Abduction and the Origin of “Musement”:
Peirce’s “Neglected Argument for the Reality of God”

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ABSTRACT: This paper is an evaluation of C. S. Peirce’s late essay “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God” (1908), based on the two logical values that he calls “productiveness” and “security.” After reviewing the unique logical form of “abduction” and noting that it is a formal fallacy—and so enjoys less “security” than deduction or induction—I turn to the extraordinary case of abduction that is found in “A Neglected Argument.” I argue that the productiveness of the Neglected Argument is found in its ability to instigate practical results. The security of the Neglected Argument, on the other hand, is rooted in an activity Peirce calls “musement,” a kind of rational intuition. Moreover, I suggest that Peirce’s notion of “musement,” which has remained something of a mystery in Peirce studies, arose from his early reading of Friedrich von Schiller’s aesthetics.

I. INTRODUCTION

CHARLES S. PEIRCE BELIEVED that there were two “principal aims” that any logician hoping to classify methods of reasoning should fulfill: “first, to bring out the amount and kind of security (approach to certainty) of each kind of reasoning, and second, to bring out the possible and esperable uberty, or value in productiveness, of each kind.” Broadly speaking, whereas an assessment in terms of security evaluates the logical virtues of a particular type of reasoning, assessment in terms of uberty is an evaluation of its epistemological and practical virtues. Alternatively, one could say that an assessment of any argument form is exhausted by a consideration, on the one hand, of its truth-preserving power and, on the other hand, of its capacity to generate new knowledge and practical results.

In this paper I consider the type of reasoning that Peirce calls abduction in light of the above two categories, and then I discuss a special case of abduction that he presents in his late essay “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God” (1908). Ultimately, my paper seeks to shed light upon the notion of “musement” found in that essay, a notion that has received little attention in Peirce studies. I argue that,


according to Peirce, musement is the key to the security of the abductive inference found in "The Neglected Argument" and that musement likely has its origins in Peirce's early reading of Friedrich von Schiller.

The first section is a review of the form of abductive inference. In the next section, I explain Peirce's general theory of the "security" and "uberty" of abduction by comparing that type of inference with deduction and induction, and I emphasize the essential temporal element of abduction. Sections three and four are a discussion of, respectively, the "uberty" and "security" of "the Neglected Argument" by noting the importance of musement for its security. In the last section I present some early texts of Peirce that indicate, I believe, that musement has its origins in his early reading of Schiller on aesthetic contemplation.

II. THE FORM OF ABDUCTION

Peirce's theory of abduction is thought to have originated in his studies of the Aristotelian syllogism. Aristotle, and through him the scholastics, had been concerned to identify all valid forms of the syllogism and the means by which they might be reduced to the first figure. Peirce, in his article "On the Natural Classification of Arguments" (1867), attempts to show that the indirect figures of the syllogism do not, in fact, deductively reduce to the first figure. For implicit in this reduction, he believes, are inferences in the indirect figures themselves.

Characterizing the premises and conclusions of the figures in terms of "rule, case, and result," he writes that the form of the second figure (what he will later identify with "hypothetical inference" or "abduction") involves "Assertion of Rule, Denial of Result; Denial of Case." Consider an example of Baroco:

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\begin{align*}
S \text{ is } M & \quad (A) \text{ All men are mortal,} \\
P \text{ is not } M & \quad (O) \text{ Zeus is not mortal; therefore,} \\
P \text{ is not } S & \quad (O) \text{ Zeus is not a man.}
\end{align*}
\]

Baroco, like all other valid forms of the second figure, proves that some proposition could not be the case; for example, it could not be the case that "Zeus is a man." When reduced to Barbara, it proves that the proposition could not be the case since it permits an impossible conclusion.\(^1\)

\[
\begin{align*}
S \text{ is } M & \quad (A) \text{ All men are mortal,} \\
P \text{ is } S & \quad (A) \text{ Zeus is a man; therefore,} \\
P \text{ is } M & \quad (A) \text{ Zeus is mortal.}
\end{align*}
\]

However, Peirce came to consider this type of inference, along with the two other indirect types, as autonomous forms proceeding from three different principles. He


