

Charles Peirce's Unpragmatic Christianity: A Rabbinic Appraisal

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The great American philosopher, Charles Peirce, calls his pragmatism a continuation of Jesus' teaching, "Ye may know them by their fruit," and labels his cosmology a doctrine of "Christian Love." Nonetheless, I have found Peirce's understanding of Christianity to be surprisingly unpragmatic. Peirce's pragmatism itself displays an unpragmatic side and the tension between his pragmatic and unpragmatic tendencies reappears in his philosophic theology. I am not certain what a consistently pragmatic Christian theology would look like, but I know pragmatism is the rule rather than the exception in rabbinic Judaism, that is the classical, post-Biblical Judaism of the Talmud. In this paper, therefore, I evaluate Peirce's pragmatism and his Christian theology from the perspective of the rabbis. For much of the paper, this perspective remains implicit, as I examine unpragmatic tendencies in Peirce's epistemology and theology. In Section III, I make the perspective explicit, by reviewing Max Kadushin's study of rabbinic pragmatism and by restating this study in Peirce's terms. The rabbinic analysis of religious language is close to Peirce's, with one critical exception. For Peirce, the meaning of God's names is disclosed in the conduct of an idealized community of scientific reasoners who are motivated by faith in God's presence in the natural world. For the rabbis, it is disclosed in the conduct of historically-bound communities of otherwise ordinary people who are socialized in the normative language of a God who speaks and commands. It remains to be seen if there is a Christian analogue to this rabbinic pragmatism.

I. Peirce's Pragmatic Critique and Unpragmatic Dogma

The tension between Peirce's pragmatic and unpragmatic tendencies is displayed in contradictions between his pragmatic critique of modern epistemology and his attempt to restate pragmatism as an epistemological dogma.¹ In this section, I review Peirce's definition of pragmatism and attempt to identify precisely how it gives rise to an unpragmatic epistemology.

In 1878, Peirce first introduces pragmatism as the claim that "what a thing means is simply what habits it involves." To identify this meaning, he says we must:

Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (2)

Some of his interpreters thought that Peirce was attempting to reduce the meaning of a concept to mere actions. In 1905, Peirce seeks to correct such a misunderstanding by explaining his doctrine this way:

The entire intellectual purport of any symbol consists in the total of all general modes of rational conduct which, conditionally upon all the possible different circumstances and desires, would ensue upon the acceptance of the symbol.³

This means that pragmatism concerns only "'intellectual concepts,' that is to say, of those upon the structure of which, arguments concerning objective fact may hinge."⁴ . Such concepts refer neither to essences, which we may define formally, nor to specific facts, which we may identify demonstrably, but to rules of behavior. We represent these rules through conditional propositions which describe how a given object would behave under certain conditions.⁵ Since these propositions "must be capable of being true," they refer also to the conditions that must obtain for their being true: that there is a world within which the object could behave as we claim it behaves and a community of observers for whom this behavior could be represented as we represent it.

In these terms, Peirce's statement of the meaning of pragmatism is not itself a pragmatic statement. As readers, we are left with the task of determining how Peirce's statement of

pragmatism functions as a rule of behavior and of identifying the world and the community to which these rules are directed.

In a manuscript of 1906, Peirce tells us that his doctrine of pragmatism emerged out discussions in a Metaphysical Club at Cambridge, where, in the early 1870's,⁶ he debated philosophy with such minds as William James, Chauncey Wright, Nicholas St. John Green and Oliver Wendell Holmes. He notes that Green

often urged the importance of applying (Alexander) Bain's definition of belief, as 'that upon which a man is prepared to act.' From this definition, pragmatism is scarce` more than a corollary.⁷

In "The Fixation of Belief," Peirce adapts Bain's theory this way:

Our beliefs guide our desires and shape our actions... The irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term the struggle inquiry.... With doubt... the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt, it ends. Hence the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion.... To satisfy our doubts, therefore, it is necessary that a method be found by which our beliefs may be determined by nothing human, by some external permanency.... Such is the method of science ⁸.

As a corollary of this theory, pragmatism therefore employs an empirical claim about how humans fix their beliefs to ground a normative claim that humans ought to fix their belief by employing the method of science. This tells us how pragmatism functions as a rule of behavior.⁹

But to what world and what community of observers is this rule addressed?

In "The Fixation of Belief," Peirce recommends the method of science as a corrective to what he calls the "a priori method of fixing belief." He introduces his recommendation with the following story. He says the simplest method of fixing belief pursued by individuals is tenacity.

This is to

(take) as answer to a question any we may fancy, and constantly reiterating it to ourselves, (dwell) on all which may conduce to that belief, and (learn) to turn with contempt and hatred from anything which might disturb it.¹⁰

He says the method fails, however, since human practice is basically social. The society's method of fixing belief is authority, which is to

let an institution be created which shall have for its object to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people, to reiterate them perpetually, and to teach them to the

young; having at the same time power to prevent contrary doctrines from being taught, advocated or expressed.¹¹

This method also breaks down, since "no institution can undertake to regulate opinions on every subject." Individuals arise who "possess a wider sort of social feeling" and who, comparing their society with other societies, lose faith in the authority of their inherited beliefs. These individuals conclude that

the willful adherence to a belief, and the arbitrary forcing of it upon others must, therefore, both be given up. A different, new method of settling opinions must be adopted, that shall not only produce an impulse to believe, but shall also decide what proposition it is which is to be believed. Let the action of natural preferences be unimpeded, then, and under their influence let men, conversing together and regarding matters in different lights, gradually develop beliefs in harmony with natural causes.¹²

This a priori method is the philosophic error Peirce attributes to the host of metaphysicians that irritate him, from Descartes to Hegel and beyond, evidently including those unnamed contemporary academicians he otherwise labels "seminary thinkers," "Cartesians," or, when using the label as a term of opprobrium, "nominalists." In his 1868 critique of "Cartesianism," Peirce says that this is the dominant method of modern philosophy, against which he appears to stand pretty much alone, linking himself with Socrates, Aristotle and certain features of the philosophies of Spinoza, the early Berkeley, Kant and Comte.¹³

In other words, Peirce offers his pragmatism principally as a means of criticizing the a priorism of his fellow philosophers. In the anti-Cartesian papers, Peirce criticizes the a priorists for replacing the "multiform argumentation of the middle ages" with "a single thread of inference depending often upon inconspicuous premisses."¹⁴ In "Fixation," he explains that these premisses are recommended, legitimately, by instinct, but attributed, illegitimately, to something more:

As long as no better method can be applied, (the a priori method) ought to be followed, since it is then the expression of instinct which must be the ultimate cause of belief in all cases. But its failure has been the most manifest. It makes of inquiry something similar to the development of taste; but taste, unfortunately, is always more or less a matter of fashion, and accordingly metaphysicians have never come to any fixed agreement, but the pendulum has swung backward and forward between a more material and a more spiritual philosophy, from the earliest times to the latest.¹⁵

Peirce concludes that the method of science, alone, offers inquirers what they are seeking: a means of grounding belief in that single reality – disclosed by way of experience— that remains

what it is independently of what any individual thinks it is. He promotes his pragmatism as the only philosophic method which is devoted to uncovering, defining and promoting this method of science.

The "a priorist" is a straw man. Disregarding his selective and tendentious reading of the history of philosophy, however, I believe Peirce's critique of a priorism offers a reliable prophylactic against one of the philosopher's perennial temptations: to reject authority without first supplying good reasons, and to replace the dictates of authority with as yet untested recommendations of the imagination. The problem is that Peirce offers his pragmatism as more than critique. When he offers it as a replacement for the a priori method of fixing belief, he imitates the a priorists' own method and, therefore, opens himself to his own criticism.

