

INVESTIGATION OF THE ROMANTIC  
THEMES AND TENSIONS IN CLASSICAL AMERICAN PRAGMATISM

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## ABSTRACT

### INVESTIGATION OF THE ROMANTIC THEMES AND TENSIONS IN CLASSICAL AMERICAN PRAGMATISM

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This thesis aims to elaborate on and defend the idea that Classical American Pragmatism shares the same themes, interests, concerns and tensions with German Romanticism. The basic proposal is that the paradoxical romantic theme of absence pointing beyond or implying more and the romantic notion of infinite strife closely connected with this theme express themselves in epistemological, ontological, ethical forms through the pragmatic philosophies of Charles Sanders Peirce and William James. In order to investigate these romantic conceptions, we focus on the romantic artistic project and romantic transformation of philosophy through the claims of Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis). First, we show that the concept of absence in its epistemological form emerges as the tensional togetherness of the impossibility of comprehensive understanding and the necessity of it in the form of an ideal. As a consequence of this tension romantics transform knowledge into a pluralistic, dynamic, self-destructive and self-producing, infinite process of

poesy which can be found in pragmatism in the form of the open-ended collective hermeneutic practice. Second, the concept of absence constitutes ethical orientation of both romantics and pragmatics in the forms of infinite struggle for self-perfection and amelioration. Finally, the notion of absence in its metaphysical aspect leads to the process metaphysics and the comprehension of the subject as constant becoming. Pragmatism romantically relies on the creative and transformative freedom of the individuals seeking their self-redemption from their alienated situation which is to be perpetually approximated but never reached.

Keywords: American Pragmatism, German Romanticism, Bildung, Infinite strife, Semiotics

## ÖZ

### KLASİK AMERİKAN PRAGMACILIĞINDA ROMANTİK TEMA VE GERİLİMLERİN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu tez Klasik Amerikan Pragmacılığı'nın Alman Romantizm'i ile ortak temalar, ilgiler, kaygılar ve gerilimler paylaştığı fikrini detaylı bir şekilde incelemeyi ve savunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Temel öneri hep 'daha fazlası'nı ima eden ya da 'ötesi'ne işaret eden çelişkili romantik yokluk temasının ve bu tema üzerine kurulan sonsuz mücadele fikrinin Charles Sanders Peirce ve William James'in felsefelerinde epistemolojik, ahlaki ve ontolojik formlarda kendini gösterdiğidir. Bu romantik kavrayışları incelemek için Friedrich Schlegel ve Friedrich von Hardenberg'in (Novalis) fikirleri dolayısıyla romantik sanat projesi ve felsefenin romantik dönüşümü üzerinde duruyoruz. İlk yokluk kavramının epistemolojik formunda bütüncül bir kavrayışın zorunluluğunun ve imkânsızlığının gerilimli birlikteliği olarak ortaya çıkışını gösteriyoruz. Bu gerilimin sonucu olarak romantikler bilgiyi çoğulcu, dinamik, kendini yıkan ve kuran bitimsiz bir üretim etkinliği olarak

düşünürler ki bu etkinlik pragmacılarda ucu açık, kolektif, hermeneutik bir pratik olarak tespit edilir. İkinci olarak yokluk kavramı hem romantik hem de pragmacı ahlaki tutumları sonsuz mükemmelleşme ve iyileşme mücadelesi kavramlarında içerilerek kurar. Son olarak bu kavram romantik ve pragmacı süreç metafiziğine ve oluş halindeki özne anlayışlarına yol açmaktadır. Pragmacılık romantik bir şekilde bireyi yabancılaşmasından kurtaracak yaratıcı ve dönüştürücü özgürlüğe güvenir fakat bu kurtuluş sonsuzca yaklaşıldığına inanılırken asla gerçekleşmeyecek olandır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerikan Pragmacılığı, Alman Romantizmi, Bildung, Sonsuz mücadele, Göstergebilim

To My Parents and Beloved Monik



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Athenaeum Fragments
B	<i>Blütenstaub</i>
CF	Critical Fragments
CP	<i>Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce</i>
I	Ideas
MT	<i>Meaning of Truth</i>
P	<i>Pragmatism</i>
PU	<i>A Pluralistic Universe</i>
VRE	<i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i>
WB	<i>The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy</i>

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Romanticism whose roots are found in Europe in the seventeenth century has an unquestionable role in shaping European consciousness and philosophy. Pragmatism, on the other hand, originates in America in nineteenth century and specifically refers to a particular intellectual orientation and philosophical perspective belonging to America. These two intellectual orientations are usually positioned as antithetical philosophical views. A general look at the general aspects of romantic and pragmatic orientations reveals how they oppose each other and support this positioning. While romanticism is associated with monistic spiritualism, absolute idealism, mysticism, nostalgia and aesthetic ideals of infinity, pragmatism is described in terms of pluralistic materialism, radical empiricism, common sense, progressiveness and finite purposes of practical life. Thus, while romanticism is supposed to be lost in art and in other-worldly longings, pragmatism is supposed to be submerged into the science, into the coarse needs and satisfactions of practical life. Against this reductive opposite positioning, this thesis articulates and defends the idea that Classical American Pragmatism shares the same themes, concerns and tensions with early German Romanticism.

The basic proposal of this thesis is that the romantic principle of infinite strife grounded on the romantic theme of absence pointing beyond or implying more expresses itself in different epistemological, ontological, ethical forms through the philosophical views of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and William James (1842-

1910); such as the absence of absolute principle, of foundation, of certainty in their theories of knowledge; absence of closed system, of completed whole, of determination in their metaphysical theories; and the absence of the closure of any formative activity, of search for self-identity, of intimacy, of progress in their ethical theories. In order to argue for this claim, we shall focus on the philosophical view of Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), the founder of Early German Romanticism. Although Schlegel's claims and arguments will be the main focus in discussing romanticism, the ideas of Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) (1772-1801) will help us too in settling the main romantic tendency and in explicating the basic romantic conceptions. The reason to single out these two thinkers from the diversified romantic community in Jena in Germany of 1700s is that these two thinkers present their ideas on the meaning and possibility of philosophy, the constitutive conundrum of romantic view and the romantic idea of ethical infinite strife in a more direct and argumentative way and in an intimate dialogue with contemporary idealist philosophers than the theologians, poets, writers, essayist or philologists of the romantic circle who express the same concerns in different mediums. Schlegel and Novalis represent the intellectual wing of the romantic consciousness and are indispensable to display how American pragmatism is built on romantic themes and tensions. However, intellectual wing of which romanticism?

Early Romantic Movement in Germany [*Frühromantik*], Jena Romanticism, historically refers to the philosophical standpoint shared by a small community of writers and thinkers in Jena and Berlin between the years 1794 and 1802. Schlegel brothers, August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845) and Friedrich von Schlegel pioneer and carry the movement by establishing their own journal *Athenaeum*. *Athenaeum* is published between the years 1798 and 1800, and the journal is considered to be the most important source of romantic fragments. The other

significant figures in Jena circle are Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel's wife Dorothea Mendelssohn (1764-1839) and A.W. Schlegel's wife Caroline Böhmer (1763-1809), Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), W. Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1789), C. J. Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and F. W. Joseph Schelling (1775-1854). Romantic consciousness, finding its peak expression in the productions and life of this circle, arises within a German intellectual tradition carrying the inheritance of Kant's critical philosophy. Romanticism has a close connection with the idealistic search for an absolute philosophical system in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries based on the reading of Kant's ideas to be culminating in the irrevocable fragmentation and insecurity of the rational subject and philosophical inquiry. When we look at the works of American pragmatists Peirce and James, on the other hand, we can easily detect plenty of negative estimations of absolutistic philosophies. Indeed, the most salient feature of the pragmatic intellectuals is their strict resistance to absolutism. Given that German romanticism belongs to the tradition of German idealism, it is easily and straightforwardly concluded that American pragmatists criticize and discard romanticism, taking it as a part of absolutistic and idealistic German tradition. Therefore, in order to argue against this conclusion it is required that the relation of German romanticism to German idealism is drawn and introduced clearly.

If the literature on German Romanticism is reviewed with this requirement in view, we encounter two leading figures offering us two directly opposite pictures of German romanticism: Frederick C. Beiser and Manfred Frank. Beiser places romanticism into the great project of German idealism. He argues that romantics and prominent idealist philosophers Schelling and Hegel, all fight against subjectivism by establishing vitalistic, monistic and rationalistic philosophies. He writes that according to romantics the "rational, archetypical or intelligible" reality (Spinozistic

absolute unity) can be known through intuition, although it cannot be known discursively.<sup>1</sup> Romantics are absolute idealists who “make aesthetic experience the organon or *ratio cognoscendi* of absolute knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> Manfred Frank agrees with Beiser in that “*Frühromantik* shares the same object and determination with the project of absolute idealism.”<sup>3</sup> However, he continues by affirming that in romantic philosophy “‘absolute knowing’ becomes replaced by an ‘absolute not-knowing’ and the result is the skeptical basis for philosophizing.”<sup>4</sup> For Beiser Manfred’s reading of romanticism is postmodernist because of his stress on the irrationality and the rejection of the self-illuminating power of the subject.<sup>5</sup> Romantics, if postmodernist *avant la lettre*, believe in “the end of metaphysics, the end of philosophy, the end of man.”<sup>6</sup> According to the post-modernist reading of romanticism romantics declare that self-reflecting art should replace philosophy and the main focus is on the limits of both art and philosophy. Self-reflecting art knows that knowledge through artistic experience or artistic creation is not possible. From this interpretative perspective, contrary to Beiser, romantics hold that art does not know but hints at. Beiser thinks that it is a wrong interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781–1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 553.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 573.

<sup>3</sup>Manfred Frank, *Philosophical Foundations of German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (New York: State University of New York Press), 56.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative* (Harvard, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3-4.

<sup>6</sup>Ernst Behler, *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), 5.



In her book, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*, after discussing the disagreement given above in a much more detailed way, Millàn-Zaibert, the third significant figure, shows that Beiser misrepresent Frank.<sup>7</sup> She claims that Frank's insistence on the unknown is balanced by his reintroduction of the absolute in the form of a Kantian regulative idea. The idea of absolute represents an ideal of knowledge for the romantics and in that point both Beiser and Frank agree. Millan-Zaibert's discussion implies that the break of German romanticism from idealistic tradition on the basis of the absence of the absolute does not necessarily include the post-modernist claim that human effort for knowledge and betterment is futile. Although Millàn-Zaibert makes Beiser and Frank's pictures of romanticism alike, she is not persuaded by Beiser's explanations of the Platonic heritage of romanticism which refers to accepting the fixed, unchanging, unitary realm of being and its transparency to reason. She points that questioning the knowledge claims and foundations constitutes the core of romanticism; of Schlegel's philosophy specifically. "It is in this epistemological, antifoundationalist sense that Schlegel's philosophy is romantic."<sup>8</sup>

This thesis draws on Beiser's clarifications of central romantic conceptions which Frank would accept too and it shares Frank's concern on romantic incompleteness and his stress on not-knowing. The reluctance of Millàn-Zaibert to accept the central role of rational fixed realm of being in the constitution of romantic consciousness is shared too because of the strong romantic emphasis on becoming, change, progress and futurity. We will basically follow Frank and Millàn-Zaibert in the discussion of the link of romanticism to idealism and in arguing for their strict

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<sup>7</sup>Elizabeth Millàn-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* (Albany: State University New York Press, 2007), 38-44.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 17.

antifoundationalism, except one point. From romanticism's destructive, skeptical, critical self-reflection even the art and its power cannot escape. Romantic trust on art is always undermined by ironic awareness of romantics. However, reduction of romanticism to its epistemological aspect is a narrow perspective. The attention given to the romantic reflection and critique should equally be given to the romantic production, formation and transformation and to its all ethical, social and political implications. Pragmatism is built on these romantic implications. The reply to the question "which romanticism?" is simply as follows: Romanticism as construed by this thesis is the romanticism which neither replaces discursiveness by aesthetic intuition to reach the absolute and so it is a form of absolute idealism nor it blocks any door to knowledge and progress forever and so it is a postmodernism *avant la lettre*. Romanticism is precisely the tensional and ironic togetherness of the necessity and impossibility of an ideal. This paradoxical togetherness is not only regulative but constitutive of art, knowledge and ethics. Legitimacy of romanticism is rooted neither in an indestructible foundation nor in an irrevocable destruction; neither in a certain aim nor in a certain aimlessness. Romantic legitimacy comes from a simple hope. This romantic hope is that which permeates all dimensions of Peirce's and James's philosophies.

Romantic hope is a hope that produces itself incessantly and contains the knowledge that it was, is and will be a simple hope whose fulfillment is necessarily extended infinitely in order to remain as a hope. Romantic hope springs from a peculiar awareness of absence. This romantic notion of absence, in turn, is closely linked to the concepts of becoming, moving forward, progressive change and formation and can be explicated in the most distinct and clear way with reference to these ideas. It is the reason of the incompleteness as the inherent structure of each human endeavor. It refers both to a necessity and to an impossibility in the sense that the

absence is necessarily posited in order to make the idea of achievement to what is absent possible, which in turn makes the achievement impossible, since the absence is necessary. This inherent tension constitutes the core of the romantic concept of activity and thereby forming the romantic idea of infinite strife, and hence it leads to the specific romantic conception of ideal. The ideal is necessarily posited as both within the reach and beyond the reach of the subject. It is used to refer to the ideal of artistic production, the ideal of complete knowledge and the ethical ideal of being a perfect individual. Both German romanticism and American pragmatism are formed by the notion of the absence in these epistemological, ethical and ontological forms.

In parallelism of the expression of the absence in these three different forms, this thesis is composed of two main parts. The first chapter is devoted to German Romanticism and the second part is devoted to American Pragmatism. While the first part starts by tracing the notion back to the romantic literature project, the second part reinterprets the understanding of philosophy, basic theories and concepts of Peirce and James to be grounded on this notion. The first chapter of the first part that follows the introduction is called "Romantic Literary Project" and gives a general view on romanticism and Early Romantic movement of Germany, examines romantic art criticism and production, clarifies the notions of romantic aesthetic ideal, irony and universal progressive poetry. The second chapter is called "Romantic Philosophy" and it is further divided into two. While the first section called "Philosophy as Progressive Poetry" investigates critical relation of German romanticism to Kant and German Idealist Fichte through mostly Novalis's arguments, the second part entitled "Romantic *Bildung* through Love" examines the origin of romantic concepts of ethical *Bildung* and of imagination as *Bildungskraft*, power of formation. Accordingly, in the first section we will learn how romantics extends their conception of poetry to the intellectual sphere of philosophy and how

they dissolve philosophical activity into a pluralistic open-ended poetical engagement which is carried on with an ironic consciousness of absence. In addition, in this section we will find romantic conception of reality as a constant state of becoming, a process, which will be continued to be clarified in the second part, too. Second part, on the other hand, deals with the romantic unending self-formation of the subject and the necessity of feeling and concrete experience for this formation. The individualistic and humanist romantic conception of religion as the vitalizing and self-transformative relation and commitment to that which counts as divine is stressed in the second section.

The second main part of the thesis consists of the inquiries of Peirce's and James's pragmatisms separately. First chapter which is on Peirce is divided into two sections. The section "Philosophy as Semiotic Inquiry" investigates Peirce's pragmatism, concepts of inquiry as placed into the context of the critical and creative meaning making activity of individuals, of truth infinitely approximated, and of philosophy as romantic collective semiotic inquiry. In this section Peirce's doctrine of abduction is read to express the romantic priority given to the imagination in production of knowledge and his *semiosis* is clarified in length in terms of romantic term *poiesis*. The infinite hope that Peirce mentions to be the necessary ingredient in knowledge production is focused on too. The topics of the second section called "Ethics of Evolutionary Love" are Peirce's grounding ethics on aesthetics, his romantic view of cosmos constantly evolving by the drive of love to become an aesthetic whole and the absolute chance as romantic creative spontaneity. Peirce's special terminology including synechism, tychism and agapism is analyzed in this section too. Furthermore, we will underline the inherent romanticism of his construction of the subject extended to the idea of community construed as a personality, which is continuously destabilized by the absence of an identity.

The chapter on James starts with the section called "Philosophy as Transformative Hermeneutics." The section begins with comparing to and contrasting of Peirce's pragmatism and James's pragmatism. It continues with exposition of James's antifoundationalism and antiabsolutism, his theory of truth and his re-formulation of philosophy as a temperamental open-ended pluralistic truth-making process which romantically aims at self-completion. Through this process the creation of reality is actively contributed to by a sympathetic living understanding and reality is transformed in view of the constant absence of the absolute truth. Through the process the old beliefs and formations are continuously under criticism and destruction. The following section entitled "Ethics of Meliorism and Hope" reviews James's metaphysical and moral theory of meliorism, his doctrine of will to believe, his humanistic individualistic conception of finite God and panpsychism. In this section we will read James's meliorism as the romantic infinite social struggle for betterment of life and for becoming a strenuous self, his doctrine will to believe as the doctrine of romantic commitment and hope, and his re-introduction of mysticism to human life as the romantic attempt to metaphysical vitalizing. This vitality is needed to foster the pragmatic individuals in their romantic desires to make the alienated world a home to themselves.

## CHAPTER II

### GERMAN ROMANTICISM

#### 2.1. Romantic Literary Project

Early Romantic Movement in Germany [*Frühromantik*], in its other name Jena Romanticism, refers to the philosophical standpoint shared by a small community of writers and thinkers in Jena and Berlin between the years 1794 and 1802. Schlegel brothers, August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845) and Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) pioneer and carry the movement by establishing their own journal *Athenaeum*. *Athenaeum* is published between the years 1798 and 1800, and the journal is considered to be the most important source of romantic fragments. The other significant figures in Jena circle are Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel's wife Dorothea Mendelssohn and A.W. Schlegel's wife Caroline Böhmer, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ludwig Tieck, W. Heinrich Wackenroder, C. J. Friedrich Hölderlin and F. W. Joseph Schelling. Within the intellectual history of Germany, Jena Romanticism is placed between the introductory romantic movement called Storm and Stress [*Sturm und Drang*] (1770-1780) and concluding period of Late Romanticism; that is, Heidelberg Romanticism (1806-1808). Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) initiated the Storm and Stress movement and had a strong influence on Jena Romantics. After the deaths and separations from the Jena circle, Clemens Brentano carries the center of romanticism to Heidelberg, the city where Sophie Mereau, Achim von Arnim, Joseph Görres, Joseph F. Eichendorff and E. T. A.

Hoffman gather and join him.<sup>9</sup> From the larger perspective Jena Romanticism is viewed to be a part of European Romanticism which, as a title, covers manifold dimensions of intellectual and artistic atmosphere in French and in England as well in addition to Germany. European Romanticism, if it is taken as a historical period, starts in the last years of the eighteenth century and ends in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The reason that romantic rupture in consciousness changes the paradigm of thought and spreads all over Europe is that grand political, social and cultural changes which influence Europe have an immense role in this rupture. In *Athenaeum* Schlegel writes that “[t]he French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy, and Goethe's *Meister* are the greatest tendencies of the age” (AF 216, 190).<sup>10</sup> French Revolution incorporated to the tendency of the age by the humanistic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity which were advocated by the progressive Enlightenment, yet it brought a turmoil and terror to the French society at the end. German Romantics shared the revolutionary ideas and were committed passionately to them. This share manifests itself as the romantic will to establish a unity of the fragmented Germany at that time.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup>Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. Robert E. Goodwin (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2014).

<sup>10</sup>Unless stated otherwise, all the references to Schlegel's fragments are given *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments* in parentheses in the following way: the abbreviation of the name of the collection of the fragments, the number of the fragment in the translation and the page number. The abbreviations are: *Athenaeum Fragments* [AF], *Critical Fragments* [CF], *Blütenstaub* [B] and *Ideas* [I]. The translator renames *Lyceum Fragments* as *Critical Fragments*. Friedrich Schlegel, *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup>See Azade Seyhan, “What is Romanticism, and where did it come from?” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-21.

failure of the French Revolution in bringing the unity and order became a symbol of a loss for the romantics and it resulted in “mourning an irretrievably lost world of unity and harmony.”<sup>12</sup>

The ideals of French Revolution romantically defended can be traced back to the Enlightenment and modernist ideals. Accordingly, the romantic consciousness as the consciousness of the irretrievable loss, at least in political and social order, also means the loss of Enlightenment world image based on the self-given authority and norms of reason instead of dogmatic principles and externally authoritative structures. Given that even after the acts performed in the name of the Enlightenment resulted in the disappointment rather than the progression, romanticism does not position itself antithetically to Enlightenment progressivism and does not desire to turn back to the old and to the origin, condemning the new and the change. As Ernst Behler analyzes romanticism should be evaluated on the context and history of modernism. Romanticism is the self-reflective and critical form of modernism which reveals and acknowledges its destructive inner tensions and potentialities. In that sense, romanticism is both the continuity and the rupture in modernist consciousness of Enlightenment. The ideas leading to French Revolution, the experience of it and its aftermath, romantic ambivalence regarding the revolution as a result exemplifies this reflection. Romantics have the similar ambivalent link to German idealism, particularly to Fichte, in developing their own philosophical attitude and to classicism in their literary project. Romantic critique of French Revolution, Fichte’s philosophy or artistic classicism does not render these attempts futile, but manifests and critically embraces these attempts’ necessary inner contradictions. Therefore, it can be said that romantics does not nostalgically yearn

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<sup>12</sup>Azade Seyhan, “What is Romanticism, and where did it come from?” 6.



for the return to a 'golden age' of neither a political government, nor philosophy, nor art. The revolutionary ideal that is lost does not point to something that have been had in the past but then lost; on the contrary, the failure of revolution points to an absence which was never present but should be presented. Actively and progressively seeking after this loss transforms the world and creates the future anew which is intimately shared by pragmatic attitude.

While French Revolution is the symbol of romantic political tendency, Goethe's novel of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* [Meister] is the example of romantic artistic tendency. Schlegel affirms that "[A]ll art should become science and all science art; poetry and philosophy should be made one" (CF 115, 157). So, the essential characteristic of romantic artwork exemplified by *Meister* will provide us the model to grasp what this art is that philosophy must become. Not only philosophical activity but Romantics also describe nature, individual, community and state as becoming artworks, or more properly as artworks in process. Both the receptive critical aspect and productive aspect of art are central to the self-understanding of romantic philosophy. Precisely this centrality and involvements of romantics in art causes confusions and disagreements about the meaning and legitimacy of romanticism. For example, the term romantic is used to describe certain qualities of literature produced in a historical period, to describe certain qualities not only of literature but of all artworks produced in a historical period, to a class of artworks regardless of their time of production, to express a general aesthetic criteria and to specify a particular type of art criticism and a literary project, apart from its being a form of critical thought and philosophical endeavor. What did romantic mean in art and how Jena Romantics appropriated it? What is the romantic literary project reciprocally informing romantic philosophy?

The historical roots of the word romantic go back to its origination in Rome and to its later use in the Middle Ages. Originally the term is used to differentiate a class of Gallo-Roman languages and comes from the French word *romanz*.<sup>13</sup> These languages are referred as romance languages and the literature written in these languages, usually chivalry and love tales of the Middle Ages, are called medieval romances. They are the first acknowledged examples of the literary form novel. In "Letter about the Novel" Schlegel writes that "A novel is a romantic book [*Ein Roman ist a romantisches Buch*]" is a tautology by hinting at the shared root of the German words romantic, *romantisch*, and the novel, *Roman*, thereby pointing to the etymological origin of the word romantic too.<sup>14</sup> Later, being romantic becomes a category which is employed to differentiate common characteristics, norms and themes of some literary works from classical forms of literature. The classical-romantic, ancient-modern distinctions in art arises out of this usage. Schlegel and other Jena Romantics adopt the term in their critical and historical writings on literature in the similar fashion; for example, Antonio, the character that represent Schlegel in "Dialogue on Poetry," specifically in "Letter on Novel," says: "According to my point of view and my usage, Romantic is that which presents a sentimental theme in a fantastic form."<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, Dante, Cervantes and Shakespeare are romantic writers. Schlegel claims that most of the modern poets or writers fail to be romantic. In other

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<sup>13</sup>See Ernst Behler, "The Origins of the Romantic Literary Theory," *Colloquia germanica*, 1968, 109-126 and Azade Seyhan, "What is Romanticism, and where did it come from?" in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-21, 1.

<sup>14</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, "Letter on Novel" in *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, trans. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), 101.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 98.

words, not all romantics are truly romantic and not all modern art is poeticized romantically. Jena Romantics establish romantic theory of art by formulating a conception of romantic poetry as a universal genre which transcends the particular and historical genres. Thus, romantic poetry refers to a kind of aesthetic ideal for artists and a norm for critics rather than being a category contrasted with the category of classic poetry. In that sense, romanticism becomes a self-reflection of the literature. European romanticism can never be penetrated without understanding Schlegel's normative concept of romantic poetry which did not directly influence the European artistic atmosphere, yet through Madame de Stael it indirectly shapes all European aesthetic consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

Schlegel starts to shape the notion of romantic poetry in his early essay *On the Study of Greek Poetry* (1795) and completes it through the fragments of *Lyceum der schönen Künste* (1797), *Athenaeum* fragments (1798-1800) and in *Dialogue on Poetry* in the last volume of *Athenaeum*. In *On the Study of Greek Poetry* Schlegel mainly expresses his ideas on the debate on whether ancient poetry should provide artistic criteria for the moderns. The debate is called as *querelle des anciens et des modernes* in the European art world and occupied the art critics of the age for a long time. Though modern poetry seems to be characterless, lawless, idiosyncratic, thematically confused, purposeless and full of skepticism, it has common traits, origin and a task for the future and this task is not the imitation of the ancients.<sup>17</sup> Very similar to Schiller's separation of naïve and sentimental poetry, Schlegel calls the ancient literature disinterestedly

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<sup>16</sup>Baroness Staël Holstein, *Germany* (London: John Murray, 1813), see 294-378.

<sup>17</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *On the Study of Greek Poetry*, trans. and ed. Stuart Barnett (Albany: State of New York Press, 2001), 20-21.

objective and the romantic literature subjectively interesting.<sup>18</sup> Modern poetry of Schlegel's time has the quality of interesting because they reflect on inexhaustible subjects and philosophical or moral questions by focusing on individuals in their own "characteristic" ways instead of expressing the disinterested beauty.<sup>19</sup> While the ancient artworks have a "classical" style of perfection, completion and systematization, the modern ones have a "progressive style" of imperfection, striving and fluidity.<sup>20</sup> While the ancient artwork is built on the idea of identity, the modern artwork is an artwork as far as it is different. Moderns have "the *restless, insatiable striving after something new, piquant, and striking* despite which, however, longing persists unappeased."<sup>21</sup> The modern principle of otherness indicated by the rule of being interesting and mannered leads to the aesthetic vitality, abundance, novelty in art though it also means imperfection, fragmentation and heterogeneity. Schlegel thinks that there is a misunderstanding in calling the ancient artworks as representing eternal ideals which moderns are fated to imitate. The ancient artworks

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<sup>18</sup>Schiller established his book "Naive and Sentimentality Poetry" in 1795 while Schlegel started his essay in the same year but published it in 1799. Despite the parallelism of the categorization, Schiller gives an equal weight both the ancient and modern poetry while Schlegel praises the ancient culture. After corresponding Schiller, Schlegel's view changes on romanticism and modernity.

<sup>19</sup>Beiser writes: "To interpret a literary work, Friedrich Schlegel once said, it is necessary to understand its individuality, what is unique to or distinctive about its style and way of seeing things. We can criticize a work, he held, only if we lay aside general norms and consider the author's own goals and circumstances. This method of interpretation, which attempts to define what is characteristic of a work by understanding the writer's aims and context, Schlegel called "characteristic" (*Charakteristik*)." Frederick C. Beiser, *Romantic Imperative* (Harvard, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 23.

<sup>20</sup>See also the introduction of Peter Firchow Friedrich Schlegel's romantic literary theory in *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 3-22

<sup>21</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *On the Study of Greek Poetry*, 24.

cannot be both eternal and ancient. If the Greek artworks were eternal, they couldn't be located to a particular place and time. Moreover, they cannot be both ideals and completed actualized realities. To put it differently, poetry cannot have already completed itself while still continuing to be. Furthermore, something cannot be decided to have the perfect style, when there is no style at all. In antiquity, plurality necessary to produce the concept of style did not exist. In this early essay, through his ambivalent relation to both antiquity and his own age, through usually negative assessments of modern subjectivism, egoism and ever-increasing alienation and taking side with the ancients, Schlegel acknowledges both the tendency of artistic creation towards the harmony and the unity that the ancient works express and the tendency to the disharmony, plurality and novelty.<sup>22</sup> An aesthetic ideal is possible if the double drive of the moderns can become the universal guiding thread of the art.

Romantic poetry as the ultimate literary ideal to be reached is constituted by the harmonious togetherness of dualities associated by classism and modernism: natural beauty and artificial beauty, unconscious production and conscious reflection, naivete and sentimentality, universality and individuality, unity and plurality. Accordingly, literary production consists of alternating between these dualities neither by hindering one of the drives nor by reconciliation of them into a complete dialectical totality. Creative activity progresses by tensional hovering between the unity and abundance and aims at the infinite abundance in infinite unity. Goethe's *Meister* approximates the ideal of romantic poetry in that it presents the

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<sup>22</sup>Kierkegaard and Hegel criticize Schlegel for the subjectivism of his own romanticism too with respect to the ironic character of the art reduced to the play of self-destruction and self-creation. See Soren Kierkegaard [1813-1855], *The Concept of Irony: With Continual Reference to Socrates*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 246-301.

individuality by manifold and various personalities in the novel and it carries the unifying spirit of antiquity throughout.<sup>23</sup> However, what is equally important is that the novel is produced progressively by transformations. That is to say, novel creates itself anew through transformative stages. For example, the initial idea of the novel as the education of an artist transforms itself to a theory of education in the art of living. As such, Schlegel thinks that the novel both initiates self-culturation of the reader and presents the miniature form of Goethe's thoroughly progressive artistic development "which for the first time encompasses the entire poetry of the ancients and the moderns and contains the seed of eternal progression."<sup>24</sup> Goethe's artistic development, in turn, is the demonstration of the development of all literature whose essence lies in eternal progress, unending becoming. Romantic poetry [*Romantische Poesie*] should be conceived as a novelistic, *romantische*, poetry and the novel or literature should be conceived as poetry in progress. To add, romantic idea of novel is very different than the classical writings in prose because it freely includes all other genres and styles in it such as letters, poems, songs, dialogues, essays, speech, descriptions of phantasm view. Schlegel's own novel *Lucinde*, too, consists of the break in the form and narrates in a rich variety of literary forms. Thus, not only the romantic content but the romantic form is also determined according to the principle of infinite abundance in infinite unity.

As Beiser critically examines, once Schlegel establishes general features of the romantic literature he extends the concept of romantic poetry from a literary work to a general aesthetic category. He applies it to all other arts, given that other forms of

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<sup>23</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, "Essay about Different Styles in Goethe's Early and Later Works" in *Dialogue on Poetry*, 112.

<sup>24</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, 113, see also 29-33.

art, such as music or paintings, can bear the same features.<sup>25</sup> The literary ideal becomes the general aesthetic ideal for all arts. The notion of romantic poetry allows such an extension in meaning since it refers not only to the aesthetic product but also to the productive, creative, activity; to the poesy itself. Art provides one of the concrete ways of poiesis by means of producing multiple forms of reflection and interpretation of the reality.<sup>26</sup> Thus, romantics focus on the poesy more than poetics and on poiesis which originally means producing, creating, bringing into presence.<sup>27</sup> On this context Schlegel regards the creative production as an ongoing process through which the meaning of artwork is infinitely produced by reflection both by the producer and receiver, while both of the artist's and receiver's awareness and self-awareness grow.

One important aspect of this creative/interpretative process is the principle of wit. Wit is the enthusiastic, inventive, combining, passionate, expressive and involving imaginative aspect of creative process, usually associated by the genius (CF 250; 197). The romantic genius, on the other hand, is the heightened power of productive imagination which, as a human faculty, is shared by all human beings and involved in all experience in addition to aesthetic experience (CF 16; 144). Schlegel writes that "[t]o have genius is the natural state of humanity" (I 19; 242) and "[e]veryone is an

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<sup>25</sup>Frederick C. Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, 11-22.

<sup>27</sup>Derek H. Whitehead expresses the difference as follows: "Here poiesis does not bring itself into presence in the created work as praxis brings itself into presence as an act. The Greeks drew a distinction between poiesis and praxis. Praxis in the Greek sense had to do with the immediate sense of 'an act', of a will that accomplishes or completes itself in action. Poiesis was conceived as bringing something from concealment into the full light and radiation of a created work." Derek H. Whitehead "Poiesis and Art-Making: A Way of Letting-Be," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 1 (2003). See also Andreas Michel and Assenka Oksiloff, *Romantic Crossovers: Philosophy as Art and Art as Philosophy in Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings* ed. and trans. Jochen Schulte-Sasse *et al.* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 157-180, 158.

artist whose central purpose in life is to educate his intellect" (I 20; 243). Imaginative wit is a necessary aspect of consciousness and like Kantian moral imperative it is demanded from everyone. "You should demand genius from everyone, but not expect it" (CF 16; 144). In Kathleen M. Wheeler's description, poetic genius belongs to everyone and romantics have the democratic spirit with regard to genius.<sup>28</sup>

While romantic wit constitutes the inventive and unifying aspect of the artistic creative process, romantic irony constitutes the inevitable destructive and separating factor in it. Irony is the other aspect of the poetic genius. Although not art but philosophy is "the real homeland of irony, which one would like to define as logical beauty," romantics use irony in the specific aesthetic context too, yet they tear off irony from its rhetorical meaning in art and romanticize it (CF 42; 148). Rhetorically irony means saying the opposite what you mean. Schlegel writes that by irony he does not understand rhetorical ironies used in literature or in speech as some parts of the content, but he thinks that the artwork itself is irony in its constitution. The poesy is ironic because it cannot communicate in its limited and continuous existence what it wants to and claims to transfer; that is, the truth. Indeed, it hinders what it wants to transform in every time it attempts to do it. Poetry only hints at it. In the essay "On Incomprehensibility" published in *Athenaeum*, Schlegel affirms that every comprehension is necessarily incomprehension and, as pragmatist Peirce would claim 100 years later than time he wrote, "incomprehension doesn't derive from a lack of intelligence, but from a lack of sense" (AF 78; 170). Every

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<sup>28</sup>Kathleen M. Wheeler, "Classicism, Romanticism, and Pragmatism: The Sublime Irony of Oppositions," *Parallax* 4, no. 4 (1998): 5–20, 9.



understanding carries with itself the absence of the understanding the whole and this lack cannot be something eliminated but something to be endured.

Precisely because of this absence, forms of creations and reflection multiply so that the truth can be expressed. Hence, a created poem express the truth only as a fragmentary incomplete interpretation, yet without being imagined and created as a fragment it cannot be a poesy expressing the real at all. The romantic consciousness is the ironic consciousness in its self-critical awareness of the paradox involved in its creative activity. "It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication" (CF 108; 156). Romantic artist creates critically "in the mood that surveys everything and raises infinitely above all limitations, even above its own art, virtue, or genius" and while he or she creates he simultaneously destroys his creation and inspirational and imaginative capacity by critical reflection. Therefore, Schlegel described the romantic poesy as involving its own self-criticism and judgment; as the "continuous fluctuating between self-creation and self-destruction" (AF 51, 167). In "On Incomprehensibility" he questions the negativity of the irony too and holds that the necessary incomprehensibility, which he describes as "the clear consciousness of eternal agility, of an infinitely teeming chaos" in "Ideas," is what throws the creation, invention, interpretation constantly forward. Thus, "[a]ll the greatest truths of every sort are completely trivial and hence nothing is more important than to express them forever in a new way and, wherever possible, forever more paradoxically, so that we won't forget they still exist and that they can never be expressed in their entirety"<sup>29</sup> In conclusion, there are three

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<sup>29</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, "On Incomprehensibility" in *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 259- 271, 263.

romantic usages of irony. It is used first to reveal the tensional nature of creative process, second to attribute the critical and self-transcending mood and consciousness of the poetic genius shared both by the interpreter and the artist, and third to describe romantic poetry's mode of being,

In addition to irony's three romantic usages, the notion of irony is given a central role by romantics with respect to its roots in Socratic dialogue and Attic tragedies too. Interlocutors of the Socratic dialogue actively participate into the philosophical questioning. So, the dialogue consists of the affirmation and refutation of the thoughts in an unfinished dialectical form. The inclusion of the spectators through the chorus into the play is the characteristic of Attic tragedies and it supplies another example for the necessary collective involvement into poetic activity. In parallelism with ironic method and execution of the play in Attic tragedy, for romantics aesthetic experience or aesthetic creation is carried communally by active participation and polemics. Schlegel writes that romantic novels are Socratic dialogues of his time. Socratic dialogue is the best model to express both aesthetic communication and philosophical investigation whose transformation to poetry is aimed at by romantics (CF 26; 145). The communal practice of romantic poetry modeled after Socratic irony is a "sympoetry" or "symphilosophy" in three different senses (CF 112; 156-7). First, as it is already mentioned, aesthetic production is the result of the dialogue of the interpreter, the critic and the artist. Second, in producing artworks artists themselves form a community and they work together. *Athenaeum* whose parts were written in concrete intersubjective relations within the Jena circle is the striking example of the sympoetry. This collective reflection and production which transform the whole culture illustrates the pattern that the philosophical practice should be molded into. Not only external dialogue with the other, but internal dialogue is also essential to the formation of the individuality. Thus, "the life

of a thinking human being" is "a continuous inner symphilosophy" (B, 2, 160). Third, considering that the prefix 'sym' comes from 'syn' and means 'co-' or togetherness, Socratic dialogue points out essential togetherness of uncertainty, indeterminacy and ignorance with knowledge. In his role of midwifery and with his frequently pronounced ignorance, Socrates destabilizes and relativizes the truth throughout the dialogues while at the same time hinting at the wisdom ironically. As James Corby suggests too, romantic irony radicalizes this necessity of uncertainty to the point of the impossibility of attaining the absolute truth and communicating it discursively by disclaiming Socrates's representation of determination, objectivity and eternity. Indeed, the figure of Socrates represents the truth in the ironic dialogue but it represents it as an absence to be filled by investigation. As we will see, pragmatic theory of knowledge and philosophical investigation share all of these three senses of sympoetry.