\(^3\) Of course, there is nothing logically impossible about Zeus being a man. It may be that, in some possible world, there is a god named Zeus who is also a man. Presumably the reductions were concerned, however, only with preserving the appropriate de re necessities and possibilities. Accordingly, it is (de re) necessarily impossible that Zeus be mortal, and therefore necessarily impossible that he be a man.
identified hypothesis with the second figure of the syllogism and induction with the third. Peirce’s explanation of “formal hypothesis” proceeds thus:

From the syllogism,

- Any M is \( \pi' P' \);
- Any S is M;
- therefore, Any S is \( \pi' P' \);

where \( \pi' P' \) denotes the conjunction of all the characters of M, if the conclusion and the first premise are true, the second premise is true by definition; so that we have the demonstrative form of the argument,

- Any M is \( \pi' P' \);
- Any S is \( \pi' P' \);
- therefore, Any S is M.

Peirce calls this “formal” hypothesis because the conclusion is “true by definition.”

However, if one were to make a hypothetical inference without knowing of all the properties that defined M, then instead of using \( \pi' P' \) as the middle term one would just use P, or P and \( P' \). Thus a “probable” hypothesis “may be defined as an argument which proceeds upon the assumption that a character which is known necessarily to involve a certain number of others, may be probably predicated of any object which has all the characters which this character is known to involve.” For instance, I might observe that a table “has a sheen,” “is nonabsorbent,” “is made of a heavy material,” “is more brown than blue,” etc. But in supposing a cause that would explain the phenomenon of the table, I would not include in my middle term all that I have observed about the table, and certainly not all that I could have observed, but only those properties that are in some sense conspicuous:

Most tables that have been lacquered have a sheen and are nonabsorbent,

This table has a sheen and is nonabsorbent;

therefore, it is likely that this table has been lacquered.

This inference, unlike a formal hypothesis, is indeterminate. Peirce explains the difference between the second and third figures of the syllogism and the indeterminate or probable inferences associated with them in his later essay “Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis” (1878):

Baroco and Bocardo are based upon the fact that if the truth of a conclusion necessarily follows from the truth of a premise, then the falsity of the premise follows from the falsity

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4In 1903 Peirce gave the following account of this discovery: “With this hint [inferring the rule from the minor premise and the conclusion] as to the nature of induction, I at once remarked that if this be so there ought to be a form of inference which infers the Minor premise from the major and the conclusion. Moreover, Aristotle was the last of men to fail to see this. I looked along further and found that... Aristotle opens the 25th [chapter of the Prior Analytics] in a description of the inference of the minor premise from the major and the conclusion.” Quoted in Murray Morphey, The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), p. 60.

5WCP I, pp. 43–44.

of the conclusion. This is always true. It is different when the inference is only probable. It by no means follows that, because the truth of a certain premise would render the truth of a conclusion probable, therefore the falsity of the conclusion renders the falsity of the premise probable. 7

Peirce also dubbed probable inferences in the second figure a posteriori inferences. He held to a causal theory of the proposition that later transformed into a relationship of signs: “There is no difference logically between hypotheticals and categoricals. The subject is a sign of the predicate, the antecedent of the consequent; and this is the only point that concerns logic.” 8 These remarks imply, for example, that “Socrates (p) is a man (q)” may be rewritten as “If p (Socrates is) then q (a man is).” 9 He evidently thought that inferring the minor premise from the major premise and “result” was the same as inferring a cause from an effect, or that the “sign” of the antecedent, in the case of abduction, intervened on the “sign” of the consequent, and that, under either interpretation, the consequent and antecedent cannot be thought simultaneously. Hypotheses may therefore be characterized, according to Peirce, as a posteriori inferences that suppose a single cause or group of causes out of an infinite number of possible causes.

So, unlike formal hypothetical inferences (ideal instances of Baroco), probable hypothetical inferences generate indeterminate conclusions. Indeed, such inferences (paradigmatic cases of abduction) are identical with the formal fallacy of affirming the consequent. Given some puzzling fact(s) q to be explained, and some conditional p→q such that, if p were the case, q would follow, one hypothesizes or supposes that p.

