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Leigh Price, Associate Professor, University of Inland Norway

On playing God: Why we should ‘be like Bhaskar’ and not Peirce when it comes to systems theory, computers, social engineering, and evolution

Karl-Otto Apel described Peirce’s Pragmaticism as ‘a three-dimensional, cybernetically oriented *systems theory* of science’. Bhaskar’s transcendental realism is well-established as having relevance to systems theory; and elsewhere I have described it as a version of system’s theory, where the relationship between facts and values provides the social mechanism for a kind of ‘cybernetics’ (I prefer to call it homeostasis) orientated towards the survival of humanity. In this presentation, I describe the similarities and differences between the philosophies of Peirce and Bhaskar and their different implications for the survival of humanity. I argue that Peircean analytic philosophers have erred in not taking into account Peirce’s extensive work on mathematics when trying to understand his triadic system of philosophy. I also argue that the current use of artificial intelligence and weapon’s grade psychological warfare aimed at socially engineering political outcomes are a traceable consequence of - or at the very least, are commensurate with - Peircean philosophical contributions (notwithstanding that he would have been truly dismayed by this use of his work). It is not co-incidental that Peirce provided the first known design for electronic computer circuits; for him, these logical machines, developed more fully by his student Allan Marquand, were analogical to the way that God creates and evolves beings and meaning in the world. By contrast, a modern world based on the philosophy of Bhaskar would be significantly more sustainable, egalitarian and potentially could achieve eudaimonia.