To conclude, Schlegel's own literary theory is built upon the necessary absence of synthesis of unity and abundance which constitutes an aesthetic ideal to be strived for not only in poetry but in art in general through different individual artworks. Romanticism of Schlegel does not refer to a kind of genre which he himself contrasted to classical understanding of art in ancient Greek. It refers the ironical productive activity, poiesis, which goes beyond any form of artistic form or genre. All art, science, individual, nature, life, state, society and philosophical activity are poetic as far as they are originated and carried out by the productive imagination should be romantically poetic. Schlegel writes that "[a]n ideal is at once idea and fact." (AF, 121, 176) That all art both is and should be romantic poetry, that the philosophical activity both is and should be romantically poetic or that the life of the individual both is and should be romantic refers to the fact that they are both the idea and the fact, they are their own ideal. In other words, the activity that gives

them their being is a never-ending becoming. In order to comprehend this endlessly dynamic nature of art, the literary theory and criticism should be romanticized as well and should be transformed to art. Hence, not only the creative activity of the artist but also the theoretic practice of the critic should be romantic productive activity and it should become “the poetry of poetry” or “transcendental poetry” (AF 238; 195). Romantic project, in the aesthetic sphere understood narrowly, means the self-creation of the literary criticism and theory and in that sense it challenges both the conception of art and theory. This challenge is only one aspect of romantic project. The romantic project in its totality is a reaction to multifaceted changes eighteenth century including the Kantian crises and German Idealistic tradition. It is equally a challenge to the conception of philosophy. Before passing to the antifoundationalist critique of Fichte, which is the third tendency of the age in addition to the tendencies towards Goethe’s *Meister* and French Revolution, let us conclude this part with Schlegel’s own words:

Romantic poetry is a progressive, universal poetry. Its aim isn't merely to reunite all the separate species of poetry and put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric. It tries to and should mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature; and make poetry lively and sociable, and life and society poetical; poeticize wit and fill and saturate the forms of art with every kind of good, solid matter for instruction, and animate them with the pulsations of humor. It embraces everything that is purely poetic, from the greatest systems of art, containing within themselves still further systems, to the sigh, the kiss that the poetizing child breathes forth in artless song. ... Romantic poetry is in the arts what wit is in philosophy, and what society and sociability, friendship and love are in life. ... The romantic kind of poetry is still in the state of becoming; that, in fact, is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare try to characterize its ideal (AF 116; 175).

## 2.2. Romantic Philosophy

### 2.2.1. Philosophy as Progressive Poetry

According to Schlegel, Fichte's idea of *Wissenschaftslehre* means for the history of philosophy what French Revolution means for politics and what Goethe's novel *Meister* means for art in eighteenth century. Fichte changes the history of philosophy as the French movement changes the structure of politics and as Goethe reforms the literature (AF, 216,190). After Kant, the idealist philosophers believe that the only change that they could bring to the philosophy is to complete Kantian critical system. The way of this completion is to remove the limits set to reason by Kant and to restore the full autonomy and freedom to reason. Fichte has the same aim. As Kant critically examines the conditions of the possibility of experience, Fichte starts with the investigation of the conditions of experience and foundations of knowledge. He argues that ultimate ground of experience is the self-determinative act of the pure ego. That is, self-consciousness as the consciousness of free activity is the basis of experience. This unconditioned practical ground, Fichte argues, also allows the construction of the wanted systematic completion of philosophy. Accordingly, Fichte shows that critical philosophy can be the "science of science", *Wissenschaftslehre*, yet for romantics, if any romantic tribute is to be paid to Fichte, it is in the very opposite direction. Fichte changes the history of philosophy not because he completes Kantian critical investigation, but because he introduces the paradoxical constitution of experience, reality and knowledge. Fichte demonstrates the impossibility of philosophy as a completed scientific enterprise. In the following, we will discuss the romantic reform of the concept of knowledge and philosophy through the critiques of Cartesian foundationalism of Fichte. This will exemplify how Romantics react against the systematic approach of the German Idealist tradition to metaphysics. We

will also see the essential futures of the progressive never-ending romantic method of doing philosophy which is in full coincidence with the romantic poiesis, but first, why do idealists think that Kant didn't finish critical investigation and what are the problematic points remaining unexplained in Kant's transcendental philosophy?

Fichte states the aim of the philosophical investigation as follows: "Our task is to *discover* the primordial, absolutely unconditioned first principle of all human knowledge. This can be neither *proved* nor *defined*, if it is to be an absolutely primary principle."<sup>30</sup> The search for the "absolutely unconditioned first principle" goes back to pure reason's search for the unconditioned condition of experience that Kant introduces in his critical philosophy. According to Kant, philosophy should investigate the transcendental conditions of experience so that knowledge claims can be justified with reference to them. He shows that there are conditions brought about by the spontaneous or active part of experience; the subject or consciousness, and by the receptive or passive contribution of the object or being. Kant thinks that subject can only know that which it itself structures and in the case of human mind that which is known is structured by the categories of mind. This formal structuring constitutes the spontaneous part of the experience. Since the finite subject cannot create the objective content of its cognition Kant says that the content should be given externally and sensuously to the consciousness. Thus, subject synthesizes what it received sensuously according to its categories into determined objects of cognition. We understand the world as the deterministic world of casually acting spatial-temporal objects. Ultimate condition of the experience is the transcendental unity of apperception necessary for the consciousness of the universality of the

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<sup>30</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge, with the First and Second Introductions*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 93.

synthesizing act. Kant concludes that human cognition is limited to that which appears to the consciousness under certain conditions and we cannot know how the thing itself is. Every attempt to know the reality itself would fail because every attempt would again be shaped categorically. We cannot call something the “object” of knowledge so cannot be conscious of our cognition as a cognition without structuring it. However, human mind interests in the unconditional basis of the conditional being and thinking and it searches for this basis. In this search some ideas are created, like totality or infinity. Trying to understand through these ideas reason arrives at antinomies such as the antinomy which affirms the first unconditional free cause of the nature and rejects simultaneously it because causes can be carried infinitely back and there is no completion; therefore, there is no freedom.

Kant reconciles antinomies by denying any objective and constitutive role of the ideas in cognition. Given that ideas do not have the same role as categories, the affirmations reached by them are not contradictory but contrary. The idea of contrariness opens the possibility that there can be a realm of freedom and through this possibility Kant connects his investigation of the conditions of knowledge to his investigation on will and freedom by writing that “Thus I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for *faith*...”<sup>31</sup> Kant separates the theoretical use of reason from practicality. Thus, we can summarize the problematic aspects of Kant’s philosophy from idealistic perspective into three.<sup>32</sup> First, Kant stops at the unknown source of

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<sup>31</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 117, [Bxxx].

<sup>32</sup>See also Daniel Breazeale, “Fichte and Schelling: The Jena Period” in *Routledge History of Philosophy Vol. VI: The Age of German Idealism*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 138-181, 141.

the unity of the conditions of thought and being. The concept of the thing-in-itself is a problematic concept, once it is established and claimed to be unknown. Second, this critical limit of knowledge, Kant thinks, is also the limit of philosophy, for it points to the lack of scientific completeness of theoretical knowledge sought by reason to form a systematic whole. Critical philosophy is architectonically incomplete. Third, Kant depicts different subjects in different part of his philosophy. While in *Critique of Pure Reason* he portrayed the transcendental apperception to be dependent on subjective spontaneity, in *Critique of Practical Reason* he formulates a free, autonomous, self-determining practical agency. The relation of the transcendental apperception to practical agency on the one hand, the relation of them to the finite empirical subject on the other are remained to be explained. This last problem of missing relations hints at the well-known Kantian alienation problem too. The irreconcilability of the idea of moral selfhood and the deterministic nature necessarily constructed by theoretical reason leads to the alienation of individuals who recognize themselves as morally responsible free agents with moral ideals or aims from the world devoid of meaning, morally irrelevant and unreceptive to the tasks and actions. Romantics attempt to redeem the intimacy between the self and the world while keeping the sense of otherness without reducing the one to the other and they deal with the different ways of reflections and experiences for the sake of this intimacy. Fichte, however, gives priority to the systematic quality of philosophy as a science and philosophical reflection as a way to absolute knowledge.

Contrary to Kant, Fichte believes that reason is self-sufficient in its reflective power and the unconditioned first principle can be known by its direct demonstration in consciousness. In Kant's terminology, Fichte aims to demonstrate that through reflection reason knows itself as the source of the unity of all three discrepancies of Kant's critical philosophy. He aims to exhibit the common root of thought and



intuition, the practical I and the transcendental I, and practical philosophy and theoretical philosophy. To demonstrate this, Fichte adopts the Cartesian method of investigation, limits his investigation to the standpoint of the consciousness, and seeks self-certainty as the indication of immediate truthfulness. So, the unconditioned first principle should be a self-certain principle. Accordingly, the principle [*Grundsatz*] that Fichte discovers has the status of the first, basic, or unconditioned in that it is self-certain, or self-grounding. Other principles founding other domains of philosophy can be legitimated by means of their deductive derivation from the self-grounding principle and the unity of the practical and theoretical part of the philosophy can be shown to be united, too. Thus, philosophy as *Wissenschaftslehre*, as the “Entire Science of Knowledge,” can be grounded on this self-certain principle. Fichte believes that the first unconditional principle is the auto-positing of the “pure I” from which both the consciousness and the object of consciousness can be derived. He concludes that “the essence of critical philosophy consists in this, that an absolute self is postulated as wholly unconditioned and incapable of determination by any other thing; and if this philosophy is derived in the due order from the above principle, it becomes a Science of Knowledge.”<sup>33</sup>

Among manifold versions of Fichte’s attempts to explain his idea of *Wissenschaftslehre* and different expressions of the first principle in his life span, the Jena period of his studies in the years between 1794 and 1799, the time that he corresponded with Jena Circle, resulted into the publication of *Foundations of Wissenschaftslehre*. His later lectures of Jena revising his philosophical project are published posthumously with the name *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) nova methodo (1796-99)*. The formulations of this first principle in

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<sup>33</sup>J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge: with the First and Second Introductions*, 119.

these respective works are “the self posits itself”<sup>34</sup> or “the I simply posits itself.”<sup>35</sup> Fichte characterizes this pure self-positing as “absolutely free and unconditioned instance of acting.”<sup>36</sup> That the I simply should posit itself refers, simply put, to the act of pure self-consciousness. It means that the I, to be conscious of itself, should posit itself to itself as the object that is been conscious of. Otherwise, there could arise no object-subject distinction and so there would be no cognitive relation supposed to hold between the I *qua* subject (cognizer) and the I *qua* object (cognition). So, Fichte thinks that the object-subject relation of the cognition; that is, the production and representation of objectivity as an independent something standing over against the subject, necessitates an original act of consciousness which constitutes the absolute condition of any cognitive activity and the possibility of experience. The act of self-consciousness is autoproduction because the position of the self as a being is the result of this positing act.<sup>37</sup> In that sense, Fichte resists the reduction of the spontaneity of the consciousness into a thing or a substance because the self-consciousness do not need any prior self but originates itself in the act of becoming conscious of itself. This self-producing act is called by Fichte neither as a pure fact nor as a pure act but as a fact-act (*Tathandlung*) in parallelism of its double dimensional nature as “subject-object.” The other significant notion used to depict

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>35</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) nova methodo* (1796-99), ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 114.

<sup>36</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy*, 98.

<sup>37</sup>Daniel Breazeale expresses it by writing that Fichtean thought can be understood as the affirmation that “existence precedes essence” and that the category of being is derivative and secondary in Fichte’s philosophy. Daniel Breazeale, “Fichte and Schelling: The Jena Period” in *Routledge History of Philosophy Vol. VI: The Age of German Idealism*, ed. by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (London and New York: Routledge 1993), 151.

the act of self-consciousness is intellectual intuition.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to Kant's denial of this type of intuition for finite rational beings, Fichte believes that self-consciousness can be called an intuition because the self is *immediately* present to itself. On the other hand, the self is not sensuously given or passively received like sensuous intuitions but it is actively constituted. Indeed, what is immediately intuited as object is the self-generative activity. For this reason, the intuition is intellectual. Fichte attributes the self-certainty sought as supplying the foundation of knowledge and philosophical reflection to the intellectual intuition. Thus, the I, in its knowing, is grounded on nothing except its own activity and discovers itself as such.

Fichte further clarifies the principle of autoposition of the I in terms of formal or logical principles of identity and opposition. He analyzes the self-certainty of the proposition "I am" with the help of these principles. In other words, Fichte explains the process of the activity of self-consciousness through the principle of identity, provided that the subject and object are absolutely identical. To begin with, the I, in order to be *self-certain*, should posit itself as against or opposite to itself: I am I. The second I in the proposition refers to an object that corresponds to the I. Then, it means that this principle of identity necessitates the principle of opposition. I, in order to be *self-certain*, should posit itself as that of which there is the certainty: as not-self. Hence, Fichte concludes with the synthetic proposition which states the necessary inclusion of the not-self in the self: "*In the self I oppose a divisible not-self to the divisible self.*"<sup>39</sup> With this assertion Fichte drives the finite being in the sense that the assertion refers to the counter-position of the individual, or finite being, both to the infinity of the pure constitution of the absolute selfhood and to the empirical

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<sup>38</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy*, 109-118.

<sup>39</sup>J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 110.

world. The inherent opposition in the self implies both the separation of the individual from the activity of the self-consciousness and its necessary separation from the world of knowledge, nature. Thus, only through the individual's self-awareness of her/his separation self-consciousness arises and this awareness, in turn, requires the representation of the external world. As far as the self is identical with the individual who opposes the world, the absolute self cannot be part of the individual experience and individual cannot recognize his or her identity, because she is part of the division and; yet, the individual should be identical with the act of the pure self-consciousness in order to be the self who knows, because this identity makes the counter-positing possible and originates the experience. We can be aware that it is we who do the action and the reflection; it is we who are the agents, only on the condition of the act of auto-position. This is the paradoxical nature of, in Hector Kollias's term, Fichte's "identity as duplicity;" that is, absolute difference in absolute oneness that the romantics think to be establishing the antinomic structure both in thinking and in being.<sup>40</sup> This ironic thought is the final point that Fichte has arrived.

Fichte passes in his investigation from the concept of not-self as the "objective" opposition to the self in its entirety to the concept of the "objective" understood as the opposition to the ideal or practical activity.<sup>41</sup> He notes that the necessary separation demonstrated formally and theoretically as opposition between the self and the not-self is experienced by the subject as the limiting presence of the nature

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<sup>40</sup>Hector Kollias, "Positing/Hovering: The Early Romantic Reading of Fichte," *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy, special volume, Crises of the Transcendental: From Kant to Romanticism* 10 (2000): 127-140, 130-2.

<sup>41</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy*, 167.

on the absolute freedom of the subject. Indeed, nature cannot be understood as an objective presence having independent externality to the acts of self-consciousness. It is nothing except being viewed, experienced or put as a barrier to the activity of full assertion of the self. The activity of the self is always a “self-reverting” activity.<sup>42</sup> It is directed back to itself; therefore, the other that is related to has only the medium of self-reflection. Within this activity, the experience of the outer world or nature is reduced to the feeling of necessity and limitation. This morally experienced constrain which Fichte calls check [*Anstoss*] is in essence the manifestation of the self-limitation of the will or striving. Every expression of limitation is at the same time an expression of strife. Thus, the feeling of necessity is a “feeling of striving, of “ought,” of a demand, of limitation, and\_ to this extent\_ of prohibition.”<sup>43</sup>

Limiting is important both in theoretical determination and practical one because nothing can be determined without being limited. According to Fichte, the check is not an external constrain to the activity but it gives to the self the task of setting bounds to its own activity; the task of legislating and determining itself. Both self-reflection and self-legislation are tasks. “I cannot engage in an act of reflection unless I grasp a concept that assigns me a task, a concept that contains within itself a task for me: the task of limiting myself.”<sup>44</sup> The determination and production of the self is set as a task and this task consists of constantly setting limits and revision of these

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<sup>42</sup>J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy*, 294.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 294.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 342.

limits.<sup>45</sup> However, the boundary that the self sets to itself can never be passed by because the very limiting act originates the self.

In *The Vocation of Man*, with regard to subject's relation to nature, Fichte writes that the constraints that nature puts on the rational human being are fought by extended dominion and rule of enlightened and technologically strengthened human being.<sup>46</sup> In this world our vocation is to answer our conscience and to respond to our moral duties some of which necessitate material as their means. This material is supplied by nature and nature has no significance apart from this role. So, "[m]y world is the object and sphere of my duties, and absolutely nothing more; there is no other world for me" and the reality of the sensuous world for us arises from the reality of our freedom and power, which is another expression of relation between the self and the not-self.<sup>47</sup> Fichte concludes that "[w]e do not act because we know, but we know because we are called upon to act:—the practical reason is the root of all reason. The laws of action for rational beings are *immediately certain*; their world is only certain through that previous certainty."<sup>48</sup> Thus, Fichte's idealist foundationalism completes Kant's critical investigation by unifying the world and the self, the theoretical and the practical realms of philosophy and the transcendental subject and practical agency by grounding the former on the absoluteness of the latter. He, as a philosopher, provides us with a systematically unified philosophy, reveals the absolute truth through philosophical reflection and anyone who raises his or her

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<sup>45</sup>See also Simon Lumsden, "Fichte's Striving Subject," *Inquiry* 47, no.2 (2004): 123-142.

<sup>46</sup>J. G. Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, trans. William Smith (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1906), 115-119.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

consciousness up to the level of philosopher would discover the same principle as the absolute truth. How did Jena romantics react?

While Fichte argues for the essential completeness and absolute comprehension of philosophical reflection, romantics declare that incomprehension and incompleteness is the essence of philosophy and knowledge. From the romantic perspective Fichte fails in his attempt, as it has been already mentioned, when his investigation arrives at the duplicity in identity. There lies the ironic hovering between finitude and infinitude inherent in self-consciousness. Although his study consists of partial notes and arguments and its being so results in different interpretations, among the romantics, Novalis contemplates on Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* more directly.<sup>49</sup> In *Fichte Studies* Novalis starts his critique of Fichte by mentioning the original paradox included in the first principle of philosophy: "[w]e abandon the *identical* in order to present it."<sup>50</sup> He later expresses this conflict within I by writing that the pure I should be divided in order to be a unity with itself and it should be a unity in order to be divided.<sup>51</sup> Novalis reads this necessary division in the formal principle as meaning that the being of the I cannot be understood without its contrast with not-being. With regard to this not-being contained within the sphere of the pure I itself, philosophy "just grasps a handful of darkness," because it refers to no determination except "absolute sphere of existence. This is mere-being\_ or chaos"<sup>52</sup> The impossibility of the comprehension is also the

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<sup>49</sup>See Manfred Frank, *Philosophical Foundations of German Romanticism*, Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute* Nassar, and the introduction part of the of the Novalis's *Fichte Studies*.

<sup>50</sup>Novalis, *Fichte Studies*, ed. Jane Kneller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 6.

result of the reflective nature of the philosophical investigation which cannot be regarded as intellectual intuition in so far as thought is discursive. For Novalis, when one intuits, one only feels; therefore, intellectual intuition can only mean the effort of the individual to reflect on that intuition intellectually and to present it. What is felt always eludes the reflection and so what is produced through reflection can only be a sign that point to a lack. This struggle to express originates the semiotic realm with its all ambiguous semiotic relations and philosophical reflection, discursive thought and speech fall in the semiotic realm. Novalis takes knowledge to be in a constant state of struggle to know and to express, and he thinks that being has the similar conflicting and tensional structure as long as the individual cannot become a pure I. Fichte's philosophy leaves the thought with an unsatisfied drive to be and to know. To conclude in Novalis's own words: "[p]hilosophy, the result of philosophizing, arises accordingly through *interruption* of the drive toward knowledge of the ground – through standing still at the point where one is" and "[t]he I signifies that negatively known absolute\_ what is left over after all abstraction\_ what can only be known through action and what only realizes itself through eternal lack."<sup>53</sup> The only thing we can know absolutely is the inability to attain knowledge. To put it differently, the only thing of which we are aware of is this eternal lack. Instead of seeking after a ground, philosophy should acknowledge the absolute groundlessness and it should focus on the possibilities that this groundlessness supply for life.

In accordance with his critical analysis of Fichte's first principle, Novalis denounces philosophical methodology of idealism and announces that true philosophy aims at being in harmony with the creative principle of life. He simply writes that the aim of

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<sup>53</sup>Novalis, *Fichte Studies*, 168.



philosophy is not to transcend life but life itself. In his notes for the project of romantic encyclopedia *Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, Novalis calls philosophy as unending poetic experimenting in a constant uncertainty since life itself is a continuous experimentation.<sup>54</sup> “Everything can become an experiment\_ everything can become an *organ*. Genuine experience has its origin in genuine experiments. (*Attempts* are experiments)”<sup>55</sup> The natural genius lets the subject to act as a romantic artist to observe, connect, differentiate and so to partake in the principle of life through transforming it. Neither the model for knowledge is the representation nor is the model of philosophy the presentation of self-certainty. According to Novalis, philosophy is imaginative and reciprocal transformation of the world and the self through the activity of romanticization which is the significant concept of romanticism and which will be clarified in the section on the romantic critique of Fichte’s idea of nature.

Schlegel, in a similar way, states the necessary incomprehensibility or lack of comprehension which arises as the condition for the possibility of the understanding. In “On Incomprehension” he asks: “[a]nd isn't this entire, unending world constructed by the understanding out of incomprehensibility or chaos?” (I, 268). In the previous part we have seen that in the context of the discussion of artistic interpretation it is impossible to comprehend a text or an idea in its completeness and this impossibility and lack of absoluteness makes interpretation possible. Likewise, in the context of the discussion of philosophical reflection and legitimacy of philosophical knowledge, our perspective constitutes partial interpretations

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<sup>54</sup>Novalis, *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia: Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, ed. and trans. David W. Wood (Albany: State University of New York Press), 130, 219.

<sup>55</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 121.

instead of achieving full transparency and knowledge of the absolute. Schlegel believes that knowing is a hermeneutical practice. Like Novalis, he rejects Fichte's concept of intellectual intuition. If to know is presupposed to fulfill some conditions, the notion of unconditioned knowledge makes no sense and consequently "[t]he unknowability of the Absolute is [a] triviality."<sup>56</sup> Thus, every claim for the absolute knowledge is dogmatism in guise of critical thought. Philosophers should acknowledge the absence of comprehension as the core of philosophical activity. Through this acknowledgement philosophy becomes provisional and progressive, always in the search of the truth though constant revision. Against Fichte's idea that we should try to reach the absolute viewpoint of the philosopher, Schlegel says "[o]ne can only become a philosopher, not be one. As soon as one thinks one is a philosopher, one stops becoming one" (AF 54, 167). As a philosopher cannot be but can only become, so philosophy cannot be but can become.

If we go into details of Schlegel's rejection of the notion of the systematic science, we discover that Romantic antifoundationalist critique of Fichte's idea of *Wissenschaftslehre* is based on the skeptic critique of the Cartesian starting point, self-certain principle as foundation and the deductive method Fichte employs. This criticism and rejection of philosophical foundationalism exemplified by Cartesian Method is the primary point shared by pragmatism and romanticism. To begin with, according to Schlegel any principle is in need of proof, the questioning for reasons can be extended infinitely, and any certainty which is established as self-grounding certainty is arbitrary. Secondly, given the infinitely possible ways of justification and

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<sup>56</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe 18 (KFSA) 35 volumes*, ed. Ernst Behler (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1958), p. 511, no. 64, quoted in Elizabeth Millàn-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*, 33.

demonstration, deductive derivation does not have any specialty to secure the foundational character of principles, even if such a foundational character was to be supposed to exist. For Schlegel, both the transcendental reflection and deductive derivation work only when the possibility of the system of knowledge is presupposed (AF, 91, 172). A derivation is ultimately a traduction meaning that a demanded result is inserted into the proof. (AF, 25, 164). Thus, transcendental reflection implies a personal aim and principles accounted to be self-certain represent philosophers' intellectual points of views or the perspectives of their age. Instead of taking the plurality of the philosophical views as an exposure of negativity, Schlegel appreciates and embraces the difference of interpretations and personal perspectives. Not only Fichte, but Kant's deductive method receives its criticism too. Kant has turned philosophy into the "science of propriety" (AF 89, 172). The philosopher in a military and political spirit claims for a realm absolutely and he tries to justify this absolute claim after the occupation. Romantics are against the totalitarian spirit of scientific knowledge and totalitarian spirit of absolutistic monism. Third, Schlegel thinks that Fichte breaks the link of philosophy with both history and particular facts of life by being too abstract and too mathematical. Philosophical practice is the historical developmental endeavor with a past and future and Fichte's philosophy belongs to a historical phase of this practice. "To entirely abstract from all previous systems and throw all of this away as Descartes attempted to do is absolutely impossible. Such an entirely new creation from one's own mind, a complete forgetting of all which has been thought before, was also attempted by Fichte and he too failed in this."<sup>57</sup> The romantic conception of the self is

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<sup>57</sup>Quoted in Elizabeth Millàn-Zaibert, "Forgetfulness and Foundationalism" in *Fichte, German Idealism and Early Romanticism*, ed. by Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010), 327-343, 335-36.

strictly relational and determinable free individual who lives in a world with other individuals. For romantics philosophical practice necessarily includes particular events, lives of individuals, concrete facts, historical beliefs and the tensions and uncertainties that human condition brings. In that sense, as Novalis asserts, from the romantic perspective “[i]dealism is nothing but genuine empiricism.”<sup>58</sup>

In a full deviation from the absolutism and ahistorical mode of thought, in his Jena lectures in 1801 Schlegel declares that “all truth is relative.”<sup>59</sup> He does not only disregard the foundational first principles of knowledge derived internally, but also the foundational “givenness” of the external reality. Romantics reject accepting any givenness resistant to relational change and so they also renounce the sense-data empiricism. The acknowledgment of the impossibility of certainty, however, does not refer to an inability and implies the futility of philosophical effort. Neither the significance of the quest for universality diminishes, nor is the justificatory role of philosophical inquiry lost. Rather, philosophy becomes truly self-critical and self-improving and the notions of justification and universality are reevaluated and radically transformed. For the romantics the universal spirit of philosophy means neither the totalitarian systemizations nor the universality of the abstract lexicon. Philosophical activity is “polytheistic,” bears within itself “all Olympus,” keeps every individual as it is and to this it owes its universal spirit (AF, 447, 239; AF, 451, 240).

Appreciation of the equality of philosophical principles, systems, viewpoints, temperaments or “tendencies,” another name Schlegel uses brings about openness to

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<sup>58</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 62. .

<sup>59</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *KFSA 12*, 9 quoted in Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute*, 104.

a pluralistic production of knowledge and intersubjective justification. Schlegel writes that personal perspectives are the categorical imperatives of theories, and they ought to be kept and fostered (AF, 76, 170). The model for philosophical practice is poetics. In parallelism to the collective production and inter-subjectivity included in the romantic poiesis, aesthetic creation, which is entitled as “symphony,” philosophy is called “symphilosophy.” That philosophy should be self-reflective and self-critical within its plurality is, on the other hand, expressed by its being “polemical totality” (AF, 399, 227). Moreover, the community welcomes the productive and critical participants from the past, present and future individuals with all their potentials of critical transformations because poeticized philosophical activity’s being is an endless becoming. In place of the “transcendental loneliness” of the Fichtean pure I and Cartesian ego in the philosophical investigation, philosophy continues by groundless romantic geniuses working collectively and producing provisional truths with the ironic hope that rendering the life meaningful in its totality.<sup>60</sup> “Philosophy is a mutual search for omniscience” (AF 344, 215).

“Our philosophy does not begin like the others with a first principle—where the first proposition is like the center or first ring of a comet—with the rest a long tail of mist—we depart from a small but living seed—our center lies in the middle” writes Schlegel.<sup>61</sup> In a similar fashion he writes “philosophy, like epic poetry, always begins in medias res” (AF 84,171). That philosophy starts from a living seed in the middle means two basic things. The first one has already been mentioned. Philosophical

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<sup>60</sup>The phrase “transcendental loneliness” belongs to Ben Lazare Mijuskovic. See Ben Lazare Mijuskovic, *Feeling Lonesome: The Philosophy and Psychology of Loneliness* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2015), 98.

<sup>61</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *KFSA 12*, quoted in Millàn-Zaibert, *Emergence of Romanticism*, 328, 84.

principles and ideas are produced in the middle and in the relation of a plurality of viewpoints. The plurality can refer either to the plurality of the beliefs and principles included within a single open ended system or to the manifoldness of different systems and different viewpoints. Schlegel thinks that philosophical activity has a fragmentary form in that every philosophical thought is complete in itself like a fragment. And “[a] fragment, like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a porcupine” (AF 206, 189). However, as a fragment, it is in the middle of multiple relations to other fragments and as such it always points beyond itself; thus, a fragment is inherently incomplete by being a fragment. The production of the philosophical fragments belongs to the romantic ironic consciousness which is the awareness of the paradoxical nature of its poetic production and of the equal necessity of having a system and having none (AF 53, 167). Fragments’ characteristic of infinite relationality also means infinite changeability, adaptability of beliefs, meanings and principles.

From this perspective, romantics procure a new understanding of epistemological principle of justification. Philosophy justifies itself by the changeability of its principle and by the coherency the ever-new principle offers to knowledge which in turn leads to a harmonious life. The principle is a living idea open to change and formation. Thus, the romantic principle is the *Wechselgrundsatz*, not the *Grundsatz*. Accordingly, as Millán-Zaibert points out, the justificatory role of philosophical inquiry is understood to be holistically and justificatory: mutual conformation of beliefs; a reciprocal proof, (*ein Wechselerweis*). Philosophical activity on the other hand resembles a puzzle work. The romantic philosophical engagement becomes a circular coherentist interplay and adaptation of beliefs which lacks both a first point and a last one and which circles genealogically and provisionally. Schlegel

characterizes it as an artistic process including both hermeneutical and critical moments with an ideal of a coherent and harmonious whole. Philosophical inquiry is an ongoing production of a romantic poem which slightly destructs and produces. It is an activity of a constant becoming which can only approximate to the perfection of the infinite diversity in infinite unity. To conclude in Schlegel's own words

Not only a *Wechselerweis* but a *Wechselbegriff*, must ground philosophy. One may ask with each concept as with each proof, for another concept and another proof. Hence, philosophy must, like an epic poem, begin in the middle and it is impossible to present it piece by piece, so that the first piece would be completely grounded and explained. It is a whole and the way to understand it is not through a straight line but rather through a circle. The whole of this science of all sciences must be deduced from two ideas, principles, concepts, intuitions, without further ado.<sup>62</sup>

Second, that philosophy begins in the middle also means that thought finds itself in the middle of an already conceptually shaped reality which is open to be reshaped and which in turn shapes the thought. As Michael N. Forster stresses romantic reciprocity is not only adaptation of ideas in the sphere of thought but it is also the reciprocal confirmative and transformative hermeneutic interaction between thought and experience.<sup>63</sup> Romantics value experience in its all richness, inexhaustibility and inclusiveness of feeling, will and imaginative participation on the side of the individual and of the surprises, novelties and mysteries on the side of the nature. In order to point out the hermeneutical aspect in the formation of reality Nassar names Schlegel's romanticism as "hermeneutical idealism" and supports this title by

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<sup>62</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *KFSA*, p. 518 no.16, quoted in Elizabeth Millàn-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*, 135.

<sup>63</sup>Michael N. Forster, *German Philosophy of Language: From Schlegel to Hegel and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28-29.

Schlegel's claims that reality is only reality through ideas and all knowledge is symbolic.<sup>64</sup> Schlegel thinks that meaning and sense determines reality. In other words, without and outside of the hermeneutical or poetical activity of making sense we cannot determine what real is and what truth is. Truth is contextually constructed from within a sphere of meaning and forms a particular interpretation of the world. This poetical activity and hermeneutical interaction transfigures reality not only with respect to the cognitive interest of the subject but with respect to its agency, its practical identity, its freedom. Hence, the particular romantic view of the world as containing real potentiality for action and as enabling productive formation through spontaneous practice is produced.

Novalis gives the name romanticization to this world's "qualitative raising to a higher power [*Potenzirung*]" and supernatural's lowering to the natural and ordinary.<sup>65</sup> "Insofar as I give the commonplace a higher meaning, the ordinary a mysterious countenance, the known the dignity of the unknown, the finite an appearance of infinity, I romanticize it."<sup>66</sup> In Novalis' romantic language, philosophy is a real homesickness; that is, an unsatisfied desire to be at home. The home sought is not discovered, found or revealed and it is not somewhere outside of the human world of appearances or everyday practical life. We make the world home by romanticizing it infinitely. It becomes cooperative with our ideas, freedom, aspirations, feelings and ideals. That philosophy does not have a concrete form and it is not linked to praxis properly is the biggest problem for the philosophical

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<sup>64</sup>Schlegel writes that reality is "only in the ideas" (*KFSA 12, 9*) and "all knowledge is symbolic" (*KFSA 12, 9*) quoted in Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute*, 113.

<sup>65</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 105.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.



reflection for Novalis.<sup>67</sup> Romanticizing the world makes philosophy concrete as the artful practice. In a similar attitude, Schlegel concludes that romantic philosophy originates from the firm commitment to freedom to create and in the possibility that life can become a work of art. "Philosophy ... is the result of two conflicting forces — of poetry and practice. Where these interpenetrate completely and fuse into one, there philosophy comes into being ..." (AF, 304, 205). Romantic philosophy aims at the complete interpenetration of performance and poesy in the human life.

When romantics explicate subject's engagement in life as the hermeneutical poetic practice, in addition to the stress they put on the self-critical aspect of philosophical activity, the productive aspect of philosophy earns the equal significance. After all, philosophy is the homeland of irony and striving towards unity though production of the new is essential. Given that romantics enlarge the concept of rationality to the point that the coherence of the beliefs and the feeling of the harmony are the primary implications of the rationality and given the centrality of the active creative principle to the subject, it is not unexpected that imagination takes the lead among the faculties of the subject. Novalis writes that "[t]he *productive imagination* is divided into reason, judgment, and the power of the senses. Every representation (expression of the productive imagination) is composed of all three, \_clearly in different relations\_ types and quantities."<sup>68</sup> Not the discursive rationality but the imaginative power defines the subject and philosophy. For Novalis, the scientist observes, critically interprets and constructs the hypotheses by productive imagination too.

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>68</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 142. In addition, in the same book he writes "All internal faculties and forces\_ as well as external faculties and forces, must be deduced from the productive imagination," 138.

The “inspired seed,” the seed of genius, is shared by systematic scholar, philosopher, artist and common man, waiting to be developed.<sup>69</sup> Schlegel, on the other hand, in the part “Dalliance of the Imagination,” in his notorious novel *Lucinde* explains how productive imagination conditions one’s shaping oneself and regulates the self-growth through ideas of the Julius, the protagonist.<sup>70</sup> The most powerful and clear work of the romantic productive imagination can be found in art and art’s creative principle. Productive imagination [*Bildungskraft*] is the center of both formation and interpretation of art because it comprehends events, situations, things by shaping them as contextual *Bildungs*. That is to say, imaginative comprehension, witty consciousness, interprets individuals in terms of their dynamic change and evolution in their multiple relations beyond any deductive or inductive comprehension.<sup>71</sup> Romantic imagination goes beyond the governess of the appearances and the abstract unities of the concepts, and grasps the phenomenon in presenting the possibilities that it can transform into and become. Essential imaginative dissolution of any thinghood introduced by concepts into the mobility of life is expressed by Schlegel as follows.

We obtain all insight regarding the essence of a thing only insofar as we get to know its emergence according to its sources, grounds and its purposes and laws of formation; thus, taken speculatively, all concepts and all theory consists only of genetic concepts; as soon as we do not remain merely by the external characteristics, the concept of a thing as an unseeable, dead holder of characteristics vanishes and there arises only the concept, a picture of life; we obtain then something completely vital—mobile, where one comes from

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<sup>69</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 84.

<sup>70</sup>See, Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde*, Introduction, 37, 128-130.

<sup>71</sup>See also Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute*, 135-37.

the other and brings forth another, in short we obtain insight into the history of the thing."<sup>72</sup>

This kind of comprehension is central to pragmatic relation to reality, pragmatic knowledge production and pragmatic ethics too. The romantic transformation of philosophy, cognitive activity and ethics into art is supported by the idea that this artistic productive imagination is in work in all these areas.

In addition to being the productive power in human comprehension and artistic genius, creative principle belongs to nature as well in the form of the dynamic force which originates in the abundant variation of the expressive finite forms in nature, animates the universe and constantly keeps it in a state of becoming. The Kantian reduction of the nature to a mechanistic unity and the bifurcation of the free subject from this deterministic sphere continues in German philosophy in the form of Fichte's alienation of the subject from nature taken to be an opposing other to be controlled, reigned and overcome. Against this modernist alienation of the human being from nature, romantics separate human being from nature romantically. As Alison Stone analyzes in detail in his article "Alienation from Nature and Early German Romanticism," human being is part of the nature and dependent on it, yet it is never fully reconciled with nature's infinite oscillation between change and order; that is, with the total movement of diversification and unification. From the romantic perspective, nature is a romantic divine poesy, and it is in a state of constant self-creation to which artist and philosophers particularly, individuals generally, participate romantically through creative and transformative activities. Schlegel holds

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<sup>72</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *KFSA 12*, p. 307 in Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*.

that nature is “the formless and unconscious poetry, which stirs in the plant, radiates in the light, laughs in children, shimmers in the bloom of youth.”<sup>73</sup> Viewing nature as the self-creative, soulful and alive poesy, the unity of infinite diversity, symbolizing itself in all the finite beings constitutes an essential aspect of romanticism because this perspective makes the world more intimate to the human being by making nature open to the reciprocal incorporation of the individual although the otherness of the world from the self is preserved. From the hermeneutical perspective, that nature is a poetry in progress also indicates the incompleteness of formation of reality and inexhaustibility of its infinite interpretation. Capturing what nature, experience, life means directly and immediately is impossible because nature communicates itself indirectly in symbols. It always hints at, implies, suggests. On the other hand, because of this very indeterminacy nature can be interpreted to be actively receptive of human cognition and purposes, and to be allowing emergence of novelty and chance. Romantic view of nature implies that ethics involves in hermeneutics in the sense that a desire to live in a world helping to human flourishing and moral amelioration is integral to the imaginative interpretation of the nature.<sup>74</sup> Romantics moralizes nature so that they have a “moral cosmology” based on an understanding of “multiverse” in which not the *one* but the “*All* is the Absolute.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, *KFSA 2*, p. 291, in Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute*, 139.

<sup>74</sup>See Andrew Bowie’s notions of interpretative imperative and aesthetic imperative. Andrew Bowie, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>75</sup>Novalis, *Romantic Encyclopedia*, 42.

To conclude, Novalis and Schlegel, like other romantics, agree with Fichte in the priority of the freedom, act and practice, in the productive principle in knowledge, in the active self-formative and self-creative power of the self, and in the dissolution of the static essence into the infinite becoming experienced by the individual to be an infinite longing. Knowledge is destabilized by the romantic absence. However, the transformative imagination and the will does not remain anonymous universal powers. They belong to the individual and function concretely as the powers of the individual. So they owe their value to the uniqueness of the individual. Freedom, on the other hand, is understood aesthetically to be free to create and reform. Moreover, the active and creative principle is placed in the nature and the self is thought to be within and in relation to a dynamic, spontaneously and unceasingly differentiated and unifying wider spiritual whole which cannot be exhausted rather than being thought as the outside and opposite. Fichte's philosophical story of the I's pursuit of self-knowledge is replaced by romantic longing for and building of a free individual concretely in relation to others, nature and state. This self-building of the individual is the core of romantic ethics which is investigated in the next section.