Peirce's critique of a priorism is, at bottom, an etiological critique. Like Descartes (there are many surprising similarities¹⁶), he judges reasoning to be only as reliable as its cause: good reasoning has real causes; bad reasoning does not. And he argues that a prioristic reasoning lacks real causes. Peirce's argument goes like this. A priorists claim to offer necessary arguments about our experience of the world, but, in fact, offer us arguments that are strictly hypothetical. The confusion of modalities is itself a secondary effect of an error of composition. The a priorists abstract and formalize selected elements of acquired habits of reasoning and then overextend them beyond their demonstrable range of meaning. Restated in terms of Bain's psychology, this is Peirce's critique of "paper doubts." A priorists have reason to doubt only those particular rules authority whose errors they can identify concretely. Instead, they reason that no rule is reliable unless it is indubitable, which means they must suspend belief altogether, in Peirce's words "feigning doubt," until they can locate at least one indubitable rule. In order to continue their project, the a priorists are therefore constrained to regard the cogito as if it offered both an indubitable and adequate foundation for general inquiry. But this, says Peirce, is an unwarranted conclusion: as he argues in his 1868 papers, there are no self-evident intuitions, of the cogito or of anything else. Susan Haack summarizes Peirce's argument as follows.

It is plausible to think of Peirce as, on the one hand, objecting that Descartes [here in the role of "a priorist"] is too optimistic, failing to realize that there are no indubitable beliefs, since any of our beliefs could be mistaken; while, on the other hand, objecting that Descartes is too pessimistic, that his pre-emptive argument [for doubting authority] grants too much to the skeptic, since all our beliefs couldn't be mistaken.¹⁷

The a priorists' skepticism is therefore too pessimistic, their dogmatism too optimistic.

Peirce adopts the a priorists' own mode of reasoning, however, when he recommends replacing the a priori method of fixing belief with the method of science. In practice, if not in intention, he replays the a priorists' overgeneralized doubt; he abstracts, formalizes and overgeneralizes selected elements of our habits of reasoning; and he presents a realist logic of scientific method as if it offered an adequate, and perhaps indubitable, foundation for general inquiry.

Peirce's tendency to overgeneralize doubt is displayed most clearly in his tendency to define his own method of inquiry as the logical contrary of whatever method he is criticizing: as if an errant method were errant all the way, in its essence and not just its practice. This tendency is illustrated most clearly in the 1868 paper, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities." There, he argues that, since intuitionism is false, then intuition has no validity and all cognitions are inferential; since introspection has no validity, all knowledge is inferred from observation of external facts; since there is no thinking without signs, all knowledge is public; and, since there is no conception of the incognizable, all knowledge may be formalized. In sum, Peirce will offer an objectivism to replace what he considers the a priorists' subjectivism. This affirms the dialectic to which a priorism is committed, arguing from overgeneralized doubt to overgeneralized certainty. Peirce overgeneralizes because he attempts to reduce the pragmatic meaning of scientific inquiry to what he calls a "second grade of clarity," or formal definition.

In papers written between 1868 and 1903, Peirce devotes much of his research to the single goal of abstracting, formalizing and (over)generalizing the pragmatic character of scientific practice, as observed in the laboratory and in the history of scientific writing. He emphasizes three essential features of this practice. First, scientific inquiry is stimulated by

concrete doubts about errors in particular habits of belief. The inquiry is completed once demonstrable methods are discovered for repairing those errors and, thus, removing the doubts which stimulated inquiry. Second, the inquiry itself displays three stages. These are Retroduction, Deduction and Induction¹⁸: recommending hypotheses about how the habits of belief are to be repaired; explicating the hypotheses and disclosing their logical consequences; and, finally, "ascertaining how far those (consequences) accord with Experience, and ... judging accordingly whether the hypotheses (are) sensibly correct, or require some inessential modification, or must be entirely rejected. Third, the conclusions reached in scientific inquiry are always provisional. They may satisfy individual doubts at a given moment, but subsequent experience may always prove them inadequate. Inquirers must be animated by

a cheerful hope that the processes of investigation, if only pushed far enough, will give one certain solution to each question to which they apply it... This great hope is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real.¹⁹

The logic of scientific inquiry is, therefore, "rooted in the social principle."²⁰ Individuals must trust that, even though they may not themselves observe the truthfulness of their conclusions, their efforts serve an inquiry whose results are disclosed only in the long run, and only for that unlimited community of inquirers to which they belong:

This community, again, must not be limited, but must extend to all races of being with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation. It must reach, however vaguely, beyond this geological epoch, beyond all bounds. He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is, as it seems to me, illogical in all his inferences, collectively. (2.654)²¹

Peirce's logic of science is a product of that kind of a prioristic thinking Karl-Otto Apel calls "transcendental pragmatism" and which informs the Frankfurt semioticians' Apriori der Kommunikationsgemeinschaft.²² As a transcendentalist, Peirce reasons that philosophers are, in fact, motivated to identify the best method of fixing belief and that we may articulate the criteria according to which they want to evaluate such a method. Only the method of science meets these criteria. He says we can observe this method at work in scientific practice, and, if we want to

learn how to imitate the method, we can formalize it as the "logic of inquiry." The problem with this line of reasoning is that, as with all a priorisms, it simply articulates the general inclinations of a particular class of inquirers. The method of science, as formalized by a foundational philosopher, fills needs defined by foundational philosophers. The transcendental argument does not, in itself, warrant any more general conclusion than this.

According to a pragmatic critique, we may conclude that Peirce's pragmatic critique is addressed strictly to the class (if not community) of a prioristic philosophers to which he belongs. Its purpose is to curb the tendency of this class to reduce pragmatic meaning to a second grade of clarity. Exhibiting the same tendency, however, Peirce also offers an a prioristic doctrine of pragmatism. It reaffirms his class' overgeneralized mistrust of societal authority and his class' tendency to adopt some single method of inquiry foundationally.

In what he calls his "pragmaticistic" revisions of pragmatism after 1905, Peirce attempts to correct the unpragmatic tendencies he may have displayed in his earlier work. For example, he promotes a "critical common-sensism," according to which all reasoning is informed by "original (i.e., indubitable because uncriticized) beliefs of a general and recurrent kind, as well as indubitable acritical inferences."²³ He says these common-sense beliefs are both shared and "vague," that is, subject to definition only in their particular applications. This doctrine is significant because it precludes foundational inquiry: once defined, the original beliefs forfeit their generality. The purpose of reason is, then, not to found our beliefs, but only to help adapt our beliefs to new environments. Peirce notes that "the original beliefs only remain indubitable in their application to affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life."²⁴ Through deliberate reasonings, we nurture habits of action which, while informed by the original beliefs, extend them to areas of conduct over which we have considerable control. Pragmatism, says Peirce, is strictly a method for clarifying those "intellectual concepts" whose meaning concerns some aspect of our deliberate conduct. This means that, while Peirce precludes any foundational doctrine of pragmatism, the pragmatist has a lot to say about the logic of deliberate conduct.²⁵

Even Peirce's mature work, however, displays many vestiges of the earlier logicism. Peirce still leaves open the possibility that, in Apel's words, "the triadic sign-relation of semiosis" may be "thematized," which means that the laws of deliberate, if not also acritical, conduct may be formalized in a transcendental pragmatism. Furthermore, and most significant for our study, Peirce still fails to acknowledge the pragmatist's need to inquire into the concrete, societal matrix of both deliberate and acritical conduct and into the moral and, particularly, religious traditions of conduct which inform the philosopher's inclinations and interests.

2. Peirce's Unpragmatic Doctrines of Christianity

"Ye Shall Know Them By Their Fruits." Peirce adopts Jesus' words as the headline of his pragmatism. He names his most inclusive cosmological principle agapasm, or "Christian Love." And, concluding an article on Christian faith he declares,

follow your colonel. Keep your one purpose steadily and alone in view, and you may promise yourself the attainment of your sole desire, which is to hasten the chariot wheels of redeeming love.²⁶

Peirce believed that his philosophical enterprise belonged to a Christian faith. Nonetheless, his relationship with the historical practice of Christianity parallels his relationship with his own pragmatism. As he writes of his life in the Episcopal church,

... when I grew up I joined the Episcopal church, without believing anything but the general essence and spirit of it. That I did and do profoundly believe.²⁷

He believed in the essence of pragmatism, but tended to practice it as a kind of a foundationalism. Comparably, he believed in the essence of Christianity as a living practice, but practiced it as a foundationalist's faith. In this section, I review Peirce's most conspicuously Christian doctrines and suggest that they support his pragmatism in its two aspects, as pragmatic critique and unpragmatic dogma.

