his philosophy would have been rendered compacter, more consistent, and stronger if its author had taken up realism, as he certainly would have done if he had read Scotus. Hegel was a nominalist of realistic yearnings.”¹⁴ Aristotle was thought to come closest to an adequate realism about categories, but Peirce claimed that he nominalistically blurred “the distinction between grammar and metaphysics” and

unnecessarily multiplied the number of categories to ten.¹⁵ Peirce's philosophy thus took the earlier formulations of Aristotle and Kant and reduced their number of categories, as well as attempted to describe the categories in their real and universal nature.

Peirce set out to explore the nature of the categories in his ontology-cosmology. He described the categories experienced in his phenomenology. Phenomenology, Peirce said, is the "Doctrine of Categories, whose business it is to unravel the tangled skein [of] all that in any sense appears...or in other words, to make the ultimate analysis of experience."¹⁶ He continued, "The business of phenomenology is to draw up a catalogue of categories and prove its sufficiency and freedom from redundancies, to make out the characteristics of each category, and to show the relations of each to the others."¹⁷ Here it may be useful to note that Peirce used the approaches of phenomenology and logic as mutually supporting and that the two methods should not be conflated—they are distinct methods, yet both are indicative of the structure of reality.

Peirce insisted that his categories are the "key to the secret of the universe" insofar as they are the categorial elements of consciousness that are deemed active ontological players in a developing cosmology.¹⁸ Through phenomenological description, one may move from the categories which are presented before the mind as the analytic "ingredients of our knowledge...continually given to us in the presentations of sense" to the categories which are ontologically active "universes of experience," isomorphic to their conscious presentation.¹⁹ Peirce then said, "My view is that there are three modes of being. I hold that we can directly observe them in elements of whatever is at anytime before the mind in any way."²⁰

It is possible to move from a description of conscious experience to an ontology of the categorial modes of being using Peirce's phenomenology. Carl Hausman states that, "Peirce's aim was to use phenomenology to describe his categories...and to use phenomenological procedures to determine...modes of being."²¹ This is possible because categories, taken as elements of phenomena, and categories, taken as modes of being, are analogous. Therefore, the categories taken as elements of consciousness may exhibit the categories as modes of being, and vice versa. To put it another way, the metaphysical aspects of each category presented in conscious experience directly pertain to their modal (ontological) properties and realities.²² Ejsing clarifies that, "it is hard to determine whether Peirce argues that the reality of the three categories is proven by phenomenological investigations, or whether the result of phenomenology is the appearance of the three categories. Clearly, however, he argues that the three categories are the absolutely fundamental elements of everything."²³ Corrington adds that, "Many commentators argue as if the three primal ontological categories are a classification device for making the world intelligible. The truth runs far deeper. For Peirce, firstness, secondness, and thirdness are enabling powers that spawn the world and its structures of interaction and intelligibility."²⁴ As these commentators point out, Peirce's categories determine how nature is experienced, and *are* themselves constitutive of nature.

B. PHENOMENOLOGY: CATEGORIES ARE ELEMENTS OF PHENOMENA

Peirce followed Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel in arguing that a category is an organizing feature of experience. However, Peirce widened a category's scope of organizing power to include the status of a phenomenological "universe of experience."²⁵

Peirce's phenomenology described each universe of experience *as* it is experienced without prejudice toward the reality of that experience. He said, for example, that the phenomenologist is to "look well at the phenomenon and say what are the characteristics that are never wanting in it, whether that phenomenon be something that outward experience forces upon our attention, or whether it be the wildest of dreams, or whether it be the most abstract and general of the conclusions of science."²⁶ I shall now explain how Peirce construed each category as an element or "universe" of conscious experience, accounting for each category's experiential properties. I will then account for how he viewed the categories as structuring experiences in their various modes of being.

Peirce described the categories as "elements of phenomena."²⁷ "Firstness" is the category of the felt *quality* of phenomena. It is difficult to say what Firstness exactly *is* other than pure feeling or quality present as it is present. I have therefore opted to call Firstness in its phenomenological sense "Firstness-feeling." Peirce listed a variety of predicates that qualify Firstness, although strictly speaking, Firstness is prior to predication. The category of Firstness is also hardest to describe because it is a domain of experience that is preverbal. About Firstness Peirce stated that, "It is so tender that you cannot touch it without spoiling it."²⁸ To predicate Firstness would be akin to touching and spoiling it. But Peirce did argue that it is impossible for something to be experienced which is not cognizable at least in some respect.²⁹ That is, if experiences of Firstness were not intelligible, how would one know that they were having one? So, it seems that Firstness is not *completely* uncognizable because it is immediately available to the life of consciousness, though only inarticulately and only through feeling. As Peirce put it, "The immediate present, could we seize it, would have no character but its Firstness. Not that I

mean to say that immediate consciousness (a pure fiction, by the way), would be Firstness, but that the quality of what we are immediately conscious of, which is no fiction, is Firstness.”³⁰ To experience Firstness, then, would be to experience a complete immersion in pure quality, where all awareness of that quality would be identical with that quality itself. This awareness would be void of past and future in a “present moment.”³¹ Unrelated to anything else, pure Firstness would be like an isolated sense-experience “in a slumberous condition to have a vague, unobjectified, still less unsubjectified, sense of redness or of salt taste, or of an ache, or of grief or joy...a purely monadic state of feeling.”³² Pure Firstness would be a form of consciousness bereft of reflexive self-consciousness, “something of a nature of consciousness, a potential consciousness. A *sleeping* consciousness, perhaps.”³³

Spontaneity, feeling, immediacy, newness, having no parts or unity, and pure quality are all features of Firstness.³⁴ It was noted in the last chapter that Peirce often used examples related to the religious life to describe Firstness. Corrington notes this as well when he writes that, “religious myths of a primal garden or of a golden age are imaginative ways of pointing toward pure firstness.”³⁵ It would seem that if Firstness is, “What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own existence” then the fallen state of a mediated world would follow from a pure primal form of unmediated awareness available in a preverbal realm. This preverbal realm represents perfect union between consciousness and reality.³⁶ The preverbal realm also takes on mythic significance because it is viewed to be an origin and place of pure unmediated conscious experience.

“Secondness” is the category of the brute *resistance* of phenomena. It is the “then and there” of phenomena, as well as the dyadic relationship between existents. Peirce wrote that the “second is eminently hard and tangible. It is very familiar, too; it is forced upon us daily, it is the main lesson of life.”³⁷ The second category involves effort, force, compulsion, and effect. Secondness involves a “brute shock” of facticity, linking it to Firstness in experience *undergone*.³⁸ In Peirce’s words, “when I feel the sheriff’s hand on my shoulder, I shall begin to have a sense of actuality. Actuality is something *brute*.”³⁹ Another example Peirce provided his reader is attempting to open a heavy door.⁴⁰ Pushing against the door and trying to force it open involves an agent-patient relationship of effort and resistance. Peirce wrote, “We have a two-sided consciousness of effort and resistance” where revealed is “a two-sided sense, revealing at once a something within and another something without.”⁴¹ Experience offers resistance in instances of Secondness. On the part of the person who, for example, is attempting to open the door, resistance is felt from without as an occurrence of reaction. Were there no resistance from without (the door, for example) there would be no reaction of pushing out against a Seconded world.⁴² Peirce held that Secondness “blindly forces a place for itself in the universe, or willfully crowds its way in.”⁴³

It should be noted that Secondness may take on the dual forms of “external” constraint and “internal constraint”—both equally “real” in their force to spur the process of abduction and open new worlds of possibility needed to solve problems or entertain new experiences. Peirce claimed, for example, that, “We are continually bumping up against hard fact. We expected one thing, or passively took it for granted, and had the image of it in our minds, but experience forces that idea into the background, and

compels us to think quite differently.”⁴⁴ External forms of constraint can work their way inward to the subconscious realms of the psyche and be repositioned as internal forms of constraint, thus engendering processes of inquiry and self-discovery from within.⁴⁵

Because experience includes both physical and mental aspects of reality for Peirce, Secondness might pose resistance from encounters with actual physical objects, or Secondness might pose resistance in the form of mental ideas. Peirce noted that,

The main distinction between the Inner and the Outer Worlds is that inner objects promptly take any modifications we wish, while outer objects are hard facts that no man can make to be other than they are. Yet tremendous as this distinction is, it is after all only relative. Inner objects do offer a certain degree of resistance and outer objects are susceptible of being modified in some measure by sufficient exertion intelligently directed.⁴⁶

Existence, actuality, and brute facticity are all features of Secondness—whether in the mental or physical aspects of experience.

“Thirdness” is the category of the functioning *generality* of phenomena. This generality is experienced as *law*. Thirdness-law is the product of the interaction between the other two categories of Firstness and Secondness. There is a sense in which Thirdness can be taken to possess a *teleological* direction because Peirce viewed the universe to be moving toward a perfected state of generality from a previous disorganized and chaotic state. As He stated, “all the evolution we know of proceeds from the vague to the definite.”⁴⁷ However, this increase in Thirdness is not without deviation from generality. There is an element of chance that is alive in the universe and keeps generality from congealing into absolute law: “In short, diversification is the vestige of chance spontaneity; and wherever diversity is increasing, there chance must be

operative,” and “All law is the result of evolution and thus imperfect.”⁴⁸ In this way Thirdness laws are not static but rather are evolving in generality. Ejsing cites an example of Peirce’s Thirdness teleology.⁴⁹ She notes how the evolution of Firstness to Thirdness would be similar to an airplane working on autopilot. The plane without a pilot tends toward a goal despite certain variations in the data fed to its computer program directing it toward the goal. During any time the plane may crash or the plane may eventually reach its goal. All the while the plane is receiving data and proceeding on its course toward the goal. Analogously, there is an increase in generality toward the goal of reasonableness throughout the universe, but not without variation from law.⁵⁰ The universe becomes more reasonable or general in its law while approaching the goal of “crystallized mind.”⁵¹

To illustrate Thirdness, one might consider the law of gravity.⁵² The law of gravity functions as a general in the cosmos, yet long ago during the initial stages of the universe’s development, the law of gravity applied differently to cosmic bodies dependent upon the state of development at that time. As the universe developed and expanded, the law of gravity applied in more uniform ways across bodies within it. Yet, even now, within the development of the cosmos, there are deviations and mild variants from the law of gravity, calculated with tolerances rather than with exactitude. General law can provide a working certainty so as to predict future events and land lunar probes. Yet general law is also susceptible to modification over time. Thirdness thus offers a *degree* of certainty in the course of the development of the cosmos. But Thirdness is not, at this point in time, *absolutely* certain.⁵³

C. ONTOLOGY-COSMOLOGY: CATEGORIES ARE MODES OF BEING

Other than taking the categories as elements of conscious phenomena, how else might one describe them? Describing the categories in terms of their “modality” means describing the categories in terms of *modes of being*. “Modality” refers to the “reality status” of something, whether possible, actual, or necessary. The categories as modes of being are, Firstness: the reality of *possibility*, Secondness: the being of *actual* fact, and Thirdness: the measure or degree of the *being of generality* that will govern facts in the future. Peirce wrote, “Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, positively and without reference to anything else. Secondness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, with respect to a second but regardless of any third. Thirdness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other.”⁵⁴ I will now describe each of these modes in detail.

Possibility is the modality of Firstness. In classical metaphysics the category of the possible was generally understood as a lack to be realized in actuality.⁵⁵ Firstness lacks the being of Secondness, however Firstness is not without a reality that fits with the other two categories. Beyond potential striving toward fulfillment in the material (Aristotle), and beyond an intellectual representation (Leibniz, the logical category of *possibilitas*), Peirce understood *possibility* as an active universe and reality in its own right. In one of the first forms of twentieth-century process philosophy, Peirce claimed possibility is a mode of being that powers the development of the cosmos by creating chance, freedom, and spontaneity within the universe—characteristics of experience otherwise unavailable from the other two categories of experience. Peirce wrote, “As such, it [possibility] is absolutely undefined and unlimited possibility -- boundless

possibility. There is no compulsion and no law. It is boundless freedom.”⁵⁶ It is this “power” of possibility that reveals the nature of the other categories, as well as reveals how beings are situated and relate among the categories. Corrington explains the modal properties of Firstness as follows, “It [Firstness] is the spawning ground of all of the world’s orders and supports them...The ground of the world, pure firstness, is a heterogeneous and self-othering momentum that spawns the things of nature but has no unity of its own. It is tempting to see firstness as a unified ground, or foundation of all foundations. However, Peirce clearly saw that it must be pure variety, pure possibility, and pure indeterminacy.”⁵⁷

Actuality is the modality of Secondness. Peirce stated, “It [Secondness] is the compulsion, the absolute constraint on us to think otherwise than we have been thinking that constitutes experience.”⁵⁸ Shock and surprise are the results of this mode of being. If Secondness were located in a triadic model of being, it would be “being,” meant as “actual existence,” versus the “possible existence” of Firstness. Both belong to the same reality—the reality of the cosmos, or nature.

The modality of Thirdness is the *being of generalizing law* found between Firstness and Secondness. Thirdness is a result of the altercation between the first and second categories. The third element of categorial altercation could be described as “a healing force,” to borrow the phrase from Schelling, because Thirdness seeks to unify and heal the other two categories in their reaction and bring them to a unified goal: concrete reasonableness.⁵⁹ Peirce stated that,

We have seen that it is the immediate consciousness that is preeminently first, the external dead thing that is preeminently second. In like manner, it is evidently the representation mediating between these two that is preeminently third. Other examples, however, should not be neglected. The first is agent, the second patient, the third is the action by which the former influences the latter. Between the beginning as first, and the end as last, comes the process which leads from first to last.⁶⁰

Thirdness continually brings Firsts and Seconds together into the more general and is geared toward the future.

II. DOCTRINE OF THE CATEGORIES: PHENOMENOLOGY

A. PEIRCE'S IDEA OF PHENOMENOLOGY

In this section I examine Peirce's idea of phenomenology. The purpose of this examination is to see how Peirce's phenomenology considers possibility. Such a discussion is relevant because possibility impels the divine life's evolution and development. First, I define Peirce's idea of phenomenology. Second, I account for how possibility is included within the scope of phenomenology by introducing the concept of "ordinality" as described within the perspective of ecstatic naturalism. Defining Peirce's phenomenology and its range of investigation will prepare the way to engage an ontology of possibility as it functions within Peirce's ontology and cosmology in this chapter, and then for a discussion of possibility as it functions within abduction as described in the next chapter.

Peirce divided philosophy into Phenomenology, Normative Science, and Metaphysics.⁶¹ Phenomenology "makes out what are the elements of appearances that

present themselves to us....”, Normative Science is “research into the theory of the distinction between what is good and is bad; in the realm of cognition, in the realm of action, and in the realm of feeling....”, and Metaphysics is “philosophical inquiry whose business it is to work out....conceptions of the universe.”⁶² Peirce used several terms to communicate the same basic idea of method and description that “phenomenology” is supposed to be. The terms used are: “phenoscopy,” “ideoscopy,” “phaneroscopy,” and “Caenopythagorean phenomenology.”⁶³ For example, in *The Century Dictionary Supplement* (1911), Peirce wrote that the definition of "phenomenology" is "Firstness," "Secondness," "Thirdness," and included "phenoscopy (Caenopythagorean phenomenology)," "phaneron," and "pragmaticism.”⁶⁴ The earliest date Peirce used the term “phenomenology” is 1902, where it functioned as his label for a new classification of the sciences and of philosophy in particular.⁶⁵ Roughly speaking, phaneroscopy, phenoscopy, Caenopythagorean phenomenology, and related terms are all equivalent to “phenomenology.”⁶⁶

Peirce defined phenomenology by its method and goal. He wrote, “Phenomenology ascertains and studies the kinds of elements universally present in the phenomenon; meaning by the phenomenon, whatever is present at any time to the mind in any way.”⁶⁷ A “‘phenomenon’ is to be understood in the broadest sense conceivable” and with regard to the phenomena appearing, “Phenomenology can only tell the reader which way to look and to see what he shall see.”⁶⁸ Peirce gave a similar definition of phaneroscopy in 1904. He stated, “Phaneroscopy is the description of the *phaneron*; and by the *phaneron* I mean the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind....there is nothing so directly open to observation as phanerons.”⁶⁹ Noticing,

describing, or understanding these appearances or “phanerons” is “not easy” on Peirce’s view, although these appearance are immediately presented to consciousness and open to direct observation.⁷⁰

Peirce’s phenomenology taken in the ways just described comes close to Husserl’s use of the term in the second volume of his *Logical Investigations (Logische Untersuchungen, 1901.)*⁷¹ Husserl’s early phenomenology, like Peirce’s phenomenology, was a transcendental project that sought to discover the universal structures of consciousness in their transcendental-empirically real form.⁷² Transcendental phenomenology, at least for the early Husserl, sought to discover the universal structures of conscious experience that allow for appearances to be presented whatsoever. By contrast, it was Peirce, and incidentally Heidegger, too, who shifted attention in their phenomenologies to the description of experience itself (where appearances appear), rather than focusing on the structural level of an experience’s organization. These philosophers described the way in which appearances are grounded in the human experience of an existentially lived world, and this seems to be in contrast with Husserl’s early focus. Here, however, I should note that Husserl did shift the attention of his phenomenology to the “life-world” later on in his career, probably under the influence of Heidegger’s existential phenomenology.⁷³ Peirce did read Husserl, and he did consider Husserl’s phenomenology in comparison to his own method. However in terms of viewing phenomenology to be a doctrine of the categories, it was ultimately Hegel, and not Husserl, who was a dominant influence on Peirce.⁷⁴

Peirce viewed his method not in association with Husserl, but in contradistinction to Hegel and his work *Phenomenology of Spirit (Phänomenologie des Geistes, 1807.)*⁷⁵

Inasmuch as it was Hegel, and not Husserl, who dominantly influenced Peirce's method, Heidegger enters the picture here as well. Heidegger comes into view because like Peirce's phenomenology, Heidegger's approach examined phenomena *as they appear* in their appearing. Heidegger wrote,

We know that Being opens itself up to the Greeks as *phusis*. The emerging-abiding sway is in itself at the same time the appearing that seems...Being essentially unfolds as *phusis*. The emerging sway is an appearing. As such, it makes manifest. This already implies that Being, appearing, is a letting-step-forth from concealment.⁷⁶

Peirce and Heidegger saw phenomenology as a method capable of examining "truths" disclosed as appearances within human experience. On the Peircean-Heideggerean view, one's manner of apprehending these disclosed truths should be as open as possible in the orientation of description and judgment. For a Hegelian phenomenology, appearances must begin in immediate "sense-certainty."⁷⁷ Contrary to Hegel, Peirce and Heidegger did not restrict appearances to the realm of the sense-certain. On their view, one is to bracket the question of an appearance's "reality" in favor of looking at the appearance *as* an appearance, regardless of origin. Peirce and Heidegger thus broadened the phenomenological range of appearances to include *all* appearances in their concrete fullness simply as something experienced. Most often, the experiences that one places under scrutiny do begin in a sensed, lived, and existentially lived world. However "certainty" is by no means a requirement for the examination of what discloses itself for the Peircean and Heideggerean variety of phenomenology.⁷⁸ Peirce claimed that Hegel had a "fatally narrow spirit, since he restricted himself to what actually forces itself

on the mind.”⁷⁹ Peirce also wrote that, “I will so far follow Hegel as to call this science Phenomenology although I will not restrict it to the observation and analysis of experience but extend it to describing all the features that are common to whatever is experienced or might conceivably be experienced.”⁸⁰

One might think phenomenology is a strict science of consciousness, or that phenomenology has a sterile methodological principle limiting its philosophical attitude to examination of the logical unfolding of historical consciousness. Reiterating the fact that Peirce’s scientific method was “ecstatic,” however, it is not surprising to see that he broadened the definition of phenomenological method to include other dispositions capable of discerning the truths of experience. Peirce mentioned in his “On Phenomenology” (1903) essay, for example, that the “poetic mood” approaches the state in which phenomenology may describe Firstness appearing “present as it is present.”⁸¹ Peirce also wrote that the “artist’s observational power is what is most wanted in the study of phenomenology.”⁸² Likewise, Heidegger thought the poet’s observational power was most apt for describing the appearance of beings.⁸³ Thus, one can see how a Peircean phenomenology (and Heideggerean phenomenology) might offer several ways to examine possibility without the restrictions posed by earlier phenomenological projects offered in the history of philosophy.

B. ORDINAL PHENOMENOLOGY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECSTATIC NATURALISM

Part of understanding Peirce’s phenomenology and how it includes possibility within its scope of investigation involves “combining the sensitivity of phenomenological

description with the metaphysical insights of ordinality.”⁸⁴ “Ordinality” is a principle originally developed by the American philosopher Justus Buchler. This principle is further used by Buchler’s student, Robert Corrington, in his ecstatic naturalism.

Within the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, employing an “ordinal phenomenology” means looking at possibility in such a way that whatever may *possibly* appear or whatever may *possibly* be experienced is deemed experientially legitimate and available for phenomenological description. These aspects of reality are not subjected to tests of experiential validity that might demand propositional truth validity but need only be conceivable as a possibility. The main principle behind ordinality is thus that there is no “ontological priority” of reality among the relations of existing things. Put in the positive, there is a level of “parity,” or ontological equality, among the various modalities of being. Buchler summarized the principle of ordinality in his *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966) as follows, “We must discard the notion as some complexes as ‘less real’ and other complexes as ‘more real.’ Let us contrast a principle of ontological priority—which has flourished from Parmenides. . . .with a principle of ontological parity.”

⁸⁵ Describing ontological parity Buchler wrote, “There is no ground, except perhaps a short-range rhetorical one, between the real and the ‘really real,’ between being and ‘true being.’”⁸⁶

Buchler continues that, “The significant question is, not whether anything is ‘real’ or not, but how and in what sense it is real, and how it is related to and functions among other reals.”⁸⁷ For the present purpose of this study, if the felt presence or sacred aspect of the divine may be phenomenologically discriminated and described, even as a hypothesis, suggestion, or possibility, then it has a reality. Possibility itself is thus a

powerful mode of being that one may draw under consideration because it may disclose specific and affective features of experience that are valid for the individual experiencing them. Given the phenomenological ordinality of an experiencing consciousness, an infinite range of experience is validly opened for query as a meaningful region of experience. One is not expected to “prove” the “truth” or “falsehood” of whatever experience suggests, but rather, if the ordinal perspective is taken, one may describe and explore suggestions of experience in their immediacy, and reflect upon what sorts of experiences those suggestions may bring in the future. Peirce noted, “Phenomenology, that is, just the analysis of what kind of constituents there are in our thoughts and lives, (whether these be valid or invalid being quite aside from the question.)”⁸⁸ As I interpret Peirce to foreshadow ecstatic naturalism, I view his doctrine of phenomenology as being in alignment with the ordinal spirit.⁸⁹ To demonstrate this spirit at work, I shall briefly turn to ordinality applying itself within the Peircean phenomenology. I invoke this same ordinal spirit in Chapter Three so as to describe the numinous aspect of the divine life in its sacred form.

In Peirce’s essay, “The Marriage of Religion and Science” (1893), the issue of what may validly count as an “experience” comes to the fore and is an excellent example of the principle of ordinality at work.⁹⁰ In the essay, Peirce wrote of a tendency, although progressive in spirit, to “pooh-pooh at things unseen.”⁹¹ These “unseen,” yet ordinally experienced appearances of nature, are also “the most evanescent of phenomena.”⁹² But the evanescence of a phenomenon is no reason to assume that it is not real, that it is not without efficacy or importance within the dimension of human experience. Peirce

claimed one may simply gaze into the great face of nature in its naturing to see the ultimate evanescents freely working out their powers. As he put it,

the theory of another life is very likely to be strengthened, along with spiritualistic views generally, when the palpable falsity of that mechanical philosophy of the universe which dominates the modern world shall be recognized. It is sufficient to go out into the air and open one's eyes to see that the world is not governed altogether by mechanism....The endless variety in the world has not been created by law. It is not of the nature of uniformity to originate variation, nor of law to beget circumstance. When we gaze upon the multifariousness of nature we are looking straight into the face of a living spontaneity. A day's ramble in the country ought to bring that home to us.⁹³

Such a philosophical openness exists in contrast to an insular philosophy that would claim the world is nothing more than the visibly sensed world, measurable and calculable in its determined nature.

Heidegger's text, "Conversation on a Country Path About Thinking" (1959), echoes Peirce's suggestions found in the "Marriage of Science and Religion" essay.⁹⁴ One need go no further than a country road or a wood path to view the evanescent unconcealing and revealing of Being, according to Heidegger. Perhaps even in moments of stillness and quiet—moments that seemingly communicate nothing in a lack of visible or audible activity—there are nonetheless "real" insights and meaningful experiences available. Getting to the most fundamental questions of existence and meaningful experiences of life simply means starting with what is presented to an individual and focusing on *how* what appears is presented in the course of experience. On Heidegger's view, one should look at how things present themselves and not limit the view of reality to specific "scientific" requirements for the conditions of things being known. Such

would be to enframe the experience of Being within a calculable and mechanistic way of understanding beings. It seems that for Peirce (and for Heidegger) if one is looking for an appearance of the divine, one need not look further than to the processes and relationships surrounding them. Peirce summarized this phenomenological disposition when he wrote that our task “as students of phenomenology, is simply to open our mental eyes and look well at the phenomenon.”⁹⁵

I have attempted so far to demonstrate that *how* one looks at phenomena is extremely important for encountering the sacred or numinous aspect of the divine life. The Peircean-Heideggerean phenomenology recognizes that the reality of possibility and the sacred is actually closer to conscious experience than what may be initially considered. Yet, as close as the sacred dimension of human experience might be, its features and powers remain passed over. Peirce wrote that, “Metaphysics, even bad metaphysics, really rests on observation, whether consciously or not; and the only reason that this is not universally recognized is that it rests upon kinds of phenomena with which every man’s experience is so saturated that he usually pays no particular attention to them.”⁹⁶ Heidegger likewise wrote that, “the way to what is near is always the longest and hardest for humans.”⁹⁷ Phenomena which are very near are at times the most difficult to detect. One approach for detecting these near yet difficult to discern phenomena could be stepping back and attending to as closely as possible conscious experience *as* conscious experience, and such is the aim of phenomenology.

With respect to a phenomenology of the sacred, the fact that Firstness is most near to human experience would seem to present possibility as a very real and near power operating at the core of experience. Even in the very personal and close dimension of

Firstness, the sacred aspect of the divine might latently wait, despite it “staring one in the face.” In Peirce’s words,

if there is a personal God, we must have a direct perception of that person and indeed be in personal communication with him. Now, if that be the case, the question arises how it is possible that the existence of this being should ever have been doubted by anybody. The only answer that I can at present make is that 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. That has been remarked from time immemorial.⁹⁸

III. AN ONTOLOGY OF POSSIBILITY

A. REALITY: ACTUAL AND POSSIBLE

So far I have attempted to outline how Peircean phenomenology describes a wide range of experience and explores three ontological modes of being, including the mode of possibility. I shall now discuss the reality status of possibility and examine its ontological features. My guiding questions in this section will be: Is possibility a part of reality, and if so, how? Does it “exist?” How is possibility involved with the divine life? Answering these guiding questions will introduce the themes of *reality*, *being*, *possibility*, and *nature*. Ultimately I would like to discuss what possibility is, how it is a part of nature, and how it is involved with the transformation of the divine life in such a way that one may call the divine life “infinite.” I will first begin with a discussion about what Peirce meant by “reality” in order to explore these issues.

“Reality” for Peirce meant “sensible experience.”⁹⁹ Yet, it becomes apparent that “sensible experience” does not simply mean sensate experience. “Sensible experience” is

intelligible in its character, and whatever is experienced—i.e., “sensed”—is thus of a cognizable reality. Peirce sometimes referred to intelligible reality as “the real.” He wrote, “whatever is meant by the term ‘the real’ is cognizable in some degree” and, “cognizability (in its widest sense) and being are not merely metaphysically the same, but are synonymous terms.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, human cognition is in potential at least as wide as reality is wide because the real possesses the character of intelligibility, and human cognition possesses the capacity for knowing the real. This means in a positive expression that whatever is now, and whatever can possibly ever be or could be in the future, can either be thought now or could be thought, at least in principle, in the future. In negative expression, whatever cannot be thought, and thus is not nor would ever be. Such boils down to Peirce’s expression, “the absolutely incognizable is absolutely inconceivable.”¹⁰¹ Elsewhere, Peirce succinctly wrote: “anything out of thought we can know nothing.”¹⁰²

Reality, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, was divided into three modes of being. These three modes of being, taken in their totality, reflect an innumerable number of “worlds” in which beings grow, live, and experience. But, in my estimation, and taking a cue from Buchler’s *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966), “worlds” should be contrasted with a term that honors what a wider sense of reality might be.¹⁰³ It is acceptable to use the term “world” when speaking of the practical everyday dealings between beings and their environment within certain frames of reference. One may speak of the world of the insect or the world of the carpenter, for example. But this world of the everyday is only a fragment of a much larger picture of reality where three modes of being construct its variety of possible experience and actualization. Therefore, I define

“world” as belonging to one’s practical everyday dealings located within one’s inhabited environment. Yet, I also include what “world” means within the sum fact of reality, or more generally what I will refer to as the sum reality of *nature*. This sum includes any and all possible and actual “worlds” within one term that honors the various everyday worlds experienced by creatures. Taken in a much larger sense, I refer to the “world” as it is a part of a greater “nature” or evolving “cosmos.” As I understand Peirce, “nature” would here equal what he understood by the term “the real.”¹⁰⁴ Nature, while itself being all encompassing of worlds, is—as I hope to demonstrate—always evolving and transforming, and could never itself be one completed “world.” For the sake of avoiding undue complexity, I use the term “world” as worlds are part of nature, or part of a reality, that indicates *whatever is or can possibly be*.¹⁰⁵

Within nature, what *can be*, for Peirce? In the beginning of this chapter I explained that Peirce’s categories are modes of being and elements of conscious experience. How do the categories measure up in terms of their reality? Can one claim that each universe of experience is real and thus “exists?” Recall how Peirce claimed that if something exists in a universe of Secondness, then it has the “being” of a reaction and is dyadic in nature (lowercase ‘b’ for Peirce’s usage.) Peirce stated that,

when we think of Secondness, we naturally think of two reacting objects, a first and a second. And along with these, as subjects, there is their reaction. But these are not constituents out of which the Secondness is built up. The truth is just reverse, [in] that the being a first or a second or the being a reaction each involves Secondness. An object cannot be a second of itself. If it is a second, it has an element of being what another makes it to be. That is, the being a second involves Secondness. The reaction still more manifestly involves the being what another makes a subject to be. Thus, while Secondness is a fact of complexity, it is not a compound of two facts. It is a single fact about two objects.¹⁰⁶

Peirce's "being" of existent reaction should be distinguished from Heidegger's "Being" (capital 'B' for Heidegger's usage, and my interpretation of Heidegger.) "Being" (capital 'B') is the total reality of nature *and its modes of possibility and actuality*. Such modes are "how" Being is or can be. Calling this total reality and its modes "nature" also follows Corrington's line of ecstatic naturalism. Corrington explains that, "While ecstatic naturalism remains sensitive to Heidegger's various uses of the term 'Being,' it is argued that 'nature' is the more generic and compelling term."¹⁰⁷ In sum, Heidegger's Being could be roughly interpreted as Corrington's nature and Peirce's reality of cosmos. Thus Being, nature, and reality are all terms expressing the ultimate "fact" of reality (the fact, namely, "it is, rather than is not") that if it was not, nothing else would be. That is, nothing can be at all if it does not either take part or prevail in the reality or Being of nature.¹⁰⁸

Peirce averred that whatever can be is able to be cognized by the mind and thus belongs to the reality of nature.¹⁰⁹ To demonstrate this point, one might mean to think about or have an experience of something *not* included within the reality of nature. But, for Peirce, it is impossible to conceive of the absolutely inconceivable. He wrote that,

But if it be asked us, whether some realities do not exist, which are entirely independent of thought; I would in turn ask, what is meant by such an expression and what can be meant by it. What idea can be attached to that of which there is no idea? For if there be an idea of such a reality, it is the object of that idea of which we are speaking, and which is not independent of thought. It is clear that it is quite beyond the power of the mind to have an idea of something entirely independent of thought -- it would have to extract itself from itself for that purpose; and since there is no such idea there is no meaning in the expression.¹¹⁰

Peirce's realism would "deny that there is any reality which is absolutely incognizable in itself, so that it cannot be taken into the mind."¹¹¹ The question then becomes: if something does not yet "exist" before the mind, is it nevertheless *real* or part of nature? Does possibility "exist" or does it, despite being the not-yet actual, nevertheless comprise a reality of its own—the reality of Firstness? *How* does possibility belong to the reality of nature?

B. POSSIBILITY: ITS CONCEPT AND MODE

According to Kant, the principles of modality "predicate of a concept nothing but the action of the faculty of knowledge through which it is generated."¹¹² Because Peirce is committed to a realism about modality, possibility must be something beyond its empirical employment.¹¹³ Peirce wrote that he is obliged to "subscribe to the doctrine of a real Modality, including real Necessity and real Possibility."¹¹⁴ To give the various modalities ontological status is to extrapolate them beyond the action of a generating faculty. As possibility is found in its conceptual form, or part of the generating faculty, it is logical possibility.¹¹⁵ Where possibility is found beyond its conceptual form, it is ontological or real possibility.¹¹⁶ To be precise, to say something is "logically possible" means to say *x* might be conceived within a proposition without contradiction. As Peirce put it, "*Logical possibility* is that of a hypothesis not involving any self-contradiction."¹¹⁷ In distinction, a real "possibility" means *that of which* the conceptualization is about.¹¹⁸ The conceptually considered expression "*x* may be asserted to be without contradiction" communicates logical possibility. That *x can be* (at all) is ontological or real possibility. This sort of possibility is the condition for the very possibility of being itself. The

impossible, by contrast, *cannot be* and thus *cannot exist*. So the impossible cannot be asserted in any meaningful way.¹¹⁹ As Peirce put it: “Everything is possible which does not contradict the laws of reason; that which is inconceivable, which violates the law of reason, is impossible. The impossible is the self-contradictory.”¹²⁰ For Peirce, then, possibility is at least a mode of being other than thought conceptually thinking that mode. Altogether he identified *ten* kinds of possibility, however those ten can be divided into logical and real possibility.¹²¹

Peirce classified what he meant by possibility in his *Baldwin’s Dictionary* entry on it. In his view, possibility has both a first-order “ontological objective value” and a second-order “logical subjective value.”¹²² First-order ontological objective value matches with “real” possibility and renders possibility in the wide sense of a reality in its own right—that which is, in Peirce’s words, “not repugnant to existence.”¹²³ Second-order logical subjective value refers to possibility as an actual matter of logical proposition and judgment. An example of the difference between second-order logical and first-order real possibility could be stated as: there is no logical contradiction in the proposition “one may strike a baseball so hard that it will fly to the moon.” Whether or not striking a baseball to the moon is *really* possible, although there is no contradiction in asserting it, is a different matter. I will leave aside questions about logical possibility because I am not concerned in exploring formal proposition and judgment as expressed in modal logic. Such would essentially involve demonstrating proofs for contradictions in modal-logical propositions. My main concern here is with an ontology of the possible in the first sense—that is, I would like to inquire about the ontological reality of possibility that one abstracts so that one *can* propose and judge.¹²⁴

The question arises whether possibility, taken in its objective ontological sense, possesses “actuality”—that is, if possibility does not “exist,” then how can it be a matter of judgment? What, after all, is the exact ontological status of possibility? I believe the easiest way to imagine the reality of possibility is to link the possible with Peirce’s triadic formulation of the categories. For example, Peirce wrote a letter in January of 1901 to his good friend and editor of *The Monist*, Paul Carus. In it, Peirce provided an explanation of three kinds of modality for possibility, each relative to the three categories. The modes of possibility relative to the categories are as follows: *can-be’s* (Firstness possibility that both can-be *x* and can-be-not-*x*), *is’s* (Secondness assertion of possibility in the form of judgment involving a hypothesis), and *would-be’s* (Thirdness generality, the particular negation of a can-be and fulfillment of a would-be.)¹²⁵ Peirce wrote to Carus,

I must show that the will-be’s, the actually is’s and the have-been’s are not the sum of the real. They only cover actuality. There are, besides, would-be’s and can-be’s that are real. The distinction is that the actual is subject both to the principle of contradiction and of excluded middle; and in one way so are the would-be’s and can-be’s. In that way a would-be is but the negation of a can-be and conversely. But in another way, a would-be is not subject to the principle of excluded middle, both would-be-*x* and would-be-not-*x* may be false. And in this latter way a can-be may be defined as that which is not subject to the principle of contradiction. On the contrary if of anything, it is only true that it can-be-*x* and can-be-not-*x* as well. It certainly can be proved very clearly that the Universe does contain both would-be’s and can-be’s.¹²⁶

The phenomenological implications of this view about possibility are powerful. If possibility is a reality in its own right within an indeterminate realm of the can-be, then Firstness (the can-be) is not subject to the principle of contradiction for such a principle belongs to actual judgment. Contradiction only applies at the seconded level, when the

powers are actualized one way and are negated in another. Thus, the difference between logical possibilities is not between first order possibilities in their own reality of Firstness, but between the realities taken as universes of experience abstracted to second order formulation; between Firstness and Secondness. Thus, the “divide” between possibility and actuality is an ontological one, and phenomenologically the divide between actuality and possibility speaks of the one same reality that is all of can-be-possible, is, and would-be-possible.

Peirce characterized such divisions as the possible in "Universes of modes of reality."¹²⁷ Each universe makes up the total reality of nature. In the total reality of nature, Firstness is the Universe of Real Capacities, Secondness the Universe of Actual Fact, and Thirdness the Universe of Tendencies.¹²⁸ Concerning Firstness possibility and the “Universe of Real Capacities,” Peirce wrote, “It follows that a member of this universe need not be subject to any law, not even to the principle of contradiction. I denominate the objects of this Universe *Ideas* or *Possibles*.”¹²⁹ While not actual, possibility is still “a member of the universe.”¹³⁰ For this study, the possibility of Firstness and its “members” are of utmost importance because Firstness is “the embryo of being.”¹³¹ That is, Firstness, in its very being a realm of real possibility, serves as a unique availability of experience for the other universes to be felt in their actuality.¹³² The significant point is that Firstness, as a reality in and of itself, may contain capacities for being that “contradict” upon logical formulation. However those capacities co-exist *de re* without contradiction in one universe of possibility.¹³³ In Firstness, contradictories cannot both be actual, but they can be possible. Thus possibility must be something other than the absence of logical contradiction—possibility is part of a reality, that of Firstness.

C. THE FUNCTION OF POSSIBILITY IN THE DIVINE LIFE

I have arrived to the point where I shall explain how possibility functions within the divine life. Given Peirce's previous remarks about possibility and being, I would like to stress that possibility is the ontological mode of being that ensures the divine's "infinite" character. More clearly put: one should not think of the divine as a closed totality or as an infinite "thing," as if it were a "super being" who possesses a range of supernatural properties. Rather, as Peirce indicated, the divine is an infinitely expanding horizon in which space, time, and matter evolve due to the ontological mode of possibility operating within the reality of nature—a mode of possible being "fueling" the actualizations of the cosmos. Thus, it may be more accurate to say that the divine is infinite not because it is a being who exceeds finite beings in their properties, but because it is an unending process of transformation and growth—a *life*—that makes all things and their worlds possible. In order to make this point clear, I appeal to Peirce's concept of addition-as-growth: a process of addition that renders the divine "endlessly infinite," to use his phrase. Critical in conceiving of the divine in this way is understanding how possibility ensures that the divine remains an unending process which continually "adds" to itself, continually grows, and continually transforms. But what does it mean, then, to say that the divine is some form of "infinite" expanding life; that is, why claim that nature is continually growing, transforming, or adding to itself *without end* and can therefore be called infinite, as opposed to something that meets some sort of end and is called finite? Peirce decided this question in terms of mathematical "set theory" and provided his reader with several examples about what "infinite" means.

“Set theory” is essentially the mathematical science of the infinite, and using it Peirce came to think that there is one “endlessly infinite” in addition to “infinities.”¹³⁴ “Infinities” are collections, or “sets,” of endless (open-ended) but countable members which may consist of points, instants in time, objects, or any other finite units. In my argument I will use numbers because that is what Peirce used in his set theory.¹³⁵ A set may begin with any one number, say for example the integer “1”, and proceed indefinitely.¹³⁶ So for example *all countable whole numbers* $\{1, 2, 3, 4, \dots\}$ would be a set. The set of *all prime numbers* would be a set $\{2, 3, 5, 7, \dots\}$ or the set of *all composite numbers* would be a set $\{2, 4, 6, 8, \dots\}$ One may title any set of countable numbers *infinite* if an individual can select a set, pick one number, and then begin counting so as to proceed +1 indefinitely.¹³⁷ In the first case: $\{1, 2, 3, 4, \dots + 1 \text{ ad infinitum}\}$, in the second case $\{2, 3, 5, 7, \dots + 1 \text{ ad infinitum}\}$, and in the third case $\{2, 4, 6, 8, \dots + 1 \text{ ad infinitum}\}$ where + 1 equals the next member of that set. Peirce did postulate an infinite number of “sets” whose members were infinite in their collection (the set of all prime numbers, the set of all composite numbers, the set of all whole numbers, and so on) and he stated that any one set could lead into an endless process of denumeration.¹³⁸ However, Peirce’s theory of an “endlessly infinite” focused primarily on the *relationship* of the counting itself; that is, the addition between the sets of infinity themselves, without regard to the infinite nature of each set.¹³⁹ The concern for my purposes here is simply to contend that, according to Peirce’s mathematical set theory, adding sets of infinity to other sets of infinity yields larger classes of infinity.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the endless *addition* of things, even the addition of things such as endless sets of numbers, equals a process that results in *the* infinite, and *the* infinite supersedes even multiple infinities.¹⁴¹ It is crucial

to know that the Peirce's point was to show how infinity is not itself a thing like a set, nor is it even a collection of sets. Rather, *the* infinite is “endlessly infinite”—it is the process of *collecting* or *adding* sets. Stated differently, the infinite is the process of addition and growth itself.

The above illustration of Peirce's set theory translates to the fact that there could be no contradiction in claiming that the divine life is “infinite,” if by infinite one simply means (in mathematical terms) *the endless process of adding together* sets whose result is never itself one collected set, but rather is the exponential process of adding larger and larger sets.¹⁴² Thus, $\{1, 2, 3, 4 \dots + 1 \textit{ ad infinitum}\} + \{2, 3, 5, 7 \dots + 1 \textit{ ad infinitum}\} + \{2, 4, 6, 8 \dots + 1 \textit{ ad infinitum}\} + \{ \dots \}$. Peirce made this point quite explicitly in an 1893 letter written to Edward Hegeler. He stated that “I fear that Carus [editor of the *Monist*] may think that there are nothing but the well-known ‘orders’ of infinity. But there are nothing of the kind...there is nothing like an infinite order of finite order. All the series of infinities which I develop are rather infinities of zero order. For an infinite of finite order multiplied into itself gives a higher order. That is not the case with the collectional infinities [sets of finite numbers.] On the contrary, each is the exponential of the preceding.”¹⁴³ Peirce's criticism of Hegel on this point makes the idea extremely clear. He wrote, “[Hegel's] system, not in its deeper and truer spirit, but as it is worked out, and notwithstanding a sop tossed in one of the closing sections, is anti-evolutionary, anti-progressive, because it represents thought as attaining perfect fulfillment. *There is no conceivable fulfillment of any rational life except progress toward further fulfillment* [emphasis mine.]”¹⁴⁴ Every life tends toward fulfillment, a +1; the divine life, being infinite, tends toward infinite fulfillment, an endlessly infinite +1. The point is that for

Peirce, the infinite is never a completed term being relative to the process of addition and growth. As a passing side note, I should also mention that infinities do not have to be large; they can also be small. Instead of something doubling in size by addition, it could be halved, and so on infinitely. Peirce entitled this principle of division “Kanticity.”¹⁴⁵ The principle of “Aristotelicity” is the infinite +1 for experience.¹⁴⁶ However, the “endlessly infinite” remains the same: infinite division yields an infinite *process*. Infinite addition yields an infinite *process*, and so on.

In ontological rather than mathematical terms, Peirce’s view seems to be that nature is perpetually left to a process of “adding” to itself in a universe of experience, where that “adding” is nothing more than the continuous self-giving of the universe of Firstness-possibility to the universe of Secondness-actuality in the form of possible to actual experience.¹⁴⁷ In this view, nature will always remain in a processive state of growth due to the fact that there will always be more possibilities to add to the course of experience in the form of the *can be* possible—the vague and unspecified base of all three universes of experience. Recall that according to its own law, nature adds what *may be* possible to the future based on the basis of what *can be* possible. What *can be* possible is a form of Firstness and is vague and unspecified. As such, like the continued process of addition, which is not itself a thing but is rather an articulated movement, possibility becomes the +1 of experience, permitted by a universe of Firstness to progress towards further fulfillment. Being general and unspecified, Firstness-possibility analogously equals that power of addition which makes the infinite, “endlessly infinite,” broken only by some form of actual counting. Peirce explained that, “The possible is necessarily general; and no amount of general specification can reduce a general class of possibilities

to an individual case. It is only actuality, the force of existence, which bursts the fluidity of the general and produces a discrete unit.”¹⁴⁸

The consequences of this point are strong for the modality of the real and the divine life. Without possibility goading the divine into +1 growth, its life would take on the form of “a discrete unit” limited to a specification posed upon it by something *other* than itself, something somehow “outside” of itself. Stated differently, if the divine *were a thing*, its properties could be collectable and countable. The divine would therefore no longer hold its unique ontological status as the divine: “the endlessly infinite.” If the divine is interpreted as a process of growth and addition, it will always contain an unspecifiable element within itself that resists a total determination of growth or which resists a total quantification and collection of its properties. That element comes in the form of possibility, or the fact that the universe is not determined due to the factor of chance operating within it. Peirce stated that, “it appears to me that chance is the one essential agency upon which the whole process depends.”¹⁴⁹

IV. PEIRCE’S “COSMOTHEISM”: ONTOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

A. MIDWORLD AND HORIZONS, PAST AND FUTURE

Peirce’s categories and phenomenology have been the main focus of attention in the chapter thus far. I have attempted to show how possibility is a feature of nature and human experience. I have also attempted to demonstrate how possibility allows for a dynamic, creative, and organic universe that includes all aspects of reality. I shall now synthesize those points and describe how Peirce ordered his universe into an ontological

“continuum.” It is my contention that, in Peirce’s view, a continuum of nature makes up an evolving cosmos implied to be the developing life of God. To support my claim, I first define what exactly Peirce meant by a “continuum.” Second, I briefly define Peirce’s concepts of “development” and “evolution.” Third, I focus on the importance of possibility for Peirce’s theory of evolution, drawing attention to the fact that he viewed nature as the development of generality, and that God is the absolute or ultimate mind of nature’s development. The final point of discussion will draw on these insights to explore the importance of possibility for Peirce’s cosmology as it relates to his continuum, and for his thinking about God. Before offering an analysis of Peirce’s definition of a continuum however, a metaphor might be helpful in introducing the idea. I choose to use the metaphor of a “staircase” in order to demonstrate how finite beings belong to a continuum that is infinite in nature.

