Term: Normative Science

Quote: Philosophy has three grand divisions. [—] The second grand division is Normative Science, which investigates the universal and necessary laws of the relation of Phenomena to *Ends*, that is, perhaps, to Truth, Right, and Beauty.

[—]

Normative Science treats of the laws of the relation of phenomena to ends; that is, it treats of Phenomena in their Secondness.

[—]

There are sundry other widely spread misconceptions of the nature of Normative Science. One of these is that the chief, if not the only, problem of Normative Science is to say what is *good* and what *bad*, logically, ethically, and esthetically; or what degree of goodness a given description of phenomenon attains. Were this the case, normative science would be, in a certain sense, *mathematical*, since it would deal entirely with a question of *quantity*. But I am strongly inclined to think that this view will not sustain critical examination. Logic classifies arguments, and in doing so recognizes different *kinds* of truth. In ethics, too, *qualities* of good are admitted by the great majority of moralists. As for esthetics, in that field qualitative differences appear to be so prominent that, abstracted from them, it is impossible to say that there is any appearance which is not esthetically good.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture V*. MS [R] 312.

References: CP 5.121-127

Date of Quote: 1903

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-v-12