### **2.2.2. Romantic *Bildung* through Love**

In his article *Friedrich Schlegel and the Character of Romantic Ethics* Benjamin D. Crowe traces the three phases of the development of Schlegel's ideas on morality and the elaboration of his ethical perspective during the years between 1790-1801. He starts from the early period of Schlegel's moral classicism and exemplarism, the period in which Schlegel wrote numerous letters to his brother A.W. Schlegel and to his friends from Jena circle; passes to the second period concentrated on individualism, moral *Bildung* and the literary notion of characteristic, the period in which Schlegel

contributed to the periodical *Lyceum der schönen Künste*, started *Athenaeum* and wrote his novel *Lucinde*; and he ends at the last period of Schlegel's introduction of the romantic concept of humanistic religion, the period in which *Ideas* was published in *Athenaeum* and Schlegel lectured on transcendental philosophy.<sup>76</sup> According to Crowe, the critical points that Schlegel raised against "heartless rationalists" in his letters which Crowe proved to be targeting Kant are Schlegel's first steps to form his own romantic moral perspective. Kant's moral theory is romantically criticized because the moral concepts and discussions are too abstract, the moral ideals are so remote from the actuality that they are unable to change anything *in concreto*, the superiority given to the theory renders the practice trivial and finally mathematical or logical engagement with the universal rules, i.e. their derivation; that is, "moral mathematics," is ridiculous.<sup>77</sup> Schlegel also points to the problem of the multiplication of the subjects in Kant's philosophy and criticizes the fact that Kantian morality divides human being into discursive rationality and desire, and set the individual against herself. This separation enforced by the concept of pure duty results in one's alienation of one's own life and from her/his innermost motives for the sake of duty. As romantics are irritated by the abstractness of the formulas of Fichte's systematic philosophy and form their own conception of philosophy by criticizing it, in a similar way they start the formulation of their ethical perspective by the criticism of the remoteness and abstractness of moral theories, social codes and ideals, and the values introduced by religious institutions.

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<sup>76</sup>Benjamin D. Crowe, "Friedrich Schlegel and the Character of Romantic Ethics," *J Ethics* 14 (2010): 53-79.

<sup>77</sup>Benjamin D. Crowe, "Friedrich Schlegel," 56.

According to romanticism the main concern of morality is to become a self. Instead of stressing the anonymous universal rationality as the origin of human dignity, Schlegel finds the moral dignity in individuality which is not something readily given or found but should be in the process of forming and be strived for. In his letter to Dorothea published in *Athenaeum* where he expresses his ideas on her choice between studying philosophy or poetry for self-cultivation Schlegel writes that “[t]he individual mind, the individual strength, the individual will of a person are the most human, the most originary, the most holy in him.”<sup>78</sup> The romantic moral perspective based on the glorification of the individuality entails the glorification of the plurality and difference instead of universality and oneness too. Romantic agency, on the other hand, is described not as the autonomy to give law and to follow law for the sake of duty at the expense of feelings and drives, but by the creative power of the subject used in producing ideals and in practice of transforming reality through transforming itself, by the power to desire, believe and devote, by the primary feeling of the longing. While desire should be taken under control by reason and should be tamed according to moral rationalism, for the romantics desire is the primal source of morality. Remembering that all the certainties are romantically dissolved, romantic morality does not ask how certain rules for conduct can be postulated but it concern with the production of a form of self-consciousness, art of living and an image of the world in which both the self and the life can become other and better.

The “normative sense of individuality;” meaning that one ought to become the one that she or he is, coupled with the romantic notion of eternal longing for the

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<sup>78</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, “On Philosophy: To Dorothea” in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings* ed. and trans. Jochen Schulte-Sasse *et al.* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 423.

unattainable ideal, is expressed in moral terms as the romantic commitment to be a better, or infinitely bettering, self. The moral commitment to being a better self is called by Schlegel as devotion to “being one’s own God” and he affirms that “[t]he highest virtue is to strive for one’s own individuality as one’s ultimate end” (147, KA XVIII, 134). He writes that “[t]o pursue the cultivation [*Bildung*] and development of this individuality as the highest calling would be a divine egoism” (60, KAI, 262). This divine egoism with its moral order to strive to cultivate one’s unique potential (one’s distinctive powers) according to one’s ideal is Schlegel’s ethics of self-realization which can alternatively be called ethics of self-perfection or ethics of authenticity. “Being one’s own God” also implies the role of the individual himself or herself in the creation and judgment of his own being rather than situating the source of the moral becoming externally. Despite the negative connotations of the inward divine egoism, which Crowe points at too, such as narcissism without any genuine care for the others or for the factual realities, one can only become one’s self romantically only in relation to others, in a community and in the intimate imaginative response to the world. Being constantly in dialogue and creative communication constitutes the condition of romantic self-culture in the same way as it is the condition of philosophical activity, symphilosophy. Humanity can be flourished in a plurality in so far as it allows the realization of the different potentials of different individuals through each individual’s strenuous moral dedication to self-perfection. Schlegel draws attention to the equal value of each unique path to be a self in the following fragment. “If every infinite individual is God, then there are as many gods as there are ideals. And further, the relation of the true artist and the true human being to his ideals is absolutely religious.” (55, p.246). Moreover, as the second sentence indicates, the morally dedicated life to self-betterment is the life lived divinely or religiously. This understanding of religiosity transforms the content



of religion as well and consequently, romantics introduce their own romantic concept of humanistic religion by rejecting institutionalized theistic religion, although in the late years of their lives most of the German Romantics turn to theistic religion. Romantic ethics of self-formation, with all its tensions can be caught by focusing on the concept *Bildung*. This concept brings forth the role of intersubjectivity and relationality exposed by the theme of love, which extends itself romantically to the metaphysical causality too, in becoming oneself.

The concept of *Bildung* is not the distinctive notion of Romanticism and the idea of self-realization through *Bildung* as the highest moral ideal belongs to a wider German philosophical tradition.<sup>79</sup> In German the term *Bildung* covers the meanings development, moulding, formation, growth, education, creation, culture, determination, making explicit, organized, whole and complete, although the list is not exhaustive. The term comes from the verb *bilden*, which is usually translated into English as formation or creation and it originally means crafting an object after a model. To put it differently, *Bildung* originally refers to the activity of producing and shaping a concrete object. If this creative activity belongs not to the art but to the nature itself, *Bildung* denotes a well-shaped organism, natural form or part of a body organized and shaped by nature as it should be. To borrow Hein Retter's examples, one can organize a political party (*Partienbildung*), there can be natural formations

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<sup>79</sup>See Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, 25-35, 88-105. See also W. H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: Bildung from Humboldt to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Bruford clarifies the conceptions of *Bildung* in the wider German tradition, analyzing the lives and theories of nine German thinkers and artists: Wilhelm von Humboldt, Goethe, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Adalbert Stifter, Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Nietzsche, Theodor Fontane, and Thomas Mann. He keeps track of *Bildung* from its first appearance in Wilhelm von Humboldt's theory of education who reforms Prussian education system, to Thomas Mann's political transformation of it against Hitler's National Socialism.<sup>79</sup>

like ice formation (*Eisbildung*) or tumor can grow (*Tumorbildung*).<sup>80</sup> However, in eighteenth century in German philosophy *Bildung* gains a specific meaning: self-formation of the human being. *Bildung* means the process of society's or individual's realization of her or his human potential as culture. In his inquiry on *Bildung* Gadamer quotes Herder, whose dynamic concept of open-ended history including the creative development of nature has an immense impact on romantics, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, the reformer of Prussian education system, to clarify how *Bildung* was introduced in to German world.<sup>81</sup> While Herder defines *Bildung* as "rising up to humanity through culture," Humboldt writes that "but when in our language we say *Bildung*, we mean something both higher and more inward, namely the disposition of mind which, from the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character."<sup>82</sup> Although Gadamer did not quote, Humboldt's following paragraph from *The Sphere and Duties of Government (The Limits of State Action)* is often cited to capsule the German conception of *Bildung*:

The true end of Man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal and immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a

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<sup>80</sup>Hein Retter, "Dewey's Progressive Education, Experience and Instrumental Pragmatism with Particular Reference to the Concept of *Bildung*," in *Theories of Bildung and Growth: Connections and Controversies Between Continental Educational Thinking and American Pragmatism*, eds. Pauli Siljander, Ari Kivela, Ari Sutinen (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012), 281-303; 285.

<sup>81</sup>For further information on Herder's Influence, see Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. Robert E. Goodwin ( Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2014), 3-12.

<sup>82</sup>Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* , trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 9.

complete and consistent whole. Freedom is the grand and indispensable condition which the possibility of such a development presupposes; but there is besides another essential,—intimately connected with freedom, it is true,—a variety of situations.<sup>83</sup>

Still under the influence of Kantian concept of reason, in this passage Humboldt ascribes the status of highest good to *Bildung* and criticizes the hindering and pressing policies of the state on individuality because the state aims to create anonymous, uniform and patriotic citizens by suppressing the difference and plurality and uses education for this end.<sup>84</sup> State's duty is to provide the citizens a variety of situations in equality as much as possible and so that each person has the opportunity to develop his or her individuality. Humboldt's idea's implications can be detected in Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism of oppressive power structures and social, economic and political constraints on the development of individual freedom.<sup>85</sup>

What is significant with respect to Herder's ideas, Gadamer remarks, is the idea that the rise to humanity is not natural formation but formation through culture. Culture points to human way of forming, the conscious and intentional formation of one's capacities and talents rather than referring to natural formation. One works on

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<sup>83</sup>Wilhelm von Humboldt, *The Sphere and Duties of Government (The Limits of State Action)* (1854) [1792], trans. Joseph Coulthard, (London: John Chapman, 1854), 19.

<sup>84</sup>Later he changes his mind and holds that becoming a citizenship and education are for the sake of the state's perpetuity.

<sup>85</sup>See Horkheimer's rectoral address given in Frankfurt and called "Zum Begriff der Vernunft" Farnfurt Universitätsreden VII in 1952 and Theodor Adorno and Hellmut Becker, "Education for Autonomy" *Telos* 55 (1983): 93-110.

shaping her or his self out of her or his own resources, it is self-formation.<sup>86</sup> What is worth pointing with the respect to Humboldt, on the other hand, is the stress on *Bildung's* inwardness; that is, the formative process's being an inner transformation changing the whole being through intellectual and moral endeavor. Moreover, this inner transformation goes beyond the development of one's human capacities in that it bears the traces of mystical tradition which holds that human being's soul is implanted with the image of God and the individual should fashion himself or herself after this image. This idea called the doctrine of *Imago Dei* in its Christian form, displays equivocal noun form of *bilden*, *Bild*, which means both an after-image and a copy (*Nachbild*) and a model or example (*Vorbild*). Gadamer concludes that the dual role attributed to *Bildung*, firstly, carries an inner tension in being both reality and ideal, present and absent, finite and infinite, descriptive concept and a normative ideal.<sup>87</sup> Man forms himself in order to realize his own potential but his potential is becoming divine, the other self but still his self, which cannot be fulfilled in the form of a finite being. Given this historical ambiguous mystical roots of the concept, secondly, *Bildung* doesn't achieve a result, but is in a state of continuous formation. Thus, the concept of *Bildung* as, emerging in eighteenth century German modern consciousness refers to the continuous self-formative process towards the advanced form of being. While it can be thought as the work of the creative and self-

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<sup>86</sup>The term culture also implies the Hellenistic doctrine of *cultura animi* which refers to refinement of and care for the soul so that it can flourish. For future information on the relation of self-cultivation to education and pedagogy see B. Schwenk, "Bildung," in D. Lenzen (Hg.) *Padagogische Grundbegriffe*, Band I (Hamburg: rowohlt Tachenbuch Verlag), 208-221. Quoted from *Theories of Bildung and Growth: Connections and Controversies between Continental Educational Thinking and American Pragmatism*, eds. Pauli Siljander, Ari Kivela, Ari Sutinen (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012), 3.

<sup>87</sup>Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 10-12.

organizing power in nature manifesting itself in organic forms and results in divinization and enlivenment of nature against the mechanistic idea of nature, like Herder, Goethe and Romantics do, it can also be interpreted as specifically an ethical ideal. In that sense *Bildung* is the continuous self-formative practice of the humanity seeking fulfillment and betterment of conditions to make this fulfillment possible. Ethical *Bildung* has no other end than itself.

The last novelty associated with the idea of *Bildung* as an ethical ideal in eighteenth century and early nineteenth century is the creation of *Bildungsroman*, usually translated as novel of formation. According to Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), who introduces the concept into the literature, *Bildungsroman* is a German type of novel, which pictures philosophical concept of *Bildung* narratively.<sup>88</sup> The novel is usually about an observant, contemplating, critical and enthusiastic young man's development of identity and self-transformation from his youth to his maturity through different feelings, ideas, occupations, relations of mentorship, friendship and love. The core tension of the novel is constituted by the longing of protagonist's to reconcile his alienated self with society and to find who he is. Dilthey thinks that every stage of the journey is valuable in itself and is a development in comparison to the former stage.<sup>89</sup> In similar lines in reference to *Bildungsroman*, Georgy Lukacs writes

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<sup>88</sup>Wilhelm Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 335-340. W. H. Bruford calls *Bildungsroman* as "the novel of personal cultivation and development," and characterizes it as "the German species of the novel. W. H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation*, 29-30, 281.

<sup>89</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, 335-340.

Humanism, the fundamental attitude of this type of work, demands a balance between activity and contemplation, between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive towards it. The form has been called 'novel of education'— rightly, because of its action has to be conscious, controlled process aimed at a certain goal: the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and circumstances; whilst the goal thus attained is in itself formative and encouraging to others— is itself a means to education.<sup>90</sup>

Lukacs affirms that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is the quintessential example of *Bildungsroman*, creation of which according to Schlegel is the most approximation to the ideal of romantic progressive poetry in that it tries to reconcile the totality of the Greek art and modern fragmentation and plurality ironically. Romantics themselves create their own *Bildungsroman*'s. Schlegel wrote *Lucinde*, Novalis wrote *Henry von Olfendinger* and Hölderlin wrote *Hyperion*. Thus, *Bildungsroman* becomes another name used for the romantic literature form. What beautifully expressed by Lukacs also provides a glimpse of romantic's ethical conception of *Bildung* in addition to the artistic form which is extended by romantic not to a genre but to the art's form of becoming and transformation itself, as it is clarified in the previous section of this chapter. Subject's romantic search for a complete selfhood in an ever becoming unending flow of experience is concretized by the dramatic transformative journey of the *Bildungsroman*'s protagonist suffering failures, uncertainties, tragedies, resignations, resistances, resolutions. However, *Bildungsroman* does not only depict the ethical ideal of self-transformation and betterment, but itself educates and forms

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<sup>90</sup>Georg Lukacs, *The Theory of Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: The Merlin Press, or M.I.T. Press, 1971), 135. He differentiates two different forms: novel of education and novel of disillusionment. The former is exemplified by Wilhelm Meister which is different from the romantic form. According to Lukacs contemplation is preferred to action in romantic form.

its writer and reader's life by manifesting how the good way of living is becoming an art-work, turning the life itself into a novel, or *Bildungsroman*, in other words, romantic poetry. Romantic's ethical ideal converges on the aesthetical ideal and this assimilation of ethics into aesthetics singles out romantic *Bildung*. This essential assimilation is one of the two differentiating aspects of romantic self-formation which can also be detected in pragmatism in different forms.

Romantic *Bildung* is dissimilar to traditional *Bildung* in two basic points. First point is that not humanity as a species, not subjectivity identified with consciousness or rationality or not the absolute I develops and transforms, but the individual herself or himself forms her or his being to the perfection. The development of general human capacities and the unique individuality do not need to contradict each other, both can be endeavored to be perfected, but the desire to self-formation arises only because of the existential situation of the individual and the process can be carried out by the individual in his or her unique way. Romantic individuality, in addition, is qualitative and expressive rather than being quantitative.<sup>91</sup> That is to say, romantics prioritize individuality not because of its singularity but because of its idiosyncrasy. Consequently ethical struggle to become an individual does not mean the process of becoming an active, obedient, uniform, rounded 'same' citizen. Difference and plurality are inherited in romantic ethics of individuality. This allows the romantic extension of individuality from the personalities to the collectivities, such as unique culture or nation. World, nature, culture, societies or nations are individuals too, which are in their unique process of becoming (I 24, 243; I 47, 245). However, the individual can never become an exhaustive totality, so romanticism

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<sup>91</sup>Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

rejects any cultural or political absolutism in favor of pluralism. In accordance with infinite relationality of the fragment, individuals are like fragments, infinitely relational and relative to others and act in their relatedness and positionedness, always dependent on something beyond themselves in their practice, although the lives they survive are uniquely their own. Self-creation of individuality, in addition, unlike the traditional idea of self-formation, aims to development of the self not only with respect to one characteristics or aspect, but with respect to her intellectual, sensuous and emotional aspects holistically. Therefore, romantic education demands not shutting oneself up in her or his subjectivity but delving into the world of experience. Romantic self-formation is an indeterminate moral experimentation. As Schlegel advises Dorothea in his letter, for moral well-being participation in all abundance of life is necessary.<sup>92</sup>

The individuality gains such a specialty for romantic ethics because the individual is the source of new possibilities, change and creation in the order of experience. Accordingly, the subject emancipates itself romantically by becoming more and more creative and transformative in its practice. To remember, if heightened and cultivated, the productive power shared by all subjects is called genius by romantics and “[e]veryone is an artist whose central purpose in life is to educate his intellect” (I 19, 20; 242, 243). In the ethical doctrine the genius is identified with virtue: “True virtue is genius” (I 36, 244). According to romanticism, the productive imagination as the hermeneutical power makes the transformative practice and virtuous action possible in that it produces a kind of moral image of the world and adds a dimension to the reality as open to change and betterment. Aesthetics grounds

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<sup>92</sup>Friedrich Schlegel, “On Philosophy: To Dorothea” in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings* ed. and trans. Jochen Schulte-Sasse et al. (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 427.



ethics. This grounding is the core of Peirce's pragmatic ethics too. In addition, in romantic ethics the power to commit zealously to the ideal collaborates with this transformative power of genius active in practice. The alliance of the power of the will and genius constitutes the romantic autonomy. Schlegel concludes that

There are unavoidable situations and relationships that one can tolerate only by transforming them by some courageous act of the will and seeing them as pure poetry. It follows that all cultivated people should be capable of being poets if they have to be; and from this we can deduce equally well that man is by nature a poet, and that there is a natural poetry, or vice versa (AF 430, 236).

This romantic "courageous act of will" and toleration reappears in James' pragmatic theory of will to believe too. "Courageous act of will" distinguishes the last dimension of romantic individuality. Romantics hold that the choice to be responsible to become a better self is a free choice of the individual. It is neither dictated by the universal moral rule nor by the societal norms. In that sense, the individual has a radical freedom. The acts and ideals are chosen and dedicated to in the way they are only because they are chosen to be so.

The second point that romantic *Bildung* differs from its traditional conception, as it has been already pointed at, is that it is an attempt to self-formation through artistic activity unlike the other ways like self-formation through asceticism or through hedonism. As suggested in the above quotation, Schlegel holds that everyone is the poet of her or his life and ought to live as producing a poem romantically through endless coherentist and laboring interplay between abundance of possibilities, choices and purposes in a very uncertain world. The subject endeavors to become an artwork, that is to say, to turn life into a romantic poetry. Accordingly, the creative process that should be followed consists of the continuous self-destructing and self-

constructive or self-criticizing and self-affirmative moments. Thus, the romantic self-formative and thus life-producing process continues ironically. The romantic moral ideal to be reached through this process is the individual equally unified and diversified like a romantic artwork. Schlegel trusts the power of the individual, the genius and the will, to bring novelties and change the history and society in a better direction through changing and forming herself into a fully developed individual. However, if modeled after the romantic creation, self-creative activity of a constant becoming can only approximate to the perfection of the infinite diversity in infinite unity. Beiser emphasizes that the ideal of becoming an individual points to the never attained (infinite) self-formation which consists in “constantly attempting to determine what one is, and then realizing that one is nothing but the activity of constantly attempting to determine what one is.”<sup>93</sup> In that sense, romantic freedom means living through a constant, essential tension. One should have an unquestionable faith and commitment to freedom, to the power to eliminate imperfections and inconsistencies, to the openness of the world to this labor and corroboration of it with this labor. At the same time, the experience of romantic freedom is having the tragic insight that this faith itself is an ungrounded choice and striving is without an end. The critical consciousness of the lack of certainty and groundlessness is a romantic imperative too. To put it differently, as Izenberg does, the romantic chooses to put all power to an external source, they are aware of being something more, something beyond the individual, while acknowledging that this more or beyond is the product of their imagination, the result of divinization.<sup>94</sup> Thus, “[m]orality without a sense for paradox is vulgar” (I 76, 248) and the virtuous

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<sup>93</sup>Friedrich Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, 64.

<sup>94</sup>Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 10.

romantic embraces melancholy and enthusiasm simultaneously. The identity, the individuality, which is hoped to be attained through moral struggle, is ironically the movement of the struggle itself. The ideal individuality becomes the ever-developing, ever-experimenting, ever-expanding individual and the aim of the romantic *Bildung* is the *Bildung* itself as a process of becoming.

The last romantic difference to be mentioned is that *Bildung* is possible only through feeling and experience. Schlegel, like other Romantics, takes the feeling of love as necessary for an internal development and as the moral principle of actions. The necessity comes from the fact that the motive for self-realization should drive from the individual's own experience of the necessity of her acts as directly and deeply connected to her innermost actuality. In addition, the fact that the possibility of becoming an individual requires love also means that the individual cannot strive for the better self and better life in its isolation from other individuals and society. Close and intimate bonds to others should be established and the retention of plurality of different ways of strivings for perfection should be pursued.

Schlegel introduces his notions of religion, God and divinity by close association of them to his romantic ethics and romantic notion of ideal. Religion, in that sense, drives its importance for Schlegel as far as it contributes to the romantic moral and social aims; that is, as far as it enlivens the senses and strengthen the dedication to the ideal. Schlegel writes that

*God* is nothing but the individual in the highest power; only individuals can have a God, which therefore is completely subjective, not merely with respect to constitution [*Beschaffenheit*] but also to existence. But the world, too, is of course an individual—that can be known—and so it too must have a God, and this is the paradigm [*Urbild*] (§ 605, KAXVIII, 243).

That God is nothing but the individual in the highest power results in the plurality of Gods and religions. "If every infinite individual is God, then there are as many gods as there are ideals. Even the relation of the true artist and the true human being to his ideal is religion through and through. The priest is one to whom this inner service of God is the goal and occupation of his whole life, and everyone can and should become this." (§ 406, KAI, p. 242). Thus, Schlegel understands by religion not the religion as a constitution but as a kind of spirituality; that is, a kind of personal or private relation to infinity. He concludes: "Every relation of man to the infinite is religion; that is, man in the entire fullness of his humanity" (I, 81, 248). Everyone has their own authentic way of forming intimacy with divinity and the power to build their perspectives to experience it which makes them an artist.

## CHAPTER III

### AMERICAN PRAGMATISM

Classical American Pragmatists refer to a circle of philosophers and their intellectual correspondences in a period starting from the second half of nineteenth century and continuing until the second half of twentieth century. Pragmatism as a philosophical method critically adopted by pragmatists made its first appearance without a name in 1878 in one of Peirce's papers called "How to Make our Ideas Clear" as a product of the philosophical discussions made in the Cambridge Metaphysical Club. Pragmatism did not take attention until James used the term during an address, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," delivered at the University of California in 1898. It gained popularity when his book *Pragmatism: A New Name for an Old Way of Thinking* was published in 1907 which was based on the lectures at Lowell Institute. Through these lectures James articulated and defended pragmatism. The core members of the Metaphysical Club were Peirce, James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Chauncey Wright, Nicholas St. John Green and Joseph Bangs Warner. Bruce Kuklick names the pragmatism founded and shaped at Metaphysical Club as Cambridge pragmatism (1867-1923) while Harvard Pragmatism (1878-1913) is given to the joint ideas of James and Royce to whom Santayana joined later at Harvard.<sup>95</sup> While a comparatively systematic view of philosophy centered on epistemology and metaphysics was dominating at Cambridge, Harvard pragmatism

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<sup>95</sup>Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America 1720-2000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 151.

focused on human will, social practices, and religious concerns. Dewey, the other main figure of Classical American Pragmatism, carried pragmatism to Chicago, shifted the center to politics and gave pragmatism a new form under the name “instrumentalism.”

In light of these distinctions, following Sami Pihlström, if classical American Pragmatism is placed into a larger whole to grasp the complete development of pragmatic thought, one can differentiate 6 stages: (1) the influence of R. W. Emerson and Thoreau, Kant and Darwin on pragmatic thought, (2) the discussions, mainly by Peirce, James and F. C. S. Schiller on the meaning of pragmatism (1880s-1910s), rise of pragmatism in the hands of James, the critical dialogue of pragmatic thought with Hegelian idealism adopted by Royce, (3) Dewey’s introduction of a social and political role to pragmatism (1910s-1940s) (4) the link between pragmatist thought and analytic philosophy represented by Rudolf Carnap, W. V. Quine, Nelson Goodman, Morton White, Wilfrid Sellars, (1950s–1970s), (5) Richard Rorty’s and Hilary Putnam’s neo-pragmatism (1980s–1990s), (6) contemporary pragmatist (2000s).<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, pragmatism can be interpreted in four ways: it can be argued that pragmatism is a philosophical system founded by Peirce and other articulations distort what pragmatism is; or that pragmatism consists of two strands antithetical to each other (Classic Pragmatism and Neo-Pragmatism), like H. O. Mounce does in his book *The Two Pragmatisms: From Peirce to Rorty*; or that pragmatism is a continuous intellectual movement only with regard to Classical period and neo-pragmatism is excluded from this movement; or that pragmatism with all its phases is a continuous movement, including both strands, and contains manifold

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<sup>96</sup>Sami Pihlström (ed.), *The Continuum Companion to Pragmatism* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 3-4.

differences and tensions but unity as well. The last one is the way Pihlström interprets pragmatism.<sup>97</sup>

Considering the historical line given above and the close relations of pragmatist thinkers both as professionals and as friends, it is hard to say that there is no influence or a kind of continuity among the theories of pragmatic thinkers. Considering that pragmatism includes the essential rejection of stable forms, eternal truth, infallible theories or completed inquiries and instead of these it advocates process and open-endedness in philosophical inquiry, it is plain that it is impossible to give any theory or any theories any privilege as the final or fixed descriptions of pragmatism. If pragmatism is an open-ended continuous movement in thought in America, some thematic family resemblances between the pragmatisms of the philosophers can be discovered. John J. Stuhr writes that although no essential character can be found in order to determine absolutely which philosophical theory or attitude is pragmatist, there is still a unitary character in the Classical American philosophy which is "an identifiable configuration, a characteristic shape, a resemblance, an overlapping and interviewing of features (present differing degrees in the writings of the individual philosophers) that, as a relational whole, pervades and constitutes this philosophy and these philosophers."<sup>98</sup> These features are the rejection of modern philosophy and all its dualisms, fallibilism, pluralism, radical

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<sup>97</sup>H. O. Mounce, *The Two Pragmatism: From Peirce to Rorty* (New York, London: 1997) The other interpreters advocating the view of "two pragmatisms" are S. Haack, C. J. Misak, and N. Rescher. S. Haack, "Pragmatism, Old and New", *Contemporary Pragmatism*, (2004)1: 3-41; C. J. Misak, *Truth, Politics, Morality: Pragmatism and Deliberation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); N. Rescher, *Realistic Pragmatism: An Introduction to Pragmatic Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).

<sup>98</sup>John J. Stuhr (ed.), *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press 2000), 3.

empiricism with its notion of experience as an ongoing dynamic activity without the object-subject distinction, the continuity of science and philosophy, meliorism and finally the centrality of community and society.<sup>99</sup> American pragmatists do not only share these family resemblances but they are also bonded with respect to romanticism they share. We are occupied in this study with the shared romanticism of American pragmatists as it expresses itself in the philosophical attitude of two Classical American Pragmatists, Peirce and James.

### **3.1. Charles Sanders Peirce**

#### **3.1.1. Philosophy as Infinite Semiotic Inquiry**

Among the classical pragmatic philosophers, Peirce, James and Dewey, Peirce seems to be the most un-romantic philosopher because of his philosophy's scientific, intellectualistic, mathematical and technical outlook. He admires the idea of architectonic philosophical system that Kant had introduced and romantics destructed. He studies mathematics and logic, contemplates on positive sciences, investigates the method and nature of normative science and he himself joins in scientific practice by doing research as a scientist. All these points seem to be putting Peirce with the romantic imperative that "[A]ll art should become science and all science art; poetry and philosophy should be made one" at odds (CF 115, 157). Indeed, Peircean imperative asserts that philosophy should become a pure science but art doesn't enter into the picture. Moreover, in his lectures and writings after 1900 Peirce separates his pragmatism with clear lines from James, Dewey and C.F.

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<sup>99</sup>John J. Stuhr, *Pragmatism*, 3-7.



Schiller (CP 5.414).<sup>100</sup> The points at which he withdraws himself from the late pragmatists are those where the latter approach romanticism; such as the focus on pluralism, on individuality, on concrete experience, on the creative power of the subject, the understanding of pragmatism as an orientation, or the priority of productive action over theory. Furthermore, pragmatic theory of meaning in its first formulation by Peirce seems to aim of rendering all metaphysical questions nonsense and of reducing ethical concepts to utilities. With reference to these features, As Cheryl Misak, following Goudge, summarizes, Peirce can be regarded as “a hard-headed epistemologist/philosopher of science,” whose primary interest lies in logic and in the construction of a scientific system of philosophy to explain possibility of knowledge.<sup>101</sup>

On the other side of the coin, Peirce’s interest in philosophy started when he read his first philosophical text, Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters* (CP 2.197, 5.129).<sup>102</sup> In Herman Parret’s words, “Peirce’s encounter with philosophy was through aesthetics. As early as 1855, he read Schiller’s *Aesthetische Briefe*, and kept from this reading the intuition of the specific *quality* of the aesthetic with regard to logical, physical and

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<sup>100</sup>Unless stated otherwise, all the references to Peirce’s works are given to *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* in parentheses in the following way: the abbreviation of the name of the collection, the volume number and the section number. Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965).

<sup>101</sup>Cheryl Misak, “Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914),” in *Cambridge Companion to Peirce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-26, 2.

<sup>102</sup>See C. S. Hardwick (ed.), *Semiotics and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby* (Bloomington, 1977), p. 77. See also Jeffrey Barnouw, “Aesthetic” for Schiller and Peirce: A Neglected Origin of Pragmatism, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (1988): 607-632, 610.

moral concepts.”<sup>103</sup> While disregarding Hegel’s absolute idealism, he writes to James in a letter that he admires Schelling’s “freedom from the trammels of system”<sup>104</sup> and he says that he had already been infected with the transcendentalist “virus” before he started his studies (CP 6.102).<sup>105</sup> The transcendentalist virus refers to the perspective of American romantics. With regard to metaphysics, on the other hand, Peirce writes that “instead of merely jeering at metaphysics, like other positivists, whether by long drawn-out parodies or otherwise, the pragmatist extracts from it a precious essence, which will serve to give life and light to cosmology and physics” (CP 5.423). Peirce recasts metaphysical questions as cosmological ideas. The significance of these cosmological ideas is ethical in the sense that they provide a perspective on the universe such that spontaneity, freedom and ethical strife are made possible. They introduce the romantic ideal of perfection and self-growth. Peirce’s romantic ethical perspective will be discussed in the second section of this chapter. This section, however, is devoted to Peirce’s romantic transformation of philosophy to the ongoing intersubjective hermeneutical activity. When Peirce defines philosophy as “Science of Discovery” (CP 1.183–4) or as a pure science (CP 1.645), the science he has in mind does not refer to the static, accumulated and organized body of knowledge built on certain foundations. It refers to neither *Wissenschaftslehre* of the idealism nor “mechanistic- technological conception of

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<sup>103</sup>See Herman Parret “Peircean Fragments on the Aesthetic Experience,” in *Peirce and Value Theory: On Peircean Ethics and Aesthetics*, ed. Herman Parret (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 179.

<sup>104</sup>See Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* vol.2 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1935), 415-6.

<sup>105</sup>For further information of the link of transcendentalist to Peirce see Douglas R. Anderson, Carl R. Hausman Anderson, *Conversations on Peirce: Reals and Ideals* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 149-166.

science" of modernism of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.<sup>106</sup> Nor does logic simply refer to formal logic. How does Peirce conceive of science that philosophy should become and how is the *logic* of this science constituted? What is "The Law of Mind" that encompasses the process of thought in science; thus, in philosophy? Logic for Peirce is semiotics, logical reasoning is a semiosis and scientific practice is situated within human's creative and critical meaning-making activity.

Peirce rejects the idea of epistemological indubitable foundation and first principles in knowledge. This rejection leads to his formulation of science not with respect to its first principles and static structures but with respect to its active and experiential character. Any cognition is essentially a mediated process starting in the middle of ideas; so, science, as an active inquiry, is essentially a mediated process starting in the middle of beliefs. Accordingly, philosophy should become an inquiry in order to be a science. Peirce changes the epistemological task of justifying true belief with reference to foundations and puts in its place the process of provisional belief formation through inquiry. Instead of correspondence of truth to reality, judgments of certainty, and absolute principles we have a coherentist, fallibilistic and future directed philosophical activity. This antifoundationalism of Peirce and the consequent change in the role of philosophy are manifested as the criticisms of Cartesianism, absolutism and atomistic/intuitive conception of experience.

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<sup>106</sup>Joseph Ransdell, "Peirce est-il un phénoménologue?" trans. André DeTienne in *Études Phénoménologiques*, 9-10 (1989): 51-75.

The criticism starts in his papers called Cognition Papers which are written between the years 1868 and 1869.<sup>107</sup> The notion of science to be modeled by philosophy as an open-ended collective inquiry is more articulated in his series of papers entitled "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" dated from 1877 to 1878. Here we encounter the romantic ideal of truth as the convergence of belief and reality. The convergence is impossible and the inquiry stays infinitely incomplete, yet paradoxically the convergence is posited as a possibility in the form of a hope so that the progressive movement of the process is made possible. Peirce's first formulation of pragmatism is shaped in these years too in the paper called "How to Make our Ideas Clear" which is a product of the philosophical discussions made in the Cambridge Metaphysical Club.<sup>108</sup> James was one of the members of the club too.

In Cognition Papers Peirce criticizes Descartes's philosophical method of doubt. Through this criticism the basics of his theory of selfhood and semiotic nature of thought is established as well. Descartes introspectively and methodologically doubts every belief and principle until he reaches to the certainty of his existence as a thinking being (the first principle "I think, therefore I am") and to the existence of God as a distinct and clear intuition of mind. Against this idea, Peirce argues that

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<sup>107</sup>The series includes "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" (CP 5.213-263), "Some Consequences of four Incapacities" (CP 5.264-317) and "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic" (CP 5.318-357).

<sup>108</sup>Yet pragmatism does not have a name in that time. Later, after James brought Peirce's idea of pragmatism into the light during an address, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," delivered at the University of California in 1898. Peirce tried to reformulate his pragmatism and to differentiate it from James's and Dewey's perspectives on pragmatism. Pragmatism gains popularity when James's book *Pragmatism: A New Name for an Old way of Thinking* is published in 1907 which is based on the lectures at Lowell Institute. The lectures that Peirce later discusses pragmatism, on the other hand, are Pragmatism lectures given in Harvard in 1903 and three articles in the *Monist* "What Pragmatism is," "Issues of Pragmatism," "Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism."

human being is not endowed by special intuitive capacity to guarantee a self-certain point in knowledge; consequently, there is no intuitive reflection.<sup>109</sup> “Every cognition, as something present, is, of course, an intuition of itself” but there is no intuition “simply as an ultimate premise, as a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object” (CP 5.214, 215). Thus, intuition to be disclaimed “will be nearly the same as premise not itself a conclusion” (CP 5.213). Peirce argues for this claim in seven points. First, humans do not have an intuitive power of discrimination to decide whether the cognitions are intuitions or mediate cognitions. Given this incapacity, that there are certain intuitions cannot be known intuitively (CP 5.213-224). Second, one cannot know his own existence intuitively; that is, the individual does not have intuitive self-consciousness. Self-consciousness for Peirce is a sensuous, active and intersubjective process rather than being an immediate intuition.

In the most primitive stage of the process of self-knowledge, the self, as a sentient being, draws a distinction neither between the appearances and an ‘I’ who is conscious of these appearances, nor between the appearances and reality (CP 5.229-230). Later, the awareness of the fitness of beings in the environment to be acted on and to be changed emerges. This awareness contains the recognition of the appearances as actualizations of facts. It involves the awareness that things’ readiness to be changed goes hand in hand with one’s body’s tendency to act on them. This body as the nucleus of active will, Peirce holds, is something that the individual observes to be called by a proper name, such as Johnny, by other individuals. By means of the capacity to understand language and to communicate one recognizes that some of her or his appearances, beliefs and desires are

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<sup>109</sup>Peirce “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man” (CP 5.213-263).

continually contradicted by other people while some of them are confirmed. For a child a candle is hot only when the thing she or he takes to be the center of appearances (her or his own body) touches the candle. Except this relation the candle does not appear to be hot, yet the others say that it is hot without the touch. With the testimony of others, individual adds to the conception of the actualization of facts the conception of mere appearance which becomes something private and erroneous, something valid only for just one body, himself or herself. The difference between appearance and reality is established through the movement of becoming self-conscious. The 'I' is recognized as 'mine' with the experience of fault and the continuous possibility of these mistakes. The individual "becomes aware of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a *self* in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness" (CP 5.233). Thus, intuitive self-consciousness cannot be held as the first epistemological principle because self-consciousness requires the active relation to an environment, co-experiencers and communication through language. The relation to reality and certainty is constituted collectively, verbally and experientially. Peirce depicts the movement of self-consciousness in its relations and mediations as an infinite process.

Third, Peirce continues, it is impossible to distinguish different modes of consciousness like believing, dreaming, imagining or conceiving by intuition; therefore, one cannot be certain intuitively that she does not dream and she cannot base her inferences on this intuition. Fourth, mind is incapable of producing first principle by introspection because those which are discovered by introspection in the internal world, such as emotions, are in fact predicates of objects and presuppose the relation of the self to the other. When a man is angry, "a little reflection will serve to show that his anger consists in his saying to himself 'this thing is vile, abominable, etc.' and that it is rather a mark of returning reason to say, 'I am angry'" (CP 5.247).

Fifth, reasoning necessarily proceeds in signs and every thought is a sign. If to be a sign means to address another thought which interprets the sign and if every thought is a sign, then every thought necessarily refers to another thought (CP 5.253). So, all knowing process is caught into a semiotic web of mediation without an end and a beginning. In such a web, no proposition is first, ultimate, or self-grounding. Sixth, the existence of the ultimate “incognizable” as a ground results in a contradiction. Conceptions are derived from experiences. The conception of incognizable requires the cognition of incognizable which is not possible (CP 5.254-8). And finally, Peirce writes that justifying cognition by explaining it with reference to an external ‘first’ thing leads to self-destruction of the explanatory aim in that the unexplainable is formulated as an explanation (CP 5.269). Since cognitions determine themselves continuously, being conscious of an external thing would make it a determined cognition as well, it would fall into the cognitive chain, and ‘externality’ is destroyed. If it stayed outside of the cognitive chain, on the other hand, it would lack the cognitive relation, so it could not explain and justify the cognition. In summary, modern philosophy endowed by “the spirit of Cartesianism” places universal doubt at the starting point of reasoning, removes it by the certainty found in the isolated individual consciousness in the form of the first principle and renders anything left inexplicable unless they are derived from this principle (CP 5.264). Peirce, in the spirit of romantic antifoundationalism and skepticism, is severely critical of absolute foundations and acknowledges the impossibility of self-grounding certainty with reference to infinite relationality, referentiality and mediality of thought.