III. THE “SECURITY” AND “UBERTY” OF ABDUCTIVE INFERENCE IN GENERAL

So, what exactly makes an inference to p, given p→q and q, trustworthy? That is, what allows the “rule,” the major premise of the syllogism and the second premise of abduction, to approach biconditionality (ideal security)? The rule demonstrates how some cause or collection of causes, designated p, could be jointly sufficient for some surprising or wonderful fact q. But for the rule to approach biconditionality, it must somehow be rendered likely that p be the only condition of q, prior even to the subsequent “testing” of the hypothesis. (Of course, in order for the rule to be construed in terms of biconditionality it helps to introduce a linguistic ambiguity—the option that p be interpreted as either “cause” or “explanation.”) For if hypothesizing were mere “retroduction,” mere backward thinking, Peirce’s insistence that it be considered a third (and together with deduction and induction, jointly exhaustive) method of reasoning would remain unconvincing.

7Ibid., p. 191.
8Quoted in Murphy, p. 63.
To understand in what the security of abduction consists, the temporal element of abduction should first be explained, since it is in the interval of time between the establishment of the two premises of abduction that the mind happens upon a likely cause of whatever phenomenon it is considering. Now, that an interval of time is crucial to abductive inference is not at all obvious. As noted above, Peirce held to a causal theory of the proposition, that is, that all sentences of the form “S is P” may be rewritten as “if S, then P” (or in modern parlance (∃x) (Sx → Px)). Underlying this logical theory is the idea that all thought is inferential, or imparted through a chain of signs, and that consequently there is no “immediate” knowledge. This must hold for every form of inference. However, though all forms of thought have this mediate character, there is a sense in which abductive inference is mediate in a more fundamental way. It requires, in a way that deduction and induction do not, an interval of time between the establishment of the two premises; abduction is in principle impossible without this interval. Of course, abduction supposes something that “happened before”—it concerns the temporal. But more significant is the fact that the premises themselves must be temporally separated.

To see that this is so, recall that the premises of an abductive inference are (a) some “surprising fact” that is the “result” of the syllogism and (b) the “rules” or major premise of the syllogism, from which are inferred (c) the case or the minor premise of the syllogism. However, when one is (a) “surprised” by some fact, one cannot possibly be aware of the (b) rule or rules that establish(es) the causal origins of that fact. If one were aware of all the “rules” that would cause a certain fact, that fact would no longer be “surprising”: premise (a) would not be occasioned at all, and there would be no resulting inference. The existence of a state of mind in which one is surprised by something and in which one is aware of the rules (where the content of both attitudes is the same) is impossible.

The impossibility of temporally coincidental abductive premises may be elucidated by the relationship of Holmes and Watson. The Sherlock Holmes stories offer rich examples of abductive methodology, but what is especially illustrative in them is the nature of the two men themselves. Holmes is very rarely “surprised.” He may in fact be seen as a caricature of the major premise of abduction, the premise that (on its own) occasions only immediate inferences. Always knowing the rules of his trade and having educated himself in the nomological minutiae of everyday experience, Holmes seldom exhibits the phenomenology of surprise described by Peirce:

Examine the Percept in the particularly marked case in which it comes as a surprise. Your mind was filled [with] an imaginary object that was expected. At the moment when it was expected the vividness of the representation is exalted, and suddenly when it should come something quite different comes instead. I ask you whether at that instant of surprise there is not a double consciousness, on the one hand of an Ego, which is simply the expected idea suddenly broken off, on the other hand of the Non-Ego, which is the Strange Intruder, in his abrupt entrance.\(^{10}\)

\(^{10}\)EP II, p. 154.
More often than not, no fact of a particular case escapes Holmes’s notice. His thought may be seen as “abductive” only when Watson (the embodiment, as it were, of the “surprising fact” and the “Strange Intruder”) occasions an abductive interpretation of Holmes’s thought processes by revealing his own stupefaction. It is the surprising fact of abduction, and not the rule, that is necessary to initiate the inference. Although one might have a dispositional awareness of many sorts of rules about the empirical world, these can only be used for the purposes of abduction if occasioned by some surprise. (It is for this reason that perceptual judgements would not seem to be paradigmatic instances of abduction, because there is nothing in them “contrary to expectation.” If there is an inferential process transpiring, it is not occasioned by surprise, at least as Peirce understands it.) Thus, the idea that there is no room in a single moment for both premises of abduction and that it is the “surprise” that must temporally precede the “rule” is brought into high relief by a literal example of Peirce’s “Ego” and “Non-Ego.”

