

# Tychism

1892 | The Law of Mind | CP 6.102

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In an article published in *The Monist* for January, 1891, I endeavored to show what ideas ought to form the warp of a system of philosophy, and particularly emphasized that of absolute chance. In the number of April, 1892, I argued further in favor of that way of thinking, which it will be convenient to christen *tychism* (from {tyché}, chance). A serious student of philosophy will be in no haste to accept or reject this doctrine; but he will see in it one of the chief attitudes which speculative thought may take, feeling that it is not for an individual, nor for an age, to pronounce upon a fundamental question of philosophy. That is a task for a whole era to work out. I have begun by showing that *tychism* must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind.

1893 | Evolutionary Love | CP 6.302

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Three modes of evolution have thus been brought before us: evolution by fortuitous variation, evolution by mechanical necessity, and evolution by creative love. We may term them *tychastic* evolution, or *tychasm*, *anancastic* evolution, or *anancasm*, and *agapastic* evolution, or *agapasm*. The doctrines which represent these as severally of principal importance we may term *tychasticism*, *anancasticism*, and *agapasticism*. On the other hand the mere propositions that absolute chance, mechanical necessity, and the law of love are severally operative in the cosmos may receive the names of *tychism*, *anancism*, and *agapism*.

1897-8 | Abstracts of 8 Lectures | NEM 4:144

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...tychism, or the doctrine that absolute chance plays a part in the universe...

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Logic of Continuity | RLT 261; CP 6.202

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Permit me further to say that I object to having my metaphysical system as a whole called Tychism. For although tychism does enter into it, it only enters as subsidiary to that which is really, as I regard it, the characteristic of my doctrine, namely, that I chiefly insist upon continuity, or Thirdness, and, in order to secure to thirdness its really commanding function, I find it indispensable fully [to] recognize that it is a third, and that Firstness, or chance, and Secondness, or Brute reaction, are other elements, without the independence of which Thirdness would not have anything upon which to operate. Accordingly, I like to call my theory Synechism, because it rests on the study of continuity.

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Logic of Continuity | RLT 260; CP 6.201

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Let me here say one word about Tychism, or the doctrine that absolute chance is a factor of the universe. There is one class of objectors to it who are so impressed with what they have read in popular books about the triumphs of science that they really imagine that science has *proved* that the universe is regulated by law down to every detail. Such men are theologians, perhaps, or perhaps they have been brought up in surroundings where everything was so minutely regulated that they have come to believe that every tendency that exists at all in Nature must be carried to its furthest limit. Or, there is I know not what other explanation of their state of mind; but I do know one thing: they cannot be real students of physical science – they cannot be *chemists*, for example. They are wrong in their logic. But there is *another* class of objectors for whom I have more respect. They are shocked at the atheism of Lucretius and his great master. They do not perceive that that which offends them is not the Firstness in the swerving atoms, because they themselves are just as much advocates of Firstness as the ancient Atomists were. But what they cannot accept is the attribution of this firstness to things perfectly dead and material. Now I am quite with them there. I think too that whatever is First is *ipso facto* sentient.

1904 | A Brief Intellectual Autobiography by Charles Sanders Peirce | Peirce, 1983, p. 68; MS [R] L107:12

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In 1891-3, in the 'Monist' [...], he outlined a hypothesis capable of being Subjected to inductive tests, which hypothesis, called *tychism*, was that the laws of nature, although real, are results of a process of evolution, and as such are not yet and never will be exactly fulfilled by the facts, which depart from the laws in the same way, although vastly less than, observations do.

This quote has been taken from Kenneth Laine Ketner's 1983 reconstruction of Peirce's 'Autobiography'

1906 | Introduction to Existential Graphs and an Improvement on the Gamma Graphs [R] | CP 4.584

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It is that synthesis of tychism and of pragmatism for which I long ago proposed the name, Synechism.

1907 | The Fourth Curiosity | CP 6.322

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... absolute chance – pure tychism ...

1907 | Pragmatism | MS [R] 319:16

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When law rigidly acts, the equations of dynamics show that the variety in the result is precisely the variety in the conditions, and no more. But just as all observations of the results, however nice they

may be, will be affected with errors, so we may suppose that in the facts themselves there are excessively smaller and yet existent variations from the regularity that the law calls for. If this occurs continually, it may be ever so minute and yet in billions of years may produce varieties. This is the cosmological and metaphysical hypothesis which, in articles of years gone by, I called *tychism*.