

Prof. David Lee Robbins, Ph.D., thesis supervisor
Bc. Peter Luba
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey, and the Creative Reader
M.A. thesis evaluation
Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures
Charles University, Prague

The aim of Mr. Luba's MA thesis is 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 centuries. In addition to the comparison of philosophical similarities and dissimilarities of the examined authors, each chapter also considers 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 analyzes the rudimentary signs of pragmatism, in the revolutionary ideas of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. This chapter focuses on the genesis of subjective idealism, subjective category creation, and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, along with his lectures on vocation. The third chapter surveys the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson and his approaches toward 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 creative perspectivism, learning through construct creation, and creative reading in conjunction with textual analysis. Chapter five then provides an overview of 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, and communication. The thesis concludes with chapter six, which summarizes the literary and educational imports of this vital philosophy of human experience.

Mr. Luba's scholarship and scholarly product is of considerable range—in volume, variety, discipline, and language—and of very high quality. His handling of the complex philosophical issues involved in his project is exemplary, and his examination of the practical applications of the ideas with which he has engaged is sensible and innovative. In this thesis, he has drawn together some of the best ideas of a remarkable group of pragmatic thinkers, and has drawn conclusions and made recommendations for application with unflinching competence.

I believe that it is my responsibility, as well, to point out—and validate--particular approaches to be found in Mr. Luba's thesis about which some might raise (at least methodological) questions—both of which I have previously discussed with Mr. Luba in my role as his thesis supervisor, They are:

1) Mr. Luba's emphasis on practical teaching and on fostering creative reading and creativity in general—often pausing to suggest useful applications of Fichte's, Emerson's, James's, Vaihinger's, Nietzsche's, and Dewey's theoretical ideas—may, in some cases, result in some of their other implications getting marginalized or excluded in his narrative. To this potential objection, I believe that both Emerson and Henry James have relevant responses: "What," queries Emerson, "is...abridgment and selection...but itself the creative impulse?" (Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays, First Series*, "Art" [1841], CW2:209; and "Art," Henry James agrees with Emerson, is "all discrimination and selection," and "life...all inclusion and

confusion” (Henry James, *The Spoils of Poynton*, “Preface to the New York Edition [1908],” p. 23)

2) Mr. Ľuba makes extensive use of quotations in his thesis; but all quotations and allusions are cited in thorough, impeccable, and exemplary fashion, and both the quotations and the allusions contribute significantly to enhanced illustration and understanding of his argument(s).

Overall, Mr. Ľuba has produced a thesis of the highest intellectual and scholarly quality, which, for that reason, merits an evaluation of “1, vyborne.”

Thesis evaluation: “1, vyborne.”

Signed:

Prof. David Lee Robbins, Ph.D.
Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures
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If the reader has any questions or needs additional information, please contact me at David.Robbins@ff.cuni.cz.