Of course, without being characterized as temporal, deductive inferences are conducted in an “interval” of time. But that interval is trivial; it is an accidental quality of the inference that goes along with just any inference at all. Legitimate deductive inferences are usually “definitional,” concerned with the proper arrangement and re-arrangement of classes. Peirce states, “the fact that man has a power of Explicating his own meaning renders Deduction valid” (6.474). Deductive inferences could, perhaps, be characterized as extraordinarily accurate predictions, but most aptly as definitional.

Similarly, inductive inference need not be considered as temporal to accomplish its purpose. Though no inference can be “thought simultaneously” and is therefore more or less composed of a relationship of signs, temporality does nothing logically to cohere or make consistent the premises of induction. Suppose I thought the following: (a) all seasons that I have experienced which are summers have been quite warm; (b) this season is a summer; (c) this season, therefore, will probably be quite warm. Although I think this inference in time, a time interval is not necessary for the logical compatibility of the premises. That is, my perceptual awareness of (b), the particulars of the situation, is compatible with the experience of (a). It is not as if, in knowing that a certain season is in fact a summer, I am prevented from experiencing that season’s warmth. Not so in the case of abduction.

Abductive inference, then, cannot proceed without a lapse of time, a hiatus. In this interval of time, suggestions about the causal origins of the surprising fact present themselves (the “rules” arise). However—returning to the question of the security of abduction—what confidence are we to have in that rule? What, in Peirce’s view, enables a person to locate the rule that expresses the real cause of the phenomenon in question, and so enables a person reliably to infer the reality of that cause? Again,
given \( q \) and \( p \to q \), why should one think that one is preserving truth by inferring from these the reality of \( p \)?

The security (however small) of abduction consists, Peirce thinks, in its relation to a certain properly human, instinctive "guessing power." This power seems to be a natural or acquired ability that takes an extraordinarily large (and relevant) first cut out of the initial possibilities present to the reasoner, so that, when searching out the cause of some phenomenon, he is left with justifiably hopeful trial and error. It operates, seemingly, in the interval of time between the formulation of the two premises of abduction. Peirce gives no very clear explanation of this power, however.

Jaakko Hintikka has attempted to make the security of abduction, and so the "guessing power" to which Peirce refers, less "spooky" by arguing that particular abductive inferences have no justification. The justification of abductive inference can only be established in terms of abduction in general, due to its strategic value, that is, its ability to guide inquiry by assigning priority to certain questions. Digging for truth-preservation between the premises and conclusions of singular abductive arguments is, then, simply futile. According to Hintikka, Peirce's real view is that the truth-preserving value of abduction consists in its ability to arrive at truth in the long run.

However, though this interpretation of Peirce's thought rescues abduction from scrutiny in the light of "definitory" rules of inference—for, in light of what is formally "permissible," abduction simply cannot hold up—I do not believe that we should give up thinking about the justification of singular abductive inferences just yet. Given the texts of Peirce that straightforwardly refer to a power of (what is unfortunately termed) "guessing" at work in the formation of hypotheses, it is not unreasonable to hold to an interpretation of Peirce's theory of abduction that attributes reliability to abduction prior to the inductive procedure of testing. We shall see better in Section IV the reason for my optimism, for there I describe the "security" of the abductive inference found in the Neglected Argument and show that the activity of musculation is crucial to the security of that inference. Though it is not my main purpose to extrapolate from that special case of abduction anything about abduction generally, but only to make a historical point about the origin of the concept of musculation, I believe, as I note in my conclusions, that musculation may provide an alternative way of thinking of the security of individual abductive inferences.