The theology that accompanies Peirce's 1868 critique of Cartesianism is suggested, informally, in an oration he delivered at a high school association reunion.²⁸ He is dissatisfied with Kant's excluding the ideas of immortality, freedom and God from the understanding, but yet

uncertain about how to do better. Anticipating his mature arguments for the reality of God, he muses that there is a natural religion, "where all is hinted at, nought revealed;" for example, "a man looks upon nature, sees its sublimity and beauty and his spirit gradually rises to the idea of God." Both "heathen and Jews" received this kind of inward revelation. It is fulfilled in an "objective revelation," however, only with the birth of Christ:

If therefore we are Christians it seems to me we must believe that Christ is now directing the course of history and presiding over the destinies of kings, and that there is no branch of the public weal which does not come within the bounds of his realm. And civilization is nothing but Christianity on the grand scale.²⁹

In Hegelian fashion, Peirce suggests that as this civilization evolves, our understanding of the meaning of God's presence progresses. Our age is a penultimate one, before Christ comes to rule his kingdom in person:

When the conclusion of our age comes, and scepticism 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. He will see that each one of these has an inward existence of its own, for which God loves it, and that He has given to it a nature of endless perfectability.... The time is coming when there shall be no more poetry, for that which was poetically divined shall be scientifically known. It is true that the progress of science may die away, but then its essence will have been extracted.... Physics will have made us familiar with the body of all things, and the unity of the body of all; natural history will have shown us the soul of all things in their infinite and amiable idiosyncracies. Philosophy will have taught us that it is this all which constitutes the church....³⁰

Even if not yet articulated in a philosophical theology, these musings suggest that the two aspects of Peirce's anti-Cartesian, or more accurately, anti-a priorist, polemic appear as well in his understanding of Christianity. On the one hand, he cannot countenance the a priorists' excessive skepticism. Contemplation of nature leads us to the ultimate hypothesis that there is "reason in the nature of things" — an "absolute law in all its detail and unity to which the universe is subjected"³¹ — and, thus, that the world has a Creator³². On the other hand, Peirce adopts his philosophical theism as the only, or at least the most reliable, means of acknowledging God's presence. He "could not imagine a more sublime manifestation of the Divinity than that which... appears in the nature of inference itself"³³: the inference, that is, that leads human beings

to reason from the observation of natural order to that ultimate hypothesis. This is not rationalism, but it is a species of theological objectivism, resulting, as we have seen, in his identifying the progress of science with the advancement of sacred history. Christ's birth may confirm the hypothesis, but Scriptural texts and the tradition of exegesis which interprets them have no authority in themselves.

The dialectic of pragmatic critique and unpragmatic dogma is displayed throughout Peirce's formal writings in theology.³⁴ Wanting any textual hermeneutic, Peirce tends to define his theological position abstractly, as the logical contrary of the positions he has criticized. This means that he hypostatizes his otherwise profound insights: like other a priorists, overgeneralizing a few abstractions while all the while protesting we ought not to do such a thing.

The pragmatic critique appears already in his early response to the sceptics, but is more pronounced in his cosmological inquiries of around 1893. Religion, he writes, is

in each individual... a sort of sentiment ... a deep recognition of a something in the circumambient All....But religion cannot reside in its totality in a single individual. Like every species of reality, it is essentially a social, a public affair.³⁵

Against positivists and rationalists, that is, Peirce argues that religion derives from sources deeper than individual reason. Religion is not about mere belief, but "is a life,"³⁶ and, like all lived practices, it is articulated through a vernacular vocabulary. Peirce's mature understanding of the vernacular belongs to his "critical common-sensism" and underlies his 1905 credo, "Answers to Questions Concerning My Belief in God."³⁷

Peirce begins his credo by noting that

'God' is a vernacular word and, like all such words, but more than almost any, is vague.³⁸

As Smith writes,

Peirce had much to say about vagueness, but he returned ever and again to the same points; in so far as a concept, sign, representation is vague, to that extent the principle of contradiction does not apply to it...Any proposition is either true or false when its identity has been determined..., but the condition does not hold in so far as these constituents remain vague. The second consideration with regard to vagueness is that a

vague sign is one which reserves for some other sign or experience the task of completing the determination...³⁹

Any definition of a vague term is, therefore, a particular determination of it. This means that the most the a priorist can claim is that certain determining conditions may lead us to employ the term "God" in a particular way; no such employment can be universalized. In the language of Peirce's pragmatism, this means that the meaning of "God" is disclosed only by way of conditional propositions which describe the behavior that would follow from our employment of the term. To "know" "God" is, as is suggested by the Hebrew Biblical term for "knowledge" (vidiah), to act in relationship to the object of that term. Since the term belongs to the vernacular, and since the vernacular is shared, this is to enact some shared set of behaviors in the world.

At this point, one would expect Peirce to explicate various vernacular uses of the term "God," which is to explicate particular sets of religious norms. Instead, he examines the theological vocabulary only of those exceptional individuals— philosophers, mystics and scientists— who encounter God through the via contemplativa. Peirce's most significant theological treatise, "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God,"⁴⁰ is therefore a foundational inquiry into the etiology of theological discourse. The inquiry emerges from a pragmatic critique, but, to use terms introduced in Section I, as put to the service of a pragmatic transcendentalism.

The Neglected Argument, as neatly summarized by Smith, is an attempt to do justice both to experience and to reasoning by "providing rational grounds for holding that the deliverances of direct perception are trustworthy."⁴¹ Continuing an early theme, Peirce suggests that reasoning about God begins with "musement,"

a kind of 'pure play' of the mind which, on the one hand, is guided by the object of contemplation, and, on the other, progresses in accordance with the 'attentive observation' of the muser and the direction which his internal conversation assumes.⁴²

The object of musement is the world of experience, but as referred to its ultimate categories: three universes, in fact, which Peirce calls the universes of mere ideas, of brute facts and of the

signs which connect objects from all universes together. Observing variety, then homogeneity and, finally, the single fact of growth common to all universes, the muser enters

certain lines of reflection which will inevitably suggest the hypothesis of God's reality,⁴³ which is God's presence, not as brute fact, but as Ens Necessarium, "the ultimate, purposive ground of each universe."⁴⁴ The description of musement constitutes Peirce's "Humble Argument," a species of reasoning about God which may arise only out of acritical inferences and cannot, therefore, be anticipated by any formal argument. The Neglected Argument itself

is a commentary on the Humble Argument and asserts that the latter represents the results of the same attunement between reality and the human mind which makes all science possible.⁴⁵

The hypothesis about God's reality derives, therefore, from the same kind of precritical reflection which underlies scientific method.

Peirce concludes his article by noting that the Neglected Argument gives rise to a third argument, which

consists in the development of those principles of logic according to which the humble argument is the first stage of a scientific inquiry which produces, not merely scientific belief, which is always provisional, but also a living, practical belief, logically justified in crossing the Rubicon with all the freightage of eternity⁴⁶.

Smith argues forcefully that Peirce is not intending here to reduce religious thinking to scientific thinking.⁴⁷ He is explaining that the hypothesis of God's reality is trustworthy because it is an instance of the first stage of the kind of work which produces scientific inquiry. Scientists may mistrust the hypothesis because it remains more obscure than those adopted in scientific explanations. On the other hand, unlike scientific hypotheses, this hypothesis has a "commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers."⁴⁸ The pragmatic meaning of the hypothesis is therefore explicit in the concrete rules of conduct which it determines, while the pragmatic meaning of scientific hypotheses is usually undeveloped.

The Neglected Argument begins, then, with an hypothesis about God and ends by referring to the pragmatic import of that hypothesis, as if to draw our attention again to Jesus' words, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." As with the Pragmatic Maxim, however (see above,

p.2), the pragmatic force of the argument is limited in two related ways. First, Peirce appears to identify the pragmatic meaning of his theology with a species of philosophical conduct, which is to remove it from the historical particularities of an actual community of practitioners. Second, Peirce explicates his argument only to a "second grade of clarity"; as readers, we must ourselves determine how the Neglected Argument functions as a rule of behavior, and we must identify the world and community to which those rules are directed.

