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PEIRCE'S ABJECTED UNCONSCIOUS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC PROFILE

Robert S. Corrington
Drew University Theological School

Peirce's philosophical anthropology is frustrating because it moves in several directions at once. His anti-cartesian papers from the 1860s deconstruct the substantive and introspective self in order to replace it with a semiotic self that derives its inner contour from external signs. On the microcosmic level, the concept of unmediated intuition gives way to a complex analysis of perceptual judgments in which the two elements of the percipium, namely the percept and the judgment, link together to show that all awareness is already tied to abduction in which a general rule is applied to a given case. To say that a chair is yellow is to apply a predicate to a sensum and to frame the material of sensation in terms of generals that are linked to the world of experience through a judgment. Put in colloquial terms, the world of the sign-using self, from the simplest perceptual judgment to the most complex act of internal semiosis, is a busy one.

The self of the 1860s is thus a sign-using organism that learns of its own existence through error in which it is compelled to find an elusive center of self-consciousness from out of the impaction of other selves, "Ignorance and error are all that distinguish our private selves from the absolute *ego* of pure apperception" (1868: 2.203). Peirce argues, following Kant, that the ego is secondary, both logically and temporally, to thought. Thought, here understood to be centered semiosis, makes the finite and located ego possible. The privileging of thought/semiosis serves to put the ego in a precarious position, as we shall see, and serves to put pressure on any robust theory of self-identity, "...self-consciousness may easily be the result of inference" (1868: W 2.204). Peirce's theory of the self can certainly be read in semiotic terms. But deeper vexations emerge when

the question is asked: what is the center of the self, both in terms of its meaning and in terms of its correlation with the larger worlds of signification?

The fallible self cannot think or be without signs. Its internal world is a result of introjected signs from the external world. Even the life of emotion is derived from the domain outside of the self, that is, feeling needs an intentional object in order to obtain at all. The temporal stretch of the self comes from the momentum of signification in which every thought must interpret a previous thought/sign, and in turn hand over its semiotic bounty to the subsequent thought/sign. "To say, therefore, that thought cannot happen in an instant, but requires a time, is but another way of saying that every thought must be interpreted in another, or that all thought is in signs" (1868: W.207-208).

The early papers thus conclude that there is no power of introspection, that there is no power of unmediated intuition, that all thinking must be in signs, and that there can be no conception of the absolutely incognizable. This last claim is the most interesting for our purposes and will be looked at in terms of the later writings and from a psychoanalytic perspective in which the abjected quality of the incognizable comes to the fore.

Peirce's anti-cartesian self is already a long way down the road toward a semiotic inversion in which a healthy ego gives way to larger forces of semiosis that have neither origin nor clear telos. The self is caught in the web of vast semiotic chains that reach into the heart of an elusive nature that seems to mock the fragile ego that struggles to hold its derived internal world together through purpose. Peirce's self is certainly purposive, and moves forward through self-control and something like the power of will. Of course, all purposes are what they are in the context of a developmental teleology that renders all goals finite and time-bound. Even our unconscious perceptual judgments are purposive in the sense that they contribute to the evolutionary success of the sign-using organism.

In his masterful biography of Peirce, Joseph Brent argues that the death of Peirce's father in 1880 had far reaching philosophical consequences (Brent 1993). I want to explore the implosion that took place in his philosophical anthropology as a result of this death (and the parallel transformation in his philosophical theology), and to trace Peirce's move toward a theory of the unconscious. Of course, Peirce had a theory of the unconscious before 1880, but it took on a more central and paradoxical role in the later writings. In particular, it put even further pressure on the semiotic ego as the purposive center of semiosis.

In an 1891 unpublished analysis of William James' *Principles of Psychology*, Peirce puts the personal self under a kind of erasure (c.1891: 8.82):

Everybody will admit a personal self exists in the same sense in which a snark exists; that is there is a phenomenon to which that name is given. It is an illusory phenomenon; but it is still a phenomenon. It is not quite *purely* illusory, but only *mainly* so. It is true, for instance, that men are *selfish*, that is, that they are really deluded into supposing themselves to

have some isolated existence; and in so far, they *have* it. To deny the reality of the personality is not anti-spiritualistic, it is only anti-nominalistic.

