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Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey, and the Creative Reader

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Souhlasím se zapůjčením diplomové práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the MA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

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1. Introduction: Pragmatism, Creativity, Reading

Pragmatism is not a systematic philosophical movement or a doctrine. It is rather a method of thinking, liberally shared by individual philosophers and writers in the transatlantic space. This technique of thinking, which originated in the Central European philosophical space, has been flourishing in the United States from the nineteenth century onward, and is one of the most vital philosophical traditions today.[1] Since pragmatism is a philosophy that stresses the development of individual and creative ways of thinking, it is also an immensely individualistic philosophy. As is attested in this thesis, every pragmatic philosopher devised his own pragmatism,[2] and the goal of this work is to examine the common and differing characteristics of individual epistemologies of these multifarious thinkers. Notwithstanding the common denominators and the label of transatlantic pragmatism, pragmatism remains a liberal philosophical movement, and its representatives do not form an official body;[3] they exist in a loose group, owing to their powerful emphasis on individualism. The lack of a unified school of thought is nevertheless balanced through the vitality of their epistemology.

There are four main characteristics present in almost every variation of pragmatism. The first is the stress on practicality, a pragmatic manner of thinking considering the "practical cash-value" of an action[4] or an attitude utilizing what is "*done* rather than by what is *said*" [5]. In other words, pragmatism tends to stress the question of *practical* difference in a

[1] Peter H. Hare, "Foreword," in John R. Shook, et al., *Pragmatism: An Annotated Bibliography* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998) vii.
[2] James T. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," *A Companion to American Thought*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995) 538.
[3] John Dewey, "Does Reality Possess Practical Character," Note 1, in Russell B. Goodman, ed., *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 81, 90.
[4] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955) 46. All further citations are from this edition, unless marked otherwise. If there is no indication of edition in the footnote, then the citation is from this edition.
[5] Sidney Hook, *The Metaphysics of Pragmatism* (New York: Cosimo, 2008) 41.

dispute. If a dispute is purely a matter of taste[6], pragmatism considers the dispute idle[7] and concedes "the truth" to both parties. The second salient sign of pragmatism is its recognition of the evanescence and uncertainty of the world as experienced by human beings. Things change every moment,[8] and we may never fully predict the end results of our endeavors or our actions. The third important sign is the emphasis pragmatism lays on creativity and metaphor-making as an integral part of human perception. We are all inherently creative;[9] we make up our reality as we go, and this creative, metaphor-making drive lives at the core of every thought we have. It is this part of pragmatism that especially relates to teaching practice. Finally, the fourth pillar of pragmatism is its tendency towards individualism;[10] there is a typical Self-Reliance of an individual, who recognizes that he/she is locked inside his own perspective, in his metaphor/language prison,[11] which he/she cannot escape. We all die alone. Therefore, the fate of every individual is to a good degree infinite solitude of self.[12] Nonetheless, not every pragmatist embraced this last sorrowful position. In fact, the main purpose of thesis is to explore the correspondences and variations between these signs of pragmatism in post-romantic, modern and postmodern American and European cultural space.

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[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974)186.
[7] James, *Pragmatism* (Meridian Books, 1955) 42.
[8] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Circles" 166-168.
[9] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1931) 256-256. "In our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We *add,* both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands really malleable, waiting to receive its final touches at our hands."
[10] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2022). Forthcoming. 32.: "In time the "Hedge Club" included twenty-six members, including seventeen Unitarian ministers and five women. It met nearly thirty times between 1836 and 1840. Ten people attended the first meeting on September 19, 1836; an average meeting drew eleven members, and on occasion there might be seventeen. After 1840 the club met less regularly "as the growing individualism of the group took its toll."
[11] Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 196-197.
[12] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self" *The Woman's Column*, January 1882, 2–3. Reprinted in Ellen Carol DuBois, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, and Speeches* (New York, 1981). Retrieved from <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5315/>.

This thesis aims to investigate the philosophical features of pragmatism in a number of transatlantic thinkers, philosophers and writers. It attempts to do so from the chronological standpoint, drawing a timeline from Immanuel Kant to John Dewey; on this timeline, the work compares the similarities and differences of individual philosophical systems within the loose grouping of Euro-American pragmatism. The first chapter of the thesis serves as a short introduction. The analytical part of the thesis is divided into four chapters, followed by the sixth, concluding chapter. In the second chapter, the thesis examines the post-romantic ideas of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The third chapter of this thesis surveys the theories of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is largely considered to be the cornerstone of pragmatism, and its unofficial founder. The fourth chapter of this thesis analyzes the creative philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, Emerson's great transatlantic follower, and considers his radical ideas on reading and construct-making. The fifth chapter then analyzes the educational pragmatism of John Dewey which focuses on all previously analyzed pragmatic features, but also introduces the notions of creative, democratic discussion and group-focused reading. The final (sixth) chapter is then a conclusion that summarizes the tendencies from the analytical part and offers a prospective idea of the future of implementation of pragmatism in the school environment, and in textual analysis in literary studies.

Throughout the thesis, a considerable effort is made to include the theories of William James and Hans Vaihinger, who are both crucial pragmatic thinkers from the US and Europe yet could not be included in full owing to space constraints of an MA thesis.

This thesis, however, does not only aim to compare and contrast the epistemology of these transatlantic philosophers. In addition to this, its salient and vital aim is to offer pedagogical and educational perspectives on the usefulness of pragmatic philosophy in creative reading and writing. Therefore, the educational uses of the examined theories in literary analysis and criticism are pervasively explored throughout the work. All of the

examined writers stressed the importance of creativity in education, and many of them introduced their own techniques of creative learning, reading and democratic discussion. Every chapter of this thesis is, therefore, oriented towards the practical application of the theories examined. In other words, the thesis also aims to elucidate the notion of the "Creative Reader" and seeks to provide some techniques and approaches for the development of critical thinking, creative reading, and abilities of textual analysis, usable in the classroom.

Pragmatism likes literature very much, and all pragmatic philosophers[13] have asked themselves at one point the traditional question of epistemology: What does it mean to know? What does it mean to *truly understand something, to "get" the meaning?* These are the disconcerting questions that Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte asked themselves at the time when many philosophers still sought refuge in rationalistic and/or empirical frameworks of earlier decades and previous centuries. But what if what we see we actually make up? What if our judgment is, in other words, *subjective*? This, and the question of the compatibility of creation of knowledge with the validity of science, is what Immanuel Kant analyzed in his *Critique of Judgment*, unwittingly building up the European foundations of pragmatic methods of thinking.

[13] Richard Poirier, "Why Do Pragmatists Want to Be Like Poets?" in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture,* ed. Morris Dickstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 347-349.

2. Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and The European Beginnings of Subjective Idealism

The transcendentalism (subjective idealism) of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a philosophy that vitalized and liquified the American cultural ethos,[14] did not emerge spontaneously, or merely through a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings",[15] but rather found its logical and chronological source in post-classical, pre-Romantic thinkers from Germany: Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The first analytical chapter of this thesis will begin its exploration of these philosophical foundations of Trans-Atlantic[16] subjective idealism by examining the work of these two German philosophers. The first subsection of this chapter will briefly inspect the early sources of Emerson's thought as exemplified by Kant's post-rationalistic, pre-romantic transformation of his originally rationalistic categorial imperative[17] along with the establishment of subjective categories.[18] The second subsection of this chapter will focus on Fichte and his further refinement of Kant's work – the introduction of the "self-positing I", the subjective and creative I,[19] which is the cornerstone, the most revolutionary element of his *Wissenschaftslehre,* and the concept that fostered the opportunity for further development of subjective idealism that in turn opened up the expanse for growth of interpretive techniques of creative reading.[20] The following first subsection of this thesis will now examine the relationships and points of contact between Emerson's romantic idealism

[14] David Lee Robbins, "Introduction: R.W. Emerson between Romanticism and the Crisis of Modernity," *Litteraria Pragensia: Studies in Literature & Culture* 24.48 (2014): 1-2.
[15] William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*," *The Critical Tradition*, ed. David H. Richter (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007): 316.
[16] Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 3.
[17] Paul Guyer, "Categorical Imperative," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* eds. Donald M. Borchert (Farmington Hills: Macmillan Reference, 2006) 69.
[18] Karl Ameriks, "Kant, Immanuel," *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy,* ed. Robert Audi (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1999) 464.
[19] Curtis Bowman, "Fichte, Johann Gottlieb," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: 10, URL <https://iep.utm.edu/fichtejg/>, 19 Jan. 2021.
[20] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Success", *Society and Solitude*, paragraph 18, in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 10 volumes (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971-2013), 7:150.: "'Tis the good reader that makes the good book."

and Kant's categories, faculties, and approaches to the mind as conceptualized in *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Judgment*.

2.1 The Subjective Categories of Immanuel Kant: The Genesis of Subjective Idealism[21]

Immanuel Kant of Königsberg, an east-German (Prussian) philosopher, published his final major work, the *Critique of Judgment,* in 1790. In this work, he examines the internal processes of the spirit,[22] an epistemology of forming judgment and making sense of sensible reality. His idea of subjective category formation and disjointed, disorganized sense perception[23] in this later work suggests a "deeply romantic Kant"[24]:

> But we see Kant, at an age when great writers rarely have anything new to say, confronting a problem which is to lead him into an extraordinary undertaking: if the faculties can, in this way, enter into relationships which are variable, but regulated by one or other of them, it must follow that all together they are capable of relationships which are free and *unregulated*, where each goes to its own limit and nevertheless shows the possibility of some [begin xii] sort of harmony with others… Thus we have the *Critique of Judgment* as foundation of Romanticism.[25]

Gilles Deleuze, in his analysis of Kant, examines in the preceding excerpt the "faculties", that is, the instruments, that human beings use to process and make sense of "sensible" reality. The issue with the faculties is, however, that these "enter into relationships which are variable" but also "regulated" by one another. In other words, our sense and intellectual faculties influence each other in a dynamic, evanescent, changing system of perception. My previous thought will always influence my next thought in an unpredictable way (as I am an individual, with an individual history),[26] which produces "free and *unregulated*" relationships

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[21] Of note is that we must be vary of submerging Kant under the term "subjective idealism" as in Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of Faculties* (London: The Athlone Press, 1984) 14. "*Empirical realism is a constant feature of the critical philosophy"*. See also Deleuze in the same book, page 16: "The Kantian thesis is: phenomena are necessarily subject to the categories […] we are the true legislators of Nature."

[22] Henri Bergson, "Franco-American Idealism," *Speeches to the France-America Society,* New York, March 12, 1917, and April 8, 1913. (1.)

[23] Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard Leonard, "Henri Bergson," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 Edition, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/bergson >. (29) "Bergson contended, a 'qualitative multiplicity,' such as subjective time ('Duration') is 'heterogenous and yet interpenetrating, it cannot be adequately represented by a symbol; indeed… a qualitative multiplicity is inexpressible."

[24] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* xi.

[25] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* xi-xii.

[26] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955) 113.

between ideal, immanent thoughts and external perceptions. This late approach of Kant suggests that the philosopher considered jettisoning the rationalistic,[27] absolutistic, universal approach to categories by which human consciousness supersedes "things in themselves",[28] and late in his career introduced the equally revolutionary concept of unregulated perceptions and thoughts within each individual mind.

Nevertheless, Kant moves on further and casts doubt on the existence of reason as defined by Enlightenment proto-positivist science or absolutist theological and philosophical systems of thought. "The ends or interests of reason cannot be justified in terms of experience, or of any other authority outside or above reason."[29] Furthermore:

> all the concepts, nay, all the questions which pure reason presents to us, have their source not in experience, but exclusively in reason itself … since reason is the sole begetter of these ideas, it is under obligation to give an account of their validity or of their illusory dialectical nature. [begin Deleuze's commentary] An immanent Critique – reason as the judge of reason – is the essential principle of the so-called transcendental method.[30]

This revolutionary Romantic idea is clearly presented in the excerpt: all "the questions" that arise in our minds, individually, within our stream of consciousness, are sourced "exclusively in reason itself'. What is more, the reason is not only no longer based on the positivist idea of the world governed by external laws, but is founded within the individual mind, which in turn becomes creative, the "begetter of these ideas".[31] These ideas are, additionally, according to Kant, of "illusory dialectical nature", prefiguring Emerson's dialectical "oscillations"[32] and

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[27] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 13.: "In dogmatic rationalism the theory of knowledge was founded on the idea of a *correspondence* between subject and object, of an *accord* between the order of ideas and the order of things."
[28] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 5.
[29] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 3.
[30] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 3.
[31] Richard, Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 29. So that the past might "bear *her* impress." See also Nietzsche on maternal instinct, e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Penguin Group, 2003) 214. Epub. edition without fixed pagination. "Part Nine: What is Noble?", Aphorism 292. All further citations to this book will be to this edition. As there is no fixed pagination, all citations will include the dynamic page number, chapter, section and subsection where the quoted material is located. See Philosopher "pregnant with new lightnings".
[32] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 18.

"illusion[s]".[33] Deleuze also designates this process of "reason as the judge of reason" as the "so-called transcendental method".[34]

The implications of this discovery (or rather of this creative redescription of a dynamic system[35] of thought) have been observed throughout the following centuries, as Romanticism revolutionised the self-image of humanity.[36] Since all knowledge is based "exclusively in reason itself", the aftermath of this realization is that "the battle [becomes] about what true knowledge of reality is".[37] This Kantian aftermath, the path that Kant opened through his questioning of the real basis of "reasoning" in human beings, may lead us to examine the notions of self-knowledge, subjectivity and interpretation of reality and literature alike; from the standpoint of literary interpretation, it can serve us as an "attempt to avoid being trapped in some wish-fulfilling fantasy or in yet another, merely successive provisional point of view".[38] The critical moment of reclamation of firm ground from a succession of dreams is creativity and recognition of one's own intellectual contingency.[39]

An idealistic variety of creativity is thus foreshadowed in Kantian critical thinking through the doctrine of "intuitions", as examined by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

> […] that the Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental from the use of the term by Immanuel Kant, of Koenigsberg, who,' like his successor Fichte 'replied to the skeptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by

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[33] Richard Poirier, ed., *Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Critical Edition of the Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 218.: "Dream delivers us to dream, and there is no end to illusion."
[34] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 33. Interestingly enough, Emerson never truly considered the name "Transcendentalism" for his own method of thought. On the name formation for Transcendental Club: "I suppose all of them were surprised at this rumor of a school or sect, & certainly at the name of Transcendentalism, which nobody knows who gave, or when it was first applied."
[35] Victor J. Drapela, *A Review of Personality Theories* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1995) 4-5.: On theories of personality: "The definition proposed here approximates the viewpoint of self-theorists. Personality is defined as a dynamic source of behavior, identity, and uniqueness of every person." […] "it follows that personality theories are frameworks devised by various professionals […] to interpret the interaction of dynamic forces operating in every person's life."
[36] Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999) 2.
[37] Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* 118.
[38] Robert B. Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity: On the Kantian* Aftermath (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005) 310.
[39] Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007) 234.

> showing that there was a very important class of ideas or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he denominated them Transcendental forms.[40]

Emerson considers Kant's philosophy[41] as a forerunner of his idealism; a philosophical approach focusing on the mind[42] (its "reason," its generative power, not its psychology) and its creative potential. For this Emersonian Kant, there is, therefore, a "very important class of […] imperative forms" that originated in the creative, metaphorical drive,[43] that were "not previously in the experience of the senses" of the human mind itself; these "intuitions" arrive in a truly Romantic fashion, *ex nihilio.*[44] Since this concept suggests a possibility of the fictionality of "reality" itself, and at least of our perception of it, the fixed table of categories and "the given"[45] then consequently found themselves in trouble. Kant's approach towards the creative synthesis, is, however, more subtle. This dynamic process of individual reason that is capable of creating new concepts by transcending (alleged) sense data is ultimately summarized and refined by Deleuze's reading of the concept of "re-presentation" in Kant's philosophy:

> re-presentation implies an active taking up of that which is presented; hence an active taking up of that which is presented; hence an activity and unity distinct from the passivity and diversity which characterize sensibility as such. […] It is the representation itself, which is defined as knowledge, that is to say as *the synthesis of that which is presented*. We must distinguish between, on one hand, intuitive sensibility as a faculty of reception, and, on the other, the active faculties as sources of real representations. Taken in its activity, synthesis refers back to *imagination*; in its unity, to *understanding*; and in its totality, to *reason*.[46]

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[40] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 35.
[41] Of note is that Emerson read Kant through Samuel Taylor Coleridge's interpretations and re-interpretations of Kant's work. Emerson's conception of Kantian method was therefore further away from Fichte's more immediate reading of Kant and Kant's original ideas themselves.
[42] David Lee Robbins *The Metaphor Will Hold* 5.
[43] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1991) 35-36.
[44] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 24. See also Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 192.
[45] Robert B. Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 331.
[46] Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 9.

Deleuze affords a more nuanced look on the concrete process of presentation, re-presentation and creativity in Kant; and it was this (Kant's) nuanced perspective on creativity and creative method that was later refined by Johann Gottlieb Fichte. For Kant, the "re-presentation" is an active process through which the human conscious, and above all, unconscious, actively accepts, reforms, molds and re-creates (possibly sense) data that the brain receives. The human mind is an active faculty, that shapes its reality at its will,[47] and keeps the universe fluid and volatile,[48] as suggested by the previous treatment of the dynamic, changing and mutually influential relationships between reason's faculties—uniformly (as Kant imagined it) within all human minds or (as Fichte would have it) uniquely within each individual mind. The "active taking up" of the "presented" is a process of active reshaping and unity formation. The suggestion is that by our own individual creations we follow a certain type of immanent logic, whether collective or individual,[49] based on the conscious and the unconscious; but every conscious creation will adhere to some form of this logic, this activity of reason; a form of system, thus is "active" and above all in "unity". This concept of "unity" has been widely criticized by a number of romantic, modern and post-modern philosophers and writers; but in the conception of Kant and Fichte, "unity" is brought about by the forceful and powerful "activity" of human cognition.[50] This is also the sense of Nietzsche, when he distinguishes between the life-affirming overman who is not afraid to create his/her own

[47] William James, *Pragmatism* 165.
[48] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "Circles" 166.
[49] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings,* trans. and ed.Daniel Breazeale (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) 124.: "It is the *Wissenschaftslehre* which is the condition for the validity and applicability of logical propositions."
[50] Richard Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) 71. See also Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism,* Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, trans. (New York: Zone Books, 1991) 115-118 (31): "In phenomenology, the multiplicity of phenomena is always related to a unified consciousness. In Bergsonism, 'the immediate data o consciousness […] are a multiplicity".

values;[51] this individual accepts the "unity"/integrity of the diversity,[52] and evanescence, that her or his agency and activity creates.