If, as Smith argues, Peirce does not reduce religious thinking to scientific thinking, he nonetheless addresses the Neglected Argument specifically to an audience of scientists, or, more precisely, to a prioristic scientists. These are scientists who would otherwise reject the hypothesis of God's reality on a prioristic grounds: without good reason discounting the recommendations of direct experience (the Humble Argument), of logical analysis (the Neglected Argument) and of what we might label pragmatic methodetic (the third argument). As a rule of behavior, then, the Neglected Argument employs an empirical claim about what we may experience to ground a normative claim that scientists ought not to mistrust the hypothesis of God's reality. It is evident, however, that Peirce adopts his Neglected Argument as more than a pragmatic critique of unwarranted skepticism. As with the pragmatic maxim, he presents the Argument as a source of prior knowledge about the pragmatic meaning of "God." This knowledge is not prior to experience, but it is prior to publically sanctioned experience and to the narrative traditions which articulate this sanction. Thus, in his 1910 "Additament" to the Neglected Argument,⁴⁹ Peirce offers the following hints about how he would undertake a pragmatic interpretation of the meaning of "God" as Ens Necessarium.

First, he acknowledges that the concept of God is objectively vague. It belongs to our instinctual beliefs and is therefore, so it appears, an attribute of human thinking in general: Christ's birth confirms that hypothesis of God's reality to which careful reflection had already led our sages. To define the concept, we can do no better than observe the consequences of having adopting it:

If a pragmaticist is asked what he means by the word 'God,' he can only say that just as long acquaintance with a man of great character may deeply influence one's whole manner of conduct..., so if contemplation and study of the physico-psychical universe can imbue a man with principles of conduct analogous to the influence of a great man's works or conversation, then that analogue of a mind—for it is impossible to say that any human attribute is literally applicable—is what he means by 'God.'⁵⁰

The conduct which interprets the concept of God is the individual's contemplative experience, which, as we have seen earlier, has its ultimate, or at least penultimate, consequent in scientific reasoning. The scientific reasoner knows God as the Creator of the three universes of experience, understood, by analogy, to be

a disembodied spirit, or pure mind, (which) has its being out of time, since all that it is destined to think is fully in its being at any and every previous time. But in endless time it is destined to think all that it is capable of thinking.⁵¹

As Creator, "pure mind, as creative of thought, must, so far as it is manifested in time, appear as having a character related to the habit-taking capacity."⁵² Creation itself presupposes a state of nility, "a *tohu bohu* of which nothing whatever affirmative or negative was true universally. There must have been, therefore, a little of everything conceivable." This is itself the state of pure mind, in which the tendency to take habits carries in it the germ of creativity, the coming to be of particulars out of the nility of pure possibility.⁵³

Peirce offers us, then, a naturalistic theism, for which faith in God finds its pragmatic meaning in a species of philosophical conduct: trusting experience, promoting critical reason, and so on. There is no indication here that faith in God is interpreted by any species of corporate conduct, other than that of an idealized "community of scientists." When Peirce does refer to the church, it is as a symbol of a cosmic or epistemologically eschatological condition:

[Religion] 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.⁵⁴

As for the specific, earth-bound church, we read,

can anybody who understands the procedure of science, or has so much as read the first book of Bacon's Novum Organum, assent for a moment to the idea that any science, be it theology or any other, can be rightly developed under the impulses of ecclesiastical ambition and the odium of priests?⁵⁵

Peirce's doctrine of Christian Love might appear to be the one exception to his extra-canonical theism. On closer inspection, however, this doctrine, too, displays the characteristic dichotomy of a pragmatic critique and an unpragmatic a priorism. Peirce presents the doctrine, in the 1893 article "Evolutionary Love,"⁵⁶ as part of his conspicuously idealistic evolutionary cosmology. Smith's review is once again definitive.

[Peirce's] theory of evolutionary love has two sides: on the one hand, it represents Peirce's reading of the Johannine theme that 'God is love' in opposition to the 'gospel of greed' while, on the other, it expresses a conception of evolutionary development which is distinct both from pure chance and from mechanical necessity....

As against the philosophy of unqualified individual self-assertion— what Peirce called the 'gospel of greed— he set the law of love or Gospel of Christ, which says that we are to sacrifice our own perfection to that of our neighbor, and to merge our individuality in sympathy with the persons around us.⁵⁷

Accommodating his metaphysics to Darwin's discoveries and responding to what he considers the dangers of Social Darwinism, Peirce exhibits the cosmological implications of the Johannine formula:

Everybody can see that the statement of St. John is the formula of an evolutionary philosophy, which teaches that growth comes only from love, from I will not say self-sacrifice, but from the ardent impulse to fulfill another's highest impulse.⁵⁸

Continuing that Hegelian-like strain we have noted in his high school association oration of 1868, Peirce speculates that evolution, particularly the evolution of ideas, takes three forms.

Tychastic evolution is "evolution by fortuitous variation." For example,

the tychastic development of thought will consist in slight departures from habitual ideas in different directions indifferently, quite purposeless and quite unconstrained whether by outward circumstances or by force of logic.⁵⁹

As an illustration, Peirce refers to the "history of Christianity, from about its establishment by Constantine to, say, the time of the Irish monasteries, an era or eon of about 500 years."⁶⁰ During this period, he says, the social isolation of the Christian communities fostered "a bitterness against the wicked world of which the primitive gospel of Mark contains not a single trace." By purely tychastic development,

little by little the bitterness increases until, in the last book of the New Testament, its poor distracted author represents that all the time Christ was talking about having come

to save the world, the secret design was to catch the entire human race, with the exception of a paltry 144,000, and souse them all in a brimstone lake.⁶¹

Anancastic evolution is "evolution by mechanical necessity," consisting, for example

of new ideas adopted without foreseeing wither they tend, but having a character determined by causes either external to the mind, such as changed circumstances of life, or internal to the mind as logical developments of ideas already accepted, such as generalizations.⁶²

As illustrations, Peirce notes the external influences of the crusades and the internal influences of the writings of Aristotle on the development of scholasticism. The third, or agapastic form of evolution, is "evolution by creative love." For example,

the agapastic development of thought is the adoption of certain mental tendencies, not altogether heedlessly, as in tychasm, nor quite blindly by the mere force of circumstance or of logic, as in anancasm, but by an immediate attraction for the idea itself, whose nature is divined before the mind possesses it, by the power of sympathy, that is, by virtue of the continuity of mind.⁶³

By way of illustration, Peirce notes the continuity of mind which is exhibited on the corporate level in "the spirit of an age," or in the individual's life in the "divination of genius," which is due "to the continuity between the man's mind and the Most High."

For Peirce, the first two forms of evolution are actually "degenerate forms" of the third, so that all the varieties of evolution resolve themselves into the single law of growth the Christian calls Love: the merging of individuals through the attraction of sympathy. Peirce's reflections on evolution therefore display features common to his earlier oration and his Neglected Argument. The Johannine formula provides a primary insight whose consequences for scientific reasoning are displayed in subsequent, philosophic reflection. As he says in the oration, "that which was poetically divined shall be scientifically known." If Peirce does not thereby reduce religion to science, he, nonetheless, addresses his theological insight strictly to an audience of scientists. In 1893, this appears to be an audience of Darwinian a priorists. Overgeneralizing the meaning of Darwin's discoveries, they have raised the principles of accident (tychasm) and mechanical necessity (anancasm) into cosmic and moral dogmas. Peirce's doctrine of evolutionary love has normative force as a pragmatic critique of these dogmas: neither

accident nor mechanical necessity, nor their simple combination, is sufficient to account for the phenomena of growth. Peirce puts his doctrine to more than critical use, however. He replaces the Darwinian dogmas with a pragmatic dogma, hypostatizing the principle of love and thereby intimating that Christianity has an essence.⁶⁴

Peirce's biographers suggest that his religious understanding is influenced by Friedrich Schiller's transcendentalism, by the Concord transcendentalists, by Swedenborg and, of course, by Kant.⁶⁵ Whatever its source, Peirce's religiosity is a blend of unmistakably theistic, naturalistic and transcendentalist elements. I am unable to evaluate Peirce's claim that this religiosity is Christian per se or that it represents the "essence" of Christianity. According to the rules of Peirce's own pragmatic critique, however, I am able to observe that Peirce's theological dogmas are a prioristic and, to that extent, unpragmatic. I cannot assume that Peirce would have it any other way: that is, that he would find a non-naturalistic Christianity either personally tolerable or philosophically legitimate. Independently of Peirce's own judgment, however, I am interested to know what a non-aprioristic, pragmatic theology would look like. The clearest model I have found is in rabbinic Judaism.