Interestingly, the nominalist is the one who believes in a personal self, while the objective semiotic idealist has let go of such proud delusions! The centered ego becomes more and more attenuated as Peirce grapples with the loss of his father and with his increasing sense that world semiosis is omnivorous toward the located self and its products.

We are reminded of Peirce's bizarre claim that the tongue is the true source of the so-called personal self. If postmodernists see the self as written into being, Peirce sees it as talked into being. This talk takes place against the background of the much more powerful social self, which itself rests on what Peirce calls the "spiritual consciousness". The spiritual dimension of the self is rarely attended to because of the surrounding noise of the selfish but illusory personal self and the social self. Yet the spiritual self is a continual background presence that we fully enter into at the moment of biological death. "In the same manner, when the carnal consciousness passes away in death, we shall at once perceive that we have had all along a lively spiritual consciousness which we have been confusing with something different" (c.1892: CP 7.577).

Thus far we have seen several competing layers in Peirce's philosophical anthropology. We have the anti-cartesian self that lives by internalizing external signs and emotions. This self emerges out of error and the infinite stream of semiosis that both surrounds and permeates the self-in-time. Yet we have the self that must deconstruct its proud center and become a "glassy essence", an essence that denies its own personal center so as to be a transparency onto the social self. Yet the social self, held together by the power of continuity, rides on the back of a deeper and quieter spiritual consciousness that will remain with us after death, when the social and personal selves will be cast off. More basic still is the unconscious that first announced itself in the presence of those ubiquitous perceptual judgments that bring stability to the flow of percepts.

What, then, can we say about the unconscious in Peirce, and how does it relate to the depth dimension of the self? Peirce moves closer to his understanding of the unconscious when he probes into the nature of associational patterns. It is clear that the mind works by association and that these associations are shaped by habit. We can consciously entertain signs and link them together through the standard Humean mechanisms of contiguity and resemblance. Yet even this process rests on a much vaster and more mysterious process that underlies all forms of awareness. The metaphor of the "glassy essence" gives way to the simile of the "bottomless lake" (c.1900: CP 7.547):

... that our whole past experience is continually in our consciousness, though most of it is sunk to a great depth of dimness. I think of con-

consciousness as a bottomless lake, whose waters seem transparent, yet into which we can clearly see but a little way. But in this water there are countless objects at different depths; and certain influences will give certain kinds of those objects an upward impulse which may be intense enough and continue long enough to bring them into the upper visible layer. After the impulse ceases they commence to sink downwards.

The movement upward and downward takes place through a kind of gravitational mass that may be more or less dense than the surrounding water. The "objects" found in the bottomless lake are very much like Carl Jung's feeling-toned complexes that function as gravitational centers, pulling ideational and affective material together around a core experience, that may or may not be linked to an archetype (Corrington 1987). When the complex comes to the surface it begins to shape and mould the conscious semiotic self in novel ways, thus again decentering the ego.

The relation between consciousness and the unconscious still involves the presence of purposes. Peirce links the two domains through the image of "buoyancy" (c.1900: CP 7.554):

Still another factor seems to be a certain degree of buoyancy or association with whatever idea may be vivid, which belongs to those ideas that we call purposes, by virtue of which they are particularly apt to be brought up and held up near the surface by the inflowing percepts and thus to hold up any ideas with which they may be associated. The control which we exercise over our thoughts in reasoning consists in our purpose holding certain thoughts up there where they may be scrutinized. The levels of easily controlled ideas are those that are so near the surface as to be strongly affected by present purposes.

A vivid idea gathers other subaltern ideas around itself and acts as a kind of dynamic object, luring the conscious self toward a purposive transformation in which the unconscious material moves to the center of the field of awareness. A new percept may link up with an unconscious associational chain and derive a semiotic charge that seems to belie its surface appearance. Peirce was fully aware that some percepts are more numinous than others, and that this numinosity must come, not from manifest or immediate features, but from an underlying momentum that can best be described as unconscious semiosis (Corrington 1991).