Furthermore, Kant's thinking ultimately suggests that "it is the representation itself, which is defined as knowledge", that is, the creative synthesis of the presented stimulus. This, again, points towards the inherent creative/metaphorical drive of the intellect. The "intuitive sensibility" is merely a "faculty of reception", but the "real representations" come from the "active faculties"; paradoxically, it is the "active faculties" that furnish us with our imaginative products, narratives, descriptions and re-descriptions.[53] Therefore, in this fictionalist sense, are these not our most realistic representations that our locked-in, limited[54] brain and consciousness can in fact perceive? Are these not the instrumental, operative (perhaps even existential) truth and reality? These and similar questions will be examined in the following chapters of this thesis.

Finally, for Kant, the inventive process is denominated as "*synthesis*"[55] and corresponds to imagination, the re-creation, population of the bleak rocks of "paltry empiricism" with our own inventions and metaphors.[56] The superficial "unity," the momentary and provisional ordering of perceptual stimuli, produced by the mind's/consciousness's/reason's creative/constructive exertions, was referred to by Kant, and is frequently referred in our colloquial language, as *Understanding* of objective external relationships. We think we understand this "fixed" reality; but we consistently fail to perceive that its form and structure are only momentary, fugacious products of *Reason*, human

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[51] Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism* 346.
[52] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1991) 28.: "Only poets, Nietzsche suspected, can truly appreciate contingency."
[53] Bernstein, *The New Constellation* 274.
[54] Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity* 307.
[55] Geoff Petty, *Teaching Today: A Practical Guide* (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 2009) 9. See Bloom's Taxonomy, especially synthesis from the pedagogical perspective.
[56] Richard Poirier, "Why Do Pragmatists Want to Be Like Poets?" *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture,* ed. Morris Dickstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 352.

creative faculties, fluid consciousness; that what we understand is always a derivative of our Reason; that even before we perceive it, it is already ours.[57] The creative "activity" then, in its totality, refers to "Reason" itself. The Reason, subsequently, appears to be purely subjective. And it was precisely this apparent positioning of Reason itself purely within the individual mind that Lusatian philosopher[58] Johann Gottlieb Fichte noticed, while reading Kant's philosophy for a tutoring course for one of his students.[59] Fichte posited an intriguing question about the validity of scientific inquiry itself—How can science, and any other field of human inquiry, come to terms with inherent human subjectivity? And can we, ultimately, delineate and structure a system that would account for human thinking *within* the inquiry and description of reality itself? Can we, and if so how can we, be sure of the objectivity of our subjectivity? These are the questions that Fichte attempted to answer in his *Wissenschaftslehre.*

[57] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Annotated Emerson,* ed. David Mikics (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 2012) 160-162. (56) "You cannot hear what I say until it is yours".
[58] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 9.
[59] Bowman, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 2.

2.2 The Reflexive I of Johann Gottlieb Fichte

The formal beginning of Fichte's philosophical career dates back to the summer of 1792,[60] when he received the warm approval of his master, Immanuel Kant, for his essay "An Attempt at a Critique of all Revelation". The exceptional nature of Kant's approval was attested by the fact that since Fichte himself lacked sufficient finances to publish the lauded essay, Kant himself had it printed by his own press.[61] Naturally, this was an astonishing compliment paid to Fichte, and the enthusiastic reception of the essay by the educated public[62] propelled him to the stature of "a philosophical figure of importance"[63] almost overnight. The harmony with and synthesis of Kant's work figured in Fichte's essay to such a degree that his work was at the outset mistaken for the work of Kant himself.

Throughout Fichte's career, Kant was for him a role model that he never wanted to disavow; Fichte himself maintained that he "saw himself as the heir to Kant and viewed his own philosophy […] true to the 'spirit', if not to the letter, of his illustrious predecessor",[64] and that he merely focused on refining the work of his *maître à penser*. This refining of Kant's work occurred in three main areas, and all of these three concepts do refine Kant's original work; nevertheless, they are also profoundly innovative and pragmatic.[65] The first of these concepts is the idea of the "first principle", as the core conception of

[60] Bowman, „Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 3.
[61] Dan Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* (Summer 2018 Edition): 2, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/johann-fichte/>, 19 Jan 2021.
[62] Erich Fuchs, et al., *J.G. Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Verlag Günther Holzboog,1978): 74.: "Ich bitte Dich im Namen der Freundschaft und der Liebe: […] Fichte, der Dir entgegenkommen wird, mit Deiner Liebe anzuhören und anzusprechen. – Er ist einer der himmelnächsten Geister unserer Erde."
[63] Bowman, „Johann Gottlieb Fichte "4.
[64] Dan Breazeale, "Preface," in Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings,* trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988): ix
[65] Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte," 10.: "philosophy's task as that of 'displaying the foundation of experience' or 'explaining the basis of the system of representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity'".

Wissenschaftslehre – the "science of science itself".[66] As was foreshadowed by the previous questions, Fichte attempts to answer a difficult quandary: Is there a way to determine whether the ur- (i.e., original) principle of any science, is, in fact, *true*? Is this original, first principle, the 1+1 axiom, real? Fichte offers a solution to the problem of the truth value of the initial proposition by presenting his readers with the construct of the "self-positing" I.[67] This positioning of the I (pure I), is seen as the base for any judgment, creation, understanding. One can never think of himself, except through self-positioning of himself in himself. Finally, Fichte refined Kant's work further by offering a social dimension[68] to philosophical inquiry. In a highly pragmatic fashion akin to John Dewey,[69] Fichte thinks about the role of the scholar in the society and about the development of vocations and personal authenticity; this aspect of Fichte's work will be further discussed in Chapter 5 on John Dewey and Pragmatic Pedagogy. The fundamental perspectivist[70] idea of *Wissenschaftslehre,* the first principle, constitutes a primary contribution to the birth of what was later to become Romanticism and Subjective Idealism.

Fichte introduces his concept of scientific thinking about science itself, and in that way, he attempts to provide an intellectual platform on which one can truly be "certain".[71] The impossibility of certainty started to plague modern science from the advent of systematization and formalization of the scientific enterprise. If there is to be a way to analyze the truth (certainty) value of other sciences, a proto-science needs to be devised that

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[66] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 91.
[67] Michael G. Vater and David W. Wood, *J.G. Fichte/ F.W.J Schelling: The Philosophical Rupture between Fichte and Schelling* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012) 124. See subjective self-positing as the absolute reason: "only where the formal significance of this proposition is reinterpreted in a wholly unproved and unjustified manner in the sense of a self-positing that remains identical to the absolute reason in things".
[68] Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 3.
[69] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 167.
[70] Nietzsche, 299.
[71] Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 42.

can provide a critique; Fichte attempts the construction of this concept, and as the forerunner of subjective idealism, he recognizes that the scientific descriptions themselves might be based on personal preferences:

> It appears to follow that the essence of science lies in the character of its content and in the relation of this content to the consciousness of the person said to 'know' something. Thus, systematic form seems to be something merely incidental to science – not its aim, but merely the means to this aim. […] Suppose that for some reason the human mind were able to know only very little with certainty, and that regarding everything else it could entertain only opinions, guesses, suspicions, and arbitrary assumptions.[72]

For Fichte, the "essence of science" derives from the "content of the consciousness" of an individual who, in a mendacious manner,[73] professes to "know" something. As already apparent in Kant's writing, this proposition will find a considerable hurdle in the form of subjective category creation.[74] Fichte, however, continues a bit further and suggests a deeply Rortian and Pragmatic concern; the "form" seems to Fichte "incidental": a personal, contingent, individual means of getting the job done. This incidental form bears a very strong resemblance to Rorty's contingent vocabularies,[75] systems of man-made descriptive instruments, controlled by those who are said to "know". In this sense already, Fichte is deeply pragmatic. As he is aware of this question, he introduces the notion of "certainty". He carries on to problematize the traditional notion of rational certainty of natural and other types of sciences, as he posits, hypothetically, that our minds could know "only very little with certainty"[76] and about almost everything else we could entertain "only opinions, guesses, suspicions",[77] or in the words of Hans Vaihinger "[wir erstellen nur] bloße

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[72] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 102.
[73] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 101.
[74] Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* 122,. See also Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* 118.
[75] Rorty, *Contingecy, Irony and Solidarity* (1991) 6. "The world does not speak. Only we do."
[76] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007) 252-253. (7) Only "Sensorial images are stable psychic facts"
[77] David Simpson, *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Kant Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 84. "Imagine her spirit as a striving to form the most perfect harmony, and its particular notes as the representative images [Vorstellungen] of this soul."

Fiktionen".[78] The similarity with the dictum of the German ultra-pragmatist[79] is not a coincidence, since Fichte here grapples with the same questions Vaihinger attempted to solve a century later. If all we can posit about reality are our subjective "assumptions" and "opinions", how can we be sure about anything?

Fichte introduces his theory of the first principle as a way of making sure that there is a singular proposition that does not derive its certainty from any other proposition, and is, therefore, certain in itself, by itself; it exists as a certainty, an axiom, a founding principle that cannot be doubted, of a particular (or any) science:

> that in each science there can be only one proposition that is certain and established prior to the connection between the propositions. […] But a proposition which possesses its own certainty independently of the other propositions could not be connected with them in this manner. If its certainty is independent, then it remains certain even if the others are not. Consequently, such a [begin 104] proposition would not be connected via certainty with other propositions at all. A proposition of this sort, one which is certain prior to and independently of the association with others, is termed a *first principle*. Every science requires a first principle.[80]

For a science to be truly built on a safe, hard rock, or on an unchanging, axiomatic fact, it must be based on a proposition termed "first principle". Fichte asks an intriguing question that once again predates the pragmatic method of inquiry: How can we be sure that our science is not just a collection of "reine Fiktionen"[81] but is based on reality? That it is not just one "proposition", illusion, related to other "propositions", all of them basing their truth value on the original illusory proposition. Fichte sees the only way out in establishing, that is, *creating* a proposition that would possess "its own certainty independently". If this certainty

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[78] Hans Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des als ob* (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1924) 141. On Kant and Fictions: "Natürlich ist dies nun noch weit mehr der Fall bei jenen Fiktionen, welche die Psyche unbewußt bildet, und die dann als fertige Dogmen vor die Seele treten und im Bewußtsein als solche gelten: so die ganze Kategorieneinteilung. Diese, ursprünglich Dogma, wird dann Hypothese, und seit Hume und Kant steht ihre Fiktivität fest, wie sie denn auch ursprüglich bloße Fiktionen sind."

[79] John R. Shook, et al., *Pragmatism: An Annotated Bibliography* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998) 241.

[80] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 103-104.

[81] Vaihinger 174. See also page 145: "Mit dem Wachstum der Wissenschaft findet die Fiktion allmählich eine viel weitere Ausdehnung".

truly is independent, then it might logically follow that other propositions based on this genuine proposition will also be built on a safe, stable bedrock. According to Fichte, a proposition of this kind, which would be *a priori* certain, would be termed a *first principle*. However, the issue that Fichte approaches is then the question of certainty of *Wissenschaftslehre* itself, which itself is a science in need of a first principle, is said to be grounded merely on the self-positing activity of *Tathandlung"*.[82] So even Fichte's own system for science criticism, which aims to warrant the certainty of other sciences, is essentially subjective. *Tathandlung* is seen in Fichte's philosophy as "I" that "posits itself as a totality, that is, it determines itself".[83] And the fact that the first principle even of *Wissenschaftslehre* can only be determined subjectively leads us to Fichte's core concept of the self-positing I.

"Fichte maintained that there are two and only two possible starting points for the philosophical project of 'explaining' experience: namely, "the concept of pure selfhood […] and that of pure thinghood" the former being associated with pure freedom and the latter with utter necessity.[84] Neither of these sources for the first principle can be accessed by a direct appeal to experience; they can only be constituted in the human mind, the I, through the *activity*[85] of self-positioning, creation of representation, an abstraction from ordinary experience.[86] The process (activity) of self-positing as the ground of knowledge is explained by Fichte in a following manner:

> Consequently, this first principle – the first principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and through it the first principle of all science and knowledge – simply cannot be proven[87]

[82] Bowman, „Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 8.
[83] Fichte *Early Philosophical Writings* 284.
[84] Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 13.
[85] Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* 120. First, we should recall that Fichte characterized the theoretical subject as an activity (rather than as a *faculty* for carrying out a subjective activity) and that this activity was simply a species of self-awareness. See Pragmatic emphasis on active, processual imagination, and Deleuze's treatment of Nietzsche – overman as Active, creative, affirmative.
[86] Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte" 13.
[87] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 108.

> Logic, on the other hand, is an artificial product of the freedom of the human mind. […] '*A=A*' is undoubtedly a logically correct proposition, and insofar as it is, it means '*if A* is posited, then *A* is posited.' This raises two questions: Is *A* posited? And why and to what extent is *A* posited, *if* it is posited?[88]
>
> It is posited, *for* it is posited. It is posited unconditionally and absolutely. […] Thus all of the content to which the proposition '*A=A*' is supposed to be applicable must be contained within the I. Therefore, *A* can be nothing, but something *posited within the I*, and the proposition in question now reads: 'That which is posited within the I is posited.'[89]

The excerpt above presents Fichte's fundamental approach to the subjectivity of self. Fichte aims to isolate an "essential feature of subjectivity" that is a particular kind of "activity, which he terms 'self-positioning;'."[90] Owing to this basic fact of I, residing in the I in its totality,[91] the "first principle of *Wissenschaftslehre* […] simply cannot be proven". As any type of science is observed mainly by human consciousness, a type of rationalistic, absolute proof simply cannot exist, in the final analysis. Fichte, just as Vaihinger,[92] considers logic to be merely another kind of fiction created by individuals to make sense of their perceived reality.

Through the equation *A=A*, "*if A* is posited, then *A* is posited" Fichte shows perhaps the most axiomatic idea in mathematics and logic and transforms it into a subjective proposition. If 1 equals 1, then we posited[93] it. We consider it true, *but only because we posited it to be true in the first place. We created the meaning of 1=1 ahead of the phenomenon of the equation itself*. Or, as Emerson would describe this phenomenon: "You cannot hear what I say until it is yours".[94] The natural question to ask along with Fichte then is: Is *A* posited at all? And to what extent may it even be *posited*? In other words, can *A* even

[88] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 150.
[89] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 151.
[90] Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* 117.
[91] See previous quote: Deleuze on Kant and totality of imaginative understanding. Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* 9.
[92] Vaihinger 3.: „Das logische Denken ist also eine organische Funktion der Psyche."
[93] "Posit." Def. 1. *Cambridge Dictionary.* ed. 2021.: "to suggest something as a basic fact or principle from which a further idea is formedor developed. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/posit>
[94] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Annotated Emerson* 160-162.

have *any* truth value? Can we at all determine something as *the* truth? Can a proposition be truly posited (considered to be *true*)? And to what degree can we ascertain anything?

Fichte deals with these questions in a profoundly pragmatic manner. The I "is posited, *for* it is posited." By using the conjunction *for*, Fichte injects the concept of human Will to the most fundamental metaphysical inquiry. Will, then, becomes the main creative drive[95] behind the formation of truths and moral order, the Posits. This approach that puts the metaphysical truths, generated through the creative will, in the hands of the individual, predates Emerson's subjective idealism in a very accurate manner; one only need consider Emerson's ideas such as: "The world is… what you will, and the metaphor will hold",[96] and, similarly, "all things are yours".[97] This integration of human subjectivity into the fundamental creative process of metaphysics has all the more relevance to James' concept of the *Will to Believe*, where James posits that the individual needs to indulge in substantive language[98] from time to time, believe in something, take a moral holiday.[99] This is all predated by Fichte, as he carries on to finalize his thought; "all of the content" of the equation *A=A* must be "contained within the I", i.e. the imagination, the mind, the ego. Therefore, *A* is nothing more than something subjectively "*posited within the I*" i.e., my own head, my own metaphor. The ultimate proposition about our ability to know *the* truth then might read, in a sense similar to the eternal recurrence,[100] or an ever-expanding, subjective circle:[101] "That which is posited within the I" is posited by the activity of our mind, the generative/process, a certain

[95] Vater and Wood, *J.G. Fichte/ F.W.J Schelling* 11.
[96] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 399.
[97] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Sermon XXVII," *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. Albert J. von Frank, 4 volumes (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989-1992). 1:227 "Therefore, let no man glory in men; for all things are yours."
[98] James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cosimo, 2007) 243-244.
[99] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans Green and Co., 1931) 73-74.
[100] Walter Kaufmann, "Translator's Introduction" in *The Gay Science,* ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) 14.
[101] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Circles" 166-167.

reflexivity of a subject, "*eine in sich zurückgehende Tätigkeit*";[102] an activity of a mind that returns into itself, as a snake biting its own tail.

[102] Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* 121. "A further aspect of the notion of self-positing subjectivity that will be relevant to Fichte's account of self-determination is the essentially reflexive nature of the subject's activity. This reflexivity is evident in the term 'self-positing', as well as in Fichte's description of the same as 'an activity that returns into itself'.

3. Ralph Waldo Emerson: Poet,[103] Maker, Creator

In the previous analysis we have seen that the influence of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte on Ralph Waldo Emerson cannot be doubted.[104] But in addition to these philosophical individuals from Germany, a number or thinkers and poets from Britain also had a profound influence on the flowing philosopher. Among these is for example Thomas Carlyle, who was a close, if physically distant, friend of Emerson. Emerson's visit to the Carlyles in Craigenputtock was for Emerson "a white day in my years",[105] and Jane Carlyle "insisted that Emerson's visit was the most memorable event in their life" while living there.[106] Or, in their reading club,[107] Emerson indicates that they enjoyed discussing British romantic poetry, most of all "Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe […] Carlyle, with pleasure & sympathy".[108] Emerson could not read German, and therefore his knowledge of German literature and philosophy had to rely on translations from his friend Frederic Henry Hedge.

