Normative Philosophy of Charles S. Peirce ed. by Cornelis de Waal and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński (review)

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on format and infrastructure will be better able to account for future developments in the ways that we exchange information and listen to sound.

A reader seeking a sustained examination of the MP3's role in the contemporary music economy should look elsewhere. Sterne's work is no less valuable for shifting the temporal and theoretical contexts in which the MP3 matters beyond this framework. *MP3* is an engrossing read, blending thorough historical research, clear explanations of technical concepts, and flashes of wry humor. In describing the multiple strands of technological research that would become encoded in the MP3 format—and in opening up the kinds of contexts that make formats meaningful—this book makes an important contribution to sound studies and media theory (even as it exposes the limitations of the latter).

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Cornelis de Waal and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński, eds. *Normative Philosophy of Charles S. Peirce.* **New York: Fordham UP, 2012. 344 pp.**

There is a tension in the idea many of us have of Charles Saunders Peirce and his illusive statements concerning normative philosophy. Peirce never falls into categories other than his own and an introduction to his work might very well leave one, even one literate in the American Pragmatists, with a buzzing confusion of categories and technical terms. Many Pragmatists, including Richard Rorty himself, see Peirce only as a logician who establishes a basis for future pragmatists and then tend to dismiss him on matters of normative philosophy. Peirce himself does not help matters when he admits to little knowledge of aesthetics and, in the 1898 Cambridge Conferences lectures, states that "vital matters" like morality are potentially dangerous to and conceptually separate from the sciences. Bringing out the ethical and aesthetic elements of Peirce's thought is the topic of de Waal and Skowroński's *The Normative Philosophy of Charles S. Peirce*. The fundamental assumption that unites the essays of this work is Peirce's claim that logic is itself a "normative science" along with ethics and aesthetics. Whatever else is argued in the chapters, each contributor forwards the volume's thesis that Peirce's philosophy is permeated by norms that unite the conduct of philosophy within a value-laden framework.

Evaluation of a collection of essays can be a difficult task—as the reviewer must analyze multiple theses and points of view. Thus, allow me to evaluate the volume in a particular manner: on its achievement of the goals the editors put forth in the preface. This reviewer believes it does. Not because the essays reflect agreement about how to interpret Peirce, which they not univocally do, but rather because the essays show that there is a deep and under-studied normative aspect to Peirce's philosophy that can contribute

to ethics and aesthetics. The first essay in the volume, Vincent Colapietro's "Traditions of Innovation and Improvisation," demonstrates this well by arguing that jazz works as a metaphor for Peircean philosophy insofar as aspects such as "the spirit of playfulness, a sense of the sacred, and a contrite consciousness of our ineradicable fallibility" motivate both Peirce's philosophy and jazz (16). This essay provides us with an invitation to improvise—to "hear"—potential variations on Peirce's themes.

The essays that follow the first in the volume break into two broad categories. Five attempt to demonstrate what a Peircean ethics would claim and five work to apply Peirce's normative philosophy to a specific areas with the hope of developing new insights. The five essays which develop Peirce's ethics are by no means of one voice—yet all claim that there is an ethics latent in Peirce's philosophy that extends itself beyond the mere sentimentalism of instinct and beyond Peirce's personal conservatism. James Liszka's "Charles Peirce on Ethics" stands out as a careful and nuanced attempt to show where a Pericean ethics would point by deliberately putting ethical inquiry into a Peircean categorical scheme. Two other essays on ethics take up ethics in light of Peirce's other areas of philosophy. Cornelis de Waal in "Who's Afraid of Charles Sanders Peirce?" and Rosa Maria Mayorga in "Peirce's Moral 'Realicism'" argue that there is a latent ethics to be found in Peirce's scientific methods and in his defense of scholastic realism. The two remaining essays on ethics look into how Peirce's methodologies and careful inquiry can be helpful in our conduct as inquirers and agents. Mats Bergman argues in "Improving our Habits," contra Peirce's self-proclaimed conservatism, that his pragmaticist inquiry leads to a meliorism which can help improve our habits of inquiry insofar as intelligent methods change our intellectual habits. This results in a far more progressive vision than Peirce would have personally endorsed. Sami Pihlström, in "Peircean Modal (and Moral?) Realism(s)," argues similarly, pointing out that there is no sustainable dichotomy between metaphysics and ethics in Peircean philosophy. While these essays do not speak in the same voice, they all bring new light to Peirce's comments in the 1898 Cambridge Conferences lectures in which he appears to distance the practice of philosophy from "vital matters" such as morality. These essays all argue that one must take Peirce to mean something quite significant in his 1898 remarks but that Peirce does not completely exclude ethics from philosophic inquiry given substantial evidence in his other works.

The remaining essays revolve around how Peircean normative philosophy has something to contribute to other studies and fields of inquiry. Kelly A. Parker, in "Normative judgment in Jazz," and Ignacio Redondo, in "The Normativity of Communication," argue that the norms inherent in Peirce's semiotics are useful to both musicology and communication studies. Parker sees Peirce's semiotics—and its three-part theory of signs—to be helpful in showing how music's performance, score, and audience can be taken into account in a musical judgment. Similarly, Redondo suggests that Peirce's "normative background of dialogue and communication and its implications

for community would be appreciated by" those analyzing communicative practices (230). In "Self-control, Values, and Moral Development," Helmut Pape suggests that Peirce's idea that the "relationship between cognitive autonomy and moral status of being a person," or the origin of self-control, leads to an agency that can be helpful in understanding what makes human intelligence different from artificial intelligence (151). Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen uses game theory to demonstrate that logic is rule-based and that a Peircean model is "cooperative rather than competitive" (184). This game-model helps to demonstrate the habits that allow for interpretation of signs in communication. Finally, in "Unassailable Belief and Ideal-Limit Opinion," Mateusz W. Oleksy argues that Peirce's consentualist theory of truth is helpful in understating how communities come to have "unassailable" beliefs. Each of these five essays show a clear way that Peircean philosophy can settle normative problems in other fields of inquiry beyond Peirce's immediate subject matters.

As a reader, I find myself desiring further detail and explanation from many of these authors. The ideas they present need more flesh than an essay in a collection can provide. This, however, is by no means a criticism of the ideas presented—rather these essays have left me wanting more. Then again, if the Peircean norm demanding that we never block the road of inquiry is respected, I would say that the collection is successful as it demands *more* inquiry. The road of inquiry is open if we take the deeply normative character of Peirce seriously. More needs to be said, but this is an admirable opening dialogue from a diverse assemblage of scholars worthy of attention.

This work is not for the Peircean neophyte. The content of this work results from the discussion and presentations of a roundtable of scholars. Thus, the diversity of opinion and depth of expected understanding makes demands of the reader. The papers reflect the rigor and deep understanding of Peirce's philosophy that a group of Peirce scholars would exercise during a roundtable on the theme of normatively in Peirce. Scholars who have some understanding of Peirce's semiotics or synechism will find much to enjoy and many ideas worth exploring. Those interested in how to apply Peirce's thought widely or to begin an inquiry in the ethical norms underlying Pragmaticism will also be interested in this volume.

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Terry Eagleton. *Why Marx Was Right.* New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2012. 272 pp.

In *Criticism and Ideology* (1978), which was one of Eagleton's first books, he expounds the scientific Marxism of the French philosopher Louis Althusser.