Thus no percept comes pure or unmediated. Not only must it subject itself to a perceptual judgment, which is unconscious and rooted in evolutionary habit, but it must also link up with a stream of unconscious interpretants that have an uncanny and powerful momentum in their own right. Again, we ask the question: where is the ego in this process? The ego, an illusory product of error and a misreading of external semiotic structures, is deposed not only by the social

and spiritual dimensions of the self, but by the general or collective unconscious that only shows the most shallow aspect of itself to the sign-using organism. Peirce's image of the "glassy essence" is far too passive and ocular to serve in the later anthropology. The "bottomless lake", on the other hand, is an unlimited sphere of activity and semiotic energy that buffets the ego again and again and compels it to acknowledge phylogenetic structures that forever shape its precarious trajectory.

What is the heart of the unconscious? Is it confined to the human organism, or is there a dimension of the unconscious that reaches right down into the mystery of nature? Peirce makes the bold claim that the personal and collective unconscious have their roots in nature which functions as their Creator. In a c.1893 manuscript (CP 7.558) he puts it forcefully:

Thus all knowledge comes to us by observation, part of it forced upon us from without from Nature's mind and part coming from the depths of that inward aspect of mind, which we egotistically call *ours*; though in truth it is we who float upon its surface and belong to it more than it belongs to us. Nor can we affirm that the inwardly seen mind is altogether independent of the outward mind which is its Creator.

Nature's mind, understood under the purview of panpsychism, is the full semiotic universe that undergirds both conscious and unconscious forms of signification. Nature is far more than the 'sum' of interpretants, signs, and objects, and lives as a dynamic progenitor of all forms of signification. Does Peirce see the mind of nature to be a center of self-consciousness? His stated anthropomorphism would seem to push him into an affirmation of a super-consciousness akin to the medieval conception of God. Yet there lurks another possibility within the mind of nature that points to the religious sphere and, ultimately, to Peirce's profound fear in the face of the unconscious, a fear that stems from his tragic entanglement with his father. This stark claim can only be defended by a detailed psychoanalytic study, but we can lay down some of the traces of what such a study will reveal.

With the loss of the cartesian ego in the 1860s, followed by the further displacement of the semiotic ego in the 1880s, Peirce's semiotic anthropology opens a door on the abjected region of the unconscious, abjected and feared because of its link to a missing component in his own psycho-biographical development. My concluding remarks, hopelessly truncated, will correlate his personal travail with his intensified religious consciousness.

As noted, Brent points to the centrality of Benjamin Peirce in Peirce's inner struggles. This relationship was surely the most important in Peirce's life, not only in sheer practical terms, but in the deeper sense that his father imposed what Alice Miller calls a "narcissistic wound" (Miller 1990) on the young Peirce. The narcissistic wound occurs whenever the gifted child is not allowed to develop

what she calls a "healthy" narcissism that brings about a strong sense of a centered ego. The stronger, and unfulfilled narcissism of the father, who in this case acts as the semiotic and Oedipal mother, pulls in all of the fragile energy of the child, who must suppress his own legitimate narcissistic needs to please the demands of the father. The son thus becomes little more than a projection of the father, and must win his way in the world through his productivity. The young Charles had only one choice: he could become autonomous and win approval by generating a string of public interpretants and, in effect, become ensnared by his own products; that is, the self becomes the self-as-works.

In this process, the unconscious, which compels the child toward its own healthy narcissism, becomes suppressed, and, in extreme cases, becomes the abject, the denied and feared locus of a hidden and true self. As long as the power of the father is maintained, the unconscious is removed from the semiotic playing field. As his true self becomes more and more covered over, the child must push outward into the vast and external signs and interpretants that surround it. Peirce's manic creative productivity is deeply tied to an underlying melancholy that has its roots in the lost object, in this case, the unconscious. What, then, can the gifted adult do that the child could not?