In his *Semiosis in the Postmodern Age* (1995), Floyd Merrell refers to Peirce’s continuum as a “semiotic staircase,” where a sign-reading interpretant is situated in a relative “middle” of signs and sign-systems.¹⁵⁰ Previous to Merrell’s formulation of a semiotic staircase, other philosophers such as John William Miller and Ralph Waldo Emerson provided similar scenarios where the human being was said to exist midway upon an ontological “staircase” of reality.¹⁵¹ These philosophers claimed that the human being occupies a relative middle position of reality within a vast nature. This middle position is known as the “midworld.”¹⁵² I interpret the midworld as the position occupied by the finite being within the infinite divine life. To illustrate how I understand the midworld, a metaphorical description of it could be described as follows. The finite being stands in the universe as if on a “staircase.” Standing on the staircase and looking down,

the staircase descends indefinitely below and vanishes into darkness. Looking up, the staircase ascends infinitely upward, leading to the stars above and vanishes out of sight. For Emerson and Miller, the midworld was human experience, where one can find no absolute foundation beneath them, nor can one ascertain with absolute certainty goals ahead of them. There is a horizon trailing off into infinity far above (whither the finite being could possibly go up toward the ends of the staircase) and a horizon trailing off into infinity far below (whence the finite being possibly could have come from, the stairs leading below.) Both horizons *seem* to lead to points of convergence—where the staircase might have started or where the staircase might end—but one is not quite sure. In his essay “Experience” (1844), Emerson described one’s position on the staircase as follows.

WHERE do we find ourselves? In a series of which we do not know the extremes, and believe that it has none. We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us, which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight. But the Genius which according to the old belief stands at the door by which we enter, and gives us the lethe to drink, that we may tell no tales, mixed the cup too strongly, and we cannot shake off the lethargy now at noonday. Sleep lingers all our lifetime about our eyes, as night hovers all day in the boughs of the fir-tree. All things swim and glitter. Our life is not so much threatened as our perception. Ghostlike we glide through nature, and should not know our place again.¹⁵³

Miller followed suit, describing a midworld where, “The end and the beginning are reciprocal. In any story of genesis, the tale is told in terms that have themselves evolved in the process described.”¹⁵⁴ I believe the descriptions of how human beings occupy a midworld upon a staircase of reality are similar to Peirce’s theory that nature is a

developing continuum of reality, yet Peirce adds the twist of evolutionary theory and developing mind to the metaphor.

B. THE CONTINUUM OF NATURE: CONVERGENCE OF MIND, SYNECHISM, AND TYCHISM

In the *Monist* 1890s series, Peirce developed a theory of creative evolution in which the universe was claimed to be moving toward an ultimate mind-like state. In his view, and according to the analogy of the staircase provided just a moment ago, chaos and nothingness dwell at the bottom of the “staircase,” and the “would-be” completed generality of law rests in view at the top.¹⁵⁵ The generality of law, or Thirdness, is represented by the terms mind, intelligence, and reasonableness. In between the depths of the stairs below and the horizon of the stairs in view ahead is a relative middle state in which reasonableness, or “mind,” increases and develops. In Peirce’s view, mind evolves as it reaches out and interlocks with other mind, welding its pieces together, and as such, proceeds up the continuum toward greater law like states.¹⁵⁶ Absolute Mind, presumably, rests at the top of the staircase: a form of ultimate reasonableness and “common mind” that would, if ever achieved, be a publicly corroborable form of intelligence conducive to investigation, verification, and confirmation by all communities of inquiry.¹⁵⁷

The doctrine that things exist in continuity and grow toward an ultimate state of reasonableness is Peirce’s doctrine of *synechism*. Synechism postulates a cosmos that is evolving according to the “law of mind.” The law of mind, Peirce stated, is that “ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectibility. In this spreading they lose intensity, and especially the power of

affecting others, but gain generality and become welded with other ideas.”¹⁵⁸ Ideas tend toward law-like states as they “weld” together, constituting a process of developing mind that is present within all of nature (a form of panpsychism), or as Peirce wrote, “everything is the nature of mind.”¹⁵⁹ Thus, nature and mind are not wholly disconnected—these features of experience exist in a relationship of continuity with each other. That chance is really operative in nature is Peirce’s doctrine of *tychism*.¹⁶⁰ Peirce clarified of tychism that, “the only possible way of accounting for the laws of nature and for uniformity in general is to suppose them results of evolution. This supposes them not to be absolute, not to be obeyed precisely. It makes an element of indeterminacy, spontaneity, or absolute chance in nature.”¹⁶¹ These two doctrines exist in a productive tension found within a *continuum of nature*—that is, a continuum whose finite parts exist in relation to an infinite whole of the cosmos. Thus, for Peirce, there was no part of the universe that is wholly different from or discontinuous with any other part of the universe because any member of the universe stands at least within a potential relation of “affectability” relative to any other member.¹⁶² Yet one should keep in mind that spontaneity and chance were said to be at work in nature allowing for variation and novelty in the course of development, even as generality and law developed toward increasing reasonable states.

Peirce defined a “continuum” in the following way. “A *continuum* (such as time and space actually are) is defined as something any part of which however small itself has parts of the same kind. Every part of a surface is a surface, and every part of a line is a line.”¹⁶³ Or, as Peirce also described, “a continuum is merely a discontinuous series with additional possibilities.”¹⁶⁴ To communicate the “wholeness” of the continuum I vary

between the words “universe” and “cosmos.” In my estimation, *cosmos* communicates the flavor of an enveloping yet limitless nature that is available for anyone to experience in its surplus of possibility, life, and being. Peirce wrote,

I use the word ‘cosmic’ because cosmicus is Kant's own choice; but I must say I think secular or public would have approached nearer to the expression of his meaning. Works of sculpture and painting can be executed for a single patron and must be by a single artist. A painting always represents a fragment of a larger whole. It is broken at its edges. It is to be shut up in a room and admired by a few. In such a work individuality of thought and feeling is an element of beauty. But a great building, such as alone can call out the depths of the architect's soul, is meant for the whole people, and is erected by the exertions of an army representative of the whole people.¹⁶⁵

As I interpret Peirce’s continuum, it is the “great building” meant for the “whole people”—a larger whole in which persons or things help make up its totality. I relate Peirce’s continuum of nature to the divine life because, in agreement with Charles Conway’s view, the continuum represents both an immanent and transcendental plane in which there is congruence between individual members and the infinite totality that Peirce suggested is the becoming reality of God. As Conway states, “Peirce conceives the universe as Absolute Mind, and the ‘pure’ version of Peirce’s category of Firstness can represent the inexhaustible abyss of divine potentiality, seen as a continuum of Absolute Mind, from which both originating and continuing creation spring... There exists a congruence between the functionalities of the continuum and the principal missions of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶⁶ Before elaborating more on Peirce’s continuum of mind (which I do in more detail in the next chapter), I should first explain his continuum in

terms of its ontological and cosmological features, for those issues are more pertinent to the task at hand which is identifying the evolving cosmos as a divine life.

The continuum of nature, according to Peirce, started from a primordial state of nothingness. He wrote, “We must, in order to account for the whole universe, suppose an initial condition in which the whole universe was non-existent, and therefore a state of absolute nothing.”¹⁶⁷ This initial state of nothing was not formal Hegelian Being—an end result contained in the beginning. Nor was this initial nothingness the nothing of negation, for this implies an affirmation of what is first negated. Peirce claimed that the initial “nothing” state of the cosmos was, in terms of Firstness, a “very first” freedom, chance, spontaneity, and possibility.¹⁶⁸ The initial state was a “germinal nothing, in which the whole universe is involved or foreshadowed. As such, it is absolutely undefined and unlimited possibility—boundless possibility. There is no compulsion and no law. It is boundless freedom.”¹⁶⁹ The question arises how law or mind emerged from that initial primordial nothingness. Furthermore, if Peirce was to distance himself from Hegelian logical and historical determinism, the initial state of nothing could not have *necessarily* started the chain of events necessary for a metaphysical existence to arise. Peirce clarified this point by stating, “I say that nothing *necessarily* resulted from the Nothing of boundless freedom. That is, nothing according to deductive logic. But such is not the logic of freedom or possibility. The logic of freedom, or potentiality, is that it shall annul itself. For if it does not annul itself, it remains a completely idle and do-nothing potentiality; and a completely idle potentiality is annulled by its complete idleness.”¹⁷⁰ Stated another way, for Peirce, it seems that ontological freedom necessarily affords contingency as a means for development.

The critical line for the development of the continuum comes in the next passage—and I will return to its significance in the last chapter when I examine the concept of “ground” as origin as formulated by Heidegger and Schelling. Peirce’s line reads, “Thus the zero of bare possibility, by evolutionary logic, *leapt* [emphasis mine] into the unit of some quality.”¹⁷¹ Interestingly, Schelling thought something similar about the origin of the cosmos, except in his view he introduced the notion of a cosmic Fall. This Fall might be described as an initial “leap” [*Sprung*] or self-breaking-away [*Abbrechen*] of God’s first potency in the creation of the universe. Schelling, in a view similar to Peirce’s view, stated, “From the Absolute to the real there is no continuous transition; the origin of the sensible world is thinkable only as a complete breaking—away from Absoluteness by means of a leap.”¹⁷² As I understand the development of Peirce’s initial state of the cosmos, Firstness-possibility arises or leaps from the depths of nature in its germinal state and gives itself over as an active and dynamic power. Yet, how is it that the universe lifts itself up into being by its own bootstraps from Firstness alone? An answer to this question may be discerned in yet another quotation from Peirce: “the logic of freedom, or potentiality, is that it shall annul itself. For if it does not annul itself, it remains a completely idle and do-nothing potentiality.”¹⁷³ If Firstness-possibility were idle and incapable of being determined from its undetermined state (a do-nothing power), then any preceding state would not result and the reality of now would not be. That is to say, Firstness-possibility would already be completed and determined if it were not a self-sustaining spontaneous power that continually annulled its self in a creative and transformative process. Thus, Peirce’s primeval nothingness could not be, nor ever have been, a blank nothing supremely idle if things now are in a course of development and

activity. Peirce summarized this idea by stating, “I account for all the variety and diversity of the universe, in the only sense in which the really *sui generis* and new can be accounted for...variety can spring only from spontaneity.”¹⁷⁴

Peter Turley comments upon such an interpretation of Firstness-possibility and “nothingness.” Turley emphasizes how Firstness-possibility represents the freedom of possibility to become one specific actualized state in the future, versus becoming some other actualized state. He comments that “freedom refers to choices or actions, and potentiality to actualization; a freedom or potentiality devoid of such reference is meaningless. It would seem, therefore, that every freedom or potentiality must sooner or later manifest this reference by being realized; and realization is never indeterminate, it follows that every freedom or potentiality must annul itself by becoming determined.”¹⁷⁵ Turley continues: “One possible interpretation is that Peirce means ‘nothingness’ to be taken literally...Nothingness, the evolutionary point of departure, could be construed as non-being.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, it appears as if “nothingness” (a form of nihilating reality) dwells at the bottom of the staircase as a powerful feature of reality in that it serves as an enabling condition for growth lying at the heart of nature. In some sense, then, “nothingness” is also an origivative condition that appears to be the source of a fundamental activity—an activity of self-annulment that empowers the reality of possibility to actually become. Corrington associates Peirce’s primordial nothingness and origin point of possibility with power and potentiality, although potential comes before possibility in his own account of how nature creates.¹⁷⁷ Corrington is, I think, correct when he argues the point that possibility equals a creative base of power found within nature, but I should not adopt his

use of the term “potential,” at least at this point in the dissertation, for the sake of clarity and consistency.

In Peirce’s initial cosmic state, nothingness is a dynamic agent at the heart of nature. This initial primal condition of nature enables the organic and dynamic activity of the cosmos, an activity described by Corrington as “nature naturing,” taking a cue from philosophers such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Benedict Spinoza.¹⁷⁸ When taken as an active power, Peircean nothingness implies nature’s potent indeterminacy, and it is from that indeterminacy that nature’s cosmic orders spawn. Thus, for Peirce, nature meant birth and potency for production. He wrote, “The word *natura* evidently must originally have meant birth; although even in the oldest Latin it very seldom bears that meaning. There is, however, a certain sub-conscious memory of that meaning in many phrases; just as with words from {physis}, there is the idea of springing forth, or a more vegetable-like production, without so much reference to a progenitor.”¹⁷⁹ To anticipate my analysis of Schelling and interpretation of Schelling’s influence on Peirce and Heidegger, I view nature as containing within its own depths an animating power that continually gives birth to itself and ensures its own infinite life. Nature naturing means the power of possibility found within the depths of nature as a sacred form of productivity, an indeterminate “ground” or “abyss” of possibility, power, and spontaneity that mutually gives the divine life and finite being the gift of freedom which is counterforce and resistance to metaphysical determination.

When discussing Firstness, I choose to associate possibility with power because according to Peirce’s cosmological account of creation, possibility is a *capacity-to-be* which is essential for initial creative states of nature. Possibility gains its power for

creation by means of its vagueness: “For possibility being the denial of necessity is a kind of generality, is vague like any other contradiction of a general.”¹⁸⁰ Vagueness is an ontological condition that enables thought to actualize itself as cognition through the actuality of judgment and proposition. Thus, *as* a First, possibility must be an enabling capacity that, by virtue of its vagueness, permits concepts to be determined as actual determinations. For without possibility’s enabling capacity, judgments and propositions could not be “possible” within the realm of abstract experience. In Peirce’s words, “That which is possible is in so far *general* and, as general, it ceases to be individual. Hence, remembering that the word ‘potential’ means *indeterminate yet capable of determination in any special case*...it is vague, but with such a vagueness it *permits* accurate determination in regard to any particular object proposed for examination [emphases mine].”¹⁸¹ And quoting David Jeremiah Higgins, “some Peirce interpreters approximate possibility to power; and so too does [my]...reading of Heidegger. By the possible...[I mean] neither sheer conceptual possibility nor potency (as opposed to act in the Aristotelian sense, nor essence (as that which is actuated by existence of actuality)...rather, it designates that...being itself which is the supremely possible, the enabling power whereby whatever is is. As enabling power...it permits thought to realize itself as an affirmation of being and hence constitutes man in his essence as what he is: a participation in being.”¹⁸² Firstness thus approximates to “*vermögen*” as it functions in German verb meaning “to be able to.”¹⁸³ It is a form of power in its *capacity-to-be*, which is first-order real ontological possibility, discussed earlier in this chapter. Here one finds that Firstness-possibility is a basis for experience, or a ground that supports and enables the categories of reality, yet is not entirely determined by them. Having argued

for identifying possibility with power, I shall now apply this idea within an explanation of Peirce's ontological-cosmological continuum. I begin by explaining the successive stages of the continuum's creation.

The power from the original state of nothing was a spontaneous uncaused act of creation; that is, it was of the ontological status of possibility. Peirce wrote that the birth of nature naturing occurred in spontaneous fashion, and that "flashes" leapt from the depths in closely linked connections that congealed into the events of existence. Peirce claimed that

Out of the womb of indeterminacy we must say that there would have come something, by the principle of Firstness, which we may call a flash. Then by the principle of habit there would have been a second flash. Though time would not yet have been, this second flash was in some sense after the first, because resulting from it. Then there would have come other successions ever more and more closely connected, the habits and the tendency to take them ever strengthening themselves, until the events would have been bound together into something like a continuous flow.¹⁸⁴

Thus, from a primeval nothingness qualities spontaneously emerge—the primeval nothingness resembles a "vague underexistence in the mind of him who planned the construction."¹⁸⁵

The next step in Peirce's cosmological account of creation explains the organization of qualities in the world of existence of Seconds and reality of Thirds. Peirce took the view that nature, being "mind like," has the tendency to take habits. Habit for Peirce meant "a specialization, original or acquired, of the nature of a man, or an animal, or a vine, or a crystallizable chemical substance, or anything else, that he or it will behave or always tend to behave, in a way describable in general terms upon every

occasion (or upon a considerable proportion of the occasions) that may present itself of a generally describable character.”¹⁸⁶ The first appearances of Secondness were *reactions* that, whatever their nature, followed a generalizing tendency of past actions, and “caused actions in the future to follow some generalization of past actions.”¹⁸⁷ Unfortunately, Peirce was not very clear on how this generalizing tendency happened in the germinal state of the cosmos. But, the essential character of the cosmos was “to strengthen itself.” He wrote, “But such a state must tend to *increase itself*. For a tendency to act in any way, combined with a tendency to take habits, must increase the tendency to act in that way, Now substitute in this general statement for ‘tendency to act in any way’ a tendency to take habits, and we see that that tendency would grow.”¹⁸⁸

Peirce’s account of the genesis of the cosmos also conjectures that it was through habit-taking that time itself became part of the universe. One must imagine, he claimed, that the “flashes” of creation did not “succeed” one another but rather “appeared” and may have not been concomitant states in the sense that one perceives temporal events. “Different flashes might start different streams, between which there should be no relations of contemporaneity or succession. So one stream might branch into two, or two might coalesce. But the further result of habit would inevitably be to separate utterly those that were long separated, and to make those which presented frequent common points coalesce into perfect union.”¹⁸⁹ Peirce claimed that developed habits passed into certain states of Seconds by the principle of Thirdness generality. In this manner, “habits will be formed which will constitute a spatial continuum.”¹⁹⁰ Summarizing his theory thus far, Peirce wrote,

This theory is that the evolution of the world...proceeds from one state of things in the infinite past, to a different state of things in the infinite future. The state of things in the infinite past is chaos...the nothingness of which consists in the total absence of regularity. The state of things in the infinite future is death, the nothingness of which consists in the complete triumph of law and absence of all spontaneity. Between these, we have on our side a state of things in which there is some absolute spontaneity counter to all law, and some degree of conformity to law, which is constantly on the increase owing to the growth of habit. The tendency to form habits or tendency to generalize, is something which grows by its own action, by the habit of taking habits itself growing. Its first germs arose from pure chance....As to the part of time on the further side of eternity which leads back from the infinite future to the infinite past, it evidently proceeds by contraries.¹⁹¹

And

It would suppose that in the beginning—ininitely remote—there was a chaos of unpersonalized feeling, which being without connection or regularity would properly be without existence. This feeling, sporting here and there in pure arbitrariness, would have started the germ of a generalizing tendency. Its other sportings would be evanescent, but this would have a growing virtue. Thus, the tendency to habit would be started; and from this, with the other principles of evolution, all the regularities of the universe would be evolved. At any time, however, an element of pure chance survives and will remain until the world becomes an absolutely perfect, rational, and symmetrical system, in which mind is, at last crystallized in the infinitely distant future.¹⁹²

Here it is evident that not only does one ascend the “staircase” in a forward (although not necessarily “progressive”) direction of cosmological development, but one’s current place on the staircase appears to point toward an increase in reasonableness and “the complete triumph of law” at the top of the staircase.¹⁹³ Peirce called such the conceivable endpoint of this process or “staircase” the “ideal state of complete information.”¹⁹⁴ From an indefinite, vague, and infinite past, tendencies arise and by conflicting with established law they congeal and form generalities which move toward an end state of completed

habit; the ideal end-state of the universe. Generality as Thirdness was previously noted to take on the form of law or reasonable idea—the example of gravity, for instance. The ultimate generality would be reasonableness; complete or absolute mind “crystallized.” Thus, ultimate generality, Absolute Mind, Idea, Law, and crystallized mind are roughly co-extensive terms.

As one ascends the staircase or proceeds from “past” to “future,” habits and law generalize and grow toward the apparent point of convergence of absolute mind. In other words, habit appears to be increasing, and the intelligibility of mind appears to grow into a fixed point. Like other basic components of the cosmos, laws grow and develop by the same law that was responsible for the beginning of time and for the organization of the continuum, as well as the ideas within it. Peirce stated that, “The evolutionary process is, therefore, not a mere evolution of the existing universe, but rather a process by which the very Platonic forms themselves have become or are becoming developed.”¹⁹⁵ That movement, or growth, is what Peirce calls “evolution.” In Peirce’s words, “Evolution means nothing but growth in the widest sense of that word.”¹⁹⁶

What are the ramifications of Peirce’s ontological-cosmological continuum? Most apparent is how the fact that Peirce took nature to be a continuum evolving toward generality and completed mind places his thinking close to that of Hegel. Does this also bring Peirce’s theory of nature close to a form of historical-spiritual determinism? In response to such a question Carl Hausman insists that it is crucial to hold the distinction between an *absolute* idealism about generality converging to a point in nature, and a *conditional* idealism about a point of ideal convergence should enough time pass that one could approach that point.¹⁹⁷ For example, using the stair case metaphor, one would need

an infinite amount of time to traverse the steps to actually reach the last step. Until that time, the last step always remains on the horizon in view.

I would add more distance between Peirce's developing nature and Hegel's unfolding nature by stating that Peirce does not subsume Firstness-possibility to the Hegelian *aufgehoben*.¹⁹⁸ The ultimate horizon in Peirce's system is all possibility completed or completion of the ideal state, which would be the end of all inquiry. If possibility, however, is necessarily vague and general then the ideal state of information—the horizon—is continually forestalled in fulfillment. Firstness-possibility cannot be sublated *absolutely* to pure abstract Hegelian Being because the convergence point is infinitely relegated to the "distant future." It is *ideal* and cannot be made *absolutely concrete* as an instantiated fact. This is possible because Firstness-possibility resists Thirdness-generality, and thus continuously forces open the horizon as an end to achieve in the future.¹⁹⁹ According to Hausman, "It [the end, the ideal state of complete information] is perpetually approximated; it is something that only would be attainable if there were an assignable actual time at which all thought were to converge in the future."²⁰⁰ *Aufgehoben* is "infinitely prolonged."²⁰¹ In Schellingian fashion, the fact is that nature cannot consummate itself in total determination for it simultaneously contains the source of its own limitation and is its own limitlessness, and this renders nature's own life infinite while maintaining the very possibility of its completion. Peirce wrote of this productive tension, "It consists of a sense of 'can' which is at the same time a sense of 'cannot.' Force implies resistance, and power limitation. There is always an opposite."²⁰²

As I have argued, it is the continuum's reality of possibility that "indefinitely" prolongs the consummation of nature's end. In principle, the divine *could* achieve such an end. However, if possibility infinitely prolongs nature's end, the cosmic life is extended without boundary and the end thus exists as a regulative notion. Hausman explains that

there is a difference between an infinite future and an indefinite future. An indefinite future is one that in principle may be reached. An infinite future is unreachable. One might be able to equate these two notions if one were to provide some construction of a notion of infinity that succeeds in closing the gap between eternity and temporal everlastingness. What I mean is that one would need a way of construing infinity so that it is at once atemporal and temporally imagined.²⁰³

Put differently, the completion of the divine life remains a regulative ideal. This end is regulative because the divine hungers to complete a nature that it is actually incapable of completing, though in principle could obtain and desires to obtain. As such, the divine's longing to complete itself powers its own real cosmic evolution. Could this construal of infinity be the unlimited *power* of creativity given by a God found in the limited manifestation of nature? That is, could the divine life be temporally *limited* in nature as that which is created: "nature natured," yet creatively *unlimited* in the creative power of Firstness-possibility: nature naturing? Corrington mentions, "The intriguing question remains: does God, as the ultimate personality, manifest developmental teleological structures, and thus an open future? Put differently, is God's future open, as undetermined, as ours? If so, what is God's future open to? ... My sense is that Peirce had the courage to open the door onto the prepersonal ground and abyss of God, but that his categories not did have the flexibility needed to open out this reality in its inner

being.”²⁰⁴ Whether or not Peirce’s idea of an evolving cosmos maps perfectly onto a God that is a *personal* creator is a question that must, for now, remain open. However, if the universe is not to be taken as a person but is instead conceived of as a life with a personality, then Peirce’s God would be not only be the reality working at the “top” of the stairs but the reality working at the “bottom” of the stairs impelling the development of generality—what Corrington refers to as the “prepersonal and irrational ground underneath God.”²⁰⁵

C. PANTHEISM OR PANENTHEISM?

The fact that Peirce believed finite beings exist within the same continuum of nature that is the divine life may suggest he was a pantheist. The fact that he suggested the divine life changes or contains succession (various stages of evolutionary order in nature’s growth) may suggest elements of process theism. To discuss at length Peirce’s connection to either of these ideas would unduly complicate my primary focus, which is Peircean Firstness in an evolving cosmos. However, in passing it should be noted that Peirce’s ideas discussed thus far were, and still are, of tremendous importance for process philosophers and process theologians alike including Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb, and David Ray Griffin, to name but a few.²⁰⁶

As Peirce hinted the continuum of nature to be an unfolding God, one might suppose that the universe and God are a synonymous identity. If one claims that God and the universe are identical, then the result is the pantheistic viewpoint. In its formal meaning, “pantheism” means *πάν* or “pan” and *θεός* or “theos”—“Everything-God.” As Heidegger explained the term, “everything stands in relation to God; all beings are in relation to the

ground of beings. This ground as the One, *hen is as* ground what everything else, *pan*, is in it, in the ground. *Hen kai pan*. The One is also the whole and the whole is also the One.”²⁰⁷ But it was not Peirce’s intention to claim the pantheist viewpoint. Rather, his idea of the divine is part of the world, yet also exists beyond the world in the sense that God represents Thirdness-generality to come, in addition to being reflected within nature as order, rationality, and established habit. For this reason Michael Raposa has called Peirce a *panentheist*. Panenetheism asserts that God is fully in relation to the world but still transcends it in some basic respects including breadth, depth, and power.²⁰⁸ That is, the supreme being of God includes and penetrates the whole cosmos so that all members and facts of the cosmos exist in God’s reality, yet God’s being is more than, and not exhausted by, those members and their facts.²⁰⁹ The term “panentheism” literally means “all-in-God-ism,” or the Greek-English translation of the German term *Allingottlehere*, the doctrine that “all is in God.” Karl Krause introduced the term to update and describe the philosophies of Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel.²¹⁰ Later, “panentheism” came into common usage in the twentieth-century and was popularized by Hartshorne.²¹¹ Raposa and Corrington both link Peirce’s continuum to an implied panentheism rather than a pantheism. Raposa writes,

Nonetheless, God’s relationship to individuals in the world might be roughly compared to that existing between a continuum and its topical singularities [finite beings]; these singularities may themselves constitute continua while still being determinate with respect to a given dimension of the embracing whole...while definitely not a pantheist, Peirce might be properly labeled a *panentheist*, that is, one who views the world as being included in but not exhaustive of the divine reality. Such a view neither undermines the doctrine of creation nor collapses the distinction between God and the universe.²¹²

I agree that Peirce's continuum implies a panentheistic ontology and cosmology motivated by concern with the divine. Clearly Peirce did think that the continuum could be identified with an evolving God whose life just was the altercation of Firstness and Secondness, as well as their mediation in Thirdness.²¹³ But, as Corrington notes, "My own sense is that God is an evolutionary emergent who is struggling toward a full realization of the highest good that some how transcends it... Yet there is a mysterious sense in which God is also a creative ground of the world... Peirce was compelled to locate an evolving God within the tensions of the hidden whence and the triumphalist longing of the whither. He leaves us partially in the dark about the whence, but makes some clear affirmations about the whither."²¹⁴

Taken as a panentheist, Peirce left the reader the following clue concerning God's development in the form of an ever-becoming, or "evolving" divine life, as well as its relationship to finite creatures: "When the conclusion of our age comes, and skepticism and materialism have done their perfect work, we shall have a far greater faith than ever before. For then man will see God's wisdom and mercy not only in every event of his own life, but in that of the gorilla, the lion, the fish, the polyp, the tree, the crystal, the grain of dust, the atom."²¹⁵ I interpret this statement to indicate a working panentheism for it seems that Peirce meditated upon a God with its own purpose, but not without including human purpose and the purpose of all life to come through the course of evolution. That is, all life exists within the reality of God, yet God's reality nevertheless transcends life's currently existing facts displayed within the evolution of nature and the principles of nature's workings. Summarizing this point, Donna Orange writes that for Peirce, "God presents the existing set of facts with new possibilities, and thus God cannot

be simply identified with what is. As ideal outcome of evolution, God is more than any world of mere facts, possibilities, or finite minds.”²¹⁶ Put in term different terms, Peirce’s panentheism suggests that if God is reflected in the world via the forms of life that comprise it, then the ideal outcome of life’s development would, at least for the time being, remain “ahead” of nature in terms of the evolutionary process—thus placing one aspect of the divine beyond its immanent manifestation within nature. Things continually evolve in the divine reality and that reality is a self-surpassing life for ideal completion is its goal. This life drifts toward the goal and longs for a universal union of all consciousness in its would-be final realized state.

D. NATURE AND ITS ORDERS: THE DEPTHS OF FIRSTNESS

Having discussed the ideal of Thirdness generality at length and the evolution of Peirce’s cosmic continuum of nature, I shall now point in the opposite direction of the “staircase” down toward the sacred *depths* of nature—depths of nature that provide the spontaneity, chance, and possibility needed for the continuation of the divine’s life. My focus in this section will be how the continuum of nature evolves into generality over time and tends toward, though does not necessarily achieve, an ultimate mind-like state due to the inherent *non-rational* nature of Firstness. This will serve as a transition from the focus on Firstness-possibility in this chapter to Firstness-feeling in the next chapter. In order to accomplish this task I will focus on Peirce’s “Order of Nature” (1878) because that essay elaborates upon the continuum of nature in its depth dimensions. In contrast to Peirce’s other essays that emphasize a developing cosmic rationality that points toward the ideal state of complete information to come, “The Order of Nature” hints at the sacred

depths of nature that permit for the development of rational generality given a basis of feeling. Thus, the mind of nature, or what Peirce called a “fountain of existence,” stretches between nature’s ideal rational state of the future and nature’s depths of possibility and feeling.²¹⁷

The divine life’s evolving nature is ordered according to an ontological continuum, as I have argued for in this chapter. It was noted that the continuum of nature evolves into generality over time and tends toward, though does not necessarily achieve, an ultimate mind-like state, or Absolute Mind. Generalities “hang together” in an evolutionary matrix and are grouped systematically within “orders,” or general categories of organization, similar to an Aristotelian category.²¹⁸ Peirce claimed that the orders of nature belong to general groupings. Each grouping’s end or “purpose” is “open-ended” in the sense that each grouping’s purpose varies and changes according to need or desire. Peirce summarized this point by writing, “evolution is nothing more nor less than the working out of a definite end....The doctrine of evolution refrains from pronouncing whether forms are simply fated or whether they are providential; but that definite ends are worked out none of us today any longer deny....In regard to natural objects, however, it may be said, in general, that we do not know precisely what their final causes are.”²¹⁹ This simply means that the ends of nature’s orders are not determinately given and are thus susceptible to the forces of development. Yet, nature’s orders still have specific ends to meet.

Peirce’s main point was that the classification of nature’s orders depends on their purpose, or final cause. As such, within nature things fall into natural classes or orders and form a general structure of nature. However, an order’s final cause is “occult”—it is

unknown in its final determination because there is the element of chance, or possibility, at work in the universe. To portray the orders of nature as open-ended with their purposes set according to what functional purposes can be grouped within “operative desires,” as Peirce claimed, means that the orders in nature are “more or less variable.”²²⁰ That is, orders of nature have a “general plan” and do possess a function or *telos* to fulfill. However that *telos* is not in and of itself *determined*, but is of a *determinable* nature.²²¹ These orders interact with one another and develop according to their use in fulfilling “ends” (operative desires.) Peirce linked each order of nature with intelligence (an implied panpsychism), viewing the orders of generality as moving forward toward an ultimate goal which is mind or generality: more generality means more mind and intelligence. However, Peirce also stated that the sense of order is given to the mind that is looking for order.²²²

Peirce maintained that the orders of nature relate to one other as if the universe itself were a great inferential reasoning chain. In the first chapter of this project, I mentioned how the reasoning processes of mind that work toward that Thirdness-generality also work themselves down into the most basic or “deep” dimensions of nature. To the standpoint of a polyp, for example, the world appears chaotic and unruly yet contains intelligibility or a degree of order.²²³ To the standpoint of the human being, the world appears to exhibit some generality or features of mind—more generality than could be detected at the level of the polyp. In Peirce’s continuum, then, there are conceptions of mentality that can drop “downward” into “lower” orders of creation. I believe this to be a critically relevant point for Peirce’s theory of nature’s development.

In “The Order of Nature,” interestingly, Peirce entertained the idea that the ordering of nature might point to an *ordering power*. While hinting, Peirce left this idea undeveloped. Here some reconstructive effort is needed on the interpreter’s part. I cite Peirce at length to communicate his intimation that nature developing could be a life structured into an ordered continuum, though this continuum may not necessarily culminate in a supreme deity in any classical sense. Moreover, here it appears that nature’s orderliness does not pose a challenge to religious faith—order in fact can support the recognition of an ordering power which is of a divine nature. I also cite Peirce in order to demonstrate that nature’s life is not presently rational in its own nature, and that the irrational basis of Firstness is of vital importance for the life of the cosmos and may be found in the “depths” of experience. Peirce wrote,

Any proposition whatever concerning the order of Nature must touch more or less upon religion....If a remarkable and universal orderliness be found in the universe, there must be some cause for this regularity....One way of accounting for it, certainly, would be to suppose that the world is ordered by a superior power....Nevertheless, it cannot truly be said that even an absolutely negative decision of that question could altogether destroy religion, inasmuch as there are faiths in which, however much they differ from our own, we recognize those essential characters which make them worthy to be called religions, and which, nevertheless, do not postulate an actually existing Deity. That one, for instance, which has had the most numerous and by no means the least intelligent following of any on earth, teaches that the Divinity in his highest perfection is wrapped away from the world in a state of profound and eternal sleep, which really does not differ from non-existence, whether it be called by that name or not.²²⁴

In the passage above Peirce was referring to the religious views that admit non-existence (states of chance, indeterminacy, potency, or possibility) into God. If Peirce’s God could be the ordering power of the orders of nature, then could one adequately title such a

power, “God?” Moreover, if Thirdness-generality to come is temporally set ahead of one on the “staircase,” could it be that Firstness-possibility is wrapped away deep within the world, responsible for “Divinity” in “its highest perfection?” Corrington aids in an understanding of the above passage by writing, “Is God the agency within or behind this process, or is God too a product of this process? . . . It is as if God will only fully appear, both to us and in itself, at the end of history.”²²⁵ Whether God is an ultimate order determining all other orders is a question that could only be answered when the evolution of the cosmos came to an end. Until then, the ordering power of nature is essentially locked away as a mystery. Corrington continues to claim that “The whither of the world is not only locked in the mystery of the would be, but veiled from the view of the God who stands in the cleft between the ultimate nothingness and the final consummation of cosmic history.”²²⁶

I believe Peirce left several clues about how to approach his God. One way might be through the process of abduction, as abduction actualizes the same power of possibility found in nature’s depths that is actuated within human inquiry. Peirce wrote that abduction

goes upon the hope that there is sufficient affinity between the reasoner's mind and nature's to render guessing not altogether hopeless, provided each guess is checked by comparison with observation. It is true that agreement does not show the guess is right; but if it is wrong it must ultimately get found out. The effort should therefore be to make each hypothesis, which is practically no more than a question, as near an even bet as possible.²²⁷

Thus, there is a congruency in the ordering of nature between finite orders and the ultimate infinite ordering power of nature. Ontologically speaking, this congruency is

ensured by the continuum of nature itself. Epistemologically, and phenomenologically, that congruency takes the form of a hypothesis, which is checked against nature itself. In the case of abduction, however, hypothesis is not limited to the construction of intellectual knowledge—as Peirce suggested. Abduction draws upon creaturely instinct and feeling, as well as non-rational features of experience and these are important and essential for contact with the divine. For example Peirce mentioned that both “the human mind and the human heart have a filiation to God.”²²⁸ The finite being poses the hypothesis of an ultimate ordering power and feels sufficient connection to that power by virtue of a non-mind-like faculty—that of the heart. Perhaps the “heart” here means an intuitive feeling that there is something akin within the depths of the human being that matches with nature’s order of development. Scientific knowledge may hypothesize nature’s truths, but the basis for the creation of such hypotheses is human feeling, or Firstness. Nature spurs within the human heart the *desire* to know, or the longing and love to understand. Such is an event within the depths of the human heart and soul.

I must set aside, for now, the question of whether the consideration of nature’s ordering power is a “scientific” region of inquiry, especially with respect to the role that feeling or “the heart” plays in Peirce’s account of abduction. The point here is that the feeling behind abduction is not out of touch with the orders of nature, but feeling is not completely rational either. Did Peirce admit *irrational* feeling into his account of the universe? Because he allowed for room in nature’s depths for feeling and mystery, I would interpret that Peirce’s account of nature does allow for the sacred to dwell within nature’s depths as an irrational, or more accurately put, “non-rational” feeling. To cite an everyday example about how there is indeed “room” for the irrational within nature,

Peirce wrote, “Let the Universe be an evolution of Pure Reason if you will. Yet if, while you are walking in the street reflecting upon how everything is the pure distillate of Reason, a man carrying a heavy pole suddenly pokes you in the small of the back, you may think there is something in the Universe that Pure Reason fails to account for....”²²⁹ His point is that, in the everyday, events occur that challenge the apparent rational direction and complexity of nature. Perhaps even in those moments when nature seems the most non-rational—that there is no reason for some event occurring in one’s life or that life may seem terribly mysterious and beyond one’s own power or control—perhaps then the power of the divine is most potent, yet given most mysteriously in its infinite and awe inspiring character. In the next chapter I will discuss this power as it appears within acts of human inquiry into the wonders of an encompassing cosmos that situates all living and inquiring beings.

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* Vols. 1-8, edited by Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, A.W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931, 1958.) Hereafter cited as CP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, edited by Nathan Houser, Christian Kloesel, and Jonathan R. Eller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.) Hereafter cited as EP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles S. Peirce, *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. 6 volumes, edited by Max Fisch, Christian Kloesel, and Nathan Houser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-2008.) Hereafter cited as W followed by volume and page number. Also, *The Charles S. Peirce Papers*, Microfilm edition, Harvard University Library Photographic Service, 1966. Hereafter cited as MS with catalogue manuscript and page number.

² CP 6.157.

³ Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 258, 269.

⁴ CP 1.362.

⁵ CP 6.33.

⁶ CP 1.615

⁷ For a rich analysis of the evolution of Peirce’s three primal categories and an elucidation about how the categories play into the post-Kantian tradition, see Joseph Esposito, *Evolutionary Metaphysics: The Development of Peirce’s Theory of Categories* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980.)

⁸ EP 1.1, see also EP 1.11, “Questions Concerning the Certain Faculties Claimed for Man” (1868.)

⁹ EP 1.xxx, *Introduction*. Basic sources for categorial theory relevant to Peirce include: Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 1941); Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1929); and G.W.F

Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, translated by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995.) For an excellent introduction to categorial theory as it relates to process ontology, Peirce, and Buchler, see Abraham Edel, “The Nature of Categorial Theory” in *Nature's Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal Metaphysics*, edited by Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington (New York: State University of New York Press 1991.)

¹⁰ EP 2.148.

¹¹ CP 1.300.

¹² CP 1.4.

¹³ CP 1.42.

¹⁴ CP 1.19.

¹⁵ CP 2.384.

¹⁶ Charles S. Peirce, in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, edited by Justus Buchler (New York; Dover, 1955), 71 and CP 1.280.

¹⁷ EP 2.148.

¹⁸ EP 1.243.

¹⁹ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 93.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

²¹ Carl Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 118-119.

²² Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 127.

²³ Anette Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce: Princeton Theological Monograph Series* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2006), 18.

²⁴ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 131.

²⁵ EP 2.435.

²⁶ CP 5.41.

²⁷ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 77.

²⁸ CP 1.358.

²⁹ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 126.

³⁰ CP 1.343.

³¹ CP 5.44.

³² CP 1.303.

³³ CP 6.221.

³⁴ CP 6.221.

³⁵ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 126.

³⁶ See also, Robert Forman, *The Problem of Pure Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.)

³⁷ EP 1.249.

³⁸ Heidegger, too, elaborated on the brute facticity of existential experience. See Martin Heidegger, *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, translated by John van Buren. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.)

³⁹ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 76.

⁴⁰ EP 2.150.

⁴¹ CP 1.24.

⁴² Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 43.

⁴³ CP 1.459.

⁴⁴ CP 1.324.

⁴⁵ I am explicitly referring to Paul Ricoeur's *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), especially Book III, Chapter 2, “Reflection: An Archeology of the Subject,” where Ricoeur discussed the question of the subject and the positing of subjectivity in relation to the “ideality” of meaning, 419-459.

⁴⁶ EP 2.151.

⁴⁷ CP 6.191.

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- ⁴⁸ CP 6.267, CP 6.91.
- ⁴⁹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 32.
- ⁵⁰ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 129.
- ⁵¹ CP 6.33.
- ⁵² Peirce also used the law of gravity as an example of Thirdness. See EP 2.152-3.
- ⁵³ EP 2.153. Chance, for Peirce, modifies general laws in “infinitesimal” steps. As an adjective, “infinitesimal” means having a value arbitrarily close to zero. An infinitesimal number is a number closer to zero than any specified number but is less than any finite number. An infinitesimal duration of time would be less than any finite duration of time, but still greater than no time at all.
- ⁵⁴ CP 8.328.
- ⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 9.8.1059.
- ⁵⁶ CP 6.217.
- ⁵⁷ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 127.
- ⁵⁸ CP 1.336.
- ⁵⁹ See for example F.W.J. Schelling, *Ages of the World*, translated by Jason Wirth (New York: SUNY, 2000), xix.
- ⁶⁰ CP 1.361.
- ⁶¹ C.f. MS L75.350-357 (1902), CP 1.186. CP 1.203-283 (1902), CP 1.180-202 (1903), and CP 1.180-202 (1903.)
- ⁶² EP 2.147.
- ⁶³ For further elaboration on specific terminology of phenomenology, see EP 2.148-49, EP 2.260, EP 2.289, and EP 2.272. Relating to phaneroscopy, EP 2.363, EP 2.403, and EP 2.501.
- ⁶⁴ CP 8.3, Bibliography.
- ⁶⁵ CP 2.120 and Herbert Spiegelberg, “Husserl’s and Peirce’s Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 17., No. 2 (Dec., 1956): 164-185.
- ⁶⁶ If coming from the Continental tradition, a reader may compare Husserl’s phenomenology to Peirce’s as Husserl outlined in the *Cartesian Meditations*. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988.) One may also want to consult Frederik Stjernfelt, *Diagrammatology: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics* (New York: Springer, 2007) for a direct comparison of Husserl and Peirce.
- ⁶⁷ CP 1.186.
- ⁶⁸ CP 2.197.
- ⁶⁹ CP 1.284, and Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 74.
- ⁷⁰ CP 1.280.
- ⁷¹ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations: Volume II*, translated by J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001.)
- ⁷² Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 53-56.
- ⁷³ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Philosophy* translated by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.)
- ⁷⁴ Mention of Husserl appears three times in the *Collected Papers*. “Elements of Logic” in Volume 2, “Logic and Mathematics” in Volume 4, and “John Dewey’s Studies in Logical Theory” in Volume 8. The most notable mention is CP 8.189. Interestingly, the two editors of the *Collected Papers*, Paul Weiss and Charles Hartshorne, spent time in Freiburg during the 1920’s. Charles Hartshorne studied under Edmund Husserl at the University of Freiburg in 1923, before beginning work on the *Collected Papers*. Paul Weiss had been in Freiburg between the years of 1929 and 1930 while Husserl was in Freiburg. For more information on the connection between Charles S. Peirce and Edmund Husserl, see the groundbreaking article by Herbert Spiegelberg, “Husserl’s and Peirce’s Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 17., No. 2 (Dec., 1956): 164-185.
- ⁷⁵ F.G. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.)
- ⁷⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale, 2000), 106-07. See also, “The Concept of Phenomenon” in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962), 51.

⁷⁷ F.G. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), Introduction.

⁷⁸ Further Heideggerean commentary on Hegel may be found here: Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), and Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics" in *Identity and Difference*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969.) The "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics" essay is Heidegger's attempt to construct a conclusion to his *Hegel* seminar (*Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1930, GA 32.) Heidegger's essay views Hegelian metaphysics as metaphysics gone awry—specifically as it is part of the history of mis-thinking Being. Heidegger argues that a mis-thinking has occurred essentially as part of Being's fated history, or *moira*, so that Being might present its own truth to *Dasein*. Heidegger critiqued Hegel's notion that "only the absolute Idea is Being" where Being is the absolute self-thinking of thinking, and where thought alone is the truth of Being, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," 43. Historical "truth" meant, for Hegel, to be known certainly and absolutely by virtue of thought itself, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," 43. Like Hegel, Heidegger thought about Being in historical terms—but not in any way that would dialectically presuppose Being come to a full head, or come to be fully transparent and unmediated to itself as completed Absolute Idea. An interesting comparison here becomes evident between Heidegger and Peirce: both reacted to Hegel's historical concept of Being as "absolute" in challenging Hegel's deterministic representation of reality. Both Heidegger and Peirce strongly relied on the concepts of freedom and possibility to challenge Hegel's absolutism.

