Chapter 9 continues along this trajectory by contrasting productive pragmatism with other schools of thought, including Anglo-American analytic philosophy, early and late critical theory, and phenomenology. All of this work is in the service not only of advancing an argument for productive pragmatism, but also to explicate it in light of these other traditions.

Philosophical Tools for Technological Culture should be of great use not only to Dewey scholars, all those interested in pragmatism, and philosophers of technology, but also would benefit courses and readings on social-political theory, philosophy of science and technology, and cultural studies.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale  Stephen Barnes


This collection of essays constitutes Volume 15 in the series Psychiatry and the Humanities. Most of the contributors are either psychoanalysts or professors in the humanities, and most of the latter are professional philosophers. After the first essay, which serves as an introduction to key concepts in Peirce’s thought, the book is organized along an occupational divide: the first group of contributions unites the analysts, and the second group brings together the academics.

The introductory essay, by Peirce biographer Joseph Brent, serves as a useful overview of Peirce’s life and thought. Brent casts his subject’s biography in the form of a psychograph, and argues that the philosopher’s notorious instability was probably due in large part to three distinct neurological pathologies: namely, trigeminal neuralgia, bipolar disorder (with both manic and depressive phases), and chronic drug addiction. In his consideration of Peirce’s thought Brent focuses on the central notions of inquiry, inference, and semiosis. In the essays that follow it is Peirce’s theory of the sign, and the relationship of this theory to his phenomenology, that receive the most attention.

As one would expect from the book’s title, almost all of the authors explore some aspect of Freud’s understanding of the psyche reinterpreted from a semiotic perspective; however, the Freud who is present in many of these essays is one who has made
more than a passing acquaintance with French postmodernism. References to the great Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure are scattered throughout the book. Saussure's structuralist theory of the linguistic sign has exercised considerable influence over contemporary French thought. Unlike Peirce, who provided a general theory of signs, of which language constituted just one area of sign use, Saussure's work mainly concerned linguistic signs. Whereas Peirce insisted on the triadic nature of all signs (sign-object-interpretant), Saussure construed linguistic signs dyadically, in terms of the signified (signifié) or concept, and the signifier (signifiant) or acoustic image. Saussure held that linguistics need not concern itself with the relationships of signs to the actual objects to which they refer, and consequently developed a theory of the linguistic sign in which meaning is largely a function of the internal structure of a language. Peirce's thought has usually served as a basis of departure for those who accept some form of fallibilism and realism. Saussure's dyadic theory of the linguistic sign, on the other hand, with its emphasis on the social constitution of meaning, has played an important role in the development of structuralism, post-structuralism, and deconstruction.

The tension between Peirce's pragmaticism and Saussure's structuralism makes itself felt throughout the essays. In fact, the implicit and explicit debates between the contributors seem to hinge more on this underlying semiotic disagreement than they do on any conflict between orthodox Freudian views and Peirce's thought. While some of the authors clearly throw in with Peirce, others seek to interpret his theories from a postmodernist perspective. The two most frequently mentioned representatives of French postmodernism in the various essays are the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Given the complex and challenging nature of their respective views, many readers will probably find that the not infrequent references to their ideas comprise the most difficult passages in the book. Thanks to the introductory essay and various brief expositions of Peirce's semiotics in some of the other chapters, readers who have little or no background in Peirce will be able to follow most of the discussions of his thought. The exception to the rule here is Peirce's phenomenology of firsts, seconds, and thirds, which the uninitiated might want to acquaint themselves with ahead of time. *Peirce, Semiotics, and Psychoanalysis* should be of interest and benefit to anyone who believes, as did Peirce, that
a genuine understanding of mind will take psychology well beyond the bounds of consciousness.

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Jeff Mitchell

On Rawls: A Liberal Theory of Justice and Justification

Focusing on John Rawls' major works, A Theory of Justice (1971, revised 1999) and Political Liberalism (1993, expanded 1996), Robert Talisse attempts to distil Rawls' well-known political philosophy project into an 84 page introductory volume - certainly a difficult endeavour.

The book is divided into three main sections; the first provides a preliminary sketch of classical and modern liberalism, and Rawls' place within the tradition. The second section is devoted to explaining Rawls' theory of justice as fairness, and the third section outlines Rawls' complementary framework of political liberalism.

I found Talisse's handling of Rawls' work on the whole to be reasonable and fairly inclusive. His writing is clear and concise, and he does a great job of incorporating a good survey of the most noted positions and ideas from the history of political philosophy and contemporary thinkers who have affinities with, and diverge from, Rawls' conception of justice. Overall, Talisse provides an accessible springboard for individuals interested in Rawls' project and its importance to philosophy.

Unfortunately, I found Talisse's treatment of Rawls' notion of fair equality of opportunity as a principle of justice to be wholly inadequate. Admittedly, the principle of fair equality of opportunity is not a difficult one to explain, however, receiving only one paragraph, individuals new to Rawls' work will fail to appreciate the importance this principle has on the structural underpinnings of many societal institutions. For instance, Norman Daniels' work Just Health Care (Cambridge University Press, 1985) has extended Rawls' ideal theory of justice to the health care setting using the principle of fair equality of opportunity, which, in my mind, establishes both the theoretical and practical robustness of Rawls' work.