Fichte's legacy for Emerson's thought stands strong, as the principle of the self-positing I from *Wissenschaftslehre* became the main tenet of Emerson's nascent philosophy of creativity and subjective idealism.[109] This chapter will, therefore, not only examine the connections and links between Fichte and Emerson but will also consider and examine Emerson's unique ideas built on the framework of German and (budding) American romanticism. The first subsection of this chapter will examine the practicality of Emerson's new philosophy and how this practical orientation stems from Fichte's own thinking and philosophy. The second subsection will examine the notion of the creative reader and

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[103] "Poet." Def. 1. Oxford Dictionary of English. Oxford University Press. ed. 2020. Definition from the Middle English: from Old French ***poete***, via Latin from Greek ***poētēs***, variant of ***poiētēs*** 'maker, poet', from ***poiein*** 'create'.
[104] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 14-15.
[105] Robert D. Richardson, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) 258-259.
[106] Richardson, *The Mind on Fire* 260.
[107] Richardson, *The Mind on Fire* 885.
[108] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 33 and 26.
[109] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 6.

imaginative fashioning[110] of our perspective of the world. The third and final subsection will then in brief examine the connective threads between individualism and creativity, as evidenced by Emerson, Nietzsche, and, tangentially, Marcel Proust.

[110] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Fate" 354.

3.1 Whither Goest Thou, Philosophy? Fichte, Emerson and the Practical Role of the Scholar in Community

In 1881, Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Gay Science* postulates an interesting realization that found its origins in Emerson's "Divinity School Address"[111] and, by extension, in Fichte's Lectures. It would, therefore, be pertinent to start off this section focused on Emerson and Fichte through Nietzsche's summary of his contemporary situation in philosophy, written several decades later:

> The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes to frightening lengths – and often I have asked myself whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation [begin 35] of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body*. […] All those bold insanities of metaphysics […] may always be considered first of all as the symptoms of certain bodies. And if such world affirmations or world negations *tout court* lack any grain of significance when measured scientifically, they are the more valuable for the historian and psychologist as hints or symptoms of the body.[112]

As metaphysics had been suffering under the attacks of scientific/materialistic proto-positivism and positivism from the 17th century until his own time, it is easy to understand Nietzsche's frightening realization. Fichte himself considered the question of utility of philosophy in his own time. If the "metaphysical insanities" are merely symptoms of a metaphorically active brain,[113] based on purely physiological characteristics, then what would constitute the value of philosophical musings and analysis itself? Nietzsche does, indeed, offer a pragmatic answer to the issue[114] that in its contents comes close to the answer of both Fichte and Emerson. Nietzsche's "philosophical *physician"* is strikingly akin to Fichte's young "*Gelehrter*";[115] this physician uses the instrumentalist[116] approach, where the truth is

[111] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "An Address" 63.
[112] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 34-35.
[113] Mark Edmundson, *Towards Reading Freud: Self-Creation in Milton, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Sigmund Freud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 19 (5).
[114] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 35.
[115] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 141.
[116] Hook 41.

ultimately the question of "health, future, growth, power, life." for the individual and society. Based on these ideas, one could argue that modern philosopher' queries should pertain predominantly to *practical* matters of life. As Nietzsche read Emerson avidly,[117] we may argue that this profound question that doubted the usefulness of philosophical endeavor found its source directly in Emerson, which also puts it into a broader relation to Fichte's thought.

The aim of philosophy, consequently, becomes the search for the *utility* of philosophy; this is examined precisely by Fichte in his *Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation:*[118]

> It is this vocation which I would like for you to make the most deliberate aim and the most constant guide of your lives- you young men who are in turn destined to affect mankind in the strongest manner, and whose destiny it is, through teaching, action, or both – in narrower or wider circles—to pass on that education which you have received and, on every side, to raise our fellowmen to a higher level of culture.[119]

Fichte's classes were always pedagogically interesting; of note is his vivid gesticulation and burly mien,[120] and his profoundly practical, instrumental, action-oriented approach. For Fichte, philosophical ideas must in "the strongest manner" "affect mankind", and this is to be done "through teaching, action, or both".[121] Nietzsche's existential issues in matters of philosophy are, therefore, resolved even before they arise. For Fichte, the import of the young scholar is not merely his self-positing I, but his "action", the practical activity of teaching others, i.e., of "pass[ing] the education" and raising other individuals to "higher level of culture". Therefore, the place of philosophy in modern society might not be exclusively a psychological investigation of positivistically-defined, biological/material brains; it should,

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[117] Mason Golden, "Emerson-Exemplar: Friedrich Nietzsche's Emerson Marginalia: Introduction," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 44.3 (2013): 398, JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jnietstud.44.3.0398>, 20 Jan 2021.
[118] Fuchs, et al., *J.G. Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen* 96: "die Bestimmung des Gelehrten".
[119] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings* 152.
[120] Fuchs, et al., *J.G. Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen* 106.
[121] Bert P. Helm, "Emerson Agonistes: Education as Struggle and Process," *Educational Theory* 42.2 (1992): 166. On Eloquence.

above all, aspire to teach literature, history, culture, reading literacy, but also financial literacy, active citizenship[122] and social skills.[123] Philosophy should offer a bird's-eye perspective on everything in a complex way; everything here meaning culture and its manifold manifestations (see "health, future, growth, power life"). And it is the maker and the fashioner of philosophical thinking, the thinker, who has this capacity for vast, complex perspective. Informed thoroughly by his German predecessors, Emerson introduces the elements of practical active citizenship as early as in his earliest essays.

Emerson published his *Essays: First Series* a decade after abandoning his career as a minister in Boston,[124] and the essays, therefore, contain fresh ideas of a newly constituted idealistic/pragmatic philosopher. Emerson, however, even from early on in his ministerial career, encouraged his parishioners towards the performance of practical Christianity. His early sermons[125] contained encouragement regarding the importance of practical religion, activity, and social engagement.[126] His first significant philosophical treatment of what was later to become the pragmatic method,[127] is found in his essay "Spiritual Laws", from *First Series:*

> Our young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, origin of evil, predestination and the like. These never presented a practical difficulty to any man – never darkened across any man's road, who did not go out of his way to seek them.[128]

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[122] James M. Albrecht, "What's the Use of Reading Emerson Pragmatically? The Example of William James," *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 30. ½ (2003): 495. On "melioristic activism".
[123] *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (Luxembourg: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission, 2019) <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>.
[124] Richardson, *The Mind on Fire* 890.
[125] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Sermon XXXVIII, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. Albert J. von Frank, 4 volumes (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989-1992). 1:292
[126] Emerson, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Sermon CLXVI" 4:219.
[127] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 45-46.
[128] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. A. C. Hearn (Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo, Hay & Mitchell, 1907) 47.

In his introduction to "Spiritual Laws", Emerson looks at issues in his contemporary Christianity where, according to him, separate "theological problems" plague "young people". For Emerson, on the other hand, these issues might not present an actual "practical difficulty" to anyone. This phenomenon of practical thinking is also one of the points of incipiency in the pragmatic thinking of William James. The philosopher, using the pragmatic method, asks chiefly about the practical difference that ensues if one or the other party is right in a philosophical dispute.[129] If there is no practical difference between the alternatives, then "all dispute is idle".[130] James had been a comprehensive reader of Emerson since childhood, as he was raised in a household whose head was profoundly sympathetic to Emerson.[131] He even enthusiastically re-read, again, the complete oeuvre of Emerson in preparation of a presentation that he had been invited to give, as one of Emerson's most prominent admirers, for the Emerson Centenary in 1903.[132] The connection between the two authors is therefore very significant, and this is also naturally reflected in James' writing. Both the authors, using the pragmatic method,[133] see the future of philosophy in pursuit of practical endeavors and avoidance of unproductive discussions that signify no "practical difficulty" or difference.[134] The issues in question, according to Emerson, also never arise unless the individual wills them into existence, goes "out of his way to seek them". More

[129] Charlene Haddock Siegfried, *William James's Radical Reconstruction of Philosophy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990) 12.
[130] James, *Pragma*tism (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 45-46.
[131] Frank Lentricchia, "Philosophers of Modernism at Harvard, circa 1900," *Modernist Quartet* (1994): 26.
[132] Fredric I. Carpenter, "Points of Comparison between Emerson and William James," *The New England Quarterly* 2.3 (1929): 472, JSTOR < https://www.jstor.org/stable/359243>, 20 Jan 2021.
[133] Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: A. L. Burt Company, 1913) 41. "Let us row; what signifies it?".
[134] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* [1907], Lecture III: Some Metaphysical Problems, in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 528.
See also Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, ed. Alan Bass (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005) 354.

concretely, individual issues that the person faces might be, in the ultimate analysis, imagined and created through their metaphorical drive.[135]

In addition to these perspectives, the issue of practicality in philosophy is often taken up by Emerson from the standpoint of education.[136] Emerson often talks about the way education should be conducted: teaching should proceed in a manner that protects the individuality of the person being educated,[137] and with a practical, active import--both on the side of the educator and the student. The first signs of this pedagogic method appear in the essay "Spiritual Laws":

> A stranger comes from a distant school, with better dress, with trinkets in his pockets, with airs and pretensions: an older boy says to himself, 'It's of no use; we shall find him out tomorrow.' 'What has he done?' is the divine question which searches men, and transpierces every false reputation. […] Pretension may sit still but cannot act. Pretension never feigned an act of real greatness.[138]

Emerson usually connects the higher philosophical and educational issues with bucolic and quotidian[139] metaphors and images. The scene is set: a swanky "stranger" with "airs and pretensions" attempts to impress and instill respect into students. But, as is usual in school experience,[140] an "older boy" immediately spots the pretense, he "shall find him out tomorrow". This is a passage that is, to a considerable degree, indicative of the role of personal authenticity of a teacher in practice. Children and adolescents can be very perceptive

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[135] Edmundson, *Towards Reading Freud* 19.
[136] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Politics" 255: "A man who cannot be acquainted with me, taxes me;"
[137] Helm 175.: "keep the student's natural base, but also train off all excesses and anarchic impulses attached to it."
[138] Emerson, *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. Hearn, A.C. "Spiritual Laws" 57.
[139] John J. McDermott, "Preface," in *The Writings of William James* (New York: Random House, 1967) 6. See also
Jonas F. Soltis, "John Dewey (1859-1952)," *Education Encyclopedia - StateUniversity.com*, 2021 ed. 3. On Pragmatism and coolness.
[140] Zdeněk Helus, *Osobnost a její vývoj* (Praha: Studijní texty pro distanční vzdělávání, 2003) 70-83.

towards the pretense of adults;[141] often this is due to the fact that they are not burdened with the intellectual "blind impress"[142] of culture and can see the world with a fresh set of eyes.[143]

Emerson then further posits that the child will ask, chiefly, "'What has he done?'"; this is also suggestive of the practical character of Emerson's educational philosophy, which preceded and formed a foundation for John Dewey's project education. In other words, "We become what we do. *The end pre-exists in the means.* [begin Lindeman] There can be no doubt concerning Emerson's pragmatic mood in this context".[144] Finally, Emerson also connects this performative idea of knowledge with the notion of personal authenticity. An inauthentic individual and his knowledge "cannot act"; such a person is purely theoretical: he/she does not venture to the Deweyan unknown with a map and a rucksack.[145] Furthermore, Emerson in his epistemology turns away from "questions of origins and causes" and rather promotes inquiries into the present and future consequences "such as: what kind of world is it […] what kind of behavior does it require from us – how shall we act in and towards our world?"[146] Better yet, "How shall I live?".[147] This functional, pedagogical role of philosophy and the constructive uses of the neutral[148] pragmatic method will further be examined in subsequent material on William James and the chapter on John Dewey.

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[141] J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Random House, 1951) 14. "Grand. There's a word I really hat. It's a phony. I could puke every time I hear it."
[142] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1991) 23.
[143] Robert Čapek, *Moderní Didaktika* (Praha: Grada Publishing, 2015) 273. See the technique "Lodní porada".
[144] Eduard C. Lindeman, "Emerson's Pragmatic Mood," *The American Scholar* 16.1 (1946): 62, JSTOR < https://www.jstor.org/stable/41204866>, 20 Jan 2021.
[145] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (Delhi: AAKAR Books, 2004) 161. "The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance."
[146] Albrecht 403.
[147] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "Fate," 345.
[148] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 79-80. "She is completely genial. She will entertain any hypothesis; she will consider any evidence." See also Emerson's essay "Montaigne; or, the Skeptic."

Emerson, nonetheless, did not stop with the type of vocational education that such a school as the Tuskegee Institute would offer,[149] but rather attempted a thoroughgoing approach that fused the functional product with a sense of *metanoia*, a constant "struggle for new dimensions of being", innovations.[150] And this is precisely the point where Emerson's practicality meets his romantic creativity.

[149] "Booker T. Washington," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 6 May. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Booker-T-Washington>, Accessed 28 June 2021.
[150] Helm 169.

3.2. Emerson's Creative Reading and Creative Faith

The inchoate forms of subjective idealism find their first representations in Emerson's early lectures. Among these is the "Divinity School Address" that was delivered in front of Harvard Divinity School graduates in 1838.[151] In this early lecture, Emerson proposed his controversial ideas on religion and on the creative drive within the individual:

> And now let us do what we can to rekindle the smouldering, night quenched fire on the altar. […] The question returns, what shall we do? I confess, all attempts to project and establish a Cultus with new rites and forms, seem to me vain. Faith makes us, and not we it, and faith makes its own forms. All attempts to contrive a system are as cold as the new worship introduced by the French to the goddess of Reason, -- to-day, pasteboard and fillagree, and ending to-morrow in madness and murder […] The remedy to their deformity is, first, soul, and second, soul, and evermore, soul. A whole popedom of forms, one pulsation of virtue can uplift and vivify.[152]

Several years before the publication of his *Essays: First Series,* Emerson already shows signs of advocacy for and application of religious techniques based around creativity. Emerson recognizes the contemporary situation where "half parishes are signing off",[153] and levies criticism towards the responsible institutions. The "altar" is "nigh quenched", and the pragmatic question arises "What shall we do?". Emerson does not see the establishment of "Cultus" with "new rites and forms" as a way out of the growing disillusion of the population with organized religion and its activities. However, in a melioristic way,[154] he does see an opportunity for pragmatic religious renewal:[155] Emerson introduces spiritual creativity into the mix: "Faith makes us, and not we it". Through this approach, Emerson opens up a space for a more immanent, creative experience of individual faith, which is mediated within the

[151] Breazeale, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte", 28-29. On "Atheism controversy". See also Jacobi's letter to Fichte.
[152] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "An Address" 66-67.
[153] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "An Address" 63.
[154] McDermott 7.
[155] Giles Gunn, "Religion and the Recent Revival of Pragmatism" in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture,* ed. Morris Dickstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 406-407.

individual's "soul" (i.e., Ego, creative drive or in the religious sense[156]). Faith "makes its own forms" and the "spirit moves where it will",[157] so rather than contriving new forms, old forms, according to Emerson, already suffice; the "cold" "deformity" can be rectified not through the abolition of "forms", but by the creative, free soul that exists alongside the form. "A whole popedom of forms" can be vivified by a lively, pulsing virtue that does not aim to cancel the already established system, but rather to animate it. The world is "the mirror of the soul" and the "Ought", "Duty" is "one thing with Science, Beauty, and with Joy".[158] Therefore, for the early philosophical Emerson, the deformity is not "worship" to the "goddess of Reason" or the Christian God, but lack of individual, creative soul that determines its own rules within the dogma, and searches for a synthesis between the classical order and individual romantic ideal. Above all, Emerson seeks to "vivify" religion through creativity. From this more sacral orientation, Emerson then moves a few years later towards his career in literary criticism.

Emerson's fame began to grow substantially from the 1840s, as he started travelling on lecture tours, and lived from the substantial dowry left by his deceased first wife.[159] The opening essay from the collection *Essays: First Series* published in this period (1841) was "History". Here the writer presents his initial ideas on Nietzschean perspectivism:

> To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine.[160]
>
> Dem Dichter und Weisen sind alle Dinge befreundet und geweiht, alle Erlebnisse nützlich, alle Tage heilig, alle Menschen göttlich.[161]

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[156] Řehoř z Nyssy, *Katechetická řeč* (Praha: Oikoymenh, 2015) 24-30. On Hypostasis. See also Mircea Eliade, *Posvátné a profánní,* trans. F. Karfík (Praha, Oikoymenh, 1994) 10-13.
[157] Mark Patrick Hederman, "Cinema and the Icon," *The Crane Bag* 8.2 (1984): 99, JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30023284>, 9 April 2020.: "The film is a mystery... The Spirit breathes where it will." quoting Robert Bresson.
[158] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "An Address" 67.
[159] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "Chronology" xxiv.
[160] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "History" 117.
[161] Friedrich Nietzsche - *The Gay Science/ Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Title page, 1882. In *The Gay Science,* ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

> The true poem is the poet's mind; the true ship is the ship-builder.[162]
>
> The student interprets the age of chivalry by his own age of chivalry, and the days of martime adventure and circumnavigation by quite parallel miniature experiences of his own.[163]

In "History" Emerson presents his well-known quote on the creative endeavor of the poet. For Emerson, idealistically (spiritually) minded individuals such as the "poet", "philosopher", "saint" are all equally creative – their world is imagined as "profitable", their fellow "men" are "divine." Of note could be the comparison to a strangely reverential approach that even Nietzsche, Emerson's great transatlantic follower,[164] exemplifies at the beginning of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* where the protagonist recognizes a certain similarity between him and the saint and chooses to let the saint roam the forests in peace.[165] Similarly, in *Zarathustra*, one could consider the episode with the demon relevant here, too, where the reader is encouraged to accept the idea of eternal recurrence in the sense of *amor fati.*[166] The imagination here is central; the "poet…philosopher…saint" all color their environment with their perspective, thus they all share the pragmatic appreciation of the quotidian and daily.[167]

All of these approaches suggest the need for a metaphorically active mind, a creative individual that can make flowers bloom from the bleak rocks. Therefore, no matter how bleak the setting may seem, for the creative poet "all days are holy" --"Dem Dichter" sind alle Tage

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[162] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "History" 119.
[163] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "History" 124.
[164] Hermann Hummel, "Emerson and Nietzsche," *The New England Quarterly* 19.1 (1946): 73, JSTOR < https://www.jstor.org/stable/361207>, 20 Jan 2021.
[165] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* translated by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 2003) 41. Epub edition. Part one, "Zarathustra's Prologue", Aphorism 2. All further citations of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* will be to this edition. The Epub. edition does not have fixed pagination, therefore, the page numbers will always be supplemented alongside with the section name and aphorism.
[166] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 273-274. "Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine".
[167] John Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *The Essential Dewey. Volume 2: Ethics Logic Psychology,* ed. Larry A. Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998) 367. "That, as Emerson says is 'the path of the creator to his work'; and again 'a habitual respect to the whole by an eye loving beauty in detail.' Affection is towards the meaning of the symbol, not to its constitution."