⁷⁹ CP 5.37.

⁸⁰ CP 5.37.

⁸¹ CP 5.44.

⁸² CP 5.42.

⁸³ See for example, Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Poem "Der Ister,"* translated by William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.)

⁸⁴ Robert Corrington, *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992.)

⁸⁵ Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁸ CP 5.295

⁸⁹ The currency of ordinal phenomenology for ecstatic naturalism is discussed by Robert Corrington in his *Nature and Spirit*, 10-16.

⁹⁰ Originally published in *The Open Court* Vol. 7 (1893): 359-360. The original is housed in: C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008.) C.f. CP 6.428-452.

⁹¹ CP 6.431.

⁹² CP 6.552.

⁹³ CP 6.553. For more comparison on Peirce and Heidegger with regard to a comparison between the calculational and contemplative attitudes, see Douglas R. Anderson, "Peirce and Heidegger: A Shared Concern" *Philosophy Today* (Summer 1986): 119-125.

⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (Harper and Row, 1969), 58-91.

⁹⁵ CP 5.41

⁹⁶ CP 6.2.

⁹⁷ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 53.

⁹⁸ CP 6.162.

⁹⁹ CP 3.527.

¹⁰⁰ EP 1.51-52.

¹⁰¹ EP 1.51-52.

¹⁰² W 3.60-61.

¹⁰³ Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 250-251.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁰⁵ Again, avoiding undue complexity, I can only refer the reader to Buchler's *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966) where one may sort out the intricacies—and there are many—of how later process philosophers such as Whitehead and Hartshorne took up Peirce's ontology and developed it within their own respective ontologies. Buchler thus provides a good starting point for understanding how these process philosophers develop Peirce's ontology. One may consult such essays as "The Structure of the Whole, The Location of the Parts"; "On the Concept of 'the World'"; and "Probing the Idea of Nature"—all found in *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966.)

¹⁰⁶ CP 1.526.

¹⁰⁷ Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 53.

¹⁰⁸ Heidegger expressed this idea as, "If the Being of beings, in the sense of the being here of what is present, did not already prevail, being could not have appeared as objects." Elsewhere, Heidegger wrote about nature and Being, drawing from Hölderlin, that, "'Nature' means here that which is *above* the gods and 'older than the ages,' according to which every being *is*. 'Nature' is the name for 'Being'; for it is prior to all beings which are indebted to it for what they are." See Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of PHYSIS in Aristotle's *Physics* B, I, translated by Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeil (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 184.

¹⁰⁹ Husserl's and Peirce's phenomenological insights were similar insofar as both of their phenomenologies begin with the intentionality of consciousness—that is, consciousness is always conscious *of* something; it is directed toward its objects.

¹¹⁰ CP 7.345.

¹¹¹ CP 8.13.

¹¹² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 287.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, B 266.

¹¹⁴ CP 5.547.

¹¹⁵ "Taken logically, it denotes that there is some ground for asserting actuality, but not sufficient to justify a positive statement: may, as distinct from can, be. Thus, possibly it will rain tomorrow. It has to do with degrees of certainty in judging." CP 6.365.

¹¹⁶ Peirce referred to this as the "objective" or ontologically real form of possibility. He wrote: "Taken objectively, it may mean something as yet undeveloped, since not presenting itself in actually objectified form, but capable of doing so at some future time, when all the conditions of its realization occur: latent, potential being. This implies capacity for realization; and, if this capacity be taken in an active sense, connotes some inherent tendency to actuality, which, if not thwarted, leads to final completeness of being. This involves the active sense of potentiality, of force, etc. It is close to the literal sense of the term (*posse*, can be). This is the dominating sense in Greek philosophy, being connected with Aristotle's teleological theory of development." CP 6.365. Interestingly, Peirce also equated "real" ontological possibility with power: "Metaphysical possibility ought to mean a possibility of existence, nearly a potentiality; but the phrase does not seem to be used in that sense, but rather in the sense of possibility by supernatural power." CP 6.371.

¹¹⁷ CP 6.371.

¹¹⁸ CP 6.371.

¹¹⁹ My primary source for interpreting Peirce's modal logic and theory was David Higgins, "Possibility in Peirce and Heidegger: A Propaedeutic for Synthesis," Chapters 3,4, and 8.

¹²⁰ CP 6.366.

¹²¹ The ten kinds of possibility are: "Logical," "Mere," "Metaphysical," "Moral," "Physical," "Practical," "Proximate," "Real," "Remote," and "Substantive." CP 6.371. Peirce's views on possibility and impossibility fall in line with the Scholastic modal realism of philosophers such as Aquinas and Scotus. While admitting possibility into the life of God, Peirce's views on the impossible *qua* impossible echo the Scholastics. Take for example Peirce's quoted statement about impossibility and Aquinas's view about

impossibility. Aquinas wrote, “whatever implies a contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility. Hence it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done than that God cannot do them.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q.25, Art. 3.

¹²² CP 6.364, and Higgins, “Possibility in Peirce and Heidegger: A Propaedeutic for Synthesis,” 12.

¹²³ CP 6.369.

¹²⁴ The “can” here implies the capability, or the power to form propositions and judgments about possibility in actual experience.

¹²⁵ CP 6.365, CP 6.371.

¹²⁶ C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 4 of 6, folder 1892. Letter to Paul Carus dated 1892, May 19.

¹²⁷ CP 4.549.

¹²⁸ CP 4.549, CP 6.490.

¹²⁹ EP 2.479.

¹³⁰ EP 2.479.

¹³¹ EP 2.479.

¹³² EP 2.269.

¹³³ In some respects, this formulation of possibility echoes of Aristotle’s rejoinder to Parmenides in that one may maintain that there is no real contradiction to say something is *both* possible and actual. Peirce wrote in CP 6.365, “(1) As opposed to the actual, the phrase has again a double meaning. (a) Taken objectively, it may mean something as yet undeveloped, since not presenting itself in actually objectified form, but capable of doing so at some future time, when all the conditions of its realization occur: latent, potential being. This implies capacity for realization; and, if this capacity be taken in an active sense, connoted some inherent tendency to actuality, which, if not thwarted, leads to final completeness of being. This involves the active sense of potentiality, of force, etc. It is close to the literal sense of the term (*posse*, can be). This is the dominating sense in Greek philosophy, being connected with Aristotle’s teleological theory of development. (b) Taken logically, it denoted that there is some ground for asserting actuality, but not sufficient to justify a positive statement: may, as distinct from can, be. Thus, possibly it will rain tomorrow. It has to do with degrees of certainty in judging.”

¹³⁴ CP 6.118.

¹³⁵ Paul R. Halmos, *Naïve Set Theory* (New York: Litton Educational, 1960), 1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 44, 56.

¹³⁸ Peirce mentioned the significance of Cantor for his theory of infinity and continuity in CP 6.112-114. Peirce’s formulation of set theory is found in CP 6.115-120

¹³⁹ CP 6.117-119.

¹⁴⁰ C.f. CP 6.119.

¹⁴¹ Perhaps one might say that the Infinite supersedes or transcends its own infinite nature.

¹⁴² Halmos, *Naïve Set Theory*, 1-3.

¹⁴³ C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 4 of 6, folder 1893. Draft of a letter to Edward Hegeler dated 1893.

¹⁴⁴ Charles S. Peirce, *Contributions to The Nation* 3, (1903): 124.

¹⁴⁵ CP 6.614-616. Also CP 6.166, and related to Cantor CP 6.164.

¹⁴⁶ CP 6.166.

¹⁴⁷ Peirce wrote “There can be no doubt that the Possible, in its primary meaning, is that which may be true for aught we know, that whose falsity we do not know.” CP 3.374. He established that the realm of the Possible—that of Firstness—has the “wider” range than any instantiation of it. As such, any actuality or its possible true is to be given from the wider range of possible reality found in Firstness qua Firstness. He

wrote, for example, that “The purpose is subserved, then, if throughout the whole range of possibility, in every state of things in which A is true, B is true too. The hypothetical proposition may therefore be falsified by a single state of things, but only by one in which A is true while B is false. States of things in which A is false, as well as those in which B is true, cannot falsify it. If, then, B is a proposition true in every case throughout the whole range of possibility, the hypothetical proposition, taken in its logical sense, ought to be regarded as true, whatever may be the usage of ordinary speech. If, on the other hand, A is in no case true, throughout the range of possibility, it is a matter of indifference whether the hypothetical be understood to be true or not, since it is useless.” And, “The range of possibility is in one case taken wider, in another narrower; in the present case it is limited to the actual state of things. Here, therefore, the proposition $a \rightarrow b$ is true if a is false or if b is true, but is false if a is true while b is false. But though we limit ourselves to the actual state of things, yet when we find that a formula of this sort is true by logical necessity, it becomes applicable to any single state of things throughout the range of logical possibility.” CP 3.373-374.

¹⁴⁸ CP 4.172.

¹⁴⁹ EP 1.219

¹⁵⁰ Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis in the Postmodern Age* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995.)

¹⁵¹ John William Miller, *The Midworld of Symbols and Functioning Objects* (New York: Norton, 1982), 7-19. See also Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Experience,” in *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson: An Organic Anthology*, edited by Stephen Whicher (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 254.

¹⁵² Miller, *The Midworld of Symbols and Functioning Objects*, 7-19.

¹⁵³ Emerson, “Experience,” 254.

¹⁵⁴ Miller, *The Midworld of Symbols and Functioning Objects*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ “The Architecture of Theories” (1891), “The Doctrine of Necessity Examined” (1892), “The Law of Mind” (1892), “Man’s Glass Essence” (1892), and “Evolutionary Love” (1893.) Also, see for example CP 6.35-65.

¹⁵⁶ Peirce called this the “quasi-flow” of mind. CP 1.412. Mind reaches out and locks with other mind, objective present yet not brought to life within an object nature. Habit is the essence of this interlocking: it is reasonableness instantiated. *All* things have a tendency to take habits; that is, objective nature is essentially mind-like. Peirce wrote: “[For] every conceivable real object, there is a greater probability of acting as on a former like occasion than otherwise. This tendency itself constitutes a regularity, and is continually on the increase. . . . It is a generalizing tendency; it causes actions in the future to follow some generalizations of past actions; and this tendency itself is something capable of similar generalizations; and thus, it is self-generative.” CP 1.409.

¹⁵⁷ EP 1.297. This idea is developed more in the following chapter, last section.

¹⁵⁸ CP 6.106.

¹⁵⁹ Cited from Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce’s Evolutionary Philosophy*, 148. Also MS 964.00012-13.

¹⁶⁰ CP 6.201.

¹⁶¹ EP 1.288.

¹⁶² Peirce offered 41 definitions of a “whole” relative to its “parts.” For the sake of clarity and brevity, I have characterized Peirce’s theory of whole and parts under his conceptual formation of the continuum. See CP 6.382.

¹⁶³ MS 377, “Time and Thought.” Cited from Matthew Moore, “The Genesis of the Peircean Continuum,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* Vol. 43, No. 3 (2007): 428-429.

¹⁶⁴ CP 1.170.

¹⁶⁵ CP 1.176.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Gerald Conway, “A Study in the Metaphysics of Metaphorical Theology: C.S. Peirce’s Conception of the ‘Continuum’ as a Model for the ‘Spiritual Presence’ of Paul Tillich” (PhD dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, 2005), Abstract.

¹⁶⁷ CP 6.215.

¹⁶⁸ CP 6.200.

¹⁶⁹ CP 6.217.

¹⁷⁰ CP 6.219.

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- ¹⁷¹ CP 6.220.
- ¹⁷² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 6 Vols., edited by Manfred Frank (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1985), SW 4.28. Hereafter cited as SW followed by volume and page number.
- ¹⁷³ CP 6.219.
- ¹⁷⁴ CP 6.59.
- ¹⁷⁵ Peter Turley, *Peirce's Cosmology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977), 40.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.
- ¹⁷⁷ Robert S. Corrington, *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 242, 245-250.
- ¹⁷⁸ See for example, Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, 138.
- ¹⁷⁹ CP 1.214 .
- ¹⁸⁰ C.S. Peirce, *The Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 4 of 6, folder 1892. "Issues of Pragmatism" handwritten draft, 32.
- ¹⁸¹ CP 6.186-187.
- ¹⁸² David Higgins, "Possibility in Peirce and Heidegger: A Propaedeutic for Synthesis" (PhD dissertation, University of Missouri, 1968), 36 footnote 37.
- ¹⁸³ Higgins, "Possibility in Peirce and Heidegger: A Propaedeutic for Synthesis", 35.
- ¹⁸⁴ CP 1.412.
- ¹⁸⁵ CP 6.197.
- ¹⁸⁶ CP 5.538.
- ¹⁸⁷ CP 1.409.
- ¹⁸⁸ CP 6.390.
- ¹⁸⁹ CP 1.412.
- ¹⁹⁰ CP 1.413.
- ¹⁹¹ CP 8.318.
- ¹⁹² EP 1.297.
- ¹⁹³ CP 8.318.
- ¹⁹⁴ CP 5.316.
- ¹⁹⁵ CP 6. 194.
- ¹⁹⁶ CP 1.174.
- ¹⁹⁷ Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy*, 153-154.
- ¹⁹⁸ "Sublation" or "abolishment." Does this indicate that an ontological death of the universe, of God, is possible if God's life is at the very least capable of completion? See Thomas A. Carlson, *Indiscretion: Finitude and the Naming of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.) Carlson wrote, "The ultimate horizon of that possibility is the death toward which *Dasein* ever exists but at or in which *Dasein* can never actually be. Death marks the ultimate possibility of *Dasein* that undoes *Dasein* of all possibility...Likewise, while the sublation of finitude in Hegel implies the negation of singularity, the irreducible finitude of *Dasein* indicates the definitive singularity of its existence," 245. I believe this same dynamic of finitude and singularity is found in Peirce's ontology of possibility in the sense that Peirce's ideal state of information served as an ideal "end" against which all possibility is realized. Analogously, death is the absolute finitude that all living things share and have in common. If it is true of the divine that it is a living being, such a life must at least be capable of real ontological death (non-existence.) The repercussions of this idea have been taken up in recent death of God theology and within analyses of Nietzsche's texts.
- ¹⁹⁹ Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy*, 163.
- ²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.
- ²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 162-163.
- ²⁰² EP 1.283.
- ²⁰³ Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy*, 164.
- ²⁰⁴ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 187.

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- ²⁰⁵ Ibid., 187.
- ²⁰⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996), Charles Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (La Salle: Open Court, 1967), John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Westminster: John Knox, 1977.)
- ²⁰⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 68.
- ²⁰⁸ John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 17-19.
- ²⁰⁹ Ibid., 27.
- ²¹⁰ Ibid., 26.
- ²¹¹ See Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948) and "Introduction: The Standpoint of Panentheism," in *Philosophers Speak of God*, edited by Charles Hartshorne and William Reese (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.)
- ²¹² Michael Raposa, *Peirce's philosophy of religion*, 51.
- ²¹³ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 203.
- ²¹⁴ Ibid., 203.
- ²¹⁵ W 1.114.
- ²¹⁶ Donna M. Orange, *Peirce's Conception of God: A Developmental Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 45.
- ²¹⁷ CP 6.61. Hausman wrote, "his hypothesis inserts mind as a self-intelligible thing that is the place of 'the fountain of existence.' It is significant, I think, that Peirce here says that mind as a self-intelligible thing is the 'place' of the fountain of existence, which is not to say that it is the fountain itself." Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy*, 173.
- ²¹⁸ EP 2.117.
- ²¹⁹ EP 1.117.
- ²²⁰ EP 1.118.
- ²²¹ EP 1.118.
- ²²² CP 6.395-CP 6.428
- ²²³ CP 6.406.
- ²²⁴ CP 6.395-CP 6.396
- ²²⁵ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 201.
- ²²⁶ Ibid., 204.
- ²²⁷ CP 1.121.
- ²²⁸ CP 8.262.
- ²²⁹ CP 5.92.

CHAPTER THREE

ABDUCTION AND THE ECSTATIC EVENT

“A man looks upon nature, sees its sublimity and beauty and his spirit gradually rises to the idea of a God. He does not see the Divinity, nor does nature prove to him the existence of that Being, but it does excite his mind and his imagination until the idea becomes rooted in his heart. In the same way, the continual change and movement in nature, suggests the idea of omnipresence. And finally, by the events of his own life, he becomes persuaded of the relation of that Being with his own soul.”

--C.S. Peirce, W 1.108-109¹

In the last chapter, I explored Peirce’s phenomenological conception of nature and its categorial organization, as well as how one might interpret the universe to be a developing divine life, as Peirce hinted. I claim in this chapter that when inquirers deal with disruptions of their habitual beliefs and put those disruptions to rest—thereby attuning to nature in the course of its development—the divine may be felt in its *sacred* or “numinous” aspect. Possibility comes to the fore because during the act adjusting to nature’s disruptions, it is the ontological “ground” or condition that permits the divine to come forward as a feeling of the difference between what is finite, i.e., the inquirer, and what is infinite, i.e., the cosmos or divine life.² This difference is most apparent within Peirce’s account of abduction, as I hope to show.

To the end of supporting my claim, I organize my argument into four major parts. First, I define Peirce’s account of abduction and the role it plays in his theory of inquiry, logic, and reasoning. Second, I look at how the process of abduction begins in the disturbance of Firstness-feeling, and how Firstness-feeling tends toward more generalized

states of mind in the continuum of nature. Third, I argue why abduction is important for discussions about religious feeling while focusing on the characteristics of an attunement to nature. And finally, I examine Peirce's essay "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" (1908) drawing out the distinction between the finite and the infinite. Then, in the chapter that follows I will provide reasons why I believe Heidegger's philosophy can be of use in allowing Peirce's ontology to unfold while considering the divine.

I. ABDUCTION

A. ABDUCTION DEFINED

In his paper "The Logic of Drawing History from Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies" (1901), Peirce argued for a new interpretation of Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, II, 25.³ According to Peirce, Aristotle might have stated a parallel third argument concerning the inference found in the syllogisms Barbara and Celarent. Peirce wrote,

[In] having remarked that induction, *epagogue*, is the inference of a syllogism in Barbara or Celarent from its other two propositions as data, [he] would have asked himself whether the minor premises of such a syllogism is not sometimes inferred from its other two propositions as data. Certainly, he would not be Aristotle, to have overlooked that question; and it would no sooner be asked than he would perceive that such inferences are very common. Accordingly, when he opens the next chapter with the word *apagogue* a word evidently chosen to form a pendant to *epagogue*, we feel sure that this is what he is coming to.⁴

Peirce translated *απαγωγή* or "apagogue" as "abduction" because, in his view, Aristotle would have asked himself whether the minor premise of Barbara or Celarent

might not accept or create a minor premise as a hypothetical solution to the major premise known and whose conclusion we “find to be a fact.”⁵ Elaborating, in 1903 Peirce wrote,

it is necessary to recognize three radically different kinds of arguments...recognized by the logicians of the eighteenth century, although those logicians quite pardonably failed to recognize the inferential character of one of them. Indeed, I suppose that the three [kinds of argument] given by Aristotle in the *Prior Analytics*, although the unfortunate illegibility of a single word in his manuscript and its replacement by a wrong word by his first editor...[Apellicon], has completely altered the sense of the chapter. At any rate, even if my conjecture is wrong, and the text must stand as it is, still Aristotle, in that chapter on Abduction, was even in that case evidently groping for that mode of inference which I call by the...name of Abduction.⁶

Thus, in addition to the other two methods of inference, “induction” and “deduction,” Peirce added a third: “abduction.” Abduction is the first stage in scientific inquiry, but works in other forms of inquiry as well. It is a way of thinking that entertains hypotheses to determine what consequences flow from them by deducing new facts.⁷ Peirce defined abduction in the following way: “Abduction consists in studying facts and devising a theory to explain them.”⁸ This is how the human mind pushes out into the world of what is unknown, and why Peirce claimed human beings reason to “find out, from the consideration of what we already know, something else which we do not know.”⁹

The form of abduction leads from a major premise and the conclusion to a possible minor premise where there is a conjecture or hypothesis of the minor premise. As Anderson observes in his *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (1987), there are two features to note about Peirce’s abduction. First, in abduction the argument is not necessary but either probable or possible.¹⁰ Second, the acceptance of the minor premise in the argument is entirely provisional.¹¹ Given these provisos, Peirce informed his

reader what it might be like to “abduce.” In 1878 he gave the following example.

“Suppose I enter a room and there find a number of bags, containing different kinds of beans...I at once infer as a probability or as a fair guess, that this handful was taken out of that bag. This sort of inference is called *making an hypothesis*. It is the inference of a case from a rule and result.”¹² We have, then—

DEDUCTION

Rule: All the beans from this bag are white.

Case: These beans are from this bag.

∴ Result: These beans are white.

INDUCTION

Case: These beans from this bag.

Result: These beans are white.

∴ Rule: All the beans from this bag are white.

ABDUCTION [retroduction or HYPOTHESIS]

Rule: All the beans from this bag are white.

Result: These beans are white.

∴ Case: These beans are from this bag.¹³

In the above, abduction demonstrates that, given there is a bag containing all white beans sitting on the table, and given that I say to someone “These beans are white” while

holding a handful of beans, one may abduce that the beans were taken from the bag sitting on the table. A general view of abduction, then, could be framed in the following way: given a rule and a result, one makes an explanatory guess for a case given a range of possible guesses for that case. One's guess is not arbitrary or wild, but made with a degree of faith in the plausibility of the guess given circumstances at hand, and thus one may consider the guess to be a hypothesis.¹⁴

I would like to broaden the meaning of Peirce's concept of abduction by introducing a term in conjunction with it that I call "possibilizing." I adopt this term following Richard Kearney who uses the term in his book, *The God who May be: A Hermeneutics of Religion* (2001) and William Desmond, who uses the term in his *Being and the Between: Metaphysics and Transcendence* (1995) and *God and the Between* (2008.)¹⁵ In order to introduce the term "possibilizing," I would like to open with a question that Desmond formulates. He writes: "But how then do we answer a harder and prior question: *What makes possibility itself possible?* This question is not about what makes possibility actual...but about the very ground of possibility as such...What, so to say, *possibilizes* possibility, *possibilizes* in an active, generative sense? We are asking about the *very opening up* of possibility in an ontological sense."¹⁶ Building on Desmond's questions, I would like to ask not only about *what* possibilizes possibility, but *who* possibilizes possibility. In other words, I would like to ask about how one entertains a number of possible hypotheses, and on what basis. Within Peirce's metaphysics, Firstness makes possibility possible as the availability of, and capacity for, inquiry. That is, Firstness-possibility is, ontologically speaking, the freedom and capacity for inquiry. The inquirer "possibilizes" that available capacity in the venturing of hypotheses.

Although Peirce did not use the term “possibilizing,” I believe it can succinctly communicate how one may interrogatively entertain a number of hypotheses in the form of possible best fitting guesses. Thus, “possibilizing,” as used by philosophers such as Kearney and Desmond and as I use the term, here means *the act of feeling out a number of possible guesses or hypotheses in order to arrive to the best one based on the capacity to do so.*

Let me return to Peirce’s bean example so as to make the term “possibilizing” clear. In the case of guessing which beans came from which bags of beans in the room, the answer may have been relatively obvious and one may venture a hypothesis with confidence. Yet, as one performs abduction, the motion of feeling out a number of possible guesses might be required until a minor premise presents itself. One may “cycle through” possible guesses in abduction until a minor premise is found, or created, that seems to best fit the major premise and conclusion.¹⁷ For example, during abduction one might cycle through or “possibilize” a number of colors in guessing the color of the beans until the hypothesis of “white beans” suggests itself.

The possibilities that one entertains should be entertained with as much good faith that is possible, relative to the circumstances at hand, so that possibilizing does not simply equal the act of wildly guessing. Otherwise a hypothesis would lack either a rational, practical, or economic character and stand less chance of lighting upon a conclusion. Peirce had a similar idea in mind when he wrote, “It [the hypothesis] must consist of experiential consequences with only so much logical cement as is needed to render them rational....the hypothesis must be such that it will explain the surprising facts we have before us which it is the whole motive of our inquiry to rationalize.”¹⁸ For

example, while possibilizing about the color of the beans, one would not hypothesize colors of beans that could not possibly belong to the species of beans observed in the room, for such would not be a feasible hypothesis or real possibility. Thus “possibilizing” involves a *valuative* dimension because when one “weighs” various possibilities, one questions or interrogates a number of possible forms that a hypothesis might take according to its merit as a strong or fitting hypothesis. Possibilizing is therefore not just a grabbing for any hypothesis, but rather is a delicately feeling out a number of possibilities until a hypothesis presents itself and is explored in good faith.

Peirce claimed that the stating of the hypothesis and the entertaining of it is an inferential step that may be made quickly “with a degree of confidence,” or that might take longer in cases where hypotheses are entertained with “interrogation.”¹⁹ He developed several considerations and rules so as to discern the merit of a hypothesis during this interrogation. These considerations and rules were a hypothesis’ “experiential character,” its power in “explaining all the facts,” and “economical considerations” relative to it.²⁰ A hypothesis’ explanatory power may be appealing due to the fact that it may explain a situation in the most economic or practical way. Peirce mentioned how the economy and explanatory power of a hypothesis is important for abduction when he stated

It is to be remarked that, in pure abduction, it can never be justifiable to accept the hypothesis otherwise than as an interrogation. But as long as that condition is observed, no positive falsity is to be feared; and therefore the whole question of what one out of a number of possible hypotheses ought to be entertained becomes purely a question of economy.²¹

However, Peirce also suggested in essays such as “The Neglected Argument for the Reality of God” (1908) that such explanatory power and economy might not be without aesthetic appeal. Peirce wrote that one may “come to be stirred to the depths of his nature by the beauty of [an] idea” that is a hypothesis at hand, and that hypothesis may have an aesthetic appeal either in its experiential, explanatory, or economical facets.²² A particular hypothesis may appear elegant in its sheer simplicity, for example, as when a mathematical theory explains the course of several astral bodies at once. Therefore, both explanatory power and aesthetic appeal may determine how one abductively ventures a hypothesis.

B. ABDUCTION AND INDUCTION

Although Peirce gave no exhaustive description of abduction, commentators such as Anderson, Ejsing, and Corrington point out that he had an “early” (1878) and “late” (post-1901) view when it came to abduction’s definition.²³ Peirce’s early descriptions of abduction gravitated toward explaining how one reasons while encountering something unexpected, as in the case of an explanatory suggestion. In the earlier view, abduction was a form of induction: a way of deciding on a hypothesis.²⁴ In the later view, Peirce separated induction and abduction such that induction remained the only evidencing process for final conjectures in deciding a hypothesis, and abduction was understood to occupy more broadly defined evidencing procedures such as deciding how hypotheses may be used in the establishment of habitual behavior in the natural world.²⁵ In the later view, abduction constitutes “a bolder and more perilous step” than induction in deciding a

hypothesis.²⁶ In Anderson's words, the later view "described abduction procedurally" not only as logical form but a "lived process of thought."²⁷ Corrington puts the point this way: "[Peirce]...insists that whatever logic is, it is fully part of the social and biological processes of the self, even while transcending them and giving them shape."²⁸

Abduction involves supplying explanatory hypotheses for surprising observed facts. Ejsing remarks that the early formulation of abduction "opens the process of inquiry with an immediate and yet unqualified response to a given problem that simply presented itself. The process of conjecturing an abductive proposition excludes the overruling presence of logical conventionality because it is engendered by pure spontaneity."²⁹ As an unexpected phenomenon arises, one offers a guess to explain it. Peirce wrote that, "The surprising fact, C, is observed. But if A were true, C would be a matter of course. Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true."³⁰ I cite this quotation from Peirce to show that abduction begins with, in his words, "some surprising phenomenon, some experience which either disappoints an expectation, or breaks in upon some habit of expectation of the *inquisiturus*."³¹ As shall become apparent later on, the elements of surprise and spontaneity are crucial in appropriating the seeds of Peirce's religious attitude of humility (an attitude similar to Heidegger's receptive disposition needed to consider the question of Being's truth.) As I shall argue, being receptive to the shocks, disruptions, and surprises that break in upon one's course of life is a disposition necessary so that persons may come to see themselves as parts of a larger whole when considering their place within the continuum of nature, especially as they instinctually attune to nature's tentative "correct answers" in the venturing of hypotheses.

Peirce thought his early view of abduction was too easily confused with induction, and he even created the term “abductory induction” in effort to further clarify what he meant by both terms.³² Peirce thought that abduction and induction shared the same function of venturing a hypothesis, but not the same form of doing so. So as to distinguish induction from abduction, he wrote the following.

Abduction and induction have, to be sure, this common feature, that both lead to the acceptance of a hypothesis because observed facts are such as would necessarily or probably result as consequences of that hypothesis. But for all that, they are the opposite poles of reason, the one the most ineffective, the other the most effective of arguments. The method of either is the very reverse of the other's...Abduction seeks a theory. Induction seeks for facts. In abduction the consideration of the facts suggests the hypothesis. In induction the study of the hypothesis suggests the experiments which bring to light the very facts to which the hypothesis had pointed. The mode of suggestion by which, in abduction, the facts suggest the hypothesis is by resemblance, -- the resemblance of the facts to the consequences of the hypothesis. The mode of suggestion by which in induction the hypothesis suggests the facts is by contiguity, -- familiar knowledge that the conditions of the hypothesis can be realized in certain experimental ways.³³

Peirce thought that in abductory induction some guesswork would be needed where a hypothesis was to be ventured by means of a prediction, and this definition falls under the scope of abduction and induction alike.³⁴ Peirce continued to stress that “In induction, it is not the fact predicted that in degree necessitates the truth of the hypothesis or even renders it probable. It is the fact that it has been predicted successfully and that it is a haphazard specimen of all the predictions which might be based on the hypothesis and which constitute its practical truth.”³⁵ Peirce clarified induction when he wrote, “Induction is where we generalize from a number of cases of which something is true, and infer that the same thing is true of a whole class.”³⁶

“Abduction,” compared to “induction” and “abductory abduction” is “where we find some very curious circumstance which would be explained by the supposition that it was a case of a certain general rule, and thereupon adopt the supposition.”³⁷ To summarize Peirce’s remarks, the major difference between abduction and induction is that in abduction the number of particular instances leading up to a particular hypothesis is not susceptible to counting particular instances. One finds a surprising instance “not susceptible to simple enumeration” as would be the case in induction.³⁸

C. PEIRCE’S THEORY OF LOGIC: ABDUCTION BELONGS TO A LIVED PROCESS OF INQUIRY

Now that I have laid down the groundwork for Peirce’s theory of abduction, I should explain how abduction functions in Peirce’s logic. My goal here is to show how Peirce’s logic constitutes the study of relational, dynamic, and organic processes of thought that help organisms achieve stability in the world. A discussion of Peirce’s logic will allow me to establish abduction’s worth in what I call “a lived process of inquiry.” It is from within the lived process of inquiry that questions about religious experience may begin.

When Peirce developed his views about abduction, he also developed his theory of logic because abduction was said to belong to logic’s “critical” sub-division. Peirce wrote, “I recognize three divisions [of logic]: Stecheotic (or stoicheiology), which I formerly called Speculative Grammar; Critic, which I formerly called Logic; and Methodeutic, which I formerly called Speculative Rhetoric.”³⁹ Peirce defined “logic” as,

“the science of the laws of the stable establishment of beliefs.”⁴⁰ In the most general sense, Peirce also defined logic as *semiotic*: the formal theory of signs and sign processes.⁴¹ While Peirce’s writings on logic are voluminous, it is with a specific interest in the theory of abduction that I note Peirce’s “logic of relatives” and how the logic of relatives is the broader background against which Peirce’s theory of abduction is understood.⁴² A “logic of relatives” attempts to represent how individual elements in the universe inter-relate.⁴³ What is important for my purposes here is explaining how the logic of relatives was built directly upon the doctrines of synechism and tychism, or the ontological relationships that, for Peirce, govern the cosmic continuum of nature. Peirce’s logic of relatives stresses relationships, and specifically within the domain of inquiry, it stresses the relationship between human beings and the greater cosmos.⁴⁴

Understanding the greater cosmos requires not only the comprehension of logical form, but also a comprehension of the relationships that makes those forms useful for inquiry. Peirce put it this way: “I think logicians should have two principal aims: 1st, to bring out the amount and kind of security (approach to certainty) of each kind of reasoning, and 2nd, to bring out the possible and esperable uberty, or value in productiveness, of each kind.”⁴⁵ In Peirce’s view, traditional logic bypassed looking at how the forms of logic actually arise from, and apply to, an evolving and changing universe.⁴⁶ As Anderson points out, Peirce’s 1878 definition of logic—described as “the method of methods”—was de-emphasized in favor of a more “organic” logic that shifted away from “understanding inferencing and reasoning in terms of syllogisms only.”⁴⁷ Anderson continues that Peirce’s 1901-02 logic was “both a logical form and a lived process...Logic, as a living normative science, encompassed, though it was certainly not

reduced to, a logic of inquiry.”⁴⁸ Here one begins to see how Peirce’s logic was both systematic and a relational and dynamic branch of inquiry.⁴⁹ Peirce characterized this relational aspect when he wrote, “Where ordinary logic talks of classes the logic of relatives talks of *systems*.”⁵⁰ The system in question here is the unfolding universe, or life as human beings know the universe or could know it. “We all think of nature as syllogizing” he wrote, “I have not succeeded in persuading my contemporaries to believe that Nature also makes inductions and retroductions.”⁵¹

Peirce described his reasons for broadening abduction’s 1878 definition in a discussion about Galileo’s method of natural illumination. In the passage about Galileo, he stressed his focus on the relationship between human being and nature. Peirce stated,

Modern science has been builded [sic] after the model of Galileo, who founded it, on *il lume naturale*. That truly inspired prophet had said that, of two hypotheses, the *simpler* is to be preferred; but I was formerly one of those who, in our full self-conceit fancying ourselves more sly than he, twisted the maxim to mean the *logically* simpler...It was not until long experience forced me to realize that subsequent discoveries were every time showing that I had been wrong...the scales fall from my eyes and my mind awoke to the broad and flaming daylight that it is the simpler Hypothesis in the sense of the more facile and natural, the one that instinct suggests, that must be preferred; for the reason that, unless man have a natural bent in accordance with nature’s, he has no chance of understanding nature at all.⁵²

One sees from the above quotation how Peirce expanded his concept of abduction to include, in the words of Ejsing, “the contention that the reliability of abductive reasoning is guaranteed because the cosmos itself resembles rational mind and because the human mind therefore is instinctively attuned to the truth about all of reality.”⁵³ Abduction was still meant to apply in the context of a “logical” syllogism, but more importantly, it was

also meant to speak of the instinctual and “living connection” between a hypothesizing being and the universe that the hypothesis is about. Stated differently, it is only because minds emerge from nature that the forms of mind (such as those found in logic) can be used to understand nature at all. In this way logical forms *accrue* as a result of the connection, and interaction, between human minds and nature. As a result, logic represents the subject matter that the mind takes up and the conclusions that it finds warranted. These conclusions come to be the organism’s habitual life practices that are in some sense congruent with the natural world. Peirce put it this way: “The real and living logical conclusion *is* [the] habit; the verbal formulation merely expresses it.”⁵⁴ Therefore, one may claim that the ventures of thought are more “facile and natural” as Peirce supposed; they are not mechanical, artificial, or divorced from the natural world.

These considerations about Peirce’s theory of logic and abduction lead me to claim that, as I understand Peirce, the venturing of hypotheses constitutes a “lived-process” of inquiry, to borrow the phrase from Anderson.⁵⁵ A “lived-process” simply means the creative inferential strategizing that an inquiring being—an inquiring *organism*—uses to solve problems, attune to nature’s challenges, and to grow and survive while adapting to surprising or novel situations presented within the course of experience.⁵⁶ When discussing abduction I shall therefore take the liberty of using “human being,” “inquirer,” and “organism” interchangeably so as to honor Peirce’s philosophical intimations toward the fluid and lived aspects of inquiry.

It is crucial to know that Peirce thought abduction was the initial step in the lived process of inquiry. Without abductive inferences, organisms would not be able to perform trial and error, overcome obstacles, or venture possible solutions to problems.

That is, without the experimental basis of an engaged and active process of thought, inquiry would stagnate and life would come to a halt. As S. Morris Eames remarks,

In the movement of the organism through space-time, it encounters difficulties and perplexities; questions are asked and problems are posed. How shall these irritations be removed? How shall these discontinuities be bridged and overcome so that life can proceed? In the course of the organism's impulsions through time, its forward thrust, its responses at first are of the trial and error sort. The organism explores its environment, it searches and finds some way out of the perplexity it faces, if it does not find a way out, it dies.⁵⁷

Inquiry is thus part of how organisms *live* in their relationship with nature.

To be "alive" means to be an "experimenter," in Emerson's sense of the term.⁵⁸

That is, as an experimenter, one seeks to understand and cultivate the affinity between oneself and a larger cosmos that offers opportunities for growth and development through the gift of challenges, obstacles, and ruptures into life that prompt inquiry.⁵⁹ Part of responding to these challenges means instinctively coming into tune with one's environment by hypothesizing solutions to problems. The initial step in hypothesizing solutions to problems is abduction and successful abduction is possible only because the organism and its environment are of the same reality: nature. Peirce put it this way: "It seems incontestable, therefore, that the mind of man is strongly adapted to the comprehension of the world; at least, so far as this goes, that certain conceptions, highly important for such a comprehension, naturally arise in his mind; and, without such a tendency, the mind could never have had any development at all."⁶⁰ And, as Anderson summarizes the point, "Peirce frequently wondered at how man's reasoned ideas correspond or run parallel to the facts of the world itself. Thus, man has a general

instinctive faculty to guess the truth.”⁶¹ With the above points having been made, it should be clear that abduction belongs to a lived-process of inquiry and that Peirce broadened his 1887 scope of logic to include the relational and organic aspects of thought found in the transactions between organism and environment.

D. PEIRCE’S THEORY OF REASONING: ABDUCTION AND ITS RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS

It is necessary to briefly discuss some general applications of Peirce’s theory of reasoning in order to show how abduction is a functioning “rational” mechanism that may help one consider what is religious in nature.⁶² It may seem strange to suggest that the divine is disclosed via a form of rational inference, so I should take a bit of care in explaining how I understand Peirce to have used terms such as “rational,” “reasoning,” “inference,” and “argument.” Only then will it become apparent how abduction plays into the divine’s disclosure in numinous feeling as part of a “reasoning” process. To accomplish this end, I will characterize Peirce’s theory of reasoning relative to the normative dimensions of inquiry, specifically inquiry that questions what is religious in character.

Let me list a series of definitions that Peirce used which describe what he meant by “reasoning.” Explaining these definitions will further clarify his theory of reasoning in general. First, Peirce stated that *reasoning* appeals to *inferences*, and inferences are part of *arguments*.⁶³ Arguments are made of inferences that express *beliefs*. Second, Peirce claimed that controlled arguments make up the act of reasoning. He said that “reasoning” is “the process by which we attain a belief which we regard as the result of previous

knowledge.”⁶⁴ Peirce also wrote that, “The first thing to remark about reasoning is that it is a passage from one belief to another. The propositions embodying the earlier and later beliefs are called respectively the premises and conclusion: the latter is said to be inferred or concluded from the former by the process of inference or reasoning.”⁶⁵ A “belief” is “that upon which a man is prepared to act.”⁶⁶ “Beliefs,” Peirce wrote, “guide our desires and shape our actions....Both doubt and belief have positive effects upon us, though very diverse ones. Belief does not make us act at once but puts us into such a condition that we shall behave in a certain way, when the occasion arises. Doubt has not the least effect of this sort, but stimulates us to try to destroy it.”⁶⁷ *Reasoning* about beliefs means that inferences are drawn among them. Peirce defined an “inference” in the following way: “When it happens that a new belief comes to one as consciously generated from a previous belief, an event which can only occur in consequence of some third belief....I call the event an inference.”⁶⁸ Finally, Peirce defined an “argument” as “any process of thought reasonably tending to a definite belief.”⁶⁹ Perhaps one might say that an argument is a string of controlled inferences based on beliefs.⁷⁰

With the above mentioned definitions in mind, I would like to claim that *reasoning* is a performative act—thus drawing it closer to the lived process of inquiry of which abduction is a part. A performative act simply means that reasoning is a controlled process of thought that the organism uses to establish beliefs. One may use reason to draw conclusions, although inferences drawn in the reasoning process might not be drawn under the conscious faculty of thought (something Peirce acknowledged by referring to Kant’s *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* as ‘Critic of *the Pure Reason*’.)⁷¹ For example, one may come to some legitimate rational conclusion, yet lack knowledge of the consciously

controlled steps that were used to reach that conclusion. That is, one may have reached the correct conclusion satisfactorily, but the fact that they reached the conclusion could not be subject to “praise or blame,” as Peirce put it.⁷² Only through self-control is an action “other than normal.”⁷³ Peirce defined “self-control” when he stated

Among the things... a rational person, does not doubt, is that he not merely has habits, but also can exert a measure of self-control over his future actions; which means, however, not that he can impart to them any arbitrarily assignable character, but, on the contrary, that a process of self-preparation will tend to impart to action... [this] is indicated and perhaps roughly measured by the absence (or slightness) of the feeling of self-reproach, which subsequent reflection will induce.... The more closely this is approached, the less room for self-control there will be; and where no self-control is possible there will be no self-reproach.⁷⁴

Peirce gave the following example to illustrate the difference between consciously controlled reasoning and blind inference. “A stranger with whom I am dealing may make an impression of being dishonest owing to indications too slight for me to know what they are. Yet the impression may be well founded. Such results are usually set down to ‘intuition.’ Though inferential in their nature, they are not exactly *inference*.... it ought not to be called a *rational inference*, or *reasoning*.”⁷⁵

Arguments, and more generally, “processes of reasoning” should not be looked at as a strictly human affair, however. An argument, being a controlled process of inference, comes to cover a wide array of expressions. Rationality is the characteristic of mind, and as noted in the last chapter, Peirce explained the universe in terms of a developing mind. Therefore, it should be no surprise that much of the universe has the hallmark of rationality and is explicable in terms of reasoning expressions “developing in

a pattern of concrete reasonableness.”⁷⁶ For example, in Peirce’s view, a poem, a symphony, or the evolving cosmos itself may appear as finely crafted arguments for they appear to exhibit controlled processes of inference. As Peirce wrote, “The Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem -- for every fine argument is a poem and a symphony -- just as every true poem is a sound argument.”⁷⁷

Another important term for Peirce’s theory of reasoning is “colligation.” In processes of reasoning, “different premises....brought into one field of assertion....are *colligated*.”⁷⁸ “Colligation” is the spontaneous act that initiates forms of reasoning. It consists in bringing together certain propositions or premises that one believes to be true, yet that have not been previously considered together.⁷⁹ Peirce wrote that

Colligation is a very important part of reasoning, calling for genius perhaps more than any other part of the process. Many logicians refuse the name of reasoning to an inferential act of which colligation forms no part. Such an inferential act they call *immediate inference*. This term may be accepted; but although colligation certainly gives a higher intellectuality to inference, yet its importance is exaggerated when it is represented to be of more account than the conscious control of the operation. The latter ought to determine the title of *reasoning*.⁸⁰

He suggested that with colligation, one proceeds to perform an attentive and controlled observation.⁸¹ This observation leads one to make “an experiment.”⁸²

It is the act of experimentation that demonstrates the spontaneity of hypothesis and the intelligible connection between the inquirer and nature. Colligation thus sets inquirers apart from, for example, computers—what Peirce in 1887 called “logical machines”—because while machines may draw inferences (drawing conclusions from given premises), computers lack the spontaneity found in the act of conjecturing

hypotheses based on colligated beliefs. It might be said that colligation is what demonstrates the freedom and spontaneity of an organism's animality, securing organic existence against metaphysical determinism. Put differently, all inquiring organisms are free "experimenters," if they are alive and able to colligate hypotheses. As Peirce put it,

Every reasoning machine...has two inherent impotencies. In the first place, it is destitute of all originality, of all initiative. It cannot find its own problems; it cannot feed itself. It cannot direct itself between different possible procedures....In the second place, the capacity of a machine has absolute limitations; it has been contrived to do a certain thing, and it can do nothing else.⁸³

It would seem, then, that on Peirce's view computers could not experiment because machines lack the spontaneity necessary to colligate premises and conjecture novel hypotheses.

With regards to experimental or "scientific" reasoning, Peirce stated:

Retroduction, it is itself an experiment. A retroductive research is an experimental research; and when we look upon induction and deduction from the point of view of experiment and observation, we are merely tracing in those types of reasoning their affinity to retroduction. It begins always with colligation, of course, of a variety of separately observed facts about the subject of the hypothesis.⁸⁴

Abduction thus is an *experimental* form of thought and is the basis of the other two forms of reasoning. It constitutes the forward-moving momentum of inquiry. From uncertainties, inquirers attempt to resolve surprising phenomena and provide accounts for those phenomena through experimentation and tentative explanation. In Peirce's words:

The first inferences a scientific man makes are very uncertain....But knowledge must begin somewhere as well as it can. Those inferences are not valueless, because scientific inquiry does not rest upon them, but goes forward until it refutes them; and in refuting them gains indications of what theory it is that ought to be tried next....To find out what that means, we have to begin with some *guess*. We should naturally make the most likely guess we possibly could; and that is an inference....it has to be *tried*.⁸⁵

But why the need for experimental inquiry, at all? How is it that creatures can get *any* truth about the universe? The answer seems to involve the conditions for truth's being possible, and that hypothesis relies on a power that allows for the light of instinct to find its way to true conclusions. In terms of Peirce's categories, human reasoning seems to be dependent upon the vague possibility of Firstness yet derives laws of Thirdness-generalization. But how?