In parallel line with romanticism, this acknowledgment of impossibility of certainty neither implies the futility of scientific or philosophical claim to knowledge nor renders the concepts of truth and reality meaningless. Truth, the complete view of

reality, is situated into the future as an ideal to be strived and becomes the aim of philosophical inquiry. Consequently, inquiry is described as essentially to be an active pursuit of truth rather than being described as essentially powerful to capture the truth from an absolute point of view. When Peirce passed to clarify his conception of scientific inquiry, he does not focus on the impossibility of going back to the first principles with respect to the infinite referentiality and continuity of thought as he does in in his Cognition Papers but he stresses the impossibility of reaching an end contained in the idea of infinite continuity. The future time that the ultimate and complete truth is believed to be reached through inquiry is prolonged indefinitely. So, this ultimate point as a continuously present horizon of inquiry necessarily dissolves the truth into plurality of truths in the sense that beliefs agreed to be true through the inquiry historically change and reasoning lapses back into uncertainty. The idea of plurality of truths also includes plurality of subjects. The plurality of subjects that Peirce had claimed to be essential to the constitution of individual's self-awareness and phenomenal reality in Cognition Papers, however, is expanded from the circle of the living individuals to a community of knowers "without definite limits" in accordance with the idea of infinite future (CP 5.312). Peirce argues that the active pursuit of the truth is a collective activity, the ultimate truth is which would be constituted by universal agreement in a future time yet to come and so the real as the object of the agreement is "independent of vagaries of me and you" by being the constitution of infinite community (CP 5.312). He writes:

Finally, as what anything really is, is that it may finally come to be known to be an ideal state of complete information, so that reality depends on the ultimate decision of community; so thought is what it is, only by virtue of its addressing a future thought which is in its value as thought identical with it, though more developed. In this way, the existence of thought now



depends on what is to be hereafter; so that it has only a potential existence, dependent on the future thought of the community (CP. 5.314).

Because of the unrealizable ideal of complete knowledge, thought and inquiry are inherently incomplete activities, completion is always yet to come, and reality exists potentially. To conclude, the open ended futurity of the indefinite community's reasoning destabilizes the truth. However, the same futurity romantically stabilizes the inquiry at the same time because, in a form of a romantic ideal, it constitutes the hope of reaching the truth and so serves as a vindication of the inquiry.

This romantic transformation of intellectual activity is manifest, in "Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make our Ideas Clear" papers, as mentioned before, belonging to "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" where Peirce discusses, in Kantian terms, the possibility of synthetic knowledge; in other words, the validity of our knowledge claims about the world. With this aim Peirce investigates how knowledge is produced. His focus is on the central activity of inquiry as the way of producing knowledge and he discusses what inquiry is, which method the inquirers should adopt to be scientific, how the inquiry is structured, what the aim of inquiry is, and which attitude counts as scientific.<sup>110</sup> Peirce holds that one starts investigation from within already established web of beliefs, possibilities of actions and intersubjective relations. When one's beliefs on some issue are challenged either by experiences or by other views, a "genuine" or "living" doubt arises and inquiry starts. The inquiry aims to eliminate the doubt and form a belief, and accordingly the inquiry is defined as the struggle to end the state of irritation caused by doubts and to establish a state of satisfaction resulting by the settlement of beliefs (CP 5.372, 374). Considering the

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<sup>110</sup>See also Cornelis de Waal, *On Peirce* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), 37-50.

continuous movement of the whole inquiry and teleological conception of the self, however, formation of belief turns to be a moment, temporary satisfactory accomplishments and it does not end the inquiry. Rather, it ultimately serves the furtherance of the activity, intellectual or practical which is never concluded.

According to Peirce's teleological understanding of the self, the subject acts with the aim of attaining a desired end. From this teleological view belief is not a mental entity or a simple representative state but it is a guide for action. Once settled, the belief creates a tendency to act in a certain way in certain occasions. As Murray G. Murphy emphasizes by referring to the article of Max Fisch on the genealogy of pragmatic philosophy, Peirce's notion of belief is adapted from Alexander Bain who is a psychologist and a member of Metaphysical Club. Bain characterizes the belief as "'an attitude or disposition of preparedness to act' when occasion offers."<sup>111</sup> When a belief fails, doubt arises, our actions with respect to our aim are left undetermined and the continuity of the activity towards the desired aim breaks. The truth or falsity of the belief loses its significance in so far as believing in something and believing in the truth of something mean the same thing. They mean the same thing because the role of the settlement of belief is introduced as providing the calm and satisfactory continuity of a purposeful activity. This function of tensionless and satisfactory continuity of purposeful activity is the origin of the truth. As James would call, the belief is the "affair of leading", a "go-between, a smoother-over of transitions."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York: 1875), 505-507, quoted in Max Fisch "Alexander Bain and the Genealogy of Pragmatism" *Journal of the History of Ideas* XV 423 (1954) and quoted in Murray G. Murphy, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 160.

<sup>112</sup>William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking*, in William James Writings 1901-1910, (New York: Library of America, 1987), 513.

However, both beliefs and doubts are positively valued (CP 5.373). While doubts as uncertainties stimulate the inquiry, beliefs as provisional certainties respond to the stimulation and both of them fall within the flow of the inquiry; that is, within knowing process. Given that Peircean imperative of inquiry is “Do not block the road of inquiry,” (EP 2.48) skepticism, the absolute doubting, fails in that it blocks the inquiry, but the fixation of belief blocks the activity as well in so far as it dogmatically rejects the openness of belief to be changed, to be revised or to be falsified. “The person who confesses that there is such a thing as truth, which is distinguished from the falsehood simply by this, that is acted on it should, on full consideration, carry us to the point we aim at and not astray, and then, though convinced of this, dares not know the truth and seeks to avoid it, is in a sorry state of mind indeed” (CP 5.387).

There are four methods for the settlement of belief of which the first three are dogmatically shaped though in different degrees.<sup>113</sup> The last method fixes the belief scientifically and it is the scientific model that inquiry ought to follow to be an

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<sup>113</sup>It seems that Peirce’s doubt-belief theory of inquiry necessitates the motive of the doubt as an efficient cause and the movement is not initiated by an idea as a final cause; that is, by an ideal. If an aim is included in the inquiry, it is either negative; that is, the elimination of doubt, or hedonistic; that is, the pleasure of belief. Both of them are contrary to agapasm that Peirce adopts in his cosmology, as we will see in the following section. According to Murphy, his cosmology involves a very different theory of inquiry. In the end of cosmology, this theory becomes the imperfect statement of the fact that the goal of thought is the creation of rational order. The motive is not any more negative (doubt), or hedonistic (pleasure), but the attraction to the aesthetic order. Every one contributes to this order by making her or his own life beautiful, rational. Pragmatic satisfaction refers to the creation and reception of the beautiful. This aesthetic order is the aesthetic ideal which can never be reached but approximately produced and felt. This thesis argues that the elimination of doubt and the continuation of the inquiry in Peirce’s doubt-belief theory is already an aesthetic unity fragmentarily produced in the struggle to reach the absolute aesthetic unity. See Murray G. Murphy, *The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy*, p. 357, pp.362-364. For Peircean pragmatic meaning of satisfaction see CP 5. 552, 559f.

inquiry. First, one can fix one's belief by clinging to it firmly and by refusing to admit all experiences and ideas that contradict the belief. Peirce entitles this direct, simple and systematic way of preclusion the views and evidences that could change one's belief as method of tenacity (CP 5.378). This method fails to be proper for inquiry, precisely because "social impulse is against it" and one recognizes the equality of each different belief advocated by others. A method should concern not how to fix beliefs idiosyncratically but how to fix belief collectively and the contribution of the subjects into the inquiry should be acknowledged. Not the individual but an institution may settle the belief collectively by enforcing one belief or doctrine and preventing the emergence of alternative beliefs. This second method is the method of authority whose examples can easily be detected in religions or politics in history (CP 5.379). This method, however, cannot be hold when it is realized that the enforcement of the belief by a particular authority is contingent and beliefs differ from society to society. While these two methods only supply motives to believe, the next method called *a priori* method is used to determine the content of belief as well in addition to its motivation. If the reason of the fixation of belief is the agreeableness of the content of the belief to reason, then the belief is fixed by *a priori* method (CP 5.383). *A priori* method is used usually by philosophers in history; however, Peirce concludes, the truth that is taken to be agreeable to reason swings between two camps, spiritual and material through history without any revision and progress made with the hope of reaching the final opinion.

Pursuit of truth scientifically, in other words, scientific method of fixing the belief, is separated from other methods in two significant points. The first one is the *hypothesis* of independent reality is added in the understanding of the pursuit. In order to be scientific, in addition to the necessary collectivity, the formation and re-formation of beliefs necessitates the perspective that the inquirers interact with a reality external

and independent. Fully stated, the hypothesis of reality is that there is an independent reality in affective relation to the subject and despite the limitations of individuals, if experiences and reasoning on experiences were kept going, in other words, if the inquiry continued, due to this relation with what is real, the final opinion on how things are, "the one True conclusion," would be agreed in (CP 5.384). The other name for this hypothesis that can never be ascertained, but necessarily included in the reciprocal constitution of truth and reality, is the "infinite hope" for the inevitable outcome of the inquiry. "This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to fore-ordained goal is like the operation of destiny. ... This great hope is embodied in the conception of truth and reality" (CP 5.407). In a footnote in "Fixation of Belief" Peirce summarizes that the unity of ideas as the ideal that is hoped to be reached can only be approximated. The history "encourages us to hope that we are approaching nearer and nearer to an opinion which is not destined to be breaking down\_ though we cannot expect ever quite to reach that ideal goal" (CP 5.385). The second difference that makes the inquiry scientific is that among all the methods only the scientific method can be adopted self-consciously and consistently because only this method can be applied to itself. Unlike the methods of tenacity and authority, the method allows for false reasoning and correction and unlike a priori method it does not sublimate the falsehood into truth through a dialectical necessity, for example, as it is the case with the Hegelian *a priori* method. Inquiry is a doubt-belief dialectics prolonged indeterminately without an end and corrects itself endlessly. Thus, inquiry, if scientific, becomes a self-critical, self-corrective, self-fashioning collective open-ended experimentation conditioned by the romantic hope for unity.

During his discussion of the social principle of inquiry and the impossibility of the privacy of logic, rule of reasoning, Peirce connects this concept of infinite hope to the

individuals' awareness of the contingency of their existence and of the possibility of their sudden annihilation. With this awareness, one is "in the condition of a man in a life and death struggle" and freely chooses to believe of the success of the collective pursuits, though there is no piece of evidence or reasons to support this hope (CP 5.357). As the possible source of James's notion of will to believe in the face of the possibility of complete annihilation and indeterminacy, the question of reaching the ideal is "single and supreme and ALL is at stake upon it" (CP 5.357). Stating differently, the hope of reaching it vindicates the conceptual pursuits and constitutes the rationality of any action and process with an aim. Without the hope of success any action loses its rationality. This infinite hope going hand in hand with infinite commitment, in Cornell West words, is a "pragmatic leap of faith."<sup>114</sup> In addition, in the next paper in the series too, "Doctrine of Chances," this hope is mentioned among three sentiments required by logic and indispensable to reasoning: interest in the limitlessness of community, care for the importance of this limitlessness and "hope in the unlimited continuance of intellectual activity" (CP 2.655). Considering the indefinite community and infinite futurity, the hope refers to the ironic romantic commitment to an indispensable but impossible ideal. This commitment is primarily an ethical commitment to making world more concretely reasonable, as will be elaborated later.

Prolonging the future to infinity and positing an ideal at the end of this future which never comes, which is interpreted as the romanticization philosophical investigation as an infinite task in this study, is entitled by Murphy as Peirce's "philosopher

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<sup>114</sup>Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 52.

stone” to solve the dilemmatic situation concerning reality.<sup>115</sup> To recall, there can be nothing that is not cognized according to Peirce’s incognizability thesis and everything is cognized as they appear to us through our interpretative understanding, given that every thought is a sign. With the hypothesis of reality as external to thought and the cause of experience, Peirce seems to fall into a dilemma. Either what is real cannot be experienced and reality is a construction of our conceptual activity or there is a manner that things are independent to us but this manner is incognizable because what we experience is already conditioned by our hermeneutic activity. To solve this dilemma Peirce takes the reality as the source of inexhaustible possibilities which, albeit not at a particular time, can be in principle wholly cognized because the cognition process is prolonged to infinity. So, neither the reality is lost nor it is left ineffable. For sure, Peirce refuses that knowledge one-sidedly mirrors a stable, determined, already structured reality and offers a view of open-ended, dynamic, evolving reality which contains “absolute chance” or spontaneity. The inquirers, philosophers, or the individuals experiments in an interactive way in which both what is investigated and conceptual framework or web of beliefs, or system of signs have partial roles, reciprocally limit and extend each other. While Peirce’s interactive model of knowledge production will be detailed in the context of his theory of signs, his notion of reality will be elaborated in the context of his process metaphysics. For now, the point to be stressed is that in addition to transformation of inquiry into a romantic strife by the position of the infinite future contained in the notion of ideal, the corresponding romantic configuration of reality into that which is partially actualized and have been already shaped, but partially and infinitely open to reformation, and thus, into an

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<sup>115</sup>Murray G. Murphy, *The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy*, 169.

inexhaustible actualizable possibilities is completed too. The ideal opens up the semiotical horizon to interpret and re-interpret reality in terms of possibilities which Peirce calls “would-be”s or, more pragmatically “would-acts” or “would-do”s (CP 5.467).<sup>116</sup> To put differently, ‘what is’ is always understood in terms of “what could/would be.” As Thomas M. Alexander suggests pragmatic view involves “a recognition of the importance of a mode of understanding whereby the actual as reinterpreted and reconstructed in to light of the possible” and “ontological modalities of actuality and potentiality are integrated into very idea of an ‘event’ or ‘situation’”<sup>117</sup>

Although Alexander called pragmatism a worldview and although James strongly advocates it in this form, at the time when James popularizes pragmatism and when manifold forms of pragmatism flourishes, Peirce tries to differentiate between his pragmatism and the other ones. In “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” he neither espouses that pragmatism is a metaphysical view nor formulates it as a theory of truth. Rather, Peirce formulates pragmatism as methodological use of a maxim for the clarification of the intellectual concepts used through the scientific inquiry. Pragmatic criterion of meaning does not apply to all ideas, but only to “intellectual concepts,” and the meanings to be determined are “meanings of hard words and of abstract concepts” (CP 5. 467, 464). Consequently, pragmatism, in this narrow sense, does not encompass Peirce’s whole theory of meaning; that is, his semiotics

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<sup>116</sup>These possibilities are understood by Peirce as logical interpretants and the doctrine is immanent to the conception of pragmatism.

<sup>117</sup>Thomas M. Alexander, *The Human Eros: Eco-ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 159-160. In addition, the paradoxical situation caused by the hypothesis that the real is both the origin of our experience and the result of our experience as the object of our ideal is eliminated too.



according to which not only words but arguments, physical objects, or emotions count as signs.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, Peirce's pragmatism manifests the active role of the subject who is necessarily in an affective and interactive relation with the object in determination of meanings. According to logicians, Peirce writes, concepts can have two levels of clarity: clarity is either led by "familiar use" or results from "abstract distinctness" (CP 5.390). Hence, one can have a clear understanding of a term either by acquaintance or by abstract definition. Through the inquiry, however, concepts are clarified by the reference to the way the object acts and behaves. So, their sense comes from the contribution of the results of these actions to the continuity of the conduct. The pragmatic rule of ascertaining meaning is: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (CP 5. 402).

We form a conception of an object and we understand a situation by taking the practical effects of this object into consideration; that is, we think of the ways how the object acts on us or with other objects. The practical effect of an object on us is its production of habits and beliefs. So, "[t]o develop its meaning, we have, therefore, simply determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply with habits it involves" (CP 5.400). To add, the clarification process goes without an end because experience flows, the inquiry does the same and the practical effects cannot be exhaustible. Moreover, an idea or concept can be clear without being true. Thus,

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<sup>118</sup>Vincent M. Colapietro, "Charles Sanders Peirce" in *A Companion to Pragmatism* ed. John R. Shook, Joseph Margolis (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 13-30; see 22-24. While Colapietro believes that semiosis and pragmatism are separate theories, de Waal writes that in principle, pragmatic criterion can be applied to everything that can be a sign. Cornelis de Waal, *On Peirce*, 26-7.

meanings can change and develop infinitely and when a concept, for instance, free will or force, does not bring about any practical difference, this concept is a “senseless jargon” (CP 5.401). Protestant doctrine of transubstantiation, Peirce holds, referring to the transformation of the flesh and blood of the Christ into the wine and bread is meaningless because the qualities and effects of the wine and bread remain the same in spite of the fact that the substances are transformed. If there is no discernable possible difference in practice and effects, then the concept transubstantiation has no meaning.

In the footnotes to the “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” added in 1900s Peirce puts emphasis on the fact that the practical bearings mentioned in the formulation of the pragmatic method are not personal in the sense that they are relative effects on individuals. Practical difference should be interpreted as the practical difference brought about to the infinite practice of inquiry conducted by the indefinite community. In addition, the meaning of the concepts should not be thought as the actions the object of the concepts or situation referred by the concepts immediately originate. The meaning consists of “conceivable” “intellectual purport” (CP 5. 402n). Pragmatic meaning for Peirce still means the general patterns, behaviors or habits of the object. The reason of these additions is James’s re-formulation of pragmatism in more individualistic, pluralistic and nominalist manner which disturbs Peirce to the point that he calls his own pragmatism “pragmaticism” to point the difference (CP 5. 414). It should also be noted that Peirce’s pragmatic maxim cannot be read as a version of logical positivists’ verification principle despite the apparent affinity between them. As de Waal writes “whereas the logical positivist sought to eradicate everything the sciences with that method could not deal with, Peirce sought to

stretch the scientific method so as to include as much as possible.”<sup>119</sup> Reading Peirce as a positivist with the imperative that “philosophy should become science” is one sided without concentrating on what science should become.

In the parallel line with romanticism, Peirce does not only present the essential self-critical aspect and self-reflective nature of philosophical inquiry, but he also pictures it as necessarily creative. In Peirce’s characterization of thought and inquiry, in addition to the essential continuity of the thought and reasoning, the spontaneous, disruptive, novelty bringing imaginative dimension of thought comes to the fore too. Peirce shares the romantic idea that the imaginative dimension of understanding and creative principle of thought constitutes the center of any practice of knowledge. In human inquiry the creative dimension of thought manifest itself as abductive principle. Peirce starts the articulation of his notion of abduction from its technical description as a logical form of inference producing synthetic knowledge, passes to its being a necessary stage of scientific inquiry as the creation of hypotheses, simply scientific creation, and concludes with the idea that abductive power is the essential imaginative power central to thought and consciousness. Peirce concedes that “[i]t remains true that there is, after all, nothing but imagination that can ever supply [one] an inkling of the truth” (CP 1.46). In the context of the human inquiry and scientific progress, imagination is the only source of truth as “the power of the human mind to *originate* ideas that are true” (CP 5.50).

During his logical investigation in 1878, with the objective of demonstrating the right way of reasoning, Peirce discusses different qualities and forms of inference (CP 2. 619-644). He simply divides the logical inference into two kinds. Although both of

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<sup>119</sup>Cornelis de Waal, *On Peirce*, 28.

the kinds have the same syllogistic form, the explicative kind of inference, deductive inference, explicates and strengthens the connection between ideas which are already at hand or had already been discovered whereas the ampliative kind of inference adds new connections and new ideas, leading to the growth of knowledge; yet, this basic Kantian analytic and synthetic distinction in reasoning is divided further with regard to the ampliative kind: induction and hypothesis. While through the deductive inference we understand the connection between our ideas by application of a rule to a particular case, through inductive inference we arrive at a general rule from the particular case and a conclusion at hand. On the other hand, generation of a hypothesis, making a "fair guess" means finding what the case means, or inferring a minor premise, from the rule and a conclusion we have. To use Peirce's own example, if it is known that all the beans from a certain bag are white and we have some beans from the bag we deduce that the beans are from the bag (CP 2.623). If we know that the beans we have are from the bag and they are white, we induce that all the beans from the bag are white. And at last, if we know that all the beans from the bag are white and we have white beans we hypothesizes that our beans are from the bag. Peirce differentiates construction of hypothesis from other inferences by stressing that the hypothesis infers a novel fact which cannot be observed in the face of a "some very curious circumstance" or in the face of "a surprising fact" (CP 5. 189) which cannot be rendered meaningful without this novel idea. Moreover, phenomenologically, creation of a hypothesis which refers to the apprehension of a novel idea which gathers different ideas or experiences into one subject is formed by an intense feeling, called by Peirce an emotion, a "single harmonious disturbance" (CP 2.643). Using Kantian terminology, the synthetic unification of the manifold under one idea occurs through a feeling that Peirce likens to the harmonious togetherness of different notes from different instruments.

The abductive inference, in Douglas R. Anderson's words, becomes a "lived process of thought" in scientific inquiry.<sup>120</sup> It is the first stage of the scientific pursuit followed by deductive and inductive practices. Peirce straightforwardly writes that "[a]ll the ideas of science come to it by the way of Abduction" (5.145). Recalling the doubt-belief chain of the inquiry, doubt constitutes the curious circumstances where some new idea should be constructed because something breaks the old web of concepts and beliefs. According to Peirce, the inquirer tries to understand the unexpected situation by imaginatively indulging into the possibilities which he calls a play or "musement," finds a new way of ordering the ideas which relate the present situation so that the situation makes sense and becomes rational or creates a brand new concept alternatively, then deduce the possible consequences of this new way of interpretation or explanation and finally seeks the experiences of consequences by induction (CP 6. 452-474). As the perpetuating processes of the inquiry, abduction suggests 'might be's, while deduction concerns projected 'would be's and induction provides the actualities (5. 171).<sup>121</sup> The imaginative abductive power is both to the ability of opening up the possibilities and being receptive to them, and the active creation of concepts as the new organizations of phenomena. As such, Kaag interprets it as the artistic "genius" and the abductive process can be read as a dimension of poesis accordingly. It is the condition of the progress of the inquiry and imaginative effort continues as the inquiry continues because Peirce writes that only abduction results in growth of knowledge. It can never be known that it is a growth of knowledge or it is the knowledge of the way the things are,

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<sup>120</sup>Douglas R. Anderson, *Creativity and the Philosophy of C. S. Peirce* (Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht, 1987), 16.

<sup>121</sup>See Floyd Merrell, *Peirce, Signs, and Meaning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 181.

because Peirce adds that the world may not be the way inquirer guesses it to be and abductive creation cannot be justified except by the feeling of harmony and the hope (CP 2.270). Hence, the essence of science in Katrin Amian's expression, is "the creative act of guessing the world into being" and according to Peirce "[t]he Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem \_ for every fine argument is a poem and a symphony\_ just as every true poem is a sound argument" (CP 5. 119).<sup>122</sup> The truly scientific philosophy is spontaneously creative reasoning lived as a process.

Although the introduction of abductive act to philosophical investigation contributes to the romantic project that philosophy should include the poetic force, the true alliance arises when Peirce provides the unification of the poetic force with the force of practice. The striking Peircean romantic move comes from the pragmatic wing of his philosophy that philosophical inquiry should care for the effects of the hypotheses to human life. Indeed, these effects constitute the "would be"s of the inquiry. Peirce's romantic transformation of philosophy allows the abduction of God as a hypothesis. In "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" Peirce metaphysically divides the being into three Universes: the universe of ideas, the universe of brute actuality and force, and the universe of things whose beings consist in "the active power to establish connections between different objects" such as "the living consciousness" or "the life, the power of growth, of a plant" or a "living constitution," a social movement (CP 6.445). The wonder in one of these universes or the wonder in their broken connection is made sense by the "strictly hypothetical God" (CP 6. 467). Peirce writes that the pure play and pondering as the

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<sup>122</sup> Katrin Amian, *Rethinking Postmodernism(s): Charles S. Peirce and the Pragmatist Negotiations of Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and Jonathan Safran Foer* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008).

first stage of scientific inquiry leads to the plausibility of the reality of God whose sole value should be considering to be lying in the effects of this idea to one's conduct of life. The hypothesis of God is tested through its role in the self-growth of the individual. The idea of the divinity, like Schlegel's idea of the divinity, has significance in so far as it contributes positively to the moral strife of the individual and in so far as it provides an image of the world allowing amelioration of the world through one's own self-perfection. Thus, belief in God as the "living belief" or the belief as the lived process shapes one's life, at first, by determining possibilities of actions and relations open to one's self and at second by strengthening one's dedication to his or her ideal. (CP 6. 439). Other hypotheses can also be abducted, that is to say, other perspectives of the universe can also be created on the condition that universe is viewed and concretely made more and more reasonable and open to ethical growth through this choice. In the romantic terminology, Peirce enlivens and potentializes the world in a polytheistic manner so that the self and the world can be unified, constituting a dwelling place for each living being under different 'God's.

The final and the most inclusive view crystalizing Peirce's romantic transformation of philosophy and knowledge into an endless creative and critical interpretative practice is his theory of semiosis; theory of signs. Peirce explicitly transforms epistemic practice into a species of semiotic practice. Accordingly, while scientific inquiry is understood as one single all-inclusive semiotic process of all human beings, reality emerges within the semiotic web of experience and experiment. As Floyd Merrell expresses, human agents inhabit the "semiotic world" which is mostly their own making in the sense that they craft a "semiotic reality" out of the real with the hope that it will approximate it.<sup>123</sup> While the semiotically real world is always the

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<sup>123</sup>Floyd Merrell, *Peirce, Signs, and Meaning*, 25-28.

'yet to be' world of which the existing present world is only a part, the semiotic subject is always 'yet to be' subject because, as it has been shown, the infinite community is the part of the identity of the subject, and the meanings are always "yet to come" meanings in the sense that they are indeterminate, inexhaustible and developing. Peirce's theory of signs does not only extend to the theory of inquiry and notion of experience, but it is all-pervasive.

It seems a strange thing, when one comes to ponder over it, that a sign should leave its interpreter to supply a part of its meaning; but the explanation of the phenomenon lies in the fact that the entire universe\_ not merely the universe of existents, but all that wider universe, embracing the universe of existents as a part, the universe which we are all accustomed to refer to as "the truth"\_ that all the universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs (CP 5.448 n1).

That it is all-pervasive means two things. First, anything, natural or artificial, "perceptible, or only imaginable, or even unimaginable" can become a sign (CP 2.230) and "all the universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs" (CP 5.448 n1). "[S]ign... includes pictures, symptoms, words, sentences, books, libraries, signals, orders of command, microscopes, legislative representatives, musical concertos, performances of these" (MS 634: 18).<sup>124</sup> In similar lines, semiosis, the sign-activity, is a process which goes on in the nature as well as its functioning in culture and discourse. Peirce neither reduces signs to linguistic signs nor takes the interpretive agency or semiotic subject as to be the human being. To put it differently, anything that has the ability to express and communicate is language. Interpretations do not refer to only discursive understanding. For

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<sup>124</sup>Jakób Lizska, *A General Introduction to the Semiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce*, (Bloomington And Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 20.



example, signs can be interpreted emotionally, energetically, and logically in case that the interpreter has the power of feeling, autonomous conduct or discursive thought (CP 5.475-476, MS 318: 35-37). If one feels something in a confrontation, it means that one interprets that what one confronts in an emotional way. Emotions are interpretations and reciprocally some signs mean something by producing emotions. Second, that theory of signs is all-pervasive in Peirce's philosophy means that the theory can simultaneously be taken "as a theory of meaning or signification, as a theory of communication, as a theory of inference and implication, as a theory of mind, or as a theory of knowledge and truth."<sup>125</sup> All these concerns can be re-articulated and expressed within the semiotic system of Peirce because Peirce holds that signs operate in very wide range, starting from mathematics and empirical science terminating in all human thought and daily experience. Indeed, Peirce views the cosmos and the subject itself as the processes of semiosis. Hence, the epistemic practice is only a particular form of semiosis. In order to display how Peirce remodels epistemic effort, reasoning, and truth into a semiosis lived by human beings, as the particular form of his whole semiotic transformation, the starting point is Peirce's architectonical divisions where logic "in its general sense" is understood as semiotic (CP 2. 227). In the final analysis the logic of scientific inquiry and philosophical investigation turns to be the dynamic and indeterminate logic of semiosis. The architectonical division of scientific studies and a brief introduction to the terminology of Peirce's semiotic theory will be the subjects of the following part.

In his architectonical division of scientific studies, Peirce places "logic proper," the investigation of the truth conditions of our reasoning under the general heading of semiotic which is logic "in its general sense" (CP 2.227). In other words, semiotic

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<sup>125</sup>Ransdell, Joseph, "Semiotic Objectivity" *Semiotica* 26 (1979): 261-88, 51.

which is the theory and study of signs subsumes the logic proper as its one branch. This branch Peirce entitles critical logic or speculative logic (CP 2.93; 2.229). Critical logic is devoted to inquiry of the inductive, abductive or deductive types of reasoning and explains how logically consistent inferences, probable truths or hypothetical truths are generated. Since logic in narrower sense is a part of the semiotic, it is plain that logical inferences and arguments themselves are signs. For example, a particular inductive inference is in fact forming a symbol whose meaning refer to actual existences (CP 2.270). Consequently, studying logical inferences necessitates the study of signs which are used in all practices and contemplations of “scientific intelligence” which Peirce defines to be the intelligence capable of learning by experience (CP 2.227). The study of the signs and the process of semiosis in terms of conveyance, communication and representation is the other branch of the semiotic and it is called speculative grammar or pure grammar (CP 2.93; 2.229). Grammar precedes logic. Finally, semiotic involves the practice of belief establishment itself; that is, the practice of scientific inquiry, knowledge production and the methodological maxims of this production. Speculative rhetoric, pure rhetoric or is the name of this last branch (CP 2.93; 2.229). Pragmatism as a maxim of scientific inquiry falls under the speculative rhetoric in the context of the semiotic. To conclude, if one makes logical inferences, investigates and produces truths, pragmatically fixes the meanings of the concepts used in theoretical constructions, or even if one simply thinks, expresses, and communicates, all one does is to interpret and produce signs, because “woof and warp of all thought and all research is symbols, and the life of thought and science is the life inherent in symbols; so that it is wrong to say that a good language is *important* to good thought, merely; for it is of the essence of it” (CP 2. 220). But what is a symbol?

In contrast to the theories of signs that proceed from the binary structure of the semiosis, for Peirce semiosis arises and continues in a triadic relation. Signification does not simply involve sign-object relation, but the meaning of a sign is constructed by object-sign-subject relation. "A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign" (CP 2.228). Peirce calls the created meaning as interpretant. The pragmatic maxim of the meaning that it is composed of the relations or effects between the object and the subject (practical bearings of the object) can be anticipated here. As mentioned already, the creation of the second and developed sign in mind refers to the logical interpretant of the sign, while signs are not reduced to mental entities, yet contrary to other pragmatists Peircean pragmatism deals only with logical interpretants. Further, Peirce categorizes signs into three groups which in turn are divided into three. The first group characterizes the sign with respect to its mode of being. A sign can be a quality (*Qualisign*), a sign can be a single existence or an event (*Sinsign*) and a sign can be a law (*Legisign*) (CP 2.243-246). The law demands the event or existent to be instantiated and the event demands the multiplicity of qualities to signify something. So, signs are composed of signs. To put it differently, a simple quality, an event or a law are signs to be read by somebody. The second category characterizes the link of the signs to its objects. An icon is a sign which resembles its object; an index is a sign which has a physical or casual relation to its object; and a symbol is a sign which is conventionally determined to be linked to its object (CP 2.247-49). The object of icon does not need to exist; for example, the statute of a unicorn is an icon, yet the index refers to the existent effect; for example, the rise of the mercury in the thermometer is the index of the heat. Symbol, on the other hand, is a "law, or regularity of the indefinite future" (CP 2. 293). Peirce writes

that the referent of the symbol has a general nature, or it is a kind, and to be general means to have instances to determine. "There must, therefore, be existent instances of what the Symbol denotes, although we must here understand by "existent," existent in the possibly imaginary universe to which the Symbol refers" (CP 2.249). The last category divides signs according to the way they represent their object. They are categorized depending on the modalities of the objects. A sign is called rheme if it is interpreted as referring to a possible object; a sign is a dicent if it is interpreted as referring to an actual object and a sign is called an argument if it is interpreted as referring to a law. Thus, the rheme represents its object as possible, the dicent represents its object as actual and the argument represents its object as necessary (CP 2.250-2). Signs represent possibilities, facts and reasons. Peirce also shows how these categories are combined. When one hears a cry, one reads a rhematic indexical sinsign, while one constructs on an individual diagram, one produces an iconic sinsign. Peirce thinks that all perceptual, cognitive, and communicative activity is semiotic activity whose typology he exposes in detail in the grammar part of his study of semiotics.

Beyond Peirce's architectonic divisions and formal classifications, the core of his theory of signs is the dynamism he attributed to the triadic sign relation and his focus on the process of interpretation. The dynamism of his semiotic can be stressed in three different but interrelated points in his theory. The first one is that semiosis refers to the act of becoming of sign in which both the interpreter and the object participates and change as well. Provided that Peirce's interest in signs is part of his epistemological-scientific project, interpretant-sign-object relation covers both the interpretation-representation- reality and hypothesis-law-nature relations. In all its manifestations the subject-object interplay remains as hermeneutical dynamical process mediated by signs through which world becomes meaningful and meanings

becomes experienced. Second, the semiotic subject as the interpreter within the semiotic circle is also the pragmatic subject; that is, the scientific inquirer as a social actor. The semiotic constitution of reality dynamically oscillates among the plurality of the subjects. Third, the signs or symbols themselves are dynamic. "Symbols grow" (CP 2.302) because "every symbol is a living thing, in a very strict sense that is no mere figure of speech. The body of the symbol changes slowly, but its meaning inevitably grows, incorporates new elements and throws off old ones" (CP 2.222). Symbolizing event includes pointing or imagining, everything. So meaning is everywhere. (CP 2. 293). Thus, interpretative process is a meaning-making process through which symbols change and grow. The infinity of the process, on the other hand, is apparent if Peirce's transformation of all thoughts into signs, all cognition into indirect and infinity mediated cognition and consequently his description of the semiotic chain in which every interpretative idea itself is a sign for another interpretative idea in his Cognitive Papers is remembered. Anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which it refers (its *object*) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum* (CP 2.303). Hence, Peirce describes semiosis as the romantic poesis, as a dynamic practice of sign appropriation and articulation infinitely in process.

### **3.1.2. Ethics of Evolutionary Love**

The scarcity of Peirce's writings on ethics in comparison to the abundance of his writings on epistemology, logic and science cause the questions concerning the possibility of finding any substantial theory of self and ethics in Peirce, let alone the romantic ethics of self-formation. However, the first glimpse of Peirce's idea of divinity proposed for the sake of ethical growth of the human being supplies a

sound starting point to grasp the romantic ethical motive of his studies. Peirce briefly mentions ethics as a normative science in relation to logic and aesthetics in his classifications of sciences. In this classification he grounds ethics on aesthetics and hints at the romantic ethical perspective that the 'ought' is ultimately determined by the aesthetical ideal. To put in other words, ethics includes an ideal that is strived to be realized artistically. The core of his ethics, however, lies in his metaphysical studies where he constructs his cosmology. Peirce, like other classical pragmatists and romantics, pictures how the world is according to how it ought to be if the freedom is possible. According to his cosmology, universe evolves by the drive of love to become an aesthetic whole through both differentiation and unification, contains the absolute chance as creative spontaneity and moves according to the principle of continuity. The inclusion of the absolute chance into evolutionary process refers Peirce's refusal of deterministic, mechanistic, self-closed, finished universe. James follows his footsteps in his conception of novelty in the world and cosmic promise. In the context of his cosmology, Peirce states that freedom is not self-constraining by the origination of moral law but the spontaneous creation allowing self-growth. Universe evolves more and more harmoniously towards an ideal state of beauty and likewise the individuals strive to shape their selfhoods in such a way that their lives are more and more perfected into an aesthetic unity. Finally, we also ought to discuss Peirce's conceptions of semiotic, pragmatic and dialogical individuality to manifest the hidden romantic notion of *Bildung*; self-formation.

According to Peirce's teleological understanding of the self and scientific pursuit, knowledge cannot be understood except as self-critical struggle after the truth. In parallelism with this principal idea, logical reasoning is always a self-controlled and self-critical process from the perspective of the rational individual, which

necessitates the consciousness of right and wrong reasoning. Reasoning essentially includes a rational approval or disapproval, so the individuals, unexceptionally reasoning with an aim to right conclusions, are responsible for their own reasoning. Formal logic as a normative science studies the conditions for the consistency of thought. In other words, it investigates the means for the end of thought. However, Peirce thinks that in order to be fully responsible and rational one ought to not only know the means leading to the ends but the ends themselves. In logical reasoning, the questions to be asked are "What am I prepared deliberately to accept as the statement of what I want to do, what am I to aim at, what am I after? To what is the force of my will to be directed?" (CP 2.198) Since logic cannot reply these questions, it should be grounded on another normative science. Peirce continues by writing that "[n]ow logic is the study of the means of attaining the end of thought. It cannot solve the problem until it clearly knows what that end is. Life can have but one end. It is Ethics which define that end. It is, therefore, impossible to thoroughly and logically rational except on ethical basis" (CP 2.198). Without being aware of what is pursued ultimately in pursuing the truth, without investigation of the purpose of human life, without questioning what the ideal that one's effort ought to be ultimately directed, truth as an ideal cannot be adopted rationally and meaningfully.

Ethics, however, cannot provide the ideal for the human conduct or the aim of human life in its purity because ethics prescribes how to act and live in a right way but rightness is evaluated according to its fitness to an end. Therefore, rightness as the ultimate end should be clarified before what is right or wrong is stated. The ultimate end, on the other hand, can be decided in isolation from any further aim, any particular purposive action and any particular hedonistic interest for pleasure. (CP 2.199). Thus, an ultimate ideal should be that which is strived for its own sake. Peirce expresses this idea by writing that the ideal "must be a state of things that

*reasonably recommends itself in itself* aside from any ulterior consideration. It must be an *admirable ideal*, having the only kind of goodness that such an ideal *can* have; namely, esthetic goodness” (CP 5.130). Aesthetician is the person who finds out what this “admirable in itself” denotes (CP 1. 612). Peirce holds that the ideal which is liked, desired, attracted, drawn to or strived for its own sake cannot be exhausted by the term beauty because some states like confronting the sublime do not give pleasure, they horrify or disturb, but they are still admired (CP 5.132). Peirce solves this problem by translating the ultimate ideal as *kalós* (καλός) (CP 2.199). Aesthetic goodness in the sense of *kalós* refers to that which affects by being attractively good. It inspires love by revealing what is praiseworthy and means to be adapted to its end, being excellent, perfect in its nature. Given that only aesthetics grants aesthetic goodness, logic and ethics are based on aesthetics, truth and right are based on beauty, and thought and practice are based on pure satisfaction. Peirce concludes that, logical goodness and moral goodness is a species of aesthetic goodness each of which refer to a superadded specification to the aesthetic goodness. How?

