

Essay	Epistemology
Empirical but used in a much more limited way	Empirical cumulative and progressive
Subjective	Objective
Anti-Academic	Academic
presupposes an independent observer, a specific object, sympathetic reader	“cooperative, public, and cumulative” (Bacon)
spontaneous, unsystematic, occasional, even accidental	certain knowledge, a method for finding it, as Descartes
exists outside any organization of new knowledge	tries to organize a new discipline on basis of its discovery
open mind confronts and open reality	
makes claim to truth, but not permanent truth	beginning with Descartes, wants to make a new start for knowledge
opposes doctrines and disciplines ¹	learning, discipline, teaching
“I speak as one who questions and does not know...I do not teach, I relate” (Montaigne)	eventually evolves into a writing for the specialist audience
for the autodidact; no certification required	general reader is discouraged by the specialized tone and style
diversity of opinions	any addition to field is limited to those with proper training, certification
particularity, emblematic examples, often personal	unity of opinions; general rules from specific instances
makes no claim to be definitive; the truth here is a <i>limited</i> truth	knowledge is superseded by successive additions
ideas are for the here-and-now, while the sense impressions	
“belles-tristic ancestry,” i.e., literature	“philosophical legitimacy,” i.e., science
pastoral mood, detached-->freedom	knowledge
ultimately personal, “intellectual poems,” mimetic as well as creative	ultimately impersonal
connotative, humanistic, nurture	denotative, nature
tangential, leaping, “Dragon Smoke,” ² “grotesques” (Montaigne)	
provisional reflection of an ephemeral experience of an event or object	professionalized literature study
disinterestedness “the object as in itself it really is” (Arnold)	
leisure, Flaneur (Baudelaire)	necessity, utility, Pragmatism
what do I know?	what do we know?
mixture of anecdote, description, opinion	evidence, support, reporting
content is “usually” art	strict knowledge that ‘subordinates idea’ (Adorno)
“an organ of sublime power”/“parharmonicon” (Ralph Waldo Emerson) ³	

¹ “Hence,” Good says, “the essay’s neglect in the higher levels of the academic system.”

² See Robert Bly’s idea of “leaping” in poetry and literature.

³ I look on the Lecture Room as the true Church of the coming time, and as the home of a richer eloquence than Faneuil Hall of the Capitol ever knew. For here is all that the true orator will ask, namely, a convertible audience,—and audience coming up to the house, not knowing what shall befall them there, but uncommitted and willing victims to reason and love. There is no topic that may not be treated, and no method excluded. *Here*, everything is admissible, philosophy, ethics, divinity, criticism, poetry, humor, anecdote, mimicry,—ventriloquism almost,—all the breadth and versatility of the most liberal conversation, and of the highest, lowest, personal, and local of topics—all are permitted, and all may be combined into one speech. It is a panharmonicon combining every note on the longest gamut, from the explosion cannon to the tinkle of a guitar... Here is a pulpit that makes other chairs of instruction cold and ineffectual with their customary preparation for a delivery: the most decorous with fine things, pretty things, wise things, but no arrows, no axes, no nectar, no transpiercing, no loving, no enchantment. Here, the American orator shall find the theatre he needs; here, he may lay himself out utterly large, prodigal, enormous, on the subject of the hour. Here, he may dare to hope for higher inspiration and a total transfusion of himself into the minds of men.