Peirce's father pushed him to intellectual feats that forced him to drive himself into states of exhaustion. Brent, who strenuously rejects anything like a psychoanalytic reading of Peirce, does lay out the pattern that begins to show how Peirce's demons come to be in the first place (Brent 1993: 15):

In large part as a consequence of the disease [highly painful facial neuralgia], Peirce was plagued all of his life by dangerous psychological instability. Because of his affliction, his father and mother spoiled him, indulged his excesses, and protected him as best they could from the world of affairs well into his thirties--and even his forties. Peirce was, as a result of these troubles and arrangements, neurotic in the extreme, or perhaps manic-depressive. The malady took the form of what he called, contemptuously, his "emotional slush". Despite these frightening personal ills, Peirce, with the aid of his father, developed such a high degree of self-discipline that he could work on the most intricate philosophical problems with concentrated intensity for several days at a time. Because of the unexpected and sudden onset of neuralgia and his fear that his periods of lucidity were threatened by it, from the age of about twenty he spent every spare moment scribbling away at his work.

The image of the scribbling and disease ridden pragmatist is a haunting one. Yet a deeper logic is at play here than the cycles of a manic-depressive di-polar illness, or the fear of physical collapse. There is a much stronger motivational force at work, driving Peirce to fill the universe with signs, even and especially when his unconscious is continuing to plague him in the form of paralysis and profound melancholy.

Brent notes that Peirce was very fond of a passage in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c.1595) that conveys far more about the relation between the abjected unconscious and the movement toward a semiotic universe than almost any passage from Peirce's own writings:

And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them into shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

The poet/pragmaticist must take the hidden rhythms of firstness and nothingness (masks for the maternal) and convert them into positioned signs and codes. The power of the sign is to transform the presemiotic into the semiotic proper in which each sign maps out an area that it fills with connotated and denotated meaning. Peirce grappled with the nature of nothingness in several manuscripts and insisted that the semiotic universe is what it is because it comes from something presemiotic and prepositioned. The frenzy of his own writing moves toward "habitations" and "names" so that the dark and abject quality of the presemiotic background can be denied.

Prepsychoanalytic studies of Peirce have focused on the pansemiotic elements of his pragmatism, without probing into the fierce dynamism that drove Peirce away from the background of firstness/nothingness toward the fullness of thirdness. The paternal relation was somewhat brutal in that it compelled Peirce to reject and deny the "airy nothing" that brought him into being in the first place. Peirce's relation to his mother is almost always passed over in silence, as if its surface harmonies told the whole story. Insofar as Peirce was forcefully brought into the world of his father, he had to commit implied matricide so that the maternal would recede from view. Brent compares Peirce and John Stuart Mill in terms of their adult relations with women. Peirce in particular sought women who could function as a "... nurse, mother, lover, confidante, and scapegoat" (Brent 1993: 49). Brent blames Peirce's neuralgia for his dependency relation with women. Yet here again it seems that Peirce was struggling blindly toward the maternal precisely when his father had taken away the psychological means for him to find a healthy relationship to the abjected and denied realm that came back to haunt him in the many failed female relationships in his life.

As Peirce felt the uncanny presence of the abjected maternal, he compensated by filling the world with signs and their portents. His father failed to give him any indication of the tragic cost of his pansemioticism and drove him further and further away from the very solution that would bring him back to his abjected and deeper self. Peirce's father "... draped on his shoulders the crushing mantle of genius and engaged him from that age well into his manhood in an intense and extremely demanding training in the rigorous efforts needed to make fine distinctions" (Brent 1993: 16). These "fine distinctions" served to place a barrier

between himself and the unconscious that works to overturn such finely crafted codes and mechanisms. In inheriting his father's neuralgia, Peirce also inherited his father's fear of and flight from the abjected unconscious.

After the death of his father, "...Charles lost his sense of direction and purpose" (Brent 1993: 132). He had already suffered from blackouts, paralysis, and extreme nervous fatigue. The loss of the paternal and semiotic center compelled Peirce to move in new directions, probing, in particular, in to the long lost object that could only be recovered by looking into his own unconscious. The correlation between the conscious mind and the deeper unconscious begins to shift in favor of the unconscious. The semiotic ego becomes more and more suspect, and the centrality of purpose becomes questioned.