III. Rabbinic Pragmatism

Until his death in 1980, Max Kadushin was "Visiting Professor in Psychology of Religion" at the Jewish Theological Seminary. I believe he called himself "psychologist of religion" for want of a better term, however, and I find the label rabbinic pragmatist much more appropriate. In this section, I examine Kadushin's work as a striking example of a pragmatic study of religion. I suggest, on the one hand, that Peirce's pragmatic and semiotic language of analysis provides Kadushin the terminological sophistication and precision he lacks. On the other hand, Kadushin's detailed study of rabbinic Judaism exemplifies the kind of pragmatic study of religion Peirce advertises but does not undertake.

Through five book-length studies, authored between 1932 and 1969,⁶⁶ Kadushin sought to articulate the conceptual system that underlies classical rabbinic Judaism.⁶⁷ He saw this work as a challenge to those who assume that conceptual order is to be understood only on what he calls a philosophical model, which means, in our terms, an a priorist model. He argues that this assumption leads to one of two errors: either imposing an extraneous conceptual scheme on rabbinic Judaism, or else denying that rabbinic Judaism displays any conceptual order. Instead, he suggests, rabbinic Judaism displays a "non-philosophic" rationality, which can be observed in what he calls the "organismic coherence" of a complex of valuational concepts. These concepts, which he calls "value-concepts," guide behavior in the social world, while giving purpose and meaning to individual existence. To study religion is, then, to examine indigenous systems of value-concepts, noting how the concepts inter-relate with one another and how they guide concrete behavior.

Like Peirce, Kadushin presents his study as what we are calling a pragmatic critique of philosophic a priorism and, like Peirce, he tends to define his own position as the logical contrary of the philosophy he criticizes. This leads him to exaggerate both the errors of his opponents and the homogeneity and clarity of rabbinic Judaism as he sees it. For good reason, rabbinic scholars have therefore criticized him for minimizing the indigenous philosophic propensities of the rabbis and for overlooking historical development within the corpus of rabbinic literature.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Kadushin's work merits close attention for two reasons. He pioneered the pragmatic/semiotic approach to rabbinic studies which is only now beginning to attract scholarly interest.⁶⁹ And he made an ethnographer's effort to allow the rabbis to speak for themselves. His strongest claim is that, in our terms, the rabbis are indigenous pragmatists. Through their voluminous literature, the rabbis disclose the pragmatic meaning of the normative language which guides Jewish religious life.

In Kadushin's work, "Rabbinic Judaism" refers to the system of religious practice recommended by the classic texts of post-Biblical Judaism. These are the Mishnah, the compilation of legal traditions that first appears in the second century of our era; the Talmud, the

scholarly-judicial commentary on Mishnah, one version of which appeared in Palestine in the fourth century and another in Babylonia in the fifth century; and the numerous editions of midrash that appear throughout the rabbinic period, from roughly the first century b.c.e. through the sixth century of our era. The term "midrash," derived from the root d-r-sh, "to search out a Scriptural passage, expound it,"⁷⁰ denotes interpretation in general, specifically interpretation of the meaning of Scriptural passages.

The term is also used as the title for the literary compilations in which ... separate interpretations, many of them originally oral, were eventually collected and preserved for us today.⁷¹

Kadushin's primary interest is to study is with what is called aggadic (homiletic), as opposed to halakhic (legal) midrash. Halakhah, denotes "practice, adopted opinion, rule"⁷² in general, but specifically, "traditional law." Haggadah, from the denominative higid, "to show, to announce, tell,"⁷³ denotes communication or evidence in general, but specifically, "homiletics, popular lecture." Usually, haggadah refers to Scriptural interpretation exclusive of legal, i.e., halakhic material. As "published," or disseminated orally, haggadic midrashim are collections of individual exegetical statements, which Kadushin labels haggadic statements. Usually drawn from sermons, these are discrete interpretations of Scriptural passages. One of the most remarkable features of the midrashic collections is that the haggadic statements contained in them are usually contradictory, even when cited in the name of a single rabbinic preacher. Since there is no effort to harmonize the statements, scholars often conclude that the midrashim fail to display any conceptual order. Kadushin's thesis is that these scholars are looking, apparently for an organizational principle which would systematize the many and varied rabbinic statements, and they soon found that these statements would not fit into any logical scheme.⁷⁴

His method, instead, is to go "behind the statements to the concepts which the statements embody" and which belong to a coherent normative system.

Kadushin analyses the system of rabbinic value-concepts in four stages. First, he identifies "rabbinic Judaism" synchronically, as the system of thought which underlies the entire corpus of midrashic literature.⁷⁵ He argues here that, of the various forms of rabbinic literature, the

haggadic midrash most clearly articulates the fundamental norms of rabbinic Judaism.⁷⁶ He then searches for the fundamental semiotic vehicle through which the haggadic midrash performs this task.⁷⁷ He concludes that this vehicle is the haggadic statement, as defined above.

Kadushin identifies the means through which haggadic statements disclose rabbinic norms by analyzing the statements in a manner that anticipates Peirce's logic of relatives. He reduces the haggadic statement to two essential elements, "cognitive concepts" and "value-concepts." Cognitive concepts are named by "terms we use in order to describe whatever we perceive through the senses": such as "death," "table," and "angel." They have "the function of rendering objects and qualities too separable elements in a total situation...enabling us to perceive the objective relations of things and persons to each other." And they are readily translatable from one language to the next, because they refer to "definite things in sensory experience."⁷⁸ Value-concepts are named by "value terms," which enable the rabbis to abstract and to classify fundamental units in the normative life of the Jewish people:

The component 'concept' tells that the values referred to are communicable ideas, that is, ideas that may be shared by the group as a whole; whilst the component 'value' tells that these ideas are nevertheless also, in a degree, personal and subjective, and that they are ideas warmly held.⁷⁹

Examples of value-concepts are "God's Mercy" (middat harakhamim), "God's Justice" (middat hadin), "Torah" and "Israel."

In the third stage of his analysis, Kadushin identifies the various ways in which the value-concepts function within the midrashic literature. The characteristics he attributes to the value-concepts closely resemble those Peirce attributes to the "indubitable beliefs" of his Critical Commonsensism. Like Peirce's "instinctual beliefs," the value-concepts are not amenable to formal definition: in Peirce's terms, they are objectively vague. They acquire definition only through what Kadushin calls their "concretization" in specific acts of judgment⁸⁰: acts of exegesis (resulting in midrashic statements) or actions in the world (the performance of mitsvot, or religious commandments). In these acts, the value-concepts are associated with particular sets of cognitive concepts, through which association they achieve a contextual definition.

In sum, the rabbinic valuational complex as a whole functions as a system of indefinite, or vaguely defined behavioral laws⁸¹ "iconized," in Peirce's terms, or abstractly represented, through the rabbis' use of value-conceptual terms. The terms represent what Peirce calls relatives, or specific forms of relation among concrete subjects which are yet to be determined⁸². The function of the haggadic statement is to provide normative examples of how these subjects may be identified: that is, of how the laws represented by the value-conceptual terms may be enacted on earth. Let us consider one example of how Kadushin's approach may be applied.

In the midrashic collection on Genesis (B'reshit Rabbah), we find this interpretation of the Scriptural passage, "And God saw everything that He had made; and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1.31)⁸³:

(a) In the copy of R.[Rabbi] Meir's Torah (Pentateuch) was found written: 'And behold, it was very (me'od) good': and behold, death (maweth) was good... .

(c) R. Johanan said: Why was death decreed against the wicked? Because as long as the wicked live they anger the Lord, as it is written, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words' (Mal.2.17); but when they die they cease to anger Him as it is written, "There the wicked cease from raging" (Job 3.17), which means, there the wicked cease from enraging the Holy One blessed be He....

These are two haggadic statements, whose meaning is disclosed first through a philological and then a value-conceptual analysis. From the text's modern editor we read, "This may mean either that Rabbi Meir's manuscript read maweth ("death") instead of me'od ("very") or that this was inserted as a marginal comment."⁸⁴ In either case, Rabbi Meir has interpreted a textual idiosyncrasy in a way that poses the question, "How can death be good?" As suggested by the second statement, his rabbinic readers infer the answer, "Death is a potent force for repentance."⁸⁵ Discussion of a textual idiosyncrasy, in other words, becomes an occasion for displaying features of a number of value-concepts, among them, Repentance (the wicked repent through their death), The Wicked, Creation (God's creation includes death), God's Justice (the wicked are punished through death), God's Mercy (that punishment removes God's wrath). In Peirce's terms, these value-concepts represent general rules of relation which are exhibited through the specific subject matter of the Scriptural exegesis.