These reflections tie back to the relationship between Firstness-feeling and Firstness-possibility. As Peirce wrote, "Deduction proves that something *must be*, Induction shows that something *actually is*. Abduction suggests something *may be*."⁸⁶ For Peirce, abduction's modal possibility means the ontological freedom required for inquiry. Such a freedom provides the inquirer hope that ventured guesses have the chance of success and may turn out to be true, but not without the risk that the ventured guess could also be incorrect. Abductive reasoning involves risk and error because its conclusions are only possible and never absolute or metaphysically determined. At the core of Peirce's theory of reasoning, then, lies an "anticipatory hope"—as Ejsing calls it—about experimental thought in that inquirers must have faith that their ventured guesses may come to pass sometime in the future.⁸⁷ The fact that one may hope or have faith that their ventured hypotheses may turn out to be true is significant for a Peircean

philosophy of religion in her opinion, and I agree. Having placed Peirce's theory of reasoning in context, it is to this matter I now turn.

Religious abduction (the consideration of the divine's appearance in numinous feeling) involves the same freedom at work found in abduction proper, given that abduction's ontological modality is possibility and that possibility allows for the freedom of any and all inquiry. With this freedom of hypothesis at work, the divine's reality may present itself as a plausible suggestion, and inquirers are free to entertain that suggestion. Ejsing and Raposa claim that when the divine does suggest itself, the counterfactual structure of hypothesis suggestion found in scientific abduction intermingles in the sort of abduction that considers religious questions. On Ejsing's view, Peirce's epistemological mechanism of abduction points to the notion of his Christian faith: scientific anticipators of truth await the future as religious inquirers await the representation of truth to come.⁸⁸ Raposa puts it this way: "Peirce's theory of inquiry supplies the rubric for what is, in essence, a complex theological method."⁸⁹

Peirce's notion of scientific discovery relies upon the hope that ventured hypotheses should match with the will of the cosmos. This hope animates inquiry and provides inquirers with the faith that their conjectures are in fact what the divine wills to be the case. As Peirce pointed out, "our mind will be able in some finite number of guesses, to guess the sole true explanation. *That* we are bound to assume, independently of any evidence that it is true. Animated by that hope, we are to proceed to the construction of a hypothesis."⁹⁰ Therefore, it seems that at the core of Peirce's scientific methodology rests a religiosity concerned with the will of a divine becoming universe, and scientific inquirers articulate that will in the form of unveiling general laws and

confirmed hypotheses. What inquirers ask about is essentially divine in nature: the evolving cosmos.

Given the above claims, Peirce's faith in reason and human reasoning, I think, mirrors the religious believer's faith in God, making for what Raposa has called "Peirce's scientific theism"—a term not at all incompatible with the ideas expressed in the viewpoint of cosmotheism.⁹¹ While Raposa claims that Peirce had a "religion of science," I believe Ejsing and Corrington to be more accurate in their claim that Peirce had a "religion of nature." Take for example Peirce's statement that, "The Raison d'être of a church is to confer upon men a life broad in their personalities, a life rooted *in the very truth of Being* [emphasis mine.]"⁹² If, as I claimed in the previous chapter, it is accurate to say that Heidegger's generic term of Being and Corrington's ecstatic concept of nature are equivalent to Peirce's evolving cosmos (i.e., "Being" in the last quotation), then Peirce's theistic faith no doubt underscored his scientific faith because scientific faith holds true to the cosmos by honoring the truth of its revealed laws. The truth of the cosmos is simply its growth and development, and that growth and development falls within the province of scientific study. This makes the evolution of the cosmos the ultimate religious object: the ever-becoming life of the divine. Thus, from the foregoing one then sees how theism was for Peirce *the* philosophical issue, for in some sense, God must coincide with Being as such. If such an argument has any standing, then one may claim that the need to contemplate the divine, which is the truth of Being or cosmos, rests at the heart of *all* inquiry (including scientific inquiry) according to Peirce's metaphysical system. This is a very strong claim, and I do not necessarily mean to interpret Peirce that way. However, Peirce did understand scientific inquiry to include the logical

investigation of “the necessary conditions of the attainment of truth,” and because the fact that one’s reception of truth involves “a surrender to the insistence of an idea,” one may constructively interpret Peirce to have been advocating a *religious attitude* if by “religious” one firstly means a finite being’s humble surrender to, and stance before, the infinite universe and its force of insistence.⁹³

II. FIRSTNESS AND THE INQUIRING ORGANISM

A. FIRSTNESS-FEELING DEFINED

As was mentioned in the opening chapter, feeling is found in Peirce’s category of Firstness. In this section I shall discuss the relationship between Firstness-feeling, the origins of mentality, and inquiry where I concentrate on the initial moments of inquiry as it begins in feeling. A discussion of Firstness-feeling is crucial because feeling is a beginning point for abduction.

Peirce related Firstness to feeling when he stated that feeling is “predominant in the ideas of measureless variety and multiplicity. It is the leading idea of Kant’s ‘manifold of sense.’ But in Kant’s synthetic unity the idea of Thirdness is predominant. It is an attained unity; and would better have been called totality; for that is the one of his categories in which it finds a home. In the idea of being, Firstness is predominant, not necessarily on account of the abstractness of that idea, but on account of its self-containedness. It is not in being separated from qualities that Firstness is most predominant, but in being something peculiar and idiosyncratic. The first is predominant

in feeling, as distinct from objective perception, will, and thought.”⁹⁴ Peirce then defined feeling as follows:

By a feeling, I mean an instance of that kind of consciousness which involves no analysis, comparison or any process whatsoever, nor consists in whole or in part of any act by which one stretch of consciousness is distinguished from another, which has its own positive quality which consists in nothing else, and which is of itself all that it is, however it may have been brought about; so that if this feeling is present during a lapse of time, it is wholly and equally present at every moment of that time. To reduce this description to a simple definition, I will say that by a feeling I mean an instance of that sort of element of consciousness which is all that it is positively, in itself, regardless of anything else.⁹⁵

Firstness-feeling relates to abduction because abduction is a process of thought that emphasizes the feeling of Firstness through its own Thirdness.⁹⁶ That is, abduction is a form of reasoning about generality, but it is a form of reasoning about generality based on feeling. The abductive form of inquiry is therefore the most useful and “preparatory” form of inquiry because it begins in the strong and immediate experience of feeling. Yet, abduction is also the weakest form of inquiry because it lacks consistent cases found in experience against which one may test its results in addition to the fact that the feeling on which it is based is flowing and difficult to articulate.⁹⁷ Peirce summarized:

“Abduction....is merely preparatory. It is the first step of scientific reasoning, as induction is the concluding step....Abduction makes its start from the facts, without, at the outset, having any particular theory in view, though it is motivated by the feeling that a theory is needed to explain the surprising facts.”⁹⁸ And, “As a general rule, hypothesis is a weak kind of argument. It often inclines our judgment so slightly towards its conclusion that we cannot say that we believe the latter to be true; we only surmise it that it may be so.”⁹⁹

While Firstness-possibility relates to Peirce's ontology and cosmology, Firstness-feeling relates to his theory of phenomenology. Given that phenomenology has the task to "make out what are the elements of appearance that present themselves to us," a Peircean phenomenology would have as its aim a description of the "present, being such as it is...*positively* as such."¹⁰⁰ The relationship between phenomenology and abduction is that the quality and presentness of feeling that phenomenology describes is the same quality and presentness of feeling that motivates abductive inquiry. Both make their start from the immediacy of some experience and bracket suppositions as to the nature of that experience while explaining or describing it. Peirce wrote that, "Abduction makes its starts from the facts, without, at the outset, having any particular theory in view, though it is motivated by the feeling that a theory is needed to explain the surprising fact."¹⁰¹ Concerning phenomenology Peirce wrote that, "The question is what the *phenomenon* is. We make no vain pretense of going beneath phenomena. We merely ask, What is the content of the Percept?"¹⁰² In the same open-minded and free manner as hypotheses are ventured, one freely and without prejudice describes the same beginning point of human experience: feeling in its immediacy and myriad of variety. Abduction is found in Peirce's normative science of logic, and phenomenology provides the descriptive framework for the hypotheses ventured in abduction.

B. FIRSTNESS-FEELING DISTURBED: THE ORIGINS OF UNIVERSE-WIDE MENTALITY

In the Fall and Winter of 1879, Peirce began to sketch a first chapter titled "Of Thinking as Cerebration" for a book to be on logic.¹⁰³ Given the previous commentary

about Peirce's thinking about logic as a lived process of inquiry, it should be no surprise that in that sketch of a text one finds Peirce commenting on how organisms deal with their environments and how those dealings constitute primal forms of inquiry or "cerebration," rather than finding discussions of formal logic proofs found in most logic textbooks today. Peirce began his projected logic text by writing, "Thinking is done with the brain, and the brain is a complexus of nerves; so that thinking is necessarily subject to the general law of nervous action."¹⁰⁴ Thought begins in the nervous system and habitual neural response in Peirce's view. It was his thesis that when experience irritates the nervous system, Firstness-feeling is disturbed and the process of thought begins. Peirce formulated that thinking belongs to a "first level" of organic strivings at the biological level of the organism.¹⁰⁵ Nervous action is a level of striving because once stimulated, the anatomical fibers in the nerve that connect to muscle and gland cells struggle to discharge the irritation of whatever stimulus acts upon them.¹⁰⁶ In most cases, the energy of the cell's reaction tends to meet or exceed that of the stimulus.¹⁰⁷ Peirce explained the scenario in the following way.

What is usually seen is that a muscular contraction or glandular secretion takes place on the application of some external force to some nerve-cell often far from the muscle or gland affected: at the same time the energy of the action is only partially dependent upon and commonly exceeds that of the stimulus, which may even be occasionally wanting....it is observed that the nerves are highly irritable, being set into violent action by slight stimuli....the reaction, unless it be of a sort to immediately remove the source of irritation, will vary its character again and again, until some action is produced that removes the stimulus, when the activity immediately subsides....By the operation of these laws, the action of an animal come to be directed towards an end: the end being the removal of irritations.¹⁰⁸

I have cited Peirce at length here in order to communicate a few critical points on the initial moments of how organisms deal with irritations posed from the larger environment, and how those irritations initiate the process of inquiry. First, Peirce's treatment of habit and inquiry at the biological and phenomenological level of feeling posits Firstness-feeling as the "base" condition for all of inquiry, and in fact, for all of consciousness. Recall that for Peirce, consciousness begins in "living feeling. A continuum of this feeling, infinitesimal in duration, but still embracing innumerable parts....is immediately present. And in its absence of boundedness a vague possibility of more than is present is directly felt."¹⁰⁹ When this basic continuum of feeling is disturbed, organisms must adjust to disturbances in its flow. Second, Peirce related "cerebration" to the sort of freedom found in the modality of Firstness-possibility. Given that conscious organisms *do* seek to alleviate irritations, they must do so with the hope of possibly achieving success, otherwise the ontological capacity and motivation to remove irritations would be lacking and no corresponding behavior would ever begin. That is, without the hopes of achieving the removal of some discomfort, organisms would not exhibit the activity of striving to alleviate discomfort.

Peirce contended that as the level of an organism's conscious control over putting disturbances to rest increases, "mentality" or intelligence increases in a continuum of mind. Analogous to the ontological-cosmological continuum discussed in Chapter Two, the continuum of mind has its beginnings in feeling and then progresses toward more determinate forms of mentality, although feeling and the potential for mentality are found in the deepest and most primitive levels of nature.¹¹⁰ Peirce put it this way: "all matter is really mind, remembering, too, the continuity of mind. Mentality stretches through the

origins of nature to the mid-world of human consciousness, and presumably stretches in potential to a third level of future rational consciousness to come. Meanwhile, feeling accompanies mentality so as to render it present to itself in the course of its development. The future rational consciousness to come, part of a “corporate personality” or Super Mind presumably, may exert even greater control over disturbances to the flow of feeling thus existing in harmony with itself in an “absolutely perfect, rational, and symmetrical system, in which each mind is at last crystallized in the infinitely distant future.”¹¹¹

Peirce described the ascension in his mental continuum through mentioning its degrees of sophistication found in organisms: “We meet no sure indications of a consciousness unconnected with a nervous organism; and the more complicated the organism, the higher is the consciousness.”¹¹²

Peirce should not be mistaken to be a materialist with an epiphenomenalist view of consciousness given his account that mentality increases with the sophistications of the nervous organism. While mentality may be claimed to emerge from nature’s material parts, those parts are of the same nature that is dormant mind awakening in the ascending continuum. It might be safer to say that Peirce is a monist, rather than a dualist, when it comes to identifying mind with the stimulus-response sequences that alleviate neurological irritation because in his metaphysics mind and matter are of the same reality of nature; mind just becomes “hide-bound” with habit.¹¹³ As the editors of the *Essential Peirce* explain, Peirce held that, following Schelling, “matter is effete mind,’ mind that has become hide-bound with habit. According to this doctrine, matter is mind that has lost so much of the element of spontaneity through the acquisition of habits that it has taken on the dependable law-governed nature we attribute to material substance.”¹¹⁴ One

may recall Schelling's proclamation that "Nature is visible Spirit, and Spirit is invisible Nature" in comparison to statements Peirce made such as "physical events are but degraded or undeveloped forms of psychical events" and "mechanical laws are nothing but acquired habits, like all the regularities of mind," to make more sense of Peirce's monistic view the universe.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, the sort of monism that holds mind is externally present in nature has often been referred to as *objective idealism*, and much of Peirce's philosophy would fall under that title.¹¹⁶

It is at this precise point that Firstness-feeling and Firstness-possibility isomorphically mirror one another. Their isomorphic relationship is found in their shared mutual identity of belonging to Firstness's own generality as the base category of experience. In the following quotation from Peirce, let me underscore the isomorphic terms associated with Firstness so that the reader may recognize its monistic nature construed in the terms of mentality and material. In Peirce's words, "Wherever there is a *feeling*, there a *nerve-cell is in action*...Feeling corresponds to nerve-cell activity; *sensibility in psychology*, to *nervous irritability in physiology*...*Musclar reaction* corresponds to *volition outwardly directed* [emphases mine.]"¹¹⁷ The point to be drawn here is that Firstness-feeling may have a dual tendency to exist as feeling yet tend toward mind, and such tendencies may be expressed in material nature. In the words of Søren Brier, "Peirce...delivers a phenomenological as well as naturalistic framework. In his theory, mind is feeling on the inside and on the outside it can be seen as spontaneity, chance and chaos with a tendency to take habits, which is the law of mind manifesting itself as thoughts."¹¹⁸ And as Corrington puts it, "Mind lies underneath all matter as its animating principle. Consequently, mind empowers all existents and links them together

(through feeling) so that the relation between and among the objects of the world can be seen in terms of the power of mind to overcome distance and alienation...[Peirce] moves toward a monism in which mind seems to swallow up matter as one of its manifestations.”¹¹⁹

With the level of Firstness-feeling in mind I should note that Peirce was not just a monist and objective idealist, but that he was a *panpsychist*, too, because he hinted that, at the very least, the capacity for mentality “drops all the way down” into the depths of nature and finds expression even at the most basic levels of life. “Panpsychism” is a concept stemming from the ancient Greek words πᾶν, “pan” or “all” and ψυχή, “psyche” or “soul,” also meaning “life,” “spirit,” or “consciousness.”¹²⁰ The ancient Greeks thought that “soul” was the principle of all life. Panpsychism can initially be understood as an animistic doctrine claiming that mind or soul is present in all forms of nature.¹²¹ Peirce implicitly subscribed to this doctrine. For example he wrote,

Another physical property of protoplasm is that of taking habits. The course which the spread of liquefaction has taken in the past is rendered thereby more likely to be taken in the future; although there is no absolute certainty that the same path will be followed again...Very extraordinary, certainly, are all these properties of protoplasm; as extraordinary as indubitable. But the one which has next to be mentioned, while equally undeniable, is infinitely more wonderful. It is that protoplasm feels. We have no direct evidence that this is true of protoplasm universally, and certainly some kinds feel far more than others. But there is a fair analogical inference that all protoplasm feels. *It not only feels but exercises all the functions of mind* [emphasis mine].¹²²

Peirce continued that, “Mind has its universal mode of action, namely, by final causation. The microscopist looks to see whether the motions of a little creature show any purpose. If so, there is mind there.”¹²³ Thus, Peirce attributed mentality to things based on the

properties of primal feeling, habit taking, and the exercise of purpose—features shared among sentient beings even at the most primal levels of biological organization.¹²⁴

For my purposes here, the question appears to be whether primal organisms—that is, organisms with less sophisticated anatomical structures than human beings, for example amoebas, fish, plants, and so on—are able to draw inferences while strategizing to put irritations to rest, and if so, are those organisms capable of reasoning and abducing? Can these organisms establish habits and beliefs, and represent those beliefs so as to engage in primitive forms of abduction? The motivation for such a question arises from the interconnected forms of life in Peirce's divine continuum. One must ask if all beings, not just human beings, participate in the life and mind of the divine. If one were to attempt to discern whether the most primal forms of life possess mentality (or perhaps even if one were to ask the more difficult question: what forms of life are unable to possess mentality, if any at all) then ultimately one would need to determine if all organisms are able to hold beliefs in ways traditionally understood, and if organisms are able re-establish disturbed beliefs in sentient manner akin to the sort of intelligence used by human beings.

Peirce hinted at an answer to this question when he affirmed that mentality is part of nature as a whole: "Thought is not necessarily connected with a brain. It appears in the work of bees, of crystals, and throughout the purely physical world; and one can no more deny that it is really there, than that the colors and shapes, etc. of objects are really there....Not only is thought in the organic world, but it develops there."¹²⁵ Thus one can see how organisms are *in* an evolutionary cosmos pervaded by mentality in Peirce's metaphysics. It may be claimed that organisms do partake in primitive abductions while

strategizing over their environments if ventured hypotheses find outward empirical expression in an organism's behavior indicating mentality. That is, an organism's behavior must exhibit mental intention rather than be explained by happenstance. But again, this begs the question of what exactly constitutes the communication of intelligence in terms of a belief, its disruption, and its re-settlement. Is belief a necessarily linguistic and symbolic affair, and how, in terms of the communication of intelligence, does one determine the expression of a belief or the possession of intelligence if not by analogy? My point is that, as Nietzsche properly warned, anthropomorphism over nonhuman mentality threatens to run roughshod over the basic understanding that *human communications are animal communications*.¹²⁶ Peirce embraced the animality of intelligence and communication; intelligence is a condition in which life participates. It is not an added feature of experience strictly held by human beings in unique status, though in his view human beings do hold a sophisticated or elevated form of intelligence within the biological kingdom.

Beyond the base level of Firstness-feeling, organisms become sophisticated inquirers through instituting what some commentators have called "second level" practices.¹²⁷ A "second level" practice includes selectively adjusting to the cause of an irritation, interpreting and communicating the character of what exactly causes an irritation and then determining complex and structured ways to completely remove the irritation.¹²⁸ In this way organisms may be said to better participate "in" mentality through mental exercise or the use of intelligence in order to remove irritations and re-establish habits and belief. As Peirce put it, "Accordingly, just as we say that a body is in motion, and not that motion is in a body, we ought to say that we are in thought, and not

that thoughts are in us.”¹²⁹ It would be at the second-level practices of inquiry that abduction could be said to begin because beliefs are interpreted, translated symbolically, and expressed to a community of inquirers.

Before moving on, I would like to make one more interpretive point about the development of mind in Peirce’s continuum where, again, Peirce is more a Schellingian than a Hegelian, and it is his Schellingianism that will be crucial when my line of argumentation and analysis turns toward a discussion of religion in the following sections. It was Hegel who said philosophical inquiry is the highest expression of the Absolute in coming to know itself (Hegel’s continuum was history), for inquiry is powered by reason and reason is the greatest power of Absolute Spirit.¹³⁰ Hegel stated, “philosophy is the justification of religion, especially the Christian religion; it knows the content in accord with its necessity and reason.”¹³¹ Given that Peirce’s dictum was to never block the road of inquiry, a mind could never be defined as a completed Absolute because Peirce’s mind of nature freely and infinitely inquires into itself in an everlasting process. That is, while Peirce’s idea that the evolving cosmos is a life developing itself through the power of “reason” does place him on par with Hegel, nature’s mind could never be claimed to be complete in its *own* understanding because, as it is defined to be an everlasting life and an inquiring personality, it would always have more to comprehend, even about itself.¹³² Thus, ultimately, Peirce agrees with Schelling about the nature of cosmic divinity because he places the freedom of inquiry within the divine’s own becoming nature. Peirce wrote,

Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality. The mere carrying out of predetermined purposes is mechanical. This remark has an application to the philosophy of religion. It is that a genuine evolutionary philosophy, that is, one that makes the principle of growth a primordial element of the universe, is so far from being antagonistic to the idea of a personal creator that it is really inseparable from that idea while a necessitarian religion is in an altogether false position and is destined to become disintegrated. But a pseudo-evolutionism which enthrones mechanical law above the principle of growth is at once scientifically unsatisfactory, as giving no possible hint of how the universe has come about, and hostile to all hopes of personal relations to God.¹³³

In the language of Schelling's specifically panentheist Christian metaphysics, if God is infinitely free to develop and chooses to do so by virtue of existing as an everlasting life, then God is infinitely free to continually explore and understand Himself, and is thus never absolutely self-determined in His own understanding. As such, God is more than a being, He is an evolving life and intelligence that may relate to the human intelligence. As both God and creature are becoming, both are free to develop and change. Schelling expressed that "God is a life, not a mere being. All life has a destiny and is subject to suffering and development. God freely submitted himself to this too, in the very beginning....in order to become personal....For being is only aware of itself in becoming."¹³⁴ In Peirce's schematic of the cosmos, the process of a becoming God would be without end, ensuring that God is unlimited in all respects.

III. ATTUNING TO NATURE'S MIND

A. IRRITATION, DOUBT, AND BELIEF AT THE LEVEL OF FEELING

I will now turn to Peirce's account of how irritations in Firstness-feeling spur the process of inquiry relative to an inquirer's beliefs. It is my view that when beliefs are challenged, disrupted, or more generally stimulated in the course of experience, it is within the abductive process of "re-attuning" beliefs to the *source* of their disruption that a transcendental or "religious" contrast may be felt between what is finite and what is infinite. That is, a contrast is brought about between what is an individual part of nature and what is the endless total of nature which is not itself any single part. I shall begin in this section with a discussion about Peirce's concepts of doubt and belief. I will then discuss how the settlement of doubt and re-establishment of belief allows for the organism to attune to nature's challenges. This allows for a potential contact with the divine by way of feeling, or Peircean Firstness. Considering the contrast between finite and infinite is reserved for the end of this chapter where I will discuss the divine's disclosure.

Peirce wrote, "the irritation of doubt in an organism causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term this struggle *inquiry*."¹³⁵ A "belief" is whatever habitual behavior or rule of action that "appeases the irritation of doubt."¹³⁶ Thus *beliefs* are acquired *habits* that serve as "guides to action."¹³⁷ As Peirce wrote, "Belief is not a momentary mode of consciousness; it is a habit of mind essentially enduring for some time, and mostly (at least) unconscious; and like other habits, it is (until it meets with some surprise that begins its dissolution) perfectly self-satisfied."¹³⁸ "Doubt" is "an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the

state of belief; while the latter is a calm and satisfactory state which we do not wish to avoid, or to change to a belief in anything else.”¹³⁹ Doubt emerges whenever an organism’s habits do not gel with environing circumstances. In response, organisms seek new beliefs that will in turn generate new habits. These new habits will circumvent the irritation of doubt and allow the organism to return to a stable relationship with its environment.¹⁴⁰ In his article “The Fixation of Belief” (1877), part of the *Popular Science Monthly* series, Peirce continued to develop his philosophy of habit and belief. He established that the momentum of the organism is to “fix habits,” or move from states of doubt to states of belief.¹⁴¹

Beliefs, being established habits, are dependent upon Firstness-feeling because successful habits are unchallenged patterns of feeling. Once disturbed, Firstness-feeling causes an irritation within the organism that must be put to rest so that the organism can re-establish successful patterns of behavior. There is a two-way transaction in this effect upon the organism. First, nature acts upon the organism as a stimulus and the organism responds by seeking to alleviate irritation. Second, the organism, in response to nature’s posed irritation, acts as its own stimulus upon nature by introducing a disturbance upon it, where nature may respond to the organism. As Sandra Rosenthal remarks,

there is an ongoing integration and expansion of the self through a deepening attunement to, and incorporation of the ‘the other.’ This other ultimately includes the whole of the universe...such an interactional unity contains a two-directional openness...the character of experience emerges from an interaction of these two poles...though it mirrors neither exactly...the primordial openness of the character of experience itself opens in one direction toward the features of the human modes of existing...and in the other direction toward the features of the independently real...It is this interactional unity that constitutes our worldly experience.¹⁴²

For example, if I have an itch on a patch of skin caused by dry weather, nature has produced an irritation or discomfort that I must put to rest. The transaction was from nature to organism, where I respond to nature's disturbance by scratching the dry skin. Likewise, organisms may disturb nature by introducing disruptive phenomena into the natural environment.

This reciprocal relationship between organism and nature, I argue, is not simply of a biological context. Here I would like to draw the reader's attention to the interconnectedness of the organism and environment in the spiritual context as well. Just as one seeks to put to rest some disturbed belief by way of removing an irritation, disturbances in the spiritual context take their toll, as well. Irritations to established meaning and value must be removed to the success or failure of the organism's spiritual health. "Fixed belief" comes to mean a harmonious relationship with nature in all aspects, neuro-physiological and metaphysical. The organism's habits should be in good standing with nature both on both levels if either organism or environment are to function with the least amount of irritations as possible. John J. McDermott summarizes this idea by remarking that organisms exist in a balanced environment that is representative of a spiritual body or cosmos which he calls "uterine" or "natal existence." He writes as follows, and I quote him at length in order to communicate this idea's importance.

[W]e are floating, gestating organisms, transacting with our environment, eating all the while. The crucial ingredient in all uterine situations is the nutritional quality of the environment. If our immediate surroundings are foul, soiled, polluted harbours of disease and grime, ridden with alien organisms, then we falter and perish. The growth of the spirit is exactly analogous to the growth of the organism. It too must be fed and it must have the capacity to convert its experiences into a nutritious transaction. In short, the human organism has need of two livers. The one, traditional and omnipresent, transforms our blood among

its 500 major functions and oversees the elimination from our body of ammonia, bacteria, and an assortment of debris, all of which would poison us. The second is more vague, having no physical analogue. But its function is similar and crucial. This second liver eats the sky and earth, sorts out tones and colors, and provides a filter through which the experienced environment enters our consciousness. It is this spiritual liver which generates our feelings of queasiness, loneliness, surprise, and celebration. And it is this liver which monitors the tenuous relationship between expectations and anticipations on the one hand and realizations, disappointments, and failures on the other. We are not simply in the world so much as we are of and about the world. On behalf of this second type of living, let us evoke the major metaphors of the fabric, of the uterus, through which we have our natal being.¹⁴³

Overall, it is evident how on Peirce's view that there is a "tension" between organism and environment. Nature poses challenges, disruptions, or irritations to belief while beings make their way through uterine existence. To a certain degree, inquiring beings may challenge nature's established courses of habit. Doubts emerge when habits are no longer in tune with an enviroing nature, and the result is that the organism's natal equilibrium is thrown out of joint. The organism's functioning perspective may break down, and everyday life may cease to function until its functioning is repaired. Yet this tension between organism and nature is not without facilitation because as the organism attunes to nature's ebb and flow it establishes and learns habits that will help it function successfully. Nature thereby *stimulates* the organism and prompts it into a continued process of growth. As Peirce put it, "Thus it is that inquiry of every type, fully carried out, has the vital power of self-correction and growth" and "it is nevertheless quite true that there are relations among phenomena which finite intelligence must interpret, and truly interpret, as such adaptations; and he will macarize himself for his own bitterest griefs, and bless God for the law of growth with all the fighting it imposes upon him."¹⁴⁴

B. SEDIMENTED BELIEF AND THE FORCE OF EXPERIENCE BREAKING UP BELIEF

Organisms retain successful habits and discard those that are unsuccessful when attuning to nature's course. Eventually, successful habits *accrue* as beliefs, sedimenting into an edifice of belief that becomes a stable, yet pliable, guide to changing circumstances. This edifice forms "an immense mass of cognition" from which the organism may draw general rules to solve problems.¹⁴⁵ That is, as organisms inquire, they use inherited sets of belief that have proved their usefulness over the long run; established in value through individual experience, through societal interaction, or by the lessons of historical and biological experience. Future settlements of doubt and belief can be made on the basis of these established sets of belief.¹⁴⁶ The most general and basic sets of belief seem to be instinctual and "acritical," and are handed down to the organism from the course of evolutionary history.¹⁴⁷ In this way old beliefs serve as useful reminders for new beliefs suggesting how one may solve similar irritations in the future that were dealt with successfully in the past.

The accretion of a belief's sedimentation is by no means a strictly "passive affair." Peirce was not a Lockean with a doctrine of *tabula rasa*. Rather, his indebtedness to Kant shines through. For Kant and Peirce both, human beings actively shape what they encounter. On Peirce's view, a human being's beliefs do not float into one's perspective through a spectatorial gaze, but rather enter by means of "struggles."¹⁴⁸ One creatively fuses select new beliefs in an efficacious mode. Put differently, human beings are not sponges that merely absorb information, nor are human beings blank slates in the learning process. The establishment of belief is a consciously controlled process. Peirce wrote, "I

use the word 'self-controlled' for 'controlled by the thinker's self,' and not for 'uncontrolled' except in its own, i.e., automatic, self-development."¹⁴⁹ Yet, the establishment of belief is not without its passive element as well.¹⁵⁰ There is a certain force and constraint found in the in-coming flow of experience that one cannot simply ignore by shutting one's eyes. Peirce wrote, "the real is that which insists upon forcing its way to recognition as something other than the mind's creation."¹⁵¹ Moreover, already established beliefs exert their force by an instinctual influence. The best organisms can do is to utilize their edifice of belief in the best way possible, framing beliefs through logical forms of deliberation, and processing beliefs under deliberate self-control against in-coming experience.¹⁵²

Inquirers maintain self-control in how they tend to the flow of experience and configure its pieces. The processing, judging, and interpreting of experience need not necessarily be a domination of human will over it by simply forcing unfit beliefs into congruence with established belief. Rather, there is a craving for ampliation and understanding for what is *not* one's belief that is the supreme law of inquiry. Inquiry pushes "outward" in hopes of enlarging, and enlivening, one's own personal sediment of belief by craving otherness. This is not to say that individuals seek self-annihilation or cancellation of their own beliefs, thus negating oneself into oblivion through the adoption of what is not-self. Rather, as Peirce put it, the "supreme law, which is the celestial and living harmony, does not so much as demand that the special ideas shall surrender their peculiar arbitrariness and caprice entirely; for that would be self-destructive. It only requires that they shall influence and be influenced by one another."¹⁵³ Peirce's "celestial and living harmony," is what I call the "attunement" between organism and nature's

mind; it is the need to bring established belief into harmony with new beliefs, others' beliefs, or the larger-than-self cosmos.

To put the matter more concretely, “attunement” here means that the organism’s conscious control of individual habits should mirror the habits of the universe in the willful submission of personal belief to its motions and its suggestions for what is suggested to be reasonable habit. Thus, the organism’s mind comes to reflect nature’s mind for the sake of nourishment and well-being, both for physiological and spiritual success and fulfillment. This is not a blind emotive attunement, as the name “feeling” might suggest, but rather attunement is a feeling out of experience using guided inquiry so as to merge behaviors into accord with how things are—“the case” of what is simply given, or what some might say is “true” about experience. As time passes, beliefs eventually come into accord with the universe’s own habits in an exchange between the character of external constraint and the reassertion of habit. Corrington succinctly explains this idea: “Consciousness is a necessary condition for certain higher forms of self-control....under the aegis of self-control, the habits of the universe become our habits. The self and its world grow more and more reasonable with the passage of time.”¹⁵⁴

My purpose here is to draw the reader’s attention to the religious aspects of such an attunement to nature. More forcefully put, the sort of attunement found in abduction is *the* key to the divine’s disclosure. The type of conscious self-control that Peirce spoke about should, as I interpret him, bring to mind the sorts of attunement, or “mindfulness” that many of the world’s religions speak of as being necessary for contact with the divine. It is not a gross misconstrual of Peirce to claim that this is what he had in mind when he

spoke of self-control. For example, he wrote that “Self-control seems to be the capacity for rising to an extended view of a practical subject instead of seeing only temporary urgency. This is the only freedom of which man has any reason to be proud; and it is because love of what is good for all on the whole, which is the widest possible consideration, is the essence of Christianity, that it is said that the service of Christ is perfect freedom.”¹⁵⁵ In this quotation, Peirce directly correlated the activities of religious life with the sort of freedom to obtain conscious control over inquiry, thus bringing the self into alignment with nature. I should also note that the phrase “rising to an extended view” indicates the motion of *transcendence*—inquiry is the way human beings can indeed catch a glimpse of what is otherwise occluded from view. From this extended view one may find room to enter into the service of the divine, for service to the divine is perfectly free. Put differently, attunement to nature is not a blindly obedient act, it is the acceptance of the human being’s own freedom to act as an agent—otherwise human beings would “agree to be determined” and thereby fall prey to innate desires.

Foreshadowing the next chapter, Heidegger goes even further in regarding freedom as “more than human” insofar as it is claimed that it originates in the freedom of Being.¹⁵⁶ To quote David Jeremiah Higgins, “Peirce most approximates this position when...he grants numinosity to freedom, saying that we never can be immediately conscious of finiteness, or of anything but a divine freedom that in its own original firstness knows no bounds.”¹⁵⁷ And Peirce and Heidegger again touch philosophical points when Heidegger’s concept of *Gelassenheit* affirms the free act of granting Being’s transcendence. William Richardson observes that “Liberty is libertation, sc. Letting-be,

hence not primarily an ‘act of the will’ but a purely ontological process of the same order as, in fact identical with, There-being as transcendence.”¹⁵⁸

While service to Christ and the freedom of inquiry to find Christ may be at odds with the most generalizing spirit of inquiry in that a specifically Christian metaphysics designates specific terms to what is most general, some commentators remark that Peirce’s religiosity does not debar alternative understandings of service to the divine. Ejsing, for example, writes that Peirce “used Christian terminology general enough to fit other religious traditions” and she continues that Peirce’s “theological position is more generally religious than specifically Christian.”¹⁵⁹ The religious kernel found in Peirce’s account of abduction points to a basic structure common to many of the world’s religions: the structure of finite, infinite, and the vehicle of transcendental experiences going “in-between” the finite and infinite. The awareness of “betweenness” refers to ordinary human life transformed into the sacred, and this form of transcendence lures this ordinariness toward the sacred.¹⁶⁰ Willful submission to the force of these transcendental experiences implies the humble act of the finite acknowledging itself *as* finite, and freely so, before the infinite creator (should I say the *infinite creation*?) that is the co-authoring creative power of life. Such a structure of transcendence is, I think, a unifying concept among many of the world’s religions.

In my view, abduction is thought to be the “vital spark” that allows for feelings of transcendence to occur. This vital spark can be extinguished, however. If human beings focus all attention on defining strict concepts of God, rather than on feeling the divine’s living presence and allowing that presence to actively direct the conduct of life, then all is lost, for the freedom and activity involved in religious worship succumbs to the dogmatic

attempt to constrict what the idea of God means, rather than allowing the effects of religious worship to take root and blossom in practical conduct. Peirce wrote that focusing on the *concept* of God, rather than the living presence of the divine

causes a degeneration in religion from a perception to a trust, from a trust to a belief, and a belief continually becoming more and more abstract. Then, after a religion has become a public affair, quarrels arise, to settle which watchwords are drawn up. This business gets into the hands of theologians: and the ideas of theologians always appreciably differ from those of the universal church. They swamp religion in fallacious logical disputations. Thus, the natural tendency is to the continual drawing tighter and tighter of the narrowing bounds of doctrine, with less and less attention to the living essence of religion, until, after some symbolum quodcumque has declared that the salvation of each individual absolutely and almost exclusively depends upon his entertaining a correct metaphysics of the godhead, the vital spark of inspiration becomes finally quite extinct.¹⁶¹

Eugene Halton puts the point this way:

We are wired to marvel in nature, and this reverencing attunement does not require a concept of God. Quite the reverse. The development of concepts of God...represent the development of human alienation from what could be called the divine presence of the living universe. That is, the concept of God is the peeling away from direct, felt participation in the creation of the universe, from participation in the Creator, considered as felt presence rather than concept. If, as Peirce claimed, religion is poetry completed, then marveling nature, without and within is the completion of religion.¹⁶²

Rather than tinkering with *definitions* of God, the utmost importance is—as Peirce stated—maintaining “a spirit of utter surrender to the *force majeure* of Experience, or the Course of Life; and it is through such self-abnegation that all Power comes...While details of dogma are beyond its province, it would favor rather old-fashioned Christianity, than any attempt to make a christianoidal metaphysics serve in lieu of religion.”¹⁶³

Before closing this section, I would like to add a final quotation by Corrington. He eloquently summarizes the trajectory of the ideas presented here so far.

Doubt is overcome through the persuasive power of abduction, which in turn serves the growth of reasonableness in the world. In examining Peirce's mature metaphysics, we will see how he ties love, evolution, continuity, and creative advance together in a cosmology that stresses developmental teleology in a goal directed universe....Peirce makes the bold claim that the universe as a whole (if such a phrase be allowed) is abductive in its inner being, always seeking more generals under which to subsume and explain cases....If we are honest, we cannot avoid communion with God. The ultimate goal of pragmatism is thus religious. We study the logic of abduction so that we can enter into communion with God.¹⁶⁴

IV. PEIRCE'S "NEGLECTED ARGUMENT": OPENING A SACRED DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

A. THE "NEGLECTED ARGUMENT": ITS HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

Peirce left vague and unspecified the implications of abduction's use as a mechanism for inquiry beyond that of the scientific realm. Perhaps this was his willing intention, or perhaps it is possible that he simply did not have the time or resources to outline and describe experiences of abduction in other areas of inquiry beyond that of his immediate areas of concern, which were logic and semiotic. It is commonly agreed, however, that Peirce's later thought tended to gravitate toward matters of religion, and his mystical experience of 1892, at the age of 52, may have had some influence on his willingness to speak directly to religious matters towards the closing two decades of his life.¹⁶⁵ As Corrington points out in his introductory biographical chapter on Peirce's life, aptly titled "Peirce's Melancholy," the trials and tribulations that Peirce dealt with in his later years (post-1890's while living in Milford, Pennsylvania) could have placed him in a

predicament where he sought *spiritual* applications of philosophy.¹⁶⁶ A draft of a letter that Peirce wrote to James in 1905 is telling on this point: “To think of the true theist’s God is real balm to the heart. It comforts one for one’s own shortcomings. I feel better already for writing this page. My misery is alleviated.”¹⁶⁷ While in Milford, Peirce began to contemplate the mysteries of the universe in his cosmological writings of the 1890s, and he insisted that human reason, feeling, and abduction were the essential ingredients in coming to understand humanity’s place in the cosmos.

An exceptional case of Peirce grappling directly with abduction’s application to a religious question—that of God’s existence—is found in his last published article written in 1908 for the *Hibbert Journal*, “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God.”¹⁶⁸ In that article one finds how abduction is the keystone to Peirce’s theory of a lived process of inquiry, or what I have earlier also identified as “the logic of relations.” Ejsing explains how in his “Neglected” article Peirce “struggled to clarify....in its most naked form....the definition of the process of human perception as an activity of self-controlled initiation *and* a disposition of receptive submission. For Peirce, this relates directly to the difficult question of rational self-control in the reasoning process: what it is, and the details of its functions.”¹⁶⁹ In his essay, one sees the balance of rational control and a receptive yield to the force of experience—that is, one sees abduction at work in the area of the philosophy of religion.

Peirce’s “Neglected Argument” is an assertive demonstration claiming that anyone who muses over the nature of the cosmos will naturally be led to a belief in God. Such a belief instinctively comes forward as a felt “best guess” hypothesis in abduction. The hypothesis is then “tested” in virtue of the practical conduct it inspires. Peirce’s

essay does not offer argumentation that concludes with a proposition of metaphysical theology about the existence of God. Rather, he argued about the reality of God. Because God is not simply a spatio-temporal object, Peirce thought that it amounts to fetishism to say that God *exists*.¹⁷⁰ Recall from Chapter Two that, for Peirce, reality was a broader term that encompasses what exists but is not synonymous with it. Phenomenologically speaking, Peirce argued about an experience of God's reality in hypothesis formation. He did not attempt to offer a proof for God's existence *per se*.

Anderson succinctly describes the structure of the argument's three parts, or what he identifies as the pieces of Peirce's "nested argument." Anderson writes,

Musement's leading to a belief in and adoration of God's reality constitutes what Peirce called the 'humble argument,' the first of three arguments which, nested together, comprised his full 'Argument.' The second argument of the nest—the 'neglected argument proper'—forms the modest task of assessing the simplicity and universality of the humble argument and of identifying it as an instance of instinctive belief....Finally, the third argument, which I will call the 'scientific argument,' showed how the humble argument may also be construed as an instance of an initial stage of inquiry, as an abduction or retroduction.¹⁷¹

I will consider Peirce's full Argument, drawing distinctions among its three pieces and stages along the way. Respectively, the three pieces of the nested argument will be represented by the following sigla:

HA = Humble Argument

NA = Neglected Argument

SA = Scientific Argument¹⁷²

B. RELIGIOUS THINKING AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY SHARE A COMMON FORM OF INFERENCE

The “Neglected Argument” begins by focusing on a mental exercise called “interpretive musement.” It was Peirce’s view that, if allowed to run its course, musement should likely come to hypothesize God's reality. Looking ahead to the end of this chapter, musement in its most potent form is an abductive possibilizing about the reason for nature’s own being. As I interpret Peirce, musement is a primal form of abductive inquiry that may begin with the shock and disruption of Firstness-feeling when one’s settled beliefs and habits are struck by some phenomenon of nature. I will return to this theme momentarily, but for now it is sufficient to say that in musement one contemplates nature’s very reason for being.

The muser, according to Peirce, will meditate upon the various universes of experience—Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness—and come to be struck by the “similarities and regularities,” the “homogeneities of connectedness,” and the “unspeakable variety” of nature, pondering how “All the universes....exhibit some form of growth and a universal feature of growth is the preparation in earlier stages for latter stages.”¹⁷³ In order to explain that the universe grows and that its pieces come into connection, this line of reasoning will inevitably suggest the lack of any sort of metaphysical determination so that an evolving universe might be. That lack of determination is chance, or possibility, found in Peirce’s tychism. Yet, after further consideration, even possibility and growth must require some explanation. The ultimate question then becomes, what power makes such a universe possible? Peirce summarized this line of inquiry in the following way:

From speculations on the homogeneities of each Universe, the Muser will naturally pass to the consideration of homogeneities and connections between two different Universes, or all three. Especially in them all we find one type of occurrence, that of growth, itself consisting in the homogeneities of small parts....In growth, too, we find that the three Universes conspire; and a universal feature of it is provision for later stages in earlier ones. This is a specimen of certain lines of reflection which will inevitably suggest the hypothesis of God's Reality. It is not that such phenomena might not be capable of being accounted for, in one sense, by the action of chance with the smallest conceivable dose of a higher element; for if by God be meant the *Ens necessarium*, that very hypothesis requires that such should be the case. But the point is that that sort of explanation leaves a mental explanation just as needful as before....But however that may be, in the Pure Play of Musement the idea of God's Reality will be sure sooner or later to be found an attractive fancy, which the Muser will develop in various ways. The more he ponders it, the more it will find response in every part of his mind, for its beauty, for its supplying an ideal of life, and for its thoroughly satisfactory explanation of his whole threefold environment.¹⁷⁴

According to Peirce's argument, the initial suggestion of God's reality will be so compelling that one cannot help but love and adore the idea in all of its practicality. He wrote,

from what I know of the effects of Musement on myself and others, that any normal man who considers the three Universes in the light of the hypothesis of God's Reality, and pursues that line of reflection in scientific singleness of heart, will come to be stirred to the depths of his nature by the beauty of the idea and by its august practicality, even to the point of earnestly loving and adoring his strictly hypothetical God, and to that of desiring above all things to shape the whole conduct of life and all the springs of action into conformity with that hypothesis.¹⁷⁵

Such in summary is the "Neglected Argument," or NA. In an "Additament" to his essay, Peirce broke the NA into the HA, NA, and SA nest of three arguments. Having discussed the NA, I shall now turn to the other two pieces of the nest.