Like the manner that Kant explains the special quality of aesthetic feeling and reflective judgment, Peirce articulates his notion of the aesthetic ideal as an end to be aimed by saying that it refers neither to the aim of production of subjective pleasure, nor to any beneficial bearings on human life and practice (CP 5. 110, 136).<sup>126</sup> Unlike Kant, however, Peirce does not intend to clearly separate truth, beauty and good by elimination of hedonistic satisfactions and the satisfaction of attainment of objectively practical purposes from aesthetics. Aesthetics helps Peirce to drive his notion of pure satisfactoriness and in the final analysis he grounds his theory of

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<sup>126</sup>See John J. Kaag, “The Lot of the Beautiful: Pragmatism and Aesthetic Ideals,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, Issue 4 (2015): 779-801.



philosophical inquiry and the moral idea of good life on this notion.<sup>127</sup> In Kantian terminology, Peirce discovers the pure form of purposiveness without a purpose. His basic romantic notion of self-generative strife, longing or drive is clarified by being a movement in the pure form of purposiveness. As far as human activity is essentially purposive activity because one strives for the aesthetic ideal, the movement essentially has the form of purposiveness which makes possible the further determination of the purpose as truth or good life. If truth is not described as an ideal and interrelated to human activities, it is a senseless concept. Valuation of the truth as being the aim of inquiry, being an ideal, being a satisfaction turns it to a truth. So, the pragmatic claim that truth is that which satisfies means that truth is a species of aesthetic goodness; yet, as it is discussed in the first section of this chapter, this satisfaction is prolonged infinitely.

In a similar vein, instead of putting aesthetics and ethics into different compartments, Peirce romantically transforms ethics into aesthetics and discards the eternal values in morality. Although he does not problematize the abstractness of Kantian ethics, like romantics did, he criticizes the absolutist point of view that moral philosophers hold in claiming the things as eternally right and eternally wrong (CP 2.198). Morality, "doctrinaire conservatist," blocks its own vitality by claiming to eternity (CP 2.198). As Schlegel argues, moral theorist should comprehend the fallibility and modifiability of particular moral maxims and the transformative concrete power of moral ideas. Categorical imperative is one of these claims to eternity and opposes to the proposal that all practice is for the sake of the aesthetic ideal because morally all our acts should follow the eternal command of

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<sup>127</sup>Murray G. Murphy, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961).

categorical imperative itself. Since according to Peirce freedom entails to be free to criticize and create one self in view of the ideal, categorical imperative and actions derived from it should be open to critique too.

In addition to its being an untenable claim to eternity, categorical imperative leads to a dilemma with respect to critical rationality. As the voice of conscience, the imperative is beyond control and commands without being justified. Peirce asks: "If this voice of conscience is unsupported by ulterior reasons, is it not simply an irrational howl, the hooting of an owl which we may disregard if we can?" (CP 5.133) If we are not powerful and free enough to ignore this irrationality, then all moral maxims derived from our rational power are useless, yet if we have the power to silence the voice of conscience, then moral maxim is not beyond control, can be criticized and changed. What categorical imperative implies is that nothing but deliberate commitment to something taken to be an "ought" originates moral significance. Peirce's manifestation of the tensional nature of categorical imperative hints at the paradoxical romantic notion of moral commitment included in that what is committed should be accepted as unquestionable so that the commitment shapes the life, yet with the awareness that this commitment is deliberately chosen and it is ungrounded. Peirce saves the idea of commitment in his ethics in so far as the veil of absoluteness, fixity and wrong conception of rationality is torn off from it. Peirce interprets this commitment as the commitment to the ultimate ideal which allows one both to change, progress, grow and to keep living morally. Thus, "[t]he only moral evil is not to have an ultimate aim" (CP 5.133). What is this ultimate ideal which is essentially aesthetic by being admirable in itself? What is the aesthetic good to which moral good is transformed romantically by Peirce?

Aesthetic goodness is defined by Peirce as the reciprocal relatedness of multiple parts of a unity in such a way that it brings about the positive quality of an aesthetic totality (CP 5.132). Accordingly, an aesthetically good life, or a beautiful, authentic life is a life that is creatively shaped like an aesthetic unity. Expressed romantically, it is a poem in its manifold dimensions. The purpose of the individuals, then, is turning their lives into artworks through actively and critically creating harmonious and meaningful unification and organization of different aspects of their identities, of the different purposes, ideals and habits, or of different relations they form to each other and to the environment. Forming such an aesthetic totality in its perfection is the ultimate ideal which is admired and sought for its own sake. Peirce liquefies aesthetic totality into the movement or act of poiesis and stresses the creative act rather than the product in the sense that the ultimate ideal should always remain as an ideal to be never realized so that it would have the attraction on the individual as an aim to strive for. As such, the eternity that he dismisses in ethics returns as the eternal strife of the individual for aesthetic completeness of the self. Not despite of the absence of completeness and perfection, but because of this very absence, the pragmatic individual becomes a moral agent. The absence pragmatically generates moral responsibility.

Peirce's pragmatic moral agent, like the experimental inquirer, is a historical, social and sentient subject, entangled by both external and internal normative conflicts and constraints. The moral struggle of this subject to bring coherence and consistency to the life in view of the aesthetic ideal embodies moral development and Peirce thinks that the ultimate ideal can be infinitely approximated by the growth of the conduct into a more diversified and more unified unity. Such a growth requires self-controlled formation, reformation, integration or abandonment of habits. Habits are spontaneously created tendencies to act in certain ways like the beliefs as guides to

actions. In addition, the development of moral agency requires both self-reflective criticism and the use of imagination. The individual practically involved in inconsistencies and constraints comes up with novel ways by imaginative moral deliberation on possible actions, potencies, choices; and generalizes the pattern of spontaneous act as an integral part of his/her conduct towards forming an authentic life. We have seen that pragmatism of Peirce, in contrary to late pragmatic view he criticizes by calling it nominalist, does not bring forth the particular act as the meaning of the concept but the intellectual purport. Similarly, in his pragmatic ethics he stresses the possibility of the generalizability; that is, the lived continuity of right patterns of behaviors. Peirce's intention in his moral theory is to stress that practice is not for the sake of the particular act itself but for the sake of concretization of an ideal pattern in experience which changes the world for the better.<sup>128</sup> To be mentioned, given that the ultimate ideal pattern itself refers to the artistic creative and corrective activity rather than to a halting place as a product, the practice can be interpreted for the sake of practice itself, but still as a universal or general form of living in a more articulated manner. Generalities, like concepts and habits, are not fixed but they change.<sup>129</sup>

We can read the experienced self-corrective and self-creative movement under the guidance of the ideal as a moral development. According to Peirce, such a moral development demands not only formation of habits of doing but cultivation of a kind of receptivity, sensibility or affective disposition for that which is admirable. It

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<sup>128</sup>Albeit this intention, his romantic eternalizing of the process converts the process to an auto-generative and auto-corrective movement moving for the sake of itself. In the end, the realization is like the realization of the romantic individual. Romantic individual in its constant pursuit to realize herself recognizes that she or he is nothing but this constant pursuit itself.

demands growing the “habit of feeling” (CP 1.547). As Vincent Colapietro draws attention, “just as agents shape their conduct to accord with their ideals, they shape their ideals themselves to accord with their aesthetic susceptibility to inherently admirable (or fine).”<sup>130</sup> The devotion to the aesthetic ideal makes possible to cultivate certain emotional and practical habits or dispositions and reciprocally cultivation of habits makes approximation of the ideal possible. The moral task ultimately refers to the constant incorporation to the development of reasonableness, development of the habits of the universe itself, whose essence lies in its endless perfectibility (CP 1.615). In other words, the ultimate aim is to contribute to universe’s evolution towards “organized heterogeneity” or “rationalized variety” through constantly cultivating ourselves and performing transformative acts (CP 6.101). Peirce summarizes:

Accordingly, the pragmatist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody those generals which were just now said to be *destined*, which is what we strive to express in calling them *reasonable*. In its higher stages, evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control, and this gives the pragmatist a sort of justification for making the rational purport to be general (CP 5.432-3).

The one thing whose admirableness is not due to an ulterior reason is Reason itself comprehended in all its fullness, so far as we can comprehend it. Under this conception, the ideal of conduct will be execute our little function in the operation of the creation by giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the slang is, it is “up to us” to do so.” (CP 1.615).

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<sup>130</sup>Vincent Colapietro, “Toward a Pragmatic Conception of Practical Identity,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 42, no. 2 (2006): 173-204, 182. For the significance of the ideals in Peirce’s philosophy see Ciano Aydın, “On the Significance of Ideals: Charles S. Peirce and the Good Life,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 45, no. 3 (2009): 422-443, 432.

To conclude, Peirce's ethical theory offers all characteristics of the romantic conception of infinite *Bildung*. Moral development of the individual in its practical and historical entanglements respects the difference of all aspects of the self without identifying the self with one of these aspects. The treatment of manifold aspects by giving the equal significance to the coherence leads to a pluralistic and holistic development. Second, Peirce observes that the ultimate purpose of moral development is becoming an aesthetic unity. The developmental process itself is an artistic activity through which both the self and the world are transformed into a better form. Third, Peirce claims for the romantic idea that moral development is possible only through experience and feeling. The rightness of the acts or moral necessity should be felt as an internal drive intimately connected to the actuality of the individual. The term 'ought' means to be driven to a necessity and a necessity cannot be imposed at the expense of feelings. Not only to learn how to act but also to learn how to feel and how to receive is internal to morality. Peirce specifies to be drawn towards to the aesthetic unity or to be attracted as love which is the evolutionary principle of cosmos as well. The principle of love will be clarified on the context of Peirce's cosmological theory. At last, Peirce writes that to act to have an aesthetic unity, or better, to form a dynamic, diversified, affected and steady aesthetic flow, requires that the living world react to these actions cooperatively. The satisfaction of this requirement is ultimately conditioned by the idea of reciprocal relation of the experiential world to the efforts of the individual. Individual's romantic commitment to the ideal based on the hope of the self-world unity is constitutive of moral conduct. Peirce summarizes:

In order that the aim should be immutable under all circumstances, without which it will not be an ultimate aim, it is requisite that it should accord with a free development of the agent's own aesthetic quality. At the same time it

is requisite that it should not ultimately tend to be disturbed by the reactions upon the agent of that outward world which is supposed in the very idea of action. It is plain that these two conditions can be fulfilled at once only if it happens that the aesthetic quality towards which the agent's free development tends and that of the ultimate action of experience upon him are parts of one esthetic total. Whether or not this is really so, is a metaphysical question which it does not fall within the scope of Normative Science to answer. ... If it is *not* so, the aim is essentially *unattainable* (CP 5. 135).

Indeed, concerning the paradoxical structure of the moral strife, the ultimate aim is essentially both attainable and unattainable. Peirce concentrates on the metaphysical question of the attainability of the ideal or reciprocity in his cosmology which is the topic of following section. The answer is romantically positive. As John Stuhr writes "Unlike James and Dewey, Peirce seems to be an optimist rather than a meliorist."<sup>131</sup>

Peirce's metaphysical investigation of the structure of the universe is fully informed by his ethical interest. His aim in *Monist* series papers written between the years 1981-1983 is to model a non-deterministic living universe that would allow for spontaneity, chance or freedom. To accomplish his aim he establishes a theory of evolutionary love. He coins his own terms to differentiate his idea of evolution through love from other formulations of evolution. First, the idea that absolute chance operates in the universe is entitled by Peirce as tychism (originating from Greek word chance, *tyché*).<sup>132</sup> While determinist or necessitarian philosopher believes that cosmos is governed by the mechanistic necessity in that events at any time is

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<sup>131</sup>John J. Stuhr, "Rendering the World more Reasonable: The Practical Significance of Peirce's Normative Science", in *Peirce and Value Theory: On Peircean Ethics and Aesthetics*, ed. Herman Parret, (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 1994) 3-17; p.12

<sup>132</sup>See Cornelis de Waal, *On Peirce*, 54-7.

coordinated with events at every other time, the belief that the tychistic law is operative in the cosmos results in the affirmation that cosmos evolves by “fortuitous variation” (CP 6.302). In his paper “The Doctrine of Necessity Examined” Peirce argues that mechanistic philosophy cannot explain variety, diversity and irregularity in the universe. Nor can it explain the regularity of laws. The reason is that proposing that laws of nature constitute the ultimate facts does not give account of them. It is just to propose something ultimately inexplicable.<sup>133</sup> Laws need reasons too. Irregularities and deviations in nature are not results of the human ignorance or erroneous attributions of the poor comprehension, but they are real. They are real because absolute chance or pure spontaneity as the source of complexity and diversity is part of the reality of the cosmos. Moreover, determinism renders the free will and moral decisions illusionary, all the actions calculable, consciousness eliminable, yet pure spontaneity gives freedom its place in the universe back (CP 6.61). Pure spontaneity will always be simultaneously present with the evolutionary movement itself, yet asserting that events simply happen by chance does not give an account of these events either. So, Peirce warns that that spontaneity develops itself into a regularity, it moves like a tendency; therefore, spontaneity should be thought to be arising from within a continuous process and channel the process into a new regularity. Thus, universe evolves according to principle of continuity towards some aim. “[T]he physical evolution works towards ends in the same way that mental action works towards ends” (CP 6.95).

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<sup>133</sup> In “The Architecture of Theories” Peirce aligns four reasons to prove the illogicality of the mechanistic principle used to explain evolution. His target is Herbert Spencer’s mechanistic theory of evolution. First, the principle of growth does not require an external cause. The tendency to grow can be supposed to start accidentally. Second, the principle to explain the evolution itself can be the result of evolution. Third, exact law cannot produce deviancy out of itself. Finally, all the mechanical operations are reversible according to conversation of the energy but growth cannot be reversed (CP 6.14).



The idea of continuity leads to the second term that Peirce invents to spell out his theory: synechism (originating from Greek word continuity, *synechés*). Synechism is the general philosophical tendency to value the law of continuity (CP 6.169).<sup>134</sup> While tychism is formulated against the necessitarianism of both mechanistic and objectively teleological conceptions of evolution, Peirce's synechism refers to the principle of continuity which was encountered in the previous sections as the underlying principle of his theory of cognition, thought and inquiry. In that sense, synechism as a metaphysical principle indicates the counterpart of the ongoing continuity of pursuit of knowledge and perpetuating ethical strife. It points out Peirce's process metaphysics. Peirce identifies the law of continuity with the law of mind and so cosmos evolves through the law of mind. Cosmos acts like a mental phenomenon. "And to say that mental phenomena are governed by law does not mean merely that they are describable by a general formula; but that there is a living idea, a conscious continuum of feeling, which pervades them, and to which they are docile." (CP 6.152). This continuum of feeling Peirce explains as the free flow through attraction; that is, a certain kind of influence which is continuously being drawn. He calls this continuous attraction as love. Indeed, Peirce thinks that matter is effete mind, to wit, it is "merely mind hide-bound with habits. It still retains the element of diversification; and in that diversification there is life" (CP 6. 6.158). Contrary to the idea that feelings and ideas are private cognitive states, for Peirce they are evolving and growing cosmic unities. Sentiency is central to life and

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<sup>134</sup>Peirce entitles evolution by mechanical necessity as *anancastic* evolution. The example of it is Hegelian evolution. So, a mechanical necessity is that what Hegel's idea of dialectical development is grounded (CP 6.303-5).

evolution; consequently, feelings are building elements of the growing cosmos.<sup>135</sup>

They have their own agency and energy. Peirce writes

... there is but one law of mind, namely, that ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. In this spreading they lose intensity, and especially the power of affecting others, but gain generality and become welded with other ideas (CP 6.104).

Mechanical laws are the acquired habits of cosmos as the result of pure play and influence of feelings. The cosmos continues to evolve and grow through both instability of spontaneous creative agency of chance (feeling) and stabilizing tendency of unity (habit taking). As Arthur Burks sums up, tychism is the principle of creation while synechism is the principle of evolution of the cosmos.<sup>136</sup> Thus, Peirce manipulates the cosmos as an artwork in progress as a continuous unity of diversity which perpetually creates and regulates itself. "[t]he Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem -- for every fine argument is a poem and a symphony -- just as every true poem is a sound argument" (CP 5.119).

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<sup>135</sup>Peirce pictures his idea of evolution which begins from the chaos of feelings (non-existent without connection and regularity) continues towards the constitution of time-space governed with mechanical laws and moves in and through living things and humans in terms of his primary categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness. These categories are both the necessary logical categories of thought and categories of experiential phenomena. "First is the conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else. Third is the conception of mediation, whereby a first and second are brought into relation. In psychology, Feeling is First, Sense of reaction Second, General conception Third, or mediation. Chance is First, Law is Second, the tendency to take habits is Third." (CP 6.32).

<sup>136</sup>Arthur Burke, "Peirce's Evolutionary Pragmatic Idealism," *Synthese* 106, no:3 (1996): 323-372.

Agapism is Peirce's primary coinage in his metaphysics and means the doctrine that evolution happens through creative love (originating from Greek world love, *agapé*). The discussion of agapism provides some revealing insight on Peirce's romantic understanding of never fully realized moral growth, because Peirce describes the cosmos as a free developing personality towards perfection without an end. This doctrine enlightens romantic constitution of the self in relation to others and to the environment. It helps to grasp Peirce's ideal of romantic community. Romantic idea of religion is expressed in terms of feeling, experience, love and devotion too.

Peirce puts his agapastic theory of evolution at the same line with Lamarck's theory by opposing it to Darwin's theory of evolution. Peirce's paper "Evolutionary Love" begins with a criticism of the nineteenth century of America in control of the utility seeking "greedy master of intelligence" (CP 6.290). Peirce writes that in his century just prices, fair contracts and all goodness and justice in general were ensured by the greed. Individual who seeks for his own sustenance and pleasure at the expense of other lives was announced to be the engine of the social progress and betterment. Thus, the moral spirit of the century was established by the political-economists of the time and they based the ethics on the egoist interests of the individual. Economists blamed the one who refused to accept their theory for being sentimentalist and Peirce writes that he is proud of being a sentimentalist (CP 6.292).

Contrary to sentimentalist Peirce, Darwin follows the motto "Every individual for himself" and explains the progress of race and the evolution of the universe as the struggle for existence in sympathy with the political-economical view (CP 6.293). Darwinian evolution is a good example of tychistic type of evolution in that the evolutionary struggle continues through simple chance, or by random natural selection, without the imposition of any internal or external necessity arising from

the logic of events. Chance, although originates the new, does neither imply any purpose in life nor brings about any growth and escapes determinism, yet other theories which attribute a teleological structure to evolution cannot retrieve themselves from falling prey to determinism. Determinism does not allow the idea of freedom and vitality. Evolution cannot determine every step and spontaneity so that creative energy is absorbed into the logic of events according to a preordained goal and in a closed space like it is the case in Hegelian system. Such a teleological structure still moves according the mechanical necessity and Peirce calls it anancastic evolution (coming from Greek word *ananke* meaning necessity, compulsion, inevitability) (CP 6.302). In contrast both Darwin and Hegel, Lamarck thinks that “energetic projaculations” creates new characteristics and they are transmitted through habit which makes them take practical shapes in interaction with the environment. According to Peirce, the inclusion and maintenance of both the spontaneous energy and the order into the evolution coincides with the action of love (CP 6.299-300). “The movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting creations into independency and drawing them into harmony” (CP 6.288). In order not to only change but to grow the cosmos needs love. Likewise, in order to attain moral maturity the individual needs love. Romantics stress the role of love in ethics because of the same reason. Love draws the individual towards to the aesthetic ideal and evolutionary love at the cosmic level draws the universe towards a more and more aesthetic state, more concretely reasonable. Peirce’s notion of reasonableness does not exclude feelings and chance which James reformulates in his notion of sentiment of rationality. Peirce romantically construes the cosmos to be a moral cosmos. It is open to the moral acts of the individual and it cooperates with the ethical effort by allowing the individuals to partake in its development through their own pursuits of knowledge and ethical growth. The romantic love is infinite

longing which drives the individual's development forward, so is the evolutionary love. It is an unending action causing the cosmos and the individual to remain always incipient, incomplete and in constant movement towards aesthetic perfection. In Peirce's words

The agapastic development of thought is the adoption of certain mental tendencies, not altogether heedlessly, as in tychasm, nor quite blindly by the mere force of circumstances or of logic, as in anacasm, but by an immediate attraction for the idea itself, whose nature is divined before the mind possesses it, by the power of sympathy, that is, by virtue of the continuity of mind ... (CP 6.307).

Peirce views the cosmos not a simple assemblage of laws or events but as a developing personality. In addition to the idea that cosmos manifest a personality, grounded on the fact that the law of cosmos is the law of mind, the community too is a person. Peirce's pragmatic conception of personality or genuine selfhood summarizes Peirce's romanticism in three aspects. First, against the classical liberal individualism which is based on the idea that the individuals are complete and isolated nucleuses of certain faculties with full self-awareness who act according to their self-interests and should be constrained externally by society, Peirce thinks that selfhood is an ongoing process of self-realization in interaction to others and to the environment. A personality cannot be known and experienced in its totality at one particular time. "It has to be lived in time; nor can any finite time embrace it in all its fullness" (CP 6.155). Hence, romantic incompleteness is the intrinsic mode of being a self. Moreover, it reveals that being an individual is to be the active indeterminate self-transformative force. In construction of the personality the reference to future is significant because personality refers to the spontaneous growth and only in terms of the indeterminate power of transformation and novelty a growth can be thought

(CP 6.157). To remind, the pursuit of a given end is a mechanical movement, not a growing development. Neither the cosmos, nor the individual are mechanically teleological and ends should be spontaneously formed. Although the individual attempts to bring coordination to the aims, purposes, beliefs, choices so that a harmonious satisfactory life can be retained, the temporary ends of pursuit cannot be predetermined. Individuality arises always as the power to bring novelty at any time, “a living force,” to change and to determine the future self, to create new purposes.<sup>137</sup> In addition, as Colapietro pins down, the reference to the future also indicates that without the future possibilities of the self-realization, a self cannot be a self.<sup>138</sup> Yet, the future never comes, so the self is never realized. The romantic notion of individuality as not something given readymade but as something to be infinitely strived for is contained in its most apparent form in Peirce’s notion of personality.

Second, to be reciprocally related to the others is the intrinsic mode of the self too. This essential intersubjectivity and dialogue in the construction of the selfhood has been discussed in Peirce’s theory of knowledge production in the previous section. In the ethical characterization, the essential intersubjectivity is vitalized by love. As it has been clarified, the agapastic principle and aesthetic ideal applies equally to the individual and the cosmos; to the former in a micro level, to the latter in a macro level. Since Peirce views both the universe and the society as infinitely growing personalities (selfhoods), the principle is thought to apply to intersubjective relations in society too. As Lara Tout interprets, Peirce’s concept of agape provides an

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<sup>137</sup>Vincent Michael Colapietro, *Peirce’s Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity*.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, 77.

affective ideal for the constitution of a specific community.<sup>139</sup> Maintenance of the diversity of the individual, as a source of novelty brought about by unique experience and imaginative power, is inevitable for the communal growth; for the development of the personality of the community. Love, in a sense, pins down the necessary ethical openness to that what is other, different or foreign.<sup>140</sup> Hence, the individual is the center of creativity not only with respect to his own developing identity in its relation to the future. In parallel lines to the concept of creative spontaneity in cosmology, individual is the center of creativity and change in communal life and in intersubjective relations. Reciprocally, true self-education requires intersubjective relations.

As individuality and plurality is romantically embraced, so should the necessity of the community in the sense that the individual arises out of the agapastically charged community. Community is the proper sphere to realize the sympathetic circle of creation and unity. As John Stuhr emphasizes, making the world more reasonable depends on turning the society into a genuine community inclusive of members who seek the same ideal and actively participate in and devoted to the reformation of the society while simultaneously caring the conditions of the self-realization of the each other.<sup>141</sup> The followers of Peirce, James and Dewey, translate his idea of agapastic evolution to the idea of an agapastic community in a more

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<sup>139</sup>Lara Trout, *The Politics of Survival: Peirce, Affectivity, and Social Criticism*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 174.

<sup>140</sup>See also Richard P. Mullin, *The Soul of Classical American Philosophy: The Ethical and Spiritual Insights of William James, Josiah Royce, and Charles Sanders Peirce* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 119-132.

<sup>141</sup>John J. Stuhr, "Rendering the World more Reasonable: The Practical Significance of Peirce's Normative Science", in *Peirce and Value Theory: On Peircean Ethics and Aesthetics*, 3-17.

explicit manner. Stuhr criticizes Peirce for failing to extend his community to active ethical community. The reason of this criticism is that community in Peirce's philosophy is mostly a salient subject of the study of scientific inquiry and he reduced community to the scientific community of inquirers, thinkers. Nevertheless, Peirce takes the first step to formulate the romantic-pragmatic community by means of agape, by condemning his contemporary political-economical society and by integrating the pursuit of knowledge into the pursuit of the good life. For one thing, the thinker or the inquirer is the pragmatically involved self-controlling moral agent, even when she or he reasons about what ought to think.

Last romantic aspect of the pragmatic personality is that the unity of the self is given by the unity of the feeling. Self is neither a collection of habits, nor an idea referring to this collection. Self-consciousness is also more than teleological coordination of the ideas. According to Peirce, a personality has its unity on the condition that the self feels. The unity to the self can be given by feeling because "it is metaphysical nature of feeling to have a *unity*" (CP 6.229). Peirce admits that in his earlier writings he wrote that a person is only a symbol involving a general idea and in those times his philosophical view on general ideas were nominalist, yet later grasps that a general idea is something that always includes "unified living feeling of a person" which he had not taken into account at that time (CP 6.270). So, the subject, in order to become an individual, ought to center its unity not around the identity as a general category, concept or law, not around its body and will, but around the metaphysical unity that the feeling supplies. To be recalled, when Peirce clarify the origin of self-consciousness and the intersubjective constitution of objectivity, he writes that at the initial stages of becoming self-conscious the awareness that one is sentient, cognitive and active arises from one's interactions with the objects. The



body qua the source of active will becomes the center of the selfhood (CP 5.229-230). Therefore, embodiment, will, action-reaction relations are not downplayed by Peirce in the formation of the selfhood although the reduction of the self to the will, body or to the totality of the material interests causes the illusion that self is absolutely private and separate from others. This illusionary selfhood leads to ethics of greed which Peirce condemns. Turning back to the unity of the feeling, the crucial point, as Colapietro writes, is that the affective unity of personal consciousness does not exclude the conflict or the opposition. On the contrary, "this affective unity is necessary condition for such conflict. In inner conflicts, the self feels itself to be divided against itself; this is only possible if there is a feeling of unity that is being sundered."<sup>142</sup>

Peirce's non-deterministic, synechistic, tychistic, agapastic model of cosmos is a romantic invention that allows the world to be transformed and ameliorated by moral effort, allows the novelty to emerge in this living world, and let the world working harmoniously with the pursuit of aesthetic ideal and moral growth of the individuals. His cosmological theory offers a universe that moves not by the governance of causal law but teleologically. What is more, the teleological movement itself is not "that of a vast engine, impelled by a *vis a tergo*, with a blind and mysterious fate of arriving at a lofty goal" (CP 6.305). The movement in such a vast engine would only be a strictly determined movement towards a preordained goal, spontaneity would develop itself blindly according to an internal necessity and the logic of events would not allow creation of newness not determined by this logic (CP 6.63; 6.218). Therefore, the logic of evolution, according to Peirce, is the logic of

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<sup>142</sup>Vincent Michael Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 89.

love. The principle of love let the development be open to the chance factor by the inclusion of a “living freedom” and the regulative force of the movement is attraction (CP 6.305; 6.307). Thus, Peirce interprets freedom romantically as the power of creation, source of indeterminable novelty and the potential change in the trajectory of events. With his extension of personhood to such a category that both the universe and community are interpreted as developing personalities, Peirce also extends the romantic idea of infinite *Bildung* to the cosmos and humanity. The moral ideal of this development is displayed as the unattainable aesthetic perfection of differentiation and unity which should eternally be pointed at as an absence. At last, in Peirce’s philosophy the identity of the romantically constituted. In addition to its being the root of creation and novelty, its teleological nature, the inherent incompleteness of the identity, its existence as the potential fragment of an infinite community, the necessity of emotional and affective unity to its constitution, its dialogical and semiotic nature implying its inner dividedness are all aspects of the romantic subject longing internally for being an individual.

## **3.2. William James**

### **3.2.1. Philosophy as Infinite Transformative Practice**

James’s critique of foundationalism and his conception of philosophy as an inquiry are inherited from Peirce who criticizes Descartes’ philosophical method of doubt and introduces his pragmatic view instead. According to Peirce philosophical inquiry does not aim at finding absolute foundations but at provisional fixation of beliefs by a methodological principle. Being pragmatic in philosophical inquiry is clarifying the meanings of principles and concepts provisionally through observation of the experiential relations and practical consequences of these

principles and concepts rather than ascertaining them to be indestructible foundations. Although James thinks that in history of philosophy one can find various pragmatic attitudes, he mentions Peirce as the originator of American pragmatism in his lecture "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," gives him his due credit and tries to be his life-long supporter. Compared to James, Peirce appears to be interested in special sciences, their orientations, principles, categorizations, systematic relations and classifications which leads to the idea that architectonic traces still survive in Peirce's attempt to transform philosophy. Despite the fact that a huge step is taken in the transformation of philosophy, Peirce put a relatively stronger overtone on the system, generality, theory, thought and intelligence than he put on ambiguity, individuality, practice, action and psyche as James does. In addition, Peirce admits that his intellectual outlook is shaped by Scholastic realism, meaning that generals are real in nature. This influence determines and limits the role of philosophy itself in the sense that philosophical investigation always relates to this generals manifesting themselves as habits of nature or thought. So, Peirce's philosophical investigation stays within the intellectual boundaries of traditionally scientific and scholastic tradition. As Christopher Hookway points out, if pragmatism for Peirce was a part of a larger philosophical system which still displays architectonic characteristics because of its trust in essential ontological categories and systematic certainty, despite its strict antifoundationalism and antipositivism, Peirce's pragmatism could not fully liberated from traditional notions of philosophy.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Christopher Hookway, "Logical Principles and Philosophical Attitudes: Peirce's Response to James's Pragmatism," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145-166.

In the development of American pragmatic tradition, the first basic difference between Peirce and James is in the formulation of the pragmatic maxim.<sup>144</sup> With the aim of separating himself from later supporters of pragmatism, including James as well, Peirce stresses the “conceivability” and possibility of the practical as the criterion of pragmatic meaning in his formulation. To recollect, Peirce defines pragmatic method and its logical maxim as follows: “Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object” (CP 5.402). This definition becomes the classical expression of pragmatic theory of meaning. For Peirce, contrary to James, pragmatic meaning does not refer to concrete perceptions and actuality of particular practical results. He believes that later pragmatists diverge from the core of pragmatism in their restatements of pragmatic maxim because of their nominalist tendency that he himself supported in his paper “How to make our Ideas Clear?” but reformulates afterwards (CP 8.250). The second main divergence of James from Peirce’s pragmatism is the extension of the sphere to which the pragmatic maxim is argued to be applying. Peirce considers the pragmatic maxim to be purely logical, he is mostly interested in the application of this maxim to special sciences as disciplinary compartments and their special concepts, and he tends to see metaphysics as an a priori science in need of pragmatic maxim to ascertain its true self-critical and self-controlling character. James enlarges the power of pragmatic maxim to govern the whole practical sphere and all entangled “vitally important” human affairs. James completes the pragmatic separation from the search of foundations and certainties when he erases the last

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<sup>144</sup>See Christopher Hookway and Sami Pihlstörn, “Peirce’s Place in the Pragmatic Tradition,” in *Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, ed. Cheryl Misak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 27-57.

traces of intellectualism in Peirce's late philosophical outlook and making it fully dynamically human-centered and future-oriented.

Other differences of emphasis and breaks can be collected as follows: First, James enlarges the community of the seekers of truth from the closed scientific community to the commonsensical individuals. Not only the scientists, but individuals also pursue knowledge and create truths. Accordingly, James put the stress on the individual in the community-individual relation in which both parties should be present. Peirce votes for the community without reducing the significance of the individuality. Second, the idea that the ultimate aim of inquiry is to reflect general patterns of thought is changed by the importance given to particulars by James. In his article "The Pragmatist Account of Truth and its Misunderstanders" reprinted in the collection of James's writings and speeches on truth entitled as "Meaning of Truth" James explains what he means by the term practical when he formulates the meaning as the practical consequences. The term signifies "the distinctively concrete, the individual, the particular, and effective as opposed to the abstract, general, and inert. ... 'Pragmata' are things in their plurality." (II, MT, 931).<sup>145</sup> James also does not mention scholastic realism and produces his own version of conceptual instrumentalism. Third, both Peirce and James built their epistemological theory on the double dimension of truth. They preserve both the truth as the ideal and the

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<sup>145</sup>Unless stated otherwise, all the references to James's works are given to *William James Writings 1878-1899* and *William James Writings 1902-1910* in parentheses in the following way: number I for *William James Writings 1878-1899* and number II for *William James Writings 1902-1910*, the abbreviation of the name of the publication, and the page number. The abbreviations are: *Meaning of Truth* [MT], *Pragmatism* [P], *A Pluralistic Universe* [PU], *The Varieties of Religious Experience* [VRE] and *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* [WB]. William James, *William James Writings 1878-1899* (New York: The Library of America, 1992) and William James, *William James Writings 1902-1910* (New York: The Library of America, 1987).

particular truths created with the desire to attain the ideal, paradoxically leaded by and leaded to the ideal simultaneously. However, from James's perspective particulars in their relation to the ideal deserve more attention. James's disavowals, changes of emphasis and extensions of pragmatism make romantic themes in pragmatic thought more visible and straightforward than they are in Peirce's case.

In his lectures called *Pragmatism: A new Name for Old Ways of Thinking*, James describes pragmatism in three different ways. Pragmatism is a method, an attitude of orientation and a theory of truth. First, following Peirce, he defines it as a method to solve the abstract metaphysical quarrels by clarifying the verbal confusions leading to unsettled discussions (II, P, 505-23). James gives an anecdote of a philosophical discussion he ran into during a mountain camp. The situation discussed was about a tree, a squirrel and a man. The discussants imagine a man moving around a tree on the opposite side of which a squirrel moves round at the same speed so that the man can never see the squirrel because the tree remains stable between the two of them. The metaphysical question to be answered was whether the man in this situation moved round the squirrel or not. James writes that he solved the seemingly unfinished dispute in which strictly fixed parties occurred by suggesting deciding the practical meaning of the verb 'to go round.' If the verb means passing to the north, to the east, to the south and to the west, then man goes round the squirrel. However, if the verb means being in front of the object, then on the right, behind and on the left and in front it again, then the man does not move around the squirrel. Depending on this choice both parties are wrong or right. Thus, rightness and wrongness are conditioned by the meaning and meanings are clarified by pragmatic method by tracing the practical effects the object may have; that is, the conduct the idea may produce. The trivial anecdote of the dispute at the mountain camp, James writes, is to express the crucial role of philosophy. The role of

philosophy is to evaluate what difference accepting one thought or the other will make to individuals concretely at one instant of their life, either in their intellectual pursuits or practical affairs. Pragmatist concentrates on the metaphysical disputes such as the questions of one and many, fate and freedom, matter and spirit with the decision of their significances. If one spots no practical difference in the alternative interpretations of the ideas, they practically mean the same thing and any dispute about them is idle.

Second, pragmatism is not a doctrine, a ground to stand on, or a final answer to one's questions to rest on but an "attitude of orientation" (II, P, 510). James affirms that pragmatists are more than the users of an intellectual tool for the achievement of one unchangeable result. They tend to orient their thoughts and acts in a particular way in their life. Pragmatism is not adopting, in James's word, a world-formula but an orientation to choose between world-formulas or different theories. The most striking difference of this attitude is that the pragmatist cares for the future differences and does not dogmatically seek knowledge of foundations remaining as the past for the contemplating reason. As such an antifoundationalist future directed attitude, pragmatism works within and through all areas of practical and intellectual life, it combines them, and constitutes a passage between them. Following Italian pragmatist Papini, pragmatism in James's words

lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next someone on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third a chemist investigating a body's properties. In a fourth a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated; in a fifth the impossibility of the metaphysics is being shown. But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms. ... No particular results then, so far, but only an attitude of orientation, is what the pragmatic method means. *The attitude of looking*

*away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts. (II, P, 510)*

The metaphor of corridor implies that pragmatism evaluates the ideas encountered from a certain perspective like looking from a corridor, standing in-between. In addition to future-directedness, the togetherness of the chambers expresses the acknowledgement of the plurality of possible different points of views and their relative meaningfulness. Being oriented pragmatically is being oriented pluralistically towards the future.

The claim that pragmatism presents an attitude proceeds from a more basic presupposition of what philosophy is. Philosophy, James writes, "is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means. It is only partly got from books; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos" (II, P, 487). As the romantics insist, James thinks that philosophical principles manifest personal perspectives; they indicate temperamental interpretations of life disguised as impersonal, universal conclusions of universal reason. These "temperamental visions" represent the universe as it suits them under an image (II, P, 489). God, matter, reason, the Absolute, energy are different universal principles, ultimate truths, that suits to these temperaments. In his Hibbert lectures at Manchester Collage collected and published as "A Pluralistic Universe" James likens philosophers to sculptors, artists, who carve out the block of marble, the world, and produce different statues (II, PU, 634). Then he quotes Hegel who writes that the aim of knowledge is to eliminate the strangeness of the objective world and to make it more home to us. Accordingly, philosophers as sculptors with different modes of feelings, experiences and characters produce different fragments of the world in their longing for intimacy. Longing for intimacy is a metaphysical longing arising from the alienation of the human being from the rest of beings. James



welcomes the plurality of the world-images as long as they answer this metaphysical longing in the sense that they postulate a life-world in which human beings can intimately participate into the production of reality and amelioration. Philosophies are adopted and preferred as “one's best working attitude” (II, P, 639). The most working attitude for a homeless and alien being, in turn, is the one which allows more intimate relations, feelings and acts. Novalis affirms that “Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, Freedom and Immortality. Which then is more practical, Philosophy or Economy?”<sup>146</sup> In the exact wording James writes: “It ‘bakes no bread,’ as has been said, but it can inspire our souls with courage; and repugnant as its manners, its doubting and challenging, its quibbling and dialectics, often are to common people, no one of us can get along without the far-flashing beams of light it sends over the world’s perspective” (II, P, 488). James is romantically committed to the practical vitalizing effect of philosophy in its power to incorporate the lost spirituality to the structure of the universe and to make life worth living which is ethically the core issue for James. As Gerald E. Myers writes “James’s motive in philosophizing is to create an inner sense of vitality and buoyancy by constructing a philosophical picture of the universe that is itself vivid, vital and buoyant.”<sup>147</sup>

All history of philosophy can be read to be shaped by the struggle of the intellectual temperaments of philosophers which James classifies under two basic types; “sentimental” and “hard-hearted” philosophies (II, P, 489). History of philosophy is

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<sup>146</sup>Thomas Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays: Collected and Republished*, vol.1 (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1890), 239.