Other statements in this collection provide different interpretations of the meaning of the verse in Genesis. This displays another feature of the value complex. Since any value-concept may be associated with an indefinite variety of cognitive concepts, discrete midrashic statements, or particular actions, may appear to contradict other statements or acts. In Peirce's terms, the principle of contradiction does not apply here. At the same time, value-concepts display stable and identifiable relations to other value-concepts in the rabbinic literature. The coherence of the rabbinic value complex — the reasonableness of the instinctual beliefs — lies in this stability. To study the order of rabbinic Judaism is, then, to observe the various ways in which the value-concepts interrelate throughout the rabbinic literature. This detailed and open-ended observation constitutes the fourth and final stage of Kadushin's study.

In this fourth stage, Kadushin's analysis both anticipates additional elements of Peirce's semiotic and moves into areas Peirce did not have occasion to consider. To illustrate, I will review Kadushin's discussion of the rabbinic terms for "God." The rabbis' offer a pragmatic analysis of religious language which contrasts with Peirce's and which helps place Peirce's analysis in its own pragmatic context.

Like the rabbis, as we will see, Peirce says the concept of God can be defined only pragmatically, through the conduct that interprets that concept. Unlike the rabbis, however, Peirce regards the individual's contemplative experience as the most appropriate form of such conduct. According to Kadushin, the rabbinic conception of God arises out of experience, but not the experience of individual contemplation:

The actual experience of God is personal; the ways or modes of experiencing God, however, are common to the group as a whole. Being common to the entire group, the modes of God experience are expressed in value-concepts, among them such concepts as prayer, repentance, the study of Torah.⁸⁶

Religious experience is at once personal and public: the heart belongs to the individual body, but the language it speaks belongs to the public, which means to a particular public, or people. Kadushin calls this mediated or normalized experience the rabbis' "normal mysticism": personal experience of the God who makes Himself known by way of language. In contradistinction to

Peirce's naturalistic, or extra-hermeneutic analysis of the meaning of Ens Necessarium, the rabbis suggest that God discloses Himself in creation only through the mediation of His spoken, or revealed words, which are value-concepts. These words identify God's authorship of creation at the same time that they prescribe the human conduct which He will tolerate with respect to this creation. Thus, for example, reference to God's daily renewing the order of creation constitutes a liturgical act, a prescribed blessing, or berakhah. In Kadushin's words,

The sunrise, which is a phenomenal experience, is interpreted by the berakhah to be a manifestation of God's love, a present act of God's, as it were, the occasion and the berakhah together constituting a unitary, experiential entity. Once more a daily event is, through a berakhah, charged with significance; and once more, through that same act of worship, the individual is given a sense of kinship with the whole world, a kinship again expressed in yet another phrase: "Who in lovingkindness givest light to the earth and to them that dwell thereon."⁸⁷

By referring to God as daily creator, in other words, individuals conduct themselves as creatures, for whom existence is a gift. Peirce resembles the rabbis when he argues that our way of knowing the world is directly, if incompletely, a way of knowing God and that, in knowing God, we come to act in a certain way:

The discoveries of science, their enabling us to predict what will be the course of nature, is proof conclusive that, though we cannot think any thought of God's, we can catch a fragment of His thought as it were.⁸⁸

[The third peculiarity of the hypothesis of God's reality] consists in its commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers.⁸⁹

The difference is that, unlike the rabbis, Peirce suggests that our knowledge of God remains independent of linguistically bound instructions about how to act in the world⁹⁰: that is, that we can refer to the Ens Necessarium without at the same time affirming a particular tradition of value-concepts.

Kadushin notes that three rabbinic terms for God appear to be exceptions to the rule that God is named only through value-conceptual terms. If they are exceptions, then the rabbis would appear to recognize the possibility of a strictly contemplative relationship with God. These terms are 'eloah, 'el and 'elohim. Kadushin notes that, at times, the rabbis appear to use these terms to classify the non-valuational characters which the God of Israel would share with an idolater's god. For example

When speaking of an idol, [a passage in Talmud Ketubbot 110b] says, "Eloho—his (the idolater's) god—is with him in the house, 'and when speaking of God who hears prayer though it be only whispered, the passage asks, 'Can you have a God —'Eloah— nearer than that?'⁹¹

In all such cases, however, Kadushin finds that the terms are classificatory in only a limited sense, "first including and then immediately negating" reference to "other gods" than the one God. Commenting, for example, on the terms "other gods" in Exodus 20.3, the rabbis

ask, 'But are they gods (Elohot)? Has it not been said, 'And have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods (Isaiah 37.19)?'⁹²

Kadushin concludes that these terms appear to be classificatory only in contexts "where the difference between God and 'other gods' is emphasized and where, in other words, it is most clear that the rabbis possess no unambiguously generic term for "God and the gods."⁹³

To complete his argument, Kadushin notes that all the other rabbinic terms for God are either names for value-concepts or epithets. In the former case, the terms deliver information only to those who have enacted the behavior recommended by the value-concepts. In the latter case, the terms refer to aspects of personal experience of God, within the context of the valuational complex. To take some examples. "It is a rule of the Rabbis that the **Tetragrammaton** in the Bible refers to Middat Rakhmim [the value-concept of God's Mercy], as in Ex.34.6, and that '**Elohim** in the Bible refers to Middat Ha-Din [the value-concept of God's Justice], as in Ex.22.8."⁹⁴ **Shekhinah** ("The Indwelling Presence") is "one of the reverential appellatives for God," used "only when the Rabbis speak of God's nearness to man."⁹⁵ **Makom** ("The Place"), **Hashem** ("The Name"), and so forth, are all epithets for God, representing "a personal relationship, the sheer consciousness of Him..., a relationship so unique as to be symbolized by reverential names rather than by a general idea."⁹⁶

Kadushin concludes that, independently of the religion's valuational complex, the abstractive or contemplative intellect can tell us only that God is other. This means that the God disclosed in philosophic reflection would be known only in His absence. And the terms used for God in this context would have only one pragmatic meaning: that the mind which knows God in

His absence does not, in that respect, know God as creator, nor does it enter into relationship with His creation. In other words, the mind which knows God in his absence knows Him out of a context which precludes pragmatic knowledge and which permits only the kind of knowledge we have associated, in Section I, with an a prioristic — in particular a transcendental — pragmatism. This provides direct acquaintance with what is not God: the experience of doubt that exhibits the illusory, illogical or overgeneralized character of what Peirce considers unpragmatic methods of fixing belief. By excluding positive knowledge of God, however, it leaves the pragmatic critic with only hypothetical and in that sense a prioristic knowledge of how God may make His presence known in this world.

IV. Pragmatic Theology and Narrative

The analysis I have offered of Peirce's pragmatism does not warrant my drawing any conclusions about the validity of pragmatic philosophy. It takes as its starting point Peirce's pragmatic critique of a certain line of a prioristic thinking and then applies that same critique to Peirce's own metaphysical and theological doctrines. It suggests, in Section I, that these doctrines tend to be unpragmatic and that they may arise through Peirce's hypostatizing what he takes to be the logical contrary of the a prioristic philosophies he has criticized. In Section II, it suggests that Peirce's philosophical theology replays the two sides of his epistemology. He offers a pragmatic critique of a prioristic atheism or theism and attempts to replace these by hypostatizing their logical contrary: an as yet abstract trust in God's presence in the natural world and in the sciences which uncover the reality of that world. In Section III, this story takes a detour. Through a study of rabbinic pragmatism, it offers a new perspective from which to evaluate Peirce's purportedly Christian pragmatism.

For the rabbis, as interpreted by Kadushin, the pragmatic meaning of God's names is disclosed only in the way a community socializes its members in the rules of conduct which are attributes of those names. There is room in the rabbinic tradition for philosophic reflection, but the individual thinker can do no more than abstract (in Peirce's terms "prescind") general qualities of these rules. The rabbis' value-conceptual terms are products of just this kind of

abstractive analysis. From the rabbinic perspective, Peirce's doctrines of Musement and of Christian Love are not misguided, but they are of limited use. In each case, Peirce selects just those features of Christian religious life he believes are excluded, without warrant, from the a priorists' thinking: attentiveness to direct experience and to the relational consequences of thought. He then constructs theological doctrines out of these features, alone, which is to reduce the indefinite complexity of Christian religious life to a few of its attributes.