The HA highlights the role of feeling and instinct in the NA's assertion that anyone who can muse will likely follow a line of hypothesis to the reality of God. Peirce thought that theologians have not capitalized on how the NA and HA fit together. He believed that theologians have neglected the fact that there is a natural tendency or instinct to reason toward God, and that this instinct is not unlike the instinct that guides the beliefs of scientific inquiry. In the HA, for example, feeling can be effective in processes of thinking about and dealing with the cosmos. As organisms naturally tend toward states of balance and equilibrium and use instinct to find those states—usually without much error—Peirce hinted that instinct is used to strive toward spiritual equilibrium. By virtue of the HA, one sees how when left to its own devices, feelings will seek the sources needed to overcome irritations. Peirce's goal in the HA, then, was to point to how experiences of Firstness-feeling can “home in” on a natural, yet spiritual, *telos*—and this *telos* commonly applies to all inquiring beings, “high and low alike.”¹⁷⁶ One need only allow the tendencies of a primal consciousness contained within their own being to find its way, which will naturally zero in on the very source of consciousness's creation. Peirce put it this way: “as to God, open your eyes -- and your heart, which is also a perceptive organ -- and you see him.”¹⁷⁷

Anderson sketches a link between the HA and NA. He identifies a third moment in Peirce's essay, which he titles the ‘SA’ or “Scientific Argument.”¹⁷⁸ He notes how Peirce pointed out that scientific thought utilizes the three logical forms of reasoning: induction, deduction, and abduction.¹⁷⁹ He notes how on Peirce's view, the activity of musement and scientific reasoning share the common logical form of abduction.¹⁸⁰ This is a subtle, but crucial point. Peirce believed the common affinity of abduction among the

HA, NA, and SA strengthens the argument for God's reality because it shows that the same type of thinking operative in scientific reasoning is operative in religious thinking, and scientific thinking has had much success in the explanation of phenomena. Again, the reader must keep in mind that, like a phenomenological account of a religious reality, Peirce's fallibilistic account of scientific inquiry did not seek to *prove* phenomena, but only characterize and explain phenomena. Peirce described the common ground found between abductive inquiry both in musement and in scientific thinking in the following way:

The student, applying to his own trained habits of research the art of logical analysis....compares the process of thought of the Muser upon the Three Universes with certain parts of the work of scientific discovery, and finds that the 'Humble Argument' is nothing but an instance of the first stage of all such work, the stage of observing the facts, or variously rearranging them, and of pondering them until, by their reactions with the results of previous scientific experience, there is 'evolved'....an explanatory hypothesis.¹⁸¹

Here one finds that Peirce revealed the NA's abductive line of inquiry functions at the boundary between perceptions based on feeling (including instinct) in the HA, and inquiry based on scientific reasoning in the SA.¹⁸²

Anderson claims that the line of belief that leads to God's reality begins, then, to work in two directions. One direction is to serve as the basis for the conduct of life, the other is for inquiring beings to pursue it as a line of hypothetical reflection.¹⁸³ Anderson writes,

Full religious belief, then, amounts to a belief that incorporates both dimensions of the humble argument [the NA and the SA]: the acritical dimension that arises

through perceptual judgment and the fallible dimension that attends its status as hypothesis. These two work in reciprocal dependence. Peirce ‘married’ science and religion not by reducing one to the other but by bringing them together as continuous moments in a single Argument for God’s reality. He acknowledged that this produced a tension within belief; however, he believed this tension to be a healthful one. The vague, practical God yielded a faith that allowed for the believer to establish habits to meet the vital demands of the conduct of life. At the same time, the hypothetical God tempered the temptation to precise God’s vagueness in dogmatic fashion.¹⁸⁴

Thus, one’s instinctive response to the very idea of God may be demonstrated using the same power that is found behind scientific inquiry.

In Anderson’s view, the NA draws the HA out of its “subjectivity” and “presents it” by describing its instinctiveness.¹⁸⁵ Anderson then continues to claim that it is not until all three pieces of the nest are consummated that can one say that there is an argument.¹⁸⁶ Religious belief, he says, should not remain at the level of the HA, but rather should travel through to the NA and SA because each piece of the nest “involves” the other.¹⁸⁷ Yet each piece also has its own potential dangers. The HA or the “mystical element” is the most essential but the most “dangerous,” the NA is the “sober guide to action” but can miss out on the spiritual side of the HA, and the SA needs both the NA and HA but can “become a regular argument” at the expense of the conclusion.¹⁸⁸ In the end Anderson states that appealing to the HA is normal because “it is what we naturally do.”¹⁸⁹ As such, it is the most intense but to some degree also the most unscientific part of the argument because it may remain and dwell in feeling, and it may disregard abduction’s controlled aspect altogether.¹⁹⁰ Ejsing makes the interesting remark that Peirce did make musement a “rational application,” and she wonders if it is really possible to provoke an encounter with God through *rationalized* musement, or if one

needs a kind of detached attitude to receive, what may or may not, present itself.¹⁹¹

Stated differently, Ejsing's questions that if "playful" meditation likely leads to God, then the "rational" nature of this meditative act might be drawn into question. Yet, nevertheless as a whole, Peirce's Neglected Argument turns on abduction's power to characterize phenomena. The argument is a way to venture hypotheses about phenomena regardless of whichever its three pieces one chooses to focus upon.

C. NUMINOUS FEELING: A SACRED DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

I have insisted that the magnificence and mystery of the cosmos may disturb beings into meditating upon nature's ultimate and most pervasive features. As such, nature can be a site for the disclosure of the divine. This is possible because abductive inquiry, called "musement" in the NA, is the mechanism that permits the divine's disclosure in numinous feeling.¹⁹² "Numinous feeling" is a sacred feeling of the divine's manifestation and presence. It finds evidence through states of awe, overpoweringness, urgency, majesty, or otherness.¹⁹³ In this section I will discuss how nature prompts numinous feeling by offering its own appearances and workings as stimulating phenomenon for abductive inquiry. I will draw analogies between numinous feeling and Firstness, claiming that Firstness is a ground of feeling and possibility that eludes direct inspection, but can nevertheless be felt as disclosing a sacred dimension of human experience.

Nature's initial disruptions into settled belief can take many forms: a shocking earthquake, a powerful tornado, or an exploding star. The sheer power and vastness of nature certainly can prompt the meditation of human inquirers—as it did when a recent

earthquake on April 18th, 2008 in Carbondale, Illinois prompted many to discover that they were living on the edge of the “New Madrid” fault line, a seismic zone that if disturbed could destroy much of the Midwest. Seismic activity disturbed this fault line on February 7th, 1812, and consequently an 8.0 earthquake swallowed the town of New Madrid, Louisiana Territory (now the state of Missouri.)¹⁹⁴ The tremors of that earthquake were felt within a 50,000 square mile radius, ringing church bells in Boston and cracking sidewalks in Washington, D.C.¹⁹⁵ In the case of the April 18th, 2008 earthquake, beliefs about Southern Illinois’ relative safety and security from natural disaster were very quickly disrupted and challenged.

But again, nature’s promptings for inquiry need not necessarily be destructive events. A beautiful sunset or autumn meadow may cause one to sit and watch the colors of the sky or carefully listen to the rustling of trees overhead. The majestic, mysterious, and beautiful “workings of nature” are just the right circumstances to lead inquirers into an attentive mode of musement. One may hear birds and pursue bird watching and ornithology, or one might view a solar-eclipse and seek to find out facts about astronomy. In these cases, it should be clear that nature is entirely capable, and forcefully so, of challenging and stimulating belief thereby leading organisms into the process of inquiry. Peirce certainly thought as much; he wrote: “The dawn and the gloaming most invite one to Musement; but I have found no watch of the nycthemeron that has not its own advantages for the pursuit. It begins passively enough with drinking in the impression of some nook in one of the three Universes. But impression soon passes into attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into a lively give and take of communion between self and self.”¹⁹⁶

Using the mechanism of abduction, one might detect a divine power at work in the very appearances of nature. Through a give-and-take “communion” between being and cosmos, the abducer attempts to possibilize hypotheses that will account for the felt power perceived to be at work within nature disturbing feeling and prompting inquiry. If Peirce’s NA is correct, this line of possibilizing will likely suggest that the reality of God is present within nature’s workings. When nature’s workings prompt the inquirer into lines of hypothesis about the divine, it is Firstness that is the very feeling out of those lines of hypothesis. This takes the form of possibilizing, discussed earlier in this chapter. Possibilizing in abduction can only begin once some aspect of Firstness-feeling overwhelms one in such a way that they are impelled to venture a specific line of hypothesis. One may *feel* overwhelmed, taken, or simply stunned by a phenomena of nature and decide to possibilize about the nature of that experience. In a flash of wonderment the inquirer may begin musing, dreaming, conjecturing, or questioning along some line of inquiry to account for the phenomena’s explanation. Peirce wrote, for example, that

The abductive suggestion comes to us like a flash. It is an act of insight, although of extremely fallible insight. It is true that the different elements of the hypothesis were in our minds before; but it is the idea of putting together what we had never before dreamed of putting together which flashes the new suggestion before our contemplation.¹⁹⁷

In this way the possibilizing moment found in abduction may be construed as similar to the German *Augenblick*, the “resolute, ecstatic, rapture in which *Dasein* is carried away to a vision of whatever possibilities are encountered in the current factual situation.”¹⁹⁸

When confronted by nature in its blinding power, frightening might, or stunning beauty, Firstness-feeling's instinctual aspect has, in and of itself, no reason to investigate other than the re-settling of belief. One might say that Firstness-feeling craves a settled state of belief and possesses its own momentum towards sentience and completed mind. In Peirce's words, "whatever is First is *ipso facto* sentient."¹⁹⁹ But this craving towards mind or sentience is dependent on a capacity, *a power*, or a freedom to do so. There is some underlying feature of feeling that, while concomitant with feeling, nevertheless permits it to tend towards stabilizations and generalizations. That free and spontaneous "first element" or "ground" as I call it, is Firstness-possibility. As Peirce wrote, "The very first and most fundamental element that we have to assume is a Freedom, or Chance, or Spontaneity."²⁰⁰ Firstness-possibility *is* the spontaneity and freedom of Firstness-feeling. Both aspects constitute the primal category of Firstness on an equal footing.

Firstness-possibility necessitates that Firstness-feeling have no external capital-r "Reason" dominating and determining it in the course of an inquirer's investigations into nature. Firstness-feeling may crave rationality, but is, itself, not completely rational because of the lack of determination and modal possibility present in it. Firstness-possibility guarantees the spontaneous and free nature of Firstness-feeling. Firstness-feeling, on the other hand, is the exercise of Firstness-possibility. Firstness is therefore a less determined ground than that of the laws of Thirdness generality or the reactionary bruteness of Secondness actuality. In Peirce's overall architectonic, Firstness finds its expression as the lack of necessity in the development of the cosmos, as well as within the exercise of freedom found within inquiry. He most directly addressed this freedom in the essay "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined" (1892.)²⁰¹ In that essay the issue in

question is *chance*, but chance is underpinned by the metaphysical question of the reality of freedom and spontaneity. As Peirce wrote, “when I speak of chance, I only employ a mathematical term to express with accuracy the characteristics of freedom or spontaneity.”²⁰² This spontaneous and free nature of Firstness is what allows numinous feeling to come about as beings possibilize the *ultimate* hypothesis for nature’s being.

Corrington summarizes the above points in the following way:

There is a kind of inner logic to musement in that it progresses from an attentive state toward a state of pure play, which in turn gives way to a communion with God.... This sense of communion, a kind of Platonic erotic connection with the ground of the world, facilitates an enhanced understanding of the nature of the three universes and their connections.... Particular irritations and irruptions are dealt with by specific inductive, deductive, and abductive strategies. The ultimate irritation, the ultimate doubt, pertains to the ‘why’ of the three universes of experience.²⁰³

The spontaneity of Firstness results in the playful and free character of musement, or what Peirce called “pure play.”²⁰⁴ Peirce stated,

I have sometimes been half-inclined to call it reverie with some qualification; but for a frame of mind so antipodal to vacancy and dreaminess such a designation would be too excruciating a misfit. In fact, it is Pure Play. Now, Play, we all know, is a lively exercise of one's powers. Pure Play has no rules.... It bloweth where it listeth. It has no purpose, unless recreation.²⁰⁵

While Peirce described musement as care free and lighthearted, nature’s response to inquiry and musement might not be so lighthearted, or kind, all of the time. In fact, nature can be quite cruel. In my view, the “care free” character of pure play may take on a double-sense of meaning. “Care free” can be a response to a nature that is “without

care” for the human being’s needs, desires, and wishes, or it can be maintained in Peirce’s intended sense.

That nature can be without care for the human being was an idea expressed by George Santayana which he described in the essay, “Naturalism, Sad” (1905.)²⁰⁶ The thesis was that sadness is the face of nature that one does not shape or make. In some cases, one may construe nature as being without any purpose or meaning when its forces appear to be beyond one’s control and when its tendencies seem to be without care for one’s desires and beliefs. For example, the forces of biological evolution go on their way without regard to some species’ extinction, or the cosmos continues to proceed in its motions despite the death of some galaxy, including, inevitably one day, the death of the Milky Way. Thus, human needs may be ignored despite what the larger environments of *bios* or *kosmos* may demand.

Whitehead knew something of this when he cited a line from Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem “In Memoriam.” The line reads, “the stars, she whispers, blindly run.”²⁰⁷ The line points to how human beings are “in a state of debt” to nature, to use the phrase from Buchler, because one’s beliefs and desires ultimately depend on what the cosmos will either grant or deny.²⁰⁸ As nature moves on its way, sometimes without positive regard to its own ejected creatures, those creatures eventually gain a sense that their own growth and survival ultimately depends on an environment and power much larger than any individual self. This sense of debt to the universe is what earlier in history prompted Schleiermacher to claim that religion begins in individual feelings of “finitude and dependency” which “must accompany everyone who really has a religion.”²⁰⁹ There is a state of debt and dependency as the human spirit develops in history, but its

dependency is lessened until human beings are brought into union with divine mind itself, according to Peirce's system. As Peirce put it, "In general, God is perpetually creating us, that is developing our real manhood, our spiritual reality. Like a good teacher, He is engaged in detaching us from a False dependence upon Him."²¹⁰

The organism may settle its debt to nature, despite the conditions that threaten it with annihilation. This debt may be repaid at no consequence to the organism and it may die peacefully, or, nature may decide to cash in where individual or galaxy wide death is the result. Such may cause some inquirers to feel dread and despair, but it may also deepen their sense of piety toward nature. For example, Schelling said that religious experiences often begin in "a veil of melancholy" where "the darkest and deepest ground in human nature is 'Longing'. . . is melancholy."²¹¹ And Corrington directly ties his religiosity to his struggles as a manic-depressive.²¹²

Religious piety may find its expression in the dread before nature's power, the consequence being the feeling of utter dependence on nature's perceived will that is, in the end, beyond human control. Otto called such a feeling "awefulness."²¹³ One may tremor in awe before nature's power to terminate, seemingly at will. Such an awe has something spectral in it that causes the inquirer to see the cosmos as different, uncanny, or in the history of primitive religions, "eerie" or "weird."²¹⁴ Otto wrote that awe before the divine may produce a solemn and pious embrace of the divine's power to cash in its debts and destroy. In his view, it is from the perspective of the human individual that an awe of nature's power is responsible for producing a personal relationship with what is awe-inspiring.²¹⁵ Specifically, Otto claimed that an individual's sense of self, or "creature-consciousness," is dependent on how these divine powers overwhelm the

creature, whether frightening it, causing dread and despair, or inducing a mystical awe over nature's power.

The disturbance of creature consciousness introduces a transcendental structure between the finite and infinite, for when beliefs are disturbed, the organism's "ordinary" way of life is disturbed. That which is "Wholly Other" finds its first hint, even as a hypothesis, in a feeling of numinosity within human experience and it is nature's intrusion into ordinary creature consciousness that stimulates this feeling. Stated differently, the ordinary gains the surplus "heirophanic" manifestation of the divine and thus transforms into the "extraordinary." Looking ahead to the closing section of this chapter, the revelation of this extraordinary face of nature is through a finite and infinite contrast in the "ecstatic event." In the ecstatic event, finite inquiring organisms gain a sense of their own finitude in numinous feeling, yet come into a feeling-communion with what is "other"—the infinite divine life.

Nature's otherness is a mysterious power that prompts organisms to inquire into its character as a supreme and divine power. Otto put it this way: "Taken in the religious sense, that which is 'mysterious' is—to give it perhaps the most striking expression—the 'wholly other' . . . is that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar," and "the weird thing itself allures the fancy."²¹⁶ This "otherness" of nature, its extraordinary power, disrupts the organism's habitual beliefs and settled spirituality. Even at the lowest levels of consciousness, it seems that the divine life prods life into dependency upon it, yet this dependency is not without the advantage of self-reification, or in Peirce's terminology, it is not without the prospect of growth. Nature's disruptions pierce the ordinary with a certain strangeness and this strangeness allures human

questioning. On Otto's view, the "Wholly Other" need not necessarily mean something "substantive."²¹⁷ "Otherness" refers to a reality that provokes reactions in consciousness that stand out vividly in comparison to ordinary and everyday experiences. It is "religious" for him because it is quite beyond the usual, the familiar, and the limits of the intelligible. These experiences "fill the mind with wonder and astonishment."²¹⁸

To summarize my lines of reflection drawn so far, it should be clear to the reader that the world has the potency to become sacred if the right conditions are met, and if the organism is attuned and follows lines of inquiry to keep attunements "in frequency with nature." The initial reason for attuning, however, may be some shock or surprise that brings about feelings of mysteriousness, dread, awe, or fascination. This is the numinous or sacred dimension of human experience, or the "emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by....that which is supreme above all creatures."²¹⁹ I believe Otto's description of the establishment of creature-consciousness is analogous to Peirce's idea that the shock or force of experience may induce a relationship between abductive inquirer and the environment. I choose to adopt Otto's language because the experience of Otto's God is similar to Peirce's experience of reality in Firstness. "Numinous" concerns God as Otto described it, "Firstness" points to the nature of a reality, how the two are experienced is the same.

V. ABDUCTION AND THE ECSTATIC EVENT

A. FINITE BEFORE THE INFINITE

How are beings to express numinous feeling? By what qualities can one gauge an experience of the sacred? A sacred form of the divine displays itself in what I have opted to call an “ecstatic event,” taking cue from philosophers such as Heidegger, Corrington, and Badiou. An “ecstatic” event is “something which disrupts the current situation,” where one stands outside of oneself in their finitude as if partly self-transcended by “an excess of Being.”²²⁰ The ecstatic event is *trans-being*; this means that one stands “outside” of one’s interrupted situation only temporarily, or momentarily, from ordinary daily life to view nature in its spectacular power. The result is feeling the presence of some greater power at work in the cosmos. This sense of ecstasy, of a feeling of going beyond ordinariness, is “transcendental” in that it is extra/ordinary which means it is *beyond* ordinariness yet still in touch with it. In this way, human beings are connected to the whole world, that is, the cosmos, yet practically dwell in everyday life as they establish beliefs and habitual patterns of living. In this final, closing section of the chapter, I will conclude my analysis on how Peirce’s philosophy relates to the disclosure of the divine in numinous feeling.

Peirce gave his reader hints on what can and cannot be discussed when it comes to the nature of divinity. In his 1859 “An essay on the Limits of Religious thought written to prove that we can reason upon the nature of God,” Peirce claimed that, “though we cannot think Infinity we can judge about it.”²²¹ He then further developed this claim in two later drafts of that same essay, respectively titled “The Conception of Infinity” and “Why we can Reason on the Infinite” (both 1859.)²²² Peirce’s first essay opens with the question, “Can the infinite be defined?”²²³ He answered this question by stating that a “definition” necessarily involves having a concept that one may reason about. He wrote,

“We can discuss whatever we can syllogise upon. We can syllogize upon whatever we can define.”²²⁴ The issue about God, especially God’s divine character of everlastingness or “perfect degree of modality” involves having some concept of God in mind when reasoning about God’s characteristic of being infinite. Though one may not possess perfect knowledge of God’s infinite character, one may nevertheless comprehend God’s qualities that are “beyond limitation.”²²⁵ Peirce gave the following example of how reasoning about the infinite is possible, though the content of the concept “Infinite” might be vague or beyond human comprehension. “Suppose somebody should talk about an OG and when you asked him what he meant he should say it was a four-sided triangle. You would proceed to show that he had no such conception that nobody had. You would reason upon that which you could not conceive of... We can therefore comprehend definitions, when we cannot conceive of what they define.”²²⁶ Therefore, although I might not be able to comprehend Infinity, according to Peirce I may certainly reason about it.²²⁷

The next two essays explain the link between the finite and infinite within the “event” of cognition, and how cognition is dependent upon the content of its reasoned concepts.²²⁸ Peirce said, “Let us think and consider the object of our thought... as an event. Every event is a relation or dependency.”²²⁹ The event of cognition centers on what Peirce called “influxual dependency.”²³⁰ Influxual dependency means that conceptual qualities are dependent in degrees upon their objects. If one can reason upon a concept, its qualities are real or realizable in content because the concept is dependent on various real qualities for being thought. Peirce then argued that one can reason about the infinite in its *quality* of being a concept of thought; that is, as “the source of influx.”²³¹

One may analyze the conception of infinity based on its relations to other conceptions “although the conception itself we never have.”²³² Thus, on Peirce’s view, the infinite “surpasses reality.”²³³ That is to say, any concept of the infinite is a concept of no *thing* existent, yet it may be conceived of within the human intellect. Objects belong to thought as they are defined through concepts, but the infinite, being no “thing,” resists conceptual determination. The infinite, having the transcendental feature of belonging to thought, however, remains in touch with the finite in the sense that its content has yet to be filled in with anything specific.²³⁴ It is purely abstract but has a qualitative reality that may be related to other thoughts. The infinite therefore enters human thought as an object of judgment yet is specifically no-thing but a quality. In that sense, then, the infinite is both “in” finite thought, yet also remains beyond it. The infinite remains a transcendental attribute of reality.

B. PEIRCE’S TRANSCENDENTALISM

Before looking at Peirce’s essay and discussing the ecstatic event, I should right away address what I mean by “transcendental.” It is true, on Peirce’s NA that one might not know God’s reality and experience, or even “prove” a capital-t Transcendent being, but the very line of musement suggested in the HA may be taken as evidence that human beings are seeking some sort of transcendence. If transcendence can be linked to a reality that is transcenden-*tal* (though of course this reality may not be supernatural but subsist just beyond one’s perceptual horizon), then that might serve as a starting point for transcend-ing; that is, one may proceed towards numinous sacred presence felt within abductive inquiry. However, it is easy to lose one’s way along such a path of

transcendence. When possibilizing about the ultimate context for things, one often looks for some concrete proof for that thing's existence, as if it were a thing. This is a hallmark of the history of metaphysics. Transcendence seems to imply that there is some external existent concrete thing that the reasoner must *prove*, and one must pass from the idea of that thing to its existent reality—that is, to the actual being itself. But this is not Peirce's God, nor is it what Peirce would think about transcendence. Proceeding to Peirce's God, or the divine reality, involves what some commentators call "lateral transcendence."²³⁵ That is, transcendence involves a necessarily immanent finite-infinite relation, rather than a supernatural relationship.

Transcending the ordinary, and feeling the extraordinary, involves not a *per se* being, but the feeling of a *quality* about a reality in which one is already immersed. That quality is a numinous feeling of "the infinite." My use of "the infinite" is a combination of Peirce's use, and of Walter Lowe's definition:

What then is the in-infinite? The English prefix 'in-' has a twofold resonance. It can be privative, the equivalent of 'non-', as in 'inanimate' and 'inconsistent.' But it can also function in ways associated with the preposition 'in', as in 'inland' and 'incarnate.' The term 'infinite' assumes the privative; it is defined as the not-finite, and that 'not-' gesture is essential to it. But it follows, then, that the very meaning of the exalted infinite is linked necessarily, albeit negatively, to the finite—and is thus dependent upon it. It is inscribed within (and understanding of) the finite. It is in-(the)-finite.²³⁶

Heidegger affirmed to his readers that "Being itself is essentially finite."²³⁷ This means that alethiological disclosure, or ἀλήθεια, "aletheia" of Being is always through beings. And Derrida invokes the notion of a "finite infinite."²³⁸ These "transcendentalisms of the sensible" assert that "religious transcendence could not even be named were it not for a

difference that emerged from the actual figures of our experience....[and for] the interpretive activity at the heart of the flux of the phenomena of life and history.”²³⁹

The movement towards transcendence in Peirce’s NA is where the activity of abduction allows the reality of the divine to appear through the inquirer’s own sensible surroundings. The purpose, then, of abduction is to establish some sort of *pathway*, some sort of line to what is felt to be infinite via what is experienced as finite. Certainly one could proceed with the option of taking the divine to be a “God that is completely different” or a “God that is Absolute Other.” But very quickly problems arise *via negativa*. If these ontological positionings of God were true, then human beings could never find nor even initially or remotely conceive of an absolutely transcendental God. In this case, the divine would be *so* remote that its reality would forever remain unknown to finite creatures. Thus, divine transcendence necessarily involves some sort of immanence and appearance. Philosophers have struggled with this problem, from Plato in the *Parmenides* dialogue, to Saint Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, to John Duns Scotus in the *Reportatio*, to name but a few. I cannot address the problem of transcendence and immanence here in any great amount of detail due to the sheer bulk and historical complexity of the issues at stake, but I should say that “divine transcendence” may, as Lowe puts it, “refer, perhaps, to God’s *freedom*” and God’s lateral relationship to finite creatures.²⁴⁰ Taken in this unique way, transcendence would cease to be the *opposite* of immanence; for a God of freedom would not be isolated to an absolutely unknowable partition of reality, but rather would be free to immanently appear precisely because of a transcendental power to do so, i.e, a freedom-to-appear within nature. At this point, agreeing with Lowe, one might say that theology could begin to be

become more theological as a transcendent God is found to appear in some sort of manifestation, as is the case when the divine appears through numinous feeling.²⁴¹ In so far as Peirce does acknowledge a transcendental power of experience, I must enlist several arguments that Heidegger provided regarding transcendence, so I must return to this issue in Chapter Four.

C. HYPOTHESIS CONFIRMATION AS AN ECSTATIC EVENT

I may now return to the point of how the disclosure of what is transcendent occurs in an immanent manifestation and remark about how establishing a line of inquiry, a line of communication, or a pathway, is needed for this manifestation to be detected as a manifestation of sacred presence. Eliade called this a heirophanic manifestation of the divine; Otto called this a numinous feeling or dimension of the sacred presenting itself before the human being in awe, mystery, and other powerful feelings. And the claim of my dissertation has been that the reality of the divine comes forward in Firstness-feeling by virtue of Firstness-possibility through abductive acts of inquiry. Yet, all of these philosophers affirm the finite-infinite transcendental structure and therein presuppose that ordinary experience must be broken open for a revelation of the divine. Put differently, entry into religious experience seems to halt at an initial ordinary phase of dwelling in practical life. Initiation into transcendence requires, then, an *event* at the end of the line of inquiry that will bring forth sacred presence through a transformation of the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Abductive inquiry initiates this event and proceeds to be a form of divine contraction through a controlled sort of “consciousness” raising. Stated differently,

abduction allows one to distinguish the simple *occurrence* of liberating insight from ordinary experience. Peirce did not explicitly tie the consciousness of an event to religious experience, but the passage I am about to cite stresses the “shock” and non-perceptual characteristic of the event itself while what is suggested (the extraordinary) comes through the immediacy of one’s present surroundings. Peirce wrote,

We perceive objects brought before us; but that which we especially experience -- the kind of thing to which the word "experience" is more particularly applied -- is an event. We cannot accurately be said to perceive events; for this requires what Kant called the "synthesis of apprehension," not however, by any means, making the needful discriminations. A whistling locomotive passes at high speed close beside me. As it passes the note of the whistle is suddenly lowered from a well-understood cause. I perceive the whistle, if you will. I have, at any rate, a sensation of it. But I cannot be said to have a sensation of the change of note. I have a sensation of the lower note. But the cognition of the change is of a more intellectual kind. That I experience rather than perceive. It is [the] special field of experience to acquaint us with events, with changes of perception. Now that which particularly characterizes sudden changes of perception is a shock. A shock is a volitional phenomenon. The long whistle of the approaching locomotive, however disagreeable it may be, has set up in me a certain inertia, so that the sudden lowering of the note meets with a certain resistance. That must be the fact; because if there were no such resistance there could be no shock when the change of note occurs. Now this shock is quite unmistakable. It is more particularly to changes and contrasts of perception that we apply the word "experience." We experience vicissitudes, especially.²⁴²

The parallel between the ecstatic event and Peirce’s concept of an event is that both involve a level of unpredictability and an initiation into a reality by virtue of the inquirer’s observations being dependent upon a freedom or possibility for observation. These observations take one by surprise, and in a deeply transforming way. In Peirce’s case, the transformation involves the general acclamation of the inquirer to nature:

The whole operation of reasoning begins with *Abduction*....Its occasion is *surprise*. That is some belief, active or passive, formulated or unformulated, has just been broke up. It may be in real experience or it may equally be in pure mathematics, which has its marvels, as nature has. The mind seeks to bring the facts, as modified by the new discover, into order; that is, to form a general conception embracing them.²⁴³

Note that abduction has as its goal to explain some surprising phenomenon.

Suddenly, the act of inquiry is initiated, and after possibilizing a number of suggestions, in a “flash of insight” a suggestive truth comes forward to explain the phenomenon. In the case of the locomotive approaching, the sound of the whistle is faintly heard in the background until it becomes loud enough that the idea that a locomotive is passing suggests itself to one’s experience of the sound: “*That* is a locomotive!” In the case of the NA, the reality of God is suggested. The mystery of what is sacred involves encountering the unexpected, as does abduction involve encountering some startling or disruptive effect upon the mind. The force of this experience is intrusive and separates itself from the normal course of experience. It is that intrusiveness that forces inquirers, albeit momentarily, to “step outside” of their own perspective and yield to whatever hypotheses—read “reality”—that experience suggests. Communicating this idea Peirce wrote, “It thus appears that all knowledge comes to us by observation. A part is forced upon us from without and seems to result from Nature's mind; a part comes from the depths of the mind as seen from within, which by an egotistical anacoluthon we call our mind.”²⁴⁴ Thus, in the ecstatic event, one might say there is at the very least, at partial eclipse of the self by “Nature’s mind.”

Some, including Otto, have referred to the ecstatic event as a displacement of the self.²⁴⁵ One feels as if a greater power is either pulling them into a certain direction or is

suggesting something so strongly that the verity of the experience could not possibly be mistaken.²⁴⁶ Thus, the suggestion of a hypothesis and its confirmation may prompt one to feel a connection with a reality that is somehow “beyond” them or “other” than what is ordinary. The ordinary may jump out as “extraordinary.” One might feel as if the world lights up in a “eureka” type moment. In the context under discussion, it is the forcible intrusion of nature that brings such an experience about, even through the pursuit of knowledge. Certainly, as it is found in Peirce’s philosophy, this event may remind one of a Platonic moment of recollection when the inquirer has some hypothesis confirmed and that confirmation reveals a source of knowledge. Thus, individuals stand “outside” of their own sense of self and “receive” some sort of truth suggested to them.

One meaning of “ek-stasis” or ἐκ-στασις, is a “forcible modification, change, or displacement” that results in behavioral features such as “excitement or astonishment,” “fear and terror,” or “a state of consciousness in which revelatory communication are believed to be received.”²⁴⁷ Here one finds that the ecstatic event, in terms of the disclosure of some fitting hypothesis, is central to Peirce’s account of abduction. For example, in a 1902 letter to James, Peirce told of the ecstatic experience.

The question is what passes in consciousness, especially what emotional and irritational states of feeling, in the course of forming a new belief. The man has some belief at the outset. This belief is, as to its principal constituent, a habit of expectation. Some experience which this habit leads him to expect turns out differently; and the emotion of surprise suddenly appears. Under the influence of fatigue (is this right?) this emotion passes into an irritational feeling, which, for want of a better name, I may call curiosity. I should define it as a feeling causing a reaction which is directed toward the invention of some possible account, or possible information, that might take away the astonishing and fragmentary character of the experience by rounding it out. (Of course, we want later to get a real explanation; but at first it seems to me that we merely say, "What can it be?")

When such possible explanation is suggested, the idea of it instantly sets up a second peculiar emotion of "Gad! I shouldn't wonder!" Fatigue (?) again transforms this into a second irritational feeling which might perhaps be called suspicion. I should define it as a feeling causing a reaction directed toward unearthing the fault by which the original belief that encountered the surprise became erroneous in the respect in which it is now suspected to be erroneous. When this weak point in the process is discovered, it at once and suddenly causes an emotion of "Bah!" Fatigue (?) transforms this into the irritational feeling called doubt, i.e. a feeling producing a reaction tending to the establishment of a new habit of expectation. This object attained, there is a new sudden emotion of "Eureka" passing on fatigue into a desire to find an occasion to try it.²⁴⁸

This passage connects all of the threads of my premises ventured here thus far. In one passage Peirce connected elements of the neuro-physiological, emotional, psychological, and metaphysical processes of belief disruption and formation, as well as the eschatological structure of expectation and anticipation found in hypothesis formation and verification. This passage also reflects the "new sudden emotion" of "Eureka" that serves as the impetus for one to try whatever one happens to venture as a new hypothesis. As inquirers try these ventured hypotheses and adjust to the ongoing incorporation of the infinite's "otherness," there exists a change within the intellectual and spiritual perspective of the inquirer as nature suggests *its* truths to the inquirer.

The quotation above also suggests a unity that involves a deepened sense of attunement between the finite inquirer and the whole of the universe. Such an attunement involves changes in habit and belief; changes that consciously reflect the deeply embedded nature of the inquirer within the wider cosmos and a reverence before the cosmos. Within this process of inquiry and attunement finite beings gain a sense of a deep-seated harmonization of self with the totality of conditions to which the self relates. For Peirce, this meant a harmony between self and *the entire universe*, for at no time is

the inquirer ever completely separate from any other part of the universe claiming it to be irrelevant. What becomes most relevant is the attitude that one takes toward the cosmos in its infinite and everlasting nature, or what one might reverently call that which is infinite and eternal: the “more” or “beyond” finite experience.²⁴⁹ Various religions all agree that this “more” is of a reality, but differ on the specifics they attach to its existence. Such is what is meant by the divine, or in James’s words, that infinite life we respond to “solemnly and gravely” as well as “tenderly.”²⁵⁰ James capitalized upon the point here to be made, which is suggested in much of Peirce’s work, though never explicitly stated: that the religious attitude is the “belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.”²⁵¹

VI. REALIZING THE MIND OF GOD: THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

Marveling at nature proves to be not just a motive for the growth of the organism. It is also what helps human evolution to proceed towards a consummate universal state of settled belief. Peirce called this consummate state of settled belief “the ideal state of complete information,” or the ultimate “final opinion.”²⁵² The ideal state of complete information is an end point of the cosmos that is independent of any given individual, yet represents the welding together of all inquiring minds in general. For Peirce, inquiring minds in general represented a “community of inquiry.”²⁵³ The community of inquiry proceeds toward the ideal state of complete information as experience disturbs belief and inquirers settle it as experience-bound truth seekers. As disturbed belief is settled,

information about the cosmos is revealed. The ideal state of complete information turns out to be, then, nothing less than the totality of the community's general agreement about the nature of the cosmos. Peirce felt as a logician and scientist that the inroads of human evolution would eventually converge upon this ideal state in the infinitely distant future. As a student of religion and with an Episcopalian Trinitarian theology in mind, he had *faith* that the community of inquirers would, in the realization of mentality and intelligence, come closer to the divine as they probed into nature's mysteries.²⁵⁴ Peirce described the situation as follows.

Finally, as what anything really is, is what it may finally come to be known to be in the ideal state of complete information, so that reality depends on the ultimate decision of the community; so thought is what it is, only by virtue of its addressing a future thought which is in its value as thought identical with it, though more developed. In this way, the existence of thought now depends on what is to be hereafter; so that it has only a potential existence, dependent on the future thought of the community.²⁵⁵

Individuals come to represent finite minds contributing to a larger community of inquiry, and community becomes COMMUNITY through the sacrifice of personal habits and beliefs to the successful habits and beliefs of the community-mind at large. Just as finite participants recognize their own finitude within a larger infinite nature, so does, too, the inquirer see itself part of a larger part of community of inquiry. Peirce continued,

For he who recognizes the logical necessity of complete self-identification of one's own interests with those of the community, and its potential existence in man, even if he has it not himself, will perceive that only the inferences of that man who has it are logical, and so views his own inferences as being valid only so far as they would be accepted by that man. But so far as he has this belief, he becomes identified with that man. And that ideal perfection of knowledge by

which we have seen that reality is constituted must thus belong to a community in which this identification is complete.²⁵⁶

Given the previous discussion in this chapter about inquiry's role in the disclosure of religious feeling, it may be worthwhile to ask how community might be part of a larger common mind—that of the divine life's mind, or the universe-wide intelligence of Peirce's "God." Because Peirce claimed that the continuum of nature is a "living being," it seems that this being could at the very least include not just the lives of its finite members but, being a mind that is always on the way to including new members within its range of intelligence, constitute a *larger* community-mind surpassing its own individually collected members, thus representing COMMUNITY in the projection of a Kingdom to be realized at some future point in time.²⁵⁷ In this COMMUNITY the continuum of being would be more than the sum of its parts existing as a communal form of life and knowledge independent of any one finite inquirer yet representing all inquirers.²⁵⁸ About this final COMMUNITY Peirce said, "information and reasoning would finally result in [a state] independent of the vagaries of me and you....the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY, without definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge."²⁵⁹

This elevated COMMUNITY is a state of nature's life to come and represents a more definite state of affairs than those experienced within the current forms of existing communities. The elevation of finite inquirers into the communal mind of the divine is accomplished through the steady drift of inquiry towards more definite ends; that is, communal mind is realized through the tendency for inquiry to settle belief. In terms of

the philosophy of religion, as the community of inquiry probes into nature and reveals the divine's intelligence, divinity is realized. Yet, because the divine's truth is something to-be-realized (given enough reasoning and given enough time), it is not definite and its achievement within current experience can only function as a regulative ideal, and *not* as a determined end to be realized in any concrete sense for the community of inquirers. Thus, the "ideal state of complete information," God realized, is not guaranteed—it is a possibility. While thought *tends* towards universal completion and upon agreeable results confirmed by the community, it does not proceed to reach a completed end state in any *necessary* manner. In Peirce's words, "since the Universe has been a-going from everlasting, the amount of Spiritual Manifestation is Infinite."²⁶⁰ Thus, a Kingdom of Ends where divine mind is finally realized comes to take on the status of a regulative ideal.

At the core of nature's unfolding life are suggestions that confirm that the divine mind's intelligence is developing and immanencing before finite inquirers. This most actively occurs within lines of inquiry such as the N.A., but Peirce also found hope for the presentation of this intelligence within the social, public, and plural character of society at large, for example within his "Evolutionary Love" (1893) essay. The following two passages indicate precisely Peirce's viewpoint about the significance of the community of inquiry and serve as closing points for my argument in this chapter.

And what is religion? In each individual it is a sort of sentiment, or obscure perception, a deep recognition of a something in the circumambient All, which, if he strives to express it, will clothe itself in forms more or less extravagant, more or less accidental, but ever acknowledging the first and last, the {A} and {Ö}, as well as a relation to that Absolute of the individual's self, as a relative being. But religion cannot reside in its totality in a single individual. Like every species of

reality, it is essentially a social, a public affair. It is the idea of a whole church, welding all its members together in one organic, systemic perception of the Glory of the Highest -- an idea having a growth from generation to generation and claiming a supremacy in the determination of all conduct, private and public.²⁶¹

And

[T]he supreme commandment of the Buddhisto-Christian religion is, to generalize, to complete the whole system even until continuity results and the distinct individuals weld together. Thus it is, that while reasoning and the science of reasoning strenuously proclaim the subordination of reasoning to sentiment, the very supreme commandment of sentiment is that man should generalize, or what the logic of relatives shows to be the same thing, should become welded into the universal continuum, which is what true reasoning consists in. But this does not reinstate reasoning, for this generalization should come about, not merely in man's cognitions, which are but the superficial film of his being, but objectively in the deepest emotional springs of his life. In fulfilling this command, man prepares himself for transmutation into a new form of life, the joyful Nirvana in which the discontinuities of his will shall have all but disappeared.²⁶²

It is interesting that Peirce mentioned a “Buddhisto-Christian” religion. Buddhism is a non-theistic religion having no ultimate Being or Object that should take the place of a Western metaphysical God. Peirce was a deeply committed theist and Christian towards the end of his life, and yet he connected with a form of religiosity that emphasized a most wide sense of religious belief where each believer—and each inquirer within a religious community of inquiry—should weld his or her beliefs to whatever reality of nature that locates *all* finite inquirers. In this welding of finite members to an infinite continuum, one finds different believers connecting to a common nature that stirs the “deepest emotional springs” of their life.²⁶³ What is critical to realize, I think, is just how Peirce’s theory of abduction enhances these deep emotional “springs”—and even begins within their depths as a feeling. Such makes for a vitally organic theory of inquiry where feeling

is a basis for knowledge, and for divine manifestation. Possibility ensures that this divine manifestation is infinite within nature, and it ensures that inquiry into nature can be one way of bringing about the divine's sacred realization through ecstatic events in hypothesis confirmation. In the next chapter I will explore in more detail Peirce's concept of possibility and the ontology behind it insofar as possibility serves as a ground for this disclosure of the divine. In particular, I will use the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, especially his Schellingean themes, to develop what I see present in Peirce's ontology and how it applies to a discussion about the divine and its sacred manifestation within nature.

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* Vols. 1-8, edited by Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, A.W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931, 1958.) Hereafter cited as CP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, edited by Nathan Houser, Christian Kloesel, and Jonathan R. Eller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.) Hereafter cited as EP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles S. Peirce, *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. 6 volumes, edited by Max Fisch, Christian Kloesel, and Nathan Houser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-2008.) Hereafter cited as W followed by volume and page number. Also, *The Charles S. Peirce Papers*, Microfilm edition, Harvard University Library Photographic Service, 1966. Hereafter cited as MS with catalogue manuscript and page number.

² Here one might substitute "beings" for what is "finite," and Being for what is "infinite"—although Being is finite in the sense it may disclose itself via beings and perhaps only *via negativa*. Otherwise, substitutions for "finite" could be "nature natured" or "product," and for "infinite"—"nature naturing" or "productivity." In my view, finite beings are limited and indicative of *what* is generated, and the infinite is the process of *generat-ing*.

³ CP 6.525 & EP 2.75-115, and Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 1941.)

⁴ CP 7.249.

⁵ CP 7.249.

⁶ EP 1.205.

⁷ S. Morris Eames, *Pragmatic Naturalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 64-65.

⁸ EP 2.205. See also Charles S. Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, edited by Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 151 where Peirce defined abduction as "The first starting of a hypothesis and the entertaining of it, whether as a simple interrogation or with any degree of confidence, is an inferential step which I propose to call *abduction* [or *retroduction*.]" For the sake of the portability of texts, from time to time I cite excerpts of the CP or EP in edited volumes such as the one that Buchler edited.

⁹ EP 1.111.

¹⁰ Douglas R. Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² CP 2.623.

¹³ CP 2.623, and in Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 20.

¹⁴ Anette Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce: Princeton Theological Monograph Series* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2006), 95.

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- ¹⁵ Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 80. Kearney's chapter title is, "Possibilizing God." William Desmond also uses the term in his *Being and the Between: Metaphysics and Transcendence* (New York: SUNY Press, 1995). Cf. "Possibilizing the Possible" 335-342. See also William Desmond, *God and the Between* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2008.)
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 335.
- ¹⁷ To "find" a hypothesis would be to discover some best fitting idea. To "create" a hypothesis would be to *invent* one.
- ¹⁸ CP 7.220.
- ¹⁹ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 151.
- ²⁰ CP 7.223.
- ²¹ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* 154.
- ²² CP 6.467.
- ²³ See for example Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 21. Peirce addresses his earlier view in "The Three Normative Sciences" (1903) EP 2.205, originally published as CP 5.120-150 and MS 312.
- ²⁴ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 20.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ²⁶ CP 2.632.
- ²⁷ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 16.
- ²⁸ Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 48.
- ²⁹ Ejsing., *Theology of Anticipation*, 95.
- ³⁰ CP 5.189.
- ³¹ CP 6.469.
- ³² Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 152.
- ³³ CP 7.218.
- ³⁴ Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 152
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.
- ³⁶ EP 1.189.
- ³⁷ EP 1.189.
- ³⁸ EP 1.192.
- ³⁹ CP 4.9.
- ⁴⁰ CP 3.429.
- ⁴¹ CP 2.227. Peirce said, "Logic, in its general sense, is, as I believe I have shown, only another name for semiotic ({sémeiōtiké}), the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs. By describing the doctrine as "quasi-necessary," or formal, I mean that we observe the characters of such signs as we know, and from such an observation, by a process which I will not object to naming Abstraction, we are led to statements, eminently fallible, and therefore in one sense by no means necessary, as to what must be the characters of all signs used by a "scientific" intelligence, that is to say, by an intelligence capable of learning by experience."
- ⁴² CP 4.372, and Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 75.
- ⁴³ Peirce introduced his reader to the logic of relatives in "The Reader is Introduced to Relatives" CP 3.415.
- ⁴⁴ Cf. Peirce's Chapter 12 "Notes on Metaphysics: Relations and Relationships" CP 6.318. Peirce wrote: "I have, since 1870, written much about the logic of relations. In those writings, I have usually restricted the terms 'relations' and 'relationships' to existential relations and relationships. By a relationship I understand the conception of a fact about a set of things abstracted from the representation of the things themselves or, in other words, a predicate which requires more than one subject to complete a proposition, or conception of a fact. A 'relation' only differs from a 'relationship' in that one of the subjects is regarded as being taken account of first, and is usually called the subject nominative, while the others are called the direct and indirect objects. In other words a relation is a predicate requiring one subject nominative and one or more objects in a definite sequence. In my earlier papers [in Volume 3] I use the conception of relation chiefly; in my later ones that of relationship. The difference is little more than trifling. An existential relation or relationship is distinguished from others by two marks. In the first place, its different subjects all belong to

one universe; which distinguishes it very strikingly from such relations as that which subsists between a thing and its qualities, and that which subsists between portions of matter and the form into which they are built; as for example between the cells of a living body and the whole body, and often times between the different singulars of a plural and the plural itself. In the second place, an existential relation or relationship differs from some other relations and relationships in a respect which may be described in two ways, according as we employ collective or distributive forms of expression and thought. Speaking collectively, the one logical universe, to which all the correlates of an existential relationship belong, is ultimately composed of units, or subjects, none of which is in any sense separable into parts that are members of the same universe.”