Where does panpsychism fit in to this psychoanalytic scheme? I am persuaded that Peirce opted for his doctrine that "matter was effete mind" in order to find a link between conscious and unconscious, self and world. The denial of sheer materiality placed Peirce in a position to welcome the unconscious into his categorial and experiential world. However, there is a darker logic at play here. The doctrine of panpsychism actually serves to sanitize the unconscious and domesticate it for the fragile ego. If all of matter, here understood as that which is outside of consciousness, is deadened mind, it seems to follow that the domain outside of the conscious semiotic self is at least of the same 'stuff' as the ego. Because it is of the same 'stuff' it cannot pose an ultimate threat to the illusory ego.

While his father was still alive (until Peirce was 41) he could continue to work against the abjected unconscious using the same mechanisms of panrationalism and an obsession with carefully crafted definitions and distinctions. With the death of his father, a deeper fissure opened up in Peirce, compelling him more and more toward issues in cosmology. Parallel to this is, as noted, his increasing interest in the unconscious as a "bottomless lake" that contains far more than meets the semiotic eye. The link here should be fairly clear. As the paternal codes and structures weakened with the loss of the biological father, the abjected maternal returned with greater force to move Peirce away from an obsession with public semiotic codes. Yet the tragic dialectic of this return of the repressed forced Peirce to work even harder to rebuild the semiotic universe so that the uncanny music of the maternal could be drowned in the manic structures of communication. Peirce sought the maternal in many women, each time failing to find the lost object that haunted him in spite of himself. Yet he also sensed that his own physical illness might point toward a repressed content that had to be found. Tragically, he always deflected his intuition by looking for genetic reasons for his behavior as if to avoid the deeper issue of psychic motivation.

Peirce's fascination with the unconscious compelled him to the half-way measure of his panpsychism which enabled him to move toward the lost object, but freed him from the burden of grasping its sheer otherness, i.e., its abject quality (Corrington 1993). His compromise drove him to a series of religious

affirmations that all point toward a transfigured self on the other side of the brute seconds of history. After all, isn't the abjected unconscious the most perfect case of sheer secondness, sheer otherness that cannot be gathered up into the arms of thirdness? Here is where Peirce makes his camouflage move. The hidden and lost object of the unconscious, long denied because of his narcissistic wound, resurfaces in the substitute guise as the God who will emerge as the Omega point of cosmic evolution. Is this to say that Peirce's God is merely the hoped-for self writ large on the face of the deep? Or is there another possibility, dimly sensed by Peirce, that emerges in the interstices of his complex philosophical theology?

My final remarks will point toward this unsaid in Peirce that represents the hidden player in his complex psychological unfolding. His attempts to rebuild the father after the death of Benjamin are manifest in his increasing interest in the fate of the world of both particulars and generals. His developmental Platonism, in which generals live and move through a form of self-transcending cosmic habit, points toward a God who lives out of the not-yet. Just where is Peirce's God? Is God present at the beginning of cosmogenesis? From my perspective, there is no clear answer to this question. Is God fully present in the current era? The answer has to be: yes and no. God is present in the sense that there is a companion discovered in interpretive musement. God is not present in the sense that the universe frustrates the divine appearance, precisely because the universe is incomplete and fraught with chaos and novelty.

The connection between God and the unconscious should now be clear. As Peirce moved to replace the very father who deprived him of his own healthy narcissism, he created a God who speaks from the depths of the world and who can only become manifest in an incomplete way from out of the not-yet of a partially open future. By turning toward the unconscious, even while softening its otherness through the panpsychist counter-ploy, he turned toward his own hoped-for self, a self that could emerge from the ashes of his failed public life. The true self also lives in the not-yet, precisely because it was not allowed to emerge into its fullness in his childhood. Put in simple terms, the Peirce-to-be can be read on the face of the evolutionary God. Yet both God and the resurrected self hover over a deeper and more frightening reality. This reality is that of the sheer nothingness that houses and darkens the unconscious and makes it the true abject, the hidden yet always haunting partner in the unfolding of the fragile semiotic ego.

