Finally, in chapter 5 Hanna discusses the synthetic a priori. There is a very interesting reading of Kant's distinction between real and logical possibility (in which Hanna argues for a notion of relative necessity that is irreducible to metaphysical absolute necessity), and a reconstruction of Kant's argument from 'incongruent counterparts'. Hanna concludes that, prima facie, there is a case for the existence of the synthetic a priori, and that therefore the onus of proof lies on its opponents.

Hanna's book contains some interesting and suggestive discussions of Kant, and its 'cognitive-semantic' reading of transcendental idealism certainly deserves further development. On the whole, however, this book is unsatisfying because too many of its interpretive claims lack both detailed textual support and thorough exposition.

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Smyth, Richard A., *Reading Peirce Reading* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), pp. ix + 327, US$64.50 (cloth), US$24.95 (paper).

This erudite, eclectic, and fertile book examines the philosophy of Charles Peirce in the light of the philosophy Peirce himself read. Peirce is a natural choice for this kind of treatment, given his unparalleled use of the history of the Western tradition to craft a unique speculative philosophy which synthesizes key ideas from every era. Smyth is keen to differentiate the aim of this book, however, from the usual scholarly aim of examining a thinker's influences in order to understand their ideas better—that is, from the aim of merely 'reading Peirce'. With 'reading Peirce *reading*', Smyth has something more ambitious and original in mind.

He writes, 'There are many excellent studies … that will give anyone who desires it a balanced and sensible view of Peirce's own evolving system of thought. What I am concerned with is what Peirce's early essays teach us about philosophers and philosophical ideas, which are (or should be) as important for us as they were for Peirce' (p. vii). Thus he argues that a distinguishing characteristic of the work of a major philosopher is the way it causes us to read the history of thought in new ways or—if the philosopher is major enough—causes us to read in new ways *simpliciter.*

Smyth makes numerous suggestions with respect to original ways in which Peirce read the Western philosophical tradition. Chapter 1 examines Peirce's treatment of figures in later (19th century) British empiricism such as John Stuart Mill, interpreting Peirce's paper 'Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man' as a dialogue with these figures. The dialogue concerns whether human cognition includes any 'intuitions' or unmediated perceptions of the world (Peirce defined an intuition as, 'a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object' (p. 4)). Whereas most of Mill's contemporaries focused their critical mettle on defending intuitions that were rejected by his relatively moderate intuitionism, Smyth argues that Peirce 'sneaked up behind' Mill by arguing that we have no intuitions at all. Smyth suggests that Peirce was enabled to 'see' this position by his close study of the logic of science, and his reading of an older Aristotelian empiricism, by contrast to which the conception of 'experience' of the British empiricists (following Locke's nominalism, embodied in his key claim that general terms stand only for ideas in their users' minds) is crucially impoverished. Through (Smyth's look through) Peirce's eyes, John Stuart Mill's work anticipates surprisingly much of Peirce's phenomenological derivation of his three philosophical categories—most notably in a distinction Mill makes between 'natural' and 'conventional' causation of signs (reminiscent of Peirce's 'secondness' and 'thirdness' respectively).

In chapter 2 Smyth claims that Peirce extracted key themes from neo-Platonism and Romanticism and applied them—with characteristic originality—to logic. (These are decidedly not amongst Peirce's more famous influences, but they were available to him, Smyth argues, through the work of transcendentalists such as Emerson.) The 'Nine neoplatonist conjectures' which Smyth plausibly identifies include 'infinitism in the meta-theory' (i.e. there are uncountably many items of knowledge), 'Plotinian self-identity' (the idea that what is living—and for Peirce this includes signs—cannot be defined by any enumeration of its parts) and a 'romantic fallibilism' according to which self is defined in terms of error; we know that we exist as separate from the world only insofar as we form expectations that are proven false by that world (although surely Romanticism could equally be argued to run in the opposite direction, whereby a truly authentic self is seen as somehow incorrigible).