It is hardly worth mentioning the question of the "validity" of abduction—its practical and epistemological value. As is well known, abduction is the most ampliative type of inference; it does not merely generalize ideas, as does induction, but yields altogether new ideas. As noted in the previous section, abductive inference

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3See, e.g., 6,530, where Peirce notes that the "question of economy is clearly a very grave one," since before the inquirer there may be an "infinite multitude" of possible hypotheses. He states that "We shall do better to abandon the whole attempt to learn the truth, however urgent may be our need of ascertaining it, unless we can trust to the human mind's having such a power of guessing right that before very many hypotheses shall have been tried, intelligent guessing may be expected to lead us to the one which will support all tests, leaving the vast majority of possible hypotheses unexamined." Cf. 7.220, where Peirce claims that we have a "natural instinct for truth" and that the human mind is "akin to truth."

produces indeterminate conclusions (or rather, given a number of suppositions of the abductive type, some of them are likely to be false). But it is just because of this indeterminacy that such inferences can tell us new things about the world.\textsuperscript{15} Whatever abduction lacks in the realm of security, then, is compensated for by its ability to posit new hypotheses, to lead to new inquiries, and to affect the conduct of those who form beliefs thereby.

IV. THE “UBERTY” OF THE “NEGLECTED ARGUMENT”

In the next two sections, I will examine an extraordinary case of abduction presented by Peirce in his “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God.” In particular, I intend to elucidate the “uberty” and “security” of this abductive “argument” by making special note of how “musement” contributes to its security.

This case of abduction is special because the “result” that Peirce considers is a “wonder” or “spectacle” of the three universes instead of a mere “surprise,” and because the hypothesis in question is none other than “the Reality of God’s Existence.” Moreover, whereas in ordinary instances of abduction—in criminal investigations, say—the hypothesis (as well as the phenomenon that it purports to explain) must be definite and distinct, in this case, the argument that Peirce describes is one in which both the wonderful fact and the hypothesis are initially indeterminate. He writes:

Although it is a chief function of an explanatory hypothesis...to excite a clear image in the mind by means of which experiential consequences of ascertainable conditions may be predicted, yet in this instance the hypothesis can only be apprehended so very obscurely that in exceptional cases alone can any definite and direct deduction from its ordinary abstract interpretation be made. (6.489)

The hypothesis of God’s reality, as it first occurs to the reasoner, has the weak feature of implying almost anything at all, such that an inductive procedure of testing would be almost trivial. In fact, Peirce classifies this type of inference as an “argument” rather than “argumentation.” Whereas an argument “is any process of thought reasonably tending to produce a definite belief,” an argumentation “is an argument proceeding upon definitely formulated premises” (6.456). The premises of arguments, then, are not definitely formulated and thus cannot be clearly true or false. Peirce notes that “while it is false that ‘A proposition whose identity I have determined is both true and false,’ yet until it is determinate, it may be true that a proposition is true and that a proposition is false.”\textsuperscript{16} Although Peirce sometimes uses the term “proposition” loosely, it seems that what he takes to be the premises of arguments are indeterminate propositions, or perhaps something entirely non-propositional. He frequently describes the hypothesis of God’s reality as the final result of one who has pondered something “from every point of view, until he seems to read some truth

\textsuperscript{15} Whereas Baroço, as noted above, produces merely a negative explanation of the fact, for example, “Zeus is not a man,” and might therefore “be considered as a very timid hypothesis,” we might “boldly suppose” him to be a god, an angel, or a crustacean. But the latter supposition, if true, would be more informative by far (see EP I, p. 191).

\textsuperscript{16} In Issues of Pragmatism (EP II, p. 351).
beneath the phenomena” (6.463). So, at the moment of its inception, the hypothesis is merely a standpoint or manner of looking at the phenomena.

Although it is difficult to deduce meaningful consequences from this hypothesis due to its indeterminacy, it has another important feature that ameliorates its initial obscurity. The hypothesis has a “commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers…” (6.490). Once it has been entertained, perhaps after a meditative stroll through certain aspects of the Three Universes, it is utterly compelling. It is an “overwhelming impulse” that is translated directly into one’s action. Thus, though it cannot immediately be subjected to the second stage of scientific inquiry, the meaning of the hypothesis nonetheless develops because of its ability to generate a will for concrete changes in one’s life. One may come to the point of “...desiring above all things to shape the whole conduct of life and all the springs of action into conformity with that hypothesis” (6.467). Peirce writes that “this Argument should present its conclusion, not as a proposition of metaphysical theology, but in a form directly applicable to the conduct of life, and full of nutrition for man’s highest growth” (6.457). Though the hypothesis is vague at first, it is made more precise by a gradual development of its practicality: after the hypothesis has been “translated in to action” it “grows” and becomes more determinate. It tends to “define itself more and more, and without limit” (6.466).