"heilig". Of note is that the epigraph (attributed to Emerson) to Nietzsche's first edition of his *Gay Science* already omits the mention of "saint"; Nietzsche himself, however, despite his powerful atheism, initially suggested a certain degree of understanding/respect for the Roman Catholic church.[168] This appreciation mainly for the Roman ideals preserved in the institution, however, did eventually abate.

For Emerson, "there is properly no history, only biography."[169] This is further suggested by Emerson's comments that the "true poem" is the "poet's mind"; therefore, the eye "fashions planets"[170] and "perception is not whimsical, but fatal".[171] History, according to Emerson, cannot be viewed impartially, but always turns in individual's mind into "biography". Effective teaching should always follow the dynamics of human cognition, and the "student" will always imagine "the age of chivalry" through "experiences of his own"; Emerson here effectively predicts the rise of the now much preferred pedagogical "social constructivism",[172] where each child creates his/her own idea of the given material. In that way, the child creates his/her own mental constructs about the subject, understands the reading matter via his/her most effective cognitive path, and shares his/her observations with others in the classroom. Needless to say, social constructivism also lives at the heart of Dewey's project method,[173] which requires a long-term democratic cooperation,[174] and long-term creative output from each member of a team.[175] Emerson's ideas of community, creativity and imaginative individualism, are, nevertheless, more nuanced and complicated.

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[168] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 310-313.
[169] Hummel 74.
[170] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Fate" 6.
[171] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, "Self-Reliance" 139-140.
[172] Julie Carwile, "A Constructivist Approach to Online Teaching and Learning," *Inquiry* 12.1 (2007): 1, <http://www.vccaedu.org/inquiry/inquiry-spring-2007/i-12-Carwile.html>, 28 Jun 2021. Alternative link: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ833907.pdf>.
[173] Soltis 4.
[174] James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and Amercan Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 113.
[175] Čapek, *Moderní didaktika* 376-377.

3.3 Emersonian Individualism

"Insists on yourself, never imitate"[176] – These are the lines that Emerson wrote in his seminal essay "Self-Reliance" preceded by the equally captivating (and provocative) pronouncement that "imitation is suicide".[177] Emersonian individualism can best be understood in relation to several thinkers that followed in his footsteps; namely William James and John Dewey, both of whom refined Emerson's seminal thoughts and his radical individualism. Emerson published his first ideas on individual and society in his "Sermon XXXVIII":

> But the moment you put them together and they appear as Society – though the characters are the same in the multitude that they were alone; though 'tis nothing as before but a great many disagreeing, imperfect, passionate persons, yet the eye is vanquished, and the reason prostrated. Now we are willing to surrender our freedom. Now we *must* do as they do. Their opinion begins to look to us like truth, and their act like virtue, fashion for Virtue.[178]

One of the key characteristics of Emerson's thinking is his radical individualism.[179] In this sense, Emerson seems to be more akin to Nietzsche's radical theories,[180] rather than to the melioristic, pluralistic view of William James.[181] For Emerson, the "characters" do not change when in "the multitude"; it still is a "great many disagreeing" a pluralistic, democratic situation. What changes, however, is our keen eye, our perception that is clear when one is in solitude, tranquility.[182] Our "reason" becomes "prostrated", our individual ability to perceive the moral right and wrong[183] is paralyzed. Subsequently, the individual is forced into conformity by the "herd",[184] is manipulated, perceives that he/she "*must*" do as the group does.

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[176] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 148.
[177] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 132.
[178] Emerson, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "Sermon XXXVIII" 292.
[179] Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* 71.
[180] Rorty *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1991) 35-36.
[181] Lentricchia, "Philosophers of Modernism at Harvard" 21.
[182] Marcel Proust, "Preface to John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies,*" *On Reading Ruskin*, trans. and ed. Jean Autret and William Burford (New York: Yale University Press, 1987) 112. On "intellectual power we have in solitude".
[183] Carpenter 462.
[184] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 175.

The more sinister aspect of this situation is, however, the fact that a "mere opinion", "bequemste Vorstellungsweise"[185] can suddenly start to be perceived as *the* "truth", a "fashion[ed]" made-up Virtue. This aspect of the social group forcing the individual into conformity ought indeed to be considered by every teacher/instructor, especially when conducting a class based around creative discussion. Every student should always be assured multiple times that their opinion has a value on its own, no matter what its content. While this could be inherently dangerous, it is still necessary to preserve an optimistic, open, generative climate in the classroom.

From the standpoint of creative composition and writing, Emerson ponders the role of individual solitude in creative life in his essay "Montaigne, or the Skeptic". His analysis of the creative genius at work is more akin to Marcel Proust's lifestyle in his corked up bedroom;[186] but for Emerson, and his followers, every solitude is always connected to society through observation:

> The superior mind will find itself equally at odds with the evils of society and with the projects that are offered to relieve them.[187]
>
> But all the ways of culture and greatness lead to solitary imprisonment. […] Men are strangely mistimed and misapplied; and the excellence of each is an inflamed individualism which separates him more.[188]

The quotes above are well illustrative of the dissonance of Emerson from his followers, James and Dewey. Emerson is a hardy individualist;[189] "Montaigne, or the Skeptic" is an essay written in appreciation of *Representative Men*, and so it makes sense for Emerson to observe the exceptional individuals in the community and deconstruct their behavior. For Emerson, indeed, the only way of attaining "greatness" leads in the direction of "solitary

[185] Vaihinger 226.
[186] Charles Neider, ed., *Great Short Stories of the Masters* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2003) 347.
[187] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Montaigne; or, The Skeptic" 322.
[188] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Montaigne; or, The Skeptic" 325.
[189] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 113.

imprisonment". The "excellence" of these individuals fulfills a separating function from the rest of the community.

> Of note, however, is also Emerson's earlier quote in "Self-Reliance":
>
> It is easy, in the world, to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps the perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.[190]

Emerson was a flexible thinker, although it is likely that his opinion of the general public worsened in his later years, as exemplified for example in his "Considerations by the Way". His original perspectives were further refined by James' pluralistic meliorism, but also through John Dewey's democratic approach of the middle way.[191] Bearing this in mind, Dewey attempted to preserve the child's individuality, but also to develop its social efficiency.[192] The main goal of pragmatic pedagogy was thus not merely to develop the individuality of a loner genius, but also to cultivate a sense of "social sympathy and deliberative moral reason" within the democratic communities of inquiry.[193]

The vast number of concepts in pragmatism that Emerson introduced simply cannot be encompassed in a short chapter like this. The excerpts, however, are representative of certain shared visions and ideas in the transatlantic space. While the issue of individualism is a cornerstone of Emerson's philosophy, it might also be the most divisive issue for his followers, owing to some of its dissonances to some useful and practical priorities of other

[190] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 135.
[191] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 86.
[192] Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991) 181.
[193] Westbrook 72.

pragmatists. And to understand the radical side of mellow Emerson,[194] one might do well to examine his European kindred soul,[195] Friedrich Nietzsche, in no other way but in depth.[196]

[194] Hummel 78-79
[195] David Lee Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 6.: "Proust was reading Emerson, as Proust insisted any creative reader should read any truly creative writer, as a 'kindred spirit'."
[196] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 96. Part One, Aphorism "Of the Adder's Bite": "A hermit is like a deep well. It is easy to throw a stone into it; but if it sink to the bottom, tell me, who shall fetch it out again?"

4. Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosopher, Discoverer, and a Creative Reader

Friedrich Nietzsche has always been a divisive figure, as attested by the breadth and multifariousness of interpretations in his professional scholarship.[197] As a descendant of a long line of protestant ministers, he was preparing for a clerical career just like Emerson. During his secondary school period he showed academic promise, but did not deviate from the prescribed course too much.[198] The breakaway point came in the first semester of divinity school, when he decided to abandon the ministerial career and wrote the famous letter to his sister, encouraging her and seekers of knowledge towards skepticism and inquiry.[199] Nietzsche, then, carried on to become the youngest professor of classical philology in the history of the field, and eventually became acquainted with Richard Wagner, which led to his subsequent philosophical development.

In a manner similar to Emerson and Fichte, Nietzsche left the absolutistic (and, on the other hand, controlled and stable) environment of organized religion. His fondness of the spiritual, nevertheless, remained as a deeply intuitive, imaginative and creative red thread running throughout his career. The fascination with the spiritual/creative as the power to create *ex nihilio* was not a new phenomenon; in Nietzsche's era, people had already been mesmerized by the creative powers of Goethe, Mozart, and other creative geniuses in the eighteenth and nineteenth century,[200] ushering in the well-known period of Romanticism, which elected creativity and individuality as its primary concern.

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[197] Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity,* trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Fredrick J. Schmitz (South Bend: Regnery/Gateway, 1979) 154. On mystical Nietzsche. See also interpretation on page 142 and Kaufmann's completely different interpretation in, for example, "Translator's Introduction" 22, in *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann vs. others etc.
[198] Carl Pletsch, *Young Nietzsche: Becoming a Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1992) 11.
[199] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Letter to His Sister," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Group, 1988) 30.
[200] Pletsch 1-2.

This chapter will examine three main characteristics of Nietzsche's thinking, all of which can be said to exist in the freely formed and shared pool of pragmatic thought, and which he shares with Emerson, Fichte, Kant, and Dewey. In the first subsection of this chapter we will examine a creative form of Nietzsche's perspectivism, that is, his idea that one's conception of the world is based strictly on the physiological characteristics of the body and the observing brain.[201] The second salient feature that Nietzsche's thinking examined is creativity; this is a notion addressed in all of Nietzsche's major works, and it is organically developed throughout his oeuvre, all the way to the introduction of the creative overman,[202] the one who developed his/her own values. Finally, the third subsection of this chapter will examine Nietzsche's understanding of a creative reader; in addition to this, the chapter will also examine Nietzsche's approaches to textual analysis and will introduce pedagogical perspectives, which aim to develop the creative reading and critical thinking skills. This chapter will examine these three main features in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil,* and *On The Genealogy of Morals.*

[201] Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 95.
[202] Georges Chatterton-Hill, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche: An Exposition and an Appreciation* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1913) 224-225. See also
Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 316.

4.1 The Mendacious Philosopher and the Creative Thinker: From Perspectivism to Belief

Nietzsche's distaste towards the philosophical "oxen",[203] and self-assured mendacious[204] philosophers is caustically expressed on every possible occasion. Nevertheless, one may still observe a curious sense of fraternity between Zarathustra and the Saint in the forest.[205] Nietzsche never criticized individual belief and creativity; on the contrary, he saw these human perspectival activities as wholesome and conducive to development. The Catholic Church, a "southern," classical institution that preserved a subsection of Roman values,[206] is not what caused Nietzsche's nausea. Walter Kaufman even suggested that Nietzsche's ideal was a "Roman Caesar with Christ's soul".[207] What Nietzsche condemned was the *lack* of creative engagement with "reality", and the inability of an individual to recognize that he/she can only postulate an opinion,[208] and nothing more.

As is well-known, Nietzsche, in agreement with Fichte, posited that we can never know anything for sure; according to this pragmatic approach, this is true for science and humanities alike. But in his *Gay Science,* Nietzsche develops this thought further; predating modern pragmatism, he deliberates on whether this mendaciousness of our perspective might not be an excellent opportunity to fuel our personal creativity. The following excerpt points towards the possible (language-based) aesthetic value of mendaciousness:

> If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and

[203] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* 311.
[204] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* 111-112. See also Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) 32.
[205] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 41, Part one, "Zarathustra's Prologue", Aphorism 2.
[206] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals,* trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1966) 55-56.
[207] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* 316.
[208] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1968), *Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter IX, Section 289, p. 419.

> suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance[209]

Nietzsche was never a hardline empiricist. While in his earlier period he does attempt to focus more on the empirical and scientific reality, already in *The Gay Science* he jettisons the notion of scientific, positivistic "true" and welcomes the esthetic "cult of the untrue". This concept stands in direct opposition to the "mendaciousness" and "general untruth" of science; it is a realization that our perspective is inherently filled with "delusion and error". And this fragile position of scientific truth is exactly what Fichte engages with in his self-positing I and *Wissenschaftslehre*; James also describes this concept of regulative fictions in his *Pragmatism*.[210] The virtue, which Nietzsche originally valorized the most-- and subsequently disavowed--was, however, "*Honesty*".

Nietzsche initially shows a great deal of appreciation for honesty;[211] but as he eventually realizes that pure honesty would result in complete nihilism, he introduces his construct of "art as the *good* will to appearance". This argument also lives at the heart of *The Gay Science*, a Dionysian affirmation or faith in imaginative art, useful, practical fiction,[212] very much in the sense of linguistic pragmatism. Nietzsche even goes as far as to disparage the so-called empiricist/realists, when describing his useful mendaciousness in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> For thus you speak: 'We are complete realists, and without belief or superstition': thus you thump your chests […] *Unworthy of belief*: that is what I call you, you realists! […] You are unfruitful: *therefore* you lack belief. But he who had to create always had his prophetic dreams and star-auguries—and he believed in belief![213]

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[209] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 163-164.
[210] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), Lecture V: Pragmatism and Common Sense, in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 569.
[211] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* 35, "Preface," Aphorism 5.
[212] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), Lecture II: What Pragmatism Means, in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 512.
[213] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 146. Part Two, Aphorism "Of the Land of Culture".

Comparing this quote with the previous one, we may see a similar theme. Nietzsche attacks the empiricist sect and parodies their boastfulness, sourcing from their ownership of *the truth*. Here we can also observe one of the salient features of Nietzsche's prose: its multifariousness,[214] a rich, fluctuating prose style, in every moment changing tone, infusing philosophy with narratives, dramatic monologues and other stylistic features.

The crowd of scientism can cry out: "We are complete realists!" We are the strong ones; we believe *in truth*; or, we believe *in nothing*. Nietzsche's judgment is, as is often the case,[215] stern, strict, and swift: "*Unworthy of belief".* "Belief" is an extremely interesting concept in Nietzsche's creative perspectivism (for we may not think of belief and creativity separately). As per perspectivism, we already know that reason is mendacious through its practical designs.[216] This does not make, however, "realists" superior to idealists. Contrary to popular and "practical" opinion, Nietzsche considers creative[217] idealists to be superior to the "unfruitful", the uncreative. The realist[218] cannot *create* from scratch. He is *already* "unfruitful;" "*therefore*" he lacks belief. But the idealist, anti-realist creator always has had his visions, "his prophetic dreams and star-auguries"; and significantly, "he believed in belief!".

This Nietzschean "belief" is not *necessarily* of the religious kind; at the very least, however, this part of Nietzsche's creative perspectivism shows again a strange reverence to the act of belief, and his understanding of the value of art and idealism. In no way can it then

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[214] Nehamas, 40.
[215] Nehamas 22, see also: Walter Kaufmann, "Introduction," in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003)15.
[216] Vaihinger 176. The ultra-pragmatist on instrumental/ regulative fictions and fictionality of cause-and-effect category: "Das Denken gebraucht alle diese Kunstgriffe, um seine praktische Zwecke zu erreichen. Einer dieser Zwecke ist auch eben die Lust des „Begreifens". Jahrtausendelang begnügt sich der Mensch damit und fühlt eine große Lust bei diesen unschuldigen Subsumtionen, ganz so wie ein Kind vor Freude dabei aufjauchzend. […] Der Mensch merkt immer mehr, daß das „Begreifen" eine Illusion, daß das Leben und Handeln auf Illusionen beruht und auf solche führt. Er fühlt sich als der Gefoppte und wird verstimmt. Dies ist der Ursprung des Pessimismus". Compare with Emerson's "Spiritual Laws, and "Illusions", especially Emerson's affirmation of the illusory condition that eschews pessimism.
[217] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony Solidarity* (1991) 27.
[218] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, 1931) 12.

be said that Nietzsche was a pure nihilist. He was, above all, a believing, hoping, infinite creator, with an appreciation for practical, instrumental thinking. This side of Nietzsche, his affirmation of creating as learning will be examined in the next subsection of this chapter.

4.2 To Learn is to Create

Creativity is a central value for Nietzsche. This notion of generative process happening constantly in each individual mind was his main motivation for the pursuit of the genealogy of all values.[219] Through this work, he attempted to deconstruct and find the origins of separate values and depict how these values are a reflection of their inventors. The will behind this creative process of value-making is the will to power.[220] Will to power is yet another central idea of Nietzsche's philosophy,[221] tied very closely to creativity. As a phenomenon of human thinking, its main characteristic is its profound generativity. The following excerpt from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* portrays the dynamic between this perspectivist value creation and will to power:

> What urgers you on and arouses your ardour, you wisest of men, do you call it 'will to truth'? Will to the conceivability of all being, that is what I call your will! […] But it must bend and accommodate itself to you! Thus will your will have it. It must become smooth and subject to the mind as the mind's mirror and reflection. That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power; […] You want to create the world before which you can kneel: this is your ultimate hope and intoxication. […] It is not the river that is your danger and the end of your good and evil, you wisest men, it is that will itself, the will to power, the unexhausted, procreating life-will.[222]

Nietzsche here illuminates the perspectivist and creative tendency of the "wisest of men" who attempt to mask their own creative interpretations[223] of the world as their sense of the "truth". Nietzsche's discerning eye passionately uncovers the opposite; the "wisest of men", in actuality, only attempt to conceive "of all being", and this conception more than naturally "bend[s]"[224] and accommodates itself to these dishonest thinkers. The created value turns into

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[219] Jaspers 141. See also Nehamas 32-33, on Nietzschean construction of genealogy.
[220] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 49-50.
[221] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* 51. "The will to power is both the genetic element of force and the principle of synthesis of forces."
[222] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 139. Part Two, Aphorism "Of Self-Overcoming".
[223] Bjorber 96-97.
[224] Emerson, in Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*: "Nature is a mutable cloud, which is always and never the same. She casts the same thought into troops of forms, as a poet makes twenty fables with one moral. Through the bruteness and toughness of matter, a subtle spirit bends all things to its own will. The adamant

"mind's mirror and reflection". And this is the key moment when the creation of values becomes "a will to power". Nietzsche sees that individuals hope to create a "world before which [they] can kneel" with the purpose of "intoxication". While this formulation does sound disparaging, Nietzsche, nevertheless, affirms this creative faculty of our minds. It is fine to create one's own values, provided the thinker is honest about it, and admits his/her egotistic will to power, a will to create *their own construct or interpretation*. The primary danger threatening the old values is not the flowing "river" of experience and history, but the "will itself, the will to power, the unexhausted, procreating life-will".[225] From this it logically follows that the creators of values must also be the destroyers of [old] values,[226] and that these strong individuals and poets are their own greatest enemies, if they decide to turn immobile and do not attempt to rejuvenate/revalue/reassess their values.