Not surprisingly, the book—particularly chapters 4 and 5—contains much discussion of Peirce's reading of Kant, which was famously thorough. Smyth claims that Peirce took Kant's answer to the great ethical question, 'Why should I behave morally?', and examined it in the light of *logic*. (He

thought logic a special case of ethics insofar as ethics is the theory of right action and logic the theory of right mental action.) The great question then becomes, 'Why should I think rationally?' The way is thus cleared for a logical deontology (which is driven by logical conscience, as opposed to any epistemological consequentialism). Like the ethical, such a logical deontology is not to be argued for demonstratively, but consists in a rational faith, or 'postulate of pure practical reason'. Smyth holds up Kant's taxonomy of false pretenders to ethics (all based to some degree, Kant argues, on self-love) against Peirce's famous four methods for fixing belief and thereby brings both into sharper relief.

Light is also shed by this exercise, he suggests, on Kant's defence of freedom, insofar as Kant's strategy in leading his readers to his ethical viewpoint is rhetorical rather than demonstrative. In a quote which might apply equally well in a Kantian framework, Peirce states that the mere 'revelation of the possibility' of a perfectly logical man (one for whom nothing that happens to him is of more consequence to him than everything else) is sufficient to 'redeem the logicality of all men' (Peirce, 5.356, cited p. 201). Smyth notes the way in which Peirce's discussion of the fourth method contains apparently perverse praise of the other three methods. This has been read as Peirce weakly undermining his argument (for example, by Ayer). However, Smyth reads it in the light of Kant's claim that (as Smyth puts it) 'we might strengthen the subjective grounds of morality by deliberately highlighting the disadvantages and hardships of the moral life', thereby rhetorically distilling 'the purity of the moral principle' (p. 235) in those who choose it nonetheless.

The foregoing would be interesting enough, and merit a book in its own right in these times. However Smyth's reading of Kant extends to examining Kant's epistemology through Peircean eyes. Through a novel interpretation of Kant's understanding of 'a concept of a subject' (linked informatively to discussions of Leibniz and the scholastics) he derives a Peircean 'Reduction Thesis for Reasonings', which states that any piece of reasoning can be replaced by a valid deduction (*albeit* often *post hoc*). One achieves the valid deduction by adding a claim that the premises support the conclusion as a further premise. Put more simply, 'Whatever is known *a posteriori* can be known *a priori*' (p. 135). (In a brilliant move, Smyth identifies this as a version of rationalism's Principle of Sufficient Reason.) From this it follows, he argues, that the distinction between logical and non-logical truths is extra-logical. Much follows from this, including that, 'the turn towards the psychologising and historicising of knowledge, which is so characteristic of the 19th century, must already be implicit in Kant's analytic/synthetic distinction' (p. 143). These passages abound with interesting insights *re* Peirce scholarship, Kant scholarship and epistemology more generally.

Possibly the most striking treatment of one of Peirce's readings however, is an extended discussion (chapter 6) of Descartes' *Meditations.* Smyth argues that Peirce produced a unique 'metaphysical' reading of this text, whereby Descartes is interested in examining the causes of our beliefs, as opposed to the 'epistemological' reading, whereby Descartes examines the justification of our beliefs, which is generally taken for granted today. Scepticism thus becomes less of an exercise in attempting to deductively 'bootstrap' knowledge and more of an exercise in a thinker's attempting to actually destabilise himself epistemologically (in order to re-establish causes of belief that are more stable) in the tradition of spiritual leaders such as Loyola. This section is interesting, plausible and worth examination in its own right by Descartes scholars.

Smyth also identifies a style of argument, which he labels a 'Cartesian Gambit', which asserts that one cannot be blamed for not doing that which it is impossible for one to do. Smyth notes that Peirce wrote of, 'The most essential feature of the Cartesian philosophy … that to accept propositions which seem perfectly evident to us is a thing which, logical or illogical, we cannot help doing' (p. 226). Smyth combines this Gambit with Kant's famous Second Critique claim that, 'it is … a need with the status of a law, to assume that without which an aim cannot be achieved which one ought to set before himself invariably in all his actions' (p. 202), to answer logic's great normative question. The essence of this answer is that Peirce does not have to convince us to think rationally—only establish that he cannot be blamed for his own choice in this regard (by those who prefer 'other conversations'), and that his own choice is a need with the status of a law for delivering an account of whatever reality might exist.