⁴⁵ CP 8.384.

⁴⁶ Traditional logic with the exception of De Morgan. “Relative terms usually receive some slight treatment in works upon logic, but the only considerable investigation into the formal laws which govern them is contained in a valuable paper by Mr. De Morgan in the tenth volume of the Cambridge Philosophical Transactions.” CP 3.45.

⁴⁷ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 22. See for example Peirce’s paper “Man’s Glassy Essence” (1892) and “On the Logic of Drawing History from Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies” (1901.)

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 22-23.

⁴⁹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 81.

⁵⁰ CP 4.5.

⁵¹ Charles S. Peirce, *New Elements of Mathematics*, edited by Carolyn Eisele (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1976). Hereafter cited as NEM followed by volume and page number. NEM 4.344, NEM 4.343-344.

⁵² Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 156.

⁵³ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 96.

⁵⁴ CP 5.491.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 22-23

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20, 22.

⁵⁷ S. Morris Eames, *Pragmatic Naturalism*, 62.

⁵⁸ For Emerson’s use of the concept “experimenter,” see his essay, “Circles” in *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson: An Organic Anthology*, edited by Stephen Whicher (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 168-179.

⁵⁹ I am alluding to the nature of the *gift* of disjuncture or difference; that is, it is by virtue of the break-up of old or current experience that new experience and fresh beginnings are possible. In many cases, the disruption of a challenge gifted by nature, sometimes even the most terrible challenges gifted by nature, may provide an opportunity for coming into greater understandings of the cosmos and divine life. See for example Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, translated by David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.)

⁶⁰ CP 6.417.

⁶¹ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 36.

⁶² For systematic clarity, the three sub-divisions of logic according to Peirce are speculative grammar, critical logic, and methodetic. The first two belong to pure logic and the third belongs to applied logic. The logic of relatives is a division of speculative grammar. The critical logic consists of induction, deduction, and abduction. Pragmatism belongs to methodetic. See CP 1.91, CP 1.559, and CP 2.263.

⁶³ CP 1.121.

⁶⁴ EP 2.11-12.

⁶⁵ W 6.354.

⁶⁶ CP 5.12.

⁶⁷ W 3.22-23.

⁶⁸ EP 2.463.

⁶⁹ CP 6.456.

⁷⁰ Peirce sometimes referred to this as “illation.” EP 2.11-12.

⁷¹ Peirce consistently translated Kant's title that way in the *Collected Papers* and in the *Writings*. Cf. CP 4.37, "Immanuel Kant, who made a revolution in philosophy by his *Critic of the Pure Reason*, 1781, had great power as a logician. He unfortunately had the opinion that the traditional logic was perfect and that there was no room for any further development of it. That opinion did not prevent his introducing a number of ideas which have indirectly more than directly affected the traditional logic."

⁷² CP 5.493.

⁷³ CP 4.540.

⁷⁴ CP 5.419.

⁷⁵ EP 2.11.

⁷⁶ CP 3.4.

⁷⁷ CP 5.119.

⁷⁸ EP 2.45.

⁷⁹ EP 2.22.

⁸⁰ EP 2.22.

⁸¹ EP 2.45.

⁸² EP 2.45.

⁸³ W 6.70-72.

⁸⁴ EP 2.47.

⁸⁵ EP 2.25.

⁸⁶ CP 5.171.

⁸⁷ Note the title of Ejsing's project, *Theology of Anticipation*. See her introduction, "Anticipation in Context," 1-15.

⁸⁸ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 139.

⁸⁹ Michael Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 144.

⁹⁰ CP 7.219.

⁹¹ Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*, 144.

⁹² CP 6.451. One might also note Peirce's following claim: "Such a state of mind [scientific theism] may properly be called a religion of science. Not that it is a religion to which science or the scientific spirit has itself given birth; for religion, in the proper sense of the term, can arise from nothing but the religious sensibility. But it is a religion, so true to itself, that it becomes animated by the scientific spirit, confident that all the conquests of science will be triumphs of its own, and accepting all the results of science, as scientific men themselves accept them, as steps toward the truth, which may appear for a time to be in conflict with other truths, but which in such cases merely await adjustments which time is sure to effect. This attitude, be it observed, is one which religion will assume not at the dictate of science, still less by way of a compromise, but simply and solely out of a bolder confidence in herself and in her own destiny." CP 6.433.

⁹³ CP 1.444.

⁹⁴ CP 1.302.

⁹⁵ CP 1.306.

⁹⁶ Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 62.

⁹⁷ EP 1.189.

⁹⁸ EP 2.106-107.

⁹⁹ EP 1.189.

¹⁰⁰ EP 2.150.

¹⁰¹ EP 2.106.

¹⁰² EP 2.155.

¹⁰³ W 4.38-44.

¹⁰⁴ W 4.38.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Ochs, "Charles Sanders Peirce" in *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy: Peirce, James, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne*, edited by David Ray Griffin (New York: SUNY, 1993), 59.

¹⁰⁶ W 4.38.

¹⁰⁷ W 4.38.

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- ¹⁰⁸ W 4.38-39.
- ¹⁰⁹ CP 6.138.
- ¹¹⁰ Cf. Peirce's "The Order of Nature" (1878), "The Law of Mind" (1892.)
- ¹¹¹ EP 1.297, EP 1.350-351. Also see Peirce's *Monist* series including "The Architecture of Theories" (1891), "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined" (1892), "The Law of Mind" (1892), "Man's Glassy Essence" (1892), and "Evolutionary Love" (1893.) Many of these essays are still preserved, written in Peirce's hand, in: *Charles S. Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930*, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008.) I enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to research and read over these texts in their original as part of the Open Court Collection.
- ¹¹² W 4.40.
- ¹¹³ EP 1.xxxii.
- ¹¹⁴ EP 1.xxxii.
- ¹¹⁵ EP 1.334. Also D.S. Clarke, *Panpsychism and the Religious Attitude* (New York: SUNY Press, 2003.) Schelling quotes in SW 2.39, 56 & SW 3.274. Cited from Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 39.
- ¹¹⁶ Cf. EP 1.xxxii.
- ¹¹⁷ W 4.41.
- ¹¹⁸ Søren Brier, "Bateson and Peirce on the Pattern that Connects and the Sacred" in *A Legacy for Living Systems* (Netherlands: Springer, 2008), 116.
- ¹¹⁹ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 177.
- ¹²⁰ Clarke, *Panpsychism and the Religious Attitude*, 1-3.
- ¹²⁰ CP 6.254-255.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1-3.
- ¹²² CP 6.254-255.
- ¹²³ CP 1.269.
- ¹²⁴ For more on the logic of analogical inference in discussions about panpsychism, see D.S. Clarke, *Panpsychism and the Religious Attitude*, 8-9.
- ¹²⁵ CP 4.551.
- ¹²⁶ For Peirceans, this idea informs the fields of *biosemiotics* and *semiotic phenomenology*.
- ¹²⁷ Peter Ochs, "Charles Sanders Peirce" in *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy: Peirce, James, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne*, edited by David Ray Griffin (New York: SUNY, 1993), 59.
- ¹²⁸ Ochs, "Charles Sanders Peirce," 59.
- ¹²⁹ W 2.241.
- ¹³⁰ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), Preface 5-10.
- ¹³¹ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 487-489.
- ¹³² For details concerning Peirce's attribution of Personality to the evolving cosmos, see CP 6.155.
- ¹³³ CP 6.157.
- ¹³⁴ F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, translated by James Gutmann (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1936), 84.
- ¹³⁵ EP 1.114.
- ¹³⁶ EP 1.114-115, EP 1.129.
- ¹³⁷ CP 5.27-28.
- ¹³⁸ CP 5.417.
- ¹³⁹ CP 5.372.
- ¹⁴⁰ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 30.
- ¹⁴¹ EP 1.109-124.
- ¹⁴² Sandra B. Rosenthal, "Spirituality and American Pragmatism" in *Pragmatism and Religion*, edited by Stuart Rosenbaum (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 232.
- ¹⁴³ John J. McDermott, "The Aesthetic Drama of the Ordinary" in *Pragmatism and Religion*, edited by Stuart Rosenbaum (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 109.

¹⁴⁴ CP 5.582, CP 6.479.

¹⁴⁵ CP 5.416.

¹⁴⁶ Whereas for Heidegger hermeneutics was a phenomenological method to uncover the basic categories of human existence found in the existential analytic of *Dasein*, Gadamer used hermeneutics to discover the ontological conditions of *understanding* in all of its modes. Cf. David E. Linge, "Editor's Introduction" in *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.), xi. This means that in the striving to come to terms with historical and finite conditions of existence, one detects an emphasis on how these philosophers were uncovering and identifying the basic modes of an organism's existence (Heidegger) and recognizing how and in what ways the organism strives to understand phenomenon (Gadamer.) Thus Heidegger and Gadamer both maintained the subjective elements of creaturely understanding and emphasized the objective and affective features of experience. For Gadamer, there seems to be explicit attention paid to the historicity of the phenomena and the "prejudice" or "initial directedness" in the establishment of this understanding (xv.) Gadamer maintained that the faculty of the understanding, being an active and not passive faculty, is the root of experiencing all phenomena. Organisms are placed within a world and that world always has a given context. Strands of tradition transmit and deliver a "pervasive power" influencing not only the organism's future projections and understandings, but also current projections and understandings. In this sense tradition and prejudices may serve as the ground of interpretation and understanding that an organisms occupies when it strives to understand new phenomena, for tradition offers an inheritance of meanings and understandings with which one can identify, assimilate, and use when coming to understand something new (a "fusion of horizons.") Likewise, Peirce emphasized the organism's controlled assimilation of habits and beliefs within an incoming temporal flow of experience that is modified by previous understandings and accreted intelligence. This is not far from Gadamer's perspective. On Gadamer's view, the dichotomy between subject and object, knower and known, is taken up in the prior ontological relation of mutual, original co-determination of meaningfulness (*Zugehoerigkeit*.) Such would be equivalent to Peirce's understanding of organisms and their passive (habitual) and active (controlled or projective) understanding of nature. See also, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* translated by Joel Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989.) The parallels between Peirce and Gadamer on these points have yet to be worked out in scholarship.

¹⁴⁷ CP 5.442.

¹⁴⁸ CP 1.332.

¹⁴⁹ EP 2.435.

¹⁵⁰ CP 1.4.

¹⁵¹ CP 1.325.

¹⁵² Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 55.

¹⁵³ CP 6.153.

¹⁵⁴ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 61.

¹⁵⁵ CP 5.339.

¹⁵⁶ David Higgins, "Possibility in Peirce and Heidegger: A Propaedeutic for Synthesis" (PhD dissertation, University of Missouri, 1968), 94.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁵⁸ William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through phenomenology to Thought*, preface by Martin Heidegger (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 45.

¹⁵⁹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 138/139.

¹⁶⁰ See also William Desmond, *Being and the Between* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1995) and William Desmond, *God and the Between* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2008.)

¹⁶¹ CP 6.438.

¹⁶² Eugene Halton, "Animism and the End of Civilization" in *Contemporary Pragmatism* Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 2005), 149.

¹⁶³ This quote was taken from an 1892 leaflet entitled "The Principles of Philosophy: or, Logic, Physics, and Psychics, considered as a unity, in the Light of the Nineteenth Century." Peirce wrote the leaflet and his publisher distributed it. Only one of these leaflets is known to exist, and it is housed in the Special Collections *Open Court* Collection of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale library. See *Charles S.*

Peirce manuscripts: The Open Court Publishing Company: Company Records, 1886-1930, Manuscripts Collection #27-32 (Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008) Box 4 of 5.

¹⁶⁴ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 72.

¹⁶⁵ I cite Peirce's mystical experience as follows: *Draft of a letter from Charles Sanders Peirce to the Reverend John W. Brown, Rector of St. Thomas's Episcopal Church, Fifth Avenue at West 53rd Street, New York City*. From Joseph Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), 209-210.

12 W. 39th St. 1892 Apr. 24

Dear and Reverend Sir:

I took the Holy Communion at St. Thomas's this morning,--in fact, just now,--under peculiar circumstances, which it seems proper to report.

For many years I have not taken the Communion and have seldom entered a church, although I have always had a passionate love for the church and a complete faith that the essence of christianity, whatever that might be, was Divine; but still I could not reconcile my notions of common sense and of evidence with the propositions of the creed, and I found going to church made me sophistical and gave me an impulse to play fast and loose with matters of intellectual integrity. Therefore, I gave it up; though it has been the cause of many a bitter reflection. Many times I have tried to cipher out some justification for my return to the communion of the church; but I could not. Especially, the last two nights I have lain awake thinking of the matter.

This morning after breakfast I felt I must go to church anyway. I wandered about, not knowing where, to find a regular episcopal church, in which I was confirmed; but I finally came to St. Thomas. I had several times been in it on week days to look at the chancel. I therefore saw nothing new to me. But this time,--I was not thinking of St. Thomas and his doubts, either,--no sooner had I got into the church than I seemed to receive the direct permission of the Master to come. Still, I said to myself, I must not go to the communion without further reflection! I must go home and duly prepare myself before I venture. But when the instant came, I found myself carried up to the altar rail, almost without my own volition. I am perfectly sure that it was right. Anyway, I could not help it.

I may mention as a reason why I do not offer to put my gratitude for the bounty granted me into some form of church work, that that which seemed to call me today seemed to promise me that I should bear a cross like death for the Master's sake, and he would give me strength to bear it. I am sure that will happen. My part is to wait.

I have never before been mystical, but now I am. After giving myself time to reflect upon the situation, I will call to see you.

Yours very truly,

C.S. Peirce

It does not seem to me that it would be wise to make the circumstances known; but I conceive it my duty to report them to you.

I am a man of 52 and married.

Peirce, who was suffering from a profound spiritual crisis at the time (see Open Court letters, Southern Illinois University Carbondale) would later in 1898 write "If...a man has had no religious experience, then any religion not an affecation is as yet impossible for him; and the only worthy course is to wait quietly till such experience comes." CP 1.655.

¹⁶⁶ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, "Peirce's Melancholy," 1-27 and Joseph Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), "Paradise Lost: 1890-1990," 203-270.

¹⁶⁷ MS L224.

¹⁶⁸ EP 2.434-451, CP 6.452-494.

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- ¹⁶⁹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 5.
- ¹⁷⁰ CP 6.495.
- ¹⁷¹ Douglas Anderson, "Peirce's God of Theory and Practice" in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 51 (1995): 170.
- ¹⁷² Anderson also affirms the tri-partite "nested" structure of the Neglected Argument in his "Three Appeals in Peirce's Neglected Argument" *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* Vol. XXVI, No. 3 (Summer 1990): 349-363.
- ¹⁷³ CP 6.464, CP 6.465.
- ¹⁷⁴ CP 6.465.
- ¹⁷⁵ CP 6.467.
- ¹⁷⁶ EP 2.435.
- ¹⁷⁷ CP 6.493.
- ¹⁷⁸ Anderson, "Three Appeals in Peirce's Neglected Argument," 349.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ¹⁸¹ CP 6.488.
- ¹⁸² Anderson, "Peirce's God of Theory and Practice," 173.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 173.
- ¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.
- ¹⁸⁵ Anderson, "Three Appeals in Peirce's Neglected Argument," 355.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 357.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 359.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 359.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 359.
- ¹⁹⁰ MS 867.1.
- ¹⁹¹ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 138-139.
- ¹⁹² Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 5-8.
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 12-45.
- ¹⁹⁴ Jay Feldman, *When the Mississippi Ran Backwards: Empire, Intrigue, Murder, and the New Madrid Earthquakes* (New York, Free Press, 2005), Introduction xii.
- ¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.
- ¹⁹⁶ EP 4.436.
- ¹⁹⁷ CP 5.181.
- ¹⁹⁸ Gregory Bruce Smith, *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Transition to Postmodernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 222-223.
- ¹⁹⁹ CP 6.201.
- ²⁰⁰ CP 6.200.
- ²⁰¹ EP 1.285-298.
- ²⁰² CP 6.199.
- ²⁰³ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 71-72.
- ²⁰⁴ CP 6.458.
- ²⁰⁵ CP 6.458.
- ²⁰⁶ In George Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (New York: C. Scriber's Sons, 1905.)
- ²⁰⁷ I have cited this idea from the Foreword to Corrington's *Nature's Religion*, written by Robert Cummings Neville, xiv.
- ²⁰⁸ Justus Buchler, *Nature and Judgment* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1955), 106.
- ²⁰⁹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, edited by R. Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 108.
- ²¹⁰ CP 6.507.
- ²¹¹ Friedrich Schelling, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 6.465.
- ²¹² Robert Corrington, *Riding the Windhorse: Manic Depressive Disorder and the Quest for Wholeness* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2003.)

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- ²¹³ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 13.
- ²¹⁴ Ibid., 14.
- ²¹⁵ Ibid., 17.
- ²¹⁶ Ibid., 26, 29.
- ²¹⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 25-26.
- ²¹⁸ Ibid., 26.
- ²¹⁹ Ibid., 10.
- ²²⁰ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, translated by Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum Press, 2005), 70-81, 85.
- ²²¹ W 1.39.
- ²²² W 1.37-44.
- ²²³ W 1.38.
- ²²⁴ W 1.37.
- ²²⁵ W 1.39.
- ²²⁶ W 1.37.
- ²²⁷ Another example of this would be reasoning about a chiliagon, or a polygon with one thousand sides. Certain I cannot conceive of the content of this concept per se, but I may certainly reason about it: it is a polygon, has one thousand sides, and an internal angle sum of 179,640 degrees.
- ²²⁸ W 1.38.
- ²²⁹ W 1.38.
- ²³⁰ W 1.40.
- ²³¹ W 1.41.
- ²³² W 1.41.
- ²³³ W 1.41.
- ²³⁴ W 1.41.
- ²³⁵ Walter, Lowe, "Second Thoughts About Transcendence" in *The Religious*, edited by John Caputo (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 248.
- ²³⁶ Lowe, "Second Thoughts About Transcendence," 248.
- ²³⁷ Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" translated and edited by David Farrell Krell, in *Basic Writings* (California: Harper and Row, 1993), 110. See also Thomas R Carlson, *Indiscretion: Finitude and the Naming of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 137-152.
- ²³⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* translated by Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 129.
- ²³⁹ Aldo Gargani, "Religious Experience as Event and Interpretation" in *Religion: Cultural Memory in the Present*, edited by Gianni Vattimo and Jacques Derrida (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 115.
- ²⁴⁰ Lowe, "Second Thoughts About Transcendence," 250.
- ²⁴¹ Ibid., 250.
- ²⁴² CP 1.336.
- ²⁴³ EP 1.287.
- ²⁴⁴ CP 2.444.
- ²⁴⁵ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 60-65.
- ²⁴⁶ Ibid., 60-65.
- ²⁴⁷ James Orr, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, edited by Edgar Mullins (New York: Hedrickson Publishers, 1994), 2.14.
- ²⁴⁸ CP 8.270.
- ²⁴⁹ William James, from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "Circumscription of the [Religious] Topic," in *The Writings of William James*, edited by John McDermott (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1977), 758, 774, and in the *Varieties* 24-52.
- ²⁵⁰ Ibid., *Varieties*, 39.
- ²⁵¹ Ibid., *Varieties*, 51.
- ²⁵² CP 5.316.

²⁵³ EP 1.88-89.

²⁵⁴ W 1.xxxii-xxxii and Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 27.

²⁵⁵ CP 5.316.

²⁵⁶ CP 5.356.

²⁵⁷ Peirce wrote in MS 439.24 “DETACHED IDEAS ON VITALLY IMPORTANT TOPICS” that “every true universal, every continuum, is a living and conscious being.” See MS1898, 1-35, with a variant on page 24.

²⁵⁸ In MS 439.24.

²⁵⁹ CP 5.311.

²⁶⁰ W 1.44.

²⁶¹ CP 6.429.

²⁶² CP 1.673.

²⁶³ Some would argue that the very idea that various inquirers within different communities of faith should “weld” themselves to a common continuum of being is an idea all too friendly to a hyper-rationalization of religious categories exclusive to Westernized faith. Some forms of East Asian thought, for example, find religiosity in the creation of particular civilization rather than in global or universal community. So the esteem of “community,” “infinity,” or unified religious “pluralism” could in fact neglect other postures of thought that do not prize so highly Western religious categories.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SACRED DEPTHS OF NATURE

In all its progress, science vaguely feels that it is only learning a lesson. The value of Facts to it, lies only in this, that they belong to Nature; and Nature is something great, and beautiful, and sacred, and eternal, and real—the object of its worship and its aspiration.

--C.S. Peirce, CP 5.589¹

The German Idealist Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling once wrote, “If you want to honor a philosopher, you must catch him where he has not yet gone forth to the consequences, in his fundamental thought; (in the thought) from which he takes his point of departure.”² In the preceding chapters, I worked through an analysis of Peirce’s category of Firstness, experienced as possibility in its mode of being and experienced as feeling in its phenomenological aspect. I claimed that Firstness-possibility functions as an impetus for transformation and growth within the divine life, and that Firstness-feeling is the basis for inquiry within experience. I claimed, as well, that during the process of abduction inquirers can gain a numinous feeling of the divine, presented within a sacred dimension of human experience. This sacred dimension opens as the inquirer gains a sense of one’s own finitude before the infinite, where the infinite is the ever-becoming and encompassing reality of nature that situates all organisms. I then claimed that the finite/infinite distinction is most prominently brought about in an ecstatic moment when possible hypotheses are ventured and then confirmed as inquiring beings seek to put disturbed beliefs to rest.

As a conclusion to this project and to add emphasis to my thesis, I would now like to approach Peirce from a Heideggerean angle of vision so as to allow the more suggestive ideas in Peirce's philosophy to unfold in their ontological dimensions. My goal is to allow what I think is already present in Peirce's philosophy to fruitfully develop and unfold through a constructive interpretation of his ideas. In this chapter I approach Peirce through Heidegger's 1936 lecture on Schelling, identifying Heidegger's Schellingean inspired themes as they pertain to Peirce with the perspective of ecstatic naturalism serving as background for my interpretation.³ I would ultimately like to suggest that in certain respects Heidegger and Peirce have similar ontologies, and that Schelling is in fact key for both of their understandings of nature. Looking at how Peirce and Heidegger compare via Schelling will further establish how possibility is crucial for Peirce's functioning model of nature and how possibility is needed for a disclosure of the divine in numinous feeling. This involves identifying and analyzing the ground of possibility functioning within the sacred depths of nature.

I. THE SCHELLING CONNECTION

A. SCHELLING'S INFLUENCE ON PEIRCE

In allowing the more suggestive aspects of Peirce's philosophy to unfold in their ontological dimensions, one might ask, "Why use Heidegger?" Approaching Peirce through Heidegger's philosophy can allow his philosophy to unfold through appropriating what is essential for both of their ontologies; namely, appropriating a specific understanding of nature in its ecstatic or self-transforming character and attempting to

understand what allows for nature to be, rather than “not be,” in its most basic respects. To the end that Heidegger’s philosophy should be more comprehensible in applying to Peirce’s philosophy, and to the end that Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism might be more useful in understanding what Peirce and Heidegger philosophically agree about, I should introduce one philosopher whom Peirce and Heidegger said guided their own understandings of nature, the divine, and possibility. That philosopher is the German Idealist, Schelling.⁴

Schelling served as the background for much of American philosophy practiced in the nineteenth century.⁵ He still today remains of significant importance for many contemporary American philosophers, including Corrington.⁶ In the early decades of the nineteenth-century however, Schelling’s philosophy was rejected as “wild” or “vague” and subject to a combination of scorn and neglect.⁷ Indicative of this fact is that between 1817 and 1837 there was nowhere to be found in the curricula of the nation’s colleges any trace of German philosophy, let alone any indication that Schelling’s was of influence.⁸ According to the main view in the early part of the century, proponents of Schellingianism would benefit well from an education in Locke’s philosophy, for the British empiricist was esteemed in his “sturdiness” and “reliability.”⁹ Schelling, and his German contemporaries, represented a “German insanity” that, prior to 1835, was flat out rejected by many in the academic community.¹⁰ Given this initially poor reception, under what visage would Schelling come to influence Peirce?

The first guides into the territory of Schelling were English and German, and included the likes of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, James Marsh, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Charles S. Wheeler.¹¹ Printed information about German philosophy began to filter

through to philosophers in America from periodicals such as the *New Monthly Magazine* and *Foreign Quarterly Review*.¹² Some philosophers, including Hedge and Wheeler, had studied in Germany as young men and brought back their interest in German culture and theological matters. Marsh had edited Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* (1829), and wrote an introduction that for the first time advanced the importance of religious metaphysics for philosophy within the American academic setting. Compared to the Lockean and Scottish systems that condemned German metaphysics, Marsh suggested that Idealism was not as dangerous or injurious as many had supposed it to be, and suggested that he had gleaned this insight from coming under the influence of the Schellingean "vitalist" theory of nature.¹³ Later, as the president of the University of Vermont, Marsh revised the curriculum to include many elements of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*.¹⁴ Among his most popular papers delivered happened to be "Outlines of a Systematic Arrangement of the Departments of Knowledge, with a View to their Organic Relations to each other in a General System."¹⁵ In the paper Marsh discussed principles influenced by Schelling's organization of nature, including the placement of physics and the life-sciences within a categorially organized schema of human knowledge where each partition of knowledge built upon the previous in a system typical of the German metaphysicians.¹⁶ It would be these early intellectual transformations that led to Schelling's acceptance in early America and which consequently led to Peirce's interest in the study of Schelling and other German Idealists including Kant and Hegel.¹⁷

Another crucial line of thought leading from Schelling to Peirce was New England Transcendentalism, especially Emerson's view about the *Naturphilosophie*.¹⁸ Peirce was familiar with Emerson and his interest in Schelling, so there is little doubt that

Emerson's Schellingianism would come to affect Peirce's as well, for better or worse, as Peirce would admit. Emerson gave a Transcendentalist's account of Schellingian philosophy in his personal journal. He wrote, "The Germans believe in the necessary Trinity of God—The Infinite; the finite, & the passage from Inf. Into Fin.; or the Creation. It is typified in the act of thinking. Whilst we contemplate we are infinite; the thought we express is partial and finite; the expression is the third part & is equivalent to the act of Creation. Unity says Schelling is barren."¹⁹ About such talk Peirce begrudgingly noted,

I was born and reared in the neighborhood of Concord -- I mean in Cambridge --at the time when Emerson, Hedge, and their friends were disseminating the ideas that they had caught from Schelling, and Schelling from Plotinus, from Boehm, or from God knows what minds stricken with the monstrous mysticism of the East. But the atmosphere of Cambridge held many an antiseptic against Concord transcendentalism; and I am not conscious of having contracted any of that virus. Nevertheless, it is probable that some cultured bacilli, some benignant form of the disease was implanted in my soul, unawares, and that now, after long incubation, it comes to the surface, modified by mathematical conceptions and by training in physical investigations.²⁰

Clearly Peirce's comments give voice to some fairly strong and critical opinions about Schelling, but as Ejsing writes, "[these comments] in my judgment, however, are scarcely more than paper thin and, if challenged, quickly turn ambiguous, if not affirmative of Schelling's position."²¹ Peirce had steeped himself in the writings of Kant and Hegel, and as well had read Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* early on in his career.²² So, he was quite familiar with German idealism and knew quite well its working themes. However, second only to Kant, it was to Schelling that Peirce seemed to owe the most intellectual debt, despite his name remaining conspicuously absent from the pragmatist's published corpus. One does, however, detect themes of the *Naturphilosophie* upon a close

examination of Peirce's philosophy—especially within his ontology/cosmology and phenomenological theory. Thus, one may claim that the influence of Schelling upon Peirce was in no way oblique, but rather significant if the points of this influence can be identified. Before exploring these points of influence in detail, I will first identify them and broadly sketch their major features so as to introduce the reader to how they relate to my project.

Common philosophical themes Peirce and Schelling shared are as follows. First, both supplied an evolutionary idealism and developmental model of nature governed by triadic laws. For Peirce, these were the laws of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, and for Schelling these were the laws of gravity [*Schwere*], light-essence [*Licht-wesen*], and their temporary synthesis into the products of nature (or epistemologically: intuition, concept, and Idea.)²³ Both philosophers had a triadic model of the categories of nature's being. For Peirce, nature's being was categorized in terms of Firstness-possibility, Secondness-actuality, and Thirdness-generality, and for Schelling nature's being was essentially three "divine potencies" including possibility (freedom), actuality (necessity), and a developing spirit in nature, which is the ever-unfolding Absolute.²⁴ For both philosophers, the first mode of possibility was a basis or transcendental "ground" necessary for the cosmos to grow and evolve. Both claimed that without this ground the cosmos would falter in its development and the result would be stasis and universal death. The basis for this cosmic development constitutes one side of an opposing tension found between two initial aspects of nature. The tension is resolved though by means of a third, or in Ejsing's words, "a spontaneous submission to a natural order."²⁵ Hence both thinkers were dialogic or synthetic thinkers in how they believed nature to resolve its

tension by means of a third general feature of experience. This viewpoint led to the evolutionary cosmotheism of both philosophers that asserted the would-be convergence of generality in the mind of God, evidenced both through feeling and rational law found within nature.²⁶

A second common theme found in the philosophy of Peirce and Schelling is the demonstrated need for a reclassification of the disciplines of knowledge based on metaphysical principles.²⁷ Such was necessitated by the unification of new metaphysical knowledge supplied by evolutionary idealism and cosmotheism. A new classification of knowledge would give rise to a formal, structural, and theoretically sound basis for studying and understanding the cosmos based on a science of the unfolding divine life. Peirce thought of his classification of the various partitions of knowledge to include mathematics, phenomenology, and metaphysics, and Schelling's partitions of knowledge included the detailed "historical" patterns of nature found in industry, economy, society, and commerce.²⁸ It should be noted that Peirce did from time to time attempt to link the unfolding nature of the divine to the principles found in society, such as when, in his "Evolutionary Love" (1893) essay, he clearly pitted freedom for love's growth against nineteenth-century consumer greed, which he thought stifled social and individual growth alike.²⁹

A third common theme found in the philosophy of Peirce and Schelling is how both philosophers thought that creativity, aesthetic feeling, and non-rational insight are needed for scientific explanation and for knowledge in general. To be "scientific" for these two philosophers meant gaining insight into nature, which took the form of creative guesswork for Peirce, and which took the form of intellectual intuition for Schelling.

Philosophy, being “scientific” for both philosophers, was to aid in the comprehension of a growing body of knowledge and experimental data.³⁰ Stated differently, neither philosopher had a problem with the speculative nature of scientific thought insofar as it aimed to understand the universe and organize that understanding into a comprehensive world-view. Both philosophers thought that the speculative aspect of scientific thought was imaginative, creative, and based within feeling. They claimed that scientific method involves feeling, emotion, and non-rational insight, and that nature’s wondrous, awe-inspiring phenomena stirs scientific questioning—questioning ultimately guided by the ideal of nature’s becoming intelligence.³¹ Here Schiller’s idea that, “Only through Beauty’s morning-gate, dost thou penetrate the land of knowledge” applies to both philosophers.³² Perhaps in this sense it might not be entirely inaccurate to say that claiming such an importance for non-rational insight within scientific inquiry [*Wissenschaft*] places Peirce’s concept of science in a similar position to that of the early German romantics, if not in a similar position to the life-philosophy and vitalism of the German Idealists, including Schelling.³³ Thus, given the above common themes, there are, I think, significant points of similarity between the Schellingean and Peircean philosophies.

B. SCHELLING’S INFLUENCE ON HEIDEGGER

No attempt will be made to include every aspect of Heidegger’s encounter with Schelling in this concluding chapter. Rather, a representative sample is provided to indicate, if only generally, how Heidegger’s Schellingean moments display key themes within Peirce’s philosophy. In using Schelling to compare Peirce and Heidegger, one

may develop a hermeneutic that draws key insights from Heidegger's "later" corpus, particularly his work from the 1930s, to construct a somewhat fractured yet consistent interpretation of his thought as it pertains to Peirce. Before turning to my interpretation, however, I will first need to develop some of Heidegger's vocabulary and explain to the reader how it is situated within his writing. I should state right away that while Heidegger's technical terminology might initially appear bewildering and obscure, explaining its subtle nuances early enough will help illustrate his debt to Schelling and his relationship to Peirce in a less confusing manner as this work proceeds. I hope the reader will charitably attempt to follow Heidegger as he struggled to think about Being in its most elusive yet pervasive features, and will permit his terminology to ripen as I apply it within context and develop my own line of analysis.

William J. Richardson has familiarly encouraged scholars to divide Heidegger's work into an "early" period and a "late" period, separated by a turn [*die Kehre*.]³⁴ Heidegger's 1930 essay "On the Essence of Truth" [*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*] "officially" marked the turn that separated his early and late work, or a Heidegger I and Heidegger II.³⁵ While this distinction may be useful and insightful, it is not necessarily the approach I prefer to take on Heidegger's work. Nevertheless, one could claim that Schelling emerges as a central figure between Heidegger's work that focused on the existential analytic of *Dasein* in texts such as *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*] (1927), and texts that focused on the historical movement of be-ing's truth [*seynsgeschichtliche Denken*.]³⁶ I will focus on the Heidegger texts from the 1930s and follow the spelling of "be-ing" as "Beyng" [*Seyn*] to clearly mark how Being [*Sein*] was understood and explored prior to

the writing of *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1936/38), translated as *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning.)*³⁷

In the texts of the 1930s, Heidegger credited the spelling of Beyng to the century leading into Schelling's era, using it to represent a non-“onto-theological,” or pre-metaphysical, understanding of Being. As the Translator's Foreword in the *Contributions* notes, “Heidegger uses the eighteenth-century orthography of *Sein*, i.e., *Seyn*, in order to indicate that, when he writes *Sein*, he means to say *Sein* is grasped metaphysically and, when he writes *Seyn*, he means the way *Sein* is no longer grasped metaphysically.”³⁸ This distinction is not entirely consistent, though when equating *Seyn* with be-ing, in most cases, the meaning remains the same. Heidegger thought that of all the philosophers, Schelling came closest to grasping an understanding of “Beyng” when he posited an “abyss” [*Abgrund*], that is, a non-foundational pre-personal ground for becoming and self-disclosure, within the reality of God. Before discussing the concept of *Abgrund*, I should take care in explaining just a few more of Heidegger's terms that are used in conjunction with it.

The *Contributions* was one of Heidegger's attempts to offer insight into the core processes of Beyng's self-disclosure. This involved re-formulating a lost non-“onto-theological” relationship between *Dasein* and Being. By non-“onto-theological” Heidegger meant the sort of relationship between mortal and divinity that was prevalent before the onset of a metaphysical history. The “onto-theological” tradition is a tradition of thought that asserts God is a “supernatural” Supreme Being and First Cause [*causa sui.*]³⁹ Onto-theology asks the questions “What are beings as such, in general?” and “What is the greatest being?” Here the reader might recall from the first chapter that

Heidegger was attempting to think about the divine in a manner completely different from that of the “traditional” God of philosophy. In some sense, Heidegger wanted to expunge the God of metaphysics and onto-theology (God as Supreme Being and First Cause) yet speak about an openness of human beings to a reality that included the divine. This demanded a way of thinking, and a vocabulary, very different from anything that he had used before. Specifically, in texts such as the *Contributions* and his 1936 lecture on Schelling, Heidegger attempted to offer insight into a being-relatedness through which human beings are able to come into contact with a form of the divine that is non-onto-theological.⁴⁰

Heidegger claimed that entering into a non-onto-theological relationship with Being requires a transformation in the disposition of how human beings approach other beings and are to think about Being’s self-disclosedness. Thus, in a similar transition to the way Heidegger used the terms Being and Beyng, there is also a significant transition in the way he used the term *Dasein*. Whereas *Dasein* indicated the starting point for a fundamental ontology and existential analytic, *Da-sein* (hyphenated) indicated the sort of being that human beings must *become* in order to experience sacred appearances of the divine. Heidegger referred to these sacred appearances as “the holy.”⁴¹ In my project, Heidegger’s “holy” roughly equals my concept of “the sacred,” developed within Chapter One. Again, I will follow his spelling of *Dasein* and *Da-sein* to indicate these basic metaphysical and dispositional differences. Beyng may from time to time disclose a “truth,” or how things are in their being, in some sort of “event” [*Ereignis*] when *Da-sein* enters into a non-onto-theological relationship with Beyng. In this event there is a granting of divinity (what Heidegger referred to as “the last god” or “gods”) in the

disclosure of what is holy.⁴² I believe this disclosure is similar to Peirce's ecstatic moment found in abduction, although for Heidegger, what is holy, or sacred as I call it, is spoken by the poet, rather than revealed to an inquirer venturing and confirming hypotheses. Now, I will not develop the above claims in their entirety because they could be the subject of another sustained project altogether. I only wish to point out how Heidegger's metaphysical claims resemble some of the issues that I presented while discussing Peirce.⁴³ On the other hand, Heidegger's Schellingean concept of a non-foundational "ground" [*Abgrund*] offers a direct point of comparison between Peirce and Heidegger and will prove to be worth investigating in more detail.

A specific Schellingean influence upon Heidegger surfaced as the need to discuss how a basis or "ground" of freedom and possibility keeps *Beyng* from collapsing into a closed mechanistic system of nature. Heidegger thought to view *Beyng* in terms of its own "swaying" [*Wesung*], or generative processes of self-disclosure, rather than submitting thinking about it to the forces of modern rationality most evident in the Hegelian form of rational historical determinism.⁴⁴ It appears that Heidegger wanted to sort out how this ground orients itself within an active, dynamic, and truth-generative movement of *Beyng*'s self disclosure—its concealing and revealing as *ἀλήθεια*, or "aletheia."⁴⁵ Heidegger's esteem for Schelling's concept of ground thus represented a turn away from the pristine Spinozistic-Hegelian rationality and domineering mechanistic view of nature that overtook contemporary understandings of nature during his lifetime. According to Friedrich Wilhelm von Hermann, "Leaving reason behind as the measure for beingness of beings entails parting with the system of reason. But such a parting does

not terminate in disorderliness; rather, it proceeds into a transformed inner order which traces out the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning.”⁴⁶

For some, this move places Heidegger’s thought very close to the process philosophy of today because it is amenable to claiming that the divine life includes possibility, and that possibility represents the divine life’s freedom to become or disclose itself before human beings.⁴⁷ While Heidegger wrote that “‘Being’ . . . is not God and not a cosmic ground,” he did affirm that there stands within Being an essential sphere of “the holy” where one may possibly encounter God.⁴⁸ Thus, as some commentators such as Schubert Ogden and John R. Williams have noted, Heidegger’s views are in harmony with the “panentheistic American theology” of Whitehead and Hartshorne because his God is in some sense relative to the conditions for the possibility of its disclosure.⁴⁹ Of course for Heidegger, any conditions for disclosure ultimately belong to Being, and he thought that it is not the task of philosophy to judge the claims of religion or the reality of God.⁵⁰ However, the fact that possibility serves as a ground for the divine’s disclosure does position his thought closely to that of Peirce. For both philosophers there is a feature of nature that is modally non-actual and unconditioned, and which is a *real lack* of determination that permits the sacred to come forward. This real lack of determination turns out to be freedom and possibility, and as an unconditioned feature of experience it serves as a base condition for nature’s development and sacred appearance. As I will show in this chapter, for Heidegger this basis is centered in the ontological difference *within* Being, and thus represents a ground of difference *antecedent to* Being’s identity. I hope to show how in both Peirce and Heidegger, this basis, or “ground” as I will call it,

ultimately serves as a mechanism for some sort of disclosure of “truth,” divine or otherwise—of how things *are*.

A moment ago I spoke about the importance of “ground” for Heidegger and Peirce. *Grund*, or in English, “ground,” comes from the archaic verb meaning ‘to grind’ and originally meant “earth, coarse sand, or sandy soil.”⁵¹ To say that something is *grundlos* or “groundless” means to say that it has no cause or support. In German philosophy, *Grund* gave rise to the concept of *gründen*, “to ground, found, base, set up” and *ergründen*, “to fathom, get to the bottom of.”⁵² The prefix *Ab* added to *grund* strictly means “earth down (wards)” as in “an unfathomable abyss underground.”⁵³ Heidegger’s Schellingean appropriation of this term seems to come out of his reading of Meister Eckhart and Jacob Böhme.⁵⁴ Eckhart and Böhme posited a pre-personal “ground” within God’s own being, where this ground was called “the godhead” or “the abyss.”⁵⁵ Böhme specifically correlated the abyss with God’s own pre-personal ground. John W. Cooper explains that for Böhme,

The primordial principle in God...is Non-ground, Groundlessness, which is his term for Non-being or No-thing—what Neoplatonists call the Abyss, the divine depths. This is ‘the No,’ the negative potency of nonbeing, chaos, darkness, and wrath...but it is not the absolute negation of being. It contains infinite potential, the absolute freedom to be, and even the will or desire to be.⁵⁶

Schelling also read Böhme and further developed modifications of the concept “ground” with respect to God. Schelling contrasted *Grund* with *Existenz*, saying that oppositions such as real and ideal, or being and becoming, were dissolved in the absolute *Indifferenz* of the *Grund*. In this sense, *Grund* represented an “abyss” [*Abgrund*] where all

differences dissolved in an ontological basis of in-difference. Thus for Schelling the *Abgrund* is not a thing, but rather is a basis of pure difference; or one might say that it is a *basis for things to be*, yet it is, itself, *not*.

For the “early” Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927), “ground” meant the “ability-to-be” which comes into view when *Dasein* projects itself “onto possibilities into which it has been thrown....it has been *released* from the ground not *by* itself but *to* itself.”⁵⁷ *Dasein* does not lay the ground or basis but finds itself “on top” of a ground of possibility, which is simply the possibilities that initially confront *Dasein*. *Dasein* appropriates these possibilities and self-transcends; *Dasein becomes*. In *Being and Time* Heidegger showed little interest in the idea that Being is a ground: “The sense of being can never be contrasted with beings or with being as supporting ‘ground’ of beings since ‘ground’ is accessible only as sense, even it is itself the abyss [*Abgrund*] of senselessness.”⁵⁸ However, for the “later” Heidegger, Being is “the ground” of beings, and appears so when appropriated as *Beyng*. He wrote, “*Beyng* as the ground in which all beings as such first come to their truth....the ground in which beings sink (abyss), the ground in which they also assume *indifference*.”⁵⁹

The connection to Schelling is how Heidegger’s *Abgrund* serves as an ontological basis that grants identity to beings, in addition to granting the metaphysical “space” of freedom necessary for the disclosure of Being as *Beyng* before *Da-sein*—a disclosure found in the “motioning” of Being’s concealing and revealing. Heidegger called this motioning the “sway” or “falling-rising” of *Beyng*.⁶⁰ The swaying [*Wesung*] of *Beyng* has its own “inner essence of ‘logic’” (a sigetic motion and release of truth) which is appropriated by *Da-sein* in an ecstatic event [*Ereignis*.]⁶¹ For Heidegger, this event is

spoken through poetry and he discussed this idea in his lecture on the German poet Hölderlin.⁶² Interpreted as such, the sway of Beyng resembles the Peircean-Schellingean developmental cosmos, or divine life, where *Abgrund* matches Firstness in the sense that it is a basis which both permits Beyng's temporal-historical motion and its ecstatic disclosure. The connection to Peirce is how Firstness is the origin and source for possibility and feeling, and as such permits the "motioning" and unfolding of the cosmos as a divine life. If one prescind any mode of being, or any phenomenological element of experience, Firstness remains as the founding category and "ground" required for any of the other categories. All categories rest on it and it is logically and cosmologically irreducible. However, because Firstness is not a "thing," but is rather a mode of being and a feeling that is unconditioned and undetermined, it is "without ground" or "groundless." As such it is a basis for the categories, but is, itself, not a thing—it is a modal *not*. Therefore, I compare Peircean Firstness to the Schellingean-Heideggeran concept of ground as "groundless ground" or abyss [*Abgrund*.]

II. HEIDEGGER'S 1936 LECTURE ON SCHELLING: ITS IMPORTANCE FOR UNDERSTANDING PEIRCEAN FIRSTNESS

A. SCHELLING'S IDEA OF FREEDOM AND THE INDETERMINATE GROUND OF FIRSTNESS

In the Summer Semester of 1936, Heidegger offered a lecture course on Schelling's *Philosophical Inquires into the Nature of Human Freedom and Matters Connected Therewith*, originally published in 1809.⁶³ The year 1809 marked a special period for the history of German idealism, and in particular for America's reception of it.

