



**PROJECT MUSE<sup>®</sup>**

(1) says that we are creatures such that if I experience a pleasure, it does not follow that anyone else experiences it. The question is why this gives me a special reason to care about my own pleasure. Phillips's thought is that since it is a state of me (and not you), it must give me a special reason. But this seems awfully close to simply asserting the conclusion that I have a special reason to care about states of myself. At best, (1) seems a necessary preliminary to giving examples in which our intuitions would favor my favoring myself.

Phillips reconstructs Sidgwick as giving a deductive argument for egoism. Sidgwick intends something weaker. After noting (2), Sidgwick writes, "I do not see how it can be proved that this distinction is not to be taken as fundamental" (*Methods*, 498). The point seems to be that if someone thought that the distinction between one individual and another did matter to choosing between egoism and utilitarianism, it is hard to see how to show that he is wrong. Elsewhere, Sidgwick writes, "[E]ven if the reality and essentiality of the distinction between one individual and another be granted, I do not see how to show its fundamental practical importance to anyone [such as a utilitarian] who refuses to admit it" ("Some Fundamental Ethical Controversies," 485). Sidgwick's view is that the distinction between individuals is something to which more than one response is permitted.

ROBERT SHAVER

*University of Manitoba*

Paul Forster. *Peirce and the Threat of Nominalism*. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 259. Cloth, \$82.00.

Charles Peirce believed keenly in the reality of laws and universals. He claimed that despite modern naturalistic philosophy's self-conception as triumphing over a dessicated Aristotelianism, a view of universals closest to that of Duns Scotus was "the philosophy which is best to harmonize with physical science" (1). Much high-quality scholarship outlining this aspect of Peirce's thought already exists. However, this fine book lucidly systematizes it in a new synthetic approach to the problem that revives natural links between realism and a general *theory of inquiry*. For all modern realism's claims to be ontologically committed to mind-independent entities, it has largely severed itself from a philosophical account of how to determine independent existence in particular cases, instead relying on natural science or "intuition." Forster argues that this philosophical lacuna itself constitutes a form of nominalism; thus, realism in its deepest sense may be understood as *explanatory ambition*.

The book begins by outlining why Peirce saw nominalism as such a threat. It "limits the scope and authority of reason and ... yields far too much to scepticism in science, ethics and religion" (7). By contrast, Peirce ambitiously seeks "an ultimate impartial and binding basis for the organization of human life" (12). A great interest of this book is in tackling head-on what many contemporary philosophers have filed in the too-hard basket.

The main argument begins with an account of "the science of inquiry." Forster outlines five requirements: it must be *a priori*, *formal*, *universal*, *necessary*, and *normative*, and must *license metaphysical conclusions* (20). This obviously means that it cannot be a natural science. But neither can it be grounded in appeals to pure reason, as these amount to reliance on intuition, which cannot "distinguish principles that are truly self-evident from those that only seem to be" (25). But natural or a priori science—what other option could there be? One of the great excitements of Peirce's thought is how it frequently breaks time-worn dichotomies with a third alternative. As a new foundation for the science of inquiry, Forster offers *diagrammatic reasoning*. Such reasoning is experimental, and thus more than intuition-mongering, yet there can be no mismatch between the way things are and the way they are represented to be, since the relations among elements of diagrams are the very objects of study.

In chapter 3, Forster uses diagrammatic reasoning to argue that nominalism cannot give an adequate account of continuity, for general concepts do not refer to collections of individuals but manifolds of actual and possible entities “welded together” (this issue is arguably insufficiently studied by metaphysicians). Next, Forster notes that the nominalist might claim that true continuity is a coherent hypothesis that cannot be verified, as the world consists solely of individuals. But he argues that Peirce’s pragmatic maxim challenges this, teaching that the meaning of a term is a general pattern of effects, expressed in hypothetical conditionals.

But why should we use the pragmatic maxim? Peirce worked long and inconclusively in his later years on a “proof of pragmatism,” which Forster claims can be reconstructed from his theory of symbols. It holds, roughly, that insofar as symbols are interpretable they require the interpreter to gauge their implications, which must be empirically accessible effects. This argument has many steps and I am not convinced Forster has nailed down every possible counterargument, but it is a worthy attempt.

The nominalist will protest that this epistemological story does not yet require metaphysically real universals. In his mature work Peirce argued that universals may be directly perceived. Appreciating this requires an analysis of perception considerably more sophisticated than today’s British empiricist legacy. Whereas for Hume the percept (impression) is directly copied into the sign (idea), for Peirce this approach “overlooks enormous differences between the feeling of, say, a yellow quale and the term ‘yellow’ as it occurs in a judgment,” whose meaning “is dependent on the object it represents and its effects on interpreters” (114). Incorporating such judgments turns the meaning of a given perception from prior causes to future epistemic consequences. This account of perception is unknown to mainstream philosophy, and could be of great interest.

Chapter 7 moves from perception to inquiry, arguing that the hypothesis of real universals is intelligible, and implied by the truth of any symbol. Chapter 8 argues for this hypothesis via an elegant reconciliation of correspondence, coherence, consensus, and instrumental theories of truth. Finally, chapters 9 and 10 explore Peirce’s argument for the reality of laws and his evolutionary cosmology, in which lawfulness itself evolves out of pure chance. The book ends with a discussion of the pursuit of truth as a moral ideal, arguing that “the nominalist is wrong to view human nature as a metaphysical fiction,” and the Good as purely “goods for this or that individual” (232). Rather, humans are capable of great selflessness in “the active realization of intelligent ideals” (245).

The writing in the book is careful and clear, with helpful chapter summaries. It will offer Peirce scholars new insights, as well as being a useful resource for advanced undergraduates. One possible drawback is that it advances on so many philosophical fronts. It is hard to craft a definitive argument across mathematics, logic, epistemology, and metaphysics. But having said that, pursuing synthetic philosophy with real implications for human life is hard work, and Forster should be applauded for taking it on.

If you are a contemporary realist in the analytic tradition, please read this book! Such a combination of difference (from accepted philosophical wisdom) and depth is rare, and whether you agree or disagree with the position argued for, it will challenge your thinking in productive ways.

CATHERINE LEGG

*University of Waikato*

Jessica N. Berry. *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 230. Cloth, \$65.00.

Jessica Berry provides the first detailed analysis of whether, and in what sense, Nietzsche was a skeptic (5). Exploring the affinity between Nietzsche’s work and Pyrrhonism in six main chapters, Berry differentiates between modern skepticism, understood as epistemological pessimism or nihilism (33), and Pyrrhonian skepticism as a commitment to continuing