Between the extremes of sheer nothingness, as the abjected maternal, and the public realm of the father's patriarchal codes, lies the "imaginary father" who is created by the self in an effort to both soften the brutal power of the "father as Law", and find a means toward the lost object. Peirce sought out many substitute fathers before and after his father's death. This strong drive was actually a manifestation of the hunger for a linking "third" that would provide another possible route back to the abjected unconscious. Unlike the stern biological father, who whipped Peirce into further feats of thought, the imaginary father could

provide the love that was missing from the codes of the patriarch. Ironically, the imaginary father (played by such figures in Peirce's life as president Daniel Coit Gilman, president Charles William Eliot, Judge Francis C. Russell, and William James) also serves to protect the self from the abjected maternal. Kelly Oliver states this logic with precision (Oliver 1993: 83):

The loving imaginary father is needed to offset devouring by the abject mother. Also, the loving father is needed to provide an imaginary secular replacement for a dead Christian god. Without the loving father we are abandoned by god and possibly devoured by abjection as well.... This stern father [i.e., Benjamin as the "Law"] cannot coax us away from our maternal shelter even if that shelter threatens to devour us. This is why we need the loving father as a support against abjection.

We thus have four players at this stage of the game. There remains the abjected maternal that lives just on the other side of conscious semiotic life. Secondly, there is the stern father of the Law who tries to pull us away from the maternal. Thirdly, there is the loving father of imagination who provides a link (a mediating third) between the Law and the maternal. Fourthly, there is the God who is the public expression of the loving father of the imagination. Peirce replaced his dead father with the imaginary father manifest in his philosophical theology. The imaginary father has a deeply ambiguous relation to the maternal. On the one hand, he serves to protect the vulnerable child/man from the maternal, while on the other, he is less violent toward the maternal power than the father of the Law who merely wants to dominate the abject.

This triadic relation characterizes Peirce throughout his adult life. If the original relation to the maternal is preOedipal and takes place before what Lacan and Kristeva call the "mirror stage" (around 18 months of age), then the full triad of maternal, father of the Law, and imaginary father, emerges later after some sense of personal identity has been forged. Peirce's repeated attempts to frame a coherent philosophical anthropology represent, among other things, attempts to find some strategy for dealing with the internal triad of the abject maternal and the two fathers. Peirce experienced his biological father's rages and allowed his nascent self-consciousness to become one of his father's projects/products. This semiotic invasion clearly affected the way Peirce understood the self. His denial of true introspective knowledge in the 1860s, combined with his sense that all internal semiosis has external sources, showed that he was profoundly ambivalent about his own identity, an identity which was clearly derived from the father of the Law. His later reflections on the unconscious (as a "bottomless lake") moved him toward at least a partial understanding of the lost object.

How then, does the adult go beyond the child? I am persuaded that Peirce felt compelled to complete his anthropology in his philosophical theology in which the finite human self could be transfigured within the context of an evolving and loving semiotic universe. The priority of nothingness and firstness provide the

seed bed from which God comes. If there is a direct link between the imaginary father and the God of agapism, then it follows that there is a maternal domain prior to both realities. The imaginary father links the self back to the abjected maternal and gives the self some sense of its lost and unconscious reality. By a parallel logic, the God of an agapastic universe is itself derived from and dependent upon sheer firstness/nothingness for its being. Just as the human self rests on the maternal, so to does the manifest God of the world. Peirce's post 1880s cosmology, forged in the wake of the death of Benjamin, provided Peirce with the only means he had for reconfiguring the triad of the abjected maternal, the father of the Law, and the loving imaginary father. The motive for his endless "scribbling" ran deep within his fragmented psyche. His sheer productive fecundity and drive was an ironic gift from the abject to its lost son. The adult wrote a transfigured self into being, thus redeeming the promise of a child split into irreconcilable halves.

Of course, the psychoanalytic reading refuses to take the ontological elements of the divine nature seriously. At such a juncture, the psychoanalytic reading needs to be profoundly modified so that the divine can begin to emerge on its own terms. The important link for us is that Peirce worked his way back toward the unconscious by developing a mediating God who would provide him with agapastic love and with a link to firstness and nothingness, as well as the sheer secondness of the hidden dimension of God.