In 1807, two years before Schelling's treatise on freedom, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* appeared.⁶⁴ The preface marked a final break between Schelling and Hegel due to Hegel's indirect criticisms of Schelling's work. The break between the two concerned the concept of the Absolute as the identity and indifference of all opposites, which Schelling had made the fundamental idea of his philosophy. Hegel maintained that the Absolute consists in nothing else than the abstract identity of $A = A$, where there is nothing at all in the Absolute because in it all differences break down, or as it was succinctly put: "all is one."⁶⁵ The Absolute is a state of determinate and complete knowledge, on Hegel's view.⁶⁶ It is an end-state of result that inevitably unfolds, synthesizing all oppositions in its path and absorbing all differences within it into a unity of Absolute Spirit (Mind, or *Geist*): a state of "vacuous knowledge," the "night in which all cows are black."⁶⁷ All distinctions including Being and Nothing, Sameness and Difference, and even Freedom and Necessity disappear in *aufgehoben*.⁶⁸

In the preface to the *Phenomenology* and in a letter that he wrote to Schelling in May of 1807, Hegel used Schelling's philosophy as his foil, albeit indirectly.⁶⁹ Before the *Phenomenology* was published, and since Schelling left Jena in 1803, the two Idealists had only communicated infrequently. Breaking a silence of two and a half years, Hegel penned a letter to Schelling in 1807 and mentioned the "popular opinion" that thought Schelling's philosophy was "nonsense" and "empty formalism."⁷⁰ In addition to an indirect or perhaps unintended insult, Hegel did not address whether his caustic remarks made in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* were aimed at Schelling or not. Schelling's reply to Hegel's letter was delayed, and its tone cold and injured: "Inasmuch as you yourself mentioned the polemical part of it [the Preface to the *Phenomenology*], decent

self-respect forbids me to think so little of myself as to judge that this polemic refers to me.”⁷¹ Schelling’s discontent with Hegel grew mainly because he thought that the Hegelian critique of his philosophy did not fit.⁷² In return to the criticisms indirectly pointed at him, Schelling critiqued the Hegelian Absolute as being too abstract and “too negative,” where the idea of Absolute in abstract identity neglected “concrete existence.”⁷³ Due to Hegel’s criticism—intentional or not—Schelling would publish nothing during the next 45 years, and he never communicated with Hegel again.⁷⁴ Schelling withdrew from public activity and lived until his death in 1854 writing, but never publishing, a planned major work that never got beyond the form of lecture courses. His son published these lecture courses as part of the published collected works. Today it could be argued that Schelling still stands, for the most part, in Hegel’s shadow save for one major work: the *Freiheitschrift*, or “Freedom essay” as it is called for short in place of the lengthier title, *Philosophical Inquires into the Nature of Human Freedom and Matters Connected Therewith* (1809.)⁷⁵

The aim of Schelling’s Freedom essay was to first, define the concept of freedom, and second, place that concept within a whole scientific world-view. Thus, Schelling sought to “understand nature as a unity, which is self-maintaining and which, contained within itself requires no ground outside of itself for its movement and interconnectedness.”⁷⁶ In looking at how nature could be a systematic unity, yet include room for its growth and development in the form of freedom, Schelling thought to isolate the study of nature as a “universal organism” rather than a “mechanical machine.”⁷⁷ In terms of human freedom, the central issue for Schelling, then, was reconciling the necessity of nature and its associated empirical investigations posed from a scientific

world-view with freedom's affordance of contingency and the subjective experience of it. For my purposes here, I am not so much concerned with Schelling's interest in freedom as it pertains to issues of free will; for example, the freedom of the will to choose good or evil. Rather, my interest is in his idea that freedom should take on the role of an ontological basis or ground for the experience of nature in its divine aspect and show how that idea is pertinent to Peirce's category of Firstness. This connection should become clear as I attempt to tarry with the difficult question of how freedom might be found not just as a concept within the context of a scientific world-view, but rather exist as a *reality* within an ordered and necessary system of nature.⁷⁸

Similar to Peirce's category of Firstness, Schelling made it clear in advance that freedom was primarily given through a "feeling."⁷⁹ Schelling said the feeling of freedom was "ingrained in every individual."⁸⁰ However, the feeling of freedom, Schelling maintained, is just as elusive as it is strongly felt. While strongly felt, there is no guarantee that freedom is in fact something real or part of nature, rather than existing as a subjective feeling alone. Thus, if nature is systematic, orderly, and objective, feelings of freedom might be strongly felt, but they may simply be personal and subjective and thus hold no reality within an external system of nature. If nature is to be objective, complete, and systematic, then freedom's contingency could *only be* a feeling, and nothing more. As Schelling wrote in the introduction to the Freedom essay: "the idea of freedom is said to be entirely inconsistent with the idea of system, and every philosophy which makes claim to unity and completeness is said to end in denying freedom."⁸¹ Thus, the claim was that if nature is a complete and objective system, then freedom cannot exist because

freedom means contingency and a completed and objective system has no room for contingency.

In the quotation above, Schelling was referring to Spinoza's system of pantheism, for that system identified God the creator with an objective and mechanistic system of nature. On Spinoza's view, creatures' wills or subjective feelings of freedom were nothing but parallel modifications of God's will, and the result of that perspective, Schelling thought, was fatalism and determinism.⁸² But just in the same way that the lack of determination found in Firstness opposes Peircean tychism to Hegelian rational determinism, so, too, does the Schellingean insistence that freedom is real distance his philosophy from Spinoza's pantheism. Therefore, it was Schelling's point to place freedom as the crowning concept *and* reality within a system of nature despite its elusive and undetermined aspect. That is, Schelling sought to create a systematic account of nature that included freedom, and thereby challenge the tendency to declare in advance what absolutely and rationally counts as an objectively completed system. In this way God's will could be reflected in an objective and ordered system of nature, yet human beings could be free while existing in that nature. Thus, for Schelling, "the system itself is a system of freedom."⁸³ This meant that nature was taken to be "a system capable of metabolism, growth, development, self-regulation, response to stimuli, and spontaneous activity," opposed to "a closed system which rests in a static equilibrium rather than a dynamic state."⁸⁴ If freedom is of a reality situated within an objective nature—a nature including God *and* creature—then neither God nor creature could be determined. In this very respect Schelling's account of nature taken as a system of freedom resembles Peirce's model of the universe, for in Peirce's universe the rigidity of synechism is

tempered by the spontaneity of freedom found in tychism. Spontaneity, chance, possibility, and freedom are grounded in the reality of Firstness, and Firstness is of an objective reality that helps categorially structure nature, even though it has no objective actuality (Firstness is possibility and it indeed is of a reality, however.) Because Schelling's concept of freedom and Peircean Firstness are so similar, I refer to Schelling's concept of freedom as "Firstness-freedom."

Already one finds a challenge to what "freedom" is supposed to mean here, especially as freedom is to be found in a systematic account of nature. Is a *system of freedom* internally impossible? Stated in terms of the concern of my project, can Firstness-freedom be found in a divine life that develops systematically toward Thirdness generality? Schelling answered that "if the opinion be advanced that the concept of freedom contradicts the concept of system altogether and inherently, then it is extraordinary that some sort of system must be present and coexist with freedom at least in the divine understanding. For individual freedom in some manner or other has a place in the universe."⁸⁵ To argue against the idea that systematicity, order, or necessity should occlude freedom, Schelling thought to demonstrate how a lack of necessity does not equal complete disorderliness. That is, a systematic account of nature may be given that is loose enough to include freedom, yet which is itself of an ordered, actual, and necessary nature. In the 1936 lecture course on Schelling, Heidegger looked to the origins of the word "system" in order to make this point clear.

Heidegger remarked how the origin of the word σύστημα or "sunistemi" refers to a "visible unity in the inmost jointure of things."⁸⁶ By "jointure" [*Fuge*] Heidegger meant that different things join together to form a self-same whole; that is, a "system."

Accordingly, a system can mean an “accumulation” or a “patchwork” of things following some definite ordering forming a unified whole.⁸⁷ Yet, within this ordering, there can exist room for change in the ordering of things.⁸⁸ In the Schelling lecture, Heidegger provided his reader with the example of a phalanx troop formation so as to make this point clear. In a phalanx formation, there is an external shape and outer grouping for the troops, and as the troops move over the battlefield each member understands the order necessary so as to maintain course on the battlefield. The phalanx formation therefore represents a “system”—a visible unity of joined things forming a whole. The troop members make up the system, yet each troop member may adjust to the conditions of the battlefield as the formation requires. That is, the formation holds while the pieces may choose to change their position given certain field conditions. This understanding of “system” therefore asserts that joined members are individually free enough to adjust to the system as a whole, yet an ordering system for the formation remains. Thus a degree of freedom is exercised *within* a given or laid out order, the square shape of the phalanx formation.

I believe this idea of system resembles Peirce’s idea of how Firstness operates within nature as a condition for freedom, but not without belonging to a defined order of reality. Peirce’s concept of nature admits systematic ordering by virtue of the categories, yet the law of Thirdness-generality is loose enough to change while certain categorial ordering always holds true as necessary. Thirdness-law may change because of the spontaneity given by Firstness-possibility, but all the while a categorial formation of reality holds. In essence, here one is identifying what condition allows for nature to freely develop (contingency) while nature is permitted to maintain functioning

regularities and law-like states (necessity.) Heidegger thought that Schelling was significant in helping introduce this idea into the history of philosophy because it was Schelling who first placed freedom directly within an ordered system of nature—not as a mere concept, but as a fundamental basis of reality. For Schelling, the result was that there could be an absolutely necessary and existing God (whose “formation” would be the development of empirical history and nature), yet such a God could contain within itself enough contingency to “adjust to the conditions” at hand—which is to say that God could possess enough freedom or possibility-for-growth to become without existing as a closed or absolute system.⁸⁹ In opposition to Hegel’s God, Schelling’s God was elevated from negative abstract thought to a positive, concrete, and full existence in the very manner of its becoming.⁹⁰ With the reality of freedom firmly established, Heidegger wrote, “Schelling...wants to accomplish precisely this: to bring a conceptual formulation how God—not as a concept thought, but as the life of life—comes to himself. Thus a *becoming* God!”⁹¹

The concept of a becoming God was one of Schelling’s greatest achievements in the history of philosophy. He contended that the concept of God cannot be expressed in traditional onto-theological language: for example “first,” “oldest,” or “necessary,” but rather that God must contain pairs of contrasting terms such as “necessity and freedom”, “joy and suffering,” “subject and object,” and “finite and infinite” in order to relate and understand to creation in addition to existing as a becoming divine life.⁹² As Schelling phrased it, “The concept of God is of wide, yes of widest scope and cannot be articulated in a single word. In God there is necessity and freedom.”⁹³ The connection to Peirce and Heidegger is that for one to claim that an identical or “self-same” thing contains

contraries (whether it be nature, a system, God, or Being) seems to imply a contradiction. Either nature is a closed system or it is free to develop. How could nature really be *both* determined *and* free? Schelling took this question to ask: how can a necessary God who is pure being also be contingent enough so as to subsist as a freely becoming being? Does this mean that a necessary God also holds some sort of contingency and is a resultant contradiction?

Schelling pointed out that to predicate P and \sim P (for example, necessity and non-necessity) of one individual being is no contradiction provided that opposed predicates apply to diverse aspects of that being.⁹⁴ The relevance of this claim for Peirce and for Heidegger is that the identity of any predicated subject contains “within” or “before” it a *fundamental difference* which serves as a basis for the positing of the subject’s identity *as* an identity. In Peirce’s philosophy this ground of difference functions as the basis for semiotic predication. So that identity *can be*, there must be some basis or ground upon which identity is granted.⁹⁵ Rather than approach this issue through Peirce’s semiotics and unduly complicating the issue, for the sake of economy I will look to what I have already established with an examination of how the concept of ground functions in his phenomenological and cosmological theory by way of Heidegger and Schelling. This differential basis is most adequately formulated by Heidegger’s concept of “ontological difference” and by Schelling’s concept of “ground,” both explained in the next section.

B. “GROUNDLESS GROUND” [*ABGRUND*] AND THE ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE

So far I have been asking what basis could there be for nature to freely develop yet remain an ordered system with some form of categorial organization. That is, I am raising the question whether the development of an ordered system of nature necessarily excludes freedom. I raise this question with the purpose of comparing how Peirce and Heidegger, through a Schellingean inspired understanding of nature, placed an undetermined feature of experience directly within nature. Doing so, I believe, will draw out to the reader how Firstness-possibility is also Firstness-freedom. I would also like to further explore how this undetermined feature of experience plays its part in the disclosure of nature taken as a developing whole—or what I have previously called “the infinite” or “divine life.” This undetermined feature of experience is found *within* nature, and is a “ground” for experience that permits nature to develop in its infinite and self-transforming character. Schelling’s philosophy is, broadly speaking, a philosophy about the genesis of nature from its “ground” and the process by which this generation takes place, secured as a systematic process by the identity of the whole system. By “ground” Schelling meant the basis for things in terms of their generation, by existence he meant that things are, and by Being he meant identity.⁹⁶ Because he was a philosopher of genesis, Schelling must not only describe the identity of the system (Being, or the Absolute) but he must also describe the ground for Being’s existence, as well as the difference between the two. The question of Being included for Schelling the distinction “between Being insofar as it exists, and Being insofar as it is the mere basis for existence.”⁹⁷ He claimed that within nature itself there is a fundamental difference between ground and existence, or a difference between

that which generates or produces beings, and actual existent beings or what is produced. That is, Schelling asserted a basic ontological difference between nature taken as *productivity* and the *products* of nature. This basic difference is another formation of the ontological difference, or the difference between Being and beings, formulated by Heidegger and by Corrington's ecstatic naturalism. This ontological difference has been discussed at length in Chapter One so I will forgo any detailed discussion of it here. The discussion about the ontological difference in Schelling's text begins with a discussion about the law of identity. Identity traditionally means "sameness," as in $A = A$, and is usually taken to be tautologically simple and self-evident. Schelling challenged this notion altogether claiming that identity presupposes a basic differential ground rendering identity intelligible *as* identity.⁹⁸ With this understanding of identity in mind, Schelling claimed that things could belong to the "same" reality, such as the reality of God, yet possess a "different" nature distinct from that reality.⁹⁹ For example Schelling said that, "'This body is blue,' does not mean that the body in and by reason of its being a body is also a blue body, but only that the object designated as this body is also blue though not in the same sense."¹⁰⁰ He then continued that, "Even a tautological statement, if it is not altogether meaningless, retains this relationship. Thus if one says: A body is body: he is assuredly thinking something different in the subject of the sentence than in its predicate. In the former, that is, he refers to the unity; and in the latter to the individual qualities contained in the concept, body, which are related to the unity as the antecedens to the consequens."¹⁰¹

Heidegger outlined a similar concept of identity in his essay "The Principle of Identity" (1957.)¹⁰² In that essay Heidegger claimed that $A = A$ contains a prior

fundamental difference needed to identify the subject A and its identity re-asserted *as* A in the form of a tautology. Heidegger wrote that the principle of identity says: “for every A, A is itself the same.”¹⁰³ Stated negatively: “every A is different than every other A given, yet each A is the same for itself.”¹⁰⁴ Take for example the proposition: “A body is blue.” “Blue” (the predicate) belongs to the body but is not entirely identical with it. One might say that the predicate “blue” belongs to the subject “body,” but they are not *completely* the same. In asserting the law of identity, $A = A$, the latter re-assertion of A (that is: something = A) must be thought to belong to the first assertion of A (that is: A = something.) So the latter assertion of A can also be thought as being different or separate from the first assertion. Heidegger wrote that,

According to the common idea of identity, this sentence means body and blue are the same thing. But body and blue are different things....If they are both now to be the same according to the proposition as an expression of identity, they can only be such if they are so in a different respect....What, then, is meant in the statement of identity? Identity is the belonging together of what is different in one.¹⁰⁵

Thinking about the difference between subject and predicate (represented by the copula “is”) comes about through a thought that attempts to think about the self-same identity of Being. Identity qua identity is enabled by a difference between two assertions of its sameness; in the example above, an “equals” sign (=) or the copula “is” represents difference within a proposition for a selfsame identity. The copula “is,” Heidegger said, “takes over and makes possible” the predicate for the subject.¹⁰⁶ In the Schelling lecture Heidegger noted that,

Subject is predicate means S grounds the possibility of being of P, is the ground lying at the basis and thus prior. 'S is P' means S 'grounds,' gives P its ground....A sentence such as 'God is everything' must from the beginning not be understood to mean a mere, boundless identicalness of God and all things in the sense of a lawless primeval hodgepodge. If the statement has something philosophically essential to say, it is just the question of how the 'is' is to be understood here.¹⁰⁷

Thus, in the example above, the copula 'is' represents the ontological difference between subject and predicate that gives identity as such; it grounds the possibility of being a predicate for a subject. The ontological difference or "between relation" of the copula is a "ground" or basis for possible predication.

The idea that the law of identity rests on a fundamental ontological difference was the thrust of Schelling's argument against Spinoza's pantheism. Schelling remarked that an infinite substance "A" could not be infinite and identical with one of its consequences "a."¹⁰⁸ For, if "a" exists in derivative relation to "A," and "A" is infinite, then how could "a" be a particular and finite thing, recognizable as such?¹⁰⁹ From the viewpoint of pantheism, Schelling thought, the infinite identity of God supersedes all within a pure abstract identity, that of Substance. This God posits its own will and determines only itself. Yet, as all things are said to be *in* God, finite wills are nothing more than God's infinite will. Schelling wrote that the error of Spinoza's system

is by no means due to the fact that he posits all things in God, but to the fact that they are things—to the abstract conception of the world and its creatures, indeed of eternal Substance itself, which is also a thing for him....He treats the will, too, as a thing, and then proves, very naturally, that in every case of its operation it must be determined by some other thing....and so forth endlessly. Hence the lifelessness of his system, the harshness of its form....Thence also, quite consistently, his mechanistic view of nature.¹¹⁰

Schelling challenged the rigidity of Spinoza's system, and I think, challenged Hegel's rational determinism within the same line of thought. He did so because both Spinoza and Hegel posit identity as "self-same"—creatures are in God, and thus creatures *are* God—the difference between the two is subsumed within an absolute identity. For Spinoza that identity is Substance and for Hegel that identity is consciousness or Spirit [*Geist*.] Another way of stating this is that Schelling, opposed to Spinoza and Hegel, was a philosopher of difference. Thinking and being, finite and infinite, subject and object are merely formal differences and parallel modifications of one infinite Substance or Absolute, and nothing more for Spinoza and Hegel, according to Schelling. His major disagreement with the Spinozian and Hegelian systems was that he thought that they only conceptually posited an ontological difference between God and creature or between the finite and infinite, and thus he thought that they neglected a real ontological difference working at the basis of nature. Without a real difference between the finite and infinite, the infinite taken as Absolute is a contradiction in terms because it is the positing of itself against itself, and nothing else. In this way finite beings *could not be*. Heidegger remarked how this was true of Hegel's conception of nature with reference to Spinoza: "In Spinoza, Hegel finds the fully developed 'standpoint of substance' which cannot, however, be the highest standpoint because Being is not yet thought equally and fundamentally as thinking thinking itself....Spinoza appeals always afresh to the whole thinking of German idealism, and at the same time provokes its contradiction, because he lets thinking begin with the absolute."¹¹ Stated differently, with a traditional understanding of identity, thinking begins with the Absolute and never leaves it behind. Difference between the finite and infinite was thought to be a conceptual contribution, but

as Heidegger pointed out, it is antecedent to *any* positing of identity as such, formal or otherwise, as in the case of a being's very own being, ontologically speaking. Heidegger wrote, "Whenever we come to the place to which we were supposedly first bringing difference along as an alleged contribution, we always find that Being and beings in their difference are already there."¹¹²

Corrington leads the way in the effort to view Peirce and Heidegger grappling with this basic already-present ontological difference which serves as the basis for all possible identity, but which is not itself any one established or substantial identity *per se*. That is, this ground, when taken as *difference* (a fundamental "not" within experience), is itself without "ground" and is therefore also "groundless." Thus the "ground" [*Grund*] is without ground or "groundless" [*Ab-grund*.] Analogically speaking, one could picture ontological difference as an "abyss" that permits possible meanings to surface from its depths, yet which is not itself any one of those meanings individually. Corrington claims that admitting this abyss into the "depths" of nature provides an explanation for how the divine life, discussed in the previous chapters, exists as a becoming life, which is, for him, "God."¹¹³ Corrington then claims that Schellingean ground represents the basic ontological difference between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*, or "products" and "productivity," where the life of God swells and surges forth from within ontological difference.¹¹⁴

In order to explore this ontological difference, Corrington turns to Schelling's key description of "unruly" ground.¹¹⁵ This means that the ground resists being "gathered up under the arms of reason and brought into a full transparency."¹¹⁶ Schellingean ground is, for him, "the ground of all grounds beyond good and evil."¹¹⁷ This idea resounds of

Schelling's contention that the ground for nature's development remains within God, yet is not of God's own nature. As such, the ground within God permits the freedom of choice between good and evil.¹¹⁸ Most important for Corrington is how ground permits God's continual act of self-revelation, which is, I think, an incredibly important feature of experience for the ontologies of Peirce and Heidegger. In Peirce, nature's self-revelation is the confirmation of a hypothesis for an inquiring organism, and for Heidegger it is Being's self-disclosedness spoken by the poet. The ground's "unruliness" is nothing short of its freedom to resist being brought to order, and as such, like Firstness, it remains a nonrational ground of feeling and possibility lying incomprehensibly at the basis of all things. Schelling's most forceful and clear statement about this ground, now discussed in its full ontological import, is as follows.

Following the eternal act of self-revelation, the world as we now behold it, is all rule, order and form; but the unruly lies ever in the depths as though it might again break through, and order and form nowhere appear to have been original, but it seems as though what had initially been unruly had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible basis of reality of things, the irreducible remainder which cannot be resolved into reason by the greatest exertion but always remains in the depths. Out of this which is unreasonable, reason in the true sense is born. Without the preceding gloom, creation would have no reality; darkness is its necessary heritage.¹¹⁹

Thus, one views how Schelling thought that identity is only possible because of ground. Without the preceding "gloom" of the depths—the "unruly" and "incomprehensible basis of reality of things," the world would not have a reality. One catches a glimpse of these depths by manner of whatever "reversed directionality" of actuality points back towards what has made reality *possible*. The actualities of nature, *nature natured*, or Schelling's

Welt, always point back towards this ground as a source for its own possibilities.¹²⁰ The point to be drawn for my purposes here is how this ground provides for the possible being of identity, and as such, assumes a power of identity-bestowal in and through its own unconditioned status as a basis or ground for experience.

As all products of nature remain “in” the difference of this ground—in the sense that beings are defined by this fundamental “not” of nature—a priority of ground appears, and to some degree, warrants sacred status. Corrington writes, “The unruly ground is best understood through the image of the churning sea that is absolutely indifferent to whatever may occur on or below its surface, but which also provides nourishment to its creatures. Two aspects of this relationship assume priority: the encompassing quality of the unruly ground, which we will refer to as its providingness (Buchler) and its nutritional dimension, which we will refer to as its form of natural grace.”¹²¹ Recall from Chapter Three my use of John McDermott’s concept of “uterine existence.” “Uterine existence” is an encompassing state in which the organism is submerged into a sort of depth of nature’s being that is nowhere completely beyond the scope of detection and which remains an unconditioned *sacred* providing source for the organism’s spiritual well being. Yet, what *is* this source other than sheer providingness or simply an encompassing nature? Corrington remarks that, “We have providingness but no provider, natural grace but no bestower of grace.... The failure to live in the continual self-overturning of the ontological difference has meant that selected traits from pertinent orders of nature natured have been illegally smuggled over the border into the domain of nature naturing.”¹²² In other words, human comportment toward an incomprehensible and differential ground often poses its own anthropocentric portraits of what this face of

nature should be, as if it were *a thing*, rather than a creative ground and source for the very being of nature.

I previously mentioned how this ground is found “in-between” nature naturing and nature natured—perhaps one might say “in-between” be-ing itself—and as such constitutes the very identity of Being. Perhaps this was why Heidegger hyphenated being; so as to mark a non-onto-theologically appropriated mode of Being [*Sein*] in effort to display the “in-between” of the ontological difference already contained within Being. The question arises whether the “in-between” of the ontological difference is impossible to cross; that is, one must ask if ontological difference separates finite beings of nature from the infinite source of nature naturing which creates them, then can finite beings ever understand or catch a glimpse of the infinite? Stated differently, can one directly face the abyss and think “about” ontological difference as if it were a representation, thus crossing the abyss between finite and infinite? One must find a bridge or jointure between the two so that the finite can both see itself as finite and as relating to the infinite, yet all the while one must maintain a real difference between the two so as to honor their separate identities. As shall become apparent in the following section, it is the jointure of ground and existence which accomplishes this task and which permits finite beings to encounter the infinite in acts of transcendence.

To summarize my points so far, I believe that the jointure of Schelling’s ground is similar in function to Heidegger’s ontological difference, yet conceived within an onto-theological framework. The ontological difference turns out to be a basis for identifying existence as such. In Heidegger’s ontology, ground means free self-giving of Being [*es gibt*] to *Dasein*, and in Schelling’s ontology ground means the freedom of becoming for

the divine life of God.¹²³ In both ontologies, ground is a ground *of* freedom and *for* freedom, but is not itself anything specific, determined, absolute, or substantive. Ground is always “without ground” [*Abgrund*], and so defies any sort of substance ontology that posits a concrete foundation resting at the bottom of existence. This is not to deny the reality of freedom found in that ground, but quite the contrary. A lack of a concretely posited foundation is a positive affirmation of the reality of freedom whether for *Dasein* or God’s own transcendence as a freely becoming life. Heidegger put it this way: “Freedom is the ground of ground. Yet not simply in the sense of a formal, endless....freedom is the abyss of ground [*Ab-grund*] in *Dasein*. Not that our individual, free comportment is groundless; rather, in its essence as transcendence, freedom places *Dasein*, as potentiality for being, in possibilities that gape open before its finite choice.”¹²⁴ And Schelling stated his idea of the “groundless” [*Abgrund*] in this way:

Here at last we reach the highest point of the whole inquiry. The question has long been heard: What is to be gained by that initial distinction between being insofar as it is basis, and being insofar as it exists?....We have already explained what we assume in the first respect: there must be a being before all basis and before all existence, that is, before any duality at all; how can we designate it except as ‘primal ground’ or, rather, as the groundless? As it precedes all antitheses these cannot be distinguishable in it or be present in any way at all. It cannot then be called the identity of both, but only the absolute indifference as to both.¹²⁵

Without the ground-*less*, the two-foldness of identity, A equals itself, A, would be a blank identity, that of the Absolute. If an ontological difference did not antecedently claim the identity of the Absolute, then any formulated identity distinct from the Absolute *would not be possible*. Regardless of its ultimate source, the ground/grounded relationship

posits nature in its own very identity and allows for difference to be found within its very own being. That is, the divine life can be identified as a life (a unitary identity or system of ordered nature) *and* finite creatures are able to reflect on that life, and on their own lives. In this way finite beings grow and develop belonging to nature yet also remain distinct from it. The crucial distinction here is the reality of the ontological difference between ground and what is grounded. Due to the nature of this real difference, transcendence is indeed possible. One might say that a creature who is grounded, when experiencing the difference between itself and what is ground or gives ground, “transcends” its own finitude by becoming aware of a greater reality which it is *not*.

By “transcendence” I am referring to my discussion earlier in this dissertation where I spoke about Peirce’s and Schelling’s “not-yet,” or the ground of possibility working at the basis of nature which plays such an important role in the contrast between finite creatures and the infinite cosmos. It was claimed that, when standing over a ground of possibility (possibilizing), finite creatures have the potential to gain a sense of the infinite in an act of transcendence available through abduction. I have described this event as “ecstatic.” Heidegger spoke of a similar ecstatic event as a sort of transcendence, where *Dasein* reaches from itself to a world that is *beyond* it, where “world” means a totality of meanings and purposes within which *Dasein* can act and can encounter beings.¹²⁶ Is this “beyond” toward which *Dasein* transcends beyond nature—is it supernatural? Or, does Heidegger’s transcendence fall within the limits of the reality of nature and therefore mirror the Peircean finite-infinite relationship of transcendence?

C. GROUND FOR TRANSCENDENCE: POSSIBILITY

As early as 1928 in the essay “On the Essence of Ground,” Heidegger wrote that “Transcendence means surpassing” [*Überstieg.*]¹²⁷ Transcendence was claimed not to entail a relation to a higher being like God, but rather said to involve the possibilities for *Dasein*’s own self-surpassing.¹²⁸ As a surpassing, the occurrence of transcending “passes ‘from’ something ‘to’ something.”¹²⁹ Heidegger wrote that, “To surpassing there thus belongs that toward which such surpassing occurs, that which is usually, though inaccurately, called ‘the transcendent.’”¹³⁰ Here Heidegger appealed to the religious motif of transcendence in order to describe a more general structure of being-in-the-world. But for Heidegger, transcendence is finite, or as I stated in the last chapter, transcendence is always “lateral” because what is being transcended belongs to the realm of nature, for inevitably, beings belong to Being. Stated in Peirce’s language, while one may surpass beyond what is immediately sensible, one does not necessarily surpass to the supernatural. Thus, Heidegger is speaking of a *finite form of transcendence*. Frank Schalow explains it this way: “When understood as a finite disclosure, Being remains ontologically prior to a ‘transcendent’ God, who is *a* being.”¹³¹ There is not a Supreme Being or first cause against whom *Dasein* is posed and transcends toward as an unconditional object.¹³² Heidegger thereby sought to purge the concept of transcendence of all “other worldly” or “supernatural” overtones. This sort of finite transcendence does have room for a concept of the infinite if what is infinite takes on a different sort of form than that of *a* being who is deemed infinite.

In Heidegger’s view of transcendence, what, then, is being surpassed? Heidegger wrote that *Dasein* surpasses itself when it transcends its own current factual situation and

projects forward towards its own future [*Jemeinigkeit*.]¹³³ The transcendent for Heidegger simply meant *the conditions* for *Dasein*'s self-surpassing to become a self and "prevail" in the world.¹³⁴ "Transcendence" is always an active projecting-ahead in the sense that *Dasein* projects a future for itself given the conditions for its possibility. These conditions of possibility permit *Dasein* to become itself. Heidegger wrote that, "Transcendence constitutes selfhood. Yet once again, it never in the first instance constitutes only selfhood; rather, the surpassing in each case intrinsically concerns also beings that *Dasein* 'itself' is not."¹³⁵ *Dasein* surpasses itself only on the basis of what is *not*: its own possibilities of what can-be-possible. In this sense, then, *Dasein*'s transcendence depends on a radical form of temporality, but even more fundamentally on a radical form of ontological modality. By reaching into the present, the future, and past, *Dasein* reaches beyond beings to Being.¹³⁶ Heidegger could claim that his project is transcendental if he would mean to say that Being's temporal framework is a condition for *Dasein* to go beyond beings to their Being.¹³⁷ This "going beyond" constitutes the ecstatic moment: that is, it is a "standing out" [*ekstatisches*] of what is "standing in" [*Innestehen*] the world.¹³⁸

On a deeper level, *Dasein*'s own possibility first becomes recognizable through a more fundamental ontological difference between what is and what permits anything to be (or to possibly become), rather than not be. In other words, *Dasein*'s own possibilities rest upon a more primordial "not" belonging to the structure of Being itself.¹³⁹ This "not" belongs to the ontological difference discussed earlier, or in Heidegger's words, and in the sense that I am discussing here, the ontological difference is the "not between beings and Being."¹⁴⁰ For Schelling, too, the human being stands "in" this fulcrum point of

ontological difference (in-difference) among beings between God realized as Absolute and the ground for God's unfolding in a divine life. *Dasein* exists in the midpoint between this not-being and actualized being, which is simultaneously a possibility-for-being and what *Dasein* already is or could be in the future. In a strikingly similar comparison to John William Miller's "midworld," Schelling mentioned that "man occupies a middle place between the non-being of nature and the absolute Being, God....He is free from God having an independent root in nature; free from nature through the fact that the divine is awakened in him, that which in the midst of nature is above nature."¹⁴¹ Here the reader may wish to recall the staircase analogy from Chapter Two where Peircean inquirers are situated on a continuum of being in the cosmos. In the 1936 lecture, Heidegger remarked how Schelling's God reveals itself by virtue of this fundamental "not" within its own Being.¹⁴² Thus, God contains an ontological *difference* within its own *identity*. As such, this ontological difference is a basis of possibility for God's very own transcendence as a self or as a life. Heidegger explained as follows,

Schelling begins by showing this distinction of ground and existence in God.... We can say that the kind of grounding remains indefinite....ground only means the whence of God's existence....If God is the existent being, then the most difficult and greatest becoming must be in Him and this becoming must have the most extreme scope between this whence and his whither. But at the same time, it is true that this whence of God and also the whither can again only be in God and as God himself: Being!....Thus "existence" is understood beforehand as "emergence-from-self" revealing oneself and in becoming revealed to oneself coming to oneself.¹⁴³

Thus, God is a divine life for Schelling, as it is for Peirce: God does exist as the one necessary God, but is, as well, a becoming life—which is another way of saying that God is God but not-yet “Himself,” to use the Christian metaphysical language that Schelling employed. In order to become, God contains a ground of becoming for His own existence which is “not” God, yet this ground is still “His” ground.¹⁴⁴ Stated in terms used in Chapter Three, God’s identity is slowly filled in or shaped by the contexts of cosmic evolution and the growth of universe-wide mentality. In this way, even God self-surpasses Himself, or transcends His own being as a life.

What, then, is transcendence for Peirce? Like Heidegger and Schelling, Peirce could only have a finite or “lateral” form of transcendence. In Peirce’s philosophy, transcendence did not mean ascending toward what is outside the ordinary categories, but rather meant moving toward the conditions that establish the possibility for experience. This is not to say that Peirce thought of himself as a “transcendental” philosopher, but only that he maintained the basic categories of experience would direct the nature and formation of all possible questions. He wrote for example that,

A transcendentalist would claim that it is an indispensable ‘presupposition’ that there is an ascertainable true answer to every intelligible question. I used to talk like that, myself; for when I was a babe in philosophy my bottle was filled from the udders of Kant. But by this time I have come to want something more substantial.¹⁴⁵

As established in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, there is nothing outside of the categories to transcend *to*, at least so far as human cognition might experience it. Peirce did claim that philosophy must be open to the possibility of the revelation of experience,

and that the limit towards which experiment and scientific learning tends but has not yet reached is “the knowledge of an individual, in short, God.”¹⁴⁶ However, for Peirce, like Heidegger, one must ask the question: what can be experienced other than nature? In Heideggerean terms: what can *be*, other than *Dasein* and world? Peirce seemed to maintain that one may ask transcendental questions about experience but not necessarily think outside of the conditions for that experience. He wrote,

I hold...that man is so completely hemmed in by the bounds of his possible practical experience, his mind so restricted to being the instrument of his needs, that he cannot, in the least, mean anything which transcends those limits...For let him try ever so hard to think about what is beyond that limit, it simply cannot be done.¹⁴⁷

Thus for both philosophers transcendence is identical with the possibility of experience but represents nothing beyond it.

Finite or “lateral” transcendence may pressure one to say that without a beyond that somehow exists “outside” of experience there could be no God, for God is *ex hypothesi* beyond experience and the natural world. Heidegger’s concept of transcendence did not completely debar an understanding of the divine, just as Peirce’s understanding of transcendence did not block the reality of the infinite. In order to experience divinity, an act of “transcendence” is indeed necessary, but not in any traditional sense as advanced by the history of metaphysics. Rather, transcendence was said to be first and foremost an act initiated from within a specific understanding of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world, to use Heidegger’s language. Only by first considering one’s world and the immanent relations within it may one begin to consider the divine as

something “transcendental;” that is, something which establishes the conditions for the possibility of finite experience. This may be an infinite or unconditioned condition, but stands necessarily in relation to what is finite and must always find its disclosure there; otherwise it would transcend the limits of possible experience. In this way, the divine stands in a direct relationship to finite creatures. Heidegger wrote, “The ontological interpretation of Dasein as being-in-the-world tells neither for nor against the possible existence of God. One must first gain an adequate concept of Dasein by illuminating transcendence. Then, by considering Dasein, one can ask how the relation of Dasein to God is ontologically constituted.”¹⁴⁸

III. THE SACRED DEPTHS OF NATURE

A. SCHELLING’S PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

So far I have pointed to how acts of transcendence necessarily link to an inhabited and lived world. It is not the case that Heidegger or Peirce denied the appearance of divinity. In fact, the opposite is true: the revelation of divinity belongs to how truths are disclosed within experience. It is important to note that the “identity” of truth asserted is not strict identity, but the identity of “indifference.” That is, “truth,” or the revelation of how things are, means the invariance and becoming of concepts based on a fundamental difference that permits identity to be. The transcendental structure of the revelation of these truths rests within “the system” itself, or nature. There is no “outside the system” in the sense that there cannot be a coherent account of what is revealed. However, there is indeed something that is beyond the system only in the sense that it does not belong to the

system's abstract or rational intelligibility but nevertheless appears there, even if in feeling or through some non-rational representation or event. Thus, Heidegger's philosophy of difference points directly toward the simultaneous empowering yet elusive nature of Peircean Firstness as it is an unconditioned feature of nature *found within* experience that also *eludes* experience, at least so far as one may rationally attempt to consider nature in its full expression. In order to shed further light on this elusive ground that is required for truth and the divine's appearance, I shall turn to looking at Schelling's philosophy of nature. Schelling specifically articulated a philosophy of ground despite its elusive features, and he developed a model of nature not unlike the Peircean-Heideggerean understanding of reality.

Like Peirce's account of nature, Schelling's nature is a progression of consciousness from the depths of experience working its way toward self-consciousness.¹⁴⁹ Thus there is a progression of finite or limited mind to a greater infinite mind, similar to Peirce's continuum discussed in Chapter Three. To bridge the gulf between the finite and the infinite within traditional metaphysics, typically one had to cross an unbridgeable rift between the two; most notably between creature and God. On Schelling's view however, *the infinite is reflected in the finite*: "The body is an infinite-and-finite sort of thing, a definite individual, yet capable nonetheless of exhibiting the whole universe (presumably by registering any change of state in its ongoing interaction with its environment.)"¹⁵⁰ In his view, God's reality is reflected in the cosmos and accounts for how the divine and its truths can be found "inside the system." This is possible because God's reality works *through* nature, yet always has a *telos* that strives to reach beyond it.¹⁵¹ In this way Schelling's theory of cosmic and divine development

resembles Peirce's theory of cosmic development in the positing of a divine life that is reflected through finite aspects of nature. The fact that the infinite, or divine life, *can be* reflected in the finite draws on a ground structure similar to that found in Peircean Firstness. The same ontological-cosmological and phenomenological features of Peirce's ground operate within Schelling's concept of ground. Both versions of ground allow for the divine's potential disclosure. Both versions of ground permit the divine's ever-becoming nature.

By "becoming" Schelling meant the transition from not-yet-being, or possibility, to actual being. Since a "not" occurs in this transition, a lack and thus a finitude of God is suggested.¹⁵² How is it that the divine might contain something not of its own nature, a *lack* of actual being? Schelling answered in the following way.

We recognize, rather, that the concept of becoming is the only one adequate to the nature of things. But the process of their becoming cannot be in God, viewed absolutely, since they are distinct from him *toto genere* or—more accurately—in eternity. To be separate from God they would have to carry on this becoming on a basis different from him. But since there can be nothing outside God, this contradiction can only be solved by things having their basis in that within God which is not *God himself*, in that which is the basis of his existence. If we wish to bring this Being nearer to us from a human standpoint, we say: It is the longing which the eternal One feels to give birth to itself. This is not the One itself, but is co-eternal with it. This longing seeks to give birth to God, i.e., the unfathomable unity.¹⁵³

Schelling was speaking about a primal longing of the divine life that, through a hungering "in and for itself," is brought into unity with a higher principle, and through a means of synthesis brings about the world. This longing stems from the primal ground, and represents a "primordial sundering in Nature itself."¹⁵⁴ Ground is, by analogy, an origin

of gravity and darkness, or ontologically speaking, it is the fundamental lack and absence of being that seeks to affirm itself. It is “what burdens and pulls, contracts and in this connection what withdraws and flees.”¹⁵⁵ On this account, Schelling stated that the primal ground is a basis of “nought of own-ness,” “seclusion,” “supported by nothing,” “pure egoity,” and pure “indifference” to all.¹⁵⁶ He added that this ground is “emptiness,” “non-being,” “nothingness,” “pure potentiality,” “contingency,” “the darkness in the heart of God,” “the unconscious,” and “the non-ground [*Abgrund*] which is the primal ground [*Urgrund*].”¹⁵⁷ In many ways, the ephemeral, intangible, and fleeting nature of this ground appears similar to Firstness—especially as both are deemed creative spawning beds of the laws of being according to each philosopher’s respective philosophical cosmology. The basis of nature for both Schelling and Peirce appears to be an ontological lack that seeks actualization and completion. However, as a mode of *possible* being, this ontological lack cannot complete its actualization, unless it is brought to fruition in Secondness through Thirdness. A different way of putting this idea is to state that Schellingean ground/Peircean Firstness has no rational application in and of itself, though it is not necessarily antithetical to reasoning either.

Schelling’s concept of ground is one of three “divine potentials,” also called “potencies” [*die Potenzen*], which are the basic forces of nature. The first divine potency is the power of the abyss, or depths [*Abgrund*] mentioned a moment ago.¹⁵⁸ It is the truly free, indeterminate, spontaneous, and creative dimension in God. The second potency is always “the clearing” for ground.¹⁵⁹ It is analogically described as “light” and is the power which develops gravity.¹⁶⁰ What is “light” is always the clearing of “what is intertwined and entangled, what is veiled and obscure.”¹⁶¹ Or, as Heidegger clarified in

the 1936 lecture, “What is to be illuminated precedes light as its ground from which it emerges in order to be itself light.”¹⁶² The second divine potency is “God’s essence, a light of life shining in the dark depths,” “the principle of being,” “reason,” “order,” “positivity,” and “the principle of love.”¹⁶³ God’s actuality—personal existence or life—is the eternal, necessary, self-generated synthesis of the tension between the first two divine potencies.¹⁶⁴ That is, God’s actuality consists in the unity of the divine potentials and finds expression in Idea, intelligibility, law, and Self-Consciousness.¹⁶⁵

In addition to manifesting the divine life of God, the striving of the potencies results in a “primordial motion” which nature represents through matter.¹⁶⁶ That is, the matter of nature is the temporary result of how each of the potencies interact with one another in a form of rotary motion that produces a common “product,” in this case the products of nature, or *nature natured*. The motion of nature is considered its “productivity,” or *nature naturing*. The antithetical features of the potencies, including cohesion and expansion, attraction and repulsion, assure that productivity is endless in its creative power. Thus, the tension between them is taken to be incapable of an absolute or determinative resolution and nature is rendered infinite in its motioning. As Schelling put it, “This struggle will not cease until there exists a common product. The product, while forming itself, proceeds from both sides through all intermediate links that lie between the product.”¹⁶⁷

Schelling explained how God’s personal existence is the eternal unification of the contradiction between the first two potencies in a third divine nature:

The essence of the basis, or of existence, can only be precedent to all basis [*Urgrund*], that is, the absolute viewed directly, the groundless [*Abgrund*]. . . . The groundless divides itself into the two equally eternal beginnings only in order that the two . . . should become one . . . it divides itself only that there may be life and love and personal existence.¹⁶⁸

In a draft of the text, *The Ages of the World* (1815), Schelling shed further light on how the rotary motion of nature's primal elements constitutes an "essential contradiction" that propels God's infinite and divine life.¹⁶⁹ In this particular text, and to quote his specifically Christian metaphysical terminology, Schelling wrote that God permits what is not "self-same" or what is not of His own nature to exist within His own reality.¹⁷⁰ God's permission (willing) for what is "not-self" to exist within what is "self" constitutes the power behind the continued development of the cosmos and as such guarantees that the divine life is infinite. Additionally, the permitted contradiction urges all life into motion as beings seek to resolve the tension between the two contradictory poles of being found in the potencies: self and not-self, being and non-being, light and gravity, and all other fundamental oppositions.

God's *self*-positing helps to personalize the essential contradiction and propel nature forward in an eternal motion that is the very life of the divine. In the Freedom essay, the openness of an unconditioned divine nature explains how evil might be found in the universe. The possibility of evil lies in the freedom of God, provided by the ground which is without any determination whatsoever. It is, in the words of one commentator, "the dark abyss beyond love and reason."¹⁷¹ In Schelling's words: "In order that evil should not be, God himself would have not to be The good is to be raised out of darkness to actuality in order to dwell with God everlastingly; and evil is to be separated

from goodness in order to be cast out eternally into non-being. For this is the final purpose of creation.”¹⁷² My point here, however, is to show how for Schelling, *all* life begins in contradiction and longs for its resolution, even the divine life. What is interesting is that the tension of contradiction found in the divine life finds no permanent resolution because its constitutive potencies are essential to the being of the universe, and as such, the rotary motion and alteration of the potencies goads the universe into an infinite state of development. Schelling explained that, “If primal nature were in harmony with itself, it would remain; there would be an abiding one and never a two, an eternal immobility without progress. As certainly as there is life, there is contradiction in primal nature.”¹⁷³ And, “The Universe which forms itself from the center towards the periphery seeks the point at which even the extreme antitheses of nature cancel themselves, the impossibility of this canceling guarantees the infinity of the Universe.”¹⁷⁴

B. SCHELLING’S FIRST DIVINE POTENTIAL AND PEIRCEAN FIRSTNESS

The comparisons to Peirce’s categorial organization of the cosmos here are far more than evident when Schelling’s first potency is matched with Peircean Firstness. Various modes of being co-exist and their interaction goads the development of the cosmos. The cosmos grows progressively law-like through the synthesis of the first two categories. Or, in Schelling’s words, “Following the eternal act of self-revelation...grow clear thoughts.”¹⁷⁵ Peirce envisioned this creation of law as a continual process rather than a once-and-for-all happening. As Firstness creates each new law it adds a new created reality to an evolving cosmos. Thus, for Peirce, and for Schelling, there is an organic and holistic dimension to divine creation that is ever-present. For example,

Schelling wrote: “God then has no beginning only in so far as there is no beginning of his beginning. The beginning in God is eternal beginning, that is, such a one as was beginning from all eternity, and still is, and also never ceases to be beginning.”¹⁷⁶ On the Peircean-Schellingean model, creation happens *anew* with each passing moment. Peirce’s view of nature insisted that the creation of law develops toward completed Thirdness law. Nature tends to drift towards this goal, but does not *necessarily* reach it. In Schelling, one finds something similar: “We must imagine the primal longing in this way—turning towards the understanding, indeed, though not yet recognizing it, just as we longingly desire unknown, nameless excellence.”¹⁷⁷ The fact that nature drifts towards a state of completion but has not as of yet reached it is due to what Corrington calls the “depth dimension of a self-transfiguring nature.”¹⁷⁸ This depth dimension is basically equal to the Schellingean-Heideggerean *Abgrund*. Comparing Firstness to *Abgrund*, Firstness is “the chaos” or “nothingness...[that] antecedes the infinitely distant absolute beginning of time...in which there is no variety, but only an indefinite specificability which is nothing but a tendency to the diversification of the nothing.”¹⁷⁹ Corrington writes that for Peirce,

The true originative power of the universe is a deep nothingness that is more of a tendency than an actual pool of diversified possibilities. We call this a domain of nature’s potencies (to use a term from Schelling.) The potencies of nothingness are ontologically prior to the possibilities that obtain in what we could call the lesser nothingness [non-actualized propositional or conceptual possibility, as opposed to real modal possibility.] This is a kind of storehouse of possible objects and events, that has no internal variety, but which makes variety possible....Nothingness is the cosmic soup of possibilities that can become actualized whenever emergents take on habits. Deeper down is the greater nothingness that provides the metaphysical goad for cosmogenesis. That is, the deeper domain of the potencies of nature provides the true restlessness that

compels the universe into existence. The locus of chance is thus to be found in the greater nothingness that is continually spawning possibilities, and through the 'agency' of lesser nothingness, actualities (seconds), Peirce wants the necessitarian to go to the heart of nature, rather than cling to its surface phenomena.¹⁸⁰

Here Corrington points out Peirce's appropriation of the Schellingean depths of cosmic Firstness in the first divine potential. "Firstness-freedom" is precisely just the tendency for possibility to diversify from its primal real ontologically modal form into a "lesser" nothing of unactualized possibility. As possibility hungers to become actual, a higher principle, that of Secondness or the facticity of established principle in Thirdness, will draw it out from the depths of nature.

