“Peirce’s pragmaticism should be used to provide educational norms. Once established, these norms can go a long way in helping us to build the minds we need to formulate and implement good solutions” (205). However, while “Peirce’s theory provides us with an ideal, with what we should all be aiming for, …he does not provide much of a roadmap for getting there” (151). For that road map, Chiasson focuses on developments in educational theory, namely, Relational Thinking Models, Davis Non-verbal Assessment, and Engaged Intelligence training programs. Without going into depth about these developments, it is enough to point out that Chiasson views Peirce’s work as a vital component of and compliment to recent developments in educational theory. While Peirce focused on verbal reasoning methods, recent developments focus on non-verbal reasoning methods. And while Peirce focused on the logica docens of reasoning, recent models focus on the logica utens of reasoning. Understanding Peirce’s role as a forerunner of educational theory represents an important step toward improving our educational models and practices.

In sum, this book is composed of two parts that effectively compliment each other. Chiasson’s ability to offer an overview of Peirce’s pragmatism and make a valuable contribution to educational practice and theory is partly a result of her years of experience applying the very educational methods she discusses. But it also derives from her obvious dedication to understanding how pragmatism can influence practical affairs, something all philosophers can learn from.


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Wielding Ockham’s razor Tuttle disembowels analysis after convoluted analysis of Wagner’s operas, leaving in his wake a host of inadequate critics. Further he cuts to the quick to show the depth and quality of passages that, heretofore have been viewed as enigmatic by musicians and theorists. Tuttle uses Wagner’s letters, stage notes, drama, lyrics, and score to prove a musical and philosophical consistency in Wagner’s Der Ring des Niebelungen, Tristan and Isolde, and Parsifal. Each was written during Richard Wagner’s mature years, with the librettos written between 1848-52 for Der Ring, 1857 for Tristan, and 1877 for Parsifal. Full individual scores were completed for the parts of the tetralogy and the other operas, as early as 1856 and as late as 1882, the year before his death.

David L. Wolfe argued that an epistemological structure must have consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, and congruity. While Tuttle’s work is musical in nature he rigidly adheres to those philosophical criteria. In fact, he berates other critics for their lack of consistency, and particularly for their incongruity between their analyses and
Wagner’s statements about specific passages in question. By examining not only *Der Ring*, but the other two operas as well, Tuttle shows the coherence and comprehensiveness of his own approach to the Wagnerian structures. In so doing, he affirms and even apotheosizes Bill Nye’s comment found in Mark Twain’s *Autobiography*: “Wagner’s music is better than it sounds.” Tuttle explains in detail, why it is better than one can possibly comprehend at a single sitting.

The treatise that Tuttle presents is clearly from a musical perspective, but it begs philosophical or semiotic comment. Like Joseph Brent, in his most recent biography of Peirce, Tuttle draws in the opening pages from Baudelaire, this time from one of the poet’s letters to Wagner, expressing “a new musical emotion . . . [one of] religious ecstasy . . . and the pleasure of comprehension . . .” upon hearing one of Wagner’s concerts. Beyond the coincidental tie to Baudelaire, the Wagnerian structure presented by Tuttle is a structure of relationships not unlike Peirce’s architectonic, signifying emotions, actions, and concepts—e.g., key “modulation down a minor third to the relative minor seems to be held in a position of contempt” (305), an emotion; or “descending whole step modulations have a significance of binding” (304), an act. And finally, the concepts or ideas themselves are related in such a variety of ways, e.g. “The *Ring* as a whole is about the liberation of human consciousness from myth,” (337) in much the way described by Baudelaire’s epiphany, above. The structure is the very essence of music at its quintessence of communication because of the very foundational nature of music—a Peircean aesthetic. Yet at the same time it is semiotic because of the foundational nature of semiosis. While Tuttle is mute on the semiotic, the relationships expressed merely await a correlation. Tuttle explicates Wagnerian motives (any recognizable pattern of music) as clearly as Peircean signs representing precise objects and calling forth specific interpretants.

The razor that Tuttle uses is simply that Wagner’s “tonal practice is conservative . . . and orthodox harmonic syntax is rigidly and consistently applied” (19). Wagner does not move significantly beyond the music of his day, but he has more comprehensively understood the language of music, or rather has discovered the primal role of music. He uses the tonal relations inherent in music to provoke the variety of semiotic interpretants. Tuttle exposit the rules used by Wagner, his harmonic grammar, in Chapter 2 and the modulation between keys and tones with *Tristan* as a case in point in Chapter 3. Wagner’s theory of modulation and tonal association is discussed from his writings in Chapter 4 and its application, as found in *Der Ring*, is presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 (145-205) is a lengthy symbolic analysis of *Parsifal* in response to Lewin’s critique of Wagner, showing the complexity of the overlaying musical structures employed—in a sense an overlaying of semiotic thirdnesses, third thirdnesses calling forth a plethora of firsts, seconds, and thirds. The destruction of myth begins to unfold in Chapter 7, “Wotan’s dream of self destruction,” as Tuttle shows the consistency and coherence of the final scores of the lengthy opera with the opening musical scenes. The how and why of semiotic relationships are musically delineated in the eighth (“Motive transformations”) and ninth (“Key relationships and tonal association”) chapters. The “Summary and concluding remarks,” Chapter 10, are brief, addressing specific Wagnerian techniques that moved beyond the music of the time to produce “music even
Appended is a section that musically addresses the death of myth, ala Joseph Campbell, in the birth of human consciousness ala Julian Jaynes. Beyond the impact to musical theory or Wagnerian studies, this work will be of value to the semiotic of music, and the philosophy of music and myth.

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In discussing the role Plato played in ancient Greece, Dewey complained about the “unimaginative commentators who treat him as the original university professor.” In my judgment, Larry Hickman’s new book continues the attempt by some readers of Dewey to cast him as the original philosopher of technology. Against the background of the misconstrued critique of technology by the early members of the Frankfurt School, contemporary neo-pragmatists, deconstructionists, post-modernists, and religious fundamentalists, Hickman’s Dewey emerges as the great post-modernist prophet who correctly understood the function and method of technology. While for some technology is wrongly seen as a foreign and unwelcome intrusion into human freedom, Dewey sees technology as the example par-excellence of his instrumentalism, or what Hickman calls “productive pragmatism.” The latter is to be understood as an “inquiry into techniques, tools, and artifacts,” or more specifically, as “the invention, development, and cognitive development of tools and other artifacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems.”

Furthermore, Hickman argues that such “productive pragmatism” presents contemporary philosophers with tools to overcome contemporary social and moral problems introduced by modern science and technology. Defending the academic profession against the “end-of-philosophy” charge, Hickman argues that our current technological culture “is a legitimate concern for philosophers” and that their role is to be “critics and reformers in the broadest of senses.” Rorty’s interpretation of pragmatism as the “criticism of criticism” is again rejected on the ground that it fails to see the “productive” and reconstructive nature of Dewey’s pragmatic instrumentalism.

For many, such a technologically minded reading of Dewey is unimaginative since it continues to ignore the complicated issue regarding the nature of the human organism, or more specifically, the nature of self-activity. William Barrett frequently criticized Dewey’s instrumentalist treatment of the human organism for failing to address the inner dimension of the organism’s existence, i.e., its fear and trembling. Barrett correctly argued that Dewey substituted the inner life with an account of “secular intelligence” that was a “picture of man as essentially *Homo Faber*, the technological animal”. Others further pointed out Dewey’s failure to grasp and incorporate the revolutionary insights of Freud into the psychosexual dimension of self-development. Such an oversight, no doubt, rendered anemic Dewey’s instrumentalism, in particular his