While the will to power can be and has been interpreted in many pathological ways in the twentieth century,[227] its core principle is innocence, forgetfulness and constant will to create new concepts, "things," phenomena. In his *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche intensively[228] preaches his gospel of creativity:

> Truly, you do not love the earth as creators, begetters, men joyful at entering upon a new existence! Where is innocence? Where there is will to begetting. And for me, he who wants to create beyond himself has the purest will.[229]

For Nietzsche, the will to power entails "love" of one's world as a "creator, begetter" and individual, who in a "joyful" manner goes about creating a new existence. The key ingredient

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streams into soft but precise form before it, and, whilst I look at it, its outline and texture are changed again." ("History," p. 118)
"Life may be… a poem or a romance." ("Art," p. 193)
"Every man should be so much an artist… ("The Poet," p. 198)
"[E]very man that is born will be hailed as essential."
[225] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* 54: "The will to power as genealogical element is that from which senses derive their significance and values their value".
[226] Jaspers 146-147.
[227] Kaufmann, "Introduction," in *The Gay Science* 22-23.
[228] Nehamas 23.: "The spell that fights on our behalf, the eye of Venus that charms and blinds even our opponents, is *the magic of the extreme*, the seduction that everything extreme exercises: we immoralists – we are the most extreme".
[229] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 149. Part Two, Aphorism "Of Immaculate Perception".

for this spontaneous creativity is precisely the Nietzschean "innocence". This notion of "innocence" is also a key to understanding Nietzsche's genealogy/deconstruction of the process of maturation of creativity, where the creative individual grows through the stages of a camel, then a lion, and finalizes his/her growth as a "child".[230] The child is *almost* a tabula rasa—not completely, but in whom the ideological accumulation is nowhere as significant as in a fully indoctrinated adult. The fundamental pre-requisite for productive, creative behavior is the ability to forget, to become innocent once again, like a child. The "innocence" is "where there is will to begetting". The creative overman exemplifies the "purest will" when he attempts to "create beyond himself", to bring into the world something new.[231] This is also the essence of Nietzsche's Self-Overcoming;[232] a process that should never cease in higher human beings and eventually in the overman. "The Ultimate Man," on the contrary, is the catastrophic vision of failure of an individual to achieve this state of constant revaluation and self-overcoming[233]. One could call him/it a docile creature that does not doubt, create, and is above all reactive and negative[234], rather than active and affirmative.

Nietzsche then carries on in *Zarathustra* to foreshadow the concept of amor fati, which is, as is usual with Nietzsche, always intricately interconnected with creativity and affirmation of responsibility for one's own actions:[235]

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[230] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 52-53. Part One, Zarathustra's Discourses, Aphorism "Of the Three Metamorphoses.": "To create new values—even the lion is incapable of that: but to create itself freedom for new creation—that the might of the lion can do. […] The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes."
[231] Hana Arendtová, *Vita activa, neboli O činném životě* (Praha: Oikoymenh, 2009) 320-321: Proti tomuto – přirozeně stále hrozícímu – nebezpečí stojí odpovědnost za svět vyplývající z jednání, která naznačuje, že lidé sice musí zemřít, ale že se nerodí proto, aby zemřeli, nýbrž naopak proto, aby začali něco nového, dokud životní proces nerozdrtí vlastní personálně lidský substrát, jenž s nimi přišel na svět."
[232] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 54. Part One, Zarathustra's Discourses, Aphorism "Of the Chairs of Virtue".
[233] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 45. Part One, Zarathustra's Prologue, subsection 5. See interesting mélange of the ascetic and the esthetic ideal in Nietzsche. See also Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.
[234] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* 57-58.: "This is where Nietzsche's use of the words 'vile', 'ignoble' and 'slave' comes from – these words designate the state of reactive forces that place themselves on high and entice active force into a trap, replacing masters with slaves who do not stop being slaves"
See also pages 53-54 on distinction between "*active*" and "*reactive*" and "*affirmative*" and "*negative*".
[235] Chatterton-Hill 234-235.

> I led you away from these fable-songs when I taught you: 'The will is a creator.' All 'It was' is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful chance – until the creative will says to it: 'But I willed it thus!' Until the creative will says to it: 'But I will it thus! Thus shall I will it!' But has it ever spoken thus? And when will this take place? Has the will yet been unharnessed from its own folly?[236]

The prophetic Zarathustra in "Of Redemption" addresses his followers and explains to them that he "led [them] away from these fable-songs" through the fundamental principle of Nietzsche's doctrine: "The will is a creator". Furthermore, in a pragmatic fashion, everything is fugacious, "a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful chance" until the creative will, the will to power based in a subjectively motivated consciousness, infuses it with meaning. In a passage directly quoted by Rorty a hundred years later, the strong poet echoes this creative responsibility by stating "But I willed it thus!".[237] Moreover, for Nietzscheans, there is no reason ever to have regrets about things that may or may not have happened, since at every point in his/her life, the strong poet knows that he/she always has the full capacity to create, adapt, make a decision, and take a stand towards fugacious reality. The creative poet, the strong overman with master morality,[238] has no qualms about the reality of his/her motivations, since he/she is too honest for deception and "hiding places";[239] the strong poet knows that he/she needs to forget just as much as he/she needs to create, and this will to power, this "will to begetting," is for him/her an opportunity for the delight experienced so often by children who are not burdened by adult ideologies.[240] This will to spontaneous

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[236] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 167, Part Two, Aphorism "Of Redemption".
[237] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* 40 (1991) "Thus I willed it."
[238] Chatterton-Hill 237-238. However, for a less radical view on master morality see Walter Kaufmann, "Editor's Introduction," in *On the Genealogy of Morals,* trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1966) 19. The overman: "created himself".
[239] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 44.
[240] Edward W. Emerson, ed., *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York: Hughton Mifflin Company, 1904), Volume X: *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, "Education," 7. "Or we sacrifice the genius of the pupil, the unknown possibilities of his nature, to a neat and safe uniformity… Rather let us have men whose man-hood is only the continuation of their boyhood, natural characters still; such are able and fertile for heroic action: and not that sad spectacle with which we are too familiar, educated eyes in uneducated bodies."

discovery combined with the inherent joy of creation constitute and embody the pedagogical and critical concepts championed by Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's advocacy of child-like innocence and inquisitiveness in education reflects the basic characteristics of the project method,[241] and pedagogy by discovery.[242] The project work[243] and discovery learning[244] as fundamentally important techniques were pedagogically formulated by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education*; these notions will be examined in the last analytical chapter focused on Dewey, creative reading, and pragmatic teaching. Nietzsche, nevertheless, connects this innocent joy of discovery, central to any creative and engaging (active and affirming[245]) endeavor, to his notion of forgetting, innocence, and creative nihilism:

> *The happiness of those who have renounced something.*—If one renounces something thoroughly and for a long time and then accidentally encounters it again, one may almost think that one has discovered it—and how much happiness is there in discovery! Let us be wiser than the serpents who lie too long in the same sunlight.[246]

The preceding aphorism mentions a "happiness" that sources from something "renounced", echoing an earlier aphorism called *man of renunciation*;[247] nonetheless, within the broader framework of Nietzsche's thinking that always functions in a broad, and yet interconnected system,[248] this renunciation can well relate to the forgetfulness and innocence of a creator, a seeming impoverishment of a child[249] that might in fact be an opportunity for a new creation.

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[241] Čapek, *Moderní didaktika* 376-377.: "Projektové výukové metody"
[242] Čapek, *Moderní didaktika* 307-309: "Literární kroužek".
[243] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 110.
[244] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 152.: "To 'learn from experience' is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction—discovery of the connection of things."
[245] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* 55. On what Nietzsche calls "*noble, high master*" See also *On the Genealogy of Morals* 39: Signs of aristocratic morality and taste for "powerful physicality…overflowing health… war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity."
[246] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 200.
[247] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 100-101.
[248] Kaufman, "Translator's Introduction" in *The Gay Science,* 15.
[249] Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, *Arts of Impoverishment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993)

The renunciation of our spiritual stocks[250] might offer us a chance to repopulate the world with our own, novel metaphors.[251] If something is renounced so "thoroughly and for a long time" that it is essentially forgotten,[252] the innocent observer may discover it again, and feel "how much happiness… there [is] in discovery!".

All of these approaches positively anticipate the newest and most innovative trends in pedagogy.[253] Children are mesmerized by openness, the unknown, mystery; and they are very eager to explore the enigmatic concepts themselves, each making his/her individual, natural path through the project or the environment.[254] This pedagogic technique of discovery, nurtured by an observant and facilitating teacher, significantly helps to improve a child's motivation and makes learning intriguing for each individual.

Nietzsche additionally echoes another pragmatic characteristic—that of flowing experience and fugacity—when he recommends that we be "wiser than the serpents who lie too long" in the same spot. As per Heraclitan philosophers, everything in nature is flowing. The universe is fluid and volatile.[255] The pragmatic pedagogic method then encourages ceaseless individual construct-making and (re-) discovery of individual path,[256] all this against the background of acknowledgment of the basic fugacity of existence. In other words, we must make our students creative, flexible thinkers, while respecting their individual bent or talent.[257]

8-9. See also
Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 194:" He produces without taking for himself,/ He acts without expectation,/ His work done, he is not attached to it,/ And since he is not attached to it,/ His work will remain.

[250] Wai-Chee Dimock, "Debasing Exchange: Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth," *PMLA* 100.5 (1985): 786, JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/462098>, 1 May 2020.

[251] Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* 71-73.

[252] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 44. On quick forgiveness of strong natures.

[253] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 161-163.

[254] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 144.

[255] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* 166-167. "Circles": "There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees. Our globe seen by God is a transparent law, not a mass of facts. The law dissolves the fact and holds it fluid."

[256] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 42-43.

[257] Emerson, *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Spiritual Laws" 50-51.

Finally, according to Zarathustra himself, "Willing liberates: for willing is creating: thus I teach. And you should learn *only* for creating!"[258] But Nietzsche's perspectives on education may serve us in textual interpretation and analysis just as well as for general classroom purposes. And the final subsection of this chapter will examine Nietzsche's "cow" philosophy, and his recommended techniques for creative, multifarious, diverse, and inclusive reading.

[258] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 226. Part Three, Aphorism "Of Old and New Law – Tables", subsection 16.

4.3 Creative Reading and Textual Analysis

In his "Preface" to one of his most elegant works,[259] *On The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche ends his introductory letter with a meditation on the accessibility of his texts. Along with Emerson, who is also a profoundly difficult writer to read,[260] Nietzsche acknowledges the intensity and deep nature of his writing. According to him, to understand the aphoristic style, one must be able to perform an "*exegesis*" of it.[261] This method of intensive "*exegesis*" that Nietzsche recommends to his readers, can also give us an insight into what he considered to be the most efficient method for creative reading in general:

> Reading my *Zarathustra*, for example, I do not allow that anyone knows that book who has not at some time been profoundly wounded and at some time profoundly delighted by every word in it; […] An aphorism, properly stamped and molded, has not been 'deciphered' when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis*, for which is required an art of exegesis. […] To be sure, one thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an *art* in this way, something that has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays—and therefore it will be some time before my writings are 'readable'—something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case *not* a 'modern man': *rumination.*[262]

The paragraph quoted above may remind us immediately of modernist writer Marcel Proust and his work *On Reading*. There, Proust discusses the nature of imaginative reading and the creative connection the reader makes with the writer; this involves a conversation in solitude[263] (away from the Emersonian/Nietzschean marketplace[264]) where both the actors do

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[259] Nehamas 19.
[260] Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* 31.: "Emerson makes himself sometimes amazingly hard to read, hard to get close to, all the more because he finds it manifestly difficult to get close to himself, to read or understand himself."
[261] Jaspers 153.: "For *himself*, Nietzsche is aware that he lives on 'a rich moral heritage' and that he is in a position to treat morality as an illusion just because to him it 'has become instinctive and unavoidable'" See also Lectio Divina.
[262] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 29.
[263] Proust, *On Reading Ruskin* 113.
[264] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 79. Part One, Aphorism "Of the Flies of the Market-place".: "The experience of all deep wells is slow: they must wait long until they know *what* has fallen into their depts. All great things occur away from glory and the marketplace: the inventors of new values have always lived away from glory and the marketplace."

not lose their dignity, and can agree or disagree with reverence towards each other.[265] Nietzsche, as a thinker close to (modernist) textual pragmatism, maintains that a good reader ought to be at least as engaged, as to be "profoundly wounded" and sometimes "profoundly delighted" by the work he/she reads, reflecting Proust's "Incitements"[266] towards creative work with the text experienced. In other words, Nietzsche recognizes the formation of a "kindred spirit"[267] through literature, incited by the text and the individual reader's creativity. And this is precisely the core concept of creative reading. Creative reading, phrased differently, is not merely an analytical undertaking, but a holistic one; it also functions on emotional level, developing the reader's empathy along the way.[268]

Nietzsche then further problematizes the art of reading, the fertile soil for which had already been established through his deliberation on the essential characteristics of creative interpretations in his earlier works.[269] To read an aphorism successfully, it is not sufficient that "it has simply been read", in the fashion of the worst reader;[270] instead, a proper "art of exegesis" must be employed. Finally, Nietzsche then presents the first primary concept of this effective art of reading. "Reading as an *art*" can be learned by going back to the past, in an atavistic sense.[271] This art "has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays", and it is the art of "*rumination*" a quiet prayer or meditation on the text. This is, according to Nietzsche, very

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[265] Proust, *On Reading Ruskin* 112.
[266] Proust, *On Reading Ruskin* 114. "And there, indeed, is one of the great and marvelous features of beautiful books) and one which will make us understand the role, at once essential and limited, that reading can play in our spiritual life) which for the author could be called 'Conclusions' and for the reader 'Incitements.' We feel quite truly that our wisdom begins where that of the author ends, and we would like to have him give us answers, when all he can do is to give us desires."
[267] Georgia Walton, "Emersonian Language in Marcel Proust's À la Recherche du Temps Perdu," *White Rose Journal*, 23 June (2018), <https://journal.wrocah.ac.uk/article/emersonian-language-in-marcel-prousts-a- la-recherche-du-temps-perdu/>.
[268] Christopher Bergland, "Can Reading a Fictional Story Make You More Empathetic?" *Psychologytoday.com,* Sussex Publishers, LLC*,* 1 Dec 2014 <*https*://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201412/can-reading-fictional-story-make-you-more-empathetic> 27 Jun 2021.
[269] Nehamas 28.
[270] Nietzsche, *Mixed Opinions and Maxims*, in "Appendix: Seventy-five Aphorisms from Five Volumes" in *Genealogy of Morals* 187.
[271] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 84. On atavism.

unlike a "modern man"; this lack of holistic reading reflects the already-discernible tendency of capitalism and modern society towards acceleration, lack of historical awareness, schizophrenia,[272] and "new depthlessness".[273]

The first primary ingredient for effective reading, is, paradoxically, slowness, rumination, a cow-like serenity. One of the reasons this chapter started with Nietzsche's relationship to Christianity is the existence of Lectio Divina; this spiritual method of reading used to fulfill the role of the forgotten art of reading as "*rumination"*. Reading itself, however, is not the sole part of the learning process; further in the book, Nietzsche describes his mature theory of critical thinking that works with the information that the creative reader extracts and processes from his/her study.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche, in his twelfth aphorism, manages to summarize several of the key points of his epistemology and philosophy at large. This time, however, his perspective is mature and exceptionally broad, since he not only affirms perspectivism and disparages (so-called) objective reason, but now also introduces something more intriguing: a detailed description of a technique of critical thinking and its relation to creative reading. Along with his vision for the future of thinking, Nietzsche starts his twelfth aphorism by deliberating on the paradoxical tendency of reason in Eastern philosophy to discredit itself, along with the consideration of itself as unreliable and perspectivist:

> But precisely because we seek knowledge, let us not be ungrateful to such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has, with apparent mischievousness and futility, raged against itself for so long: to see differently in this way for once, to *want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future 'objectivity'—the latter understood not as 'contemplation without interest' (which is a nonsensical absurdity), but as the ability to *control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge.[274]

[272] Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *The Anti-Aesthetic*: *Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983) 117.
[273] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (New York: Duke University Press, 1991) 6.
[274] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 130.

Nietzsche always felt at home with seekers of knowledge. Those who "seek knowledge" affirm the "reversals of accustomed perspectives", with which every absolutistic spirit "raged against itself for so long". The seeker of knowledge, for Nietzsche, is then a re-evaluator and fugacity-affirmer. Nietzsche's suggestion of intriguing method of creative/democratic thinking follows immediately afterwards. The seeker of knowledge, or an inquisitive student, should "*want* to see differently", should seek a variety of different perspectives, arising from the composite reality (or fiction),[275] and should attempt to analyze the perceived phenomena according to type or quality, rather than quantity.[276] In this spacious, porous, liberated environment, the student might prepare his/her intellect for "its future 'objectivity'". This objectivity is, of course, not the positivist/totalitarian kind that would postulate one valid perspective, a "'contemplation without interest'". This new "objectivity" resides in one's "ability to *control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them" and one's consequent ability to compare this conceptual product with "a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations", all in the service of the search for subjective "objective" truth. The former ability is typical of modern essay writing, where analysis is employed; the second ability, which is that of comparison with "*variety*", is typical of the highest form of cognition: the synthesis.[277] In Nietzschean terms, this synthesis is essentially the creation of something new. Nietzsche, therefore, managed to predict Bloom's Taxonomy a full century before it was applied in mainstream pedagogical usage. The creative reader, then, reads the text carefully, using the "art of exegesis", and becomes emotionally, or at least intellectually involved, ruminates, considers the pros and cons of the text, and then attempts to employ "a *variety* of

[275] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991) 20.
[276] Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 21.
[277] Petty, *Teaching Today: A Practical Guide* 7-9.

perspectives and affective interpretations" to achieve more levelled, inclusive, "objective" perspective.

In the same aphorism, Nietzsche carries on with finalizing his technique of intellectual development; in this case, he merges his perspectivist theory with a democratic approach (however much that sounds unlikely for Nietzsche)[278] towards an interpretation of literature and any intellectual inquiry, whether in school or outside.

> Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject' let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason,' 'absolute spirituality,' 'knowledge in itself' […] There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing' and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity,' be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this—what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?---[279]

According to Nietzsche, philosophers should beware of the old dangerous pitfall: a "conceptual fiction" of things-in-themselves, *noumena,*[280] a realm of "'pure reason", of "knowledge in itself"'. This is precisely the problem Fichte encountered, when he attempted to establish his *Wissenschaftslehre*; as is evident from the theory of the self-positing I, he inevitably failed to establish an objective first principle. Nietzsche sees this development clearly and no longer attempts to revive any "objective reality"; this is done only partially by the ultra-pragmatist Vaihinger several decades later.[281] For Nietzsche, the perspective we

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[278] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* 149: 'The *goal of humanity* cannot lie in the end [*Ende*] but only *in its highest specimens*". Perhaps there is not more basic statement of Nietzsche's philosophy in all his writings that this sentence. Here the most crucial point of his philosophy of history and theory of values – no less than the clue to his 'aristocratic' ethics and his opposition to socialism and democracy".

[279] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 130.

[280] Ameriks, 462.

[281] Vaihinger 72-73. Hans Vaihinger, however, does not manage to save the objective reality and any things-in-themselves; he still works with a concept of hypothesis but he himself admits, from his observations on scientific struggles with the actuality of first principles, ("Grundbegriffe") that most of our frist principles are, in fact, fictions.: "Ohne das Atom fällt die Wissenschaft; aber allerdings—wahres Wissen und Erkennen ist mit demselben nicht möglich. Es ist ein widerspruchsvoller Vorstellungskonten, der aber notwendig ist zur Berechnung der Wirklichkeit. Man hat erst neuerdings eingesehen, daß das Atom eine Fiktion, eine fiktive Rechenmarke sei … Nachträglich erst pflegt die Einsicht zu kommen, daß

experience is "*only*" one of many, "*only*" one among other perspectives of "knowing", suggesting a thoroughly Jamesian pragmatic pluralism.[282] Nietzsche, moreover, also recommends a Deweyan approach to democratic discussion,[283] which respects the "*variety*" of opinions and perspectives, so that we might utilize not only "*more* eyes", in a Jamesian sense, but also "different eyes" in a Deleuzian understanding, a part of exploration of "the differential element" of genealogy.[284] This differential approach allows us to complete the picture of "reality" through its "million different blooms"[285] and the more eyes we can use "the more complete will our 'concept … our 'objectivity' be".

In philosophy, therefore, we have arrived at the limit of objectivity; and the limit is set strictly on the number of different perspectives we can encourage to be shared in the group discussion. This democratic, reverential discussion, protecting each participant's/student's "democratic dignity,"[286] is the only way we can arrive at an "objective" reading of a text, if there is such a thing at all. In addition to this, democratic discussion inclusive of the variety of perspectives allows the diverse, individual students/participants to share their creative reading of the text with others, synthesizing (and encouraging) both "objectivity" (i.e., greater inclusiveness and comprehension) and creativity at the same time. But were we to "eliminate the [individual and creative] will [to power] altogether" and suspend the "affect" that deviates in quality/type from the prescribed totalitarian narrative, would this not be the *castration* of the intellect? Nietzsche suggests this to be the case. The creative reader, then, while creating and imagining his own unique

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beide Teile Unrecht und Recht hatten: der Begriff ist zwar widerspruchsvoll, aber doch nötig: denn die meisten Grundbegriffe sind dieser Art."

[282] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), Lecture IV: The One and the Many, in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 549-50.

[283] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 118.

[284] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* 55.

[285] Also see Bernstein quoting Rorty in Bernstein's *The New Constellation* (Polity Press, 2007) 233-234: "let a thousand flowers bloom," or Emerson's "Spiritual Laws" in *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* 60: "We know the authentic effects of the true fire through every one of its million disguises."

[286] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851) 118.

perspective, exists inseparable from the democratic reader, always ready to present his/her opinion to the broader audience of his/her equal fellows, and in this way, creatively and together, striving after "truth" that is provisional, instrumental, but also useful, inclusive, pragmatic, performative, and creative. After all, it is Nietzsche himself who defines *friendship* as: "a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal above them."[287] And it is the development of this creative and democratic reader that became the primary concern for the American philosopher of education, John Dewey.

[287] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 89.

5. John Dewey and the Democratic Reader

John Dewey was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont,[288] surrounded from very early on by the working class ethos and practical endeavors of his immediate family. His father owned a department store,[289] and Dewey, having graduated from the University of Vermont, started his first full-time job as a teacher of Latin, algebra, and science at a rural high school in his hometown. Therefore, from the very outset of his professional career, Dewey was actively interested in teaching and pedagogy. He eventually took up a teaching position at the University of Michigan (1884-1894), the University of Chicago in (1894-1904), and Columbia University (1904-1930), at all of which he lectured on philosophy, psychology, and education. Dewey, owing to his long academic career, developed his highly technical[290] philosophical style of thinking. His education involved primarily a study of Kant and German Idealism,[291] which is a background very similar to philosophical foundations of Emerson, whom Dewey not only recommended, but explicitly celebrated.[292] Dewey, however, did not limit himself to academic philosophy; on the contrary, later in his career he decided to disavow academic philosophy[293] to focus his energies more on a democratic philosophy of education, which would be approachable and understandable to a common person on the street, and would deal mostly with "problems of men".[294]

The last analytical chapter of this thesis will examine three salient sings of pragmatic thinking in the philosophy of John Dewey. The first subsection of this chapter will consider Dewey's pragmatic turn towards quotidian, daily, "homely language"[295] as a way of writing

[288] Soltis, "John Dewey (1859-1952)," 1.
[289] Westbrook 2.
[290] Westbrook, "Preface" in *John Dewey and American Democracy* xiii.
[291] Soltis, "John Dewey (1859-1952)," 2.
[292] Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *The Essential Dewey. Volume 2: Ethics Logic Psychology* 369.
[293] Westbrook 120.
[294] Westbrook 151.
[295] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 379.

that disavows academic authority and decreases the distance between the intellectual and the rest of society. This stylistic tendency is well exemplified in Dewey's large philosophical work *Art as Experience*. The second subsection of this chapter will turn to Dewey's pedagogical approaches; here we will examine Dewey's advocacy of methods that furnish meaningful, social, and creative learning. The final subsection will then examine Dewey's ideas about creativity and imagination in reading and writing. Both the second and third subsections will focus on Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and *A Common Faith*.

John Dewey was, above all, a democratic humanist par excellence.[296] One of the signs of his humanistic orientation was his pragmatic belief (which he shared with Emerson) in democratic, clear language of "immediate life"[297] that would not be isolated from daily life experience. This (post)modern tendency in art, which refined Emersonian rustic metaphors, is exemplified in Dewey's major work on art and imaginative language, *Art as Experience.*

[296] Giles Gunn, *Thinking Across the American Grain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 36.
[297] Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *The Essential Dewey. Volume 2: Ethics Logic Psychology* 368.

5.1 Dewey's Postmodernity: The Art of Common Experience

During most of his academic career, Dewey focused on the development of social efficiency,[298] and examined new and innovative ways of transforming community life in democratic societies in twentieth century. Dewey was a collectivist thinker; nonetheless, he also maintained a strong recognition of individual originality and value.[299] His focus on the community life of ordinary people incited Dewey towards a more democratic, approachable theory of art. He concentrated at the quotidian, daily experience of the general population; this turn towards the common and popular is also a paradoxical tendency later exemplified in advanced postmodern art in the twentieth century.[300] The pragmatic turn here is towards homely objects and modest, plain language instruments. Dewey problematizes Platonic rationalism (not completely, but to a good degree[301]), and advocates for a direction in art that would work candidly with perceived experience, infusing "popular" art and modifying the experience of language[302] with imagination:

> the implications of the statements that have been made may be useful in defining the nature of the problem: that of recovering the continuity of esthetic experience with normal processes of living. The understanding of art and of its role in civilization is not furthered […] exclusively at the outset with great works of art recognized as such. The comprehension which theory essays will be arrived at by a detour; by going back to experience of the common or mill run of things to discover the esthetic quality such experience possesses. […] Even a crude experience, if authentically an experience, is more fit to give a clue to the intrinsic nature of esthetic experience than is an object already set apart from any other mode of

[298] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 123. Westbrook 158.
[299] Westbrook 41,
[300] Frank O'Hara, "Larry Rivers: A Memoir" in *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, ed. Donald Allen (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971): "As with his friends, as with cigarette and cigar boxes, maps, and animals, he is always engaged in an esthetic athleticism which sharpens the eye, hand and arm in order to beat the bugaboos of banality and boredom, deliberately invited into the painting and then triumphed over. What his work has always had to say to me, I guess, is to be more keenly interested while I'm still alive. And perhaps this is the most important thing art can say.
[301] Westbrook 172-173.
[302] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 52. See also
Gunn, *Thinking Across the American Grain* 90.

> experience. Following this clue we can discover…what is characteristically valuable in things of everyday enjoyment.[303]

Dewey here attempts to make art more relevant in the era of industrial society. Art, as he maintains earlier in the book[304] has become the domain of the upper classes and an educated intellectual elite. This brought about a curious situation in which the "esthetic experience" became alienated from the common experience of human life. A countervailing tendency towards popular immediacy, however, is markedly Deweyan, as it is based around his primary concept of experience.[305] This concept of experience was partially motivated by the work of William James on the continuous stream of experience,[306] which was also in turn inspired by Emerson's epistemology of the flow.[307] For Dewey, the most worthwhile things happen in individual streams of experience, be they in education or art; this is also reflected in the Emersonian idea of days as gods.[308] In Dewey's philosophy of experience, the imagination must infuse the individually experienced reality. And this is the primary reason why Dewey attempts to return the "esthetic experience" back to "normal processes of living". Dewey sees the future of cultural criticism in "going back to experience of the common or mill run of things", as there is "esthetic quality" that "such experience possesses". And this "esthetic quality" is based on individual imagination.

For Dewey, however, even imagination must be tied fast to "reality" as experienced. Any "experience" if "authentically an experience" can clue us in to the "intrinsic nature of esthetic experience". This "intrinsic nature" is seen by Dewey as the individual creative perception; but unlike more idealistic/abstract thinking philosophers, Deweyan creative

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[303] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1980) 10-11.
[304] Dewey, *Art as Experience* 8-9.
[305] Peter Hansen, "Aesthetics," in *A Companion to American Thought,* ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995) 16-18.
[306] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), "Lecture V: Pragmatism and Common Sense," in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 569.
[307] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson, "*The Method of Nature*"* 92.
[308] Richardson, *The Mind on Fire* 838. On fleetingness of moods and experience. Intellectual fugacity.

perception/experience is not afraid of "crude experience", but rather affirms the "characteristically valuable in things of everyday enjoyment". While this creative tendency is inspired by Emerson[309] and James,[310] it also postulates a stronger democratic and pro-social orientation. For Dewey, not only should everyone be an artist, but the hierarchy of art, the higher vs. lower forms of art, should be abolished and be replaced by universal appreciation for the esthetic experience. In other words, Dewey's theory of art is radically social. And it is this collective/creative approach that is very salient in Dewey's theories of education, community, and democratic reading.

[309] Emerson, "Compensation" in *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* 37.
[310] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955) 46.

5.2 The Imaginative Thinker and Discoverer

Deweyan pedagogy is, in its most fundamental features, social,[311] practical[312] and meaning oriented. In 1894, Dewey introduced his Laboratory school concept, where he attempted to provide the students with an environment[313] that would help them develop their ability to affirm the pragmatic fugacity of reality and grow the flexibility of their thinking. As a pragmatist, Dewey is aware of the fleeting nature of our experience of "reality." This condition also brings with itself dangers and instability; it involves a world where things and conditions can change at any minute. Therefore, "All thinking involves a risk" and:

> The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure… The conclusions of thinking, till confirmed by the event, are, accordingly, more or less tentative or hypothetical… Tentative means trying out, feeling one's way along provisionally… Systematic advance in invention and discovery began when men recognized that they could utilize doubt for purposes of inquiry by forming conjectures to guide action in tentative explorations… [begin 162] Knowledge [is] only a means to learning, to discovery.[314]

Nietzsche encouraged his readers to live dangerously,[315] and art (however construed) is, in its essence, a dangerous thing. Life itself, according to pragmatism, is "an adventure", our thinking "tentative or hypothetical", and a strike of radical contingency[316] can revaluate/alter almost anything considered to be set in stone. Deweyan education, is, above all, always preoccupied with preparation for the future in the present moment of growth;[317] it prepares its students for a life which more and more involves an "invasion of the unknown", provision for an unpredictable sequence of events. According to Dewey, students should be prepared to

[311] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 374.
[312] Westbrook 177-181.
[313] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 81.
[314] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 161-162.
[315] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 228.
[316] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 26.
[317] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 60-61. See also Westbrook 127: "The agent-patient of experience 'lived forward,' for adjustment was an ongoing process requiring an eye to the future.'"

enter this "unknown", "advancing on Chaos and the Dark"[318] and affirm the adventure that life presents them with.

For Dewey, all our conclusions are "tentative or hypothetical", unless proven otherwise (and whether anything can truly be proven is still a contested thing in pragmatism).[319] The young student should be "trying out, feeling one's way along provisionally", trying different occupations,[320] trying it out in America.[321] In a Rortyan sense, Dewey recommends that we affirm chance (and the opportunities it provides) as the defining principle of our experience.[322] Moreover, pragmatism does not postulate substantive "knowledge" to be the ultimate end of teaching, but favors rather the *process* of learning itself. "Knowledge" is only "a means to learning, to discovery". The student should have a certain knowledge base to which he/she can refer; but the actual learning happens through individual construct-creation, the "trying out, feeling one's way along provisionally", a creation of interpretation, key words, a story/narrative/poem, or a discussion. Knowledge acquisition, in other words, must be creative; and knowledge itself is merely an instrument for further discovery. These concepts also concur with Robert Čapek's educational philosophy, which advocates for the formation of interest in the subject first; the student should be allowed to find his/her own emphasis in any analyzed text/object. These ideas, focused on discovery (always facilitated or guided by the attending teacher), are examined further in *Democracy and Education* and carry strong Nietzschean overtones.

In the second half of *Democracy and Education*, Dewey concentrates more on the role of creativity and imagination in schooling. The following excerpt from the chapter

[318] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 132.
[319] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 102-103.
[320] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 145.
[321] Richard Poirier, *Trying it out in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999) xvi.
[322] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 22.

"Thinking in Education" reminds one of the "the happiness in discovery"[323] idea of Friedrich Nietzsche:

> The educational conclusion which follows is that *all* thinking is original in a projection of considerations which have not been previously apprehended. The child of three who discovers what can be done with blocks…is really a discoverer, even though everybody else in the world knows it. There is a genuine increment of [begin 173] experience; not another item mechanically added on, but enrichment by a new quality. The charm which the spontaneity of little children has for sympathetic observers is due to perception of this intellectual originality. The joy which children themselves experience is the joy of intellectual constructiveness—of creativeness,[324]

The main aim in Deweyan education and development of literary skills is, above all, nurturing the growth of original thinking. According to Dewey, "*all* thinking is original", which has "not been previously apprehended.", i.e., anything which is new for the student alone; the experience need not be a communally groundbreaking discovery for it to be educative: the point is that it is new for any given individual. It is the process of discovery that aids not only the recollection of facts, but, most importantly, the understanding of the text itself. Especially in textual analysis, the method of individual discovery allows every student to create his/her own interpretation of the text with his or her original ideas, which are not disfigured by the teacher's interference. The point is not that "everybody else in the world knows it"; for the child, this is still a considerable task and a challenge, as he/she lacks the life-experience of adults. The interpretation of the text can then be guided by the teacher/instructor, as deemed necessary; nonetheless, as per the classical rule of brainstorming,[325] no interpretation is to be considered less valuable than others.

Dewey additionally stresses the "genuine increment of experience", and he considers it to be an "Enrichment by a new quality"; therefore, Dewey connects the genuine learning

[323] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 200.
[324] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 172-173.
[325] Čapek, *Moderní didaktika* 38-39. See also on subsection on "Formativní hodnocení" 495-496.

process with a certain wholesome response on the side of the student, when faced with something new. Children, in other words, crave novelty. This can be attested by their interest in modern trends and technology. And this is what Dewey understood. The method of spontaneous discovery is, for Dewey, also associated with "intellectual originality". This recalls the individualist method of thinking of pragmatism and its disavowal of interpretative authority.[326] In pragmatic pedagogy, when the child perceives something for the first time, it is unthinkable that he/she will mechanically memorize an authoritatively dictated set of data; there will not be "another item mechanically added on", as there is no mechanism to submit to.[327] Emerson, in this case, would probably voice his pragmatic argument "You cannot hear what I say until it is yours",[328] recommending the avoidance of teacher-mandated interpretation. This, in other words, allows for the formation of individual, original ideas, and provides the child, the college student, or the continuing education adult student with "the joy of intellectual constructiveness—of creativeness". And this is precisely what Emerson promotes as the joy of discovery in his "Education",[329] and what Nietzsche recommends in his idea of "the happiness in discovery". Creativity, flexibility in the face of contingency, and courage then all live at the core of the pragmatic philosophy of education.[330] The crowning achievement of Dewey's educational philosophy is, however, his notion of creative learning through imagination and social engagement.

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[326] Russell B. Goodman, "(Introduction to) Richard Poirier (1925-2009)," and "The Reinstatement of the Vague" in Russell B. Goodman, ed., *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 266.
[327] Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables,* trans. Emiliano Battista (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006) 10-11. See also
Bersani and Dutoit, *Arts of Impoverishment* 7-8.
[328] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Annotated Emerson* 160-162.
[329] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Education" *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson with a Biographical Introduction and Notes by Edward Waldo Emerson and a General Index*, Volume X: Lectures and Biographical Sketches (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911) 127.
[330] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* 375.