Thus, the productiveness of this hypothesis is found in its applicability to and power to change one’s conduct: it is found in its “nutrition,” and in its “supplying an ideal of life.” Its gradual increase in precision evidences, it seems, not any intrinsic semantic deficiency but rather the inexhaustibility of its meaning. There is apparently no end to the ways in which it affects conduct. It is for this reason, however, that a thorough process of testing is indefinitely postponed: perhaps, for the purposes of the hypothetico-deductive method, this hypothesis is too practical.

V. THE “SECURITY” OF THE “NEGLECTED ARGUMENT”:
PEIRCE’S NOTION OF MUSEMENT

The foregoing discussion of the “uberty” of the Neglected Argument leads to the question of whether abduction has any logical virtue in addition to its practical value or productiveness. Why would such an inference be trustworthy? It would seem that, if the premises of the Neglected Argument are initially unformulated, or if one of them is “suppressed” or outside of conscious awareness at the moment of inference, this would make the inference less reliable. Shouldn’t one know that one believes p in addition to p’s giving one a will to change one’s conduct? Or are such restrictions evidence of epistemological tenacity, of an internalist predilection toward identifying access to the grounds of justification with the value of the generated beliefs? Moreover, the extraordinary practicality of this hypothesis actually precludes, as noted above, a thorough testing procedure.

However, Peirce suggests that this inference, the Neglected Argument, is strong—despite it being out of one’s control and unverifiable. He states that, in the case of the Neglected Argument, “conjecture mounts the high peaks of Plausibility—and is really most worthy of confidence” (6.469). In fact, the hypothesis
of God's reality is so "plausible" that, due to the indifference of the reasoner to any subsequent arguments, "there is a great danger that the investigation will stop at this first stage" (6.488).

To understand why Peirce is so confident in the truth-preserving power of the Neglected Argument, let us first recall that he considers the security of abduction, in general, to consist in a power of the mind, a certain "guessing ability," that operates in the interval of time between the establishment of the two premises of abduction. Though the Neglected Argument really has no established premises (since it is merely an "argument"), there must be, as in abductive "argumentations," some cognitive process of "reckoning" that, in this case, enables a person to move from an informal standpoint of "surprise" at the reality of the universe to belief in the reality of God (which, Peirce thinks, is the "conclusion" of the Neglected Argument).

Indeed, in "A Neglected Argument" Pierce introduces the concept of "musement." This mode of thinking, while strikingly receptive and leisurely, is crucial to the strength of the Neglected Argument. Peirce explains musement as an activity which is "Pure Play." It is a "lively exercise of one's powers" and yet "has no rules, except this very law of liberty" (6.458). Though musement is leisurely in that it allows the muser to assume different standpoints, it also involves deliberate observation and meditation. "It begins passively enough with drinking in the impression of some nook in one of the three universes. But impression soon passes into attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into a lively give-and-take between self and self" (6.459). While in a sense passive and receptive, musement is also that in which "logical analysis can be put to its full efficiency" (6.461). We might say that, while "musing," one is both "active" and "contemplative," and that this active receptivity somehow contributes to the reliability of the Neglected Argument.

The idea that musement contributes to the security of the Neglected Argument by integrating receptive and active powers in a consummate intellectual activity is substantiated, first, by noting Peirce's statement in "A Neglected Argument" that musement is related to "esthetic contemplation" (6.458). On its own, this statement is rather cryptic. However, an examination of Peirce's early studies of aesthetics (between 1855 and 1857) shows that the notion of musement likely has its provenance in his reading of Friedrich von Schiller, and that Schiller considered musement or leisurely thinking to be the highest realization of human intellectual powers.

In Peirce's essay "The Three Normative Sciences" the editors note that Peirce's "first real philosophical reading, one that made an indelible impression on him" was Schiller's collection of letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man (1795).15 Schiller's philosophy of beauty and of the condition of humanity was no doubt appealing to Peirce at that time, if only for the reason that both were almost exclusively disposed toward Kant's philosophy. In his book, Schiller claims that individual men and humanity in general suffer from an oscillation between the extremes of two capacities, that of the "sensuous" or "material" and that of the "spiritual." The latter capacity is, according to Schiller, what governs man in terms of "necessity and freedom."