<sup>147</sup>Gerald E. Myers, *William James: His Life and Thought* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 303.

polemics of moods. While sentimental intellectual make-up creates “tender-minded” philosophies which are associated by rationalism, intellectualism, idealism, optimism, religion, free-will, monism and dogmatism, hard-hearted intellectual make-up creates “tough-minded” philosophies which are associated by the opposites of the tender-minded philosophies’ characteristics: empiricism, sensationalism, materialism, pessimism, irreligion, fatalism, pluralism and skepticism. Reconsidered in connection with the longing for intimacy, James names the tender-minded type of philosophy sympathetic and tough-minded type cynical. While materialistic way of thinking (tough-minded philosophy) is cynical in that it leaves the human being to live as a stranger in the background of foreignness of the world, spiritual way of thinking (the tender-minded philosophy), connects the world intimately to the human. James divides the spiritual type into the sub-classes of absolutistic monism (pantheism) and theistic dualism. Theistic dualism with its idea of God as external creator and world externally created does not offer the intimacy sought because the world, man and God are distinct, separated, alien entities. In contrast to theism, pantheistic worldview has “the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator, and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality” (II, PU, 644). Divinity is more intimate and organic. The last stop of James’s classifications through which the intimacy escalates is pluralism. In accordance with the criteria of intimacy, James proposes a sympathetic spiritualism which is not monist but pluralist. Pluralist spiritualism allows the divinity in the “*each-form*” instead of “*all-form*,” rejects the idea that to be is to be experienced and manifested at once in an absolute totality. Experience for James is the partial and pluralistic experience of the humanly beings. The other name of this pluralism is radical empiricism and “radical empiricism allows that the absolute sum-total of things may never be actually experienced or realized in that shape at all, and that a

disseminated, distributed, or incompletely unified appearance is the only form that reality may yet have achieved" (II, PU, 649). James's pragmatism as an orientation is radically empirical and sympathetically spiritual in being both tender-minded and tough-minded so that it offers the most intimate universe possible. This orientation is also strictly humanist.

The third idea that James proposes is that pragmatism is a theory of truth. This proposal is closely connected to James's famous claim that truth is the species of the good. Since pragmatism is interested in the determination of the meanings, the main question of epistemology is what it means for an idea to be true, or what the significance of truth for us is. Truth is meaningless unless it has a connection to our practical life and lead experiential consequences. Consequently, truth as *the* truth, the one, unchangeable, indivisible, eternal is devoid of meaning in so far as it is described to be impossible to relate and change. Truth does not ground. James complains about the philosophical overlap of truth and reality by saying that only ideas, thoughts, theories or beliefs can be true. Under the title of humanism, James advocates an antifoundationalism Moreover, a belief is true not because it represents an independent reality via corresponding and mirroring it, but because it satisfactorily leads, works or functions intellectually or practically in the world of experience and for the sake of the expansion, richness, consistency of experience:

*Ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual short-cuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labour; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally (II, P, 512).*

James accepts that truth agrees with reality but instead of correspondence theory of truth and theory of representation, he presents a coherentist, experimental and hermeneutical theory of inquiry or belief formation through which truths are made and agreements are produced in cooperation with realities which in turn are reciprocally formed by these truths. The truth conditional on agreement can meet this condition of agreement with reality in three different ways because according to James there are three forms of reality that should be taken account of: matter of facts including the sensibly present things and relations such as relations of time, place or kinds; relations between abstract objects of mental ideas; and the old stock of our beliefs. Accordingly, a true idea leads to the sensible present object actually or possibly, and a true principle relates to other principles in a systemic way and subsumes the particulars successfully; and finally a true idea is successfully incorporated into old system of beliefs. In all these three cases, agreement with reality means consistency and satisfactory working of the ideas or beliefs in the epistemic practice with respect to the aim of knowledge. The success of the knowing process is described by the movement, change and flow of cognition, rather than the final epistemological fixed equilibrium. If the movement and the transitions of the process is experienced to be progressive and harmonious, then our ideas are true.

The epistemic process is the continuous event of the validation of the ideas. True beliefs or ideas, for James, get their sense by being fallible in the sense that truth-making is a dynamic process in which old truths can be changed or abandoned. James writes that "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot" (II, P, 573). Truths are mutating, plural and historical. In addition to this conception of the "half-truths," or "truth processes" or in romantic language, fragments, James also has a conception of absolute truth (II, P, 584). In parallelism with his picture of growth of the truths like

a rolling snowball, the truths are growing to a whole, completed experience which is the final, or absolute aim of the epistemic practice. Truth as absolute is not expedient for little processes but expedient for the whole course of experience. James writes that "The 'absolutely' true, meaning what no farther experience will ever alter, is that ideal vanishing-point towards which we imagine that all our temporary truths will some day converge. It runs on all fours with the perfectly wise man, and with the absolutely complete experience; and, if these ideals are ever realized, they will all be realized together." (II, P, 584). The ideal of absolute truth regulates the process romantically in its assertion of the presence of a state yet to be arrived in every truth made so that the absence of it is recollected. This ideal is both destabilizes the movement of knowledge and stabilizes it as an ideal. Given that truths can be regarded as little termination points of the successful leadings in the field of experience; that is, as "a positively conjunctive transition" between the conceptual part of the experience and sensuous part of it and given that the field of experience is fringed and superseded everlastingly by a "more" that forever develops, the ideal absolute truth pointing to a never coming termination and realization eternalizes the movement, suspends the subjects in their practice eternally as partially virtual knowers in transition, striving for actuality and validation (I, MT, 888). The ideal, like the romantic ideal not only regulates but partially constitutes and gives significance to the fragmentary truths as well in the sense that the ideal, if it is ever arrived at, will be human made too as the collection of the fragments.

The process of knowing, or alternatively called, inquiry, is not progressive on one side in the sense that truths are produced and their agreement with the independent realities are checked while realities remain unchanged. James thinks that not only truths are made, but the realities themselves are human creations. He refused the idea that reality independent of any addition of thought and imagination can be

conceptually known, demonstrated and communicated. The only way to understand the independence is to call it silent “that”ness without any experience of “what”ness of it. Reality, if it is to be considered in itself, can only to be claimed an “aboriginal presence in experience” or limit to the knowledge (II, P, 595). “[W]e may glimpse it, but cannot grasp it” (II, P, 595). And James adds that this aboriginal presence has been always already “faked” in so far as we intellectually grasp it through its substitutes that we create (II, P, 595). Reality in its presence infinitely escapes from the cognitive subject. *That* it is something resistant to our cognition and we should incessantly take account of it but it is malleable as well. So, *what* it is can be changed infinitely according to perspectives thrown upon it. It is James’s humanistic view of reality. The same fact, James writes, can be read in countless ways and countless true beliefs agreeing with reality can be formed accordingly. For example, the number 27 can be taken and known to be as the cube of 3, or as the product of 3 and 9, or as 26 plus 1, or 100 minus 73 and innumerable other true ways (II, P, 596). Following Henri Bergson, in *Pluralistic Universe* James articulates his conception of untouched reality as the aboriginal presence with equating it to the “living, moving, active thickness of the real” or “inner dimension of reality” which can be named but cannot be comprehended by neither the absolute conceptual logic of the idealism nor the simple logic of empiricism used to fathom the finite experience (II, PU, 745).<sup>148</sup>

As romantics believe that the adventure of knowledge is conditioned by creativity and that subjectivity emerges as creative power, in the same way James claims that subject’s rationality or the ability of conception, as well as acts in practical life, is

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<sup>148</sup> In “Bergson and Intellectualism” James rejects the authority of the logic and discursive thought in reaching the reality and writes that “The only way in which to apprehend reality’s thickness is either to experience it directly by being a part of reality one’s self, or to evoke it in imagination by sympathetically divining some one else’s inner life” (II, PU, 745).

conditioned by creativity. Without the subject's creative transformation of the presence through interpretative web neither the process of knowledge nor the practical life emerges. As a consequence of necessary creative and interpretive human addition to the cognitive growth, all three classes of realities turn to be interpretations. Since "[a]s a matter of fact we can hardly take in an impression at all, in the absence of a preconception of what impressions there may possibly be" (II, P, 595) our impressions, for example, come with a preconception of objectivity which includes the categories of subject and predicate. We interpret the flux of sensations into things. "We create the subjects of our true as well as of our false propositions. We create the predicates also. Many of the predicates of things express only the relations of the things to us and to our feelings. Such predicates of course are human additions" (II, P, 598). James also admits that the realities of arithmetic or geometry, defined as systems of intuitively known eternal relations, are arbitrary chosen orders and classifications that have been fixated gradually, (II, P 594). The realities of which our previous truths take account of, on the other hand, are already human made realities. In "Pragmatism and Common Sense" James writes that common sense categories embedded into the language such as thing, the same or different, kinds, minds, bodies, one time, one space, subjects and attributes, causal influences, the fancied and the real are discoveries of ancient people to unify the experience and these discoveries are consolidated in experience in such a degree that they are taken as absolutes (II, P, 558-72). However, some native people still do not have conception of permanent thing or one unitary time or causality. Commonsensical belief system is one of the created narratives on reality in addition to the narratives that science and philosophy produce. Thus, James emphasizes the collective nature of belief-

formation, stabilization and destabilization of the truth collectively through use of language and actions.<sup>149</sup>

It can be concluded that James's conception of truth dissolves epistemic activity into the double-bounded social praxis of truth-making; that is, a practice bounded both by that the experience presents and by coherency of the ideas. James further elaborates on this activity in the form of a hermeneutical activity, along similar lines that Schlegel draws with the help of the notions of circularity and coherence and the proof of the truths becomes a *Wechselerweis*.<sup>150</sup> Both of the bounds of the sense-making activity, on the other hand, are created by the subject itself, except the aboriginal presence of the sensuous core, because James describes the process in terms of a firm reciprocal and circular interdependence of flux of experience, acts and beliefs. The process of truth production continues as follows: we are absorbed into the field of experience with an interpretative web constituted by beliefs and principles we already possess. These beliefs and principles determine what we notice and how we make sense, what we notice determine how we act, how we act

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<sup>149</sup>For the collective nature of truth production, see José M. Medina, "James on Truth and Solidarity: The Epistemology of Diversity and the Politics of Specificity," in *100 Years of Pragmatism: William James's Revolutionary Philosophy* ed. John Stuhr (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 124-44.

<sup>150</sup>See also Paul Fairfield, *Philosophical Hermeneutics Reinterpreted: Dialogues with Existentialism, Pragmatism, Critical Theory and Postmodernism* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 63-80. Although Fairfield does not address the relation of romanticism and pragmatism, he discusses the important resemblances of hermeneutics and pragmatism; specifically James and Hans Georg Gadamer, with respect to their conceptions of truth: "Their respective accounts all appeal to the notion of coherence in both its experiential and intersubjective connotations and to the dynamic back-and-forth of experimental investigation. Pragmatism and hermeneutics allow us to conceive of truth no longer as a mirroring relation but as a praxis-oriented commerce with a lifeworld and as 'an intra-experiential affair' of interpretive leadings and verifications. Both refuse to separate the theory of truth from the practice of inquiry as it unfolds phenomenologically," 71.



again determines what we experience and the whole movement circles (II, P, 598). From the perspective of the individual, the individual as a truth-maker calls her belief true based on the performance of the belief in the taking of novelties of life into her old stock of truths; that is, based on the “go-between function” or “marriage-function” of her beliefs (II, P, 515). Through this process, which Schlegel would call an ongoing production of a poem which both destructs and creates, one is alienated neither from one’s own past nor from the future experience but actively connected to them by forming both of them slightly, and so one lives satisfactorily. The struggle for the actively contributed practical satisfaction in relation to life, one’s constant active participation in the transformation of reality of which she or he is a part is pragmatic sense of inquiry into truth. In so far as the inquiry is not challenged and it is prolonged, the flow of experience is not broken, the world is enriched by the activity and the leadings and transitions are worthwhile, truth prevails.

James’s understanding of philosophical endeavor can be modeled after this epistemic practice. Philosophy does not pursue absolute foundations by speculation and does not build architectonic metaphysical systems on eternally fixed principles. Philosophical truths concerning the core of reality, such as Matter, God, Reason, the Absolute, Energy are the truths produced from an individual’s perspective in a particular mood and shape the comprehension and life of the believer. Manifestation of the principles to be relative, historical and open to change is the critical part of philosophy. Thus, philosophy is critical and genealogically destructive in that it “unstiffens” all theories and fixed truths, even the most commonsensical truths although they remain comparably stable in construction of reality. It should critically destructive because being such knowledge progresses and new actions and forms of life are decided, like the romantic activity of truth-seeking. Like romantic activity and endeavor again philosophies carve out the reality by transforming it. In

that sense it is truly artistic. Although James too believes that the activity aims at a coherent unity both among principles and to the fluent unity between the stock of the beliefs and the flow of experience, this ideal is only an image to be infinitely strived for because if it were achieved, it would be the “ideal vanishing point” of the activity itself. (II, P, 583). Like the former again, it is truly artistic in that it “carves out” the reality thereby transforming it.<sup>151</sup> Although James too believes that the activity aims to a coherent unity both among principles and to the fluent unity between the stock of the beliefs and the flow of experience, this ideal is only an image to be infinitely strived for because if it were achieved, it would be the “ideal vanishing point” of the activity itself (II, P, 583). Finally, it can be said that pragmatic philosophy originates from the belief in human freedom to really change the existent and the belief that world is plastic enough to be carved and shaped. It is the romantic belief in freedom to create and in the real possibility of life’s becoming a work of art. It can be concluded that pragmatism romanticizes the world.

Moreover, any monistic system, for James, sacrifices the irreducible multiplicity, dynamism, vividness and flow of life for the sake of a deadly totality. Life is in a constant state of becoming in the sense that “whatever equilibriums our finite experiences attain to are but provisional and” and its reigning principle is “perpetual moving on to something future which shall supersede the present” (II, PU, 670). However, sublimation of this principle to the conceptual level with a final resolution as a necessary logical principle is vicious intellectualism. James writes that philosophy should keep experiences as they are and in their dynamic link to each other like the pieces of a mosaic without a bedding where “the Substances,

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<sup>151</sup>José M. Medina, “James on Truth and Solidarity: The Epistemology of Diversity and the Politics of Specificity,” *100 Years of Pragmatism: William James’s Revolutionary Philosophy*, ed. John Stuhr (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 124-44.

transcendental Egos, or Absolutes” stand (II, ERE, 1180). Philosophy starts in the middle of this life and in order to be committed to this life it should become mosaic philosophy, put itself into never-ending making of things with an intuitive sympathy with them and seek a kind of “living understanding of the movement of reality” which “changes and creates” (II, PU, 751).

### **3.2.2. Ethics of Meliorism and Hope**

The main essays that James wrote and presented as public lectures on ethics and religious belief are collected in his *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. One of them is his address to Yale Philosophical Club “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” which discusses psychological, metaphysical and casuistic questions on moral terms such as good, evil and obligation. This essay is usually regarded to be the presentation of the central ethical doctrine of James. The other important collection is *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*, the collection of Gifford Lectures on natural religion delivered at Edinburgh between the years 1901 and 1902. In these lectures James investigates and evaluates religious experience and temperament with regard to its psychological, pragmatic and moral aspects. James’s ethical individualism, his view on freedom, his meliorism and the humanistic core of his conception of “vital religion” connected with his doctrine of will to believe are all romantic ideas (II, VR, 401). At the center of James’s ethics stands neither the law-giving reason, nor the pleasure seeking hedonist, but the purposeful and striving individual experiencing the tragic homelessness who is bound to the romantic imperative of ongoing melioristic practice. Ethics essentially pertains to the romantic choice of a particular attitude, view of universe and form of life instead of dealing with laws, absolute codes or judgments.

In the "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" James discusses psychological, metaphysical and casuistic aspects concerning moral values. He questions the meaning of searching an "ethical philosophy" (I, WB, 595). At the very beginning James claims that the content of moral philosophy will be in a constant change until the last experience on earth. Until this last experience humans and moral philosophers will struggle to reach final truth of morality which, in turn, partially is conditioned by this struggle of humanity and ongoing moral investigation of intellectuals. Inquiring into the historical origin of moral values, which corresponds to their psychological aspect, James writes that moral values are neither founded upon an a priori moral sense (conscience) or on reason, nor are they different names associated with future pleasure and pain, although both of rationalist (intuitionist) and empiricist (evolutionist) doctrines catch some characteristics of moral values. Moral empiricist, a kind of moral utilitarian, is right in claiming that morality includes the consequences of actions and feelings; yet, she fails to give account to moral attitudes through which a moral ideal is preferred for its own sake regardless of the pain or pleasure. Moral rationalist, a kind of moral intuitionist, is right in stressing the importance of the creation of and devotion to moral ideals; yet, she fails to capture the role of concrete cases and feelings. James thinks that there is "felt fitness between things" or "brain-born feelings of discords" which is beyond utility or disadvantage. (I, WB, 597). This discord or fitness is not ordered as an 'ought' but directly experienced. Moral choices do not depend on utility calculations. James thinks that this independence can be proved by the strength of a particular feeling in a particular case that each one of us would feel indubitably. He wants us imagine a case when one has to make a critical choice. One is offered a life-long happiness, for him or her, and for million other people too if and only if he or she allows that one person will be tortured in a corner of the universe constantly. On that condition, in

presence of such an offer, one would experience a strong discomfort no matter what utility it causes and no matter to how many people this utility is brought. No one could prefer this kind of happiness. Thus, quantitative utilitarianism fails.

The answers to the metaphysical questions in ethics are given by the determination of the meanings of the moral terms. Moving to the meanings of moral terms, James claims that the interpretation of the world as morally genuine form; that is to say, as morally qualified, principally requires a consciousness of a sentient being. Good, evil, obligation and moral relations are impossible to exist in purely physical world because facts are simply are or are not while values need to be *realized* as facts of conscious sensibility in order to exist. Evil does not simply exist, but it exists always for someone. Existence of moral relations necessitates the existence of a desire causing the experience of a demand. On the other side of the coin, this necessity means that moral laws, values and obligations cannot originate and flit about in a pure space. A universe of "moral solitude" even inhabited by a single individual would be populated by values of the good and bad, since this individual would be the creator of those values (I, WB, 600). "So far he feels anything to be good, he *makes* it good." (I, WB, 600). For the individual in its moral solitude, in the absence of any company in the status of a moral judge, the moral life would mean the consistency of desires, ideals or preferences. The individualistic good would mean the elimination of the bewilderments and inconsistencies caused by the fact that some of the demands ought to come prior than the others. The tyrannical demands of the single individual James calls imperatives (I, WB, 614). The life formed in moral solitude is absolutely good since there is no external demand and relations. Hence, for James, like for romantics, the moral authority is given to the individual rather than the universal reason and one essential aspect of moral selfhood, as Schlegel argues, is one's way to create one's own life as an integrated coherent whole of manifold

desires and ideals. If the second self is introduced to the universe of moral solitude, good and evils are doubled. Thus, James holds that individuality does not only signify the power to unify desires, preferences and ideals into a stable moral system but also hints at the creation of new values. In that sense, individuality is destructive and formative center of power. The more plural the moral universe is, the more diversified it becomes, the more fragmented the already structured whole gets. Moral philosopher, who is “just like the rest of us non-philosophers,” particularly deals with the creation and sustainment of the unified social moral life.

In addition to psychological and metaphysical questions of ethics, the third question is the evaluation and rankings of the different ideals, demands, moral claims and interpretations of goods. Every demand has normatively equal status by simply being a demand and demands can range from most crude hedonistic ones to the most universal claims for freedom, peace and justice. In other words, everything that is desired has a moral legitimacy simply by virtue of being a demand. As Ellen Kappy Suckiel writes, demand is the basic notion of the ethical doctrine of “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” and used by James in three different ways, the last of which relates to the casuistic question directly.<sup>152</sup> First, demand means a felt positive tendency because it should be a fact of sensible consciousness. Second, demand implies the moral judgment on the goodness of the conduct. If something is demanded, the thing is judged to be good. At last, demand means necessitation. Every demand has a claim on the other persons and to demand is to order, or to command. James writes that “we see not only that without a claim actually made by some concrete person there can be no obligation, but that there is some obligation

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<sup>152</sup>Ellen Kappy Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982).

wherever there is a claim" (I, WB, 602). In that sense, striving for the moral order obliges one to answer and care for the demand of the other, the needs of ones fellows, their ideals, pursuits and ways of life. Morality consists of "life answering to life" (I, WB, 604). However, contrary to the ideal moral life in which the richness of demands and integrity is reached, in actuality the satisfaction of a demand destroys the other one. The moral philosopher that James likens to a statesman or a citizen faces not only speculative problems but vital dilemmas as well because in the moral system that he wants to construct he necessarily ignores some ideals, downplays some demands and causes frustration of a part of the society. His decision of the superiority of the one value and his imposition of it to others who lives with other values leads to horrible cases. In tensional awareness of the impossibility of both moral skepticism and absolute moral truths, and in avoidance of being a partisan in his concrete and historical position while trying to keep his judicial position, moral philosopher should bear in mind the principle that good means satisfying the demand and seek to satisfy as many demands as can be satisfied at the minimum oppression, imposition and ignorance. "There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see" (I, WB, 613).

James thinks that the possibility of attainment to this ideal is through a dynamic social moral progress in which certain unities are formed temporarily through conviction that the most diversified and inclusive totality is gained. This conviction leaves its place to the disappointment of failure when new resistances, tensions or demands arise. New inventions of unities are up to the individual who strives to realize the ideal of better society by breaking already established codes, values and principles. The future is open to perpetual creation. This ongoing incomplete

dynamic process continuing through conflicts and settlements is a moral experimentation progressing to a better stage which James hopes to be incessantly approaching to the perfect community. In this community, every individual pursues their own ideals and self-fulfillment and makes their life significant in their unique way. In that sense James's ethics is, to use James Campbell's terms, both an ethics of fulfillment and ethics of reform.<sup>153</sup> The philosopher is confident that "the line of least resistance will always be towards the richer and the more inclusive arrangement, and that by one track after another some approach to the kingdom of heaven is incessantly made" (I, WB, 797). James resembles this never fixed, irreducibly plural and dynamic moral progress which is indeterminate and groundless to an "ethical symphony," yet the symphony plays itself in a compass of poor octaves and in need of opening to infinite scale of values (I, WB, 615). In other words, "[i]t lacks the note of infinitude and mystery" (I, WB, 616). James's moral progress is the romantic *Bildung* in its clarification in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" as it is clarified so far. The romantic theme of striving for the aesthetic unity as a moral ideal is apparent in James's address. What is missing to be read as truly romantic is the interpretative act of the individual which romanticizes life and makes possible the romantic strenuous commitment to the ideal of perfection. James immediately fills this lack with his idea of religiosity as the energizer of the moral agents, with his conception of strenuous mood or healthy-mindedness and with his doctrine will to believe.

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<sup>153</sup>James Campbell, "William James and Ethics of Fulfillment," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 17, no 3 (1981): 224-240.



Gerald E. Myers writes that the moral battle for the improvement of the imperfect world and hope for betterment is two of the James's favorite themes.<sup>154</sup> The themes of moral battle, hope and strife go hand in hand with the themes of tragedy of life, suicide, pessimism and nihilism in James's thought. He devotes considerable energy to these themes in his philosophical works, especially in his first essays like "Is Life worth Living?" or "Sentiment of Rationality." In "Sentiment of Rationality," James firstly identifies rationality with the feeling of ease and fluency in our thinking and explanatory processes; in other words, fluency of our truth-making activity, which he claims to be necessarily satisfying both the craving for plurality and concreteness and the craving for unity and abstractness. James says that even we have the absolute datum and perfect scientific vision and classification of facts in perfect tranquility of mind, our mind starts spinning towards the void beyond (I, WB, 504-510). Indeed, if the universe is more perfectly comprehended as a unique fact, mind is stuck with the "nonentity enveloping the being of its datum." "Why was there anything but nonentity; why just this universal datum and not other?" (I, WB, 510). One is faced with the ultimate irrationality of existence and the ontological wonder is never satisfied as far as the bottom of being is logically opaque. The block to intellectual fluency and the "nameless *Unheimlichkeit*" [homelessness] that it is felt in the pointlessness of aspirations, ideals, purposes can be removed and the sentiment of rationality can be retained if the world is construed to be congruous with the spontaneous power of the individual. James thinks that the tragedy of the absolute meaninglessness of the existence can become bearable when this opacity is turned to be the vitalizing mystery to which the ontological wonder clings eternally. This wonder should remain unsatisfied eternally, so that it opens up the possibility of an

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<sup>154</sup>Gerald E. Myers, *William James: His Life and Thought*, 412.

ethical life and meaningfulness of the ethical strife for self-fulfillment and betterment of the human life. Any philosophical doctrine which renders human effort and hope irrelevant such as materialism totally alienating the individual from the nature of things, or such as idealism sickening us with all-pervading intimacy so that we have no reason to act in such a strictly deterministic universe should be resisted because they fail in motivating the active contribution of the individual to transform and create the course of destiny. Neither total stranger to the individual, nor too much intimate, the world should be conceived as collaborating with the effort of the individual to make it more and more intimate, more concordant and responsive. The effort is ultimately grounded on the search of a feeling at home and harmony. As Richard M. Gale writes, "This mystical quest for intimacy and union as both deeply rooted in William James, the man, and endemic to his era, which felt threatened by the seemingly meaningless, impersonal world that had become the professed official view of science since the science of "new physics" in seventh century."<sup>155</sup>

Although no epistemic justification can be given to the idea that universe is morally responsive to the individual, the belief in it is a necessary ingredient of one's life because, James says, this belief makes the ideal real. Belief is the necessary condition for the realization of its object and it is its own verification in the sense that one acts in order to create the truth whose reality one has already assumed and without this assumption the action is not possible. For example, James writes that each of us should decide whether the life is worth living or not (I, WB, 532). If someone decides that she cannot live in such a world full of misery, pain and wickedness, cultivates pessimism and commits suicide, then her death is added to the world's

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<sup>155</sup>Richard M. Gale, *The Philosophy of William James: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 160.

misery objectively and the world becomes more and more cruel. Her act of killing herself adds itself as a fact to the history of the world and verifies that the world is full of misery. Thus, her deed becomes the verification of the belief that world is unbearably tragic and determines the character of the world. In the same way, the moral deeds grounded on the belief that world can be perfected becomes the proof of the belief itself which is the actualization of the belief. No proof exists till the act is performed and paradoxically no act is performed without the proof.

In his "Pragmatism" lectures, James reiterates his doctrine of meliorism which he clarifies as a worldview and attitude to life in "Sentiment of Rationality." He asks: "Why shouldn't we all of us, rationalists as well as pragmatists, confess this? Pragmatism, so far from keeping her eyes bent on the immediate practical foreground, as she is accused of doing, dwells just as much upon the world's remotest perspectives." (II, P, 540). Pragmatism dwells on world's possibilities and futurity as much as it focused on the actuality and it takes the vital question of philosophy to be what life will eventually turn to become. It cares for the possibility of a better outcome of human experience and history. A pragmatic neither holds pessimistically that "world's salvation" is impossible because of material conditions nor holds optimistically that it is inevitable because of logical necessity, but believes that individuals' acts can create progressively the conditions for morally better selves and morally better world (II, P, 613). This middle path between pessimism and optimism is meliorism. Meliorism is to believe that salvation of the world is not a bare possibility, but a concretely grounded possibility in that the actual conditions of the production of the possible are actual and as they approach completeness, the possibility becomes "a better-and-better grounded possibility" and the accomplishment of the ideal is more and more approached (II, P, 611). Betterment of the world is possible concretely because concrete individuals themselves are the

actors of the process. Every realization of particular ideals is the actual moments of betterment. Thus, according to James's meliorism, world grows to be a better place at spots in a pluralistic and fragmentary manner by concrete plural acts and committed ways of life (II, P, 616). To conclude in James's words:

Does our act then *create* the world's salvation so far as it makes room for itself, so far as it leaps into the gap?

Does it create, not the whole world's salvation of course, but just so much of this as itself covers of the world's extent? Here I take the bull by the horns, and in spite of the whole crew of rationalists and monists, of whatever brand they be, I ask *why not?* Our acts, our turning-places, where we seem to ourselves to make ourselves and grow, are the parts of the world to which we are closest, the parts of which our knowledge is the most intimate and complete. Why should we not take them at their face-value? Why may they not be the actual turning-places and growing-places which they seem to be, of the world—why not the workshop of being, where we catch fact in the making, so that nowhere may the world grow in any other kind of way than this? (II, P, 613).

James's conversion of the belief-act relation in the sense that the belief conditions the happening of the event, not the event causes the belief, constitutes the romantic tension of the James's pragmatic moral strife. His idea of more and more completed conditions and more and more approached salvation makes this tension more apparent. The individual creates the reality of the ideal that she or he should already claim to be real and this necessarily makes both of the ideal and the action in suspension and incomplete. If the ideal, perfect world, the heaven on earth, was real, there would be no need of belief, so no ameliorative moral conduct would be demanded; therefore, the ideal is necessarily kept unattained. On the other hand, if the ideal was unattainable, then there would be no reason for ameliorative performance. As a result, the attainment of the ideal moral universe is infinitely

prolonged, which produces the infinite romantic struggle. The ideal is infinitely approached by every new individual formation of an ameliorating way of life as one stream of the world's movement towards to the perfect state, or by every particular ideal made actual as the moments of betterment, but can never be actualized because the experience and whole activity is inexhaustible. Nevertheless, according to James the infinite moral labor is more valuable than the infinite moral "anæsthesia" introduced by reductive positivist worldview (I, WB, 536-537).

In addition to the description of meliorism as an attitude, James also articulates it as a metaphysical doctrine. Formulated as a metaphysical doctrine it means postulation of the free will in an indeterministic-pluralistic universe. Free-will, in this sense, is the "general cosmological doctrine of *promise*" (II, P, 538) or a "doctrine of *relief*" (II, P, 539). Like Pearce's metaphysical tychistic postulate, according to James too, free will simply means the possibility of novelty or the existence of chance in the world. Contrary to the deterministic-monistic block universe closed upon onto itself in which every part is strictly determined by the other and life unfolds itself according to necessity, in the indeterministic-pluralistic world of chance origination of something that is not controlled or necessitated by other parts of the whole, or by any higher principle, is possible and it is part of the reality. The course of events is not secured and acts may be otherwise, but do not need to be. So, chance brings ambiguity of future and points at neutral change without any implication of negativity or positivity. James supports his idea of indeterministic-pluralistic universe by his theory of radical empiricism and notion of pure experience too. The universe is demonstrated to be the open-ended incomplete ungrounded dynamic universe of constant becoming full of manifold relations and immanent transitions. In such a universe what is metaphysically named as chance, the objective possibility of novelty and change, is subjectively experienced by the individual as the

spontaneous creative activity (II, PU, 815). Translated into language of ethics, free individual is called free in so far as he or she exists to be the source of creation and the power to change the flow of life. The power of opening up new alternatives in relations, to create new values and ideals to follow, to come up with novel and better solutions to the corruption of the life is what pragmatic freedom means. Freedom does not stabilize practice but destabilizes it. However, the same world that opens up the possibility of freedom ironically makes the certainty of its truth indeterminate. James thinks that we lack any proof that our acts and choices; that is, our free contribution to the unfolding of events, can be ascertained, or that our moral effort will be successful. In other sense, the belief in freedom and power of the individual is devoid of any certitude. Therefore, "the very first act of a will endowed with freedom should be to sustain the belief in the freedom itself" (I, TT, 920). James uses his principle that belief makes the act real in case of freedom too. Free activity starts with the freedom to choose to believe in freedom and strife in a vague world. At first one chooses to be free.

In "The Dilemma of Determinism" James accounts for his preference of the term chance instead of freedom in his moral reasoning. When the term of freedom is used in construction in formulation of moral perspectives, James says, it is used in a context of determinism and determinism still survives in the conception of freedom, although only in a softened form. Determinism survives through freedom in the sense that the world will become what is determined to become through freedom (I, WB, 568-69). Contrary to interpretation of the world determined in a mediate and softened form through freedom, the world of chance, a world in which freedom is active under the name of chance, is indeterminate. In an indeterminate whole if the parts act in a wrong way, the whole get worse and if the parts act properly the whole can be perfected. Wrongness and imperfection is not for the sake of perfection.

Consequently, the constitution of the society is open to perfection or worsening depending on the acts of the free individuals and the morally indeterminate world contains real possibilities.

In the same essay James clarifies the experience and reality of the freedom with reference to the feeling of regret. The idea of chance, accordingly, is grounded on the judgments of regrets and on the feelings of remorse and grief. To regret is to feel the irreversible loss of an opportunity after which one should mourn forever. To feel regret, to face the responsibility of the choice and to realize the irretrievability of this choice is the consciousness of freedom. That is to say, moral selfhood is built up neither by the consciousness of a self-given law and duty, nor by the feelings of pleasure and pain, but by the feeling of regret. Having regret is to feel that something couldn't be different but would have been different. Therefore, the feeling of remorse and the judgment of regret remain incomprehensible without the simultaneous admission of the existence of genuine possibilities, alternative ways to act. To morally judge that an act is bad, James concludes, is to regret of its happening (I, WB, 588-589). If we link James notion of regret to his moral doctrine formulated in "Moral Philosophy and the Moral Life," we can conclude that regret expresses a cosmic demand. As the good is that which satisfies the demand, the bad is that which is demanded to be changed.

As the title of James's essays informs, the feeling of regret experienced by someone adopting a deterministic perspective causes a dilemma. Regret of particular evil acts, whether the individuals themselves perform or the others do, such as murder or treachery, eventually paves the way for the regret of the existence of the world itself in its totality giving rise to such vicious acts, because ultimately the totality causes and determines the characters of the parts. The consequence is the pessimism

ingrained into the idea of life in an unchangeable vicious totality. According to James, different theories to escape from this pessimistic situation are offered. The most accepted one is the theory which interprets the evil as the passage to a higher form of good. Hence, evil is teleological justified and the feeling of regret is explained away to be an error. Using a striking example, James asserts that this image of the world, in which one shouldn't regret that a man smashes his wife's skull with a stone with the simple reason that he is bored of her existence because everything ultimately leads to good cannot be accepted. So, determinism ends with a paradox: either regret, in order to be good, requires that the murder is bad or the murder, in order to be regarded as good, requires that regret is bad. Since both of the ways produces an image of the world essentially wrong and absurd, one is left with no other options than choosing between subjectivism and pessimism.

Subjectivists are gnostics who are interested in comprehending the natures of good and bad so that ethical consciousness enlarges rather than being interested in doing good and bad. James thinks that Hegel is the heading gnostics in that all acts and movement is for the sake of subjective knowledge and feeling. Gnostic also claims that the nature of something can be experienced and appropriated through the absence of it more properly. Consequently, the absence of virtue or compassion or justice is the permanent human state and resistance to these absences for the sake of an ideal human state is morally nonsense. In that sense, subjectivism fosters passivity and indifference rather than care and practical involvement. Romanticism is classified by James as a left wing subjectivism in literature and James clearly states that he distastes the ideas of Emile Zola and M. Ernest Renan who he believes to be the leading figures of French romantic school and who worship subjective sensibility (I, WB, 585-6). From James's critical perspective, romantics embrace terror, cruelty and evil for the sake of the subjective sentiments corresponding to them, because it



makes ethical awareness deeper and richer, with a pessimistic attitude that there is no remedy for them. James mentions Carlyle's description of the romantic perspective of the world: "a vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha and mill of death" whether it is seen as "a romance of the spirit" (Renan) or as a "roman experimental" (Zola) (I, WB, 587).

The main reason that James rejects romanticism is his mistaken judgment that romantics passively contemplate the life and care for nothing other than the sensations in life. Pragmatically, not contemplation but conduct will be the way to escape from pessimism. Although the roots of romanticism can be traced back to the Sturm and Drang movement which mistakenly causes to identification of romantics with the fanatics of unbridled emotions and wild experiences, as it is clarified in the first part of the study, romanticism criticizes both Sturm and Drang movement and Enlightenment, and adopts a middle path. Instead of giving priority to the sensibility, they have a holistic view of human being. The romantic *Bildung*, for example, is the cultivation of the individual in its all capacities. On the other hand, it is true that romantics place feeling and imaginative power in the center in their conception of the subject, but so do pragmatics and James. James own idea that rationality is a sensation of harmony and fluency in both intellectual and practical engagements, or his assertion that good is that what the individual feels to be good are the simple proofs of it. James misses the romantic aims which are the transformation of philosophy from an intellectual work to a collective practice and the convergence of philosophy to life as much as possible. In addition, romantic individual is not a contemplator but an artistic agent whose act combines both aesthetic creation and practice in the concept of transformative act, which, indeed, characterizes pragmatic agent too. Moreover, the pessimism that James accuses of romantics, is the romantic awareness of the misery of life shared by pragmatic

consciousness. Both pragmatism and romanticism target the imperfections to be eliminated and chose to be not pessimist and hope for betterment, ironically knowing that it is only their choice, belief and hope which can never be grounded. Finally, it can be argued that despite the fact that James classifies Renan and Zola as romantics, they attract his attention and undergo his criticism because they break other pragmatic principles. For example, Zola, rather than being called romantic, is the father of French naturalism in literature. He advocates the idea that individuals are powerless in the deterministic nature and they only transmit nature's purposes and demands, consequently lives are reduced to inauthentic private theatricals. It is the very contradiction of both James's and romantic conception of transformative individuality.

In his addresses to the Philosophical Clubs of Yale and Brown Universities, published in 1896, James's idea that there is the right to believe in something without any epistemic certitude if this belief makes the conditions for certain consequence actual is detailed and defended explicitly. This is James's famous doctrine of will to believe. In his talk James is interested in particular case of will to believe: will to believe in religious hypothesis. From James's point of view, while with regard to scientific questions we can wait to make a decision on the truth of the hypothesis until the objective evidence is obtained, with regard to practical moral questions the act of belief is the necessary part of the realization of the truth of the hypothesis (I, WB, 470; LS, 500-501). To remind again, the belief in a fact helps creating the fact (I, WB, 479). Antagonistic positivism holds that the criteria of sensible evidence for truth of the beliefs apply to all cases of life and the consequence is the eternal moral doubt and passivity. For the urgent moral questions no sensible evidence is available and according to James moral skepticism itself is immoral. Therefore, we should not fall pray of the scienticism which is a kind of absolutism with respect to truth

because antagonist scientists stick with one idea of evidence, sensible evidence, although they claim that they are not epistemic absolutist in their loyalty to sensible evidence and doubt.

James argues that if decision between two options, different ideas, or hypotheses has some characteristic, faith in the truth of one of them is practically justified although logically the situation is indecisive. The practical belief is allowable on the condition that one of the options is a "*genuine option*" (I, WB, 458). An option is genuine, if it is living, forced and momentous. First, in a living option, both of the offers are live not intrinsically but in its relation to the individual when she or he has a tendency towards it and willingness to act on it. Some options are alive for some individuals while being dead for others. Second, a forced option is a choice between two parties which are logical disjunctives. The case is an either/or situation. For example, the option that I can take an umbrella with me or not when I go out can be avoided by choosing staying at home. So this choice is not forced. If there is no alternative way to choosing between two cases, then it is a forced option. Finally, an option is momentous if there would be no other chance in one's life for such an option to occur; that is to say, if it is once-in-a-life situation. Thus, we face a genuine option, if the option is unique, if the stake is significant and the choice is irreversible. James concludes his speech by stating that religion offers itself as a genuine option to those who are willing to make life better (I, WB, 497).