5.3 A Democratic Education: Imagination, Resilience, Communication

Dewey maintains a more non-antagonistic attitude toward "positivistic" and "realistic" thought than do Emerson and Nietzsche. In contrast to the latter, both of whom engage in lyrical and idealistic metaphor-making, Dewey remains more scientific and sense-focused throughout his *Democracy and Education* and even in *A Common Faith.*[331] Nonetheless, for Dewey, the imaginary and metaphorical have a ground and a role in the experience of the individual, which flows in front of his or her eyes;[332] in other words, our metaphors are created from the raw material of our individual perspectives. While Nietzsche encourages us to create our own ideals and values *ex nihilio*, Dewey advocates for a spirituality based solely on each individual's lived and observed "reality" (i.e. experience).[333] One instance, however, where Dewey stoutly impugns the concept of "pure 'facts'" occurs in his consideration of imagination as the most fundamental principle of learning:

> Only a personal response involving imagination can possibly procure realization even of pure 'facts'. The imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field. The engagement of the imagination is the only thing that makes any activity more than mechanical… the fact that the difference between play and what is regarded as serious employment should be not a difference between the presence and absence of imagination, but a difference in the materials with which imagination is occupied.[334]

For Dewey, "imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field," and it is this creative faculty that "makes any activity more than mechanical". This idea moves in a Deweyan train of thought that regularly attempted to infuse learning with two principal bases: the base of meaning and the base of sociality. Dewey's educational philosophy aims, above all, always to

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[331] Thomas M. Alexander, "Introduction," in John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013) xv.
[332] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), "Lecture VII: Pragmatism and Humanism," in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987) 594.
[333] Alexander xxviii.
[334] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 255.

make learning meaningful. When we teach, we must always explain to our students why they work on the assigned work, and what is the point of the activity. More importantly, the students themselves must, in the spirit of learning through discovery, find their own way through the text; and this is precisely the moment they make use of their imagination. They make their way up, as they make up their way. They project a possible interpretation. Again, this is not to eschew teacher-talk completely, but the discovery and creation of interpretation should rest mostly on the student, guided, and accompanied by her/his teacher's careful suggestions.

Another of Dewey's hallmark ideas is the disavowal of any gap between play and serious work. In pragmatic education, individual imagination is paramount and should always be present in any activity. The most important difference between (adult) work and (children's) play is "but a difference in the materials with which imagination is occupied", that is, both adults and children are using this core faculty of the mind actively, the difference being only the nature of their work/play. Dewey subsequently introduces his theory of imagination, still connected to the physical constitution of the student, a notion that is also pervasive in his pragmatic/perspectivist philosophy:

> An adequate recognition of the play of imagination as the medium of realization of every kind of thing which lies beyond the scope of direct physical response is the sole way of escape from [begin 256] mechanical methods in teaching. The emphasis put in this book, in accord with many tendencies in contemporary education, upon activity, will be misleading if it is not recognized that the imagination is as much a normal and integral part of human activity as is muscular movement. The educative value of manual activities and of laboratory exercises, as well as of play, depends upon the extent in which they aid in bringing about a sensing of the *meaning* of what is going on. In effect, if not in name, they are dramatizations.[335]

"Imagination" must be used as a "medium of realization" of any kind of venture that lies "beyond the scope of direct physical response". In other words, if we are truly to learn anything that is abstract, our only chance is to learn it through metaphor. Dewey

[335] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 255-256.

acknowledges that the use of imagination and creative metaphor is an old and venerable way of teaching,[336] and respects individual interpretation while also providing practical help. When a student engages with a text, the only way for him/her truly to "understand" the material is when the response is individual, creative, and therefore meaningful. For Dewey, "imagination" is as pervasive as "is muscular movement". This respect—often approaching reverence—for all pervasive, creative imagination, based on individual perspective/experience, is a traditional pragmatic concern, evident in William James,[337] Nietzsche, and Emerson. For Dewey, as for his pragmatist predecessors, imagination pervades the whole of any individual's experience, and therefore, meaningful learning cannot happen outside of this animating principle.

Finally, Dewey circles back to pragmatic practical instrumentalism.[338] Educational activities, tied intimately to imaginative perspective, must include "manual" and "laboratory exercises", as well as "play"; all of these practical ventures combine with imagination to help bring about the most fundamental Deweyan concept: teaching with "*meaning* of what is going on." It is not exclusively instrumental learning, imagination, social discussion, and

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[336] Proverbs 2: 1-5.: „Syn môj, ak prijmeš moje výroky/ a moje prikázania schováš u seba,/ ak budeš napínať ucho za múdrosťou/ a nakloníš si srdce k umnosti,/ keď budeš vzývať rozumnosť,/ dovolávať sa svojím hlasom umnosti,/ ak ju budeš hľadať ako strieborniak/ a sliediť ňou ako za skrytými pokladmi,/ vtedy porozumieš bázni pred Pánom/ a získaš Božie poznanie."

[337] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), "Lecture VII: Pragmatism and Humanism," in William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987), 598-99: "We break the flux of sensible reality into things, then, at our will. We create the subjects of our true as well as of our false propositions.
We create the predicate also....
...[Y]ou can't weed out the human contribution. Our nouns and adjectives are all humanized heirlooms, and in the theories we build them into, the inner order and arrangement is wholly dictated by human considerations...We plunge forward into the field of fresh experience with the beliefs our ancestors and we have made already; these determine what we notice; what we notice determines what we do; what we do again determines what we experience; so from one thing to another, although the stubborn fact remains that there *is* a sensible flux, *what is true* of it seems from first to last to be largely a matter of our own creation.
We build the flux our inevitably. The great question is: does it, with our additions, *rise or fall in value?*

[338] James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955) 46: "Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest." See also Hook 41.

social efficiency,[339] or practicality; it is primarily meaningful[340] teaching that Dewey is after. The core of Dewey's pragmatic philosophy rests on the most essential idea of "*meaning*" behind every activity in education. The turn to "*meaning"* pedagogy is a feature unique to Dewey; neither Emerson, Nietzsche,[341] James, nor Vaihinger stress the need for calling, vocation, or any type of "meaning" ideal for teachers or in teaching. While all the previous thinkers were busy jettisoning absolutistic and authoritarian tendencies in philosophy, Dewey already had a chance to discern a future trend, the crisis of meaninglessness in society.[342] The only forerunner of "meaningful" teaching from the pragmatic thinkers examined here is Fichte, whose notions of the duties of and duties toward young scholars consider the role of philosophy in modern society, and whether there is *any role at all* for it.

This question of the role of an individual in society is another salient characteristic of Deweyan pedagogy. Dewey never really loses sight of the social aspect of any individual's life. The only meaningful life, professional or otherwise, is in community.[343] While this view does seem rather collectivist, Dewey's approach to development of an individual derives from Emerson,[344] and recognizes individual bent, or "genius," in the variety of differing individuals. At the same time, every individual should strive for a satisfactory social

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[339] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 132.
[340] Viktor E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning* (New York: Penguin, 2014). Kindle edition, fixed pagination, 44-45: "Today we live in an age of crumbling and vanishing traditions. Thus, instead of new values being created by finding unique meanings, the reverse happens. Universal values are on the wane. That is why ever more people are caught in a feeling of aimlessness and emptiness or, as I am used to calling it, an existential vacuum. However, even if all universal values disappeared, life would remain meaningful, since the unique meanings remain untouched by the loss of traditions. To be sure, if man is to find meanings even in an era without values, he has to be equipped with the full capacity of conscience. It therefore stands to reason that in an age such as ours, that is to say, in an age of the existential vacuum, the foremost task of education, instead of being satisfied with transmitting traditions and knowledge, is to refine that capacity which allows man to find unique meanings."
[341] Pletsch 15-16. "Nietzsche had to overcome the narrow expectations of his family and reject the religious and ethical values that he had inherited before he could even imagine himself as a philosopher. But he also inherited a sense of duty and calling."
[342] According to The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon the translation of the word "sin" is "to miss the mark/goal". Hamartia. Def. b. The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon. 1999. < https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/hamartia.html>.
[343] Westbrook 158.
[344] Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *The Essential Dewey. Volume 2: Ethics Logic Psychology* 369.

efficiency to "learn how to earn",[345] and to be a functional (and fulfilled) member of the community. To this social aspect of education also belongs the notion of Deweyan resilience:[346]

> Duties are 'offices'—they are the specific acts needed for the fulfilling of a function—or, in homely language—doing one's job. And the man who is genuinely interested in his job is the man who is able to stand temporary discouragement, to persist in the face of obstacles, to take the lean with the fat: he makes an interest out of meeting and overcoming difficulties and distraction.[347]

Dewey pragmatically specifies that the end goal of education is to prepare an individual for "doing one's job" and to "stand temporary discouragement"; here we see another uniquely Deweyan element. Dewey, in the early twentieth century, introduces the currently often-discussed notion of resilience. The pragmatic pedagogy affirms the radical contingency of language and "reality"; human failure, suffering, and strikes of fate are therefore "natural" "facts" requiring resilience in this philosophy. As a pragmatist, Dewey realizes that in the heart of any deep vocation, which is at the same time *meaningful, satisfying* and *socially useful,* is a vital Nietzschean resilience.[348] Life needs "height"; "Life wants to climb and in climbing [to] overcome itself."[349] But this is only possible if one can "stand temporary discouragement" and "persist in the face of obstacles". In fact, he/she must "rise refreshed in the face of difficulties"[350] and make an interest "out of meeting and overcoming difficulties and distraction".

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[345] Westbrook 173.
[346] Raffael Kalisch, *Der resiliente Mensch* (München: Berlin Verlag, 2017). Kindle edition, Location based pagination, loc. 237.: Resilienz ist die Aufrechterhaltung oder schnelle Wiederherstellung der psychischen Gesundheit während und nach Widrigkeiten. Siehe auch Kalisch loc. 617, on the ability of human body for adaptation and modification under stress. … Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass sich offenbar auch der menschliche Organismus verändert, wenn er Stressoren ausgesetzt wird und trotzdem gesund bleibt.
[347] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 379.
[348] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 54. Part One, Aphorism "Of the Chairs of Virtue".
[349] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 127. Part Two, Aphorism "Of the Tarantulas".
[350] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "An Address" 66.

Pragmatic philosophy of education, like pragmatism at large, was never nihilistic. Neither was Nietzsche's encouragement for perennial, creative self-overcoming.[351] Deweyan pragmatism stresses an individual's search for vocation that is *meaningful* for a particular person, has social usefulness, promotes communication between individuals, and brings *joy* to every day.[352] And does not God communicate through hints?[353] Dewey reflects on the issue of morality, and on the search for values bringing joy to existence, in a novel and sophisticated way, in no other style than through democratic search and communication.

The question of morality occupied most pragmatists. William James resolves this through democratic meliorism, an approach from which Dewey originally sourced his ideas on cooperative morality.[354] For Emerson, morality is initially seen as something conveyed by (individual) nature, and later as an immanent creative phenomenon, a "stupendous antagonism"[355] against extant, socially- or personally-valorized "moral constructions," in the spirit of resilience. Nietzsche is here more ambiguous; but in a fashion similar to Emerson, he sees—and denounces—a ruling elite of creative value-makers striving to dictate one *right* morality, beyond whose dictates of "good" and "evil" Nietzsche aspires for himself and other

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[351] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 38-39, "Preface", Aphorisms 9 and 10.
[352] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Experience" 223: "To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom."
[353] Andrew J. Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2015) 168-173.: "Hints do not represent, they call." (168)
--"If there are to be these gods, this outside to the machinational abandonment of being, then they will exist as hints, not present or absent entities. For this reason, there can be no proof for either the existence (presence) or non-existence (absence) of a God. [fn.11]" (170) --"The concern is in part to avoid treating the hint as something present-at-hand that could be identified in terms of a single referential function. To treat the hint as such would be to understand it as a sign or cipher of something else, and thus resign it to the purview of metaphysics, or reasons we have seen. In fact the hint is not something present at all." (171)
--"A certain reticence is in keeping with hints, a kind of not speaking. The word is held back, but in being held back, it is likewise borne ahead toward what is to be thought. If naming is the application of names to objects, then this is not a naming. If anything it is a letting be named. The word is held back in order that it might receive its essential marking from the thoughtworthy. […]. The way it shows itself is understood in terms of gesture." (172)
--"Hints are like gestures in displaying the reciprocity of a bearing. They thereby resonate with the essence of language. They show that language occurs without speech, indeed, that saying and meaning are sent to us, that the unsaid announces itself, and this whether explicitly spoken or not." (173)
[354] Westbrook 158.
[355] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, "Fate" 354.

capable individuals to grow. Dewey, however, in a stroke of very original thinking, devises a far more democratic, and therefore, more practicable approach:

> studies of the curriculum represent standard factors in social life, they are organs of initiation into social values…Acquired under conditions where their social significance is realized, they feed moral interest and develop moral insight. Moreover, the qualities of mind discussed under the topic of method of learning are all of them intrinsically moral qualities. Open-mindedness, single-mindedness, sincerity, breadth of outlook, thoroughness, assumption of responsibility for developing the consequences of ideas which are accepted, are moral traits. The habit of identifying moral characteristics with external conformity to authoritative prescriptions… tends to reduce morals to a dead and machine-like routine… in a democratic society where so much depends upon personal disposition.[356]

All learning and "studies of curriculum," for Dewey, are intricately connected to their social value and worth. This is precisely from whence they draw their meaning. This point could be, nevertheless, contested by almost every individualist/pragmatic writer or philosopher; it is also precisely the point that makes Dewey's conception so original. Dewey does recognize the previous perspectivism, so championed by Kant, Fichte, Emerson, Nietzsche, and James, but he integrates his "experience" intelligently into the social fabric of democratic life. His curricula are "organs of initiation into social values". The "social significance" is always connected to the "moral interest" and "moral insight", correlating harmonically with the approach of social meliorism. For Dewey, morality is always practical. It may be individual, it may be contingent; but it must be socially integrated and useful in some way.

Starting with "Open-mindedness", Dewey then introduces some fundamental character traits that correspond to "moral traits". Such an undertaking has problematic aspects even for some fellow pragmatists, as some have chided Dewey with an overreliance on practicality. On the other hand, all these traits also correspond to Cloninger's Big Five inventory, nowadays the most well-regarded system of categorizing personality traits.[357] Furthermore, in "democratic society" "much depends upon personal disposition", and

[356] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 382.
[357] Marek Blatný, et. al. *Psychologie Osobnosti (*Praha: Grada Publishing, 2010) 45-50.

absolutistic frameworks of morals may therefore not work for every individual, owing to their natural variety. What is then needed, for this morality, are techniques developing the "Open-mindedness, single-mindedness [read resilience], sincerity, breadth of outlook, thoroughness," and responsibility. And this leads us precisely to the core of Dewey's social philosophy, a role worthy of a Fichtean pragmatic scholar, the interchangeability of moral and social engagement.

A democratic society is built around the principle of variety, a composite "reality." In the flow of experience, it is naturally difficult to gauge precisely what is happening in someone else's mind. One is then tempted to affirm the teaching of "church of one"[358] and maintain the individualistic condition of pluralism;[359] according to James, we are all in this together, yet all separated, destined for misunderstanding[360] and solitude. This is not so for Dewey. Dewey envisions a society, where the end goal for a person (even in the unfinished universe[361]) is an authentic function in society:

> The moral and the social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other…the social function of education is [to say] that the measure of the worth of the administration, curriculum, and methods of instruction of the school is the extent to which they are animated by a social spirit… Playgrounds, shops, workrooms, laboratories not only direct the natural active tendencies of youth, but they involve intercourse, communication, and cooperation,-- all extending the perception of connections.[362]

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[358] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Chardon Street and Bible Conventions" [a Convention of Friends of Universal Reform, Chardon Street Chapel, Boston, November 1840], *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion* (Boston: E.P. Peabody, 1843),Volume III (1842-43), No. I (July 1842), 100- 01; reprinted in *Complete Works*, Edward W. Emerson, ed., as "The Chardon Street Convention," *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, 10:374.

[359] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 156-157.

[360] Richard Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), Chapter I: "Superfluous Emerson," p. 30.: "the illusion that language is meant to clean up the messes of life. Instead, we ought to be grateful to language, as I propose in Chapter 3, for making life messier than ever, more blurred than we pretend we want it to be, but also therefore more malleable. Within even a single word, language can create that vagueness that puts us at rest inside contradictions which, if more precisely drawn, would prove unendurable. We willingly live with the fact that by its beneficent betrayals language constantly delivers us to ourselves, and makes us known to others, within a comforting haze. Like the soul, words can reveal the parameters of fate and limitation; just as surely, they open spaces beyond these, horizons of new, barely apprehended possibility."

[361] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 258-259.

[362] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 384.

In the last analysis, Dewey considers the "moral and the social quality of conduct" to be identical concepts. Seen from a holistic point of view, not everything social is moral, according to Dewey, but only that conduct, which leads towards social efficiency. Therefore, morality is strongly connected to practical charity in terms of service to a greater democratic community.[363] The "worth of the administration" and "the school" is dependent directly on the degree to which the environment is animated "by a social spirit". The sociality of education is then seamlessly connected to the practicality of education. "Laboratories" do not only serve as an environment that offers *meaningful* learning opportunities, but which also foster Dewey's communitarian virtues: "intercourse, communication, and cooperation". These soft skills are valuable on the job market and are fundamental for proper job performance in contemporary industry 4.0. This is, finally, the aspect that most remarkably differentiates Dewey from the previous thinkers. While all of them are to a degree instrumentalist, Dewey is directly interested in the social usefulness of knowledge, as this is the only way it becomes *meaningful* for individual students. To re-infuse the language sign with meaning and referent,[364] the only recourse we might still have is in sharing the sign, in communicating and exchanging signs, enhancing them, and re-metaphorizing[365] them together. The world is what we make it, and the metaphor will hold.[366] But for Dewey, for a metaphor to exist and be *meaningful*, it must be shared, communicated, used in cooperation

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[363] Westbrook 178.
[364] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994) 2, 16.
[365] Sigrid Bauschinger, *The Trumpet of Reform: German Literature in Nineteenth-Century New England*, trans. Thomas S. Hansen (1989; Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998) 53.
"Deleuze realized that Bergson's most enduring contribution to philosophical thinking is his concept of multiplicity. Bergson's concept of multiplicity attempts to unify in a consistent way two contradictory features: heterogeneity and continuity. Many philosophers today think that this concept of multiplicity, despite its difficulty, is revolutionary. It is revolutionary because it opens the way to a reconception of community.... Through Williams James's enthusiastic reading of this essay, Bergsonism acquired a far-reaching influence on American Pragmatism. Moreover, his imprint on American literature (in particular, Wallace Stevens and Willa Cather, who created a character called "Alexandra Bergson") is undeniable...." In Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 159.
[366] Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 95.

and creation with others; it must be employed in a shared community of interest, its meaning existing in difference (a differential relation),[367] contributing to "the building up of a common experience",[368] within a network of (social) relations. The fulfillment of the emptied sign, the recovery of the lost referent, is then found in a friendly interaction, in communication, a democratic discussion:

> The something for which a man must be good is capacity to live as a social member so that what he gets from living with others balances with what he contributes. What he gets and gives as a human being, a being with desires, emotions, and ideas, is not external possessions, but a widening and deepening of conscious life—a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings. What he *materially* receives and gives is at most opportunities and means for the evolution of conscious life… Discipline, culture, social efficiency, personal refinement, improvement of character are but phases of the growth of capacity nobly to share in such a balanced experience. And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life.[369]

The social life is a give-and-take process. The individual "gets" something from "living with others" and contributes back; it is a form of reciprocal relationship of individuals, in their variety and plurality among each other. The reward of this reciprocal economy is knowledge, "a widening and deepening of conscious life". This knowledge is of a sign type, "a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings". Therefore, for Dewey, the principal reward for every individual in this society of communication is the pleasure he/she derives from the experience of unique, communally shared signs. This is also the platform that Richard Rorty uses as the foundation for his philosophy of a society of strong poets,

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[367] Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1998)
7 ("Introduction" by George Ritzer), 59.: "But this equality is entirely formal: though bearing on what is most concrete, it is in fact abstract. And it is, by contrast, on this homogeneous abstract base, on this foundation of the *abstract democracy of spelling or the TV set*, that the real system of discrimination is able to operate—and to operate all the more effectively. In actual fact, it is not even true that consumer products, the signs of this social institution, establish this primary democratic platform: for, in themselves, and taken individually (the car, the razor, etc.), they have no meaning: it is their constellation, their configuration, the relation to these objects and their overall social 'perspective' which alone have a meaning. And that meaning is always a distinctive one. They themselves, in their materiality as signs (their subtle differences), reflect that structural determination. Like education, they obey the same social logic as other institutions, even in the inverted image they give of that logic."
[368] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 384.
[369] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 385.

engaging in the "puissance" of creativity; building on Dewey, Rorty creates a society where everyone attempts to surpass each other with creation of better, more innovative, creative vocabularies.[370] Ironically, Dewey's community of cooperative communication[371] is thus transformed into an arduous competition, all in service of Nietzschean will to power, in which individuals attempt to seize as much as possible of creative hegemony by either revaluating values or (re)inventing vocabularies.