Of importance for the present discussion, however, is Schiller's notion of the "play impulse" that makes possible a balance between the "material" and "spiritual" (what he also calls "passive" and "active") aspects of humanity. He asks, "How then are we to restore the unity of human nature, which seems to have been destroyed by this primitive and radical opposition?"\(^\text{18}\) Through the "play impulse," he answers, the two human capacities temper each other, and one is able to apprehend beauty, which is the proper object of play. In answer to the possible objection that his view makes the concept of beauty subject to triviality, a mere "game," he states: "But why call it a mere game, when we consider that in every condition of humanity it is precisely play, and play alone, that makes man complete and displays at once his twofold nature?"\(^\text{19}\) For man's freedom "consists solely in the co-operation of both his natures."\(^\text{20}\) Schiller later iterates this thought when claiming that man "plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly Man when he is playing."\(^\text{21}\) Indeed, one of Schiller's notes in his work On the Aesthetic Education of Man could almost be a commentary on musement:

The mind in its aesthetic condition, although it certainly acts freely and is in the highest degree free from all restraint, is by no means free from laws... this aesthetic freedom is to be distinguished from the logical necessity of thinking and the moral necessity of willing only by the fact that the laws which guide the operation of the mind are not realized, and because they meet with no resistance do not appear as compulsion.\(^\text{22}\)

Like musement, aesthetic contemplation, according to Schiller, involves "laws" that are nonetheless exercised so freely that they are not "realized" or formulated.

Interestingly enough, in his short 1857 review of Schiller's book, Peirce offers a somewhat syllogistic interpretation of Schiller's theory of aesthetic appreciation. Considering the "formal" and the "sensuous" impulses that Schiller expounds, Peirce states that "the first impulse gives laws, the second creates cases."\(^\text{23}\) Thus, even at this very early stage, Peirce was considering cognitive "play" in inferential terms, and as something contributing to the security of an argument or argumentation, since it involves the highest exercise of human powers. During the fifty years between the 1857 review and "A Neglected Argument," his thinking on the topic seems to have changed in just one way: he came to identify the logical output of the "sensuous" impulse with the "result" of the syllogism, rather than the "case." (The security provided for by musement would, after all, lend nothing to deduction—that form of inference is already "saturated" with reliability.)

Schiller's theory also elucidates the uberty of abductive inference (characterized above as a practical, and therefore semantic, development). Paraphrasing Schiller, Peirce writes that beauty "places the mind in a state of 'infinite determinableness'".
so that it can turn in any direction and is in perfect freedom, hence, beauty is in
the highest degree fruitful with respect to knowledge and morality.”24 His mention
of “knowledge and morality” as the “produce” (as it were) of beauty corresponds
exactly to uberty’s dual aspect: the possibility of new knowledge (hypotheses are
synthetic) and the will to change one’s conduct in accordance with that knowledge.
And yet the above quote suggests that the meaning of the hypothesis (in essence, its
powerful effect on the will) is contingent on “a state of ‘infinite determinableness’.”
The state of musement provides a context in which the muser may leisurely appreci-
ate some “wonder,” and in which the hypothesis accrue a spectacular momentum
necessary for the persistent determination of the will. Thus, Peirce’s claim that
museum is related to “esthetic contemplation” is made clearer: for he understood
both activities as consummate types of “actively receptive” cognition and as highly
fruitful responses to beauty.25

A more subtle clue to the origins of musement may be found in its affinity with
the Greek concept of theòria or contemplation, which, according to Aristotle, is the
highest activity of leisure. By the time Peirce wrote “A Neglected Argument” he had
resided at Arisbe for about twenty years; it is almost inevitable that such concepts had
found their way into his thinking, whether implicitly or explicitly. Peirce obviously
places a high value on leisure. For not only does leisurely thought “flower into
the Neglected Argument,” but it also valuable in keeping the “roadway of inquiry”
clear and warding off “airs of infallibility” (6.460). Aristotle is more explicit in his
valuation of leisure as an end in itself. In Book VIII of the Politics, he writes: “the
first principle of all action is leisure. Both [work and leisure] are required, but leisure
is better than occupation and is its end.”26