This is not to say that Peirce selects these attributes arbitrarily. In Kadushin's terms, Peirce's theology is stimulated by direct experience of God's otherness. He works, as we have seen, from out of the context of philosophical a priorism, which is precisely the context which excludes positive or pragmatic knowledge of God's presence. From out of this context, Peirce performs the remarkable task of disclosing the limits of this context and of indicating, within the a prioristic terms of this context, the routes of Musement and of Christian Love which lead to a new context. On pragmatic grounds, he is to be faulted only for failing to identify the limits of his theological enterprise in these terms. He offers a naturalistic theology without disclosing the pragmatic meaning of naturalism: which is that naturalistic theology is the a priorist's only means of understanding religious language; it says the most we can say when, isolated from God's own word and from the tradition and community which interprets it, we know of God only that He must be here but that we do not know what He is or what He wants of us. In rabbinic terms, we know only that God hides His face (mistater panim). The reasons for God's hiding are inscrutable, with one exception. We may come to anticipate God's hiding whenever disruptions in the continuity or efficacy of religious socialization rob individuals of positive knowledge about how to conduct their lives in God's image. Natural theologies, like Peirce's, articulate the religious knowledge that accompanies such disruptions.

Peirce's pragmatism belongs to a tradition of Christian philosophy. I have offered comments from out of the context of Jewish philosophy and can only assume that there are Christian philosophers who may read Peirce the way the rabbis would and may, therefore, take up Peirce's Christian project in the pragmatic fashion he initiated but did not complete. In fact, I

believe the work of several contemporary Christian philosophers displays elements of what we might call a Christian pragmatism. I will close by mentioning a sample number of these.

John Smith is perhaps the most well-known philosopher who works explicitly in a tradition of Christian pragmatism. His work on Peirce is authoritative, and his Experience and God, to take one of many examples, explicates the philosopher's route from natural to revealed theology.⁹⁷ Hans Frei has initiated a school of non-a prioristic "narrative theologies" which have been stimulated by his critique of The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative⁹⁸ in modernity. While he does not place himself self-consciously in Peirce's tradition, his critique is pragmatic and shows how the pragmatic dimension of Christian language is disclosed only by way of the Gospel narrative and the conduct it inculcates. George Lindbeck's, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age⁹⁹, augments Frei's perspective and suggests how what I am calling the Christian pragmatist can offer a non-reductive theory of religion. Lindbeck calls this a "cultural-linguistic alternative" to the opposing a priorisms of experiential-expressivism and cognitivism. Stanley Hauerwas promotes a vigorous critique of a priorism in Christian ethics. Joining Alasdair MacIntyre and Bernard Williams, he argues that human character is nurtured only within particular speech communities, which means within the language of those shared narratives through which these communities socialize their members.¹⁰⁰ Peirce devotes little attention to the narrative character of religious language. This may be a conspicuous sign of his unpragmatic tendency.

NOTES

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1. I am offering another version of what Peirce scholars call the "Two Peirce Theory." Thomas Gouge offers the first comprehensive version of this theory, in The Thought of C.S. Peirce (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950). In my 1980 Yale Ph.D. dissertation (Charles Peirce's Metaphysical Conviction), I argue that the two Peirces are in dialogue with one another and that there is a way to resolve the tension between them: an argument I revise in a book-in-progress, "Charles Peirce's Incomplete Pragmatism." Among the sources which stimulate the argument of this paper are Murray Murphey's developmental critique, The Development of Peirce's Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), Rulon Wells' logical critique of Peirce (for example, in "Criteria for Semiosis," in A Perfusion of Signs, T. Sebeok, ed., [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977], pp.1-21) and John E. Smith's corrective reading of Peirce's pragmatism (for example, in Purpose and Thought, The Meaning of

Pragmatism (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978); see also "Community and Reality," most recently reprinted in The Relevance of Charles Peirce, E. Freeman, ed., [La Salle, Ill.: The Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983]pp.38-58.

². "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," Popular Science Monthly, 12 (1878): 2286-302, reprinted in Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934-35), Vol. 5, Par.402. Future references to this collection will be to Collected, followed by volume and paragraph number.

³. "Issues of Pragmaticism," The Monist 15 (1905):481-499; in Collected 5.438.

⁴. Collected, 5.467:1906.

⁵. As John Smith explains on many occasions, Peirce characterizes the behavior of any object as a would-be, or "real possibility." See, for example: Purpose and Thought, pp. 15ff.

⁶ Max Fisch confirms Peirce's report, in "Was There a Metaphysical Club in Cambridge?" Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, Second Series, E. Moore and R. Robin, eds. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), pp.3-32.

⁷ Collected, 5.12. See Bain's The Emotions and the Will (New York: Longman's Green,1875): ch. 11.

⁸. Collected 5.358ff:1877.

⁹ As a rule of behavior, pragmatism is, as Peirce writes in 1902, a general method in philosophy, "a method of reflexion having for its purpose to render ideas clear," (5.13nl, which the editors note is "from Peirce's personal interleaved copy of (Baldwin's) Century Dictionary, c. 1902).

¹⁰. Collected,5.377.

¹¹. Collected,5.378.

¹². Collected, 5.382.

¹³. Among the 1868 papers, I am referring to "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," "Consequences of Four Incapacities," and "Grounds of Validity" (5.213-357). I am reading the reference to earlier philosophers anachronistically, from his comments in 5.11, c. 1906.

¹⁴. Collected, 5.264.

¹⁵. Collected, 5.383.

¹⁶ Richard Smyth suggests that Descartes shares with Peirce the view that "the only cause which is adequate to account for our possession of fixed beliefs is some external permanency." See his "The Pragmatic Maxim in 1878," Trans. C.S. Peirce Society XIII.2 (1977):99.

¹⁷. "Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community," in Freeman, ed., The Relevance of Charles Peirce (La Salle, Ill.: The Hegeler Institute,1983), p.254.

¹⁸ which Peirce summarizes in "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," Hibbert Journal, 7 (1908):90-112. See 6.468ff.

¹⁹. Collected, 5.407.

²⁰. Collected, 2.654:1878 .

²¹. "Doctrine of Chances," (1878): third in the Popular Science Monthly series on "Illustrations of the Logic of Science," following "How to Make Our Ideas Clear."

²². See, for example, Apel's "C.S. Peirce and The Post-Tarskian Problem of an Adequate Explication of the Meaning of Truth: Towards a Transcendental-Pragmatic Theory of Truth," in The Relevance of Charles Peirce, pp.189-223.

²³. "Issues of Pragmaticism," Monist,15, (1905:481-99).In Collected,5.443. Parentheses are his.

²⁴. Collected, 5.445 .

²⁵. After Charles Morris, many pragmatists identify this logic with semiotics.

²⁶. "What is Christian Faith?" The Open Court, 7 (1893:3743-45); in Collected 6.448:1893.

²⁷. C.S. Peirce to Smith, July 25, 1908. Scientific Correspondence. Cited in Murray Murphey, The Development of Peirce's Philosophy, p.15.

²⁸. "The Place of Our Age in the History of Civilization," delivered at the Reunion of the Cambridge High School Association, November 12, 1863: in Writings I, pp.101-14. My

discussion of this is enriched by Donna Orange's comments, in Peirce's Conception of God, A Developmental Study, Peirce Studies No.2 (Lubbock, Texas: Institute for Studies in Pragmaticism, 1984), pp. 13ff.

²⁹. Writings I, pp. 107-8.

³⁰. Writings I, p.114.

³¹. An unpublished sequel to Peirce's 1866 Lowell Lectures (MS 359): cited in Orange, pp.21-22.

³². From an unpublished critique of positivism (MS 970, 1867-8), cited in Orange, p.17-18.

³³. MS 354, cited in Orange, p.19-20.

³⁴. In addition to Orange's survey, my review closely follows Smith's brief but incisive summary of Peirce's reflections on religion, in Purpose and Thought, pp.166-82. See also Smith's "The Tension Between Direct Experience and Argument in Religion," Religious Studies17 (1986):487-497.

³⁵. From an article on religion and science, The Open Court 7 (1893):3559-60; in Collected, 6.429.

³⁶. Ibid.:3743-45; in Collected, 6.439.

³⁷. Collected, 6.494ff.

³⁸. Collected, 6.494.

³⁹. Purpose and Thought, p.175.

⁴⁰. See n. 22.

⁴¹. Purpose and Thought, p.177.

⁴². Ibid., pp.179-80.

⁴³. Collected, 6.465.

⁴⁴. Ibid.

⁴⁵. Ibid., p.181.

⁴⁶. Collected, 6.485.

⁴⁷. Ibid., pp.181-2.

⁴⁸. Collected, 6.490.

⁴⁹. Collected, 6.486ff.

⁵⁰. From "Answers to Question...", c. 1902; in Collected, 6.502.

⁵¹. From "Additament" to "A Neglected Argument...", 1910 (MS 844); in Collected, 6.490.

⁵². Ibid.

⁵³. Ibid.

⁵⁴. Collected, 6.429:1893.

⁵⁵. Collected, 6.450:1895.

⁵⁶. The Monist 3 (1893):176-200; in Collected, 6.287-317.

⁵⁷. Purpose and Thought, p.168.

⁵⁸. Collected, 6.289.

⁵⁹. Collected, 6.307.

⁶⁰. Collected, 6.311.

⁶¹. Ibid.

⁶². Collected, 6.307.

⁶³. Ibid.

⁶⁴. See Rulon Wells' critique of Peirce's evolutionary cosmology, in "The True Nature of Peirce's Evolutionism," Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, Second Series:304-322. For Wells, "the survival regulated by the Darwinian mechanism is survival for *today*" (p.311, italics mine). In order to correct Peirce's doctrine of Love, the Darwinian needs only to prove "that the perfect Christian has inferior survival-value" in the present. A Christian response would depend on the notion of an afterlife, but "Peirce neither clearly accepts nor clearly renounces this belief." Peirce's notion of the "long-run" doesn't help, since Peirce never solves the problem of how to connect the present (short-run) with the long run (p.313). A comparable concern leads Smith to write that "Peirce seems to have overlooked the fact that the present integrity of the real

individual is lost if that reality is identified with an opinion or type of experience that never manages to establish itself in the present" ("Community and Reality," p.57).

⁶⁵. Orange provides a helpful summary of the influences (Peirce's Conception of God, p.1-13). She notes that Peirce's "Unitarian background makes it not at all surprising that throughout his life, Peirce should have exhibited an intense dislike of dogmatism and intolerance in religion, together with a strong disposition to believe 'the general essence and spirit of it'(MS L408:25 July 1907)." She says the influence of Emerson and the Concord transcendentalists is difficult to ascertain, but intimated in various manuscripts and one significant publication (see 6.102). References to Schiller appear in a number of places (e.g., 5.402n, MS921,310). And the connection to Swedenborg comes through Peirce's relationship to Henry James Sr. (see Walter Krolkowski, "The Peircean Vir," in Studies in The Philosophy of Charles Peirce, Second Series:257-79; and R.L. Trammel, "Charles Sanders Peirce and Henry James the Elder," Transactions of the Charles S Peirce Society 11 (1973): 202-20). See also Joseph Brent, "A Study of the Life of Charles Peirce," Ph.D. Dissertation (UCLA, 1960), passim.

⁶⁶. Two of these are studies of specific midrashic texts. The three of interest to a general audience are Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1938), The Rabbinic Mind (New York, Bloch Publishing Co., 1952, 1972), and Worship and Ethics: A Study in Rabbinic Judaism (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

⁶⁷. The following review is, in part, a summary of my "There's No God-Talk Unless God Talks: A Study of Max Kadushin as Rabbinic Pragmatist," forthcoming in the Proceedings of the Academy of Jewish Philosophy, Philadelphia.

⁶⁸. For example, Samuel Cohon's review of The Rabbinic Mind, in Jewish Quarterly Review 44(1954): 244-51; and Marvin Fox's review of Worship and Ethics, in Commentary 38(1964): 78-82. See also David Stern's more general critique in "Aggadah," Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought, eds. Cohen and Mendes-Flohr (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986) pp.10f.

⁶⁹. Among very recent studies, for example, see Susan Handelman, The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory (Albany, 1982); Midrash and Literature, G. Hartman and S. Budick, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and Jose Faur, Golden Doves with Silver Dots: Semiotics and Textuality in Rabbinic Tradition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁷⁰. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 8.9, cited in H.L. Strack, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash (English trans.) (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society,1931), p. 6.

⁷¹. David Stern, "Midrash," in Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought, pp.613-20.

⁷² Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Pardes Pub.House,1950),p.353. I am grateful to David Novak and William Halo for pointing out to me difficulties in determining the etymology of the term halakhah. Strack and others have supposed that the term is derived from the Hebrew root h-l-kh, "to go away, walk." Saul Lieberman has suggested, instead, that the term is derived from the Akkadian ilku ("tax") and originally meant "fixed rule," as in a fixed land tax (See his Hellenism in Jewish Palestine, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 1950:p.83n3). More recently, Tzvi Abusch derives it from the Akkadian alaktu, meaning "the course or way (of the stars)" and, thus "divine oracle or decision." He suggests that the meaning of halakhah may have evolved from "courses of the stars = divine oracle = path of action (as determined by God)." (See his "Alaktu and Halakhah, Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation," Harvard Theological Review 80, 1987.)

⁷³ Jastrow, p.871.

⁷⁴ Rabbinic Mind, p.31.

⁷⁵. In his effort to bracket diachronic considerations, Kadushin displays his a prioristic tendency: an urgency to glean from the rabbinic material norms that can be put into immediate use. Seen from a different perspective, this is his own pragmatic, as opposed to historiographic use of the classic sources, to address certain problems in contemporary practice. As Jose Faur writes,

"concerning scriptural verses appearing in different places, the rabbis declared that they must be uttered in a single statement' (Sifre), meaning that they must be explained synchronically, as if constituting a single conceptual unit" (Golden Doves, p. xv). At the same time, Kadushin is not working solely within the traditional framework that legitimates synchronic interpretations, and he is to be faulted for not explicating his pragmatic purposes.

⁷⁶. Kadushin's approach is not unhelpful, but he has not clearly demonstrated that the halakhic midrash can be bracketed in this fashion. His point is that the hagadah presents the only indigenous display of the norms expressed in the halakah.

⁷⁷. His method here is that of a pragmatic transcendentalist: assuming that there is such a vehicle and that it can be identified discursively.

⁷⁸ Rabbinic Mind, pp.50, 68-9. Kadushin develops this terminology out of a critique of the linguistic theory G.A. de Laguna, Speech: Its Function and Development (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927).

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.4

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 79ff.

⁸¹ behavioral in the broadest sense.

⁸². See for example "The Logic of Relatives," 3.456:1897.

⁸³. Cited from Midrash Rabbah, I-X, Freedman and Simon, eds. (London: Soncino Press, 1939, 1961).

⁸⁴ Ibid., I, pp. 66-67.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 194.

⁸⁷ Worship and Ethics, pp. 94-5.

⁸⁸ Collected, 6.502.

⁸⁹ Collected, 6.490.

⁹⁰. He does not regard the commandment "to enact the scientific method" as being linguistically bound.

⁹¹ Rabbinic Mind, p.195.

⁹² Ibid., p.198.

⁹³ Ibid., 206.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 217, citing Sifre Deut. XXVII. The Jew is enjoined to imitate only God's attribute of mercy.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 225, citing, for example Genesis Rabbah XIX.13.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 205-6.

⁹⁷ Experience and God (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). See also, for example, The Analogy of Experience: An Approach to Understanding Religious Truth (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) and most recently "The Tension Between Direct Experience and Argument in Religion," Religious Studies 17 (1986): 487-97.

⁹⁸ (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974) and The Identity of Jesus Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). See also, most recently, "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition: Does it Stretch or Will It Break?" in F.McConnell, ed., The Bible and The Narrative Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.36-75.

⁹⁹ (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984). See also, for example, "Theologische Methode und Wissenschaftstheorie," Theologische Revue 74 (1978): 267-280.

¹⁰⁰ Among his many recent texts, two are particularly pertinent to this discussion: The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) and A Community of Character (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).