The fragmentary quality of Peirce's theology has its roots in this unresolved split between the two fathers and their relation to the abjected mother. After the death of Benjamin, Peirce conflated the two fathers and attempted to rescue the remembered Benjamin from his own patriarchal fierceness. In this process, the abjected unconscious could return in a transfigured guise in his understanding of firstness and *its* relation to cosmogenesis. The universe "perfused with signs" is itself a product of an ecstatic and maternal nature that comes into manifestation out of the hidden domain of firstness. Brent understands part of this logic when he correlates Peirce's role as a "Dandy" with the domain of firstness (Brent 1993: 335). The Dandy lives by clothing himself with flamboyant signs and social symbols and lives in defiance of the bourgeois social code. Yet the depth logic here is that of firstness, the maternal and presemiotic realm that continues to haunt the self as it finds itself more and more trapped in public semiosis. The pansemioticist Dandy wears a dramatic persona that hides the much deeper and more pervasive melancholy of the captive in the domain of signs.

The structure just delineated is a complex one, yet its main outlines can be sharply drawn. The young Peirce was pulled dramatically into the domain of the father because of Benjamin's constant attentions and manipulations. The maternal realm got pushed further and further into the background as the codes of the father (the Law) took over Peirce's psychic life. Early on Peirce developed his characteristic ambivalent attitude toward the actual women in his life, vacillating between abuse and utter psychological dependency. As the split between the

maternal and the paternal widened, the maternal became more and more abject, more and more feared and desired. The mediating third appeared in the guise of the "imaginary father" who would find a means to move between the lost maternal object and the manifest frenzied codes of the Law. Peirce tried out many substitute fathers in his lifetime, finally projecting this frustrated energy onto his cosmology and philosophical theology. Yet the deeper ontological structures of this struggle actually emerged in their own right, not as substitute formulations alone, but as encounters with cosmic powers that transcend the human.

Reworking the intrapsychic triad in terms of his mature categories, we can see clear parallels between the postOedipal struggle and his cosmology. The abjected maternal is actually a concrete manifestation of what might be called the "firstness of firstness". This redundancy makes sense when it is understood that the maternal is presemiotic (not in Kristeva's sense where she mistakenly refers to it as "semiotic"), and thus bereft of any form of signification. The father of the Law, in the finite guise of Benjamin, is perhaps best understood as a manifestation of the "secondness of thirdness". By this is meant that the father of the Law is a brute and shaping dyad that yet moves toward the generality of the Law. The imaginary father, on the other hand, is best seen as a manifestation of the "firstness of thirdness" in the sense that he is the link between the abjected maternal and the power of thirdness in cosmogenesis. God, for Peirce, participates in all three categories. In any given instance, one or more of the three categories may assume priority. Yet at the end of cosmic evolution, God will be fully manifest as the place where all three categories are gathered up into eschatological fulfillment. In his mature theology, Peirce found a place for the three persons of the intrapsychic triad. His unique version of the Christian trinity helped him to resolve his deepest fissures.

Unknown to the psychoanalytic perspective is the even deeper logic of pragmatism that acknowledges the power of signs to reach into the heart of nature itself. Peirce's tragic struggles to redefine the unconscious (moving from "glassy essence" to "bottomless lake") represent but one dimension of his struggle. On the deeper level, the human unconscious, always sought yet feared by Peirce, opened to the unconscious in nature, an unconscious that comes out of the heart of nothingness and firstness. In a striking sense, his father Benjamin and his mother Sarah Hunt Mills were masks for deeper paternal and maternal powers within the prehuman orders of the world. The biological configuration of his immediate family forced him to work within and against the maternal. But this entire complex and tragic process served to open him up to the inner dynamisms of firstness, secondness, and thirdness so that he could transfigure his internal family conflicts into a cosmology and anthropology that found the true material maternal on the edges of signification. In this sense, any psychoanalytic reading must ultimately give way before a religious reading in which the God beyond the God of the father can find a rightful place in an evolving universe of signs.

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