As an activity of the perfected theoretical intellect, contemplation is not “passive”
per se; and yet, according to Aristotle, it is receptive inasmuch as its objects are
enjoyed in themselves, and not as pragnata. As “receptive activity” contemplation
is akin to Peirce’s concept of musement, which, though it is completely free, is also
a “lively exercise of one’s powers” (6.458). Thus, just as Aristotle distinguishes
contemplation from “amusement,”27 Peirce distinguishes the activity of musement
from “reverie” or “vacancy and dreaminess” (6.458).

Indeed, where Peirce claims that accepting hypotheses that are “irresistible”
is justified by “instinct,” his distinctions are conspicuously Aristotelian. And like
Aristotle he suggests that theoretical activity is proper to man:

24WCP I, pp. 11–12.
25In his Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry (New York: Meridian, 1955), esp. chaps. 3 and 4, Jacques
Martain argues that work in poetic creation and mystical contemplation (and, I would add, scientific
discovery) is a kind of “meta-faculty” that he calls the “spiritual preconscious” (see, e.g., pp. 66–69), to
distinguish it from the “animal” or Freudian unconscious. Operating “in darkness,” i.e., outside the normal
modes of propositional and argumentative thought, Maritain argues that, nonetheless, “this free life of
the intellect is also cognitive and productive, it obeys an inner law of expansion and generosity, which carries
it along towards the manifestation of the creativity of the spirit, and it is shaped and quickened by creative
intuition” (p. 79).
26Politics VIII.3.1337b32–34. For this and subsequent references to Aristotle, I use Benjamin Jowett’s
27See, e.g., Politics VII.3.1337b34–1338a1.
The strength of the impulse is a symptom of its being instinctive. Animals of all races rise far above the general level of their intelligence in those performances that are their proper function, such as flying and nest-building for ordinary birds; and what is man's proper function if it be not to embody general ideas in art-creations, in utilities, and above all in theoretical cognition? (6.476)

This passage is suggestive of Aristotle's division of the intellectual faculties and their corresponding virtues.29 Whereas "art-creations" and "utilities" are products of the deliberative intellect, "theoretical cognition" (which Peirce suggests is the "proper function" of man) is, according to Aristotle, nothing other than contemplation. It is the exercise of "the best thing in us."29 Indeed, Aristotle considers contemplation, at its best, to be the exercise of a finely tuned theoretical intellect in relation to its highest possible object (whether this object is the unmoved mover of Metaphysics XII and Physics VIII is not clear). It is not clear whether Aristotelian categories of theoria and praxis directly influenced Peirce's notion of musement; however, there is a strong affinity between the two philosophers' thinking on the subject, and so the connection is worth mentioning alongside the more likely clues found in Schiller.

Thus, in the case of the Neglected Argument, it seems that musement accounts for that argument's security, since, according to Peirce, musement exercises that which is properly human. That is, only humans are capable, he suggests, of engaging in non-purposive, impractical thinking which is nonetheless supremely active. Musement, though leisurely and in that sense "liberal" or free, is at the same time abuzz with suggestions of "rules" drawn from past experience and from what is possible but not yet experienced; in this activity the mind, freely and informally, traces the ramifications of countless hypotheses, ultimately fixing on a "smoothly fitting key."

Though my suggestion that Peirce's notion of musement has its origins in his early studies of Schiller asks us to suppose a fifty-year gap between Peirce's encounter with Schiller's notion of man as homo ludens and the influence of that notion on his writing of "A Neglected Argument," I believe that such a supposition explains what has heretofore remained something of a mystery in Peirce studies. Moreover, though the Neglected Argument is indeed an extraordinary, peripheral case of abduction, it seems that musement, which, according to Peirce, enlists faculties proper to man, describes the cognitive process that transpires in abductive inference generally, which process is the source of ingenuity.

29The divisions of the intellect are found primarily in Nicomachean Ethics VI.
30Cf., e.g., Nicomachean Ethics X.7 1178a1.