The different readings of the Western tradition which Smyth obtains by looking through Peirce's eyes are fascinating enough. However, the book also pursues a deeper, more ambitious question implicit in the chosen topic of 'reading Peirce reading', 'How does a pragmatist read philosophy and philosophical history?'. The short answer is, 'By using the pragmatic maxim'. However, describing exactly how the pragmatic maxim might inform philosophical reading is a complex task. Smyth devotes his final chapter to a detailed discussion of this topic. As the title, 'The pragmatic maxim applied to itself' indicates, Smyth also uses this discussion as a springboard for a crack at what has been something of a holy grail of Peirce studies—explicating the so-called 'proof of pragmatism' (which Peirce claimed late in his life to possess, but never satisfactorily enunciated).

Famously, the pragmatic maxim runs as follows. 'Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is our whole conception of the object' (p. 276). First of all, the use of 'we' rather than 'I' here recognizes that the very existence of meaning rests on a community of sign-users, so that what one means is to some degree dependent on the way others 'conceive the object of one's conceptions'—that is—use and develop one's signs. This accords greater urgency to reading one's fellow philosophers than one will feel if one views oneself as master of one's own meaning and in principle able to philosophize as a Cartesian ego. Insofar as one reads widely amongst philosophy, then, one is attaining a deeper understanding of one's own meaning. Insofar as one reads the history of philosophy in particular, one is also shown trajectories (invisible from a synchronic perspective) in the development of the meaning of one's signs. This exercise is not only interesting in its own right, but can even lead to further projections.

Secondly, in the philosophical context it is worth emphasizing the pragmatist reminder that without conceivable practical effects there is no meaning. (Note the addition of 'conceivable' to 'practical effects'—the subtlety of Peirce's formulation is often overlooked both by pragmatism's friends and enemies.) Another way of putting this is that it requires that one think about what lives, which is just that which admits of use and further development. Deeply interconnected with these two points, the book abounds with interesting suggestions about understanding nominalism (the notorious object of Peirce's most concerted philosophical attacks) more broadly than as the thesis in recondite ontology to which it has lately been reduced. For instance, the nominalist-realist issue is at work, Smyth suggests, insofar as one enumerates a subject-matter in terms of discrete and apparently inexplicable *lists*, or in terms of *principles*, or reasons why what is being presented is the case. Thus, a logic which merely introduces an unexplained menu of operators in terms of truth-tables and/or rules to be memorized is nominalist. A realist logic—the very possibility of which has been obscured by much 20th century philosophy, Smyth suggests—will attempt to provide principles from which the tables and rules may be derived—and perhaps even point the way to logical forms as yet unexplored. Through chapter 3 Smyth sketches an outline of such a logic, which could certainly bear further exploration.

This is a rich and valuable book, which reads like the product of a lifetime's philosophical research and careful thought. A complex argument structure is built through it, via a skeleton of 10 'definitions', 14 'conjectures' and 21 'propositions', which repays close study. The range of topics touched on (not amateurishly, but with scholarly backup) is astounding. Like the work of Peirce himself, it abounds in original suggestions each of which might be pursued at much greater length. The book's detailed exploration of the relationship between ethics and logic (two philosophical areas the subset of whose specialists these days is close to zero) is unique and valuable. Peirce always said that ethics (and aesthetics) was the area of his 'hierarchy of the sciences' that he had filled out the least—a shame given their crucial position in the hierarchy, above logic. Perhaps inevitably, the book's achievement is not as entirely distinct from the traditional scholarly project (better understanding the thought of Peirce himself) as its introduction would lead one to believe. However given the quality of Smyth's reading of Peirce reading, it is none the worse for that.

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Abbey, Ruth, *Nietzsche's Middle Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. xvii + 208, £33.50 (cloth).

Nietzsche's middle period is commonly taken to run from 1878 to 1882, a time in which he published three major works: *Human, All Too Human* (and its two sequels, *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* and *The Wanderer and his Shadow*); *Daybreak;* and *The Gay Science.* The first stage—the Schopenhauer/ Wagner phase—is marked by *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and the four *Untimely Meditations* (1873–6). And the final period, ushered in with *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–5), includes *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and ends with a flurry of works published or prepared for publication in 1888. The tripartite arrangement, as Ruth Abbey points out, was originally proposed by Lou Salomé in her 1894 book on Nietzsche. In this challenging study of the middle period Abbey endorses the division in a fairly definite form. Specifically, her concern is to explore Nietzsche's treatment of a range of themes in the middle works and to draw comparisons with his later approach.