If the belief in the fact creates the fact, it is vital for a moral subject to believe in her or his freedom, to believe in the corroboration of the world for a successful moral struggle and to believe in God that helps this corroboration. As it is clarified, all these beliefs are up to the individual. Choosing "world's goodness" and acting on this choice, the individual makes one of the possible universes true by believing and

acting on belief (I, WB, 502). To the question "Is Life worth Living?" which is the title of his address to Harvard Young Men's Christian Association, James answers: "This life is worth living, we can say, since it is what we make it, from the moral point of view; and we are determined to make it from that point of view, so far as we have anything to do with it, a success" (I, WB, 501). He adds that making life morally significant and carrying a morally valuable life is a real battle necessitating a strenuous mood, healthy mindedness, and devotion. In that sense, will to believe also denotes a strong but unorthodox devotion to the ideal. It is the romantic commitment in the face of meaninglessness. As James M. Albrecht puts "pragmatic meliorism clearly requires the strength of will James identifies with moral selfhood: the ability to consent to an ideal, and commit one's energies to it, even in those cases where the tragic costs of such choice are painfully evident."<sup>156</sup>

God and religious faith are pragmatically the energizer or stiffener of the melioristic activities. Since God means the presence of "cosmic promise", "[e]very sort of energy and endurance, of courage and capacity for handling life's evils, is set free in those who have religious faith" (II, PU, 616; II, MT, 825). Although James mostly expresses or implies that he is indifferent to monistic and pluralistic religions, in so far as they have the same vitalizing affect, theism or polytheism, he writes that resignation from the monistic and theistic conception of God which is turned to be a metaphysical monster by theologians and ecclesiasts would help to strengthen moral effort more directly because in that case one fights not with an evil whose source is an infinite spirit or substance impossible to overthrow but with finite evil acts and wrong conducts (I, WB, 491-4). James imagines a moral struggle to

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<sup>156</sup>James M. Albrecht, *Reconstructing Individualism: A Pragmatic Tradition from Emerson to Ellison* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 179.

overthrow concrete, finite evils collectively with the romantic hope of success and commitment. God, as “having an environment, being in time and working out history,” is included into the plurality of the universe as a part and becomes a comrade in moral fight (II, PU, 775). God is finite, only a wider cosmic whole, a ‘more’ is both a claimant and a coworker; hence, God is included to the sociality of the labor. In contrast to faith the eternal God of the monistic religions, the finite God awakens only “Cosmic emotion.” (II, PU, 687). As romantics do, James romantically naturalizes the supernatural and divinizes the natural. It can be concluded that, doctrine of will to believe is James’s doctrine of romantic devotion.

Religion and God are the expressions of faithfulness, feeling and strong commitment of the individual to something that she or he values the most; for example, the ideal of making the world more livable and more intimate. It is James’s romantic understanding of divinity that he shares with Schlegel. James also closely analyzes and tries to understand the claims of the mystics and their personal religious experiences in his work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Instead of understanding religion as the ecclesiastical organization or an institution which is external and artificial to the individual, religion is understood as something personal and private: it is “the inner dispositions of man himself which form the center of interest, his conscience, his deserts, his helplessness, his incompleteness” (II, VRE, 34). Religion is a notion of species which refers to “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (II, VRE, 36). The central interest of the individual is to complete herself by making the concrete life more ideal and complete. Given the finitude of God, the infinity can refer only to the unending search for completeness, which, in turn, becomes the search for intimacy in a plurality. Relating to a personal divinity becomes being a true devout of intimacy

and sociality. Investigation of James's ideas on morality can be concluded by the following paragraph which hints at the significance of love for the constitution of moral life and the humanistic conception of his divinity.

Were all other things, gods and men and starry heavens, blotted out from this universe, and were there left but one rock with two loving souls upon it, that rock would have as thoroughly moral a constitution as any possible world which the eternities and immensities could harbor. It would be a tragic constitution, because the rock's inhabitants would die. But while they lived, there would be real good things and real bad things in the universe; there would be obligations, claims, and expectations; obediences, refusals, and disappointments; compunctions and longings for harmony to come again, and inward peace of conscience when it was restored; there would, in short, be a moral life, whose active energy would have no limit but the intensity of interest in each other with which the hero and heroine might be endowed. We, on this terrestrial globe, so far as the visible facts go, are just like the inhabitants of such a rock. Whether a God exist, or whether no God exist, in yon blue heaven above us bent, we form at any rate an ethical republic here below" (I, WB, 605).

We strive to build an ethical republic on earth no matter what. The difference that the humanistic belief in a collaborative God's existence brings it that it provides us with a characteristic of healthy-mindedness and strenuous mood to strive. The romantic hope that life will be responsive to our moral effort constitutes James's humanistic conception of divinity.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Romantic consciousness forms and expresses itself historically in Europe after the collapse of French revolution and particularly in Germany during the pursuit of idealistic absolute systems with the desire to find rational self-assurance in the face of the despair that this collapse causes to the Enlightenment consciousness. The idealistic search for an absolute philosophical system in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, on the other hand, is closely linked to Kant's critical philosophy which is interpreted to be incomplete because its halting place is the irrevocable fragmentation of the subject rooted into the separation of the deterministic phenomenal world devoid of human values and spontaneous freedom of the subject which is originator of the values. Kant's investigation leaves the philosophical inquiry fragmentary too as a result of the denial of knowledge in morality. The turbulence in societal life and intellectual life manifests itself in cultural forms too. In art and culture, the traditional conception of mimetic, organic artwork and traditional way of objective art criticism leave their places into modernist tendencies of authentic production and subjective criticism. The desire of reason to found its own secure norms and unity out of itself spreads to the areas of art and art criticism coupled with the reflective acknowledgment of the persistent insecurity of these spontaneous norms and unity. Romantic reflection critically acknowledges the impossibility of the absolute comprehension. Finite attempts are

constantly undermined by being dependent to something greater, inexhaustible and uncontrollable

Having realized the productive and interactive role of the subject in the construction of the reality with the simultaneous awareness of the fragmentariness and alienation lying at the heart of the subjectivity, romanticism emerges firstly as the concern for the possibility of art's being a unitary subject giving to itself its own norms of activity. Romantic consciousness concerning art and art theory transforms the conceptions of philosophy and ethics itself simultaneously. Through this transformation epistemological questions and ethical concerns, knowledge and the way of life, theory and practice are revealed to be strictly interpenetrated and to be closely connected the subjective potentiality discovered in the artistic practice and aesthetic dimension of experience. Romantics believe in the redemptive contribution of the creative, interpretative, practical transformative power of the subject in shaping itself, nature and society into realities. They believe in the dialogical vitalizing imaginative power of the subject.

This trust in redemptive interpretative and transformative exchange of the subject, mostly called as humanism, is the core of American pragmatism founded on the discussions of the meaning. Pragmatism is formulated at first as a theory of meaning. Meaning for pragmatists cannot be considered without taking account of the subject's contribution in the sense that the meanings of events are their possible or actual relations to the subjects. Subjects are the important partners in the origination and determination of the meanings and values in a world silent, dumb and indifferent without this interaction. American philosophers attempt to overcome the repercussion of the modernist alienation that the German romantics come to grips with. Mechanistic scienticism of their age in the intellectual sphere; and



industrialism going hand in hand with, in Peirce's description, utility seeking greedy intelligence in the social-economic sphere results in the more and more vivid feeling of separation from a mechanistic universe, absence of intimacy and unity. Peirce and James argue for the subjective power of viewing the life in such a perspective that various possibilities of different interactive relations and unities open up for the self, society and nature. Without the possibility of the difference and a different future the question of meaning does not arise.

The primary feature of American pragmatism is the priority given to will, act, and life over the concept, discursive intellect and theory. American pragmatism is a philosophy of process and becoming; to be is to be in the making. Change, newness and the promise of the future are the constant points of emphasis in pragmatic vision. This pragmatic vision exemplified Peirce and James has a romantic spirit because the understanding of process and activity dwells on a central romantic idea of infinite strife understood as the principle of any activity. Infinite strife is built on the notion of romantic absence in turn. Romantic absence means the necessary reproduction of the ideal as both necessary and impossible to be reached in any self-initiating act of becoming, given that the continuity of the movement is constituted and regulated by this togetherness of necessity-impossibility. If to be is always to be in the making, the making cannot be completed but ought to be completed because it is in the making. The absence in this sense refers always to something yet to come, to a 'more,' to an excess uncaught in every attempt to the completion of the pragmatic activity. Consequently, any activity becomes a constant strife after the realization of the ideal, a trial of approximation. The inherent tension this constant absence creates radically transforms conceptions of philosophy, knowledge, truth, being, self, morality and religion in romantic thought which can be detected in the philosophies of Peirce and James. As a result, a vivid similarity in particular

epistemological explanations, ontological inferences and ethical concerns can be discerned.

First, the romantic theme of absence and the idea of infinite strife manifest themselves in epistemological theories. Both romantics and pragmatists criticize the idea of philosophical reflection inherent in absolutism and intellectualism which presuppose the possibility of attaining absolute truth and adopt the Cartesian way to certainty. Both of the pragmatic and romantic intellectual orientations are strictly antifoundational and skeptical. Hegel and Novalis shape their conception of philosophy through the critique of Fichte's Cartesian foundationalism and his systematic approach to metaphysics. For romantics philosophical reflection does not seek after self-certain first principles to found itself deductively as a systematic science but to be in harmony with the creative principle of life. It is forward looking and progressive. Romantics reject intellectual intuition explicated to be supplying the immediate certainty. Similarly, both Peirce and James start their reformation of philosophy by refuting the claim of absolutist philosophers and their conception of truth. Peirce underscores foundationalism of Cartesian method by demonstrating the impossibility of such an intuitive faculty for human being and the impossibility of the standpoint of a universal doubt for the individuals. He disclaims self-grounding immediate certainty with reference to infinite relationality, referentiality, mediality and inexhaustible semiotic structure of thought. James, too, refutes any form of foundationalism in the construction of his doctrine of pragmatic truth. Neither first principles nor experiential atomic givens can ascertain knowledge. There are provisionally accepted truths which are believed to be true by their function to further and foster the coherent flow of experience and feeling of fluency. Truth is open unending revision. Both romantics and pragmatics leave formulas, categories, unchangeable first principles for the sake of flux of life. According to both

of them the aim of philosophy is not to transcend life but incorporate to it and transform the experience as much as possible. Life is philosophical endeavor's living seed and turning place. Change, movement and vagueness reigns but the directedness of this movement towards an end remains as well despite the fact that it never comes.

Romantics declare that the heart of philosophy lies not in comprehension but eternal lack of comprehension. Novalis maintains that this lack gives rise to unending poetic experimentation in a constant self-producing uncertainty on the way to comprehension. Every attempt to know is a fragmentary interpretation and as a fragment it always refers to the absence of the complete understanding. For romantics the model of philosophical enterprise is poetics whose essence is constituted by romantic progressive poiesis; that is, self-reflective eternal strife towards the ideal of infinite diversity in infinite unity. Like romantic poetry, philosophy is a collective, plural production of truths through which all the ideas and tendencies both within a single line of thought or within a group are acknowledged, can be changed, adapted or reformed. The romantic philosophical engagement becomes a circular coherentist interplay and adaptation of beliefs which lacks both a first point and a last one and which circles genealogically and provisionally. Romantic consciousness produces provisional truths with the ironic; that is, self-reflective and collective hope to render life meaningful in its totality in the end.

Pragmatists Peirce and James transform philosophy and knowledge exactly in the same fashion and any intellectual pursuit including philosophy becomes an open-ended, continuous process of productive inquiry. Peirce writes that philosophical investigation is a semiotic inquiry starting from a web of beliefs and meanings and

within intersubjective interactions. Philosophy is a form of semiosis, the dynamic practice of sign appropriation and articulation through which meanings change and grow while reality is construed partially too. Peirce describes this process to be a pluralistic inquiry infinitely extended and indefinitely determined by the community of future knowers. This inquiry is carried out by an infinite hope to reach comprehension. The hope is infinite because it is necessarily unrealizable so that the inquiry continues to be. James's doctrine of truth in the making romanticize the epistemic activity in that he dissolves it into the double-bounded social praxis of truth-making in reciprocal determination both by that the experience presents and by coherency of the ideas. It has the form of a hermeneutical activity, along similar lines that Schlegel describes it with the help of the notions of circularity and coherence. Both for Peirce and James the truths are always "yet to come" and meanings are constantly destabilized by the end which is infinitely approximated. In addition, romantics' agreement that subject's crucial role in production of knowledge is not its categorizing discursive functions, or the inductive and deductive workings of reason, but the imagination whose heightened form is the genius is adopted by Peirce and James too.

Second, the romantic theme of absence and infinite strife are detected in Peirce's and James's pragmatic conceptions of morality. What they try to express in their ethical theories can be captured by the basic romantic notion of infinite *Bildung*. Romantics prioritize moral perfection as the highest good. Knowledge and art are the means for the romantic ideal of becoming an individual developed holistically all in her or his aspects and powers through different moods and experience. Romantic imperative commends dedication to the infinite laboring for individual perfection through which the communal life is transformed into a higher moral order by the unique creative and transformative power of the individual. This imperative calls for a life

in the form of a continuous self-creating and self-destructive poem leading towards more and more richness and fluency. Schlegel writes that conceiving one's fragmentary self and painful life as a poem requires the courageous act of will.

Peirce grounds ethics on aesthetics by affirming that ethics concerns desire, purposeful act and willful effort while aesthetics is interested in the ideal, what is admirable in itself, towards what the effort should be directed. The ideal that should be loved, admired and strived for for its own sake is an aesthetically good life; a life towards its own aesthetic totality of reciprocally related multiple parts. Individuals' struggle to realize this ideal in their own unique way embodies a moral growth and it demands cultivation of a kind of receptivity, sensibility or affective disposition for that which is admirable. So, Peirce's understanding of the infinite moral task to increase concrete reasonableness, whose essence lies in its endless perfectibility and betterment, is the expression of the romantic *Bildung*. While Peirce picture ethical betterment as an eternal evolutionary strife for an aesthetic unity driven by love, James claims that moral aspect of life is embodied by the infinite struggle to ameliorate life and become a strenuous self. According to James's theory of amelioration, which is a moral theory of both fulfillment and reform, morality concerns with the ongoing dynamic moral experimentation progressing to a better stage which is hoped to be incessantly approaching to the perfect community while individuals fulfill their desires and strive for being strenuous selves. The perfect stage as an ideal is always absent. In his doctrine of will to believe, James romantically affirms that willing and devotion is the condition for the actualization of betterment. James's moral theory, in its connection with his doctrine of the will to believe, is grounded on the romantic ideas of strong devotion to an ideal and hope. In addition, instead of advocating the institutional idea of religion romantics construct an idea of humanistic and individualistic religion. In the origination of it

lies personal experience of divinity and feeling. It is strictly self-transformative. Love is a religion for romantics. The same conception can be discerned in Peirce and James.

Finally, the notion of absence in its ontological and metaphysical aspect refers to the incompleteness, lack of totality and oneness in the universe, and the lack of completeness in subject's identity. The possibility of free act underlying romantic perfection and pragmatic amelioration requires that neither the self nor the world constitutes an isolated, fixed, determined, already completed wholes. Schlegel, Peirce and James conceive the reality not in terms of universal and stable structures but in terms of dynamism, individuality and collectivity. Consequently, pluralism, diversity and collectivity emerge as the important components of both romantic and pragmatic thought. Instead of being a rationally structured world, the romantic and pragmatic world is the world of becoming which is open to change and transformation. In addition, the romantic and pragmatic life is a dynamic and vague life inherently embedded with manifold possibilities. Instead of the subject endowed with universal rationality, the romantic and pragmatic subject is an individual with her or his creative, transformative and interpretive power of imagination. Not the power of reason grounds the unity of the subject, but the novelty the individuals are able to bring to the world, their will and desire determine a subject as the subject. Both romanticism and pragmatism are the philosophies of difference and plurality rather than being philosophies of identity.

Both romanticism and pragmatism are primarily ethical stances. Their ontological and epistemological theories are ultimately shaped by an ethical concern. Romantics and pragmatics care for the absent intimacy in the world. Making the world a home for the individual through vitalization is the primary romantic concern. The

romantic individual transforms reality so that she or he feels more at home in the world; the individual desires and labors to make the world more intimate and cooperative with her or his being. Romantics offer the strong and personal commitment to a wider self which brings a change in view about the life and the self by allowing to form a certain image of and vitalizing relation to the world. In the same romantic way, Peirce and James fight against the reductive scientism of their times and systematic derogation of human values. Romantic search and labor for intimacy, which can be called a metaphysical intimacy, is one of the significant themes of Peirce's cosmological theory and James's metaphysical thought. James romantically believes that the individual has right to have a belief if the belief forms a personal relation to the world which motivates, supports and fosters one's moral labor. Hope is endowed with melancholy at the same time because of the paradoxical consciousness of the necessary constant absence of what is hoped for. To conclude, the theme of absence does not only constitute the self-critical aspect of both romanticism and pragmatism, determine their understanding of philosophical practice, morality and religion, but it also shapes their ontological theories and their perspective on world and self. The investigation of this romantic theme and related conceptions that mushroom around it in James's and Peirce's philosophies is only a starting point for the further inquiries into their successors in pragmatist tradition to hunt the romantic spirit. Josiah Royce's (1855-1916) idea of loyalty to loyalty which is another form of romantic devotion, John Dewey's (1859-1952) idea of education built on romantic *Bildung* or Richard Rorty's (1931-2007) conception of irony and his conviction that philosophy should become literature are traces of romanticism that this thesis points at and opens up for further studies. This thesis reveals the romantic core of pragmatism and opens up Romantic heritage in pragmatic tradition for further discoveries.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

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Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
PhD	METU Philosophy	2017
MS	METU Philosophy	2009
BS	METU Philosophy	2006

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2016- Present	19 Mayıs University, Department of Philosophy	Research Asistant
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#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Intermediate German

#### PUBLICATIONS

1. Spinozistic Notion of Individual as Constant Resistance, *Ege University International Cultural Studies Symposium Proceedings* 14: 135-149 (2015)

2. Emotional Labor in Phenomenology of Spirit, *FLSF* (Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi), 21: 87-104 (2016)

3. Inquiry into the Forms of Intersubjectivity in Kant's Practical Philosophy with a View to Cosmopolitan Ideal, *Dialogue and Universalism*, 27(1): 135-149 (2017)

## PRESENTATIONS

1. Spinozistic Notion of Individual as Constant Resistance, *Ege University 14th International Cultural Studies Symposium*, 8-10 May 2013, Izmir/TURKEY.

2. Philosophy as a Romantic Pragmatic Pursuit, *Central Washington University Northwest Philosophy Conference*, 7-8 November 2014, Ellensburg/ Washington/ U. S.

3. Inquiry into the Forms of Intersubjectivity in Kant's Practical Philosophy with a View to Cosmopolitan Ideal, *XI ISUD Congress* (The International Society for Universal Dialogue World Congress), Values and Ideals: Theory and Praxis, 11-15 July 2016, Warsaw/ POLAND.

## Appendix B: TURKISH SUMMARY

### KLASİK AMERİKAN PRAGMACILIĞINDA ROMANTİK TEMA VE GERİLİMLERİN İNCELENMESİ

Köklerini on yedinci yüzyılda Avrupa'nın fikir ve kültür hayatında bulabileceğimiz romantizm ve on dokuzuncu yüzyılda Amerikan düşünürleri tarafından bir felsefi tutum olarak ortaya atılmış olan pragmacılığın belirleyici niteliklerine bakıldığında bu iki felsefi tutumun birbirlerine oldukça zıt özelliklere sahip olduğu düşünülebilir. Romantizm tekçi bir tincilik, mutlakçı bir idealizm, mistisizm, hasret ve estetik idealler peşinde sonsuz bir uğraşla ilişkilendirilirken, pragmacılık çoğulcu bir maddecilik, radikal ampirizm, sağduyu, ilerencilik ve pratik yaşamın sonlu amaçlarıyla ilişkilendirilir. Bu tezde birbirine tamamen zıt görüşler olarak konumlandırılan romantizm ve pragmacılığın ortak tema, ilgi ve gerilimlerini göz önüne sermek hedeflenmektedir. Tezin temel olarak savunduğu fikir romantik sonsuz mücadele ilkesinin klasik Amerikan pragmacıları Charles Sanders Peirce'ün (1839-1914) ve William James'in (1842-1910) pragmacı felsefelerinde epistemolojik, ahlaki ve ontolojik formlarda karşımıza çıktığı ve bu iki filozofun öğretilerinin romantik olduğu fikridir. Bu iddiayı savunmak için tez tarihsel olarak Erken Romantik Hareket [*Frühromantik*] olarak kategorilendirilen Alman Jena romantiklerinden Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) ve Friedrich von Hardenberg'in (Novalis) (1772-1801) felsefelerine odaklanmaktadır. Alman Jena romantizminin bir felsefi tutum olarak temel taşı olan sonsuz mücadele fikri her sabit yapıyı harekete dönüştüren ve bu harekete zorunlu ve içkin bir tamamlanmamışlık katan

bir kavramdır. Bu kavram paradoksal yokluk kavramı üzerine temellenir. Romantik yokluk kavramının paradoksal olmasının sebebi içinde hem bir zorunluluk hem de bir imkânsızlığı taşımasıdır. Kavramda yokluk zorunlu olarak işaret edilmelidir ki olmayana kavuşma fikri mümkün olsun, aynı zamanda kavuşma imkânsızdır çünkü kavuşmaya giden hareketin hareket olabilmesi ve devamlılığı için olmayan olmamaya devam etmek zorundadır. Kavuşmayı mümkün kılan yokluk aynı zamanda imkânsız kılmaktadır. Böylece hem kavuşulması gereken hem de kavuşulamaz olan bu yüzden uğruna sonsuzca çabalanan romantik ideal fikri ortaya çıkar. Bu gerilim ve bu gerilimin canlı tuttuğu umut, umutta temellenmiş epistemik ve ahlaki uğraş Peirce ve James'in pragmacılığında kendini açıkça gösterir.

Pragmacı felsefenin romantik bir bilinçle kurulduğunu ve romantik bir ilke tarafından biçimlendiğini savunabilmek için öncelikle romantik felsefeyle ve sonsuz mücadele ilkesiyle ne kastettiğimizin açık ve seçik olarak ortaya konulması gerekmektedir. Jena romantiklerinin mottosu şudur: "Her sanat bilim olmalıdır ve her bilim sanat; şiir ve felsefe bir yapılmalıdır."<sup>157</sup> Bu motto doğrultusunda felsefenin kendisine dönüştürüleceği sanatın romantikler tarafından nasıl anlaşıldığı; başka bir deyişle, sanat ve romantizm bağına da göstererek romantikliğin edebi bir proje olarak nasıl ortaya çıktığı açıklamalarımızın başlangıç noktası olacaktır. Sanat üretimini ve sanat eserini romantik perspektiften kavramak elzemdir çünkü romantiklere göre yalnızca felsefi uğraş değil doğa, birey, toplum ve devlet de birer sanat eserine, birer şiire, dönüştürülmelidir. Jena romantikleri Schlegel ve abisi August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845) tarafından başlatılmış *Athenaeum* dergisi etrafında toplanmış sanatçılardan, estetikçilerden, teolog ve düşünürlerden oluşmuş bir gruptur. Grup üyeleri arasında Novalis, Dorothea Mendelssohn, Caroline

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<sup>157</sup>Friedrich Schlegel *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, çev. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 157.

Böhmer, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ludwig Tieck, W. Heinrich Wackenroder, C. J. Friedrich Hölderlin ve F. W. Joseph Schelling de sayılmaktadır. Grup en yoğun üretimlerini 1794-1802 yılları arasında gerçekleştirmiştir ve grubun düşünsel üretimlerini fragmanlar şekilde bize ulaştıran *Athenaeum* dergisi 1798-1800 yılları arasında yayınlanmıştır. Grubun sanata dair temel ilgisi Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe ve Jean-Luc Nancy'nin de derinlemesine incelediği gibi sanatın bir özne olabilme ve bir özne olarak kurallarının kaynağını kendinde bulabilme imkânının sorgulanmasıdır.<sup>158</sup> Bu sorgulamayı Schlegel *Athenaeum* fragmanlarında, derginin son sayısındaki "Dialogue on Poetry" adlı bölümde ve *Lyceum der schönen Künste* (1797) fragmanlarında yapar ancak sanat problemi en açık şekilde Schlegel'in ilk eserlerinden biri olan *On the Study of Greek Poetry*'de incelenir. Bu eserde sanatın nasıl bir üretim olduğu üzerine inceleme klasik-modern, nesnellik-öznel, özdeşlik-farklılık ikilikleri üzerinden anlatılır. Sanatın amacı Schlegel için, diğer romantikler için olduğu gibi, Antik Yunan'da estetik ölçüt olarak sunulan tamlık, uyum, mükemmellik ve örgütlülük ölçütlerine uymak ve Antik Çağ eserlerini taklit etmek değildir. Sanat başlamış ve devam etmektedir, özü oluş halinde olmaktır, tamamlanıp bitmemiştir; bu yüzden modern zamanın ilerici form ve içeriği de, yani canlılık, çokluk, zenginlik, farklılık ve yenilik de sanatın özüne dairdir. Aynı zamanda bu çokluk ve zenginlik sanat üretiminde evrenselliğin kaybolmasına, mükemmelliğin yokluğuna, parçalanmaya ve heterojenliğe sebep olur. Romantikler için ulaşılmaması gereken estetik ideal klasik ve modern estetik ölçütlerin birlikteliğidir. Sanatsal üretimin gerilimi birlik ve çokluk, düzen ve kargaşa, fragman ve bütün, yaratım ve yıkım, doğal güzellik ve yapay güzellik, bilinçdışı üretim ve bilinçli düşünüm arasında salınır. Estetik ideal sonsuz çeşitlilikte sonsuz bir birlik

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<sup>158</sup>Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, çev. P. Barnard and C. Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978).

oluşturarak sanatın kendini gerçekleştirmesidir. Özü sürekli bir ilerleme halinde olma ve sürekli kendini dönüştürme olarak belirlenen sanat kendiliğine ulaşabilmek ve bir özne olabilmek için mutlak olarak sunulan klasik yapılardan, kavrayışlardan, diretilen değerlerden ve yasalardan azat edilmeli, romantikleştirilmeli ve kendini tanımalıdır. Romantik sıfatı bu anlamda belirli bir sanat akımına ya da janra göndermektense bir ideal olarak tüm sanat dallarının uğruna mücadele vermesi gereken bir ideal hale göndermektedir.

Sanat üretimi romantikler için hem kendini yaratarak hem de kendini yıkarak; başka bir deyişle, daha çok, yeni ve farklı anlamlar üreterek ve her ürettiği anlamda bir önceki anlamı yıkarak, bu haliyle de her zaman daha çok, farklı, yeni deneyim ve yoruma açık olarak ilerleyen bir üretimdir. Romantikler sanat üzerine düşünürlerken bitmiş ve tamamlanmış olarak düşünülen sanat eserinin aksine yaratım sürecine odaklanmışlardır. Sanat eseri ne üretici ne de deneyimleyen için tüketilebilir değildir. Bir üretim olarak sanat yaratıcı ve tutkulu imgelem gücünün yıkıcı ve eleştirel ironik güçle birlikteliğini gerektirmektedir. Sanatçıların yaratım gücü olarak düşünülen dâhilik konusunda romantikler demokratik davranırlar. Deha, her bireyde bulunan yaratıcı imgelem gücünün daha güçlü ve yoğun halidir. Diğer yandan retoriğe ait olan ve söylenmek istenenin zıddının söylenerek işaret edildiği sözel bir sanat olan ironi romantisizme göre bu retoriksel anlamı dışında farklı şekillerde anlaşılmalıdır. Birinci olarak sanatın barındırdığı paradoksal yapı sanatın ironisini oluşturur. Sanatçılar gerçeği bir bütün olarak kavramanın ve göstermenin mücadelesi içindeyken ve gerçekliğin sanat yoluyla ifşa edilebileceğine inanırken aynı sebeple de sonlu ve tarihsel bir üretim sebebi ile yalnızca gerçekliği bir fragman olarak iletibilmektedirler. Sonsuzluğu yakalamak için girişilen her sonlu atılım ulaşmak istenen sonsuzluk düşünüldüğünde kendi kendiyile çelişmektedir. İkinci olarak romantik ironi dehanın romantik bilincinin ironik olması



anlamına gelir ki bu da sanatçının kendi özneliğini aşan, çelişkilere ve zıtlıkları kavrama yeteneğine sahip, bir eleştirel düşünüm dolayımıyla üretiyor olmasıdır. Romantik sanatçı bu çelişkilerin dönüştürücü gücünü kullanır. Son olarak ise ironi Sokratçı ironinin öne sürme-değilleme süreciyle ilerleyen diyalog yapısına gönderir ve sanat eserinin de hem sanatçılar arasında hem de alıcı ve sanatçı arasında kolektif bir şekilde diyalogla üretilmesi gerektiğini söyler. Üretim bir birlikte-şirleştirmedir (sym-poesy) ki romantikler aynı modeli felsefi etkinlik için de kullanıp felsefenin bir birlikte-felsefe yapma (sym-philosophy) olması gerektiğini savunacaklardır. Toparlayacak olursak, romantikler sanat üretiminin sürekli bir değişim ve akış halinde olan, yeniliğe açık, kendi üretimini ve eleştirisini kendi içinde taşıyan, olması gereken şeyin bilinciyle bir estetik ideale ulaşmaya çalışan ancak aynı zamanda da bu idealin peşinde gitmek kendi ilerici yapısını da oluşturduğundan paradoksal olarak bu ideale de hiçbir zaman ulaşip kendini tamamlayamayacak olan, öznelerarası gerçekleştirilen bir pratiktir. Romantikler tepkisel bir sanatsal proje olarak sanat üretimini sorgularken çok benzer bir tepkiyi ve reddedişi çağdaş mutlakçı idealist felsefi sistemlere ve bilginin mutlak bir şekilde temelleneceğini savunan anlayışlara karşı da gösterirler. Peki, felsefe bir özne olabilmiş midir?

Kant sonrası Alman idealizminin temel amacı Kant'ın yarıda bıraktığını düşündükleri eleştirinin ve aklın kendi üzerine düşünümünün tamamlanabileceğini göstermektir., İdealizm deneyimin koşulsuz koşulunun ortaya konulması ve aklın kendini örgütleyebilişini göstermeye, bu sayede de bilginin dışında kalan özgürlük ve bilgi alanlarının birleştirilmesiyle bu alanları inceleyen bölümleri de birleştirmeye ve felsefeye örgütlü bir bilgi, bir bilim karakteri kazandırmaya çalışırlar. Fichte bu idealist projenin önemli bir parçasıdır. Romantisizm Fichte'nin fikirlerinden oldukça etkilenmiş ancak onun Kartezyen temelciliğini ve felsefenin mutlakçı bir sisteme dönüştürme çabasını radikal bir şekilde eleştirmiştir. Fichte'ye göre felsefenin görevi

kanıtlanması ya da tanımlanması gerekmeyen doğruluğu kendinden muktedir, koşulsuz ilksel ilkeyi keşfetmektir. Bu ilke öyle bir ilkedir ki diğer tüm bilgi iddiaları onda temellenerek gerekçelendirilebilir. Fichte'ye göre bu görevi yerine getirmede Kant başarısız olmuştur çünkü birinci olarak kritik felsefe düşüncenin ve varlığın koşulsuz birliğini tesis edememiştir. İkinci olarak ahlak alanı bilgi alanından ayrı ve birleştirilmez olarak konumlandırıldığı müddetçe felsefenin arkitektonik bütünlüğünü bozmuş olmaktadır. Son olarak Kant felsefenin farklı bölümlerinde farklı özne tanımları yapar, özne birliksiz kalmıştır. Romantikler için de öznenin evsizliği ya da yabancılığı olarak tanımlanabilecek problem bilen özne olarak kurulan ve mekanik olarak işleyen dünyaya ait öznenin aynı anda belirli ahlaki görev ve sorumlulukların farkında ve idealleri olan özgür bir birey olarak doğada kendini yabancı hissetmesidir. Romantikler birey-doğa yakınlığını olabildiğince farklı yorumlar, düşünürler ve deneyimlerle sağlamaya çalışırken ve birini diğerine indirgmeden ötekiliğin gerekliliğine vurgu yaparken, Fichte'nin bu sorunlara çözümü şudur: Saf Ben'in kendini kendinden ortaya koyması koşulsuz bir doğruluk ve birlik sağlayıcı olarak entelektüel sezgiyle ulaşılır. Deneyimin zemini ve bilginin temeli saf egonun kendini belirleyici edimidir. Bilinç ve bilincin nesnesi ben=ben özdeşliğinden çıkarılabilmektedir. Bilinç ve bilincin nesnesinin farklı bir ifadesi ben ve doğa ikiliği olarak kendini gösterir. Fichte için doğa öznenin mutlak özgürlüğüne bir sınır olarak ortaya çıkar, kendini bilmek ve mutlak özgürlüğünde etkin olmak isteyen özne için doğa yalnızca tahakküm kurulacak bir araç statüsündedir. Romantiklere göre bu Kant'ın yabancılaştırdığı öznenin yabancılığının daha da keskinleştirilmesidir.

Novalis öncelikle entelektüel sezgi fikrine karşı çıkar. Her kavramsal düşünüm bir dolayımıdır ve kavramlarla ilerlendiği müddetçe ulaşmak istenen şey hep işaret edilen olarak kalacaktır. Felsefe eminlikler bulma arzusunda değildir, tam tersi her

eminliğin yıkılabileceği bir belirsizlik içinde ilerler. Novalis için bir koşulsuzluk peşinde koşarken karşılaştığımız yalnızca koşullu şeyler ve kavrayabileceğimiz yalnızca karanlıktır. Felsefe yaşamı aşmak istemez, ne de özne doğayı bir hiçe indirgemek ister; tam tersine felsefe ve özne olabildiğince yaşamın yaratıcı prensibine yaklaşmaya eğilir. Paylaşılan deha bireyin romantik bir sanatçı olarak yaratmasını ve eylemesini, böylece yaşamı dönüştürerek onun prensibine ve dönüşümüne katılmasını, karşılıklı olarak da kendisinin de dönüşmesini sağlar. Schlegel de aynı şekilde felsefi uğraşın kavranamamazlık ve bilinemezlik üzerine kurulu olduğunu söyler. Felsefe etkinliği kavramanın imkânsızlığını ve belirsizliği içinde taşır, nasıl ki tek ve mutlak bir yorum sanatta yoksa ve bir sürü fragmanlar varsa, felsefede de bilinemezlik temelinden çoğul, tarihsel, kişisel yorumlar vardır. Felsefi üretimde insanlık koşulunun getirdiği somut şeyler, tekil olaylar, kişisel hayatlar, inançlar ve hisler, gerilimler ve çözümler zorunlu olarak içerilir. Bu kaosa ve felsefi çabanın boşunaliğine göndermez, tam tersine felsefi araştırma yıkılmaya hazır doğrular üreterek hayatı bütüncül olarak anlamlı kılmaya ve değerler yaratmaya çalışan ironik bir yorum pratiği halini alır. Bu pratikte hem belirli bir bütün içindeki fikirlerin tutarlılığı, hem değişik bütünlerin birbiriyle ilişkisi, hem de fikirlerin deneyimin getirdiği tüm içeriklerle girdiği ilişki karşılıklı belirleme ve değiştirme gücüne sahiptir. Deneyimle gerçekliği oluşturmak ve dönüştürmek için girilen bu zıtlıkların bir arada tutulduğu hermeneutik pratik bitimsiz bir mücadeledir.

Sonsuz mücadele teması epistemolojik formda felsefenin romantikleştirilerek dönüştürülüşünde ortaya çıkarken ahlaki formunu romantik *Bildung* kavramıyla edinir. Romantikler için ahlakın temel sorusu nasıl kendimiz olabiliriz sorusudur. Bu bağlamda ahlaki kutsallık yasa koyan evrensel bir akılda ya da evrensel duyarlılıkta değil bireydedir ve birey olmak verili bir şey değildir, uğruna çabalanandır.

Romantik etik eylem için deęişmez yasaların formüle edilmesiyle, ya da onların gerekçelendirilmesiyle ilgilenmez; belirli bir kendilik-bilinci üretimiyle, yaşama sanatıyla ve yaratıcı dönüştürücü özgürlüğün ahlaki bir kavranışıyla ilgilenir ki bu hem öznenin hem de yaşadığı dünyanın farklı ve daha iyi hale getirilmesine fırsat tanır. Özne akılsallığı sebebiyle deęil hissedebiliyor, arzulanabiliyor, deęer yaratabiliyor, yaşama biçimleri hayal edebiliyor, adanabiliyor ve gerçekliği dönüştürebiliyor olması açısından ahlaki bir öznedir. Normatif bireysellik olarak anılabilecek romantik etik kendini mükemmelleştirme, iyileştirme, biçim verme, eğitime çabasıdır. Çoęulcudur, her insan kendi biricik potansiyelini gerçekleştirme ve birey olma yolunda ideale güçlü şekilde sadık kalabilir ve kendini mükemmelleştirmeye, ahlaki formasyonuna ahlaki bir adanmışlık gösterebilir. Sözü edilen kendini eğitime ve yaşamı biçimlendirme ahlaki *Bildung* kavramı altında toplanır ve bu kavram Alman geleneğinde zaten hâlihazırda olan bir kavramdır. *Bildung* gelişim, biçimlendirme, kalıba sokma, büyüme, eğitim, yaratım, kültür, formasyon, belirlenim, açık, örgütlü, bütün ve tam yapma anlamlarında kullanılmaktadır. Doęa için kullanıldığında organik bir parçanın olması gerektiği tamlıkta olması anlamına gelirken bir nesneyi bir modele uygun üretmek anlamına da gelmektedir. Alman geleneğinde *Bildung* daha üst ya da ileri bir oluş haline geçmek için kendine form verme işlemi olarak anlaşılmıştır. Terim ahlaki ve politik boyutunu Wilhelm von Humboldt'un terimi insanlığın içsel ve dönüştürücü eğitimi için kullanmasıyla kazanmıştır. Romantik formasyonu dięer ahlaki ya da politik formasyon türlerinden ayıran birinci özellik insanlığın, toplumun, mutlak egonun ya da tinin dönüşmesi ve iyileşmesi deęil bireyin kendini dönüştürmesidir. Toplumun ve bireyin formasyonu birbirini zıtlamak zorunda deęildir ancak ve ancak toplum da bir birey olarak düşünülürse. Romantisizm tek tip vatandaşlar yetiştirmeyi arzulamaz, biricik yaşamlar sürmeye çalışan bireyler amaçlar. Gelişim tek boyutlu

değildir; kişi duyuşal, duygusal, entelektüel ilişkiler sürerek algılamayı, kavramayı, yorumlamayı, hissetmeyi, eylemeyi bütüncül ve çok boyutlu olarak öğrenir. Büyüme öznelerarası duygu dolayımı ahlaki bir deneydir. Romantik formasyonu diđer ahlaki formasyon türlerinden ayıran ikinci nokta ise idealin estetik bir bütün olması ve dönüşümün estetik yollardan olmasıdır. Bireyin yaşamını bir sanatçının bir sanat eserini eleştirel ve olumlayıcı olarak yaratması ve biçimlendirmesi gibi biçimlendirmesi esastır. Romantikler için hareket esas olduğundan yaşam bir tür *poiesis*, sanatsal üretim gibi düşünölmelidir. Bu anlamda bireyin özgürlüğü onun estetik yetilerine işaret eder ve estetik etiğı koşullamış olmaktadır. Özgürlüğün yeni değerler ve yaşam biçimleri yaratarak hayatı iyileştirme ve değıştirme gücü olarak anlaşılması ve estetiğın etiğı önceliğı Peirce ve James'in düşünceleri için de temel niteliğindedir. Romantiklerin öne çıkardığı diđer ahlaki kavramlar ise istenç, güçlü mücadele, umut ve kutsal bulunan şeye sıkı sıkı bağılıktır. Dini kurumsal kimliğinden çıkarıp kutsal bulunana sadık olmak diye anlayan romantikler aşktan ya da sevgiden bir din olarak bahsederler. Dinin romantik karşılığı kendini gerçekleştirme ve yaşamı mükemmelleştirme çabasına duyguyu güçlendirerek ve yabancı olanı özgür edimlerle işbirlikçi olarak tahayyül etmeye yardım ederek mücadeleyi daha sağlam kılmasıdır. Romantikler bilme uğraşını olduğu gibi olma uğraşını da sonsuzca uzatmışlar, birey olmaya sonsuzca yaklaşıldığını ama asla gerçekleşemediğini savunmuşlardır. Birey hep olmakta olan olacaktır.

Klasik Amerikan pragmacılığının en öne çıkan özelliğı kavram, akıl ve teori karşısında istenç, edim ve deneyime verilen önceliktir. Pragmacılık bir oluş ve süreç felsefesidir; değışim, hareket, yenilik ve geleceğın vaat ettikleri pragmacılar için her zaman sabit vurgu noktaları olmuştur. Entelektüel bir uğraşın deneyimden çıkıp yine deneyime dönmesi gerektiğinde romantiklerle hem fikirdirler. Böyle konumlandırıldıklarında klasik Amerikan Pragmacıları olarak adlandırılan

düşünörlere baktığımızda ki bu düşünörlöer Peirce, James ve Dewey'dir, romantizme en uzak düşünöer Peirce gibi görünmektedir. İlk bakışta Peirce'ün arkitettonik yapılara, evrensel kategorilere ve yasalara hayranlığı, mantık ve matematiğe ilgisi, normatif bilimlerin doğası ve yöntemi üzerine arařtırmaları onu romantiklerden uzaklařtırıyor gibi görünmektedir. Peirce felsefenin bir bilim olması gerektiğine inanır ve bu inancı onu sanatın bilime, bilimin sanata dönüřtürölmesi, sanat ve felsefenin bir olmasını söyleyen romantik mottoda sanatı saf dıřı bırakmış gibi durmaktadır Peirce'ün felsefi pratięi ve ahlaki oluşu nasıl romantikleřtirdiğini görmek için öncelikle onun bilimden ve mantıksal yasalardan ne anladığını göstermek gerekmektedir. Peirce için bilgi edinme pratięi olarak bilim yapma statik bir şekilde bir zemin üzerine biriktirilmiş ve örgütlenmiş yasalar keřfetmek deęildir. Ne ki mantık kavramı formel mantığa göndermektedir. Peirce'e göre bilim yaparken, dolayısıyla da bilim haline gelecek olan felsefi düşünsel aktivitede, ya da genel olarak mantıksal akıl yürütmelerde, düşünöenin hareketine yön veren *semiosis*'tir; yani gösterge çözme, üretme ve deęiřtirme sürecidir.

Romantiklere paralel bir şekilde Peirce'ün bilgi anlayışı temelcilik ve mutlakçılık karřıtlığından ve bu felsefi düşünöelerin benimsedięi doğruluk kavramının reddinden yola çıkar. řüphe edilemez dolaysız temeller ve ilk prensipler arayışındansa bilginin kuruluđu sürekli dolayımlanan aktif bir deney, geçici inançların kurulup yıkıldığı, mutlak olmaktansa her daim yanlıřlanabilir bir soruřturma, geleceęe yönelmiş bir tutarlılık çabası olarak düşünölür. Peirce temel karřıtı yaklařımıyla hem Kartezyenizm'i hem de bilgi için bir temel sayılabilecek atomcu/sezgici deneyim anlayışını eleřtirir. Bu eleřtirileri 1868-69 yıllarında kaleme aldığı "Cognition Papers" ve 1877-78 yılları arasında yazdığı "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" serisinde bulunmaktadır. Peirce ayrıca bu yıllarda yazdığı "How to Make our Ideas Clear?" makalesinde pragmacılığı ki popölerliği için James'i ve

1989 yılında California University’de verdiği “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results” adlı konuşmasını beklemesi gerekecektir, bir metot olarak ilk kez formüle etmiştir.

Peirce “Cognition Papers” serisinde şüphe metodunu eleştirirken öznenin kendiliğinin kuruluşunu ve düşüncenin semiyotik (göstergebilimsel) doğasını da açıklar. Peirce öznenin ve Tanrı’nın varlığını zihnin dolayumsuz açık ve seçik bir sezgisi olarak bilme fikrine karşı çıkar. Novalis gibi Peirce bizi kesin bir bilgiye vardırarak böyle bir sezgisel düşünüm yetisini sahip olmamızın imkânsız olduğunu iddia eder ve bunun için yedi sebep verir: 1. İnsanların bir kavrayışın sezgisel olup olmadığını ayırt edecek bir yetisi yoktur; bu yüzden varılan şeyin sezgi olduğu bilinemez. 2. Kendilik bilinci dolayumsuz, anlık bir sezgisel kavrayış değildir; deneyimsel, etkin ve sosyal bir süreçtir. Peirce gerçeklik ve görünüş ayrımının bir ‘ben’ ve ‘diğeri’ ayrımıyla birlikte ortaya çıktığını anlatır. Kendilik bilincinin yanılmasının ve görünüşün bir özneliğe, doğrunun ve gerçeğin ise diğeri insanlar tarafından da onaylanan inançlara ve göstergelere ait olduğunun farkındalığıyla ortaya çıktığına değinir. Karşılıklı etkileşime açık bir dünyanın kurumuyla dünya bilgisi ve benlik bilgisi eş zamanlı kurulur. 3. İnanma, rüya görme, hayal etme, kavrama gibi bilinç formları sezgisel olarak ayırt edilemez; bu yüzden sezgiyle kavranan bilinç formu üzerine kesinlik oturtulamaz. 4. İlk ilkeler iç gözlem yoluyla bilinemez çünkü iç gözlem yoluyla sezgi ya da his olarak fark edilen şeyler aslında nesnelere kipleridir ve bir ‘diğeri,’ ‘başka’ ile kurulmuş ilişkiyi gerektirir. Örneğin sınırlı olmak aslında nesnenin sınırlendirici bulunmasıdır. 5. Her düşünce bir göstergedir ve akıl yürütme zorunlu olarak göstergeler içinde ilerler. Her düşünce bir gösterge ise, onu yorumlayan bir başka düşünceye zorunlu olarak gönderir ve o da bir diğeri ve o da bir diğeri. Böylece Peirce tüm bilme sürecinin bir başlangıçsız ve bitişsiz göstergeler ağı içine yakalandığını iddia eder. Bu ağ

içerisinde hiçbir önerme ilk, son, ya da kendinden muktedir olamaz. 6. Kavranamamazlık bir zemin olarak kendiyle çelişmektedir. Kavranamaz olanın kavranılamaz olduğunu bilmek için kavranması gerekmektedir ki bu kavramda bir çelişkidir. 7. Dışsal bir şeye göndererek doğrunun kavranışını gerekçelendirmek dışsallık fikrini bozmaktadır. Dışta olan kavrama zinciri içerisine düştüğü ölçüde bir dış değildir ve bir dış olduğu ölçüde bilme ilişkisini kaybetmiş olacaktır. Toparlayacak olursak, Peirce romantikler gibi kendinden muktedir prensiplerin ya da epistemolojik zeminlerin yıkımını sonsuz, tüketilemez, ilişkisellik, dolayım ve gösterge içeren bir düşünce tasavvuruyla yıkmıştır.

Ancak yine romantikler için olduğu gibi bu yıkım ne felsefenin kendinde doğruya ulaşabilirlik hakkını iddia edişinin beyhudeliğini, ne de gerçeklik ve doğruluk kavramlarımızın anlamsızlığını ima eder. Doğruluk ve kesinlik fikirlerini bir zemin, temel olarak kavramak imkânsızdır, bunun yerine araştırmanın amacı olarak geleceğe yerleştirilmelidirler. Ancak bu geleceği Peirce sonsuzca uzatmakta ve belirsiz kılmakta, böylece de uğruna mücadele edilmesi gereken ideal olarak bilgi, düşüncenin her hareketinde onun önüne sürekli dikilen ve bu haliyle hareketle hareket eden bir ufuk haline gelmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, Peirce arkamızda kalması gereken zemini sonsuzca önümüze düşürülerek bilme uğraşını romantikleştirmiştir. Ulaşılamaz ideal olarak tamamlanmış bilgi bilme uğraşının altını oyarken aynı şekilde bir umut olarak onu sabitleştirmekte ve geçerli kılmaktadır. Bu bilme edimi anlayışındaki sonsuz devamlılık fikrinin en açık şekilde dile getirilişi adından söz ettiğimiz "Illustration of the Logic of Science" serisinde Peirce'ün bilgi üretici araştırmanın yapısına, amacına, metoduna ve bilimsel tavra değindiği "Fixation of Belief" ve "How to Make Our Ideas Clear?" makaleleridir. Peirce bu makalelerde soruşturmanın tek bir bireyin bilinç içerikleriyle ya da dışsal gözlemleriyle ilerleyişi değil, kolektif bir çaba olduğunu ısrarla vurgular. Peirce'de



çoğalan doğrular ve çoğalan özneler vardır. “Cognition Papers” serisinde kendilik bilinci ve fenomenel gerçekliğin kuruluşu için gerekli olan çoğul özneler, sınırları belli olmayan bir bilimciler cemiyeti olarak genişletilir. Bilimsel araştırma süreci bu makalede somut ya da Peirce’ün tanımıyla yaşayan şüphelerin hâlihazırda inançları bozduğu ve inançların yanlışlanabilir olarak yeniden sabitlenerek hareketin devam ettirildiği bir etkinlik olarak anlatılır. Doğrular geçici olarak oluşturulan fikirler arası tatmin edici bağlantılardır, sonuç değildirler, amaçsal işleyişe yedirilirler. Peirce için inanç doğruluk değeri alabilen zihinsel bir temsil değildir. İnanç eyleme geçmek için bir hazırlıktır, bir rehberdir. Bu anlamda kurulan inançlar bilimsel pratikte belirli edimlere yol açarak pratiğin devamını sağlar ve yön verirler, ve böyle oldukları sürece doğrudurlar.

İnancın sabitlenmesinde dört yöntem kullanılır. İnatla inanca tutunma,(inat yöntemi), kurumun inancı sabitlemesi (otorite yöntemi), a priori yöntem ilk üç yöntemken, bilimsel yöntem sonuncudur ve diğerlerinden bir gerçeklik hipoteziyle ayrılır. Bu hipoteze göre bilmeden bağımsız bir gerçeklik ve doğru karşılıklı olarak kurulurlar ve sürekli parçalı olarak kurulan doğruluğun bütününe ulaşmak bir gün mümkün olacaktır. Bu hipoteze Peirce ayrıca sonsuz umut adını verir. Buna ek olarak, bilimsel yöntem kendi eleştirisini de içinde taşıdığından ironik olarak dayanaksızlığının ve umudun yalnızca bir umut olduğunun farkındalığını içermek zorundadır. “Doctrine of Chances” makalesinde bu umut belirsizce uzatılmış bir gelecek ve sınırları belirsiz bir topluluğun çabasına dair ilgi ve dikkatin yanında bilme uğraşının ve bilimin vazgeçilmez duygusu olarak gösterilmiştir. Toparlayacak olursak, felsefe eğer bilim niteliğinde bir uğraş olacaksa çoğulcu, farklılığa açık kolektif, eleştirel, parçalı, bilginin birliğini umut eden ve sonsuzca uzatılan bu romantik umutla koşullanmış açık uçlu bir deney sürecidir. Peirce bu süreci daha geç yazılarında estetik ideal altında değerlendirmiş ve dünyayı daha

somut bir şekilde akılsal kılma, ki bu estetik bir birliktir, çabası olarak yeniden yorumlamıştır.

Peirce'ün bilimsel yöntem açıklamalarında onun pragmacılığı ilk kez formüle edişine tanık oluruz. Peirce için pragmacılık bilimsel soruşturmalarda kavramların anlamlarının açıklığa kavuşturulurken yöntemsel bir ilke kullanmayı benimsemektir. Bir anlam ölçütü benimsemek olarak formüle edilen pragmacılığın ölçütü şudur: kavrayışınızın nesnesinin ne tür pratik yükleri, etkileri, olduğunu gözden geçirin. Nesneye dair tüm idrakınız bu etkilerin kavranışıdır. Peirce herhangi bir pratik etkisi gösterilemeyen kavramın anlamsız jargon olarak kalacağını söyler. Pratik etkileşimler tüketilemezler, değışirler, gelişirler; bu yüzden, anlamlar da sürekli bir hareket ve değışim içindedirler. Bu anlam kriteri mantıkçı pozitivistimin tam zıddıdır. Peirce pozitif bilimlerin yöntemsel olarak başa çıkamayacağı kavramları bilimin dışın atmak, indirgemek ya da anlamsız kılmak yerine, bilim yapma etkinliğini başka süreçleri ve kavramları da içine alacak şekilde genişleterek tanımlamayı tercih etmiştir. Örneğın pratik etkiler, ya da pratik hayattaki değışimler bir anlam ölçütüyse, dini inançlar ve Tanrı pratik etki ve değışim sağladığı ölçüde anlamlıdır.

Peirce'ün hem pragmacı anlam kriteri hem de bilim uğraşı daha geniş bir anlamlandırma pratiğı içerisine yerleştirilebilir ki bu da matematiksel ilişkileri, mantıksal çıkarımları ve pozitif bilimlerin doğasını da içererek, tüm düşünme, anlama, söylem, iletişim ve deneyimin doğasını oluşturan semiosistir. Semiosis göstergelerin yaratılmasını ve okunmasını içeren yorumlama aktivitesidir. Bir duygu, elma, emir, atom ya da argüman her zaman bir göstergedir, işaret eder. Bilimin, dolayısıyla da bilim niteliğindeki felsefi araştırmanın mantıksal yapısı dinamik, belirsiz, yaratan ve yıkan semiosisın yapısıdır ve formel mantık göstergeler

mantığının yalnızca bir koludur. Disiplin olarak göstergebilim 'genel mantık'tır ve üç alt-disiplin içerir: eleştirel ya da spekülâtif mantık, çıkarım türlerinin nasıl doğru ürettiğini inceler; spekülâtif ya da saf gramer, gösterge çeşitlerini iletişim, aktarım ve temsil yönleriyle inceler; spekülâtif ya da saf retorik, bilimin metodolojisini ve inanç oluşturma yollarını inceler. Peirce semiosisin her yere sirayet ettiğini, öznenin kendisinin de bir gösterge olduğunu ve doğanın da göstergelerden oluştuğunu yazar.

Peirce'ün göstergeler teorisini diğer anlam teorilerinden ayıran üç genel özellik vardır. Birincisi Peirce nesne-gösterge gibi ikili bir ilişki yerine nesne-gösterge-özne üçlü ilişkisini koyar ve anlam özneye bağlı bir yorum olarak belirir. İkincisi anlamlandırma sürecinde, bir göstergenin oluşma ediminde, hem nesne, hem özne hem de anlam değişirler ve birlikte kurulurlar. Dünyanın göstergelerden oluşuyor olması, dolayısıyla da anlamlı bir dünyanın ortaya çıkışı ve anlamların deneyimlenmesi aynı dinamik dolayimli yorum sürecidir. İkincisi yorumun öznesi, yaratan, pragmacı, sosyal, soruşturan öznedir. Öznenin bilme sürecine katkısını Peirce onun yenilik getirici yaratıcı gücünde, ya da romantikleşmiş haliyle şiirsel gücünde, yanı dehasında bulur. Yorumun yaratıcı boyutu Peirce'ün hayal gücüne yüklediği abdüktif [*abductive*] niteliğidir. Abdüksiyon Peirce için hem bilgi üretici bir mantıksal çıkarım formu, hem bilimsel soruşturmada doğru hipotezi yakalama aşaması hem de genel olarak tüm düşüncede içerilen imgelem gücünün rolüne gönderir. Abdüktif yorum gücü hem olayı kavramada olasılıkları açan, onlara açık olmamızı sağlayan, hem de yeni örgütlenmeler, ilişkiler açan, kavramlar yaratan, göstergeler oluşturan romantik hayal gücüdür.

Tüm bu açıklamalara göndererek toparlayacak olursak Peirce'ün bilim olmasında ısrarcı olduğu felsefe yapma pratiği kendini kuran ve yıkan, dönüştüren, dinamik,

çoğulcu ve öznelerarası bir yorum pratiğidir ki, romantik ideal ve umut üzerine kurularak kendini askıya almış sonsuz bir çabadır. Bütünü çeşitliliği içinde kavrama çabası gerçekleştirilemez olarak kalmalıdır ki bilgi üretici pratik devam edebilsin, aynı zamanda bir umut olarak ulaşılabilir olmalıdır ki yine felsefi araştırma devam etsin. Peirce'ün semiyotik uğraş olarak kendini açığa çıkaran felsefi uğraşı tasviri, ya da *semiosis* romantik *poiesis* ile oldukça yakındır ve paradoksal yokluk teması üzerine şekillenir.

Pragmacılığın ahlak alanına geçtiğimizde estetik bir ideal peşinde sonsuz çaba fikri Peirce'ün evrimsel sevgi teorisinde kendini gösterdiğini görürüz. Peirce düşüncesinin amacı olan doğruluğun iyi ve doğru yaşama ideali altında değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini, hayatın tek bir tane amacı olduğunu söyler. Araçsal değil de yalnızca kendi uğruna hayran olunması ve istenmesi gereken bu amaç, yalnızca bir estetik iyilik olarak arzulanabilir. Doğru ideali ya da iyi bir yaşam ideali, bu saf istenebilirlik, saf amaçsallık formu, saf tatmin arzusu üzerine kurulur. Aynı şekilde amacı belirlenmemiş ancak amaçsal forma sahip isteme ya da çabalama da estetik alana aittir, ve tüm mücadele ve uğraşların yapısını oluşturur. Bu bağlamda estetik, amacın iyi ve doğru olarak belirlenip amaçsallık formuna eklendiği etik ve epistemolojinin zeminidir. Peirce kendi içinde istenebilecek tek idealin daha çok çeşitliliğe ve daha fazla birliğe sahip bir yaşama, yani estetik bir bütünlüğe ulaşmak olduğunu, bireyin yaşamını ve kimliğini böylesi bir sanat eseri yapmak için uğraşması gerektiğini düşünür. Bu hiç ulaşamayacak bir idealdir ki birey üzerinde etki gücünü sürdürmeye devam etsin ve estetik üretim hareketini sağlasın. Aynı şekilde Peirce romantikleştirilmiş ve estetikleştirilmiş bu ahlaki çabayı bir büyüme, bir kendilik formasyonu olarak görür. Bu ahlaki büyüme özneyi bir bütün olarak görmesi ve her boyutuna aynı çoğulcu özenin gösterilmesi bakımından, belirli alışkanlıkların oluşturulmasının yanı sıra belirli bir duyarlılığın duygu ve deneyim

yoluyla oluşturulmasının çabası olması bakımından ve bu sürecin ideale karşı bir sevgi, hayranlık, çekim ve bağlılık yoluyla gerçekleşen bir mükemmelleşme süreci olması bakımından romantik *Bildung* olarak yorumlanmalıdır.

Peirce yine de mükemmelleşme ve büyüme çabamızın evren tarafından da desteklenmesi gerektiğini, bir birey-evren işbirliğinin olması gerektiğini, bu yüzden de evrenin belirli bir şekilde yorumlamamız gerektiğini düşünür. Kozmolojik teorisinde evrende düzensizlik ve düzenin biraradılığını savunur. Evrende hem yenilik ve fark yaratan yaratıcı prensip olarak bir kendiliğindenlik vardır, şanstır bu, hem de düzensizliğe, yıkıma ve kaosa sebep olabilecek yaratıcılık gücünün bir düzene girmesini ve düzenin devam etmesini sağlayan bir devamlılık prensibi vardır. Bu prensib evrene alışkanlıklar kazandırır. Evren mekanik değildir, bu iki prensibe göre dinamik ve hesap edilemez bir şekilde evrilir. Bu iki prensip Yunanca'dan gelen isimleriyle *synechism* ve *tychism* prensipleridir. Üçüncü prensip olan *agapism* ise, evrilmenin itici kuvvetinin sevgi ilkesiyle açıklanabileceğini söyler. Evren sevgi ilkesiyle estetik bir birliğe çekilen kendini mükemmelleştiren bir kişilik, kendilik, birey gibidir. Peirce evreni betimlerken sanat eserinden yararlanır ve senfoni tasvirini kullanır. Böyle bir evrende bireyin özgürlüğü getirdiği yenilik ve değişim gücü, şans olarak varlığı, yani yaratım ve yıkım gücü döngüsel bir şekilde indirgenmeden veya yok edilmeden saklanır ve teşvik edilir. Peirce'ün kozmolojik teorisi özgürlüğünde kavradığı özgür olmayan dünyaya yabancılaşmış bireye metafiziksel bir yakınlıkta evren açıklamasıyla romantik bir kurtuluş sunmaktadır.

İkinci klasik pragmacımız olan James'e geldiğimiz de ve James'in felsefesinde romantik temaların nasıl ima edildiğini açıklamaya giriştiğimizde James'in pragmacılığı yöntemsel bir ilke olarak Peirce'den devraldığını ancak iki filozof arasında bazı temel farklar olduğunu söyleyerek incelememize başlayabiliriz. James

“Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results” adlı konuşmasında Peirce’ü Amerikan pragmacılığının kurucusu olarak andıktan sonra 1906’da Lowell Institute’de ve 1907’de Columbia University’de verdiği derslerde kendi pragmacılığını tanıtmıştır. Sonra bu dersleri *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (Pragmatism)* adlı kitapta toplanmıştır. James’i Peirce’ten ayıran temel fark James’in Peirce’ün anlam kriterini daha geniş bir alana yayması, ve pragmacılığın genel kavranabilir etkiler ve ilişkilerden çok daha somut ve tekil etkilere ve ilişkilere yönelmiş olmasıdır. Pragmatik maxim hayati konuları içine alacak şekilde genişletilmiştir. İkinci olarak James epistemik uğraşı yürütenleri araştırmacı zümreyi de içine alacak şekilde tüm bireyler olarak genişletmiştir. Hem James hem de Peirce için toplum ve birey karşılıklı ilişki içindedirler ancak Peirce toplumu vurgularken James bireyi vurgular. İki filozof için doğruları fragman haline dönüştüren bir bütüncül doğru ideali vardır ancak Peirce bu ideali ve sistemi daha çok vurgularken James ideale gidişte dönüştürülen ve anlamlı kılınan tekil yaşamları ve uğraşları daha çok vurgular. Romantiklerin tespit ettiği bütün ve fragman birlikteliğinde James fragmana, Peirce bütüne yüzüne döner.

*Pragmatism*’de James pragmacılığın üç ayrı tanımından bahseder. Birincisi pragmacılığın Peirce’ten de tanıdığımız kavramların anlamlarının belirleme yöntemi olmasıdır. James’in en ünlü örneği bir sincap ve bir adam üzerinden girilen tartışmaya dair verdiği örnektir. Soru şudur: Eğer bir ağacın arkasında bir sincap ve önünde bir adam aralarında ağaç kalacak şekilde aynı hızda döndükleri için hareket ediyor ancak hiç birbirlerini görmüyorlarsa bu adam sincabın etrafında dönmüş olur mu olmaz mı? James ‘etrafında dönmek’ fiilinin anlamının belirlendiği takdirde yanlış ve doğru iddialar ayırt edilebilir ve bu seçime bağlı olarak her iki iddia da doğru ya da yanlış olabilir der. Eğer bir fikrin farklı yorumlanması yorumlamayı talep eden etkinlik için bir fark yaratamıyorsa ikisi de aynı şey demektir ve tartışmak

yersizdir. Pragmacılık ikinci tanımında bir tür oryantasyon, eğilim, tutum olarak verilir. Pragmacılar belirli bir şekilde düşünmeye ve hareket etmeye eğilimlidirler ve bu da zemin karşıtı, çoğulcu ve geleceğe yönelmiş bir eğilimdir. Bu anlamda, romantiklerin de savunduğu gibi felsefi sistemler farklı eğilimler ve yorumlardır. Aslında James'in felsefeyi bir eğilim olarak düşünmesinin altında *A Pluralistic Universe*'te felsefi görüşleri karakterin belirlediği görüşler olarak tanımlamasında yatar. James'e göre filozoflar gerçekliği kendi karakter ve duygularına göre yontan heykeltraşlardır ve bu yontma işini de kendilerine samimi bir dünya, kendilerini kabul eden bir dünya yaratmak için yaparlar. Hayatla samimi bir ilişki kurulmasını sağlayacak ve canlandırıp iyileşmesi için katkıda bulunacak her görüş anlamlıdır.

Filozofların karakterlerini James yumuşak huylu ve sert kalpli olarak ayırır. Yumuşak huylu filozoflar genelde rasyonalist, idealist, monist, optimist, özgürlükçü, dine yakın ve dogmatik olurken sert kalpliler ampirik, duygucu, materyalist, çoğulcu, kaderci, pesimist, dinden uzak ve septik olurlar. James ise bu görüşler öznenin kendini samimi kılabilceği bir ev arayışı kriteriyle değerlendirildiğinde görüşlerin zıtlıklarının bir arada tutulabileceğini ve birlikte özneye bir çare sunabileceklerini söyler. Örneğin James bir kutsallık fikrinin özgür insan için daha yakın ve samimi olduğunu ancak bu kutsallığın yumuşak huylu felsefelerde olduğu gibi teizme göndermek zorunda olmadığını söyler. Kutsal deneyimi de deneyimin içine atacak kadar deneyimi genişletebilir ve dinsel duyguya yakın olurken aynı zamanda deneyci olabiliriz der. Pragmacılık tam da bunu yapmaktadır. Her durumda James'in özenin bu samimiyet ve ev bulma arayışı halinde olma fikrinin altında romantik hümanizm yatmaktadır.

Pragmacılığın üçüncü anlamı ise doğruluk teorisi olmasıdır. Doğruluk teorisini James daha sonra yine derslerinden derlediği ve yeni makaleler eklediği *The Meaning*

*of Truth* kitabında tartışır. 'Bir fikrin doğru olmasının anlamı nedir?' diye soran James, onun ancak pratik hayatlarımıza ya da entelektüel iş görmelerimizde bir değişiklik yarattığı müddetçe anlamlı olduğunu söyler. Hiçbir şekilde iletişime geçilmeyen, tek, değişmeyen, bölünmeyen ve keşfedilmeyi bekleyen bir doğruluk insan için anlamsızdır. Doğru fikirler, kurdukları bağlantılar ve dolayısıyla epistemik sürecin ya da uğraşın akışını sağlayan, deneyime zenginlik, tutarlılık ve genişleme katan arabulucu fikirlerdir. James doğruluğun hem sosyal bir şekilde diğer bireylerin doğrularıyla belirlendiğinden, hem fikirlerin eski fikir sistemiyle tutarlılığının kontrol edilerek belirlendiğinden, hem de deneyimle ve olgularla karşılıklı olarak belirlendiğinden bahseder. Dolayısıyla, doğru fikirlerin uyması gereken üç tür gerçeklik vardır: fikirlerin kendi sistematik ilişkisi, eski inançlarımız ve olgular. Bu gerçeklikler de doğrularla karşılıklı olarak belirlenip değişmektedirler. Bilme süreci, romantik fragman üretiminde olduğu gibi dağılmaların ve yeni birleşmelerin yaşandığı, yeni anlamların üretildiği, döngüsellik ve tutarlılık kavramlarıyla tanımlanan bir pratiktir. Bu uğraşın asla tamamlanmayacak bir mücadele oluşu ise James'in bir bütün ideali ortaya koymasıyla ortaya çıkar. James fragmanların kurulup bozularak devam eden entelektüel akışın uyumlu ve ilerleyen halinin deneyimlenmesi olarak tarif ettiği doğrulukları aynı zamanda kendini tamamlamaya çalışan ve bir de bütünün bilgisi olmak için de uğraşın verildiği bir etkinliğin durak noktaları olarak tanımlar. Bütünlenme çabası deneyimin bitirilemez ve tüketilemez olmasından ve James'in değişişyle hep 'daha fazlası'yla, hep 'henüz olmayan'la, saçaklarıyla birlikte geldiğinden ideal de her zaman bir adım öteye düşecek ve kavuşma ertelenecektir. Başka bir deyişle, teker teker doğruların ve anlamların yanı sıra, James yaşamın bütünü de değerli ve anlamlı kılacak bir doğruluk fikri olması gerektiğini söyler. Bu ideal hem mümkündür ve bu şekilde deneyim ve aktivite olarak bilgi devam



eder, hem de mümkün değildir ve ancak bu şekilde deneyim ve aktivite devam eder. İlerleme için hem mümkün hem imkansız olmalıdır. Toparlarsak, James doğruluk üretimini ve bu üretimlerden biri olan felsefi araştırmayı gerçekliği de kısmen üreten ve dönüştüren, yıkan ve yaratan, paradoksal bir ideal fikri üzerine yerleşmiş sonsuz bir anlam verme mücadelesi olarak görerek romantikleştirmektedir.

James'in ahlak teorisine geçtiğimizde öne çıkan üç temel ögeyle karşılaşırız. Bu üç öge de romantik temaların dışavurumu olarak okunabilmektedir. Bunlardan birincisi iyileştirme [*amelioration*] teorisidir ki bu teoriyi romantik *Bildung* teorisi olarak okuyacağız, diğeri inanç istenci [*will to believe*] kavramıdır ki bu kavramı romantik adanma olarak okuyacağız ve sonuncusu James'in sonlu ve işbirlikçi Tanrı fikridir ki bu fikri romantik canlandırma [*vitalization*], din ve kutsallık fikri olarak okuyacağız. Bu son fikir James'in panpisişizmini ifade eder. James'in dinsel daha doğrusu mistik deneyimin pragmatik, psikolojik ve ahlaki boyutlarını tartıştığı eseri 1901-1902 yılları arasında doğal din üzerine verdiği Gifford derslerini topladığı *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature* iken, ahlakla ilgili yazılarını toplayan eseri *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Populer Philosophy*'dir. Bu eserdeki kilit konuşma "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" isimli konuşmasıdır. Bu konuşmada James ahlaki değerlerin metafiziksel, psikolojik yönlerini ve önemlerine göre derecelendirilme yollarını tartışır. Ahlaki değerlerin kaynaklarını tartışan öğretilere baktığında James deneycilerin davranışların sonuçlarının ve duyguların; yani haz ve acının, ahlakın alanına düştüğü iddiasına hak verir ancak deneyci bir teorinin öznenin haz ve acıyı dışarıda tutarak kendinde bir amaç olarak bir idealin peşinden gitme tutumunu açıklamakta yetersiz kaldığını düşünür. Rasyonalistler ise ideallere birer kendinde amaç olarak adanmışlığı açıklayabiliyorken somut olayların ve duyguların ahlaki rolüne haksızlık etmektedirler. James niceliksel faydacı değildir; ona göre ahlaki seçimler nicel fayda ya da çıkar hesaplamaları sonucu

yapılmaz. Bu yüzden seçimin iyi olduğunun gerekçelendirilmesi bu niceliksel hesaptan çıkarılamaz. Bizden şöyle bir durum tasavvur etmemizi ister. Bize bir seçim hakkı veriliyordur. Dünyanın bizden uzak bir köşesinde birinin ömür boyu işkence edilecek olması şartıyla geri kalan herkes ömür boyu mutlu olacaktır. James herkese faydasının olacağını hesaplayabildiğimiz bu durumda seçimin yanlışlığına dair şüphe edilemez güçlü bir hissimiz olduğunu söyler. Tek bir kişinin bile işkence göreceği bizi derinden rahatsız eder.

James'e göre bir değer ortaya çıkışı mutlaka onu deneyimleyen duyarlı bir bilincin varlığını gerekli kılar. Peki 'Ahlaki değer olarak iyi nedir?' sorusuna James nasıl cevap verir? İyi talebi karşılayandır. İyi bir yaşamı tasavvur ederken de James ahlaki bir yalnızlık evreni kurgular. Tek bir bilince sahip bu evrende iyi olan birbirini sınırlamaya çalışan tercihlerin, taleplerin, arzuların ve amaçların tutarlı bir hale gelmesidir. Eğer bu tutarlılık çabasında tek bir ideal hüküm sürüyorsa, dışsal talepler ve arzular yoksa, tek bir hayatta ahlaki imperatif bu idealdir ve mutlak iyinin varlığından bahsedilebilir. Evrende bilinçlerin artmasıyla kötü ve iyi değerleri çoğalacaktır. Yani James için de romantikler gibi ahlaki değerlerin kaynağı bireydir ve her bireyin iyi bir yaşam sürmesi çeşitli boyutlarına gönderen farklı arzu ve taleplerinin bir arada tutulduğu bütünlük içinde yaşamasıdır. Bireylerin çoğalması çeşitliliğin arttığı ahlaki bir evren yaratır. Ahlakla ilgilenen filozofun, diğer hepimizin olduğu gibi, eğilmesi gereken kendi içinde bir bütünlük taşımaya çalışan ve farklı değerler taşıyan hayatların birbirini en az engelleyecek ve baskı kuracak şekilde bir arada tutulmasıdır. Amacımız en geniş çeşitlilikte, en birlikli ve uyumlu; yani en iyi evreni yaratmaktır. James bu idealin uğruna savaşılmaması gereken tek koşulsuz ideal olduğunu ve savaşımın sosyal bir iyileşme getireceğini savunur. Yeni gerginliklerle, zıtlıklarla, direnmeler ve taleplere reddedilen ilkeler ve kodlar, bozulan birlikler yine bireyin yeni değerler ve birlikler yaratma gücüyle yeniden

kurulacaktır; bu anlamda gelecek sonsuz yaratım ve yeniliğe açıktır. James bu belirsiz ve zeminsiz mükemmel olmayan yaşamı ahlaki iyileştirme çabasının dinamik ve kalabalık bir senfoniye benzediğini, mükemmel topluma giderek daha da yaklaşacağımızı ummamız gerektiğini söyler. Senfonide her birey hayatı kendi biricik şekliyle anlamlı kılmaya çalışır ve kendi mükemmelliği için uğraşır. Ancak James senfonin daha yüksek sesle ve hızlı tempoda çalınmasını ister. Bu canlanma ve yüksek tempo için romantik bir *Bildung* teorisi olarak okunabilecek ahlak teorisine yine romantik adanma ve umut olarak okunabilecek inanma istenci öğretisinin katılmasını gerektirmektedir. Evrenin metafiziksel canlanışını sağlayan romantik bir yorumlama edimi gereklidir.

James “Is Life worth Living?” ve “The Sentiment of Rationality” adlı yazılarında hiççilik, kötücüllük, yaşamın trajik boyutu ve ölüm üzerinde durur. Akılsallık duygusunun yitirilip, varlığın kavram için geçirimsiz olması, tek bir olgu olarak evrenin var olmasının irrasyonelliğe kayışı, nedenin açıklanamamasıyla düşünsel akışın sekteye uğrayıp bir boşluğa düşmesi, isimsiz bir evsizlik, [nameless *Unheimlichkeit*] hissi, çabalarımızın ve uğraşlarımızın boşunalığının farkındalığı James’in üzerinde durduğu konulardır. James bir akışın ve uyumun estetik duygusu olarak tanımladığı akılsallık duygusunun yeniden kazanımı için yaşamı bireyin değer yaratıcı gücüyle, özgürlüğüyle, uyumlu bir şekilde yorumlanması gerektiğini söyler. Bu da varlığa dair ontolojik hayretin enerji verici bir şekilde yaşamı mistik kılarak dönüştürmesiyle olasıdır. Bu mistikleştirme bireyin ahlaki emeğini, ve aradığı samimiyeti boşa çıkarmayacak bir evren düşlemekten geçmektedir. Evrenin ahlaki çabaya cevap verecek bir evren olmasının hiçbir epistemik kanıtı yoktur ancak bu bir inançtır ve inanç James’e göre nesnesini gerçek kılar.

James bilimsel hipotezlerde nesnel bir kanıt elde edilene kadar hipotezin doğruluğunun şüpheye açık olabileceğini söylerken pratik ahlaki inançlarda, tam tersi olarak, inanılan olgunun gerçekleşmesinin inançla koşullandığını söyler. James'in inanma hakkı olarak tanımladığı ama inanma istenci olarak kavramsallaştığı istenç seçeneğimizin sahici olması koşuluyla belirli fikirlerin doğruluğuna inanma istencimizdir. Bir seçimi sahici yapansa üç koşul vardır. Bu koşullardan biri seçime karşı bir eğilimimizin olması ve bu seçeneği seçmek için istekli olmamızdır. James buna seçeneğin canlılığı der. Bazı seçenekler bazıları için canlıyken diğerleri için ölüdür. İkinci koşul seçeneğin kendini mecburi olarak direktmesidir ve bu arasından seçim yapılacak seçeneklerin mantıksal olarak birbirini dışlayan seçenekler olması demektir; diğer bir deyişle, durum 'ya/ya da durumu' olmalıdır. Son olarak da seçim anlık olmalıdır. Başka bir ifadeyle, karşımıza çıkan bu seçim şansının bir daha karşımıza çıkması neredeyse imkânsız olmalıdır. Toparlarsak, eğer seçeneklerimiz bizim için biricikse, seçimimiz hayati ve geri çevrilemez bir kararsa ve yapacağımız seçim diğer olasılığımızı tamamen zıtlıyorsa sahici bir seçim şansıya karşı karşıyayızdır ve inanma hakkımızı kullanarak bir kanıt ve gerekçelendirme beklemeden seçtiğimiz şeyin doğruluğuna inanabiliriz. James kutsallığa ya da dine inanmanın hayatı iyileştirme çabasındaki birey için tarif edildiği gibi bir sahici seçim durumu olduğunu söyler. Böylece birey dünyanın daha iyi bir yaşam alanı olabileceğine inanarak bu inanç üzerinden hareket eder ve iyiliğin olası olduğu bir evreni gerçek yapar. Tanrı ahlaki özne için kozmik bir vaat ve duygu durumundadır, ve yaşamı ve ilişkileri ahlaki olarak iyileştirme, tekil kötülükleri bertaraf etme işlemine, ki bu kolektif bir emektir, katılan sonlu bir Tanrı monistik sonsuz Tanrı inancının ve beraberinde getirdiği sonsuz iyilik ve kötülük fikirlerinin yerini alır. Romantiklerin yaptığı gibi James kutsal olanı dünyevileştirerek dünyevi olanı kutsallaştırmaktadır. Yine romantiklerde olduğu

gibi din James için kutsal addedilen şeyle girilen kişisel bir ilişki, deneyim ve duygu durumudur; savaşımlı güçlendirir. Sonuç olarak James'in ahlaki fikirlerinin merkezinde ne yasa koyucu evrensel bir akıl ne zevk peşinde olan bir hedonist ne de bir çıkar muhasebecisi vardır. Merkezde amaçlı çaba gösteren, trajik yabancılaşmayı ve evsizliği deneyimleyen ve bitimsiz iyileştirme pratiğinin ilkesini buyruk olarak benimsemiş birey vardır. James'in etiği romantik bir tutum seçimine, romantik bir evren imgesine, ve romantik bir yaşam biçimine dayanmaktadır.

## TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

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### YAZARIN

Soyadı : Avcı

Adı : Nil

Bölümü : Felsefe

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce): Investigation of the Romantic Themes and Tensions in Classical American Pragmatism

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans

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