

Record in the Commens Bibliography. Retrieved from http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal_article/dea-shannon-2014-peirce-and-spinozas-pragmaticist-metaphysics, 19.12.2024.

Type: Article in Journal

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Title: Peirce and Spinoza's Pragmaticist Metaphysics

Year: 2014

Journal: Cognition

Volume: 15

Issue: 1

Pages: 25-36

Keywords: Pragmatism, Spinoza, Metaphysics, Pragmatism

Abstract: In the early 20th century, moved by James's popularization of pragmatism and by the so-called "Battle of the Absolute" that divided American philosophers in the period, Peirce sought to communicate his own pragmatism both directly via repeated attempts to formulate the doctrine and indirectly by comparing his thought to that of such philosophical forebears as Spinoza, Berkeley and Kant. Peirce's debt to Berkeley and Kant are well-documented. However, insufficient attention has been paid to his invocations of Spinoza. In this paper, I survey Peirce's discussions of Spinoza, and identify a shift in his account of Spinoza. Specifically, in 1904 he comes to regard Spinoza as an important early pragmatist. I argue that this shift corresponds with Peirce's own late efforts to distinguish his pragmatism from the pragmatism of such figures as James and Schiller. While both pragmatism and pragmaticism take as their starting point some version of the pragmatic maxim, the latter is distinctive for retaining a realist metaphysics. I argue that, on Peirce's view, an early version of the pragmatic maxim, evidence of critical commonsensism and a weak scholastic realism are all evident in Spinoza's thought.

ISSN: 2316-5278

Language: English