Peirce also wrote how the primal state of non-being or "nothingness" contracts and births nature much as Schelling's first divine potential, which is a lack of being, contracts and births the divine life of God. Peirce called this particular aspect of Firstness, "the chaos," an interesting term when compared to Schelling's "unruly" ground. The chaos is the first stage of the evolution of law, and it is vagueness which permits the being all things general. Peirce said,

The chaos is a state of intensest feeling, although, memory and habit being totally absent, it is sheer nothing still. Feeling has existence only so far as it is welded into feeling. Now the welding of this feeling to the great whole of feeling is accomplished only by the reflection of a later date. In itself, therefore, it is nothing; but in its relation to the end it is everything.¹⁸¹

And

The evolution of forms begins or, at any rate, has for an early stage of it, a vague potentiality; and that either is or is followed by a continuum of forms having a

multitude of dimensions too great for the individual dimensions to be distinct. It must be by a contraction of the vagueness of that potentiality of everything in general, but of nothing in particular, that the world of forms comes about.¹⁸²

Peirce then added to the first quotation above, “If what is demanded is a theological backing, or rational antecedent, to the chaos, that my theory fully supplies.”¹⁸³ What might this theological backing look like if Peircean Firstness is similar to *Abgrund*? Corrington mentions how Peirce, like Schelling, is “asking us to meditate on the question of the origin of the world depicted in terms of categories.”¹⁸⁴ As Raposa has argued, and as I claimed in Chapter Three, for Peirce this seems to be a theological question, in addition to a metaphysical one. Firstness *founds* Secondness and Thirdness, and so is that vague basis of reality which permits the orders of nature to arise, doing so by virtue of the modal possibility and freedom found within it. Firstness is, to use Peirce’s phrase, “the womb of indeterminacy” from within which nature’s products are birthed and where freedom is of a reality.¹⁸⁵ Corrington writes that,

Peirce wanted to see nature as somehow larger than the domain articulated by the sciences. His analysis of firstness made it possible for him to peel off the cover protecting the pre-empirical dimension of the world. His attempt to find purpose in the world represented an effort to keep the future open to novel transformations....growth is....located in the abyss of nature naturing from which the unpredictable potencies continue....to spawn the innumerable orders of the world.¹⁸⁶

Thus, Peircean Firstness is a ground of freedom for development, it represents a power within nature that functions with a similar goal as Schelling’s first divine potential: to enable growth and a developmental teleology. It is a ground that “self transfigures” nature—the divine life’s own ground of freedom is just the space required for it to move

toward an ideal consummation in the *summum bonum*, but not without an opposite directionality, a whence, always impelling becoming. As Corrington writes,

The so-called ‘transcendental’ Peirce is actually the ecstatic naturalist who probed into the ontological difference (not named as such by Peirce) so that he could understand something deeper than purpose....Peirce grasped the edges of the ontological difference and cleared the way for a radicalization of naturalism. In this radicalization, his own pragmatism can be reconfigured to better correspond to the abyss within nature, an abyss that comes to meet thought in ecstatic naturalism that lets go of the panrationalism that blocks the path of piety.¹⁸⁷

IV. CONCLUSION: PEIRCE FROM A HEIDEGGERIAN ANGLE OF VISION

Schelling suggested that part of appropriating nature in its divine aspect requires a transition from viewing nature merely as a created product to viewing it in its process of nature naturing, or in terms of its creativity. How one accomplishes this shift in view depends on “grasping the movement of becoming,” where “becoming” references the motioning of nature: the rotary motion of the three divine potentials in God’s existent divine life.¹⁸⁸ Thus, *how* one understands nature will ultimately determine *what* one is able to understand about the divine life. Heidegger advocated a similar shift in the disposition of *Dasein* so as to view “beings” not simply as created “manufactured” things but rather as unconcealed beings belonging to Being. This shift in disposition would require thinking about the fundamental ontological difference between beings and Being, and appropriating Being. Here, in this final section, I would like to explore this shift in disposition; a shift in the conscious apprehension of nature’s unfolding so that one might be mindful of what sacred reflections may appear in the unfolding of the divine life. I call

such a disposition of viewing nature's disclosures a "disposition of receptivity":
remaining open to the suggestions of nature, its processes, and what those processes
might possibly disclose.

A. NATURE AND BEYNG'S ESSENTIAL SWAY

Commenting about Schelling, Heidegger wrote that,

Created nature is not to be understood as nature as it is now, as we see it, but as becoming, creating nature...Man is not to be understood as that familiar living being gifted with reason who hangs around on a planet and can be dissected into his components, but as that being who is in himself the 'deepest abyss' of Being and at the same time 'the highest heaven.'...God, nature, and man are understood from the very beginning in a different way and as such they must only now and at the same time move into the essential project of their becoming. This becoming is the essence of Being. Thus Being also cannot be understood as the brute existence of something manufactured, but must be understood as the jointure of ground and existence.¹⁸⁹

While Heidegger did not have in mind the ecstatic presentation of a God, he did agree with a required dispositional shift from *Dasein* so as to grasp beings in their generative or "becoming" nature. In other words, *Dasein* must become *Da-sein* so as to receive Beyng's granted truth. With this starting point in mind, I would like to ask how Heidegger's Being is similar to Peirce's conception of an evolving cosmos and divine life. In what way is the *Abgrund* present within Beyng, compelling it to conceal and reveal "truth," i.e., a disclosedness of how things are? Does this Heideggerean primal ground match in any way with Peirce's account of nature and present a ground for the ecstatic disclosure of some form of divinity? How might one "receive" and stand ready for this disclosure? If Heideggerean Beyng may be interpreted as an unfolding "life" (a

“swaying”) [*Wesung*] and if this unfolding can be related in any significant way to the Peircean divine life, then it is reasonable to claim that Peirce and Heidegger can be situated closer together given their mutual Schellingean understanding that a differential ground is responsible for nature’s unfolding and truth-disclosure. In Peirce’s philosophy, this differential ground is represented by Firstness and matches Heidegger’s idea that a fundamental lack of being is at work within Being itself. If such a claim has any substance, I think that Peirce and Heidegger, while never having articulated an onto-theological God, nevertheless did assert that an active, dynamic, truth-generative process of nature (a “life”) may disclose to finite creatures how things are (“truths”), and that these disclosures present appearances of sacred form(s) of divinity. I will briefly relate Heidegger’s notion of Beyng to the Peircean divine life before in support of this claim providing concluding thoughts about my project.

According to Heidegger, Being was, at one point in history, experienced in a non-metaphysical way, that of φύσις, or “phusis.”¹⁹⁰ Phusis is typically translated as “nature,” and comes from the verb usually translated “to grow.”¹⁹¹ It was Heidegger’s view that that phusis primordially meant “arising and abiding.”¹⁹² Phusis is a “living coming-to-presence” [*anwesen*] which is “living” in the sense that “its presencing is not an inert *present* object, a timeless *thing* present-at-hand, but rather a process of dynamic unfolding.”¹⁹³ The term refers to what arises from itself, what unfolds or comes-into-appearance and persists in its appearance.¹⁹⁴ Heidegger thought that the ancient Greeks understood phusis in a non-onto-theological way. They understood phusis as *appearing*—a way of Being that “puts itself forth.”¹⁹⁵ On Heidegger’s interpretation of Greek thought, there is no difference between Being and this appearing, “Being means

appearing. Appearing does not mean something derivative.”¹⁹⁶ Thus the ancient Greeks (especially for him, the Presocratics) could see truth as residing primarily in beings rather than in propositional thought. Things stood as unconcealment or ἀλήθεια, “aletheia.”¹⁹⁷ For Heidegger, Western thought replaced this primordial understanding of Being with an alternative outlook of onto-theology and substance ontology. Being was no longer understood as *a happening* or *event* that communicated a tacit awareness not just of beings but also of Being as such (what he later called *Sein*, as I have pointed out.) The pre-metaphysical understanding of Being looked to it as the source for any possible appearing of beings. That is, only by taking Being as a process of dynamic unfolding and appearing might beings be understood. Heidegger came very close to articulating a process philosophy of nature similar to that of Schelling and Peirce on this point. Moreover, Heidegger thought that, for Greek thought, there was a primal strife or tension present that first draws beings out of concealment and allows them to appear as such and as having certain determinate characteristics in relation to each other (their identity.) This appearance is based through an “originary struggle” permitted by a basis of which beings come to *be* at all.¹⁹⁸ The identity granting originally occurs as Πόλεμος or “polemos,” meaning “war” or “strife.” Such a feature resembles the tumultuous nature in which Thirdness generality emergences from the Peircean categories, or the productive tension found between Schelling’s first two divine potentials produces God’s actuality.¹⁹⁹ The strife within Being belongs to a fundamental disjunction or difference, “in the confrontational setting-apart-from-each-other [*Aus-einander-setzung*] (of Being). Only such struggle....lets gods and human beings step forth in their Being.”²⁰⁰

This fundamental disjunction or difference within Being, broadly speaking, can be accounted for by the ontological difference. In part, beings are beings by virtue of what they are *not*. When taken collectively and negated, beings appeal to a more primordial form of ontological nothingness by virtue of the fact that beings might not be, at all. Heidegger titled this primordial non-being “the nothing.” Aside from the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he addressed “the nothing” in several private writings in the 1930s, including the *Contributions to Philosophy* and its successors, *Mindfulness* and *The History of Being*.²⁰¹ Here I quote Heidegger in his inaugural lecture to the Freiburg University faculties explaining his concept of “the nothing.”²⁰² The quotation is meant to demonstrate how there is a fundamental ground or backdrop of non-being, “the nothing,” that renders beings and Being intelligible, so that things may appear and do appear in an active and generative sense. That is, the ground of non-being is not a static backdrop, but rather is an active and generative basis which is similar to Peircean Firstness in its ontological properties and function. As Heidegger succinctly put it, “This nothing itself nihilates.”²⁰³

We assert that ‘the nothing’ is more original than the ‘not’ of negation. If this thesis is right, then the possibility of negation as an act of the intellect, and thereby the intellect itself, are somehow dependent upon the nothing....The nothing is the complete negation of the totality of beings....The totality of beings must be given in advance so as to be able to fall pretty straightway to negation—in which the nothing itself would then be manifest...No matter how fragmented our everyday existence may appear to be....it always deals with beings in a unity of the ‘whole,’ if only in a shadowy way....this ‘as a whole’ overcomes us—it ‘irrupts.’

Heidegger then continued that by means of an “attunement,” or what I call a “disposition,” *Dasein* remains open to this irruption and by encountering “the nothing” gains a sense of the whole, of Being—much in the same manner as the inquiring organism remains open to the possibility of truth-disclosure in the ecstatic event of abduction and then feels its own finitude among an infinite cosmos when hypotheses are confirmed. Heidegger said, “Such being attuned, in which we ‘are’ one way or another...lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole. The founding mode of attunement [*die Befindlichkeit der Stimmung*] not only reveals beings as a whole in various ways, but this revealing---far from being merely incidental...reveals the nothing.”²⁰⁴

Nihilation in Being is not a fortuitous accident. Rather, it is the “repelling gesture toward the retreating whole of beings.”²⁰⁵ Much like the Schellingean “darkness in the heart of God,” Heidegger’s nothing, difference, and *Abgrund*—roughly co-equal terms in their function—each respectively represent the clearing against which beings are disclosed in their beingness; that is, in how they are. Because this nothing “nihilates,” I take Heidegger to mean nihilation is part of a truth-generative *activity* within Being. He wrote that in a deeper sense the nothing is “the essential trembling [*Erzitterung*] of Be-ing itself,” it is what is responsible for Being’s appearing and withdrawing, and for the appropriation of Being as it appears in historical truth. And, “The ripeness is pregnant with the originary ‘not’....Here is the essentially unfolding notness of Be-ing as appropriation.”²⁰⁶ This primal non-being is similar to Peirce’s category of Firstness in the sense that Firsts are always intangibly “First-ing”: actively and transitively supplying the basis for all of beings and their identity.

But Firstness also resists any permanent attribution of identity to itself *per se*. Thus, Firstness both gives and takes ground—it is “groundless ground.” Stated differently, Firstness is not an identity but identity’s continual deferral due to the fact that it lacks any actual being. This is not to say that Firstness is nothing, rather, Firstness is the phenomenological and ontological “open region” against which beings can come to take on their identity. In negative terms the nothing means the absence of any final ground. Because of Firstness’s groundless nature, this feature cannot be conclusively spoken. It is a lack of any absolute ground: essential ontological and epistemological ground (certainty), or otherwise. Yet the “lack” of Firstness is actually a *positive* phenomenon—it is indispensable in that it is an enabling feature for the human condition to be able to experience and interpret beings in their beingness. This lack of ground in Firstness represents a freedom *to be*. Heidegger expressed something similar with his concept of the nothing: “In the clear night of the nothing...the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings—and not nothing.”²⁰⁷ The comparison to Peirce’s model of nature, given the prior discussion about Schelling, is clear—beings are generated from their possibility in the depths of Being—from an ontological ground of difference which is *not* being; the primordial “nothing” within the depths of nature. Things within nature persist through the facticity of Secondness actuality, and in a form of Thirdness appear as a “truth” commensurate with their generative source of Firstness.

For Peirce, there is an eventual “unconcealment” of truth in the form of would-be’s in the universe, and like Heidegger, that unconcealment is inextricably tied to an unspecified differential ground that is required for unconcealment and more generally for truth. For Heidegger, this granting of would-be truth is the “gift” of Being found in an ecstatic

moment much like the ecstatic moment available in Peirce's abduction. Richard Polt explains that, "If we take Being as Be-ing [*Seyn*]—the event that grants us access to the Being of beings in the first place—then we can say that it withdraws in still deeper sense. Not only are we normally unaware of the Being of beings, but we are unaware that the Being of beings is a *gift* that is granted only at rare and unique moments."²⁰⁸ With respect to Schelling, this gift finds expression not only as a truth granted by the divine, but as freedom. As Heidegger put it, "Schelling tries to grasp Nothing as neither what is nor what is not, but only the eternal freedom to be."²⁰⁹

While Firstness is not an agent in Peirce's model of nature, there are striking similarities in terms of how difference and ground impel cosmic development, as well as how difference stands as a basis or "ground" for the disclosure of truth. I think Heidegger's basis of difference, or the fundamental "not" that actively "nothings," accentuates how Being clears and conceals, presences and withdraws, and self-discloses before *Da-sein* who have appropriated that occurrence and happening. Grasping and standing "in" this happening of Being's concealing and revealing as Beyng is marked by the "y" of Beyng [*Seyn*.] Standing in its essential motion or unfolding marks an ecstatic "event" where *Da-sein* appropriates Beyng in its ownmost truth [*Ereignis*.] As Alejandro Vallega explains it,

Heidegger's return to the archaic spelling of being [*Sein*] marks a leap. This leap opens the question of beyng anew: beyng is not to be thought now in terms of presence [identity] but as nothing. Heidegger says, '*Das Nichts nichtet.*' We can get a glimpse of the question that has opened even as we translate this brief passage into English: 'nothing nothings.' It is not 'no-thing' but a certain occurrence. We might repeat the last word of the last phrase, 'nothings,' in another way that places it at the center of Contributions: the expression 'nothings'

recalls us to our need to think beyng's essential swaying [*die Wesung des Seyns selbst.*]²¹⁰

This occurrence [*Geshehnis*] points directly to how Heidegger's ontological difference, the "not" within Being, actively generates a happening of Being.²¹¹

One might further claim that this nihilative "not" in-between beings and Being also matches Firstness as a ground for transcendence in so far as a "truth" is disclosed. John Sallis remarks that the "truth" of Beyng is the clearing/concealment in and through which beings come to show themselves in their being."²¹² He writes, "the character of beyng as a condition of possibility is—if still provisional—most prominent."²¹³

Heidegger affirms this observation: "For truth is the between [*das Zwischen*] for the essence [*Wesung*] of being and the beingness of beings. This between grounds the beingness of beings."²¹⁴ The "essence" of Beyng is its own swaying; its truth as clearing and concealment and that motioning in which Beyng "happens."²¹⁵ Possibility comes to the fore because it is the "openness" for the occasioning of the essential sway, even if only understood through *Dasein's* own horizon of being-in-the-world. Thus, Beyng's essential sway is dependent on a ground for whatever truths it discloses, and this ground actively contributes to how Beyng is given over to *Da-sein*. As such, in addition to revealing beings, the truth of Beyng is also dependent upon it. Sallis writes, "Heidegger broaches the concept of this other ground....No longer identified with the beingness of beings, this other ground—the between, the truth of Beyng—would ground the beingness of beings. One could call it a ground of ground, a ground before ground."²¹⁶

B. RECEPTIVITY: POET AND SCIENTIST

The previous comparison between Peirce and Heidegger has been meant to demonstrate a number of points crucial for understanding how Peirce's category of Firstness, analytically conceived, points back to the ontological element of possibility cosmologically speculated and phenomenologically felt. I have worked with the supposition that Peirce's category of Firstness mediates inquiry with respect to the conditions, circumstances, bearings, and desires of a lived-world that expresses any categories' meaning. If one wanted to carry my analysis one step further, the categories point back to the ontological elements of experience only with some reference to a world *and* to the organism or *Dasein* living in that world. My analysis has been meant to show that in the formulation of his category of Firstness, Peirce finds significance in an immanent life-world that is lived with respect to inquiry—especially inquiry into the nature of the divine and any resultant experience of the divine's sacred appearance. Broadly speaking, the meaning of Being, or even glimpsing the differential ground of Being that allows for any category of experience to be, would necessarily reflect in a proposition, concept, or action referencing its ontological status. Insofar as this ground is reflected in the acts of prayer or worship, those acts could only attest to the felt reality of the source of their experience, whatever that reality might be.

In order to detect these sacred appearances of the divine, a disposition of receptivity—a remaining “open”—towards the disclosure of how things are afforded by Being was said to be paramount. Both Heidegger and Peirce offered methodologies, either poetic insight or the “scientific” method of abduction, which explained how a creature living in the world could experience nature in its totality while existing as a

grounded finite being. It was for that reason that I claimed transcendence was “finite” for both of these thinkers. I also claimed that disruptions into a human being’s habitually lived mode of existence are indeed crucial for the ecstatic moment where the awe, mystery, strangeness, or beauty of experience overwhelms one to such a degree that truth seeking is aroused and truths are possibly disclosed. Perhaps in this way Peirce and Heidegger re-inaugurate the genuine philosophical thinking that is the type of wonder shared by the scientist and poet alike. As Heidegger wrote, “Only when the strangeness of beings oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder—the revelation of the nothing—does the ‘why?’ loom before us.”²¹⁷ The religious question for both of these thinkers is how a non-onto-theological understanding of the divine might be presenting during this sort of questioning. How are finite members of the universe brought into contact within something greater than themselves? How does the finite creature come to see itself part of a greater cosmos, or reality of nature? As I have argued in the preceding chapters, the kind of inferencing found in Peircean abduction is very much similar to the sort of experiences which draw out religious reflection and feeling.

My dissertation has focused on the finite-infinite distinction specifically with Peircean Firstness in mind. As Firstness-possibility and Firstness-feeling provided the basis for possible religious experience by means of abduction, it turned out that finite inquirers could gain a feeling that they do participate in an encompassing process of nature which grows, evolves, and transforms. This feeling was said to be “numinous” experience: the sacred appearance of the divine life given in feeling. Heidegger construed in the *Contributions* that reality—Being—houses forms of divinity and echoes one aspect

of transcendental truth: that Being needs human beings and indeed needs them in connection with the disclosure of its truth. He wrote that, “Being needs the human being so that it might prevail and it is only by belonging to being that a human being achieves his consummate vocation as *Da-sein*.”²¹⁸ To be sure, the transcendental seeking of the finite for the infinite, Heidegger warned, does carry metaphysical overtones that one should avoid if they are to understand the divine on its own terms. But the interplay of needing and belonging to Being constitutes the very heart of how truth might be disclosed to human beings. That is, only because *Dasein* belongs to Being might truth possibly find its disclosure, and analogously for Peirce, in as much as inquirers are part of nature should they be able to ecstatically discover nature’s truths and confirm their belongingness to nature. Thus, the manner in which truths are disclosed has the potential to reflect what is earlier, larger than self, infinite, or beyond the finite and personally limited being of the mortal creature. As such, one might say that these disclosures of truth take on a sacred status and reflect the divine—that the eventual revelation of how things *are* is in and of itself a reflection of a divine life and will. As finite creatures catch glimpses of the divine, whether through ecstatic moments afforded by abduction or poetic insight, the sacred and holy expression of what is infinite and encompassing presents itself and one is left with the task of communicating that insight, or, as expressed by the German romantic poet, Friedrich Hölderlin: “But now day breaks! I waited and saw it come/And what I saw, may the holy be my word.”²¹⁹

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* Vols. 1-8, edited by Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, A.W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931, 1958.) Hereafter cited as CP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, edited by Nathan Houser, Christian Kloesel, and Jonathan R. Eller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.) Hereafter cited as EP followed by volume and page number. Also, Charles S. Peirce, *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. 6 volumes, edited by Max Fisch, Christian Kloesel, and Nathan Houser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-2008.) Hereafter cited as W followed by volume and page number. Also, *The Charles S. Peirce Papers*, Microfilm edition, Harvard University Library Photographic Service, 1966. Hereafter cited as MS with catalogue manuscript and page number.

² Friedrich Schelling, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, Vols. 1-6, edited by M.Frank (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1985.) Originally published in ten volumes as *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856-1861.) Hereafter referred to as SW, followed by volume and page number, cross-referenced from the *Ausgewählte Schriften*. SW 3.60.

³ C.f. Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993.)

⁴ One introduction to Schelling's philosophy that draws out several major historical themes found in my project is Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1994.) I found this text a remarkable introduction to Schelling's thought, especially as it relates to the other Idealists.

⁵ Most notably it was Schelling's concept of nature that served as background for American philosophy during the nineteenth century. His concept of nature, Esposito remarks, was made from the perspective of "vitalism and organicism" and was an advocacy for connections between magnetism, electricity, and chemical reaction. His unique vision of science would be the catalyst for the transition from eighteenth to nineteenth-century scientific models of nature. As "fantastical" as his theories may have been, Schelling, so says Esposito, is now considered "surprisingly modern in his attitude toward science." As reinterpretations of Schelling's philosophy emerge, one finds that his theory of nature suggests many key themes that were developed within early twentieth-century quantum mechanics, probability theory, and general systems theory. See Joseph Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), 10-11.

⁶ Schelling's most pressing influence comes forward in Corrington's latest work, *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.) See 85, 141, 187, & 245. Most relevant is the section "Die Potenzen," 245-251.

⁷ Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 186.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 187. In 1820, the editor of the newly formed *German Correspondent* (January 1820, Vol.1, No. 1., page 1) stated how "it is very remarkable that in a country like the United States there is but little known concerning Germany." Per Esposito's citation, 187.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹² *Ibid.*, 188.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁷ Outright titling Kant an "idealist" obviously is problematic—although Kant's relationship to German idealism is complex and itself a troublesome issue. With respect to Schelling's idealism and Kant, I consulted Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1994) and the monumental tomb, Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism 1781-1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.)

¹⁸ In addition to Emerson, Frederic Henry Hedge was a member of the Transcendentalist movement who could be claimed to have had the most significant influence inasmuch as they he positively exposed Schelling's philosophy of nature. A minister and scholarly thinker, Hedge would travel from Bangor, Maine to Boston to run his "Hedge Clube" where he would dispense his reflections about his travels to

Germany, and about Schelling's philosophy. In 1833 Hedge wrote "Coleridge's Literary Character" for the *Christian Examiner*, and in his later years noted that "Of all the Germans who had trod the path of metaphysical inquiry under the guidance of Kant, Schelling is the most satisfactory. In him intellectual philosophy is more ripe, more substantial, more promising, and, if we may apply such a term to speculations, more practical than in any of the others." Frederic Henry Hedge, *The Prose Writers of Germany* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849), 510. In his book Hedge discusses Schelling's major influence, the mystical shoemaker of Görlitz, Jakob Böhme, and offers a reflection on Schelling's "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature" as well.

¹⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by W.H. Gilman and A.R. Ferguson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), Vol. 5, page 30. Hereafter referred to as EJM, followed by volume and page number. Emerson influenced other Transcendentalists including Charles S. Wheeler, who came from Heidelberg. Wheeler published Schelling's letters in *The Dial*, a major publication of the Transcendentalists. John Elliot Cabot, Emerson's biographer, was another major contributor to *The Dial*. He translated Schelling's 1809 Freedom essay, and attended Schelling's Berlin lectures.

²⁰ CP 6.102.

²¹ Anette Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation: A Constructive Study of C.S. Peirce: Princeton Theological Monograph Series* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2006), 59.

²² See Peirce's piece on Schiller, "The Sense of Beauty never furthered the Performance of a single Act of Duty," MS 12:26, March 1857, published in W 1.10-12. And, in CP 1.4 & CP 1.42 Peirce wrote, "I devoted two hours a day to the study of Kant's *Critic of the Pure Reason* for more than three years, until I almost knew the whole book by heart, and had critically examined every section of it" and "My philosophy resuscitates Hegel, though in a strange costume."

²³ SW 2.371 & Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 88.

²⁴ SW 2.225 & Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 102.

²⁵ Ejsing, *Theology of Anticipation*, 64.

²⁶ Despite the eternal contradiction of primal forces [*generatio aequivoca*] found among the divine potencies, Schelling maintained that a *unified* formulation of the Absolute was still a possibility and not necessarily in conflict with the evolutionary philosophy of his *Naturphilosophie*. See for example SW 7.350.

²⁷ Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 203.

²⁸ C.f. Friedrich Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, translated by Jason Wirth (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), and Friedrich Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, translated by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (New York: SUNY, 2008.)

²⁹ As Peirce wrote in the essay, "The nineteenth century is now fast sinking into the grave, and we all begin to review its doings and to think what character it is destined to bear as compared with other centuries ... It will be called, I guess, the Economical Century... What I say, then, is that the great attention paid to economical questions during our century has induced an exaggeration of the beneficial effects of greed and of the unfortunate results of sentiment, until there has resulted a philosophy which comes unwittingly to this, that greed is the great agent in the elevation of the human race and in the evolution of the universe." In response to this dilemma he suggested "three motives to human action: The love of self; The love of a limited class having common interests and feelings with one's self; The love of mankind at large." CP 6.291.

³⁰ CP 7.183, CP 7.186, for example.

³¹ Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 200-203.

³² Schiller, Friedrich, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, translated by Reginald Snell (New York: Dover, 2004.)

³³ Two excellent sources that may put my comment in perspective are: Frederick C. Beiser, *Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, edited by Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.)

³⁴ Richardson stresses that the "early" Heidegger is more in line with Kant given Heidegger's view that a fundamental ontology first must lay down the foundation for metaphysics through attempting to use analytic

principles and categories to carry out a transcendental project of deducing a structural organization of existence for human being. Richardson writes, that the early Heidegger, Heidegger I, is “principally concerned with the radical finitude of man and the comprehension of Being as such,” whereas the later Heidegger, Heidegger II, attempts the thinking of being, which is a non-foundational thinking; a thinking of “the process by which human ek-sistence responds to being, not only in its positivity but in its negativity, as the continual process of truth-as-history.” William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: From Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 34-36, 84.

³⁵ For a full explication of Heidegger’s turn, and potential challenges to the efficacy of the idea, see Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger’s Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002) 75-103.

³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 8th edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957.) Translated as *Being and Time* by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962.) Also, Martin Heidegger, *The History of the Concept of Time*, translated by Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), considered a “prototype” for *Sein und Zeit*.

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), and *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, *Gesamtausgabe* 65, edited by Friedrich-Weilhem von Hermann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989.) For further mention of Schelling one might also consult Heidegger’s early 1928 seminar, *Die Deutsche Idealismus (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) und die philosophische Problemlage der Gegenwart*, *Gesamtausgabe* 28, edited by Claudius Strube (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997.) Hereafter cited as CTP and GA respectively.

³⁸ CTP xxii.

³⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 71-72.

⁴⁰ CTP 25. For an introduction to Heidegger’s concept of “the last god,” one might consult the essays “Forgetfulness of God: Concerning the Center of Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy*” by Günter Figal, and “The Last God” by David Crownfield in *Companion to Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy*, edited by Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, Daniela Vallega-Neu, and Alejandro Vallega (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.) See also, Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985.)

⁴¹ For my purposes here I will be using this term as it is defined in Heidegger’s *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, translated by Keith Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000), and the “Letter on Humanism”, translated by Frank A. Capuzzi in *Pathmarks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.)

⁴² C.f. “The Last God,” CTP 285-297.

⁴³ This will also help establish where the lines of my thesis could go as potential research projects in the future, in addition to bolstering the current thesis argued in this project.

⁴⁴ Emad and Maly translate *Wesen* and *Wesung* not as “essence” but as “essential sway” and “essential swaying,” “enduring,” and “abiding.” They write, “‘Essential sway’ has nothing to do with ‘essence’ and everything to do with what inheres within the sway of being in its originary, profound, comprehensive vibrancy and resonance...in its power to say what is utterly other than ‘essence.’” “Essential sway” is “a way of being something.” CTP Translator’s Foreword xxv-xxv. Translating “sway” in this way, I think, defeats any attempt made by substance ontology to render Beyng’s motion eminently static and essential [*essentia*], cognates of a Platonic longing to keep the idea [*eidōs*] as a measure of absolute certainty: a concept that blocks the hermeneutic-phenomenological viewing of what is most needed within metaphysical thinking—a return to the embrace of dynamic nature and a pre-metaphysical stance within Beyng’s truth: phusis, or “nature naturing.”

⁴⁵ Heidegger discusses this concept, among other places, in his 1931/32 lecture course on Plato’s allegory of the cave and in his 1940 essay, “Plato’s doctrine of the truth.” C.f. Martin Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” translated by William McNeil in *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeil (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.) Also Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, *Gesamtausgabe* 34, edited by Hermann Mörchen (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1988.)

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- ⁴⁶ Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann, “Contributions to Philosophy and Enowning-Historical Thinking” in *The Companion to Heidegger’s ‘Contributions to Philosophy’*, edited by Charles C. Scott, Susan Schoenbohm, Danilea Vallega-Neu, and Alejandro Vallega (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 122.
- ⁴⁷ Frank Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 104.
- ⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism” in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 210, 216.
- ⁴⁹ John R. Williams, *Martin Heidegger’s Philosophy of Religion* (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1979), 148. C.f. Robinson, Jan and John Cobb, *The Later Heidegger and Theology: Discussions Among German and American Theologians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.) And as I have demonstrated in Chapter Three, the condition for the possibility of any being’s disclosure is ultimately ontological, rather than logical, possibility.
- ⁵⁰ For a critical take on Heidegger’s relationship to matters theological, see Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger’s Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.)
- ⁵¹ CTP Translator’s Foreword xxx. Emad and May translate *Abgrund, Ungrund, Urgrund, gründen* as concepts all pertaining to Being’s sway. The word *Abgrund* simultaneously works with *Ungrund* and *Urgrund* as a grounding that involves non-ground, or “unground.” CTP xxx-xxxii. See also CTP 15, 207-215, 226. Also, Translators Foreword, xvii-xix in Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (New York, Continuum, 2006.)
- ⁵² CTP Translator’s Foreword xxx-xxxii. CTP 15, 207-215 & 226. Also, Translators Foreword, xvii-xix in Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (New York, Continuum, 2006.)
- ⁵³ CTP Translator’s Foreword xxx-xxxii. CTP 15, 207-215 & 226. Also, Translators Foreword, xvii-xix in Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (New York, Continuum, 2006.)
- ⁵⁴ John Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 98.
- ⁵⁵ For more on the importance of Eckhart and Böhme for Heidegger, as well as to see how other panentheists affected the trajectory of Heidegger’s thought, see John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 58-59 especially.
- ⁵⁶ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 59.
- ⁵⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 284.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.
- ⁵⁹ CTP 53.
- ⁶⁰ C.f. “Beyng-Historical Thinking” in Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy*” by Alejandro Vallega in *Companion to Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy*, edited by Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, Daniela Vallega-Neu, and Alejandro Vallega (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 56-58.
- ⁶¹ “Sigetic” is an artificial term and technical concept that involves the “logic” of some “system” that incorporates a motion of transforming and happening. In Richard Polt’s analysis, the motioning of be-ing incorporates how be-ing essentially happens and depends upon Heidegger’s interpretation of *logos*. Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 129. Heidegger wrote, “It is the essential swaying of *being* itself. But from *this* beginning first becomes enactable as the *other* beginning when the *first* beginning is put into proper perspective.” The first beginning is referring to the history of Western metaphysics, or ontotheology. As Heidegger put it: “If in contrast [to the question about the Being of beings] we now ask about Beyng [*Seyn*], we are not starting from beings, that is, from this and that particular being, nor are we starting from what is, as such and as a whole; instead, what is accomplished is a leap into the *truth* (clearing and concealing) of Beyng [*Seyn*] itself” CTP 41. The “logic” of this swaying is “sigetic” (see CTP sections 37-38), from the Greek *sigan*, or “to keep silent.”
- ⁶² Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, translated by Keith Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000.)
- ⁶³ Published as: Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985.)
- ⁶⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.)

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- ⁶⁵ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 12.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁶⁸ Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 178-179.
- ⁶⁹ In some passages of the *Phenomenology*, clearly Hegel had Kant and Fichte in mind while launching his criticisms. Other paragraphs of the *Phenomenology*, however, are far more ambiguous and Schelling's philosophy does enter one's mind while reading them. For example, the first part of the chapter "Observing Reason" is devoted to a critique of the Schellingian philosophy of nature and to Schelling's formulation of "organism," in particular insofar as it is a model for the unfolding of Idea. Paragraphs 270-300 ruthlessly attack Schellingian philosophy and the philosophy of organism, titling them "static." Hegel launches a major critique of Schelling's concept of "Indifference" and his attempt to formulate laws for nature. C.f. paragraphs 271, 280, 286, & 290. Finally, Hegel indirectly slights Schelling by remarking that his phrase "potentiate" is "bad Latin" (paragraph 282.)
- ⁷⁰ Friedrich Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, translated by M. Vater (New York: SUNY, 1984), 96.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ⁷² Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 13.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13-14.
- ⁷⁴ I should qualify that the two never exchanged *philosophical correspondence* again. Schelling did have one final afternoon of conversation with Hegel after the *Phenomenology* was published when the two met by chance at a resort spa late in Hegel's life. Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, 97.
- ⁷⁵ Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, translated by James Gutmann (Illinois: Open Court, 1936), 7.
- ⁷⁶ SW 1.400.
- ⁷⁷ SW 2.344.
- ⁷⁸ By a "positive" conception of freedom I am pointing to the fact of how the German Idealists thought to surpass the Kantian limitation that ideas such as God, freedom, and immortality had only at best noumenal, and hence not empirically "real," content. For an introduction to how Schelling sought to step "beyond" Kant, see Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1994.)
- ⁷⁹ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 7.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 14-16.
- ⁸³ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 12.
- ⁸⁴ SW 2.225 and Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 102.
- ⁸⁵ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 7.
- ⁸⁶ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 25.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ⁸⁹ In this way Schelling defied Hegel's system of logic. He admitted such a radical notion of freedom within the ordered formation of nature that its fulfillment could never be absolutely completed.
- ⁹⁰ In opposition to Hegel's Absolute God of the *Phenomenology*, the young Hegel had quite a different understanding of religion. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, translated by Eleanore Kroner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.) One might also consult Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.)
- ⁹¹ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 109.
- ⁹² Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 223. When using the term "God" I am referring to Schelling's specific panentheistic Christian metaphysics. When used in conjunction with the Peircean divine life I will appropriately reference Schelling's God to reflect "the divine."
- ⁹³ SW 1.209.

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- ⁹⁴ Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God*, 122.
- ⁹⁵ C.f. EP 1.7 for Peirce's semiotic discussion of "ground."
- ⁹⁶ George J. Seidel, "Heidegger's Last God and the Schelling Connection," *Laval theologique et philosophique* Vol. 55, No. 1 (1999): 89.
- ⁹⁷ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 31.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-16.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ¹⁰² Martin Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity" translated and edited by Joan Stambaugh in *Identity and Difference* (Chicago: Harper Row, 1969.)
- ¹⁰³ Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity," 24.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ¹⁰⁵ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 77.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.
- ¹⁰⁸ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 14-16.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.
- ¹¹¹ Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics" translated and edited by Joan Stambaugh in *Identity and Difference* (Chicago: Harper Row, 1969), 48.
- ¹¹² Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity," 62.
- ¹¹³ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 172.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 208.
- ¹¹⁴ Robert Corrington, *Nature's Religion* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 97. See also Corrington's comment: "God lives within the heart of this ontological difference and is stretched between the orders of nature." Robert S. Corrington, *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 37.
- ¹¹⁵ Corrington, *Nature's Religion*, 98.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.
- ¹¹⁹ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 34.
- ¹²⁰ Corrington, *Nature's Religion*, 100.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 102.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 103.
- ¹²³ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 107.
- ¹²⁴ Martin Heidegger "On the Essence of Ground" translated by and edited by William McNeill in *Pathmarks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 134.
- ¹²⁵ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 86-87.
- ¹²⁶ C.f. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §69c.
- ¹²⁷ Heidegger "On the Essence of Ground," 107.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ¹³¹ Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred*, 34.
- ¹³² *Ibid.*, 34-35.
- ¹³³ *Dasein's* "ownness" [*eigenheit*] is particular to itself in each case of self-surpassing. That is, it is crucial to understand that, as Heidegger put it, "*Dasein* is delivered over to its own being" (SZ 41-42.) So, the very being of this delivery is exclusive to each *Dasein*, or what Heidegger referred to as "mineness" [*Jemeinigkeit*.] What this means is that human existence exhibits a structure that delivers one over not just to the being of entities at large, but over and against one's own particular and finite being.

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- ¹³⁴ Heidegger “On the Essence of Ground,” 126.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ¹³⁶ Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 42.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.
- ¹³⁸ Seidel, “Heidegger’s Last God and the Schelling Connection,” 87.
- ¹³⁹ In the essay, “What is Metaphysics?” (1929) Heidegger referred to this “not” as “the Nothing”—the ontological auxiliary backdrop against which Being itself becomes sensible. See “What is Metaphysics?” translated and edited by David Farrell Krell in *Basic Writings* (California: Harper and Row, 1993.)
- ¹⁴⁰ Heidegger “On the Essence of Ground,” 97.
- ¹⁴¹ John William Miller, *The Midworld of Symbols and Functioning Objects* (New York: Norton, 1982), 7-19.
- ¹⁴² Again, at this point Schelling’s God is specifically identified as the Judeo-Christian God of patriarchal metaphysics. However, Schelling developed his own “personal religion” towards the closing years of his life, and his God came to envelop both male and female identities. See F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, translated by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (New York: SUNY, 2008) and F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, translated by Klaus Ottman (New York: Continuum, 2008.) I should like to thank Myron Moses Jackson, as well as the other members of our “Schelling-philosophy of religion reading group” for our Saturday morning discussions about Schelling’s philosophy of religion and its relationship to medieval philosophy, Heidegger, and ecstatic naturalism. Myron’s insightful comments and willingness to look into my work is gratefully appreciated.
- ¹⁴³ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 109.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.
- ¹⁴⁵ CP 2.113.
- ¹⁴⁶ CP 8.115. Peirce was reviewing Royce’s philosophy and claimed that the Roycean notion which asserted all knowledge moves toward God was “a very notable contribution to the prima philosophia.” As a tangential note, it would be inaccurate and misinformed to say, however, that if one wanted to construct a Peircean philosophy of religion that one should turn to Royce. Such a maneuver would completely bypass the most essential and ecstatic depth dimensions of Peirce’s philosophy.
- ¹⁴⁷ CP 5.536.
- ¹⁴⁸ Cited from Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred*, 35.
- ¹⁴⁹ Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, 49-53.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.
- ¹⁵² C.f. John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.)
- ¹⁵³ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 33.
- ¹⁵⁴ Esposito, *Schelling’s Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 84.
- ¹⁵⁵ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 114.
- ¹⁵⁶ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, xxxiv, and §297.
- ¹⁵⁷ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 32-98.
- ¹⁵⁸ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 114.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 114.
- ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 115.
- ¹⁶³ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 32-98.
- ¹⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 115.
- ¹⁶⁵ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, xxxiii and Esposito, *Schelling’s Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, 95-96, 102-104.
- ¹⁶⁶ SW 2.225.
- ¹⁶⁷ SW 3.317.
- ¹⁶⁸ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 88-89.

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- ¹⁶⁹ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, xxi. Schelling wrote this text in several drafts between 1811-1815. It was meant to be one of three volumes, as indicated by the “Synoptic Table of Contents” developed by his son, Karl, and published in the original edition.
- ¹⁷⁰ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, cited from Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), §299.
- ¹⁷¹ Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*, 100.
- ¹⁷² Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 39, 78, 83. Cited from Cooper’s *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*: “The idea that God is free not to exist might seem implausible or absurd, but it is a given in Schelling’s theology.”
- ¹⁷³ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, cited from Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), §299.
- ¹⁷⁴ SW 3.312.
- ¹⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 122.
- ¹⁷⁶ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, cited from Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), §237, §300.
- ¹⁷⁷ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 122.
- ¹⁷⁸ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 215.
- ¹⁷⁹ CP 6.612.
- ¹⁸⁰ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 179.
- ¹⁸¹ CP 6.612.
- ¹⁸² CP 6.196.
- ¹⁸³ CP 6.612.
- ¹⁸⁴ Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce*, 69.
- ¹⁸⁵ CP 1.412.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 215-216.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 216-217.
- ¹⁸⁸ Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 131.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ¹⁹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale, 2000.)
- ¹⁹¹ Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, 132.
- ¹⁹² Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 14.
- ¹⁹³ Gregory Fried, “What’s in a Word?” in *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 132.
- ¹⁹⁴ Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, 132. Also Charles Guignon, “Being as Appearing” in *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 38.
- ¹⁹⁵ Guignon, “Being as Appearing,” 38.
- ¹⁹⁶ Heidegger cited from Guignon, “Being as Appearing,” 39.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39-40.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39-40.
- ¹⁹⁹ This stems from Heidegger’s reading of Heraclitus’ 53rd fragment.
- ²⁰⁰ Heidegger cited from Guignon, “Being as Appearing,” 39.
- ²⁰¹ Published respectively as GA 65, GA 66, and GA 69 in Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*. Translation in preparation for *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (1938/40), GA 69. The *Besinnung* volume was written immediately following *Contributions to Philosophy* and is similar to it in content and style. There are 135 chapters, some a few sentences and others essay length, arranged in 28 sections. The translation also shares terms with the *Contributions* and revisits key issues: *Seyn* (Beyng) is translated as *be-ing*, and *wesen* (essence) as *sway*.
- ²⁰² *Was ist Metaphysik*, inaugural lecture to the Freiburg University faculties, July 24, 1929 in the University Auditorium. Translated as “What is Metaphysics?” by David Farrell Krell in *Basic Writings* (California: Harper and Row, 1993.)

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- ²⁰³ Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?", 103.
- ²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 100-101. The specific modes of attunement Heidegger discussed in this essay were love, boredom, and anxiety.
- ²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.
- ²⁰⁶ Cited from Richard Polt, "The Question of Nothing" in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 71.
- ²⁰⁷ Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?", 103.
- ²⁰⁸ Cited from Richard Polt, "The Question of Nothing" in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 72.
- ²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.
- ²¹⁰ Alejandro Vallega, "'Beyng-Historical Thinking' in the *Contributions to Philosophy*" in *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy*, edited by Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, Daniela Vallega-Neu, and Alejandro Vallega (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 51.
- ²¹¹ In this context "occurrence" can also mean "proceeding."
- ²¹² John Sallis, "Grounders of the Abyss," in *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy*, edited by Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, Daniela Vallega-Neu, and Alejandro Vallega (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 186.
- ²¹³ *Ibid.*, 186.
- ²¹⁴ C.f. CTP 215-217, 239.
- ²¹⁵ Sallis, "Grounders of the Abyss," 186. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary remark that, "what concerns Heidegger's non-metaphysical thinking above all is to articulate what is fundamentally denied to metaphysical thinking. And he reaches the single most important locus of this fundamental denial with the word *Wesen*, respectively *Wesung*...[it] is used in the verbal sense of 'swaying,' 'enduring,' 'abiding,' 'whiling,' and so forth...In the English words 'sway' and 'swaying' we found a good approximation to *Wesen* and *Wesung*...these words have a distinct meaning that indicates dynamism and movement." Translators Foreword xxxii, in Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (New York, Continuum, 2006.)
- ²¹⁶ Sallis, "Grounders of the Abyss," 186.
- ²¹⁷ Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?", 109.
- ²¹⁸ CTP 251.
- ²¹⁹ Cited from Ben Vedder, *Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion: From God to the Gods* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 218.

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