One way or another, the most important achievement for the individual in Dewey's society is the "deepening of conscious life" and "evolution of conscious life". While a representative of practical, almost monetary-oriented philosophy, Dewey does not disavow his Emersonian lineage, and affirms that the greatest riches are to be found in the human soul alone.[372] For Dewey, virtues such as "discipline, culture, social efficiency, personal refinement, improvement of character" all function as credentials/incentives for an individual to submerge himself/herself in the community of exchange/discourse of signs, which nourish the soul from spiritual springs. This is Dewey's vision of a creative and democratic society that the school system should mimic and should help to create. Education as a fertile soil for imaginative incitement and creation of novel vocabularies should then *become* the life of an individual, as knowledge cannot be attained, ascertained, validated, and made meaningful in any other way than by discourse—be it through a "kindred spirit" within a book in solitude, or in a lively discussion in a class or a café. Education, as the process that thinks about signs and values of life, becomes then the process of life itself. And might this not be the ultimate

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[370] Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation* (Maiden: Polity Press, 2007). Epub edition. Chapter 8, subsection "Aestheticism and moral commitment", paragraph 4.
On another theory of natural will to power see Nietzsche's follower and a psychologist:
Alfred Adler, *Umění Rozumět* (Praha: Práh, 1993) 25-27, 36, Back matter by B. Brouk: "Adler zajisté správně pochopil hlavní povrchní smysl lidského jednání… Jest to, podle Adlera touha po nadřaděnosti, která v nás neustále provokuje trpký pocit méněcennosti a snahu se ho zbavit…, abychom si nepřipadali oproti druhým lidem nikdy ponížení, nicotní a méněcenní."
[371] Westbrook 364.
[372] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson,* "Poetry and Imagination" 456. See also Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* 458-459, in the same essay.

meaning of education, the final reason to go to school, or to extend the experience of schooling/learning beyond its traditional chronological boundaries? Could it be that school/learning should enable a person to *experience life* in his/her own most satisfactory way? Could education, after the morally nihilizing events of the twentieth century, provide indispensable assistance to us in regaining the rocky path towards the ideals of humanism? Pragmatism does not venture to answer these questions. It carefully observes; it, above all, considers.[373] It prefers serene skepticism,[374] but does not close the doors on the possible.[375] Notwithstanding its sharp eye, pragmatism also carries a certain coolness, a "laid-back, rather quiet way of imagining and responding to cultural crises" in its means, as is attested by Richard Poirier's pragmatic slogan "Keep cool but care".[376] As with other methods of thinking, it may be surpassed too. The only thing left to us, then, is to stay intellectually flexible, and calmly consider, and re-consider, every possibility. "For conscious life is a continual beginning afresh."[377]

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[373] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 79-81. "[Pragmatism] unstiffens our theories. She has in fact no prejudices whatever, no obstructive dogmas, no rigid canons of what shall count as proof. She is completely genial. She will entertain any hypothesis; she will consider any evidence."
[374] Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin Books, 1993) 36. "In judging another man's life, I always inquire how he behaved at the last; and one of the principal aims of my life is to conduct myself well when it ends—peacefully, I mean, and with a calm mind."
[375] James, *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 80. "In short, she widens the field of search for God. Rationalism sticks to the external senses. Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses and to count the humblest and most personal experiences. She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. She will take a God who lives in the very dirt of private fact—if that should seem a likely place to find him."
[376] Russell B. Goodman, "[Introduction to] Richard Poirier (1925-2009)," in Russell B. Goodman, *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 267.
[377] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 385.
See also Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *The Essential Dewey. Volume 2: Ethics Logic Psychology* 370: "Emerson wrote of a certain type of mind: 'This tranquil, well-founded, wide-seeing soul is no express-rider, no attorney, no magistrate. It lies in the sun and broods on the world". See also Nietzsche on silence and death of Tiberius in *The Gay Science* 105.

6. Conclusion: Pragmatism and the Uncertain World

Ralph Waldo Emerson is considered to be the precursor[378] of what was later to become a new, vital philosophical style of thinking under the name of pragmatism. Among its main focal points were, from the outset, the dynamic perception/ flow of experience and affirmation of the creative resilience in the struggle of and for life.[379] Having set its foundations in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, this flexible and creative technique of thinking turned into what we now call pragmatism mainly in the demanding twentieth-first century.

It is significant that a philosophy stressing the contingency of reality, lack of stable footing in the world, and the powerful, healing nature of metaphor emerged in a historical period, in which humanity experienced unprecedented technological growth, but survived unprecedented horrors. Old values seemed day by day less capable of dealing with the contemporary challenges, as human beings were assaulted by disintegrating phenomena: two destructive World Wars, the rise of postmodern (and superficial) capitalism, hegemony of the indifferent and often dehumanizing signs and the recent advent of the age of digital solitude/reductivism. Some traditional values, nevertheless, persisted, and some even reemerged from the past, finding new, surprising, even mystical utility in the rapidly revolving "parti-colored wheel" of the uncertain existence.[380]

The world keeps changing at a rapid pace, and it is the mission of teachers to prepare their students for a life that will only accelerate its rate of evanescence/mobility. To this purpose, and in the spirit of Deweyan education, drawing its practical force from the streams of diverse pragmatisms, the quest of education should be to teach the student to develop

[378] Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 9.
[379] Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 82.
[380] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Experience" 222.

his/her talent, in the way he/she performs best, and in this process to ensure the growth of their critical thinking. Critical thinking, as is known today in the official guidelines of the European Commission,[381] corresponds to the Deweyan ability to think up creative solutions to unprecedented situations, always resting on the bases of sociality, individuality, creativity, and practicality. All of these characteristics of pragmatism promote creative learning and thinking for the twentieth-first century.

This thesis aimed to trace the genealogy of these vital techniques of thinking, moving in chronological order from the transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant to the *Wissenschaftslehre* of Johann Gottlieb Fichte in the second chapter. In that chapter, the thesis examined the initial characteristics of subjective idealism, the conditions in which it was conceived, and the ultimate irresolvable issue of Fichte's self-positing I. Even in science, we may never go beyond interpretation, as the first principle will always be human consciousness. The issue of creativity was broached in the first subsection of this chapter, with Kant's subjectively mandated categories, and postulation of perspectivist judgment. The second subsection of the chapter focused on the reflexive, self-positing I of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and his attempt at the resolution of the first principle in science.

The third chapter of the thesis examined the features of pragmatism in the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson in conjunction and comparison with Fichte. The first subsection of this chapter examined a notion shared between Emerson and Fichte of advocacy of a meaningful engagement of the scholar in society. This salient sign of Fichte's philosophy of the young scholar is also reflected in Emerson's encouragement of practical meaningfulness in philosophy and in education. The second subsection of this chapter examined how this practicality and endorsement of meaningfulness was reflected in

[381] *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (Luxembourg: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission, 2019) <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>.

Emerson's later philosophy, which focused on creative reading and constructive (if sometimes consciously fictional) belief. For Emerson, the reader may only experience the text he/she reads imaginatively, that is, through the creation and/or adaptation of one's own metaphor(s). This metaphor-making faculty is then extended to perception itself, which is fatal—that is, world-shaping (and constantly re-shaping) for any given individual.[382] The third subsection of this chapter examined the notion of Emersonian individualism and compared his strongly individualist rhetoric with other pragmatists. As in the subsection on creativity, this subsection also offered possible educational outreaches for the organization of a democratic discussion in the education process, while respecting the individual dignity of every participant.

The fourth chapter focused on Friedrich Nietzsche, Emerson's great transatlantic follower. While often not directly acknowledged,[383] Emerson was perhaps Nietzsche's greatest influence and served as the primary inspiration for Nietzsche's own, original philosophy in his post-Wagnerian period. The first subsection of this chapter focused on the human condition of pervasive perspectivism that Nietzsche helped to formulate; it also examined a sophisticated notion of creative belief, which echoed Emerson's legitimatization of the creation of any individual metaphor or metaphor-system, which both regarded as intellectually legitimate, as long as it helps the individual to survive.[384] The second subsection of this chapter examined Nietzsche's ideas about learning through discovery; this idea prefigures the modern notion of learning through discovery that John Dewey recommended several decades later, and also forms the foundation of modern pragmatic pedagogy. This pedagogy insists that any educational outcome/conclusion need not only be arrived at by the student individually, but that both its substance and the process that

[382] Poirier, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* "Self-Reliance" 139-140.
[383] Golden 406.
[384] Robbins, *The Metaphor Will Hold* 258-259.

produced it also must be *creatively perceived* by the student, in order to be understood, to gain individual *meaning;* the substantive concept and the generative (transitive) process, in other words, must be created by the individual attempting to understand something. Finally, the third subsection of this chapter surveyed Nietzsche's techniques for creative reading and textual analysis, stressing the importance of emotional and imaginative reading, along with the techniques of rumination, and even democratic discussions respecting the variety of individual participants. This discussion-valorizing conclusion then led to the final analytical chapter, on John Dewey.

The chapter on Dewey examined his educational and pragmatic philosophy. One of the America's foremost philosophers of education, Dewey was a pragmatic philosopher strongly indebted to Emerson and William James. This chapter focused the educational theories embedded in Dewey's philosophy, which championed a democratic reader, who, while being creative and furnishing his/her own interpretation, also shares this interpretation within a democratic discourse, effectively creating common meanings in a community. Therefore, Dewey introduced the social element of shared creativity, which is, barring Fichte, marginal in the previous thinkers. The first subsection of this chapter considered Dewey's esthetic theory, which is based around creative, reverent perception of quotidian things of daily experience. In this way, Dewey managed to bring fine arts closer to the experience of a common, daily life, opening a cool, laid-back, porous cultural space where everyone can feel safe to contribute. The second subsection of this chapter surveyed Dewey's ideas on creative thinking and discovery learning as concepts that are crucial to pragmatic pedagogy. The third subsection of this chapter then explored Dewey's recommendations towards the pervasive use of imagination in any active endeavor of children and adults alike. Additional suggestions in this chapter involved learning charged with meaning (meaning is here either found or creatively furnished through the individual metaphor), endorsement of perseverance and

resilience, and creative, democratic communication, where all individuals share their imaginative concepts among each other. Through this approach, the readers can furnish more complex and complicated, but also more "objective"—i.e. inclusive—interpretations of text. And only in that way may we formulate what we call "knowledge"; a set of provisional, functional, meaningful instruments, serving us reliably in a greater, shared community where everyone has their role, personal space, and, above all, dignity.

Pragmatism is a philosophy that envisions, engenders, and vivifies a dangerous and fluxing world where portfolios are risked,[385] and which is growing at all places, unfinished.[386] A child enters this fugacious world unprepared and unexperienced. It is the duty of a good educator to provide the child (or other student) with instruments to handle the challenges that inevitably await him/her in the world, presenting, as much as he/she can, the collected "experience" (intellectual constructions and intellectual construction processes) of humanity. This must be done through techniques, which encourage creative and active thinking, and which do not shy away from modifying theory. In other words, the role of the teacher and the intellectual is to make sure that every individual has a chance to live his/her life with dignity, according to their personal bent, and in harmony with their neighbors. While this is an idealistic vision, there are practical techniques, methods, and approaches usable, in class and outside, which prepare the students for this kind of effective existence in society. And it may well be pragmatism, with its stress on creativity and practicality, that can furnish the educator with the necessary toolkit for fostering of such growth[387] in the class. In the age of increasing digital nomadism, the ability to discuss one's ideas with others is becoming undernourished.

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[385] Gunn, *Thinking Across the American Grain* 6.

[386] James *Pragmatism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1931) 258-259.: "On the pragmatist side we have only one edition of the universe, unfinished, growing in all sorts of places, especially in the places where thinking beings are at work."

[387] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 45-46.: "Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life. Translated into its educational equivalents, that means:
(i) that the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end; and that
(ii) the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming."

The approach of pragmatism, stressing the collective creativity in conjunction with respect for the individual, might therefore be one of the most useful ways to help counteract these alienating and dangerous tendencies. Pragmatic pedagogy, therefore, prepares our students for a life in an inherently uncertain world, which is full of risk and creative opportunity alike. It equips them for a life full of danger and adventure.

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Abstract

The aim of this MA thesis was to analyze the correspondences and differences between the individual philosophers and writers from the loosely formed intellectual group of Euro-American pragmatism. The thesis utilizes a chronological approach, starting with the early signs of transatlantic pragmatism in Immanuel Kant's philosophy, and traces this development throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century. In addition to the comparison of philosophical similarities and dissimilarities of the examined authors, each chapter also considered the possible uses of pragmatic techniques in pedagogy and education. Therefore, besides the examination of differing epistemologies of writers of transatlantic pragmatism, this thesis also aims to offer educational suggestions, ideas and practical methods for an educator. The first chapter of the thesis is designed to introduce the theme of the work at large. The second chapter of the thesis analyzes the rudimentary signs of pragmatism, in the revolutionary ideas of Immanuel Kant and Johan Gottlieb Fichte. This chapter focuses on the genesis of subjective idealism, subjective category creation and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, along with his lectures on vocations. The third chapter surveys the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson and his approaches towards the practicality of philosophy, creative reading, and authentic individualism. The fourth chapter focuses on Friedrich Nietzsche, an early modernist philosopher with strong ties to Emerson; the discussion centers on the creative perspectivism, learning through construct creation, and creative reading in conjunction with textual analysis. Chapter five then overviews the educational philosophy of the foremost American educationalist, John Dewey. This chapter examines his approach to art as a common experience, his methods that championed imaginative thinking and discovery learning in schools, and his recommendation of democratic discussion in textual interpretation, along with development of imagination, resilience, communication. The thesis

concludes with chapter 6, which summarizes the literary and educational imports of this vital philosophy of human experience.

Keywords: pragmatism, education, perspectivism, creativity, textual analysis, pragmatic method, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey.

Abstrakt

Cieľom diplomovej práce *Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey a kreativní čtenář* bola analýza podobných čŕt a odlišností medzi jednotlivými dielami filozofov a spisovateľov v rámci intelektuálnej tradície euro-amerického pragmatizmu.
V diplomovej práci aplikujem chronologický prístup v procese analýzy myšlienok jednotlivých autorov. Analytická časť práce začína rozborom skorých znakov euro-amerického pragmatizmu vo filozofii Emanuela Kanta a sleduje vývoj týchto základných čŕt cez osemnáste, devätnáste, až dvadsiate storočie. Okrem porovnávania spoločných a odlišných čŕt v dielach analyzovaných autorov sa zaoberám využitím techník pragmatizmu vo vzdelávaní. Diplomová práca ponúka okrem analýzy epistemologických odlišností aj návrhy a príklady praktických metód aplikovateľných v pedagogickej praxi.
Prvá kapitola práce slúži ako úvod do témy a prináša prehľad problematiky rozčlenený do jednotlivých častí. Druhá kapitola sa zaoberá rozborom prvotných znakov pragmatizmu v teóriách Emanuela Kanta a Johanna Gottlieba Fichteho. Táto kapitola sa preto zameriava na genézu subjektívneho idealizmu, subjektívnej tvorby mentálnych kategórií a rozoberá Fichteho *Wissenschaftslehre*, a tiež jeho teóriu o povolaní verejného intelektuála. Tretia kapitola poskytuje prehľad myšlienok Ralpha Walda Emersona a jeho pragmatických zásad, ako sú principiálne praktická filozofia, kreatívne čítanie a autentický individualizmus. Štvrtá kapitola sa zameriava na Friedricha Nietzscheho, skorého modernistického filozofa, ktorý bol veľmi hlboko inšpirovaný práve Emersonom. Táto kapitola analyzuje najmä kreatívny perspektivizmus, učenie sa cez tvorbu konštruktov a kreatívne čítanie v spojení s analýzou textu. Piata kapitola sa sústreďuje na teórie vzdelávania najdôležitejšieho amerického edukačného filozofa Johna Deweyho. Kapitola rozoberá Deweyho metódu kritiky literatúry, v rámci ktorej povzbudzuje k vyhľadávaniu každodenných príležitostí k estetickému zážitku. Ďalej kapitola opisuje jeho metódy kreatívneho myslenia a bádateľského učenia sa, a na

záver pojednáva o Deweyho technikách vedenia diskusie pri spoločnej analýze textu. Dewey zdôrazňuje potrebu rozvoja predstavivosti, resiliencie a komunikačných zručností. Prácu ukončuje šiesta kapitola, ktorá sumarizuje význam pragmatizmu vo vzdelávaní a v literatúre.

Kľúčové slová: pragmatizmus, vzdelávanie, perspektivizmus, kreativita, analýza textu, pragmatická metóda, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey.