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A PRAGMATIST INQUIRY INTO THE ART OF LIVING

SEEKING REASONABLE AND LIFE-ENHANCING
VALUES WITHIN THE FALLIBLE HUMAN CONDITION

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

We are already engaged in a stream of experiencing in which we strive to navigate our way toward what we value. Taking this depiction of the human condition as the starting point, in this dissertation my aim is to embark on an inquiry that aims to identify a few reasonable tools of thinking that may help humans live more reflective and meaningful lives.

The project builds strongly on the foundations laid out by pragmatist philosophy, especially the balanced, experiential, and inquiry-oriented style of pragmatism offered by John Dewey. The starting point for such a philosophy is the stream of experiencing we are already engaged in as active and caring beings. Within this unfolding life, we strive to grasp what is happening, we strive to realize what we value, and we strive to decide what is worth valuing. In other words, we engage in what Dewey calls an inquiry, through which we aim to increase our capability to navigate this stream of experiencing called life to better actualize what is valuable within this life. All we have at our disposal in this inquiry are the concepts, theories, values, and other tools of thinking that we have acquired from within this life. There is nothing external that can be used to justify certain theories or values; total certainty is unavailable for us fallible human beings.

Yet certain tools of thinking are more warranted than others: Relying on them in past inquiries has tended to lead us to where we want to get. Instead of vainly yearning for truths, we can trust and utilize those tools of thinking that have proven themselves to be more reliable maps in helping us navigate our experiential realities. In the final analysis, even reflectively endorsed values are nothing more than tools of thinking subject to being re-designed in the future to better suit the wholeness of our lives.

Philosophical inquiry grows out of actual living, and that's where it ends too. Its ultimate value is in designing better working conceptual tools that can assist people in the real-life tasks of living good and worthy lives. This is also the task of the present dissertation, which consists of an introduction and six independent articles that all apply the same pragmatist point of view to different pertinent contemporary philosophical questions to illustrate what it means to approach philosophy and life as a pragmatist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My journey with pragmatism started in earnest in 2008 when I attended *The First Nordic Pragmatism Conference* in Helsinki. Having already completed my master's thesis, I was still searching for my philosophical home, finding myself a bit out of place within both analytical and continental philosophy – the two major schools of philosophy on display in the undergraduate courses I had taken. In the conference, listening to the various speakers, I immediately sensed that the premises and ways of doing philosophy that various pragmatists displayed somehow resonated better with my way of viewing philosophy and life. I started to read pragmatist philosophy – both the classics and the contemporary thinkers – and quite soon it was clear that I had found my 'philosophical home'. Standing on the shoulders of the pragmatist giants I felt my feet had a more stable grounding than what the other traditions could provide – or rather the lack of grounding was acknowledged rather than concealed behind false hopes, unacknowledged premises, and analytic nitpicking.

During that time there was a Helsinki Metaphysical Club that met monthly and where pragmatist philosophy was actively discussed. I started to regularly attend those meetings, and remember especially the presentations and comments by *Sami Pihlström, Henrik Rydenfelt, Sami Paavola, Mats Bergman* and other regular (and irregular) attendants as helpful in forming my understanding of pragmatism. Several of these people also have provided comments on drafts of some of the papers that now form this dissertation. I was lucky that just at the moment my interest in pragmatism was awakened, there was such a vibrant community in Helsinki, where to discuss and learn about the ways of thinking behind this tradition.

In 2009, 2010, and 2011 I gave three presentations at the *Helsinki Metaphysical Club*, these being the first times when I spoke about my pragmatist philosophical ideas publicly, and the helpful and constructive feedback I got from those present greatly helped me in shaping my views. In 2010 I also attended the *Third Nordic Pragmatism Conference* in Uppsala, presenting my paper and having interesting conversations both within the conference venue and over a beer afterwards. Other conferences where I had the chance to present my developing pragmatist views include *doctoral student seminars* at University of Helsinki, *EGOS conference* in Lisbon in 2010 and in Gothenburg in 2011, *Nordic Pragmatism Conference* in Copenhagen in 2011, *Congress for Doctoral Students in Philosophy* in Tampere 2011 and 2012, *Philosophical Society of Finland Colloquium* 2011, 2012, and 2018, *World Congress of Philosophy* in Athens 2013, and the *Third European Pragmatism Conference* in 2018 in Helsinki. I want to thank participants of these conferences and especially all the participants of the Helsinki Metaphysical Club for helping me to find and understand the

pragmatist philosophical tradition upon which the present dissertation is based on.

A person I want to thank in particular is *Lauri Järvillehto* with whom we shared most of this path from attending the 2008 pragmatism conference and getting excited, to starting to attend Helsinki Metaphysical Club and pragmatism conferences in Uppsala and elsewhere, to writing our dissertations on pragmatism. During those early years we met quite regularly in the evenings where we discussed our mutual pragmatism-related papers, projects, and thinking – as well as drank beer and discussed the grand questions of life and our personal lives. Lauri’s dissertation on the epistemology of pragmatist philosopher C. I. Lewis was finished already in 2011. For me it took a bit longer as at that point I still had another dissertation to complete. Still I feel that we took those initial steps towards pragmatism together, and am grateful for his companionship on this journey! Thus I want to thank Lauri Järvillehto – especially for those enjoyable nights that combined beer, pragmatism, and big intellectual visions.

Later on, I have had great conversations about pragmatism with *Kai Alhanen*, who also read a draft of the introduction of this dissertation, providing several good insights. Other people with whom I’ve discussed pragmatism, besides those mentioned above, include *Markus Neuvonen*, *Severi Hämäri*, *Sanna Tirkkonen* and *Teemu Toppinen*, who all have helped me to develop my own views by challenging them in various ways. Then there are a number of other people with whom I’ve studied philosophy as an undergraduate, and with whom I’ve continued to discuss philosophy beyond those years, including *Johanna Ahola-Launonen*, *Karoliina Jarenko*, *Matti Kangaskoski*, *Eetu Kauppinen*, *Reima Launonen*, *Hanna Mäki-Tuuri*, *Timo Tiuraniemi*, and *Kalle Videnoja*.

I also want to mention my two intellectual mentors who have done a great service in introducing me into the world of academics, philosophy, and science. Professor *Esa Saarinen* was the supervisor of my first dissertation and although he has developed an interesting and unique way of conducting philosophy, there are many pragmatist tones in his way of thinking about philosophy and how he practices it. From him I’ve inherited a boldness to tackle grand philosophical questions in a way that is constantly mindful of how these questions play out in the everyday life, and how one can, as a philosopher, enrich the public discussions and public consciousness by offering palatable insights into the art and philosophy of living. Professor *Richard Ryan*, in turn, introduced me to the world of psychology, and how to think about human wellness, well-being and basic psychological needs. Although primarily a psychologist, he stands out among his colleagues for his deep understanding of philosophical issues underlying psychological science, and has thus been a crucial figure in helping me to navigate the space between these two disciplines and to learn how philosophy can contribute to psychology – and how psychology can contribute to philosophy. The two key

decisions that have shaped both my academic career and my thinking more generally are, first, to do my first dissertation under the supervision of Esa Saarinen, and, after that dissertation was finished, to go to University of Rochester as a visiting scholar for one- and-half year period, where my collaboration with Richard started.

At the same time I have to acknowledge my great indebtedness to *John Dewey*. Although we obviously never met and belong to a different era – he reached retirement age around the time when my grandparents were born – I feel a certain strong (intellectual) bond with him. With Dewey I have found a philosophical companion or senior colleague who has already thought through the questions I am now only starting to think about. While Peirce was stuck in his logical forms and James was too willing to believe, Dewey provided a good balance between these two, while also having a keen eye on the practical problems of his era. Mine and Dewey's thinking has turned out to be highly similar on several issues to the point that when I personally only have a vague idea about how to approach a certain philosophical question, I know I can turn to Dewey to find an already elaborated answer to the same question. And in reading his thoughts I realize that, yes, that's what I would have thought about the issue, if I only had thought it through. In this sense Dewey has saved me several years of thinking by providing me well-thought ideas, opinions, theories, attitudes, and other tools of thinking upon which I have been able to base my own thinking. Human thinking is a cultural achievement that has taken millennia to generate. Thus each of us is always standing on the shoulders of giants, and for me Dewey has been the philosopher who has allowed me to climb highest and to see furthest. This work thus stands as testimony to my great indebtedness to his thinking.

I also want to thank *Olli Loukola* for being my supervisor at University of Helsinki, and providing me with guidance especially at the beginning stages of my PhD student career. Professor *Antti Kauppinen* I want to thank both for acting as custos of the public examination of my dissertation and for several interesting conversations about the philosophy of meaning in life. Professor *Gregory Pappas*, in turn, I want to thank for taking the role of the opponent in the public examination and for his book on John Dewey's Ethics that played an important role when I was learning about what Dewey thought about ethical questions. Besides these people, I want to acknowledge all the anonymous reviewers of the papers that make up this dissertation for their sharp questions and invaluable feedback that has significantly improved the quality of many of the papers.

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the childhood and had many great moments as well as interesting conversations – and who have made wise choices in taking *Tiia* and *Tommi* as their partners in life. And of course, *Piret*, with whom we have fallen in love and grown a family of three kids, all the while when this dissertation process has been ongoing, and with whom I am happy to share my life – both my views on it and the everyday ups and downs. Thanks for tolerating my oddities and the habit of becoming absorbed in a book to the degree of being oblivious to everything around me! And then there is the next generation of thinkers – *Vikkeri*, *Roki*, and *Tormi* – whose growth has provided an intimate view on the human condition, with whom I have had the delight of having increasingly interesting conversations, and whose company helps to put things in perspective and remember that besides academia and old books, there are also other things important in life! Philosophy should contribute to life! Accordingly, even we academics need to sometimes live it, in order to know what exactly we are contributing to!

Helsinki, April, 2019

Frank Martela

CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Contents	8
List of original publications	9
Introduction	10
Locating Deweyan pragmatism in the history of ideas	15
The pragmatism employed in the present works	19
Starting point	19
Metaphysics	22
Epistemology.....	25
Inquiry.....	28
Science.....	31
Philosophizing	34
Ethics	37
Values	38
Growth	44
Conclusion	46
References	49
The original articles	54

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This thesis is based on the following publications:

1. Martela, F. (2015). Pragmatism as an attitude. In U. Zackariasson (Ed.), *Nordic Studies in Pragmatism 3: Action, Belief and Inquiry - Pragmatist Perspectives on Science, Society and Religion* (pp. 187–207). Helsinki: Nordic Pragmatism Network.
2. Martela, F. (2015). Fallible inquiry with ethical ends-in-view: A pragmatist philosophy of science for organizational research. *Organization Studies*, 36(4), 537–563.
3. Martela, F. (2017). Moral Philosophers as Ethical Engineers: Limits of Moral Philosophy and a Pragmatist Alternative. *Metaphilosophy*, 48(1–2), 58–78.
4. Martela, F. (2017). Meaningfulness as Contribution. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 55(2), 232–256.
5. Martela, F. (2018). Four reasonable, self-justifying values – How to identify empirically universal values compatible with pragmatist subjectivism. justifying values – How to identify empirically universal values compatible with pragmatist subjectivism. In Jaakko Kuorikoski & Teemu Toppinen (Eds.), *Action, Value and Metaphysics - Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of Finland Colloquium 2018, Acta Philosophica Fennica 94*. Helsinki: Societas Philosophica Fennica, 101-128.f
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INTRODUCTION

We are already engaged in a stream of experiencing in which we strive to navigate our way towards what we value. This is the thesis of this dissertation put into one sentence. More poetically:

We are thrown into a world to actively pursue what we value.

This brief statement is already impregnated with several important claims about the fundamental nature of the human condition.

First, it locates the starting point for thinking and philosophizing within a *stream of experiencing* that is already unfolding. We can never completely escape our particular human position into an objective God's-eye-view, nor can we exclude ourselves to arrive at a blank *tabula rasa* position. Instead, human living and human inquiry – be it philosophical, scientific, or whatever other kind – always takes place in the midst of a life that is already happening and where we already have acquired certain beliefs, commitments, preferences, values, and other tools for processing the unstoppable experiential stream. All of us are entrapped into our particular lives; our acting and thinking take place in a particular place and time.

Second, as living beings *we care* about what we are experiencing. There is no escaping the fact that the world gets under our skin; how the stream of experiencing unfolds concerns and affects us. It is practically impossible for a human being to stay totally indifferent to the contents of the experiential stream. Some types of experiences seem more attractive to us than others. We prefer, value, yearn, desire, and want certain things to take place while avoiding certain other things. There might be distinctions to be made between different types of preferring, but as long as we breathe, total indifference is not an option. Physical pain still feels painful. To be human is to be an organism for which things have *value*; an organism that *cares* about what is happening.

Third, we seem to have some *agency* over what kind of experiences we will experience in the future. Instead of merely passively observing the experiential stream, we seem to play an active role. Simply put, a capability to influence certain things is a key part of how we relate to the stream of experiencing. Without going into the question of whether 'free will' 'truly' exists, when examined, for example, from a scientific point of view or an impartial third-eye view, there is no escaping the fact that as human beings we experience the world from an agentic point of view: We feel that we have a degree of control over certain things, mainly our bodily movements, which in turn seems to make it possible to manipulate both our social and physical environments. Our relation to the experiential world is, thus, active.

Fourth, despite our experience of agency, we are far from having total control over how the stream of experiencing will unfold. The world keeps

happening, it keeps flowing in unexpected and undesired directions; it does not obey our wishes. Notwithstanding a degree of agency, the world offers considerable resistance, making certain paths within experiencing easier to achieve than others. We thus seem to be embedded within a wholeness in which our agency plays only a partial role among the plethora of forces at play. In other words, a degree of struggle characterizes our relation to the experiential world.

This description is a rough characterization of the human condition that serves as the starting point for philosophizing in pragmatism (*as I argue in article 1: Pragmatism as an attitude*). It means acknowledging that we are already engaged in a world that constantly unfolds in partially uncontrollable ways and in which we must exhibit agency to obtain the goals and values about which we care. From this outline of the way of approaching life and philosophizing on which the present thesis is based, certain key conclusions can already be drawn.

First, having some agency within the stream of experiencing where there are many seemingly uncontrollable flows makes navigating necessary: If we want to move towards what we value, we must have some understanding of how the experiential world works. By identifying regularities and patterns in the stream of experiencing, we can build up warranted assertions that can offer us significant guidance in our task of moving towards desirable ends and away from undesirable experiences. Our convictions, beliefs, and theories are thus a kind of cognitive map we use to navigate the experiential world. Given our specific aims and goals, we might have better or worse maps, in the sense that utilizing the guidance of certain maps will more predictably lead us to the outcomes at which we aim (*as I argue in article 2: Fallible inquiry with ethical ends-in-view*). Some ways of interpreting the world are thus more fruitful than others in bringing into being what we desire and value. Our capacity for reflective thinking and the mental maps it produces are, in the final analysis, in the service of action.

Second, any dreams of undisputed facts or values must be abandoned as such irrefutable bedrock principles are out of reach for us mortal beings entrapped within a particular unfolding life. Accepting fallibilism and abandoning the quest for certainty is a key part of the pragmatist attitude and way of philosophizing (*as article 1 makes clear*). Instead of a desperate search for 'truths' or 'objective facts', pragmatists are satisfied in investigating matters to come up with assertions that the previous experiences give most warrant to believe. Instead of erecting some human-invented principle on a pedestal and submitting to this false idol, we must accept that all human principles, values, theories and beliefs stand on legs of clay, above an abyss.

Third, this all leads to a re-evaluation of the task of philosophy itself. If it can not offer any privileged path to final truths, what should its aims be? As a contextualized action taking place within a human life, philosophy should serve living in the same way as any other forms of human inquiry. Thus,

philosophical theories should not be judged on whether they have ‘found the truth’ but on whether the theory strengthens people’s capability to live a life that they see as good. Philosophical theories are thus ‘social technology’, and philosophers crafting these theories are kind of ethical engineers (*as I argue in article 3: Moral philosophers as ethical engineers*), who reveal, investigate, refine, and reinvent the deep-held theories about the world, ourselves, and our values that human beings need for living.

Fourth, we must understand that what we value stands not outside the inquiry. It is not something externally given. Like our beliefs and maps of reality, our goals and values take shape and evolve constantly as the stream of experiencing unfolds. We might start out with certain rudimentary natural preferences and dispositions, most clearly our physical needs for oxygen, water, and food, but growing up into a culture significantly shapes what organisms such as humans come to value and prefer. One key task of philosophy becomes that of aiming to sort out these various potential values and preferences, trying to identify the ones that have some merits over others and could thus better serve as valuing tools for humans aiming to live a good life (*I aim to do this in article 5: Four reasonable, self-justifying values*). This task can be accomplished using several methodologies ranging from a more axiological approach that can help in identifying and clarifying the boundaries of the potential self-justifying values (*as employed in article 4: Meaningfulness as contribution*) to more empirical approaches that can help in examining the motivational potential of a certain self-justifying value (*as reviewed in article 5*). Value inquiry thus proceeds with the same logic as any other type of reflective human inquiry, aiming to design a set of values that on the whole suit our kind of creatures living in our kind of environmental conditions.

Fifth, the pragmatist attitude that I have outlined here should not only be applied to philosophizing but can also be applied to living. If a person takes seriously the above points about the human condition and aims to live as if they were true, then this commitment should already lead to a certain attitude of growth being part of one’s outlook on life. Given the particularities of the human viewpoint and the impossibility of any objective viewpoint, one can never rest on one’s oars, confident that one has already arrived at the final way of seeing the world. Instead, what one can do is consciously commit oneself to cultivate one’s worldview; to aim to expand one’s moral and general outlook on life in order to grow one’s ability to live a good life (*as I argue in article 6: Is moral growth possible for managers?*). Commitment to growth thus becomes a key attitude for a person aiming to live one’s life with a pragmatist attitude.

Here I have, in very broad strokes, attempted to paint the path of inquiry in which the present dissertation engages in. Beginning with spelling out the starting point and nature of inquiry for my style of philosophizing, I engage on a journey where I apply this way of thinking especially to the question of what we should value in life. Separate articles in the dissertation aim to

elaborate various parts of the above outline. Simplifying things somewhat, we may say that the first article (*Pragmatism as an attitude*) lays the groundwork by aiming to identify the ways of seeing the world that unite Peirce, James, and Dewey, which makes one's thinking pragmatist. Embeddedness in the stream of experiencing, caring about its outcomes, partial agency, fallibilism, and future-oriented, action-serving nature of inquiry are key components of what I come to call the pragmatist attitude. The second article (*Fallible inquiry with ethical ends-in-view*) aims to show how pragmatism is different from both more realist and more constructivist and postmodern schools of philosophy. It especially concentrates on the nature of inquiry and how Deweyan pragmatism sees inquiry as action-oriented, value-laden, and fallible, and how the more reflective forms of inquiry are outgrowths of the organic proto-inquiry in which all living organisms engage. The third article (*Moral philosophers as ethical engineers*) is the most metaphilosophical, arguing for a view of philosophizing that begins with particular human experiencing and ends in serving this experiencing. Moral philosophers are, accordingly, a kind of ethical engineers who use their expertise with ethical questions to criticize the currently used 'moral technology', and to construct novel concepts, tools and theories that better serve human beings in their striving to live morally good lives.

The final three articles examine the ends-in-view or values that human beings pragmatically ought to adopt in a world devoid of objective values. The fourth article (*Meaningfulness as contribution*) argues that there seems to be a limited number of goods at which philosophers usually look, when trying to identify the intrinsic values of human beings. While well-being, moral praiseworthiness, and meaningfulness are the most commonly named candidates, the article argues that *authenticity* as self-realization and *contribution* as having a positive impact beyond oneself are two additional candidates for intrinsic value. In addition to showing how these two are separate from other intrinsic values, the article notes that meaningfulness and general worthiness of life are two separate issues, and the former is most closely associated with the intrinsic value of contribution. The fifth article (*Four reasonable, self-justifying values*) picks up from this spot, asking what criteria we could use to decide whether a certain candidate value truly is a self-standing and self-justifying value that is subjectively worth valuing. A separation is made between explicit and conscious values, on the one hand, and implicit deeply held preferences humans have been designed to have through evolution. I argue that such basic motivational dispositions to strive towards certain psychosocial experiences could offer a robust grounding for self-justifying values: if humans across cultures have a disposition to implicitly and intuitively seek certain experiences, then a corresponding explicit value would have a strong intuitive and widely shared appeal. The pursuit of the value would also be connected to psychological wellness and functioning through this close connection to a basic psychological

disposition. Thus, there would be both reflective and intuitive reasons to endorse such a value as part of one's reflective value framework. Based on this mode of inquiry for identifying self-justifying values, in *article 5*, I review four potential self-justifying values, happiness, moral goodness, authenticity, and contribution, and I briefly look at whether there is psychological and evolutionary research to suggest that they could be backed up by the existence of a corresponding basic motivational disposition. Finally, *article six (Is moral growth possible for managers?)* argues that given that human moral outlook is largely inherited from one's social surroundings and almost inescapably plagued by blind spots, biases, and general narrowness, a conscious commitment to aim to grow morally by expanding, developing, and challenging one's current moral outlook becomes one of the key attitudes that a committed pragmatist ought to adopt if being morally good is part of what one wants to be in life.

Having thus outlined the key arguments made in the current dissertation, I must acknowledge that I have deliberately aimed to present them in a nontechnical way in this introduction. I wanted to give the reader a general flavor of the arguments and points of views employed. This means that I had to omit many more difficult and more technical questions. For example, in previous paragraphs, I have used constructs such as 'self', 'the world' or 'value' rather carelessly, without defining what they exactly mean and what philosophical baggage is already loaded into these concepts. In the rest of this introduction and in the articles themselves, I will elaborate on these issues, hopefully satisfactorily answering some more technical questions.

The present project in its entirety is closely aligned with the pragmatist school of philosophy. More particularly, both the inquiry and many of its conclusions draw heavily from a Deweyan interpretation of pragmatism (e.g., Dewey, 1908, 1938). Throughout the arguments in this dissertation, I take inspiration from and find support in both Dewey's own writings and in more contemporary authors who have followed in the footsteps of Dewey (e.g., Kitcher, 2011b; Pappas, 2008). However, this work is not a work of Dewey scholarship. My aim is not to build an accurate interpretation of Dewey, to stay completely loyal to him in my own arguments, or to otherwise engage in a historical analysis of Dewey's thinking. Despite a significant intellectual indebtedness to Dewey, the claims of this dissertation should stand or fall independent of him. Except the first article, the articles take issue with some contemporarily discussed philosophical question and aim to bring a Deweyan perspective into it. Thus, I come to address audiences who might not be familiar with pragmatism or Dewey, but who are discussing a topic that in my view would benefit from pragmatist engagement. As we will see, the project is also relatively metaphilosophical, making arguments about how we should philosophize about certain topics in the first place. As a pragmatist, I find that the goals of certain types of philosophical inquiries are unattainable and actually prevent progress. Thus, to proceed in finding a satisfactory answer to a philosophical riddle, we might have to rethink what

kind of answer we are actually seeking. Instead of a quest for final truths, it might be wiser to search for practically working solutions and tools for thinking that enhance people's capacity to live a life that is good and valuable for them.

In this dissertation I will offer a few such intellectual tools and the most reliable conclusions I've been able to arrive at this point of my life and career as a thinker in the hope that they might illuminate something interesting and valuable for people reading these pages. Additionally, I offer these thoughts in the hope that sharing these conclusions stimulates critique and dialogue through which I and others could be able to further refine these conclusions in the future. The designing of one's reflective way of approaching life is never finalized, and all the conclusions reached in this dissertation should be taken as preliminary, open to being refined – and even radically changed – in the future. With this in mind, I still hope that they offer some guidance in how one might reflectively approach life to enhance its value, meaningfulness, and worthiness. That is the ultimate goal of why I have devoted a nontrivial amount of time of my brief existence to writing these articles.

LOCATING DEWEYAN PRAGMATISM IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

“For fifty years he persistently worked to transform the scientific method of knowledge into an instrument of individual moral guidance and enlightened social planning.” (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 3 on John Dewey)

Pragmatism is a philosophical movement that saw its inception in the late 19th century as the first truly American school of philosophy. Its roots can be traced back to ‘The Metaphysical Club’, a gathering of young scholars associated with Harvard that used to meet in Charles S. Peirce’s or William James’ study in Cambridge somewhere around 1871 to discuss deep philosophical questions (Peirce, 1905; but see also Wiener, 1946). A few years later, Peirce published two articles that are often seen as the first published presentations of pragmatism, even though they do not contain the term ‘pragmatism’ itself (Peirce, 1877, 1878). It took twenty more years before William James in 1898 coined the term ‘pragmatism’ in print – explicitly acknowledging his debt to Peirce (James, 1898). At the turn of the century, pragmatism was ready to conquer the United States, becoming the most influential philosophical movement for the coming decades.

Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952) are often mentioned as the three founding fathers of pragmatism. Other notable pragmatists of this early period include Josiah Royce, George Herbert Mead, Jane Addams, C. I. Lewis, and F. C. S. Schiller, the last one operating in Europe instead of the US. The philosophical

traditions they drew most from were empiricism and Kantianism (Misak, 2013), and in the case of early Dewey, Hegel. However, their thinking took them to a point where they, in a sense, transcended the dichotomies inherited from Europe between empiricism and idealism to arrive at a new way of understanding not only experience but also philosophy itself. What united them were certain attitudes (as I argue in article 1: Pragmatism as an attitude), which include especially “the denial of any foundation theory of knowledge”, “the thesis that human inquiry is continuous with, and develops out of, the biological and pre-cognitive interaction between organism and environment” (Margolis, 1977, p. 122) and that our epistemological commitments gain their value through their capacity to predict and help us navigate the experiential world.

There are a few key dimensions that need to be mentioned about the intellectual setting where pragmatism was born. This setting was a time when the scientific worldview clashed with the Christian worldview in American universities and public spaces. How to reconcile God, faith and Christianity with science and evolution was one of the most heated questions of the time, and the early pragmatists eagerly offered their own intellectual solutions to these dilemmas. The early pragmatists were, according to Misak (2013, p. ix), “the first generation of philosophers to put some distance between philosophy and religion” in the US, where college philosophers had thus far also tended to be college ministers. There was a philosophy that was naturalistic and faithful to empirical experience, and only then (in some cases) tried to reconcile religion with this naturalism.

Furthermore, it is no coincidence that all three founding fathers – Peirce, James, and Dewey – were also working scientists who not only theorized about the scientific method but practiced it. Thus, the scientific way of thinking deeply influenced how pragmatists approached the world and philosophy. Peirce, for example, confesses that before starting to articulate any pragmatist theories, there was his “mind molded by his life in the laboratory” leading to the development of “the experimentalist’ mind”, which he then attempted to make into a theory (Peirce, 1905, p. 331). In addition to the scientific method itself, a key scientific development that had a powerful influence on how pragmatist thinking emerged was Darwinian evolutionary thinking. Rockefeller goes so far as to describe early pragmatists as “a new group of philosophers who turned to Darwinian biology rather than Newtonian mechanics as the key to an understanding of their world” (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 17). Darwinism led the pragmatists to realize that our intellectual faculties and capacity for thinking are not isolated from the world but developed by evolution for a purpose: to assist the organism. Dewey especially emphasized the fact that humans are first and foremost organic beings engaged with the world and only secondarily thinkers.

Another key influence was a belief in a sense of progress. A young democracy that represented itself as the land of opportunities, the United States in the late 19th century experienced, after the bitter Civil War, rapid

economic growth accompanied by rapid industrialization, constant innovation, and the emergence of an expanding middle class. In such a historical setting, the static and tradition-oriented worldview had to yield for an enlightenment worldview that emphasized opportunities for growth and progress and future-orientedness more generally. Instead of a static world, where tradition could provide the necessary answers, people started to truly believe in progress and human capacity to transform the world through active striving towards better. Pragmatist philosophy with its emphasis on future-oriented practical consequences and meliorism was the philosophy that suited such historical setting especially well.

Of the founding fathers of pragmatism, the present work draws most from John Dewey. While some versions of pragmatism come quite close to realism (see Pihlström, 1998; Rescher, 2003) and others, most notably Rorty (1982), are highly antirealist, leaning towards postmodernism, Dewey, in my opinion, provides a kind of middle ground with his experientialist version of pragmatism that is “more original and, indeed, more defensible” (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 5) than other versions of pragmatism. Thus, let’s examine him slightly more carefully.

John Dewey was born in the town of Burlington, Vermont in 1859, the same year in which Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* was published. His father was a storekeeper, and the young John was raised under the strong influence of Vermont Congregationalism and evangelical pietism (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 19). After graduating from the University of Vermont in 1879 and spending a few years as a high school and elementary school teacher, he decided to enroll as a graduate student to the department of philosophy at John Hopkins University. He received his Ph.D. in 1884 with a dissertation that concentrated on the psychology of Kant. Peirce was among the faculty in John Hopkins and Dewey took at least one of his classes, but George S. Morris, a neo-Hegelian idealist, had a much stronger influence on Dewey at this point. Dewey’s early philosophical career has been characterized as an attempt to put liberal Christianity on a neo-Hegelian foundation (Westbrook, 2010). Another permanent influence was provided by his wife Alice Chipman Dewey, with whom he was wedded in 1886. She was a vigorous proponent of women’s equality and radical democracy and has been credited with turning Dewey’s focus from abstract philosophical problems to the problems of men, especially to pedagogy and democracy. Raised by free thinkers, she most likely also strongly influenced Dewey’s shift from a devoted Christian intellectual to a secular thinker (Westbrook, 2010, p. 23). During the latter part of the 1890s, while at the University of Chicago, Dewey moved steadily from neo-Hegelian idealism towards what would be called pragmatism. Often his philosophy is divided into two main periods, the early neo-Hegelian period and the later pragmatist, humanistic, and naturalistic period, with his move to Chicago in 1894 taken as the dividing moment (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 19). In 1904, he moved from Chicago to the philosophy department at Columbia University where he stayed for the rest of his career.

Dewey remained productive even in his latter days. For example, one of his magnum opuses, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938) was published a year before his 80th birthday, and he published his last book in 1949 (together with Arthur Bentley) when he was about to turn ninety. He died in 1952 at his home in New York, at the age of ninety-two and was buried in Burlington.

Dewey's key philosophical ideas will be discussed in more detail in the rest of this introduction. However, while the present work touches upon many areas of inquiry where Dewey has trodden before, it must be acknowledged that certain key areas of Dewey's philosophical corpus are left out. Most notably, Dewey's pedagogical thinking and his views on democracy have been highly influential (e.g. Dewey, 1916a), but they are not covered at all by the present work. Also his ideas about art as experience are interesting (Dewey, 1934) but outside the scope of the present work.

Along with Dewey's purely philosophical contributions, his active role in public affairs must be acknowledged. He was an educational innovator who in Chicago founded a private elementary school as a laboratory for his pedagogical innovations and whose influence still looms large in modern pedagogical thinking. Among the myriad of leading positions within various organizations, one must mention that he served as president of both the American Psychological Association (1899) and the American Philosophical Association (1905). He was a Progressive Era reformer, an advocate of radical democracy, and a public intellectual who always had time to comment on various current domestic and international political affairs. Accordingly, many have seen him as the most important public intellectual the US had during the first decades of the 20th century. The *New York Times* once hailed Dewey as "America's Philosopher" (Hickman & Alexander, 1998, p. ix) and an article in the *New Yorker* in 1926 described Dewey as the most influential American alive (Jackson, 2006, p. 54).

By the 1950s when Dewey died, however, the influence of pragmatism had waned as logical positivism and analytic philosophy took the place as *the* philosophical tradition in the United States and the UK. In an era where young philosophers were animated by the possibility of nailing down final answers to philosophical questions by a promisingly exact philosophical method, pragmatism sounded too vague and imprecise. In the eyes of these philosophers, Dewey was regarded as "a nice old man who hadn't the vaguest conception of real philosophical rigor or the nature of a real philosophical problem" (Gouinlock, 1972, p. xi; quoted in Westbrook, 2010, p. 16).

In the 1980s and onwards, when it started to be increasingly clear even within the analytical philosophical community that it was impotent to deliver on its original promise, pragmatism started again to attract intellectual followers. Analytic philosophers such as W. V. Quine and Donald Davidson assumed theses and positions that pushed analytic philosophy closer to pragmatist conclusions. At the same time the anti-philosopher Richard Rorty became a name known even to the general public with his provocative and iconoclastic style (e.g., Rorty, 1982), but among philosophical circles the

names of Hilary Putnam and Richard Bernstein also stand tall. In particular, the quarrel between Rorty, the postmodern, and Putnam, the realist, about the legacy of pragmatists and Dewey awakened philosophers to the revival of pragmatism and how it could offer important insights to certain key debates within both analytic and continental philosophy (Margolis, 2006, p. 5). Additionally, Jamesian and Deweyan views of the mind have proven surprisingly relevant in modern cognitive science and neuroscience. For example, when professor Andy Clark (2016) integrated recent advances in the cognitive neurosciences to propose that the brain is essentially a prediction machine constantly engaged in simulation of the world in which top-down predictions attempt to accurately guess bottom-up sensory information in an iterative, hierarchical manner, he quotes Dewey approvingly, stating that “Dewey’s descriptions elegantly prefigure the complex interplay, highlighted by predictive processing” (p. 182). In recent decades, interest in pragmatism has increased in continental Europe, with the *Nordic Pragmatist Network* founded in 2006 and the *European Pragmatist Association* founded in 2012. In fact, the *First Nordic Pragmatism Conference* held in Helsinki in 2008 was where I was personally initiated into the world of pragmatism and realized how it could offer guidance for several philosophical questions where analytic and continental philosophy had been stuck. Given these developments, the future of pragmatism holds much promise!

THE PRAGMATISM EMPLOYED IN THE PRESENT WORKS

Having historically located pragmatism as a philosophical tradition, I’ll next briefly demonstrate how the type of Deweyan pragmatism employed in the present work approaches certain key philosophical topics. This serves the double purpose of giving an overall picture of the present intellectual outlook on life and introducing the articles of the present dissertation by showing how they fit into this wholeness. We will see how the same fallibilistic and forward-looking spirit of wanting to provide imperfect yet still somehow life-enhancing tools of thinking to assist people to live better lives animates pragmatist thinking whether we apply it to metaphysics, ethics, science, or philosophy itself.

STARTING POINT

“We use our past experiences to construct new and better ones in the future. The very fact of experience thus includes the process by which it directs itself in its own betterment.”
(Dewey, 1920, pp. 94–95)

What do we have at the beginning of a philosophical inquiry? What are the situational and intellectual prerequisites that need to be in place for a philosophical inquiry to initiate? Many philosophical inquiries are implicitly based on an idealized view of an asituational, pure rationalizing capacity pulling itself up on its own, which is rather similar to the infamous *Baron Münchhausen*, who saves himself from a swamp by pulling himself up from his own hair.

Instead, I suggest that being capable of starting to philosophize is being already in possession of an “immense mass of cognition already formed” (Peirce, 1905, p. 336). The reflective inquiry of a human being takes place within a particular, historicized human life, it is conducted by a human being equipped with certain thinking habits and capabilities, and its outcomes ultimately feed back into this life (Dewey, 1938; Pappas, 2008). The reflective inquiries of singular human beings are conducted in close co-involvement, coordination, and collaboration with other reflective inquirers (see *article 2*). Accordingly, the starting point for philosophical inquiry is not a neutral *tabula rasa* but an already relatively established point of view on life. Some parts of this starting point might be more explicit and articulated, and other parts function more as implicit, unrecognized background assumptions and attitudes that still significantly influence what paths of thinking or conclusions the person finds intuitively attractive and plausible. Indeed, this starting point influences even what kind of ideas we come to have in the first place and which paths of thought remain completely closed to us as we cannot even imagine their existence.

In *article 1 (Pragmatism as an attitude)*, my aim is to investigate what I call ‘the pragmatist attitude’, by which I mean the more or less explicit attitude of orientation that we find at the beginning of a pragmatist inquiry. The article argues that what unites classical pragmatist thinkers such as Peirce, James, Dewey, and Schiller is not certain explicit philosophical doctrines – among them, we find considerable disagreement – but rather a certain way of approaching the world and philosophical problems. Thus, William James argues that pragmatism is first and foremost a method, which means “no particular results” but “only an attitude of orientation” that lies “in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel”, through which all particular theorizing must pass (James 1907, 27). Similarly, Dewey takes “pragmatism as primarily a method”, agreeing with the Jamesian idea that this attitude or “temper of mind” is the most essential element of pragmatism (Dewey, 1908, pp. 86, 85). Even Peirce, who explicitly defines his pragmatism (and later pragmaticism) as a theory of the meaning of concepts (Peirce, 1905, p. 332), acknowledges that one cannot satisfactorily comprehend the theory of pragmatism without previous acceptance of certain attitudes that can be captured under the rather vague maxim “dismiss make-believes” (Peirce, 1905, p. 335).

I trace this attitude underlying pragmatism to a certain scientific turn in thinking. Peirce notes that certain attitudes acquired through “his life in the

laboratory” form the backbone of his more explicit pragmatist theories (Peirce, 1905, p. 331). For James, the gist of the pragmatist attitude was an “attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts” (James 1907, 27). He is strongly opposed to philosophy as a quest for final truths, seeing instead that all our theories should be treated as instruments used for certain purposes that are always open to be molded in the future (James, 1907, p. 26). Dewey agrees with both of these thinkers, emphasizing that all our conceptions and theories should be treated as working hypotheses and explicitly stating that “pragmatism as attitude represents what Mr. Peirce has happily termed the ‘laboratory habit of mind’ extended into every area where inquiry may fruitfully be carried on” (Dewey, 1908, p. 86).

Thus (*as I argue in article 1*), pragmatists seem to be united by a forward-looking attitude that denounces any absolutes and final truths, instead treating all theories and conceptions as fallible and primarily as tools for guiding future action. They treat human inquiry – of which philosophical inquiry is one subtype – as a process that takes place within actual living and is thus constrained by the human condition and in the end feeds into it (see Bernstein, 2010, p. x). The first basic attitude of pragmatism is thus fallibilism, which means that “we cannot in any way reach perfect certitude nor exactitude. We never can be absolutely sure of anything” (Peirce, 1974, p. 60).

The second basic attitude is about the practice-oriented aim of inquiry. Dewey captures this idea well in noting how “ideas are essentially intentions (plans and methods), and [...] what they, as ideas, ultimately intend is prospective” (Dewey 1908, 86). As active organisms, the ultimate function of our cognitive capacities is not to observe the world but to assist us to navigate within it. Instead of seeing the world in neutral terms, we see it in value-laden ways. As Dewey notes, “since we are creatures with lives to live, and find ourselves within an uncertain environment, we are constructed to note and judge in terms of bearing upon weal and woe – upon value” (Dewey, 1925, p. 33).

Finally in article 1, I argue that underlying these ideas of the nature of inquiry in pragmatism is a specific way of seeing the human condition. At the heart of this pragmatist worldview is taking seriously the fact that existence is primarily about experiencing; that a stream of experiencing already unfolding is the inescapable starting point of any form of inquiry. As Dewey notes, experience is not primarily “a knowledge-affair” but rather “experience is primarily a process of undergoing”, a temporal and ever-evolving stream (Dewey, 1917, pp. 47, 49). This “stream of experience” or the “flux of our sensations” (James 1907, 66, 107) is the place within which our inquiry takes place and towards which it aims to contribute. I give more flesh to this notion of experiencing by noting that it seems to have three characteristics that I already mentioned in the beginning of this introduction:

First, our relation to this experiencing is active; we seem to play a role in how the experiencing unfolds. Experiencing is not a “one-way traffic” where the ‘external world’ plays movies for a subject but is experienced as an interaction between an organism and its environment (Tiles, 2010, p. 102). This active role means that we are “obliged to struggle – that is to say, to employ the direct support given by the environment in order indirectly to effect changes that would not otherwise occur” (Dewey, 1917, p. 48). Second, we care about how this experiencing unfolds. Being active already presumes this kind of caring: “Action cannot exist without the immediate being of feeling on which to act” (Peirce, 1905, p. 345). Third, many parts of the experiencing seem to unfold without us being able to control it. As Peirce notes, “one cannot escape the fact that some things are forced upon his cognition. There is an element of brute force, existing whether you opine it exists or not” (Peirce, 1974, p. 73). Human experiencing thus seems to involve a sense of activity, purposefulness, and resistance. Taken together, as I conclude in article 1, “these three dimensions of our relation to experience amount to an understanding that the human condition means an active interest in developing the stream of experience in certain directions. Our primary interest as regards the world is about attempting to navigate our way within its constraints as best as we can.”

This understanding of the human condition and the nature of inquiry is thus the starting point for a pragmatist inquiry, such as the present one. In calling this the starting point and emphasizing the attitudinal nature of these premises, I aim to draw attention to the fact that these amount to no proof of what the human condition is ‘truly about’. Instead, this understanding should be taken as the partly implicit attitudinal approach that guides how we start the philosophical inquiry. Instead of being the results of a rigorous philosophical inquiry, such attitudes are the backbones supporting such inquiry. They are, in James’ words, the “more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means” that we have acquired through living; they are our “individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos” (James 1907, 5). They might be vague, but we just have to accept the fact that a more reflective inquiry has to start somewhere, and the only place it can start from is this more vague and attitudinal sense of how things seem to be that we have acquired through our experiential encounter called living. Through articulating and elaborating these ideas and attitudes, *as I try to do in article 1*, the aim is to become more conscious of them, and through that act of reflection, to start taking greater responsibility for them (see Dewey 1908, 97).

METAPHYSICS

“The chief characteristic trait of the pragmatic notion of reality is precisely that no theory of Reality in general, überhaupt, is possible or needed” (Dewey, 1917, p. 64).

Metaphysics, as classically conceived, is the study of the basic nature of the world. As a branch of philosophy, it aims to clarify what entities exist and how they are related to each other. As Dewey notes, “metaphysics is cognizance of the generic traits of existence” (Dewey, 1925, p. 50). One of the main questions of metaphysics concerns whether there is a reality ‘out there’, independent of our perceptions. Some pragmatists have aligned themselves with realism (e.g., Pihlström, 1998) even though such pragmatist versions of realism tend to involve a certain “subordination of realism [- -] to pragmatism” (Pihlström, 1998, p. xi). Other pragmatists, most notably Richard Rorty, take their version of pragmatism in quite antirealist and anti-representationalist directions where references to ‘reality’ or calling a statement ‘true’ are “empty metaphysical compliments” within a conversation – mere harmless “rhetorical pats on the back” (Rorty, 1982, p. xvii). A third group of pragmatists try to steer clear of the question altogether, aiming to go “beyond realism and anti-realism” (Hildebrand, 2003) as they see the whole distinction between realism and antirealism as based on a misunderstanding. Thus, we find Peirce remarking – in one of his more sardonic moments – that metaphysics “is a subject much more curious than useful, the knowledge of which, like that of a sunken reef, serves chiefly to enable us to keep clear of it” (Peirce, 1878, p. 301).

The Deweyan stand on ontology and metaphysics adopted in the present work starts with acknowledging the primacy of experiencing and inquiring. As already outlined above, our engagement in an inquiry about the basic nature of the world already takes place within the stream of experiencing. For Dewey, inquiry as an activity is primary, and any ontological or epistemological commitments are entangled within and arise from this inquiry rather than stand outside of it as independent presuppositions. Engagement is primary and any dualism between, for example, ‘organism’ and ‘environment’ is something that can only be found *through* inquiry rather than something that *predates* it (Dewey, 1938, pp. 25, 33). Experiencing as such contains everything “in an unanalyzable totality” and any distinctions we come to make are “products discriminated by reflection out of primary experience” (Dewey, 1925, pp. 18–19). In a sense then, there is no ontology outside of epistemology, meaning that we cannot adopt any firm position on any ontological question without simultaneously acknowledging the process of inquiry, with its uncertainties, that lead to that conclusion. Sometimes, the Deweyan stand has been described as *epistemontology* (Barad, 1998, p. 109; quoted from Iedema, 2007), to emphasize this subordination of any ontological answers or principles to the fallible inquiry leading to them.

On the other hand, in subordinating ontological answers to the fallible inquiry taking place within a stream of experiencing, one is already taking an ontological stand: one is acknowledging experiencing as something fundamental and ‘given’. Instead of starting with a distinction between the world ‘out there’ and perceptions ‘in me’, which inevitably leads to the

realism-antirealism-debate, Dewey thus starts from experiencing as a wholeness. As Brendan Hogan (2008, p. 136) notes, “‘subject’ and ‘object’, for instance, is a distinction instituted through inquiry and downstream from a primarily practical engagement with the world.” No distinctions, rules of inquiry or other fundamentals are accepted as *a priori* and given but should be understood as arising from and through inquiry into experiencing. “Experience yields method” in that we use it to find ways to make sense of it that aid us in improving it (Cochran, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, the value of any proposition about reality is “teleological, experiential, not fixedly ontological” (Dewey, 1906, p. 473). Given this strong emphasis on the primacy of experiencing, *in article 2 (Fallible inquiry with ethical ends-in-view)* I decided to call this Deweyan ontological position as *ontological experientialism* (see McGilvary, 1939).

However, is there a self-contradicting circularity in here? On the one hand, Deweyan pragmatism is opposed to any ‘givens’ and emphasizes the fallible nature of all our ontological convictions. On the other hand, the position seems to emphasize experiencing as something given and fundamental to the point of using this emphasis on experiencing to justify its commitment to fallibilism. I see that a certain degree of circularity is inevitable because we cannot start an inquiry out of nowhere but must start it with the aid of whatever vague intellectual tools we have at our disposal. As Dewey states, “we cannot permanently divest ourselves of the intellectual habits we take on and wear when we assimilate the culture of our own time and place” (Dewey, 1925, p. 40). In other words, behind any cognitive inquiry are always some more or less unarticulated background principles that make the very inquiry possible. Thus, at the beginning of the inquiry, the emphasis on experiencing should not be taken as a fully formulated ontological position but rather a vague background attitude that leads us in certain directions in our inquiry. The thesis that inquiry should start from an experiencing already unfolding is thus not taken as something ‘objective’ that stands outside of inquiry. It is rather an attitude with which we start out – because we have to start out from somewhere – but which itself remains open to be modified if future inquiry so requires. Instead of a seeming neutrality hiding the background commitments taken as given, the present type of inquiry thus aims to be transparent about the vague attitudes from which it has started out. Through this inquiry, then, our understanding of its background assumptions also starts to become more clear, and thus experientialism slowly grows from a vague unarticulated background attitude into an explicit ontological position. Inquiry into ontology and metaphysics is thus partly a process where one aims to make one’s already existing ontology more explicit. As Blattner notes, “we have a pre-ontological understanding of being, and our job as philosophers is to make that pre-ontology explicit in an ontological theory” (Blattner, 2006, p. 20). This sentiment echoes Dewey:

“We may begin with experience in gross, experience in its primary and crude forms, and by means of its distinguishing

features and its distinctive trends, note something of the world which generates and maintains it.” (Dewey, 1925, p. 366)

EPISTEMOLOGY

”Knowledge is to be defined in terms of inquiry, not vice-versa.” (Dewey, 1938, p. 21)

Epistemology as a branch of philosophy aims to specify what can we know and what knowledge is. For Dewey, the way to approach such a question was to “begin with successful cases of knowing and then analyze what goes on in them” (Gale, 2010, p. 68). Such success, however, is not found in ‘finding the truth’ but rather in situations where inquiry successfully resolves some problem. There are, in essence, two key commitments in Deweyan epistemology: *fallibilism* and *instrumentalism*. Thus, *in article 2*, I come to call the Deweyan epistemological position as *fallibilistic instrumentalism*.

Fallibilism, as already noted, is about acknowledging the fallible nature of all human knowledge. As mortal, situational beings, our ability to transcend our partial viewpoint is inescapably limited. In the constantly flowing stream of experiencing there simply are not any *a priori* given and infallible standpoints that we could take as totally certain. Dewey diagnoses the whole ‘quest for certainty’ as a psychological malady to which philosophers through the ages have fallen prey (Dewey, 1929). Many weak souls have been unable to stare reality in the eyes. For such thinkers, “the feeling that the world of experience is so unstable, mistaken, and fragmentary” leads to the psychologically rather than rationally grounded conclusion “that it must have an absolutely permanent, true, and complete ground” (Dewey 1908, 87). In a constantly flowing world, we yearn for certainty and thus are willing to clutch at any straws that promise us such ‘objective’ comfort in an uncertain world. Pragmatism as an attitude means that one has to get a grip on oneself, give up the illusion of unyielding certainty, and accept one’s knowledge about the world as what it is: fallible. All theories and conceptions should be seen “as working hypotheses” (Dewey 1908, 86), no more, no less. We simply can never be absolutely sure of anything. That is the human condition.

However, *as elaborated in article 2*, this situation does not mean that we should have no standards for evaluating the accuracy of our theories about the world. Notwithstanding the (mis)reading of pragmatism by some of its adversaries, accepting fallibilism does not have to lead to the conclusion that *anything goes*. Instead of a correspondence with an unreachable truth, the theories are evaluated based on their power to guide us in the stream of experiencing. Thus, the traditional spectator theory of knowledge “is replaced by a theory that regards the knower of the world as an agent in that world” (Putnam, 2010, p. 34). As agents in the world, we are not indifferent spectators but are active beings who are striving to live our lives as best as we can. The reason evolution crowned human beings with unprecedented

cognitive ability was not to make us more accurate spectators, but to improve our ability to act successfully in our environment. While knowledge as such might have value in the same sense as a piece of art has value, the fundamental way of evaluating knowledge that an active organism has acquired is about looking at its instrumental value. Some interpretations of reality seem to allow us to better succeed in our projects, while other interpretations lead to unexpected outcomes and failing to reach our desired destination. For example, there seems to be a strong practical necessity for accommodating our movements to robust physical aspects of the experiential world; running against a concrete wall will hurt and will not lead us to the place where we were headed (Määttänen, 2006, p. 13). Thus, a theory of reality that is able to distinguish concrete walls from doors and windows allows us to better navigate the built environment of modern cities. Through our constant daily interaction with experiential reality, we come to recognize patterns and ways of interpreting this reality that will typically lead to expected outcomes. An infant will learn that certain objects known to adults as door handles are useful when wanting to get to another room. When encountering a new closed door, the infant equipped with the door-handles-open-doors theory can look for such a thing and thus get to a previously closed place. The theory thus proves its success in expanding the *lebensraum* of the infant. More generally, increased knowledge in pragmatism is not about getting the correct “representation of reality in cognition” but is an expression of an “increase of the power to act in relation to an environment” (Joas, 1993, p. 21).

In this spirit, Dewey recommends replacing the words *belief*, *truth* and *knowledge* with the term *warranted assertability* to emphasize the ever-evolving nature of human convictions (Dewey, 1938, p. 7). The word ‘truth’ carries so much objectivistic baggage that in his later writings he avoided using the word altogether. Warranted assertions are outcomes of inquiry that are so settled that we are ready to act upon them yet remain always open to be changed in the future. The assertions become settled and warranted by repeatedly proving their effectiveness in guiding us in desired directions in our inquiries and practical endeavors. The theories about reality thus face a type of natural selection where some prove successful while others fail, and thus we are constantly trimming the toolbox of beliefs that we use to encounter the world. As I argue in article 2, warranted assertions reached through inquiry are similar to maps of the experiential world, they give us tools to interpret it in ways that help us orient ourselves within it. Ultimately, we can only talk about these maps and how well they have guided our experiencing in the past. There is no need to talk about the ‘external world’ or the ‘truth about the world’ beyond these maps, as there is nothing beyond the experiencing and our mapping of it we could ever be in touch with in any case. However, when the maps have “repeatedly proved effective”, they serve as stable conclusions on which future inquiry can build (Dewey, 1938, p. 521). Some of the maps are so robust in predicting the future flows of

experiencing that they acquire, for all practical purposes, an apparent solidity. The theory that heavy-objects-fall-downwards has worked so well throughout our lives that we rely on it without blinking an eye in our encounters with the physical world. However, were we to suddenly wake up on the *International Space Station*, we would quickly have to abandon this belief and adjust our expectations about how objects move in this new reality.

It needs to be acknowledged that ‘the pragmatist theory of truth’ has a relatively bad reputation within philosophical folklore. Sometimes it is represented as equating truth with utility, a claim that whatever is prudent for you to believe in any situation is true. At least since Russell (1910a, 1910b), this interpretation is how the theory is sometimes represented and then dismissed as obviously implausible: “‘true’ does ‘not mean ‘furthering our purposes’” (Russell, 1910a, p. 110). While it must be admitted that the way William James (1907) sometimes talks about truth gives ample room for this kind of interpretation, Dewey was well aware of this criticism, and thus it is worth noting how he aimed to address it. First, as already noted, Dewey essentially gave up the whole notion of ‘truth’ as its objectivistic connotations did not fit into his inquiry-based epistemology. His epistemology did not require a notion of truth, and he preferred to talk about warranted assertions instead. Second, Dewey emphasized that instead of examining individual beliefs as isolated, we must understand and examine also the path that led to these beliefs (Dewey, 1908). Instead of the utility of singular beliefs in singular situations, what is relevant is the utility of our entire believing apparatus, including the methods of inquiry that we use to infer beliefs. Starting to believe in something without good reason just because it could have some utility is not only a matter of that belief itself. It is a matter of abandoning the whole process of inquiry that one has come to rely on in making warranted inferences. Thus, in a Deweyan inquiry-based account of warranted assertions, one cannot simply will something into a belief, as the warrantedness of any belief is dependent on the reliability of the path that led to that belief.

All in all then, Deweyan fallibilistic instrumentalism means that we have no use for constructs such as ‘truth’ or ‘knowledge’ with their objectivistic undertones. The conclusions that humans can reach through inquiry are “always provisional, subject to modification as the result of subsequent inquiry” (Putnam, 2010, p. 37). The theories that we use to make sense of the experiential world are not ends in themselves but are rather instruments, “their value is determined by their efficacy as operative means” (Dewey, 1938, p. 140). As fallible human beings we must settle with warranted assertions, some of which are more robust than others based on their instrumental value in guiding us in desired directions in past practical endeavors. The most robust of these assertions are such that they acquire a practical objectivity, which means that we unquestionably rely on them without any doubt in our practical endeavors, and the threshold for abandoning them even in the face of contradicting experiences is high.

However, even most robust of these assertions remain open to be changed if necessitated by future experiential realities where they no longer fit. Gravity could stop working; there is no objective guarantee that this could not happen even though from a practical perspective it probably makes no sense to prepare for this scenario. As fallible beings within unfolding lives, we must rely on the most robust and practically useful assertions we have acquired without reifying any of them into an objective ‘truth’.

INQUIRY

“Common experience is capable of developing from within itself methods which will secure direction for itself and will create inherent standards of judgment and value” (Dewey, 1925, p. 41).

Given the constitutive role of inquiry in both Deweyan metaphysics and epistemology, it becomes essential to examine more carefully what this inquiry itself is about. One could go so far as to suggest –as Ruth Putnam (2010, p. 39) does – that for Dewey, his theory of inquiry includes his metaphysics, his theory of knowledge, and his philosophy of science. To understand how Dewey sees inquiry, we must start with acknowledging that the more reflective and deliberate forms of inquiry are outgrowths of a more basic type of proto-inquiry in which all organisms engage:

“Upon the biological level, organisms have to respond to conditions about them in ways that modify those conditions and the relations of organisms to them so as to restore the reciprocal adaptation that is required for the maintenance of life-functions.” (Dewey, 1938, p. 60)

In other words, all living organisms react to their experiential conditions by altering their behavior to bring forth desired experiences. For lower organisms, this reacting takes place on an instinctual level in a relatively behavioristic manner: A certain environmental trigger leads to a certain behavioral response, and this response has been evolutionarily selected for as it has tended to bring forth better outcomes in terms of the organism’s fitness. As I outline in article 2 (based mostly on Dewey, 1938), there are in essence three stages to this kind of proto-inquiry: (1) *Indeterminate situation*, which means that the organism encounters a disturbance or felt uncertainty in its experience. Some experiential encounter with the environment is what sets the inquiry into motion. (2) *Behavioral response*. To address the indeterminate situation, the organism makes some alterations to its behavior. To common stimuli, the reactions might be more or less predetermined, but if there is not a ready response for the encountered stimuli, the organism might just experiment with various random behaviors. (3) *Desired experience or undesired experience*. The alterations to behavior

lead – in the best-case scenario – to the settling of the indeterminate situation. The disturbance is solved or contained. This is the outcome that the inquiry aims to serve. However, sometimes the behavioral response does not lead to the desired outcomes, which triggers new behavioral responses aiming to bring the situation to closure.

Organisms engage in this kind of inquiry continuously and human beings are not an exception. Many of human inquiries take place on this implicit, non-cognitive level without the need for any interference by the conscious mind. For example, to stand up without falling down, we need to constantly make slight adjustments to our posture to maintain balance. A slight imbalance (indeterminate situation) leads to slight postural adjustment (alter behavior), which leads to better balance (improved situation). This process typically takes place without any conscious awareness. As another example, we can *borrow an illustration from article 2*: “While walking on a road we suddenly note a car bearing down upon us in full speed (indeterminate situation). Before even realizing what is happening, we automatically jump to the side (alter behavior) and are able to avoid the fatal collision (improved situation).” No reflective or discursive thinking is needed for this process to happen.

Human beings, however, are fortunate to have developed significant capacities for reflection and reasoning, which means that they can engage in more reflective and intellectual forms of inquiry (Dewey, 1925). Tiles formulates well the distinguishing quality of such inquiries:

“Cognitive interactions are to be distinguished from unmediated response to stimuli, in that the subject can delay its response while experimenting (in thought or with physical actions) under the guidance of ‘ideas’ or ‘propositions’ – representations of possible responses and the outcomes that would follow those responses.” (Tiles, 2010, p. 106)

In essence, this means that between the environmental trigger and the behavioral response, a human being can engage in mental activities where one simulates various possibilities to figure out what would be the best way to respond to the situation at hand. In other words, reflective inquiry makes it possible to “rehearse’ or try out activities before making a final irrevocable commitment to some overt action” (Hickman, 1998, p. 185). This rehearsing and simulation makes use of the mental maps of the reality, such as categorizations, concepts, and theories, we have developed through previous inquiries. Encountering a situation, we use our mental maps to make sense of it, to simulate possible actions within it, and finally to choose which of the possible actions we carry out. We also make use of various logics of inference. Certain paths of thinking are taken as legitimate while others are seen as leading to wrong conclusions. However, even the most basic of these logics of inference are, according to Dewey, not something *a priori*, but something that we have found out through inquiry to be useful to bringing

that inquiry into fruitful conclusions. In other words, “all logical forms (with their characteristic properties) arise within the operation of inquiry and are concerned with control of inquiry so that it may yield warranted assertions” (Dewey, 1938, pp. 3–4). In our inquiries, we not only shape our conclusions about the world but also constantly shape our ways of reaching these conclusions. In its wholeness, Dewey defines inquiry as follows:

“Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole” (Dewey, 1938, pp. 104–105).

The indeterminate situation thus initiates a process of reflective inquiry where we work with the indeterminate situation and our current warranted assertions, experiences, and ways of reasoning to produce some solution or harmonization for the situation. In the process of such iterative exploration of various possibilities, we might need to gather new information or engage in certain activities to explore their consequences, in order to validate some new hypotheses.

However, our reliance on these mental maps to make sense of the experiential reality means that many times the indeterminate situations triggering inquiry are not practical in the sense of requiring immediate behavioral response, but rather intellectual: Something happens that does not fit into our mental maps and accordingly we feel that it does not make sense. For instance, a remark made by our friend sounds very uncharacteristic of him or her. A distant object in the air moves in ways that does not fit into any of the usual patterns of how birds, airplanes or butterflies move. This event triggers an inquiry through which we attempt to figure out what changes in our mental maps could make sense of the event. The goal of such inquiry might not be direct behavioral response but rather the harmonization of our mental maps of how the experiential reality should play out and how we feel it is playing out.

Furthermore, given that these mental maps involve various concepts and theories, sometimes the inquiry might be triggered by one noticing that two separate theories one holds contradict each other. This discovery leads to a kind of intellectual inquiry that is already far removed from immediate experiencing and it might be hard to trace out any immediate practical consequences of this inquiry. Humans, especially philosophers, might thus be lost in their minds, spending hours upon hours in inquiries that are removed by several levels of abstraction from any immediate practical situation. Therefore, even though “there is no breach of continuity between operation of inquiry and biological operations and physical operations” and “rational operations *grow out of* organic activities” (Dewey, 1938, p. 19), the human reflective capacity makes possible second-order inquiries that take

place mentally, exploring the relations between various mental concepts without immediately leading to any behavioral responses.

The outcome of such reflective inquiry is new or transformed warranted assertions through which we feel that we are better able to understand the unfoldings of the stream of experiencing. These new warranted assertions thus become the lenses through which we aim to predict and make sense of the stream of experiencing. They are in turn tested in future encounters with our lives and our future strivings within our lives. Therefore, even though human reflective capacity might lead us to inquiries that are very far removed from our everyday lives, ultimately all our inquiries are triggered by physical, emotional, or intellectual felt disturbances in experiencing and finally contribute to assertions about the experienced reality that make better sense of it and better guide our actions within it. As Hickman puts it:

“There is thus first an ‘excursus’ from the existential situation into deliberation, and when deliberation has reached its end, its time for ‘recursus’ in which the results of abstract thinking are brought back to the existentially doubtful situation that triggered the inquiry in the first place” (Hickman, 1998, p. 184).

SCIENCE

“Sciences themselves are outgrowths of some phase of social culture, from which they derive their instruments, physical and intellectual, and by which their problems and aims are set” (Dewey, 1928, p. 311)

In the Deweyan view, science is a practice, a special type of inquiry humans have developed to produce assertions that are warranted by an especially rigorous procedure. Instead of a strict demarcation line, there is a continuity between inquiry in science and inquiry in everyday life (Putnam, 2010, p. 39). Both “scientific subject-matter” and the procedures used in science have grown “out of the direct problems and methods of common sense, of practical uses and enjoyments” (Dewey, 1938, p. 66). In the human quest for warranted assertions, certain practices for producing knowledge have proved themselves more reliable than others. The division of labor that is characteristic of modern societies has allowed us to have a profession where people specialize in a joint practice of aiming to produce especially warranted assertions about various aspects of nature, society, or other topics of human interest. Science does not produce objective ‘truths’ as it is subject to the same fallibilism from which all other forms of inquiry suffer. However, through a reflective and self-correcting process, science has aimed to overcome several biases and uncertainties that ordinary inquiries suffer from, and thus ideally produces assertions that are as warranted as is possible for the human species. “To abandon foundationalism while holding

on to science is to embrace some form of fallibilist self-correction”, as Margolis (1984, p. 76) aptly notes.

There is thus no strict line separating scientific inquiry from other forms of inquiry. What makes certain conclusions scientific is that they have been produced through certain experimental procedures and/or subjected to certain institutionalized forms of scrutiny to guarantee that as assertions they meet certain standards of warranty. Science is essentially about “a system of checks and tests to be used before the conclusion of inference is categorically affirmed” (Dewey, 1916b, p. 271). The products of science are “instruments to be used to reduce, where possible, the indeterminateness in what would otherwise arise in the factual aspects of practical inquiries” (Tiles, 2010, p. 109). Science is thus a special form of practice, the aim of which is to provide well-warranted assertions on which the practices closer to actual living can then rely in aiming to solve the practical problems that they address. As I conclude in *article 2*:

“What sets science apart from other forms of inquiry are its historically developed rigid standards, assessment procedures and institutionalized ways of involving others in the inquiry through which the scientific community aims to ensure the warrantedness of its assertions.”

A key part of scientific practice is conducting experiments. To increase the warranties behind an assertion, it is often not enough to passively observe the world. Instead, one needs to actively engage with the world to test the theories. A theory is a hypothetical proposition about how the world works and is thus “open to verification or falsification by the occurrence or non-occurrence of the consequences it predicts” (Putnam, 2010, p. 51). Therefore, between the formation of a hypothesis and the acceptance of it as a warranted assertion, there typically are experiments where one aims to manipulate the environment or at least the experimenter’s relation to it (Putnam, 2010, p. 47) to examine whether the reality behaves as predicted by the hypothesis. If the hypothesis can predict correctly (and/or better than competing hypotheses) how the world will unfold under certain conditions, it counts as evidence for the usefulness of the theory in future encounters with the world. There is, of course, no possibility for any ‘final verification’, after which the theory could be counted as true, but rather theories are evaluated as more or less reliable. The wider the spectrum of experiments and real-life situations is where the theory has given accurate predictions, the more reliable and applicable it can be taken to be.

Another foundational element of science is that it is essentially a collective form of inquiry, *as I argue in article 2*. The aim is to transcend the limitations inherent in any individual standpoint; to be as detached from any particular personal standpoint as possible (Tiles, 2010, p. 109). Science is a profession where the community sets the standards that are used to evaluate the contributions of individual researchers. Before any individual

contributor's conclusions are accepted, they are stated and evaluated by one's colleagues, typically in a formal procedure known as the peer review system. After the actual experiments and one's personal interpretation of their results, the crucial next step is about convincing one's colleagues of the soundness and reliability of one's conclusions, typically through written and transparent reporting of the whole story of the inquiry: one's hypotheses, experimental procedures, results, and how one has aimed to address various potential shortcomings and competing explanations in one's research. Given that no single experiment is typically able to address all points of criticism, science progresses slowly through several studies and preferably several researchers studying the same question separately using various types of data and experimental procedures. Through this collective process that involves actual experiments, interpretations of various data points, and theoretical discussions around them, the field progresses slowly towards ever more reliable warranted assertions (this progress is the hope at least) and an ever clearer picture of the contexts and situations where certain hypotheses are reliable and in what contexts another hypothesis is better able to guide one's interpretation of future possibilities.

Finally, it is worth noting that for Dewey, science is not only about certain collectively agreed procedures but also involves a specific individual attitude. He sees that scientific inquiry starts with adopting a particular scientific attitude towards the subject under investigation:

“The scientific attitude may almost be defined as that which is capable of enjoying the doubtful; scientific method is, in one aspect, a technique for making productive use of doubt by converting it into operations of infinite inquiry” (Dewey, 1929, p. 228).

Being skeptical about appearances and quick conclusions, consciously trying to produce counterexamples and alternative explanations, and entertaining various possibilities without the need to quickly adopt and defend only one of them are all parts of the attitude that a scientist approaching one's subject should entertain. Thus, the scientific attitude is much about taking fallibilism seriously and accepting and becoming aware of the inherent biases and shortcomings of the ordinary human perspective and ordinary forms of human inquiry. Science “arises out of social *praxis*”, and it is “incurably ideological and contingent”, as Margolis (1984, p. 76) states. Acknowledging this starting point, the scientist aims to consciously identify and overcome, as much as possible, the biases and ideologies inherent in one's own position. In all, science in pragmatism is about approaching various questions with a fallibilistic attitude making use of tested procedures to collectively ensure that the conclusions reached meet certain relatively strict standards of warranty.

PHILOSOPHIZING

"The distinctive function of philosophy for Dewey, to the extent that it can be marked off for emphasis but not separation from other disciplines, is the normative consideration of human values – or, most simply put, the quest for a good life in a good society." (Hook, 1925, p. ix emphasis in original)

What role does philosophy have in this pragmatist *Weltanschauung*? The reader might already have identified a pattern in how the present type of pragmatism approaches various subjects. Thus, one could already guess that when pragmatism examines the question of what philosophy is about, again the emphasis is on the fallible nature of the conclusions reached and the ability of these conclusions to aid in human practices.

First, then, we have to acknowledge that philosophy is not something that happens outside of life but rather within a life that is already happening. Philosophy is an activity, a practice in which a person can choose to engage. Thus, given that our existence appears to be limited by death and given that there are often more immediate matters that engage our mind – where to get food, how to ensure that others like me – philosophy as an activity requires some justification. Why would we allocate part of our limited time and effort to practicing philosophy instead of other possible pursuits?

One option is to say that philosophy is its own justification in the same sense that playing chess is its own justification. As beings capable of reflective thinking, we humans simply enjoy various types of mind-games. Perhaps philosophy is one type of game that we can play. Similar to chess, being good at this game, being able to outmaneuver others, can win oneself social status and admiration from others. Perhaps if one can compete at the top level, one can make a living out of this mind-game. If one's talents are in this area, it might be a nice way to get a salary and bring food to the table. Beats working in a fast-food joint for sure!

However, I suspect that many of us would not be satisfied with this kind of mind-game analysis of why the practice of philosophy exists. Many of us would want to see some more substantial role for philosophy among human endeavors than a mere intriguing pastime. Pragmatists have been especially keen on criticizing the tendency of academic philosophy to become a series of technical internal debates that have little connection to any practical problems that people face in their actual lives (e.g., Kitcher, 2011a). As a technical self-serving and self-referential practice, philosophy will easily make itself into a discipline that it is all too easy to ignore. It becomes, as Dewey once put it, "sentimental indulgence for a few" or "mere arbitrary dogma" (Dewey, 1916a, p. 315). Just by reading the titles and abstracts of any prestigious philosophical journal one can easily conclude that for most of what is written, it would be very difficult to convince the general public that the questions actually have some relevance for how they should conduct their lives. There are happy exceptions, and at its best, philosophy has been able to

raise important questions to public awareness, but the risk runs deep of becoming entrapped in technical questions whose answers turning out this way or another have no relevance for almost any practical endeavor.

As I argue in article 3 (*Moral Philosophers as Ethical Engineers*), pragmatism offers an analysis of why this entrapping in minuscule technical questions tends to happen. It is because even at our present age, many philosophers still dream of finding the final irrefutable solution to the questions they study. In this quest for absolute certainty (Dewey, 1929), any minor counterargument must be fully addressed and eliminated before one can proceed. Accordingly, a grand quest to say something relevant about a relevant question tends to get sidetracked into technical arguments and counterarguments related to tiny analytic details in the overall picture. In other words, the tendency to devote one's brainpower to very technical analyses of practically irrelevant, small details is a symptom of a mismatch with hopes and reality. One desperately aims to reach absolute certainty through a human practice incapable of delivering such certainty. As Philip Kitcher paints the situation of modern analytic philosophy:

“Any defense of the idea that philosophy, like particle physics and molecular biology, proceeds by the accumulation of reliable answers to technical questions would have to provide examples of consensus on which larger agreements are built. Yet, as philosophical questions diminish in size, disagreement and controversy persist, new distinctions are drawn, and yet tinier issues are generated. Decomposition continues downwards, until the interested community becomes too exhausted, too small, or too tired to play the game any further”
(Kitcher, 2011a, p. 251)

In place of the view of philosophy as a noble discipline delivering divine truths, pragmatism offers a more modest view of philosophy. As a human practice, philosophy is essentially fallible. It has no privileged access to any final or irrefutable truths. It is merely one form of inquiry that has adopted certain procedures and standards for evaluating and ensuring the warrantedness of the conclusions reached. While most scientific disciplines have specialized in developing rigorous procedures for engaging with the environment, philosophy, for the most part, takes place within the world of arguments. The various schools of philosophy have developed various, rather rigorous standards of what are acceptable arguments and forms of inferences that can be made to reflectively investigate the subject under study. What thus distinguishes philosophy from other forms of inquiry is *the art of thinking clearly*: It aims to be the most rigorous way of thinking about the most fundamental questions of human existence.

At the same time, pragmatism is interested in knowing what we get out of this engagement in rigorous thinking. What more can time devoted to philosophizing offer than a mere status-building pastime? To offer an

answer, we need to acknowledge that the human way of approaching the world involves many types of warranted assertions, some of which are more fundamental than others. Our worldview is a *conceptual scheme*, by which I mean the “entire network of conceptual principles that we employ in interpreting experience.” (Järvilehto, 2011, p. 98; see also Quine, 1951). Based on C. I. Lewis (1929), Järvilehto argues that these conceptual schemes are hierarchical in the sense that some concepts are more fundamental than others. Upon seeing a black swan, we realize that our current beliefs cannot account for the existence of such a creature and we face a choice of what current beliefs to abandon. Abandoning the belief that all swans are white is the less radical alternative, as it leaves our other belief system relatively intact. Abandoning the belief that we can rely on our eyes to give accurate information about colors would be more disturbing, as it would cast doubt on many other beliefs we have. Abandoning the belief that there is an external world out there populated by other humans and animals would be even more radical, as we would need to abandon most of our other beliefs as well because they have been built on this assumption. Conceptual schemes – what I call here belief systems – are malleable and plastic, but some beliefs are easier to abandon, while giving up others is harder: “Changes in more fundamental conceptual principles reconfigure the entire conceptual scheme, whereas changes in more peripheral conceptual principles are less dramatic” (Järvilehto, 2011, p. 101). Therefore, the more fundamental role a certain belief has in our interdependent network of beliefs, “the more reluctant we are to disturb it” (Lewis, 1929, p. 306).

Based on this spectrum of more or less fundamental beliefs in our belief system, we can now state that philosophy is an attempt to get in contact with the most fundamental and deeply held beliefs we have. While in typical inquiries the basic beliefs are taken as “*operationally a priori* with respect to further inquiry” (Dewey, 1938, p. 14), philosophy is an inquiry into these very beliefs. Blattner describes the philosophical task as follows:

“We have a pre-ontological understanding of being, and our job as philosophers is to make that pre-ontology explicit in an ontological theory” (Blattner, 2006, p. 20).

Many of the most fundamental parts of our conceptual schemes are so self-evident that we are not even consciously aware of how they are structuring our inquiries and ways of interpreting reality. What philosophizing aims to achieve is a more explicit and refined understanding of one’s basic beliefs that then allows one to make more reflective choices about what fundamental beliefs to commit to and what to abandon. Such inquiry into basic beliefs can be descriptive, aiming to “describe the actual structure of our thought about the world”, or it can be revisionary, aiming “to produce a better structure” (Strawson, 1964, p. 9; see also Haack, 1979). While our basic beliefs are often useful, sometimes they can hinder progress or be outright harmful to us and our communities. Philosophical inquiry,

through making explicit these beliefs, and by inventing new ideals and goals, can significantly assist human beings in building conceptual schemes that serve them better than previous ones. The old views are, of course, not inferior to the new ones in any absolute sense, but in the same sense that some new ways of farming or medicine are more successful than older ways (Dewey, 1938, p. 104). Equipped with the old views people were less “competent to reach the intended end of the inquiries in question” (Dewey, 1938, p. 104).

This task, then, is the task of philosophy in pragmatism. Not a quest for eternal truths, but rather a quest to build, through reflective inquiry, more beneficial basic convictions about the nature of this world, one’s place within this world, and what one should aim to do within this world.

ETHICS

“A moral principle, such as that of chastity, of justice, of the Golden Rule, gives the agent a basis for looking at and examining a particular question that comes up. It holds before him certain possible aspects of the act; it warns him against taking a short or partial view of the act. It economizes his thinking by supplying him with the main heads by reference to which to consider the bearings of his desires and purposes; it guides him in his thinking by suggesting to him the important considerations for which he should be on the outlook” (Dewey, 1932, p. 309).

Given the general task of philosophy as the reflective generation of warranted assertions that improve people’s ability to live a good life, ethics, as a branch of philosophy specialized in moral questions, should naturally be seen in a similar way. As I argue in *article 3 (Moral philosophers as ethical engineers)*, moral philosophy should not be a quest to *discover* the *objective* moral truths. Instead, the task is to *design* the most *functional* ethical theories, concepts, and convictions. Morality serves specific functions in societies, roughly the function of making it possible for us to live together harmoniously. This means that morality should be seen as a “social technology” that “grows out of our needs and our social condition” and aims to address those needs and conditions as well as it can (Kitcher, 2011a, p. 256). Moral principles, theories, distinctions, and values should thus be seen as tools that aim to help us to better address the various disagreements, conflicts, and other social dilemmas arising from the fact that several separate individuals aim to live together. When facing such dilemmas, we may possess better or worse tools to address them. Dewey is well aware of this issue:

“Like every analysis, it [the analysis of moral activity] requires that the one making it be in possession of certain

working tools. I cannot resolve this practical situation which faces me by merely looking at it. I must attack it with such instruments of analysis as I have at hand. What we call moral rules are precisely such tools of analysis” (Dewey, 1891, p. 194)

As tools, moral principles and rules serve three functions *as I outline in article 3*. First, they serve as records “of past moral experimentation” (Fesmire, 2003, p. 59), allowing us to use the wisdom we have acquired from previous social encounters to address current social dilemmas. The moral principles that we have adopted have proved effective in the past and thus can significantly help us in future situations. We do not have to start our reasoning from scratch but can operate with the support of these existing moral tools. Second, moral rules can serve as tools of criticism (Pappas, 1997, p. 546) that help us see flaws in our current moral practices and theories. Given that our moral convictions operate to a significant degree on an emotional and implicit level, the articulation of these convictions helps in making them more transparent to us and others. This transparency then allows us to better examine, evaluate and criticize them. Third, designing new moral tools and ideals serves the function of moral imagination (see Fesmire, 2003): Through these new tools we can look past our current convictions and practices to find ways of living that we deem better but that we would not have even been able to envision without this imaginative experimentation.

The moral philosopher should thus come down from the ivory tower and cease to imitate a priest who educates less enlightened minds about the truths of the matter – or who ignores the general public altogether to debate more noble matters with one’s more enlightened colleagues. Instead, moral philosophers should be public servants. Luckily many moral philosophers of both pragmatist and non-pragmatist bends already see themselves in this way and act accordingly. In this view, moral philosophers are *ethical engineers* whose task is to shape our current moral outlook by making it more transparent, by showing flaws in its design, and especially by designing new and better working moral tools. Just as engineers use their expertise in, say, bridge-making to design better bridges (see Dewey, 1939, p. 21), moral philosophers have acquired, through their education and engagement with the topic, significant expertise in moral matters. The task, then, is to use this expertise to design well-working moral tools that have the potential to improve people’s ability to live better together.

VALUES

“Before life began, nothing was valuable. But then life arose and began to value – not because it was recognizing anything, but because creatures who valued (certain things in particular) tended to survive.” (Street, 2006, pp. 155–156)

There is no room for any ‘objective’ or transcendent values in the kind of pragmatism propagated in the present work. A world devoid of humans (and other intellectual creatures) would be a world devoid of values. Values are one of the intellectual tools we humans have generated to better navigate our experiential world. All organisms, naturally, have some inbuilt motivational or proto-motivational dispositions that guide their behavior, making them seek certain experiences over others. A flower seeks sunlight, and a wolf hunts reindeers. As I argue in article 5 (*Four reasonable, self-justifying values*), also humans have many such innate motivational dispositions, or as Dewey (1939, p. 29) calls them, “native organic tendencies”. Thirst makes us seek water, hunger makes us seek food, and solitude makes us seek human company. As such, these tendencies are not values but rather implicitly held motivational preferences that guide our behavior (Haidt, 2001; Street, 2006). A cow or a baby is almost exclusively guided in their behavior by such inherited or habitually learned motivational dispositions. As Welchman (2010, p. 169) notes, “we each begin life as bundles of organic impulses that prompt movement in and about our environments.”

However, what makes us humans is our capacity for reflective thinking, which, in a way, is the capacity to step outside our current situation and the habitual responses offered by it to consciously choose how to behave. This is where the intellectual tools come in handy. Our concepts and theories are what make possible reflective inference; we reflect with these tools. In this scheme, values are one more intellectual tool we have. They are things we have consciously (and typically collectively) chosen to uphold and attempt to realize. Values are, in a sense, “whatever is taken to have rightful authority in the direction of conduct” (Dewey, 1929, p. 256). Conscious awareness and firm conscious commitment makes something into a value. There is thus a key distinction to be made between “two radically different attitudes – that of direct, active, non-cognitive experience of goods and bads and that of valuation, the latter being simply a mode of judgment like any other form of judgment” (Dewey, 1916b, p. 226). In distinguishing between direct *prizing* and deliberate *appraising*, Dewey (1939, p. 5) thus made a distinction between implicitly held motivational preferences and consciously upheld values, a distinction that has in recent decades been confirmed by modern psychological research (Evans & Stanovich, 2013; Haidt, 2001). Both prizing and appraising have motivational pull and guide our behavior but through different psychological mechanisms: one works more implicitly, the other through conscious choice.

Values, which can be understood as reflectively chosen goals, are an essential element of any reflective inquiry. As noted, Dewey (1938, p. 499) sees that inquiry must “grow out of actual (or ‘practical’) social conditions”, and there should always be something that the inquiry aims to resolve or improve. Values, then, are the ends-in-view that can provide direction to the inquiry by providing an idea of what ‘improvement’ comprises. For Dewey (1930, p. 223), ends-in-view are the “foreseen consequences which influence

present deliberation” by providing it with direction and aim. This view means that inquiry is always value-laden: “The problematic situation has a deeply normative character” because it is primarily an action situation where “something must be done and there are better and worse things we can do” (Hogan, 2009, p. 286). To escape from a life that is “blindly impulsive or mechanically routine” (Dewey, 1939, p. 3), humans need valuations as something more solid and long-term that we can reflectively strive to realize. We need values both to guide our personal lives and to guide our collective endeavors. As stated by Dewey (1939, p. 2), “all planned human conduct, personal and collective, seems to be influenced, if not controlled, by estimates of value or worth of ends to be attained.”

However, given the paramount importance of values in human conduct, how should we choose what values to uphold in our lives? The subjectivistic view of values that leaves no room for objectivity might make one worry. Is whatever a person chooses to value worth valuing? Given the lack of objective values that one can pick ready-made and mindlessly obey, the key question for a pragmatist is what values to consciously choose.

The general answer is that the best values to uphold are a product of inquiry. Just as we constantly update our best theories about the nature of the experiential world, we also constantly update the values we see as most worthy of pursuit. We have our current, explicitly held values because past inquiries have led us to see them as somehow fitting who we are and what we want to advance during our brief lives. In this sense, we can have as values whatever we have come to uphold as a value through our conscious deliberation.

However, despite this plurality, I argue (*in article 5*) that there are certain values that are more suitable for human beings given basic human nature and the typical life-challenges we face individually and collectively. In other words, a deeper understanding of our basic human nature could offer guidance in what values would be especially suitable to the kind of creatures we are. Given that as biological creatures we prefer certain experiences over others (pleasure over pain, satiation over hunger), and given that as social creatures certain societal arrangements tend to give more people room to live a preferable life, choices can be made between values that are more or less fitting for our life situations. In our quest for the best fitting values we are thus searching for some kind of reflective equilibrium between “all the evaluative judgments that selective pressures (along with all kinds of other causes) have imparted to us” (Street, 2006, p. 154). Some of the ‘fitting’ values might be fitting in certain socio-environmental conditions and for certain types of people, and others might be relatively broadly fitting for almost all socio-environmental conditions and for almost all people. The aim of inquiry into values is exactly about trying to identify those values that are as broadly applicable and as supportive of our various innate and learned preferences as well as our capacity to live together with other people.

Such inquiry can employ many methods. One classical method is analytic axiology, an attempt to reflectively identify, carefully define, and separate the key values humans might uphold. This conceptual work is often the necessary first step as it helps to clarify what we are even talking about and searching for in the more empirical part of the inquiry. This is the method employed in article 4 (*Meaningfulness as contribution*). The article engages with recent analytic scholarship into meaningfulness and intrinsic values (see Kauppinen, 2016; Metz, 2013), which have identified a few separate ways a life can be good. It argues, first, that we should see the meaningfulness and worthiness of a life as two separate questions. Worthiness is the broadest evaluative question we can ask about a life. It means that one is evaluating a life taking all possible things into account that could influence such a judgment. Worthy life is thus what Haybron (2008, p. 36) calls a good life: “a life that is desirable and choiceworthy on the whole: not just morally good, or good *for* the individual leading it, but good, all things considered – good, *period*.”

Self-justifying values, in turn, are values that need no further justification, that are considered valuable of their own accord. Self-justifying values are thus what make life good and worthy. They are the separate dimensions we use when evaluating a life and its value and worth. Most widely accepted self-justifying value is typically happiness, which is a broad notion covering both short-term and long-term positive affective experiences humans might have. It seems to be built into our basic nature that we prefer pleasure over pain. This preference does not have to be justified with something else, but pleasure seems to be intrinsically preferable. However, happiness is not the only thing in which we are interested when examining the goodness of life. Moral goodness is typically taken to be another intrinsically valuable dimension of a good life (Haybron, 2008; Wolf, 2010), and it is often argued that the meaningfulness of a life is a third independent way in which a life can be good (Wolf, 2016). In article 4, I build on this framework to argue that our intuitions about meaningfulness and its intrinsic value actually seem to hide two separate self-justifying values: authenticity and contribution. Authenticity, as I argue in article 4, is roughly about “being true to oneself, living authentically, being able to make autonomous choices and being able to express who one really is in one’s words and actions.” Following thinkers such as Kierkegaard (1992) and Sartre (2007), I argue that there seems to be something intrinsically valuable about this sense of authenticity. It has a dignity that is not reducible to mere pleasurable experiences that might be derived from it. There are situations where we are willing to sacrifice our personal happiness to be able to live more authentically and to remain true to ourselves.

Contribution, in turn, is about the positive impact beyond itself that a particular life is able to make. It is about a life mattering, having somehow contributed beyond the subject in question. I argue that contribution seems to be separate from the other identified self-justifying values and still

something that we value as such. We might find a life that only contributes to its own well-being and authenticity as shallow because we yearn to make a difference in the world. This issue is also a separate yearning from mere moral goodness as I illustrate in *article 5*. For example, Nelson Mandela, when released from prison, could have chosen either to dedicate his time to his family and children or to the nation. From a moral point of view, both choices would have been justified, but from a contribution point of view, choosing the former ensured that his life had a much broader impact beyond itself. Thus, I argue in *article 5* that when a pragmatist starts to make choices about what self-justifying values to uphold, there are certain key candidates that one should at least consider, chiefly among them happiness, moral goodness, authenticity and contribution.

This analytic separation and definition of a few potential self-justifying values is essential groundwork as only after we have identified a candidate can we start to examine its qualities in more detail. However, what is the pragmatist way of evaluating these candidate self-justifying values? Given the essentially subjective stance of the present type of pragmatism on values, can we not adopt whatever we want as a self-justifying value? In principle, it is true that there are no objective or absolute limits to what could be taken as a self-justifying value. However, in practice, our human nature makes certain types of values easy and natural to uphold, and some other types of values very difficult to truly endorse. More particularly, in *article 5 (Four reasonable, self-justifying values)*, I argue that human motivational psychology is not only about consciously upheld values and goals, but much about implicitly held preferences or ‘proto’ values (Haidt, 2001; Street, 2006). Furthermore, while many of our implicit preferences are the result of our idiosyncratic life experiences, there are also a limited number of basic preferences that evolution has shaped us to have. In particular, in addition to basic physical needs, humans also have certain basic motivational dispositions to seek certain psychosocial experiences that recent psychological research has examined (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, 2011). A few examples of these needs are the human need to belong in the sense of having close and caring relationships in one’s life and the human need to contribute in the sense of feeling that one’s impact on the wider world is positive (e.g., Martela & Ryan, 2016). Now, while explicitly held and consciously chosen values are relatively easy to change through reflection, these implicit motivational dispositions sit so deeply within our basic human nature that they guide our affective and behavioral responses regardless of whether we consciously endorse them. This implicitness means that while these basic motivational dispositions are subjective in the sense of not being *mind independent*, they are still more or less *conscious-mind independent*.

Given that such basic motivational dispositions exist independent of our conscious mind, choosing self-justifying values that are in alignment with these dispositions makes much sense. Self-justifying values should be values

that need no further justification; they provide their own justification. If a candidate self-justifying value is closely connected with a corresponding basic motivational disposition, then it would have strong motivational appeal and feel as something that needs no further justification. Furthermore, given that humans share the same basic motivational dispositions, the self-justifying value would also have wide appeal across cultural boundaries. Thus, arguably, such self-justifying values provide the most widely appealing value system that would be in alignment with what humans already seek as part of their basic nature. Accordingly, *in article 5*, I suggest that in evaluating various potential self-justifying values, we should especially examine how well they align with our human nature and the basic motivational dispositions humans have.

Now, a reader familiar with Dewey's aversion to intrinsic values (see, e.g., Dewey, 1939, pp. 24–25) might ask whether this search for the most natural self-justifying values is somehow contradictory to Dewey's aims. Commentators such as Welchman (2010, p. 172) have emphasized that Dewey denied that any distinction between intrinsic/inherent or extrinsic/instrumental values reflect a real difference in the things to which they are attributed: "There is nothing in the nature of prizing or desiring to prevent their being directed to things which are means" (Dewey, 1939, p. 27). Dewey's point seems to be that in practical affairs there are no such things as 'pure ends' completely "independent of the appraisal of things as means" (Dewey, 1939, p. 25). Instead, every end is just one chain in an unfolding stream of intertwined means and ends. When considering a particular end, I am also considering the means needed to reach that end and the further consequences to other areas of my life and to my other ends that reaching for that end would likely cause. All these factors have a role when I evaluate how much I actually desire that end. For these reasons, it is a fallacy to interpret "what is designated by these terms as out of relation to anything else and hence as absolute" (Dewey, 1939, p. 26).

Here, I agree with Dewey. The self-justifying values I propose should indeed not be seen as absolute but rather as empirical generalizations about the kinds of values that would most likely be a natural fit for humans. Dewey emphasized the importance of "an empirical analysis of concrete desires and interests as they actually exist" (Dewey, 1939, p. 29), and the self-justifying values proposed here aim to take seriously the results of such empirical analyses that have proliferated in recent decades. Instead of something absolute and objective, I see 'self-justifying values' as a tool, a category of values that can be highly helpful for an individual aiming to build one's own value system, for societies aiming to build their value systems, and for various occasions where people from different societies and groups aim to build common ground. The science of self-justifying values is an attempt to identify those values that are most in alignment with basic human nature, where what is 'human nature' is an empirical and probabilistic question. A list of self-justifying values should be one tool in the toolbox of moral

principles, the whole content of which should be considered as “tentative outcomes of ongoing, collective human inquiry into the means and methods available for ameliorating serious obstacles to the satisfactory conduct of personal and social life” (Welchman, 2010, p. 181).

Thus there is no ‘true’ and ‘final’ list of basic motivational dispositions, but rather there are a handful of candidates with weaker or stronger empirical evidence behind them. But as Welchman (2010, p. 182) notes, building on our empirical knowledge about human physiology and psychology, “we can generate a ‘thin’, cross-cultural account of certain necessary constituents of welfare that may be used to evaluate practical deliberations both individual and collective.” As science around human nature progresses, the philosophical conclusions about the most suitable self-justifying values should also progress to stay aligned with this development. Accordingly, I argue that in looking for the most robust ends-in-views possible in this fallible world of experiencing, we should take a serious look at the research on basic motivational dispositions and use this knowledge to construct, in an engineering sense of the word, value systems that are most prone to leading to good living at individual, societal, and cross-societal levels.

GROWTH

“We may say that the good person is precisely the one who is most conscious of the alternative, and is the most concerned to find openings for the newly forming or growing self.” (Dewey, 1998, p. 353)(Dewey 1998, p. 353)

When no final and absolute standards exist for morality, but one still needs to make choices in one’s life, how to ensure that these choices are moral? Pragmatism does not offer a ready-made moral framework with pre-existing standards against which one can evaluate one’s behavior. Typically, pragmatists do not offer very explicit normative theories. Welchman (2010, p. 182), for example, states that Dewey “did not engage in normative debates nor attempt to develop his own normative theory.” Yet, in *being against* a commitment to firm and final moral standards, pragmatism comes to *be for* one particular ethical commitment: moral growth.

Moral growth means a commitment to improve one’s moral standards and conduct, as I argue in *article 6 (Is moral growth possible for managers?)*. Fallibilism leads to a worldview where one can never rest on one’s oars, convinced that one’s current moral principles and other moral tools are already perfect and final. When instead of final answers one acknowledges that all one’s answers are temporary and more or less well-grounded, it quite naturally follows that one wants to seek those answers that are better grounded, which is a lifelong quest.

Each person in a particular situation brings into the situation one's moral past and the moral tools that one has acquired through one's biological dispositions, one's upbringing, and one's idiosyncratic life experiences. Growing up in a certain culture leads one to value certain things and shun other things. "The presuppositions, prejudices, and confusions of one's cultural inheritance set the inescapable context for value inquiries", as Fesmire (2003, p. 12) notes. We did not have a say regarding into what family and what culture we were born. Thus, Hugh LaFollette, who grew up in Nashville, Tennessee in the 1950s, acquired the racist attitudes that were all around him: "I grew up a bigot, living in a land of bigots" (LaFollette, 2001, p. 409). However, listening to the courageous speeches of the civil rights movement activists, he was forced to rethink his attitudes. This thinking led him to evolve morally and to acquire new beliefs and attitudes, where the equality of people became a grounding moral principle.

The commitment to moral growth, then, is a conscious effort to transcend the necessarily narrow and unreflective moral framework with which one has grown up. Given that there are no external evaluative standards, one becomes personally responsible for cultivating one's moral outlook to escape the blind spots, biases, and narrowness that almost inevitably plague uncultivated morality. Dewey saw that when evaluating a person's morality, we should not concentrate much on a static evaluation of a person's current moral beliefs, but rather on a dynamic evaluation of the person's willingness to evolve morally. For him, the difference between high and low selves was "that between the attained static, and the moving, dynamic self" (Dewey, 1998, p. 353). Thus, we should not condemn Hugh LaFollette for growing up in a culture of bigots. We should praise or condemn him based on whether he accepted this moral framework as such or whether he took efforts to transcend it when confronting experiences that did not fit into it. More broadly, moral growth means striving to use one's experiences and available lessons to actively develop one's moral toolbox towards a system that is more internally consistent, based on more defensible premises about human nature and the world, and offers better ways to confront the various situations one faces in one's life. Growth thus does not take place against some objective standards, but rather is about a situation where from the point of view of one's new moral system, it feels like an improvement compared to the old system.

In article 6, I list a few key attitudes or habits that a person committed to moral growth should adopt to best ensure such growth. First, one should admit the incompleteness of one's current moral outlook and thus not become defensive when something in one's experiential world might challenge it. Second, one should not only develop one's moral system when passively confronting something that challenges it, but one should actively seek opportunities to expand one's moral horizon. One should actively seek voices that disagree with oneself and can provide new viewpoints and ways of seeing things. Third, one should give others' opinions and viewpoints a

charitable interpretation. When facing a new argument one should try to interpret it in as good a light as possible instead of the all too common habit of deliberately misinterpreting it to more easily dismiss it. Fourth, one should try to keep one's values and beliefs up-to-date as the world changes. Beliefs and attitudes that were taken as completely normal when one was twenty can become widely reprehended when one has reached the age of sixty. Finally, one should engage in moral imagination where one momentarily abandon's one's current attitudes and imagines how one would react, act, and think if one approached the world utilizing somewhat different attitudes and believes. This process can help both to better understand one's current moral worldview and to find alternatives that could actually be better in some sense.

This commitment to growth takes pragmatist ethics to the everyday. Every choice a person makes is an opportunity to either grow or decline morally, as I argue in *article 6*. Dewey notes how every choice sustains a double relation to the self. It both "reveals the existing self", making visible the path that you've taken to get here, and "forms the future self" (Dewey, 1998, p. 342). Through our choices, we choose what kind of person we want to be in the future. Instead of passively accepting one's current moral outlook as good and final, a pragmatist of the present type should thus make a conscious attempt to update and grow one's moral beliefs and one's key moral commitments. Through such moral cultivation, one aims to have a moral outlook that is more capable of looking at the same situation from a wider set of viewpoints, ensuring a more reflectively chosen and more widely defensible course of action.

CONCLUSION

How to live? For organisms capable of reflection thrown into a world in which they need to act, this question is the broadest practical question about life. We are already living, our lives are constantly unfolding, and we are blessed and cursed with the ability to reflect on how to act. The potential to choose differently and to act in a novel way is present in every moment. Some potential paths constantly present themselves to the agent; other potential paths are concealed by the narrowness of our current habits of thinking. Yet we must navigate through this experiencing by making the choices we see as best in some sense of the word. Some choices lead to outcomes more attractive to us, and in the best case, to a life that we will see as good and worth living. To get the most out of this potential given to us, we would benefit from having some guidelines on how to think about the world and what to strive for within it. This is where philosophy steps in.

Browning (1999; quoted in Pappas, 2008, p. 11) notes how "the starting point ... of all our attempts to enhance the meaning of our lives" is located in the "everyday experience." Everyday experience is also where philosophizing

starts. The human condition is that of active experiencing, which means that “we make use of experience, noting its functional constancies and acting upon those constancies to refine the ways in which we draw from experience, thereby improving upon it” (Cochran, 2010, p. 5). Through such an iterative process of language-assisted reflection, we can step outside of the urgencies of the mundane and towards levels of abstraction that are unfathomable to our closest primate relatives. We can make generalizations, coin new concepts to highlight certain aspects of experiencing, and use the empirical scientific methods to examine the world and to generate highly warranted assertions about its basic nature.

Everyday experience is, however, also where philosophizing should end. The ability to transcend the mundane and enter the world of abstractions is important, but the ability to travel back is equally important. This process is about harvesting the lessons learned on the abstract and conceptual level to apply them to actual living. A philosophical inquiry – as any other inquiry – ultimately serves people’s capacity to live good, meaningful, and valuable lives. The conceptual tools we philosophers build – distinctions, clarifications, theories, novel constructs – should not only serve the petty intellectual games of the ivory tower. Their value is ultimately connected to their ability to enhance, enrich, and enable people to navigate their lives in directions seen as good. An important part of this philosophical inquiry is also to assist people in making more reflective and informed choices as regards what values are worth striving for and what standards to use to evaluate a life as good.

Accordingly, the greatest service that philosophy can provide to humanity is to offer people intellectual tools that enhance their ability to live meaningful, valuable, and good lives. This is a grand task. Thus, any individual studies can only shine light on some small aspects of this broad project. The present introduction and the articles that follow are my attempt to say something valuable that could in the best case advance this project. They represent my current best conclusions about how to approach this task of enhancing people’s capability to live a good life. Remembering fallibilism we should naturally approach these conclusions with a certain degree of skepticism. First, the Gibbardian caveat should be applied to them: “If the psychological facts are roughly as I speculate, here is what might be said philosophically” (Gibbard, 2002, p. 30). Twenty years from now, some of the psychological conclusions that the present work builds upon will have surely been transformed in some way or another. Some crucial flaws or blind spots in the philosophical arguments of the present work have surely surfaced. However, in an imperfect world where one only has a limited lifetime during which to reflect, write, and publish, this is the best that one can do. Waiting until one’s arguments are perfect inevitably leads to dying with a closet full of manuscripts from which no one benefited. Life is happening now. People need better tools for thinking already today. In choosing when to publish one’s conclusions, one must balance the constantly present and practical

need for such conclusions with the need to ensure that such conclusions are sufficiently warranted. This balance means that one must be able to tolerate certain degrees of imperfection. Ultimately, one must give to the world one's imperfect conclusions in the hope that they could still do more good than harm in influencing people's thinking and acting. There is a real possibility that one fails, yet one must try. One must try because in this imperfect world, there is no alternative to using such inevitably fallible tools of thinking. Some of these tools turn out to be better than others in the sense of leading to more accurate predictions about how things unfold and to better behavioral responses to the various challenges that life presents to the person.

Philosophy is the craft of using one's reflective capabilities in interaction with others to design the best possible tools of thinking one can make. This work is a sample of my current toolbox. While some of the tools might already prove useful, there is also the hope that the interaction that their publication makes possible helps me and others to design even better tools in the future.

In brief:

Life is short. Reflection is inescapably narrow and imperfect. Yet one must live. In living, one makes use of those tools of thinking one has available. Philosophy has the capacity to design novel and improved tools for such thinking. Indeed, it is the duty of philosophers to design such tools. Therefore, herein are a few such tools. My hope is that they have the ability to transform some lives for the better; that these tools can assist someone to live a better life than what they would have been capable of living without these tools. Living to fulfill this hope is what makes a philosopher – including yours truly – a pragmatist.

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THE ORIGINAL ARTICLES